

THE BELOVED PASTOR'S PLEA FOR UNITY NO. 2320

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 7, 1889.**

*"To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you
and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."
Romans 1:7.*

IN a few minutes we shall gather together as members of the Church of Christ to celebrate the memorial of His death. It is a memorable sight to see so many Christian people sitting together with the objective of observing this ordinance. Frequently, as I have seen it, I must confess that when sitting in the chair at the head of the table, I often feel overawed with the remembrance that it is the largest gathering of Christians anywhere beneath the sun, and that they have come there with one common objective, namely, to show our Lord's death "till He comes." The question then rises in our minds whether there is real fellowship in all this, for if there is not, it is a great sham, and the more numerous we are, if we have not fellowship with Christ and with one another, the greater is the deception—it is only having a name to live while we are dead. So I want, tonight, not so much to preach to you as to exhort you, who are about to gather to this holy festival, to think that your thoughts shall go out toward all your Christian Brothers and Sisters, and that you shall feel the power of that precious blood which makes us nearer akin than even the blood of Adam—that blood of Jesus which makes us truly Brothers and Sisters, yes, members of one body, and so united by living communion, the one to the other.

In this first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, you see the spirit of communion in the Apostle Paul. He was, he says, anxious to do good to others. He longed to see the Roman Christians in order that he might impart to them some spiritual gift. While he is writing to them you can see that he is anxious that they may have the best things that they can have. All his desire is for their good—he is lovingly interested in their welfare. That is how *we* ought to be, the one to the other, not only the pastor to the people, but the people to the pastor, and the members of the Church to each other, all anxious for the good of the rest—no man living unto himself, but each one endeavoring to live for the benefit of the entire community in Christ Jesus.

Not only did the Apostle's heart go out to the church in Rome, but to all the Gentiles. He felt himself, he says, a debtor to everybody, to the Greeks

and to the barbarians, to the wise and to the unwise, to, the bond and to the free. Do you not think that our loving sympathies should go out towards all mankind? Oh, let them do so! While you have the nearest and closest fellowship with the saints, yet desire to recognize your kinship with the rest of men, praying to God that He would enlighten them and bring them, also, within the bonds of the Covenant, that your fellowship with them might be loving, and true, and deep.

However, the Apostle especially expresses his fellowship with the saints in Rome and, to prove that fellowship, he calls them by endearing names, by the highest titles which they could have, "beloved of God, called to be saints." And then he salutes them with good wishes of the very sweetest, most tender kind, when he says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." While I am trying to talk on this text, will our dear Brothers and Sisters' hearts be going out, the one towards the other, with a view to the increase of real spiritual communion in this Church, and also in every branch of the one Church of Christ throughout the world?

First, notice, concerning these people, *their favored condition*—"beloved of God." Secondly, *their sure proof of that favor*—"called to be saints." And, thirdly, *their blessedness through that favor*. Paul wished them to have what he was allowed to wish for them, for it was truly theirs—"Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

I. First, then, notice concerning these people, **THEIR FAVORED CONDITION.** They are said to be "beloved of God."

I wish that I could hope that this was true of everybody here in the fullest and most emphatic sense, that we were all "beloved of God." There is a sense in which it is true, for God has a love of benevolence, kindness and well-wishing towards all His creatures. He is kind to the unthankful and the evil, and makes His rain to fall upon the field of the miser as well as on the ground of the gracious. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God is willing that all should come to Him, repent of sin, believe in Jesus Christ and find eternal life! We are all, in some respects, partakers of the love of God.

But, dear Friends, there is a love to Peter which is greater than the love which Christ had to Judas. There is a love which He has to His own which is of peculiar character and differs very greatly from that common love which He bestows upon all the works of His hands, for there is a *love of choice* and it is in this sense that Paul calls these Roman saints "beloved of God." God had chosen them—His prescient eyes had foreseen them and their condition—and He had selected them out of the mass of the Roman population that they might be His own. Whatever may be said about the Doctrine of Election, it is written in the Word of God as with an iron pen and there is no getting rid of it! There it stands. To me, it is one of the sweetest and most blessed Truths in the whole of Revelation—and those who are afraid of it are so because they do not understand it. If they could but know that the Lord had chosen them, it would make their hearts dance for joy! The Lord has a people in this world whom He has, Himself,

chosen and given to His Son, Jesus Christ, and whom the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed from among men, for Christ, "loved the Church and gave Himself for it." These are the people of whom Paul speaks as beloved of God, those who have been, by Divine Grace, chosen out of the great mass of mankind!

Beware, I pray you, of that desperately evil thing which is everywhere now—"the Christian world." There is no mixture that can be so bad as that! If it is the world, it is the world—if it is Christian, it is *not* the world—and the two things cannot be bound together! There is a divorce proclaimed between the two. Our Lord Jesus proclaimed it when He said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And He was never of the world! Nobody ever thought that He was of the world and so His followers, if they are true to Him, are not of the world. They are of another race. As the Apostle John says, "You know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the Wicked One." It is not, as someone said the other day, "a redeemed world"—it is a world that lies in the Wicked One, as a child lies in its father's arms! There is a *redeemed people* in it, whom Christ is calling out by His own wondrous and Sovereign Grace, but we are not to look upon them as tasting of the benefits of His redemption in any saving way until He calls them to faith in Himself and brings them to be washed in His precious blood! Then may they, indeed, be called, "beloved of God."

These are, again, beloved with a *love of resolve*. He determined concerning those whom He loved that they should be saved, that they should repent, that they should accept the great Sacrifice. He ordained them unto eternal life and He resolved so to work upon them that, while He did not violate the freedom of their wills, or treat them otherwise than as men, yet still He would accomplish His purpose with them, He would create in them a new heart and a right spirit! He would turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to Himself. These are the beloved of the Lord.

And in consequence they came to be the beloved of God in another sense, namely, with a *love of complacency*. The Lord cannot love a wicked man with the love of complacency. He takes no delight in him—He cannot even look on him without abhorrence, for he provokes the Lord to anger by his iniquity. But there are men and women in the world in whom the Holy Spirit has worked principles which delight God. He has given them a character which is pleasing to Him. They are His Hephzibahs—His delight is in them. There are some of whom He thinks with pleasure, though they were once sinful and vile as others. He has transformed them into new creatures in Christ Jesus and now He delights in them. I do not know a more joyful thought than for a man to be led to believe that God takes complacency in Him and looks at him with the eyes of loving approval. Such as he are the beloved of the Lord!

And because of this, dear Friends, there was also a *love of unity*. God joins Himself to the man in whom He takes delight. There is a friendship between them more close than that between David and Jonathan, so that

God speaks with His servant and hears what His servant has to say in reply. There are men who are on such intimate terms with God that they might be called the friends of God, as Abraham was—and God is both their shield and their exceedingly great reward. Oh, did some of you know what a joy it is to be the beloved of the Lord, you would reckon yourselves to be wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked while you are without Him! And you would reckon that even if you were poor, blind and naked, yet you would *not* be wretched and miserable if you did but know this wondrous love of God which leads to the friendship of God and to fellowship with God! There are many men and women, nowadays, thank God, who have a place where they are accustomed to meet with God quite as regularly as they meet with their fellow tradesmen at their stall or at their office. They meet with God and it would be a doleful day to them if, on any occasion, they should go to wait upon God and find that He had closed the door against them! Yes, we have in London and all over the world, a multitude who may truly be called the beloved of the Lord!

This is a very choice privilege. If you possess it, prize it beyond everything else! This is a crowning honor. Perhaps if you were invited to attend the Queen, you might think something of it, but what would that be compared with being beloved of *God*? To have the love of our fellow men is very sweet—there are times when it comes with peculiar pleasantness—but oh, believe me, all the loves of all relationships, all the loves of all friendships heaped together can never be compared with the love of God to us! All the goodness that there is in human love is derived from the love of God and is, at best, but as a drop compared with the boundless ocean! If you are beloved of God, I will not stay to ask whether you are rich or poor, or even whether you are in good health or in sickness! Neither will I enquire whether you are in honor or in disrepute, or whether your life is likely to be long or to be suddenly cut short. All these things are but trifles! This is the solid fact that makes you a happy and a blessed man, that you can be called, “beloved of God.”

Now the sweet thing, here, is that if I am beloved of God, and you are beloved of God, here is a ground for us to meet. If you have not yet learned to know your Brother, if he is a stranger to you and if, because of this, no love has actually sprung up in your heart, yet, since Christ loves *you*—when you hear that Christ loves *him*—why, you will seem at once knit to him! I remember, when I first came to London, I used to think a great deal of everybody who came up from Waterbeach. I believe that if a dog had come up from Waterbeach, I should have fed him and I think that if anybody comes from where Christ is—the Christ who loves us—we shall be sure to love him! They who are beloved of God will love all others who are beloved of God! “But they are American friends.” Never mind whether they are American or Dutch—if the *Lord* loves them, *we* love them!

“Oh, but they live so many thousands of miles away and they never come here.” Never mind—what if seas and mountains divide us—yet are we one and He who loves us loves them, also! I am sure that I appeal to you with no doubt as to what your answer will be. If God has put us

within the same circle of His infinite affection, may we not safely clasp hands feeling that we shall never have to unclasp them, no, not even in death? The relationship between a husband and a wife, between a mother and her son may be snapped entirely by death, never to be renewed. If there is no Divine Grace in the heart of the husband or the child, the weeping and the wailing will be useless! They are parted, never to meet again! Think of that, you who are still unsaved. But if we are one in Christ's love, we may have to bid, "Good-bye," to one another here on earth for a time, but it is only for a time! Those bands, of which the love of God is the raw material, are everlasting!

Some of you, tonight, when I break the bread, will have to go upstairs or go home. I very often meet with good men who come to join the Church and who say, "Nothing decided me till I had to leave my wife behind me, or when I stayed in the top gallery and looked down upon her and felt that I could not come and eat with her the memorial of the Lord's death. Then I felt that I could not hold out any longer." Oh, may you have that union in the love of God which never will be broken! Seek it tonight! May we all, in these two galleries and this great area, be encompassed within the circle of the "beloved of God"!

II. Now, my second head is, THEIR SURE PROOF OF THAT FAVOR, for they were "called to be saints"—"beloved of God, called to be saints."

What were these people to whom Paul wrote? First, *they were saints*. You notice that the words, "to be," are put in by the translators, but though they are supplied, they are not really necessary to the sense. These Believers in Rome were "called saints." They were not called because they were saints, but they became saints through that *calling*. Now, here is a name that belongs to *all* the people of God—they are saints. It is not merely, "St. John," and, "St. James," and so on, as some foolish people talk, who cannot call Matthew, Mark, Luke and John by their right names, but must always "Saint" them! I believe that there is a St. John—I dare say that there are 20 St. Johns in this Tabernacle tonight! I believe in St. Matthew—I expect that there are two or three St. Matthews here tonight! All the people of God—all who are really believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are saints! They are, all of them, called saints and we may call them so.

Is not that very wonderful, that these Romans should be called saints—for once they were not saints! The Romans were among the worst of mankind. This first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is one of the most awful that ever fell from a human pen. It so describes the infamous crimes of the Gentiles that we might almost blush to read it in the presence of a congregation—and such were some of these people—but Divine Grace came and renewed them! And they were called saints and really were saints, that is, dedicated persons. A saint is a person who is set apart unto God, consecrated to God, sanctified, separated—a man who is in the world, but not of it—he belongs to God and he lives for God.

Now, if God loves you in the sense in which we have been speaking, He has made a saint of you, a dedicated man. You remember that Jonah was

asked, "What is your occupation and of what people are you?" and he answered, "I am an Hebrew and I fear the Lord." That was his occupation—he was a God-fearing man. It is not every man who could give such an answer as that. When we feel that our very occupation is to serve God, then are we rightly "called saints," sanctified, set apart ones.

But the word "saints" really means, also, holy persons. If we are the beloved of the Lord, He will make us holy persons. There is a very wide difference between that and being merely moral. Here is a man who calls himself a saint and he is not honest—do not call him a saint—he is not even a respectable sinner. Here is a man who says he is a child of God and yet he is guilty of lewdness. Call him a saint when even common morality is absent? Dear Friends, all the charity we can possibly pump up will not allow us to call that man a holy man who is not even a moral man! What is holiness, then? It rises *above* morality as much as the Heaven rises above the earth! Holiness is a more spiritual, a more intense, a more Divine, a more heavenly thing than morality—and he who has not morality certainly falls very short of anything like holiness! We are called not merely to be moralists, but to be saints!

If you go, tomorrow, into some place of amusement where there is something not quite clean, something full of levity, I should like somebody to whisper in your ear, "Called to be saints." Or, if tomorrow, in business, you should lose your temper and begin to speak rather strongly, I should like something, even if it were only a parrot, to say, "Called to be saints." And if, when you go home, you begin to be very rough to the children, unkind to the wife and not what you should be, even to the servant, I should like you to hear a voice saying, "Called to be saints." It might make you blush, if you can—there are some who cannot—but every man who professes to be a child of God should remember that this is what his calling is and he cannot prove that he is beloved of God unless he can prove his calling to saintship by being really a saint. Oh, that we had a Church made up all of saints! Our churches, nowadays, are very respectable communities, I do not doubt, and there is a good deal of sainthood in them, but, oh, if they were *all* saints, then, indeed, we should tell upon the world and tell upon the age—and the Kingdom of our Lord would come! They were saints, then, to whom Paul wrote.

He also says that *they were "called to be saints."* They were not originally saints—they were "called to be saints." They were not saints by their own native growth—they did not grow up into saints—they were "called to be saints." They were called of Christ, Himself. Read the sixth verse—"Among whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ." Being called by Jesus Christ, they were called by a Voice which they recognized, a Voice to which they yielded, a Voice that spoke effectually, a Voice that spoke transformingly—and they were called by Him to be saints. Have you ever had such a call, my dear Hearer? Sitting in your pew, tonight, can you remember when that call came to you, as real a call as when God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, a call from Heaven—mysterious, Di-

vine—which nobody else could hear, but which you heard and obeyed? “Called to be saints.”

Now, then, see a ground of our communion, one with another! If I have had a call to be a saint, I should not like to talk much about that to some people whom I know, for they would call it fanaticism. If you have had a call to be a saint, you have been very much in the same state. And when you and I meet together, we are not afraid to talk about it. You understand it and I understand it—and on the ground of having had a common call, we feel ourselves at home. We are Brothers and Sisters at once because we are equally “called to be saints.” You cry and you sigh for saintship and your friend cries and sighs for saintship, too. He is conscious that he comes short of his own idea of it. He struggles, he groans. You and he have a secret between you—your experience is his experience and you two feel, having equally received a call from God, and a call for the same purpose—that you should both become the same thing, namely, saints unto God! Here is ground for fellowship.

The lambs can have no fellowship with the wolves—let them stay together and have fellowship, one with another. You who love God will not find much fellowship up and down these streets. In many of the houses, if you were to speak of God, they would ridicule you. Get all the fellowship that you can, one with another. Let it be said of you, as of those of old, “Then they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another, and the Lord listened, and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name.” I like to think of this, that as we are one in being, the beloved of the Lord, so are we one in the outcome of it! We have all been called and we have all been called to the same high attainment of saintship. Paul does not say that he alluded to “the upper ten” at Rome. No, but he says, “To all that are in Rome, beloved of God.” Do not go about and pick out a few of the best Christian people and say, “I am in sympathy with them.” Ah, dear Friends, this is not like Christ! He washed His disciples’ feet, but you are for looking up at their heads!

Go and begin fellowship with him by washing his dear feet. Where there is *aliquid Christi*, as a good man used to say, *anything of Christ*, there should your love go forth. Where there is any work of Christ upon the soul of *anyone*, however uneducated, however poor, however rough he may be, yes, and however bad-tempered he may be, nevertheless endeavor to get to maintain and to increase fellowship with him, seeing that you and he have one calling—you are both “called to be saints.”

III. Now I come to a close with the third point where I think we shall also find some ground for fellowship, THEIR BLESSEDNESS THROUGH THE FAVOR OF GOD. This was the same with regard to all to whom Paul wrote—“To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

First, these good people had this blessedness—*they all had the same Father*. Suppose that two persons were to meet here, tonight, who did not know each other, and they were to begin to talk to one another, and one

said, "My father's name is So-and-So," And the other were to look at him and say, "And where does he live?" "He lives at such a house, in such a city." "Does he? Why, do you know, that is *my* father?" Those two would be surprised that they did not know each other, for they evidently had the same father! I can see them backing a bit and looking at one another, and saying, "Do you mean to say that his name is really John Smith?" "Yes." "And he lives at such a house?" "Yes." "What age is he? What kind of a man is he? Have you his picture with you?" "Yes." "There, I have a good portrait of him, too, and it is the same man! He is father to us both—then what are we two?" "We are brothers." And they put their arms about each other's neck and say, "What have we been doing, that, having the same father, we did not know each other?"

Now, there are many Christian people who, if they came right, would be in much the same condition. They have the same Father and do not know it because they do not quite agree, perhaps, upon some form of doctrine, or even upon the rite of Baptism, or something of that sort, which is of very great importance, but still, the most important thing is— Have we one Father? If we have, then let us have fellowship, one with the other! I want this to be real. When I was very young and first joined the church in Cambridge, I sat in a pew at the communion with a gentleman, perhaps with two or three, but none of them spoke to me. The next time I went to the communion, it was the same—nobody spoke to me. I was not anybody to be spoken to, so when I got outside the Chapel, I said to one gentleman, "Well, dear Sir, how are you?" He said, "I am pretty well, thank you, but you have the advantage on me." "I do not think I have, Sir. I do not know you any more than you know me, but I came to the Communion Table to profess that I was a Brother of those who were there and I meant it—did you not mean it?" He put both his hands on me, for he was much older than I was, and he said, "What sweet simplicity! You have only acted according to truthfulness. I am glad," he added, "that you did not do it to our deacon!"

The next thing he said was, "Will you come in and have a cup of tea with me?" I said, "Thank you, Sir, I could not do that, tonight, because I am expected home at the place where I live." "Will you come in next Sunday?" "Yes." I continued to go in every Sunday as long as I could and he remained, and does remain, a dear friend of mine to this day. Though he is very much older than I am, I established a friendship with him which never has been interrupted, and never will be, either in time or in eternity! Should it not be thus among *all* Christians?

Is the Fatherhood of God a reality among the children of God? If it is, let their brotherhood be a reality and let them show that they are true Brothers and Sisters by their love, one to another! May the Lord make it so! The common talk of the *universal* fatherhood of God is a flat contradiction of the teaching of the Bible. There is certainly, in God's Word, such a Doctrine as Adoption. Does God adopt His own children, then? There is certainly a Revelation about the new birth. What are the regenerated born into, then? Only into the same nature as they had before? Is there any-

thing fresh given to them which makes them to have the Nature of the children of God? I thought, and I still think, that it was meant that, until then, they were *heirs of wrath, children of disobedience, even as others, and children of the Wicked One*—but by no means children of the family of the Most High! By Grace alone could the saints in Rome call God, “Abba, Father.”

The next point in their blessedness was that *they had the same Savior*, for so says the text, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” He who died for Paul died for them. The streams of blood that flowed for the Apostle, flowed for them. For them the bloody sweat, for *all of them!* For them the death cry, “It is finished,” *for all of them* and, truly, I think that being bought with the same price ought to make us feel that we are all one lump! We were all passed over to Christ by the one transaction of the paying down of His heart's blood to redeem us and we ought to feel, no, Brothers and Sisters, I hope that we *do feel* that we are all one and we will endeavor as much as lies in us to show this in our lives.

And, more than that, *they were going to the same Heaven*. Beloved, the Home of God should be the great goal to which we are always pressing forward. You see that the men of the world are coming this way in a great crowd, all in a hurry, rushing after their gods—and we, what are we doing? Threading our way, as best we can, pushing our way against the stream, going in an exactly *opposite* direction to the rest of mankind. Some of you cannot do this! You keep getting carried off your legs and you are swept along by the torrent. But the man of God must go against the current. He is not to be swept back—but he is always pressing forward, always seeking to make an advance, contending for every inch—and making up his mind that, come what may, he cannot go back! That is not his way—he must go forward, always pressing on toward the City that has foundations! Christians are like a live fish that goes up the stream, always up the stream. If the fish comes down the stream and you see it floating with its white belly on the top of the water, you know that it is dead—and we can see plenty of these dead fish floating down the stream nowadays. But the live Christian is going straight up the stream, straight up, up, up! Whichever way the tide may be running, whether it is at the ebb or at the flood, he is going straight up the stream and, God helping him, he will proceed in that way right to the end. So, Brothers and Sisters, as we are going to the same Heaven, let us have Heaven begun below as we live in love, one towards another.

These saints, also, *had the same Grace*. I cannot stop to say much about it, but Paul wished for them all that they might have “Grace.” If you have Grace and I have Grace, the Grace is the same in us all. It may take a different shape as to the fruit that it produces, but Grace is one. Whether it is Grace in the babe in Christ, or Grace in the strong man in Christ, it is the same Grace. And if we all are debtors to Grace and if Grace begins, and Grace carries on, and Grace completes its work in us

all, let us, by the bonds of that Grace, be knit together in mutual affection, the one towards the other.

And then they all *had the same peace*. Oh, what a blessed thing is peace with God, peace with our own conscience, peace with the past, peace with the present, peace with the future—the peace of God which passes all understanding! Have you peace, Brothers and Sisters, and have I peace? Then let us be as one, for we have the same peace! You must have noticed, in times of peril, how men are driven into each other's arms. If you are on board ship and the vessel is ready to go down, his lordship will be seen at the pumps working as hard as any sweep who may be on board! Everybody must share alike when they divide the biscuit—and everybody must take his turn at working in the saving of the ship. Well, well, if it is so in time of danger, let it be so in time of peace! Let us have an equally hearty communion and fellowship, the one with the other, in happy times and under sad circumstances as well.

And so have I tried to prepare you to come to this feast. If any of you have any ill-will towards the others, have done with it! If there are any bickering and jealousies among you, wring the necks of those evil birds and have done with them—put them to a speedy death! Now, surely, is the time, when we come to the common Table of the Lord's one family, to feel that one heart is in us all and that by Him who loved us all and through Him whom we all love, we will love each other! God grant it! I am not aware that there is any special reason, now, why I should urge you to this unity more than at any other time, but there is always a reason for it. There is never a company of men and women, so large as ours, but what they have little jealousies between them. And you may be quite sure that these are displeasing to God and should be put away as speedily as possible. So let it be and thus may we keep the feast in union with Christ and with one another, for our Savior's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. ROMANS 1:1-17

Verse 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 thoughts, all his talents, 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 Gos-

pel 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 you also the called of Jesus Christ: to all that are 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 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, but 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 travel 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 you 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 gifts of gold or silver, but he was a chosen man and 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 need 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 hindered until now), 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 needed, 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 is in me, 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's 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 everyone that believes; 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 does these things shall live by them." But the Gospel is, "The just shall live by faith." "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." The Lord give to us all that saving faith, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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PAUL, THE READY

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"I am ready."
Romans 1:15.

I THINK Paul might have used these words as his motto. We had once a Saxon king called Ethelred the Unready. Here we have an Apostle who might be called Paul the Ready. The Lord Jesus no sooner called to him out of Heaven, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" than he answered, "Who are You, Lord?" Almost directly after, his question was, "Lord, what will You have me to do?" He was no sooner converted than he was ready for holy service and, "straightway, he preached Christ" in the synagogues at Damascus. All through his life, whatever happened to him, he was always ready. If he had to speak to crowds in the street, he had the fitting word, or if to the elite upon Mars' Hill, he was ready for the philosophers. If he talked to the Pharisees, he knew how to address them and when he was brought before the Sanhedrim, and perceived the Pharisaic and Sadducean elements in it, he knew how to avail himself of their mutual jealousies to help his own escape.

Watch him before Felix, before Festus, before Agrippa—he is always ready—and when he came to stand before Nero, God was with him and delivered him out of the mouth of the lion. If you find him on board ship, he is ready to comfort men in the storm, and when he gets on shore, a shipwrecked prisoner, he is ready to gather sticks to help to make the fires. At all points he is an all-round man and an all-ready man—always ready to go wherever his Master sends him, and to do whatever his Lord appoints him.

In talking at this time about Paul's readiness, I shall, first, dwell for a little while upon *the state of Paul's mind*, as indicated by his declaration, "I am ready." Secondly, I shall show that *this state of mind arose from excellent principles*. And, thirdly, I shall point out *that this readiness produces admirable results* wherever it is to be found.

I. First, let us consider THE STATE OF PAUL'S MIND which enables him to say, "I am ready."

I shall refer you to four passages where he expresses his readiness. The first is our text. Here we have Paul's *readiness to work*. "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome, also." He

had preached the Gospel throughout a great part of Asia. He had crossed over into Europe, he had proclaimed the Word through Greece—and if ever an opportunity should occur for him to get to the capital of the world, whatever might be the danger to which he would be exposed—he was prepared to go. He was ready to go anywhere for Jesus, anywhere to preach the Gospel, anywhere to win a soul, anywhere to comfort the people of God! “I am ready.” There is no place to which Paul was *not* ready to go. He was ready to make a journey into Spain and if he did not come to this island of ours, which is a matter of question, undoubtedly he was ready to have gone to the utmost isles of the sea, and to lands and rivers unknown, to carry his Master’s mighty Word! Are we as ready as Paul was to go anywhere for Jesus, or do we feel that we could only work for Christ at home? Dare we go to the United States, or to Australia, or into some heathen land? Oh, may God keep us always on tiptoe, ready to move if the cloud moves, and equally ready to stay where we are if the cloud moves not!

If Paul went to Rome, he would be going into the lion’s mouth, but he was ready for that, for lions had no kind of terror for him. He had fought with beasts at Ephesus. In spirit he had died in the mouth of the lion many a time, counting not his life dear to him. I wish we were ready for all danger, all slander, all contumely, all poverty, all of anything that it might cost us to preach Christ where He is not known. The Apostle was ready to go anywhere with the Gospel, but he was not ready to preach another gospel—no one could make him ready to do that! He was not ready to hide the Gospel, he was not ready to tone it down, he was not ready to abridge it or to extend it. He said, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

As to the matter of preaching the Gospel, Paul was always ready for that! He kept not back any one of its Truths, nor any part of its teaching. Even if it should bring ridicule and contempt upon him, though it should be to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, Paul would say, “As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel” to them all. He did not always feel fit for the work—he did not always find the same openings, or the same freedom in speech—but he was always ready to preach wherever the Lord gave him the opportunity.

If you will kindly turn to Acts 21:13, you will read, in the second place, of *Paul’s readiness to suffer*. He says, “I am ready not to be bound, only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” This is, perhaps, a greater thing than the former one—to be ready to suffer is more than to be ready to serve. To some of us it has become a habit to be ready to preach the Gospel, but here was a man who was ready to suffer for the name of the Lord Jesus—so ready that he could not be dissuaded from it. He might preach the Gospel, but why must he go to Jerusalem? All the world was before him—why must he go to that persecuting city? Everybody told him that he would have bonds and imprisonment and, perhaps,

death—but he cared nothing about all that! He said, “I am ready, I am ready.”

Beloved Friends, are we ready to be scoffed at, to be thought idiots, to be put down among old-fashioned fossils? Perhaps so. Are we ready, if we should be required to do so, to lose friends for Christ’s sake, to have the cold shoulder for Christ’s sake? Perhaps so. Are we also ready, if it is the Lord’s will, to go home, to be carried upstairs and to lie there for the next three months? Are we as ready as that poor woman who said, “The Lord said to me, ‘Betty, mind the house, look after the children,’ and I did it. By-and-by, He said, ‘Betty, go upstairs, and cough 12 months.’ Shall I not do *that*, also, and not complain, for it is all that I can do?” “I am ready.” Do you remember what is on the seal of the American Baptist Missionary Society?—An ox with a plow on one side and a halter on the other, ready for either—ready to *serve*, or ready to *suffer*. You have not come to the highest style of readiness till you are ready for whatever the will of God may appoint for you! Unreadiness from this point of view is very common, but it shows unsubdued human nature. It is a relic of rebellion, for when we are fully sanctified—when every thought is brought into subjection to the mind of God—then the cry is not, “As I will,” but, “As You will!”

Ah, dear Friends, while I am talking very feebly to you, I should not wonder but what you are saying to yourselves, “This is above us as yet—we shall need much more teaching of the Holy Spirit before we are ready for unknown sufferings, for lonely sufferings, for suffering that seems to have no good in it, useless suffering, for being put on the shelf, for being laid aside from the holy services of God’s House, and from the little works that once we were able to do for Christ. Are you ready? Can you answer, “Ready, yes, ready”? So it should be with you if you belong to Christ. And so it was with Paul.

The third passage I must now quote is not exactly the same in words, but it means the same as the others. It tells us of *Paul’s readiness to do unpleasant work*. I am afraid many of God’s servants fall short here. The passage is in 2 Corinthians 10:6—“And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.” The Church at Corinth had sunk into a very sad condition. It was a Church that did not have any minister. It had an open ministry and nobody knows what mischief comes of that kind of thing. Paul recommended them to try what a minister could do for them, for he said, “I beseech you, brethren, (you 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 you submit yourselves unto such.” They were too gifted for that and *everybody* wanted to speak. When a Church is all mouth, what becomes of the body? If it were all mouth, it would simply become a vacuum—nothing more—and the Church in Corinth became very much that. It was nobody’s business to administer discipline, for it was everybody’s business, and what is everybody’s business is nobody’s business, as we well know! So no discipline was administered and the Church became what we call, “all sixes and

sevens.” It stands in the Scriptures forever as a warning against that method of Church government, or, rather, of *no* Church government at all.

Paul, when he went among these people, determined to administer discipline, and to try to put things right. He was not going to Corinth with a sword, or with any carnal weapon, or with anything of unkindness or hasty temper. But he was going with the Word of God. He wrote, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” And he meant to go among the Corinthian professors and pull down the stronghold of heathen vice that had entered the Church to such an extent that even at the Lord’s Table some of them were drunk! Paul meant to deal honestly with all who were dishonoring the name of Christ.

Now, dear Friends, I speak especially to Brothers whom God has put into the ministry, or put into office in the Church—are you ready for this unpleasant duty? Oh, it costs some of us a great deal to say a strong thing! Perhaps we cannot say it at all without getting into a temper—and then we had better not say it at all! It is not easy to have firmness in the language combined with sweetness in the manner of uttering it. It is easy to *congratulate* friends. It is not difficult to condemn them in the gross—but it is another think to speak *personally and faithfully* to each erring one, and to be assured in our own souls that, as far as we have any responsibility in the matter, we will not tolerate an Achan in the camp, and will not have evil done knowingly in the House of God. It should be our endeavor, as God has made us overseers, not to overlook things that are evil, but really to oversee *everything* that is committed to our charge, and to try to set right whatever is wrong.

Is it not the case with you who are private members of Churches—do you not, sometimes, find it difficult to rebuke sin? Even profane swearing will come under the notice of many Christian people without a word of rebuke from them. They say they thought it best to hold their tongue—you mean you thought it easiest for yourselves! Sometimes known wickedness comes before the eyes of Christians and they excuse themselves, and say, “We did not like to interfere.” “Perhaps they were too gentle,” you say. I suggest that they were too *lazy*, too much inclined to save their own precious skins, too anxious to have the soft side of this life and not willing to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ! Are you ready, as Paul was, to exhibit a holy indignation against sin, and lovingly and tenderly, yet firmly, in the name of the Lord, to see that evil does not go unrebuked? If any man has come to this, I will not say that I envy him, but that I desire to be found in that position, so that, when the Lord comes, none of the evil of this generation may be at my door. When He shall come, and find His Church lukewarm, faithless, adulterated by worldliness and all manner of heresies, I pray that He may not have to point His finger at unfaithful pastors and say of any of us, “You are the man who is responsible for this sad state of affairs.” Oh, may God make us ready for whatever is laid upon us, however unpleasant and contrary to our mind

and feeling the task may be, may we be ready to do the Lord's work, faithful even to the end!

Now, once more, will you kindly turn to 2 Timothy 4:6, where you have a verse well known to you all, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." *Paul was ready to die*. He was ready to loose his cable from earth and to sail away to the haven of the blessed! And well he might be, for he could add, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: therefore, 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." Beloved Friends, we cannot be ready to die unless we have been taught how to live! We who are active, and have talents to use, and health and strength with which to use those talents, must go on with "the greatest fight in the world" till we can say, "I have fought a good fight." We must go on running the Christian race till we can say, "I have finished my course." We must go on guarding the Word of God and holding fast the Truth of God, till we can say, "I have kept the faith." It will be hard work to lie dying if we have been unfaithful. God's infinite mercy may come in and forgive and help us, and we may be "saved, yet so as by fire," but if we would look forward to death with perfect readiness, having no dread or fear about it—but being as ready to die as we are to go to our beds tonight—then we must be kept faithful to God by His Almighty Grace. The faith must keep us, and we must keep the faith.

Thus, you see, Paul was ready for service, ready for suffering, ready for unpleasant duty and ready to die. If I were to go round this Tabernacle and ask of everyone, "My Friend, are you ready in these four ways?" how many of you would be able to answer, "We are ready"? I am afraid many would have to shake their heads and say, "I do not know what to say. I am doing my best in some style, but I cannot say that I have the readiness which the Apostle claimed."

II. Let me show you now that PAUL'S READINESS AROSE FROM EXCELLENT PRINCIPLES. That is our second point.

As for Paul's *readiness to preach*, I should trace that to his solemn conviction of the Truth of the Gospel. If a man only *thinks* it is true, he will not care whether he preaches it, or does not preach it. But if he knows it is true, then he *must* preach it! I do not think we need find much fault with people, nowadays, for being too positive and dogmatic about the Truth of God. The present current runs in quite another direction. A feeble faith which might almost be mistaken for unbelief, is the common thing, and, therefore, there is no great readiness to speak. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "As it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." If I get a grip of a thing and know it is true, then I must tell it to others. The backbone of the preaching of Christ is a conviction of the Truth of Christ.

Paul also had a dauntless courage in this matter. He said, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!" Whatever happened to him if he did preach

it, he had counted the cost, and he was quite ready for all the consequences of his action. He had a holy self-denial so that he put himself out of the question. "I am ready for anything; I am ready to preach this Gospel if I am stoned, if I am thrown out of the city as dead, if I am imprisoned, if I am sent into the den of Caesar at Rome."

Paul was ready because his courage had been given him of God. Paul was ready to preach the Gospel at Rome because he had freed himself from all entanglement. You know how he put it, in writing to his son Timothy, "No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier." There are some of us who get so tied up and entangled, that we are not ready to do God's service because we are all in knots through too much worldly business. Try, dear Friends, you who are the servants of Christ, to keep yourselves as clear as you can of all entanglements. You have your living to earn, but serve God while you are earning it. If you see an opportunity of getting rich, but in order to do so you will have to deny yourself from Christ's work—you will have to give up week-night services, and so on—do not thus entangle yourself! Keep yourself as clear as you can.

Her Majesty does not expect one of her soldiers to take to farming and then to send word that he cannot go to battle because he has to get in his hay, or he has his wheat to cut. He must come whenever he is called! And blessed is that good soldier of Jesus Christ who can come when he is wanted by his King and Captain. Sir Cohn Campbell, when told that he was needed to go to India, was asked, "How long will you take to get ready, Sir Cohn?" He replied, "Twenty-four hours." And in 24 hours he was ready to go. A Moravian was about to be sent by Zinzendorf to preach in Greenland. He had never heard of it, before, but his leader called him, and said, "Brother, will you go to Greenland?" He answered, "Yes, Sir." "When will you go?" "When my boots come home from the cobbler." And he did go as soon as his boots came home. He needed nothing else but just that pair of boots, and he was ready to go! Paul, not even waiting for his boots to come home from the cobbler, says, "I am ready." Oh, it is grand to find a man so little entangled that he can go where God would have him go, and can go at once!

Paul had, besides, such love for men, whether they were Jews, or Romans, or any other people, that he was ready to go anywhere to save them. He also had such zeal for God that it was a happiness for him to think of going to the furthest region if he might but preach Christ where He was not known—not building on another man's foundation, but laying the first stone of the edifice himself. This, then, accounted for his readiness to preach—a holy conviction of the truth of what he had to preach and of the need of preaching it.

But what helped Paul to be *ready to suffer*? Some here will have to suffer for Jesus Christ's sake, though they may never be called to preach. Well, I should say, dear Friends, first, that Paul was completely consecrated to the Lord. He was not his own—he was bought with a price—and

that led him to feel that his Master might do whatever He liked with him. He belonged to Christ, he was Jesus Christ's branded slave and he was absolutely at Christ's disposal. Moreover, he had such trust in his Lord that he felt, "whatever He does with me, it will be good and kind and, therefore, I will make no conditions, I will have no reserve from Him. It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him." He had resolved to serve his Lord and, therefore, if he had to be bound, or to die, he would not shrink back. He could have sung, as we sometimes sing, but he could carry it out better than we do—

***"Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where He goes."***

A whole-hearted consecration, a child-like confidence, a deep-toned submission—these will make us ready for suffering, whatever it may be.

But how did Paul prepare himself to be *ready to exercise discipline*? That is, to me, the ugliest point of all. How could he bring himself to be able to do that? I think it was because he had not received his Gospel from men, nor by men, and he had learned not to depend upon men, nor to look for their approval as the support of his life. He was able to lean on the Savior and to walk alone with his Lord. So long as he had Christ with him, he needed nobody else. Paul had learned the fear of God which casts out the fear of man! "Who are you, that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forget the Lord, your Maker?" Remembering *man* leads to the forgetting of God! If we learn to speak very plainly, yet very lovingly, habitually cultivating frankness towards all Christian people, and even towards the ungodly, and do not know what it is to ask of any man leave to speak the truth, how much better it will be all round! May the Holy Spirit deepen in us the fear of God and so take away from us the fear of man! Then, with Paul, each of us will be ready to say, even concerning the most unpleasant duty, "I am ready."

But how came he to be able to say that he was *ready to die*? I will not dwell upon that. I have already told you that he felt ready to die because he could say that, as far as he had gone, he had finished the work God gave him to do and he had kept the faith. Ah, dear Friends, it is nothing but *keeping faithful to God* that will enable you to treat death as a friend! One dereliction of duty will be sufficient to rob you of comfort. When a traveler is walking, a very small stone in his shoe will lame him—and a very small offense against the integrity that God requires of His servants may do us great mischief. Did you ever notice, in Gideon's life, that he had 70 sons, his own legitimate sons, and that he had one son who was the child of a harlot, and that one, Abimelech, killed 69 of his father's 70 sons? So it may be that a good man has 70 virtues, but if he tolerates *one* wrong thing, it will be enough to rob him of the comfort of all the good things of this life, so that, when he comes to die, he may go limping and lame! Yes, and all his life long he may go, like David did, halting even to

the grave. May the Lord in mercy and love keep us right! If He teaches us how to live, we shall know how to die.

It is not dying that is the great difficulty—it is living. If we are but helped to fight the good fight of faith, to finish our course, and to keep the faith, we shall die right enough. As Mr. Wesley said when the good woman asked him, “Do you not sometimes feel an awe at the thought of dying?” “No,” he replied, “If I knew for certain that I was going to die tomorrow night, I should do just exactly what I am going to do. I am going to preach (I think it was) at Gloucester this afternoon and this evening. And I shall go to lodge with friend So-and-So. I shall stay up with him till ten o’clock and then I shall go to bed. And I shall be up at five and ride over to Tewkesbury and I shall preach there, and shall go to friend So-and-So’s for the night. And I shall go to bed at ten o’clock and whether I live or not, it does not matter at all to me, for if I die, I shall wake up in Glory. That is what I am going to do, whether I live or die.”

It was said of Mr. Whitefield, that he never went to bed at night leaving even a pair of gloves out of its place. He used to say that he would like to have everything ready in case he might be taken away. I think I see that good man standing with a bedroom candle in his hand, at the top of the staircase, preaching Christ the last night of his life to the people sitting on the stairs—and then going inside the room and commending himself to God and going straight away to Heaven! That is the way to die! But if you do not *live* like Wesley and Whitefield lived, you cannot *die* like Wesley and Whitefield died. May God grant us Grace that we may be perfectly ready to die when the time for our departure is at hand!

III. Now I finish by saying that THIS READINESS PRODUCES ADMIRABLE RESULTS.

First, *it prevents surprise*. It is always bad to be taken by surprise. He who lives unto the Lord shall not fear evil tidings, for his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. If you are perfectly submissive to God’s will and, as you crossed your threshold tonight, you heard that your child was dead, or that your dearest friend was smitten with sore sickness, you would say, “Well, I stoop to the surrender. When I had my children I did not think they were immortal. I knew they would die and I have stood ready for anything that might happen to them.” Oh, Brothers and Sisters, it is because we are not submissive, not sanctified, not fully resigned to God’s will, that we get tripped up, every now and then, and do not quite know where we are! May the Lord give us the Grace to be prepared for every emergency.

Again, when a man is ready, *it prevents loss of time and opportunity*. Many a sportsman has lost his bird because he was not ready to take aim. Many a fisherman has lost his fish because he has not been ready to grasp his rod and put the line into the stream. Many a preacher has, no doubt, missed the mark because when he might have said a word for Christ, he was not ready to say it. Have you not often gone home and said to yourself, “Now I remember what I ought to have said! That man made an observation and I could not tell, at the moment, what to reply to it. I

now know what I should have said”? It is a fine thing to be wise when it is too late, but it would be much better if we waited upon God and asked Him to make us ready—always ready—to speak for Him in every place, at any time and whenever an opportunity occurs.

Readiness also helps us *to make good use of every occasion*. He who is ready as each occasion comes, not only snatches the first part of it, but all the rest of it. He is prepared to deal with the whole thing as it proceeds. He who is always doing his Master’s work learns how to do it well—but he who only does it occasionally is like a bad workman who half forgets his craft because he is so much engaged in doing something else. God keep us all ready! May you be ready, tonight, to say a good word to somebody on your way home and to serve God in your family when you get home!

To be ready *puts a bloom on obedience*, and presents it to God at its best. Some Sunday school children were once asked what was the meaning of doing the will of God on earth as it is done in Heaven, and they gave some very pretty answers. One said, “In Heaven they always do God’s will.” Another said, “They do God’s will cheerfully.” But one said, “Please, Sir, they do God’s will at once.” That is the thing—that is how it is done in Heaven—at once. May we be in such a state of heart that we are ready to do the Lord’s will at once!

In this readiness, our *obedience is multiplied*. I mean that any one act is multiplied, for the man who is ready to do the right thing has already done it in the sight of God. The Lord accepts it as done and then, if the man still remains ready, he does, as it were, the thing, again—and when it is actually done—he is still ready to do it again! If the act is only one, yet to God’s eye it has a teeming multitude of obedient actions swarming around it!

To be ready, especially to be ready to die, removes all fear of death. I wish we could all sing as she did, who died in her sleep, and left this verse written on a piece of paper by her bedside—

**“Since Jesus is mine, I’ll not fear undressing,
But gladly put off these garments of clay.
To die in the Lord is a Covenant blessing,
Since Jesus to Glory through death led the way.”**

If we are ready as Paul was, all fear of death will be gone from us.

And I think it *takes away a thousand ills* if we are ready for service, ready for suffering, ready to die. I will tell you one thing, dear Sister over yonder, you would not be so ready to stay as you are if you were ready for the Lord’s work and the Lord’s will. And you who are ready to perish would get out of that sad kind of readiness if you came and trusted Christ and became ready to suffer, or to do the Master’s will. The Lord is ready to pardon! May we be ready to believe. May we come at once to Him, accept salvation through Jesus Christ, and then all through the rest of our lives say to the great Captain of our salvation what good sailors reply to their captain’s call, “Ready, yes ready! Ready for storms and ready for calms; ready for whatever You command. Ready for whatever You ordain!” The

Lord bless you, dear Friends, and give all of you this readiness, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON
ISAIAH 63.

Some of you will remember that chapter 62 ends with the announcement of the Savior's coming—"Say you to the daughter of Zion, behold, your Salvation comes; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him," The present chapter describes His coming.

Verse 1. *Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?* Who can HE be, this mysterious Person, this Friend of God's people, this destroyer of their enemies? Who can HE be?—

***"Who is this that comes from Edom,
All His raiment stained with blood;
To the slave proclaiming freedom;
Bringing and bestowing good:
Glorious in the garb He wears,
Glorious in the spoils He bears?"***

1. *This that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.* He that has come to save us is majestic in His Person, but He is also mighty in His power to save! When we ask, "Who is this?" the answer comes to us, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Listen to this, you who feel that you are great sinners, you who know that you need a mighty Savior! Here is One able to do for you all that you need! He comes from the field of battle, from the place of conquest, where He has fought the fight on your behalf, and won for you the victory over sin, and death, and Hell. Who is He?—

***"'Tis the Savior, now victorious.
Traveling onward in His might;
'Tis the Savior, oh, how glorious
To His people is the sight!
Jesus now is strong to save;
Mighty to redeem the slave."***

2, 3. *Why are You red in your apparel, and Your garments like he that treads in the wine vat? I have trod the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me.* In all Christ's redeeming work He was alone. None could help Him to redeem His people. He must, alone, pay the ransom price. None could help Him in His last great battle, when He stood forth as the sole Champion of all whom His Father had given to Him—

***"Death and Hell will He dethrone,
By His single arm alone."***

3, 4. *For I will tread them in My anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come.* It was the day of vengeance on the enemies of God, vengeance on sin and death, and Hell. And it was the year of redemption

for the great host of Believers in Christ, for whom His garments were dyed in His own most precious blood. Notice how the great Redeemer speaks of His chosen people—"My redeemed."

5, 6. *And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore My own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me. And I will tread down the people in My anger, and make them drunk in My fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.* Dear Friends, I will not go into a full explanation of these verses just now. I have often explained them to you, but this is the one lesson that they teach—there is a Savior "mighty to save." Nothing can destroy those who put their trust in Him. He will overthrow every enemy of our souls if we take Him to be our Savior. Now the Prophet speaks again.

7. *I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD has bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies, and according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses.* It is well to talk of God's love and God's mercy, for, if we afterwards speak of our own sin and unfaithfulness, it tends to set our sin in a clearer light, and we are the more ready to confess it, and to mourn over it. God has dealt well with us and, therefore, that we have dealt ill with Him is the more shameful. See what He did for His ancient people and behold, in His actions, a picture of what He has done for His spiritual Israel.

8. *For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Savior.* He thought well of them. He said, "They will be true to Me." He loved them. He chose them. He put them in a place of trust and honor. He entered into fellowship and sympathy with them.

9. *In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them, and carried them all the days of old.* This is what He did for them in Egypt, what He did for them in the desert. He was very near them, one with them, very tender to them.

10. *But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit; therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them.* Hear this, you people of God! This is what God will do to you if you rebel against Him and vex His Holy Spirit. He will turn to be your enemy and will fight against you! If God's people will not yield to His love and His pity, they must suffer from His hand and His rod!

11. *He remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of His flock? Where is He that put His holy Spirit within them?* God begins to think of the past, and of what He did for His people in the days of old.

12-14. *That led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make Himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble? As a beast goes down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD*

causes him to rest: so did You lead Your people, to make Yourself a glorious name. See what God did for His people in His tenderness and loving kindness? Is it not strange that, after that, they rebelled against Him?

15. *Look down from Heaven, and behold from the habitation of Your holiness and of Your glory: where is Your zeal and Your strength, the sounding of Your heart and of Your mercies toward me? Are they restrained? If you are in trouble. to-night, if you have lost the light of God's Countenance, here are words for you to use in prayer to God.*

16. *Doubtless You are our Father, though Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: You, O LORD, are our Father, our Redeemer; Your name is from everlasting. Get a hold of this great Truth of God, Believer! Say, "God is my Father. He is still my Father and, though He smites me, though He frowns upon me, I will not let Him go. I will still plead His dear Son's name and wait for His mercy, trusting in His Grace."*

17-19. *O LORD, why have You made us to err from Your ways, and hardened our heart from Your fear? Return for Your servants' sake, the tribes of Your inheritance. The people of Your holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trod down Your sanctuary. We are Yours: You never bore rule over them; they were not called by Your name. I pointed out to you, at the beginning of our reading, that this chapter appropriately follows the preceding one. It is, itself, most suitably followed by chapter sixty-four. Indeed, the first verse of that chapter belongs to this one and should not have been separated from it. God's people, in their low estate, recognized that deliverance must come from the Lord alone, so they prayed, "Oh that You would rend the heavens, that You would come down, that the mountains might flow down at Your Presence, as when the melting fire burns, the fire causes the waters to boil, to make Your name known to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Your Presence!"*

God bless the reading of His Word and give us His Presence during the whole of the service, for Christ's sake. Amen!

[The exposition was always read *before* the service.—EOD]

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FAITH—LIFE

NO. 2809

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 14, 1902.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MAY 10, 1877.**

*“The just shall live by his faith.”
Habakkuk 2:4.*

*“The just shall live by faith.”
Romans 1:17.*

*“The just shall live by faith”
Galatians 3:11.*

*“Now the just shall live by faith.”
Hebrews 10:38.*

THE fact that these words are so frequently found in the Word of God is a sufficient justification for often preaching from them. There seems to be, among certain preachers and hearers, some sort of question about preaching more than once from the same text, yet it would appear that this is by no means a wrong practice, but a most proper one. Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ may be thought to have preached the same sermon more than once, for the Sermon on the Mount contains many passages similar to those uttered by Him on other occasions. The Apostle Paul imitated his Master's example when he wrote to the Philippians, “To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe.” We need not hesitate to follow such leaders as these!

As the Truth of God contained in our texts is so often brought before us in the Scriptures—and is revealed at least four times in almost the same words—we ought to regard it as of the greatest imaginable importance, as indeed it is. A mistake upon this subject would be a mistake concerning life—for we are told, again and again, “The just shall live by faith”—and a mistake concerning life is a vital mistake and will be a fatal mistake to those who make it unless it is corrected and rectified by a power higher than their own. Therefore, we ought to give most earnest heed to that which lies near to the very heart of true religion and which is, indeed, its very life. To the Believer, faith is of the utmost importance. He should endeavor not to lose any of his Divine Graces—he should seek, by the power of the blessed Spirit, neither to lose patience, nor hope, nor love, nor any other Grace or virtue. But still, the root of true religion is faith, so he must first of all see to that. If we fail in faith, we shall fail everywhere. I might almost say of faith, with regard to religion, that it is like the heart, out of which are the issues of life. If faith is weak, we are weak all over—for service, for suffering, for everything! But when faith is strong, it imparts strength to all the members of the spiritual body and the whole spiritual manhood is full of vigor. So, my Brother, or Sister, see first and foremost to your faith! May God the Holy Spirit graciously

strengthen it and may our consideration of these four texts tend to the same end!

First, *in the great change from condemnation to justification*, these words are true—“The just shall live by faith.” And, secondly, using a very wide term to take in *all the rest of our daily life*—in reference to what we have been accustomed to call sanctification—these words are also true—“The just shall live by faith.” It is the same life all the way through, and the same method of living that life, namely, “by faith.”

I. First, then, **IN THE GREAT CHANGE FROM CONDEMNATION TO JUSTIFICATION**, these words are true—“The just shall live by faith.”

We all need to be delivered from the condemnation which is our due because of sin. When a man’s conscience is awakened to see the fearful penalty which he has incurred by his transgressions, he cries out for someone to rescue him from the death which looms before him as the result of his condemnation. He begins to seek a way of escape and he tries all sorts of ways and runs in them with great perseverance, earnestness and self-denial—but he makes a mistake as to every way of escape until he comes to this way—“The just shall live by faith.”

This is the famous text which was the means of the emancipation of the soul of Martin Luther. I have stood at the bottom of the Santa Scala, or Holy Staircase, at Rome, which is superstitiously believed to be the very one down which the Savior came from Pilate’s Hall. I have never gone up those stairs because no one may go up them except upon his knees and I would not do that. But I have walked up and down the steps by the side of them. There are certain holes cut in the wooden floor which encases the marble staircase and that wooden floor has been worn away many times by the pilgrims’ knees. There are places cut—where the priests say that the blood of Jesus fell—in order to enable the poor votaries of superstition to kiss the spot where the blood drops fell. I have seen scores of men and women going up that staircase on their bended knees, for they are told that there are great indulgences to be obtained by crawling up those stairs! Luther was doing this, for he had gone to Rome determined to get rid of his sins, if possible, and while he was in the middle of that slavish toil, seeking to gain everlasting life by his penances, this text came into his mind—he had read it in the Bible in the monastery—“The just shall live by faith”—and, to the astonishment of those who looked on, he rose from his knees, never to go up the Santa Scala any more in that fashion!

He had discovered that which he was looking for—the true way of living—and you know that it was not long before he needed to tell others of the life and peace that he had discovered. An old monk who knew something about these Truths of God, but who did not want to have any noise made concerning them, said to him, “Go back to your cell and live near to God, but do not make a stir.” But God did not mean him to go back to his cell and he began to speak, and very soon the world knew that a mighty change had been worked, but it all came, instrumentally, through Luther learning this great Truth of God—“The just shall live by faith.”

If I am addressing any who are *trying to procure eternal life by their own works*—if you have mended your ways a good deal, it was time you

did so! If you have obtained a great many virtues to which you were strangers, before, I am very glad to hear it, for it was your duty to do so! But, if you are hoping, by any such means, to put away your sin, oh that some voice more potent than mine, would speak not only to your ear, but to your heart and say, “The just shall live by faith!” It is well that you have forsaken the ale-bench. It is right that you have abstained from profane language. It is good that you are honest. It is most commendable that you are seeking to be a comfort to your friends at home and to observe all the laws of domestic and social life! But if you are seeking, in this way, to obtain eternal life, you will miss the object of your search. It is not so that you can be made just in the sight of God, or that you can secure true spiritual life, for, “the just shall live by faith,” that is, by faith in Jesus Christ.

You know “the old, old story,” but I will tell it to you once again. To obtain life, you must believe in that dear Son of God who came to earth, took our nature, took our sin and was made a curse for us that we might be no more a curse, and died, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” Your faith must be fixed on what He did, not on what you can do. And on what He suffered, not on what you can suffer by way of repentance, despondency and distress of soul. You must look right away from anything there is within or about you, or anything you can possibly perform or achieve, to the ransom price paid by Christ upon the Cross of Calvary, for you must live—you can only live—by faith in Jesus Christ, for, “by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.”

Some, however, place a great deal of reliance *in various forms of religious observances*, as Luther himself did until his eyes were opened by the Holy Spirit. If that is your case, my dear Friend, let me say that it is well that you should attend the House of God and I am glad that you do. But if you get the idea that you are to be saved because you go so many times a week to the assembly of the saints, you are making a fatal mistake! It is well to search the Scriptures, but if you imagine that the searching of them will save you—if you think that in them there is eternal life—you will find that there is something else to be done before you can get that great blessing, namely, coming to Christ that you may have eternal life, for you will search the Scriptures in vain if you regard that exercise as one which merits salvation! It is well that you have begun to pray, but all the praying in the world, if it is relied on as a ground of salvation, is like a sandy foundation for a man to build on. You may weep over your sinful state—your tears may flow until, like Niobe, you are transformed into a perpetual fountain—but salvation comes not so. “The just shall live by faith.” All the devotional exercises in which you can possibly engage in public or in private, with all the so called, “sacraments,” thrown in, and all the priestly efficacy of which men dream—even if there were such a thing in reality—all this could not save you! “The just shall live by faith.” This is the only way of living that God has ordained for sinners dead in trespasses and sins.

There is a notion more common, perhaps, than either of these two—of salvation by works or ceremonies—and that is the idea of a certain

amount of terror of conscience, which is often confused with true conviction of sin. According to the ideas of some people, this state must be passed through before you can be saved. You must dream about dreadful things at night, wake in the morning full of horror and confusion and go about your business in the utmost conceivable despair! So some say, and it is true that there are many who come to God in that way. I do not doubt that there are thousands who reach the Celestial City by way of the Slough of Despond. No, how can I doubt it, when I went that way myself? Yet that is not the best way—it is our wandering and blundering that leads us to go that way, for the just shall not live by despondency, but by faith! The just shall not find eternal life through terror and despair, but they shall find it through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ! The Prophets of Baal were under a gross delusion when “they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them”—but they are equally deluded who think that by lacerating their conscience and by endeavoring to make themselves miserable, they shall, thereby, obtain the favor of God! That is not true! You may even be put into the mortar of conviction and brayed there with the pestle of the Law until you are ground to atoms and there is no hope left in you—but that is not the way of salvation! “Believe and live” is the Gospel precept! “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “The just shall live by faith.” Do not, therefore, try and set up another mode of salvation, “for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” And salvation comes by building upon that foundation, resting and relying only upon Him.

There are, no doubt, others who are looking in various directions for salvation, but we may say to them all that it is of no use which way they look—this way or that, up, down, to the right, or to the left—until they look by faith to Jesus Christ. But, oh, what life comes streaming into the soul as soon as the eye is fixed upon Jesus! In the case of some of us, the thrill that went through our heart, when we looked to Jesus, was like a little Heaven! It seemed to us as if we were suddenly brought into a new world. To me, believing in Jesus brought such a change in me, at once, that I can only compare it to the experience of a blind man, who, having never seen a ray of light, should be suddenly taken out in the night, set under the sky studded with stars—and then should have an instantaneous operation performed upon his eyes so that in a moment he could see clearly! Oh, how ravished he would be, how astonished, how delighted! How every little star would seem to twinkle for him! How every beam of light would seem to make him glad! He would clap his hands, he would leap for joy in the new sense of sight and the newly discovered pleasure which it had brought into his life! This is the kind of bliss that comes through believing in Jesus. It is like the discovery of buried treasure—there comes such a flood of delight upon the soul as must be experienced to be understood, for it cannot be described! It does not come to all so suddenly, for some eyes are opened gradually—first they see men, as trees, walking and, by-and-by, they see more fully. But, however it is

manifested, the change that faith works in the soul is truly marvelous. Beloved, he that believes in Jesus is “justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses.”

He relies upon a perfect Atonement that puts away the whole sin of the man’s earthly existence and he rejoices with unspeakable joy and full of glory. Man, you will die—the sentence already passed upon you will be executed before long unless you believe in Jesus, for, “he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” But, Man, if you believe in Jesus, you can never be executed for your sin! For you, there is no Hell! For you, there is no undying worm, no Tophet, no Gehenna—there cannot be any of these things, for you now have no sin. “Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven you.” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” “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.” Faith brings life, liberty, love and everlasting joy into the heart—nothing else will do this!

This then, is the first sense of the expression, “The just shall live by faith,” and many of us have realized it and bless God that we have. I wish that all in this place did not only know about faith, but really *had* faith. Oh, that some might have it now and that, before this congregation shall break up, each of them might be able to say, “I believe in Jesus. I repose myself upon Him. Sink or swim, I fall into His arms. Come what may, Christ shall be to me, from this time forward, all my salvation and all my desire!” O blessed Spirit, work this faith in every heart here present, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

II. Now comes the second part of the subject, namely, that THE WHOLE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN, AFTER HE IS MADE TO LIVE, IS STILL BY FAITH.

Note, first, that *the Believer, after his conversion, lives in no other way but by faith.* No Christian remains a Christian except by still believing. Where we began, there we continue—we looked unto Jesus at the first and we are still looking unto Jesus. We came to Him at the first, and we are still coming unto Him “as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious.” We know of no future ground of hope that can be any stronger or better than this, no, we know of no other than believing in Jesus Christ! I beg you, Beloved Christian people, try to avoid all attempts to live in any other way.

There are some professing Christians who live upon their devotions. Now, no Christian can live without prayer—without praise—without feeding upon the Word of God. Nobody ought to attempt to do that, but if any man should begin to say, “Now I can do without faith in Jesus because I read so many chapters each morning, and I spend so much time in prayer and I also attend so many public services.” Ah, my Brother, you have wandered out of the right track, for you are not living by faith! If you pray in faith, praise in faith and read the Word of God in faith, then all these things shall become helpful to your spiritual life—but if faith is

left out, all these things shall be but as mere husks which contain no wheat in them whatever! I fear that there are some professors of religion who feel perfectly satisfied if they have gone through the regular routine of the day. I admire habits of devotion—they should be maintained—but if the mere habit is mistaken for living power and if it takes the place of coming continually to Jesus by living personal faith, you will soon find yourselves in a very strange case. “The just shall live by faith” and not by these things apart from faith. Faith puts power into them, but they have no living force apart from faith.

There are some other Christians who try to live by their works. They are Believers in Jesus, but they have got into such a state of heart that they are happy, restful and comfortable only when they can have a certain amount of activity in the service of God. But if, through illness, or any other cause, they are hindered from active service, they are full of doubts and begin to think that they are not saved—which proves that they were at least somewhat resting upon their *activities*. Now by all means, let us be active in the service of our Savior! Let us be zealous in good works, for to this end were we called, and this is for the Glory of God. But, Beloved, if I were to begin to draw comfort as to my soul’s salvation from the fact of my diligence in preaching the Gospel, I would be making a great mistake! Or if you began to draw comfort from your earnestness in the Sunday school class, or if you should rest upon your devotion to various benevolent societies, or upon anything that you do—you would be upon the wrong track altogether. You would be feeding where God would not have you feed! Do all you can do, but live by faith. Serve God with all your might, but never make your service into a prop or pillow of confidence, for, even when we have done all that we ought to do, we are still unprofitable servants and we must bring our best works and ask forgiveness for their imperfections, even as there was a sacrifice appointed for the sins of Israel’s holy things. There is sin, even in our holy things, so that they might sooner damn us than save us! Let us put no confidence in them, nor try to live by them as some do.

There are other Christians who live by feeling. Indeed, I have heard some advocate that we *ought* to live by feeling. Now, a true Christian cannot be without feeling. God forbid that he should! Feelings of sorrow, feelings of joy, feelings of spiritual depression and feelings of holy elation—these are all necessary in their time and place—but to live by feeling and to gauge our security by our state of feeling would be truly dreadful work because our feelings are more fickle than the weather! It is fine just now, but in another half-hour, it may rain. In such a variable climate as ours, we can never reckon for long upon any sort of weather. And as to our hearts and our feelings, so dependent upon our bodily health, or upon the kindness or the unkindness of our friends—so dependent upon a thousand little things almost too minute to be observed—if we begin estimating our safety by our ups and downs, we shall feel lost and then feel saved a hundred times a day! That plan will not do. “The just shall live by faith.” I like to believe in Jesus when I have the worst feelings, just as firmly as when I have the best of them—and to trust in God just the same when my full assurance in Him brims with

delight as I did when my soul was emptied by sorrow. Do you think I put that sentence the wrong way? I did not, for it is easier, I believe, to trust Christ in the depths of sorrow than it is when you are high up in your stirrups and feel yourself to be somebody—for then, almost insensibly—you get away from the sole foundation of your standing by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are some, too, who live very much, even in religious matters, upon their outward circumstances. There are some who, if they become poor, almost give up all profession of religion. They say that they have not proper clothes in which to come to God's House and that they do not like to be seen by people who knew them when they were in better circumstances. And so that religion depends upon how many shillings a week they can earn! That is a very poor concern. But, if we have learned to live by faith, we shall follow the Lord in rags if He gives us nothing better to wear. And if we have not shoes for your feet, we shall follow Him all the same. Let us be in whatever condition we may, we shall never be worse off than He was! So, come poverty, or come wealth. Come the lowest possible ebb of outward fortunes or the highest, yet, still, if we live by faith, we shall keep close to the heels of the Crucified. God grant us Grace to live above our outward circumstances! Remember that Inspired message, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Thus, you see that the Christian lives in no other manner than by faith.

And, Beloved Friend, *he lives in all forms of his life by faith*. I can only speak, for a minute or two, upon this thought. In one form of his life, the Christian is a child at home with his Father. Well, as a child, he lives by faith, for "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. Our sonship and adoption remain to us matters of faith and we continually look up to God our Father by faith. As His children, we receive teaching, supplies, food, clothing and everything—and we receive all by faith. To the child of God, faith is the hand that takes everything from God. I am His child, and I know that He will supply my every need, but faith prompts me to tell Him my needs—yes, makes me feel that He knows what I need before I ask Him and so I take from Him what He freely gives by believing in Him.

The Christian is described in the Word of God, next, as a pilgrim. He is journeying to "a city that has foundations," but, all the way there, he goes by faith—he never takes a step heavenward except by faith. An unbelieving step is not a step towards Heaven. All the progress that is made by any child of God is due to faith.

The Christian is also described as a warrior and there is no fighting except by faith and no weapon of defense like the great shield of faith. No victory is won by doubting! No devil is ever overthrown by desponding. Mistrust of God never yet put to flight the armies of the aliens. Unbelief never stopped the mouths of lions, or quenched the violence of fire, or divided the sea, or conquered the land! Point to the wonders worked by unbelief if you can. All it can show is ruin and desolation, for unbelief is powerless except for mischief. The just, when he fights, must fight by faith, and faith is the victory that overcomes the world!

The Christian is also continually described in the Word of God as a servant. Now, all service done for God must be done by faith. One of the first objectives of our service must be to please God, but “without faith it is impossible to please Him.” O Brothers and Sisters, if we always go to our work as Christians saying, “I am going to do it by faith,” how differently we would act from what we do now! We sit down and think of our many infirmities and we say, “We shall never accomplish that task.” But, Sirs, have you forgotten the everlasting arms and the Omnipotent might of Jehovah? We observe how difficult the duty is and how strong the opposition, and so we go to work very mistrustfully, but if, instead thereof, we were to say, “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain,” we would be sure to conquer! Service rendered in unbelief is like a vessel marred on the potter’s wheel, but as long as faith can turn it round upon the wheel and fashion it, it will come to something that the Master can use. You must believe, for so will you be able to serve! “Trust in the Lord and do good,” but be sure to do the first thing. The *trusting* must come before the doing—and be mingled with all the doing—or else it will be a very poor piece of doing, indeed!

Well, then, in any capacity in which a Christian is found, he must always be believing. If you have to go home and go to bed, and lie there for a month and suffer, go upstairs believing that the Lord will make your bed in all your sickness. If you have to go back to a business where everything seems to be going wrong with you, go in faith and know that He has said, “Bread shall be given you, your waters shall be sure.” Or if you are going, next Sunday, to teach a class in the Sunday school, or going round with your tracts in a district where you have to call upon some ugly-minded people, go in faith. Has not the Lord said, “Certainly I will be with you. I will bless you, and help you”? Then, go in faith! It will change the whole color and tenor of your life if you remember that “the just shall live by faith,” whatever form his life takes.

Very rapidly, let me also say to you that *this is the way the just are to live in every case and every condition*. The Prophet Habakkuk is the one who first uttered these words, “The just shall live by his faith.” I wonder whether he fully understood them, himself? It is always pleasant to see whether a doctor takes his own medicine and whether a preacher practices his own precepts. I think this is how Habakkuk understood these words—here is his practical exposition of them, in the last verses of his prophecy—“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and He will make me to walk upon my high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.” Why, it is a hymn, is it not?—the hymn of a man who saw his bread going, the meat going, the oil going and everything going, and yet he rejoiced in the Lord! This is what he meant by living by faith—faith, you see, about fruit—faith about flocks—faith about cattle—faith about fig trees—faith about everything—yes, a faith that does without anything—a faith that can take nothing and be

content with it because it finds everything in God—faith under the worst conceivable conditions! This is how the just are to live.

And as they are to live thus at their worst, so should they live at their best—still by faith. I was told of a friend who walked with that blessed man of God, Mr. George Muller of Bristol, and who made the remark to him that he thought he had a £5,000 balance one year. “Yes,” said Mr. Muller, “God had been very gracious and we had a large balance.” “And I think,” said the friend, “for some years you have always had a large balance.” “Yes,” he replied, “we have.” “Well,” asked the other, “do you now, my Brother, trust in God just as simply as you did when you had to call the children together to pray because there was no bread to give them for dinner—and God graciously sent you the dinner just at the right time? Is your faith just as simple? Do you walk by faith as you did then?” And that good man said, “Yes, my dear Brother, I live by faith now as I did then, only a great deal more so, for I find I have more need of faith now to prevent me beginning to trust in what I have in store.” It is just so—if you are getting on in life, you need more faith to keep you from making a god of what you have and trusting in it! Instead of less faith in time of prosperity, you will need even more! There are some people, you know, who lean upon God because they have no one else to lean upon. They are like that famous rider of whom Cowper sang, who was—

***“Stooping down as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright.”***

That is how it is with the faith of these people, and very good faith it is, too! But that faith is even nobler that has some apparent means of sitting upright, that seems to have something to confide in, yet will not do it because it disdains to have even things visible, of the best and most powerful kind, to rest upon, but will rest on nothing but God. Why, you props and buttresses, if I trust you today, I may need you tomorrow, and where shall I be then? No, as Abraham said to the king of Sodom, “I will not take from a thread even to a shoe lace, I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, I have made Abraham rich.” Often we have to cast aside what is offered to us and say, “I cannot and will not have it, lest my heart should, at any time, rely upon those gifts rather than upon my God.” You know how the devil spoke to God concerning Job, “Have You not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse You to Your face.” That is what the devil said, but it was not true. Yet, in some cases, there is a danger of it getting to be true. We are getting on so well and the hedge is all around us. Ah, but we must not get to love the hedge, or it will be taken from us! If you love the fields, the gold, the silver and begin to confide in them, you will lose them.

“The just shall live by faith”—faith as much in the summer weather as in the winter cold. See to that matter, O you who are the children of God! “The just shall live by faith” in every condition. When he comes to die, he shall live by faith. I recollect what a Negro said about his master who was a Christian. The minister said to the Negro, “Sam, is your master dying?” “Yes, Sir,” he said, “he be dying.” “And how is he dying, Sam?” “Sir,” said

the Negro, “he be dying full of life.” That is how a Christian should die—“full of life.” The life of God is within him even to the last! Till he gets into Glory, “the just shall live by faith.” Yes, and before he gets there, he shall taste some of the joys of Heaven, for, living by faith means living in the heavenly! It means getting to anticipate the Glory that is yet to be revealed. Living by faith makes us live the life of God and he that lives the life of God must, in some degree, live the life of Heaven! Oh, to have it so developed, strengthened and full-grown that, from this time forth, we may live by faith even to the end! The Lord bless you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
MATTHEW 22:1-14.**

Verses 1-3. *And Jesus answered and spoke unto them again by parables, and said, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bid to the wedding: and they would not come.* Observe that it was a king who made this wedding feast. Therefore, to refuse to come to it when the command implied great honor to those who were bid, was as distinct an insult as could very well be perpetrated against both the king and his son! “They would not come.” Had the one who invited them been only an ordinary person, it might not have been their duty to come and they might even have been justified in their refusal. But this was a king who sent his servants to summon the guests to the marriage of his son. And I bid you to take notice that the Gospel marriage feast, to which you are invited, is the feast, not only of a king, but of the King of Kings, your Creator and your God! And in refusing to come in obedience to His command, you commit an overt act of rebellion against His Divine Majesty. The king “sent forth his servants to call them that were bid to the wedding: and they would not come.” They were bid, yet they would not come—from which I gather that those who think the invitations of the Gospel are to be restricted to certain characters, because they say it is useless to invite others, “do err, not knowing the Scriptures.” What have we to do with the apparent uselessness of what we are commanded to do? It is our duty to give the invitation according as our King directs us! It is not our business to decide whether that invitation will be accepted or rejected. In this case, we know what happened—“They would not come.”

4. *Again he sent forth other servants.* Perhaps, in the kindness of his heart, he thought that the first servants, whom he sent, were somewhat offensive in their manner and that, therefore, the guests would not come. Just as it may be that some of you will never receive the Gospel from one minister, for you have a prejudice against his way of putting it. So the Lord may, in the greatness of His mercy, send you His Word by the mouth of another. I am quite sure that any of us who are the King’s servants would be very glad for somebody else to take our place if he could succeed better with you than we can. This king, in his wisdom and kindness, “sent forth other servants.”

4-6. *Saying, Tell them, which are bid, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and treated them spitefully, and slew them.* The great majority of those who heard the invitation, “made light of it.” And this is still the habit of the bulk of mankind, and even of many whom I am now addressing. Any day will do for you to think about Christ, so you seem to fancy! He may have your leftovers—when it shall come to the last, you think that you can send for a minister to come and pray with you and then all will be well. You make light of it—you make light of present mercy, of immediate reconciliation to God—you make light of the love and Grace of God and of the precious blood of Jesus. Take heed what you are doing, for the great King in Heaven regards this as high treason against Himself! He looks upon it as a presumptuous attempt to lower His Infinite Majesty in the eyes of men! When a king has killed his oxen and fatlings for his son’s wedding feast and there is nobody to eat the provision, then is it a dishonor to him—and if it were possible for the Gospel provisions to be universally rejected, God would be dishonored. There are some, however, who go further than merely making light of the invitation—“the remnant” who would, if they could, maltreat and slay the messengers of mercy and, as they cannot, nowadays, kill their bodies, they try to slay their reputations! Any slander which they have heard, or any lie which they have invented, will do to tell in order to make the minister of Christ of less repute than he deserves to be.

7-10. *But when the king heard thereof, he was angry: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bid were not worthy. Go you therefore into the highways and as many as you shall find, bid come to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.* This is still the glorious rule of the Gospel! Those who were first bid to the great wedding feast were the Jews. They would not come and, therefore, Jerusalem was destroyed. Now the Gospel is preached to all nations and all sorts of people in all nations—yet the same sinful rejection of the invitation is constantly being repeated. You who hear the Gospel from Sunday to Sunday are bid by it to come to the great supper and, as some of you will not come, God, in His Infinite Mercy, is sending His Gospel to the poorest and the vilest of mankind. Many of them do come and thus the Lord provokes you to jealousy by a people who were not a people—and astonishes you as you find that many come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South and sit down in the Kingdom of God, while you, who reckoned yourselves to be the children of the Kingdom because you have long been privileged to hear the Gospel, shall be cast out! The king’s servants “gathered together as many as they found, both bad and good.” The best gathering into the visible Church is sure to be a mixture—there will be some coming into it who should not be there.

11. *And when the king came in to see the guests.* For whom he had provided sumptuous garments suitable for the wedding—for, as we provide what is supposed to be appropriate array for mourners at a funeral, so, in the East, they provide, on a much larger scale, suitable apparel for wedding guests.

11. *He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.* He might have had one, for it was provided. The fact that he had not one was as great an insult to the king as a refusal of his invitation would have been. He was not bound to provide himself with a wedding garment—he could not have done it, for he was probably one of those swept up out of the highways. But there it hung and he was requested to put it on. But he refused and he had the impertinence to sit there without the indispensable wedding garment. If he could not show his contempt for the king in one way, he would do so in another, and he dared, in the midst of the wedding feasters, to defy the authority of the king and to refuse to do honor to the newly-married prince.

12. *And he said unto him, Friend, how came you in here not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.* He could give no reply—the king’s presence awed him into silence.

13. *Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* You may manage to get into the Church even though you are not converted, but if you are not trusting in Christ, you are not saved, and your false profession will only make your destruction the more terrible! Woe unto us unless we are found wearing the righteousness of Christ—unless our lives are made holy by the gracious influence of His blessed Spirit! These are the wedding garments which we are to wear. If we have them not, our presence at the festival will not avail us in the great testing time that is coming.

14. *For many are called, but few are chosen.* All who hear the Gospel are called, but the call does not come with equal power to every heart. And with some, the power with which it comes is not that which saves—it only convinces the intellect so that an outward homage is paid to the Word of God and the inward obedience of the soul is not rendered to the Lord. God grant that each of us may have on the wedding garment when the King comes in to see the guests!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—571, 519.

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

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KNOWLEDGE. WORSHIP. GRATITUDE.

NO. 1763

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

***“So that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.”
Romans 1:20, 21.***

THOSE who boast of their knowledge betray their ignorance. Knowledge is not a possession to be proud of, since it brings with it so great a responsibility that a nurse might as well be proud of watching over a life in peril. Knowledge may become good or evil according to the use which is made of it. If men know God, for instance, and then glorify Him as God and are thankful, their knowledge has become the means of great blessing to them. But if they know God and fail to glorify Him, their knowledge turns to their condemnation. There is a knowledge which does not puff up the mind, but builds up the soul, being joined with holy love. Did not our Lord say, “And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent”? But for men to know God and not to glorify Him as God, and to be unthankful, is, according to our text, no benefit to them—on the contrary, it becomes a savor of death unto them because it leaves them without excuse.

Our Savior could plead for some, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” But what plea is to be used for those who *know* what they do and yet do evil? Who know what they ought to do and do it not? These have the Light of God and close their eyes or, to use another figure, they have the Light of God and use it to sin. They take the golden candlestick of the Sanctuary into their hands and, by its help, they perform their evil deeds the more dexterously—and run in the way of wickedness the more swiftly. Accursed is that man who heaps to himself knowledge till he becomes wise as Solomon and then prostitutes it to base ends by using it to aggrandize his wealth, to pamper his appetites, to bolster his unbelief, or to conceal his vices!

A man may, by knowing more, become all the more a devil. His growing information may only increase his condemnation. It is clear, then, that knowledge is not a possession of such unmingled good that we may grow vain of it—better far will it be if the more we know, the more we watch and pray. Go on and read, young man. Go on and study with the utmost diligence. The more knowledge you can acquire, the better, but take care that you do not, like Sardanapalus, heap up your treasures to be your own funeral pile. Do not, by a rebellious pride, curdle the sweet milk of knowledge and sour your precious blessing into an awful curse. It is soon done, but not so soon undone.

It was the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—the eating of which brought all this evil upon us which you see this day. You may still eat of that tree, if it so pleases you, but if you taste not of the Tree of Life at the same time, your knowledge shall only open to you the gates of Hell! Knowledge of itself is as land which may either become a blooming garden or a howling wilderness! It is a sea out of which you shall bring pearls or dead men's bones. Life and death, Heaven and Hell are here—if it were said of old, “Take heed what you hear”—I will also say, “Take heed what you know.”

The people mentioned by Paul in our text fell into two great evils, or rather into two forms of one great evil—atheism—the atheism of the heart and the atheism of the life. They knew God, but they glorified Him not as God, neither were they thankful. We will first consider *the first sin mentioned here* and then the *second*. I shall not look at these two evils as if you were Romans, because I know that you are not, but I shall adapt the text to your own case and speak of these sins as Englishmen are too apt to commit them. Thirdly, *let us view the consequences*, or, what comes of men not glorifying God and not being thankful. Then, fourthly, let us *fly from these sins immediately, God helping us*. O Holy Spirit, help the preacher, now, for all his help is in You!

I. At once, then, let us look at this first sin—a sin very common in these days. THEY KNEW GOD, BUT THEY GLORIFIED HIM NOT AS GOD. Even in old Rome, with all its darkness, there was some knowledge of God—how can the creature quite forget its Creator? Of course the people had not that *spiritual* knowledge which the Holy Spirit communicates to the renewed in heart, for the carnal mind cannot know God *spiritually*—its fleshly ideas cannot come near to His holy spirituality. But Paul means that they perceived the eternal power and Godhead of the Great Former of all things; and they might have perceived much more of His Divine Character and Glory if their foolish hearts had not been darkened by their evil passions.

When you go among the heathen, whether they are Pantheists or Polytheists, or whatever they may be, there is still a notion in the background of all their mythology of some one great superior being, elevated above those whom they call gods, some serenely just father, preserver, avenger and rewarder of men. The most debased of mankind are still found to have some measure of knowledge of the great Creator—they hold the Truth, though they hold it in unrighteousness. They can as soon shut their eyes to the sun, as completely blind their minds to the fact that there is a God! Some among the heathen, no doubt, attained to a very considerable knowledge of God, or at least they walked upon the borders of marvelous discoveries of the Godhead.

We are greatly surprised at the language of Socrates, Plato, Seneca and others—such men have lately been held up as patterns—but if their lives are studied, they will be found to be sadly defaced with what Paul fitly calls “vile affections.” These were wise men, but the world, by wisdom, knew not God. They were great thinkers, but a clear revelation of God was

not in all their thoughts. They did not like to retain God in their knowledge and so they remained steeped in loathsome vice which we dare not mention, for it is a shame, even, to *speak* of the things which were of the most enlightened of them in secret. They had knowledge, but they forgot its responsibilities. They knew God, but they glorified Him not as God, neither were they thankful.

We may now let all the heathen go, for it is more true of *us* than it is of them, that we know God. Those to whom I am speaking, tonight, dwell where the name of God is familiar; where the Gospel of God sounds like a trumpet in their streets; where the Character of God is painted with the finger of light upon the blessed pages of the Bible and where the Spirit of God takes care that the consciences of men shall be enlightened. We know God, but I am afraid that there are many thousands and millions of our fellow creatures who glorify Him not as God! Let us see to it that we do not, ourselves, belong to the unhappy number.

Those do not glorify God as God *who do not trace all their good things to God*. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above,” but many ungrateful hearts forget this Truth of God and receive the blessings of this life with dumb mouths and cold hearts. In the old times there were those who traced everything they saw to what they called, “chance”—that misinformed deity has been laid aside and on its pedestal men have set up another idol known as “Nature.” Nowadays swarms of people attribute everything that is great and wonderful to “Nature”—they talk forever of “the beauties of Nature,” “the grandeur of Nature,” “the laws of Nature.” But *God* is as little spoken of as if He were not alive!

As to laws of Nature, these occupy with moderns much the same place as the deities of Olympus with the ancients! What are laws of Nature but the ordinary ways in which God works? I know of no other definition of them. But these people attribute to them a sort of power apart from the Presence of the Creator. One standing up in the street, venting his infidelity, said that we could not do better on Sunday than go abroad and worship Nature. There was nothing that was so refining and elevating to the mind as Nature. Nature did everything. A Christian man in the crowd ventured to ask, “What is Nature?” And the gentleman said, “Well, Nature—well—it is Nature! Don’t you know what it is? It is Nature.” No further definition was forthcoming!

I fear the term is only useful as enabling men to talk of creation without being compelled to mention the Creator. I find, nowadays, that people talk about “Providence” and yet discard God. Among the vulgar and the ungodly this is another subterfuge to avoid the ascribing of their blessings to the Giver of them. A farmer, whose crops had failed a second time, was consoled by a clergyman because he suffered from the hand of Providence. “Yes,” he said, “that Providence is always treating me shamefully—but there’s one above that will stop him.” The poor soul had heard of Providence till he thought it an *evil power* and hoped that the good God would curb its mischievous influence! This comes of not speaking plainly of God.

For what is Providence? Can there be such a thing without the constant working of the Great Provider? Men talk of “foresight.” But is there any foresight without an eye? Is there not some living eye that is watching for our good, some living hand that is following up the eye and providing for our needs? Man does not like to think of his God. He wants to get away into a far country, away from God, his Father, and he will adopt any sort of phrase which will help him to clear his language of all traces of God. He longs to have a convenient wall built up between himself and God. The heathen often attributed their prosperity to “fortune”—some of them talked of “chance”—others discoursed of “fate.” Anything is to man’s taste rather than blessing the great Father and adoring the one God.

If they prospered, they were “lucky”—this was instead of gratitude to God. They looked into the almanac to find lucky days—this instead of faith in the Most High. They were superstitious and asked their priests to tell them what would be a fortunate time for commencing an undertaking—this instead of resting upon the goodness of the Lord. Have we not some, now, who bless their good luck and still talk about their fortunate stars? God whom they know, they do not honor as God! Yes, and we have among us men who talk neither of “fortune” nor of “Nature,” but of *themselves*. They are styled, “self-made men,” and they are very prone to worship the great self who made them—they are never backward in that cult! Their adoration of themselves is constant, reverent and sincere.

“Self-made men,” indeed! Infinitely better is it to be a God-made man! If there IS anything about us that is worth having, it must be from Him from whom every good gift and every perfect gift has always descended! Let us, therefore, give *Him* thanks! There is no other sun for our sky than yon sun in the heavens! There is no other source of good but the ever-blessed God who has made Himself known to us—Whom, with all our hearts, we now adore! But may I not be addressing some who, at this moment, do not bow before God and bless Him for their prosperity? They attribute it to their industry and to their good luck. Oh, Sirs, you come under the head of those who know God and yet do not glorify Him as God—neither are you thankful! The Lord help such to confess this sin and may His Grace wash them clean of it, for, indeed, it is a great and heinous sin in the judgment of the Most High! Justice makes a black mark against those who do not ascribe their good things to God, from whom they know with such sweet constancy of kindness.

But we can also commit that sin, in the next sense, *by not feeling any obligation laid upon us through partaking of the Divine bounty*. Are there not many rich men to whom it never occurs to feel bound to serve the Lord who gave them power to get wealth? Are there not many healthy persons, sound of limb and strong in constitution, who yet do not praise the God who has kept them from sickness and death? Are we, any of us, sufficiently grateful for our talents, our faculties, our friends, our daily provisions? Do we not all receive a large amount of blessing for which we do not render praise to God? The fact is that every mercy brings an obligation with it—and we that receive most ought to render most—for we receive

nothing from God without being, thereby, naturally and of right, laid under bonds to return to Him the glory due unto His name.

We are tenants whose rent is to be paid in service and praise. It is a very blessed obligation! It is a happy bond to be bound to praise and bless God! Praise is no more a burden to a true heart than song to a bird, or perfume to a flower, or twinkling to a star! Adoration is no taxation. God's revenue of glory comes from myriads of free-will offerings which gracious spirits delight to present to Him all their days. Yet there are some who know God, but they glorify Him not as God—they rob Him of that which should be their life to bring. They seem to say that they are their own and not God's—they may live as they please—they may serve themselves. God is not in all their thoughts and, as to spending and being spent in the service of Him who gave them being, it has not yet crossed their minds!

God's complaint concerning them is a just one—"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord has spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib: but Israel does not know, My people do not consider." God grant us Grace to avoid this cruel provocation and may we glorify God as God by practically acknowledging the obligation under which His mercy places us. Many may be met with who know God, but never glorify Him as God because *they never adore Him and worship Him with the love of their hearts*. They regularly go to Church or to some place of worship and sing Psalms and hymns. They may even have family prayer at home—but their heart has never adored the living God with living love.

Their worship has a name to live, but it is dead. They present to the Lord all the external harvest of worship, but the corn is gone—only the straw and the husk are there. And what is the value of your husky prayers? Your prayers without a kernel, made up of the straw of words and the chaff of formality? What is the value of professions of loyalty from a rebel? What is the worth of professed friendship to God when your heart is at enmity against Him? Is it not a mockery of God to present to Him a sacrifice "where not the heart is found"? When the Lord has to say—"They come as My people, and they sit as My people, and they sing as My people, but their heart is far from Me"—can He take any pleasure in them? May not God thus complain of many? Oh, let it not be so with you!

I know that there are some here against whom that charge would rest if we pressed it—that they know God, but they do not glorify Him as God, for they do not love Him! The name and service of God are much on their tongues, but they do not delight in Him. They do not hunger and thirst after Him. They do not find prayer and praise to be their very element, but such service as they render is merely lip service, the unwilling homage of slaves and not the delighted service of those who are the children of God! Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, if we accept Jehovah as the living God, let us give Him the utmost love of our souls! Will you call a man, Brother, and then treat him like a dog? Dare you call God your God, and then act towards Him as though He were not worthy of a thought?

With what joy does David cry, "I am Your servant, and the son of Your handmaid: You have loosed my bonds"! This is the kind of spirit with which to deal with the Lord. Oh, to rejoice in God all day and to make Him our exceeding joy! Thus, and thus, only, do we glorify Him as God. Without the fire of love, no incense will ever rise from the censor of praise. If we do not delight in God, we do not fitly adore God. There is another way of not glorifying God as God and that is by *never recognizing His Omnipresence*. Have we not among us those who, on Sunday, feel some kind of reverence of God, but during the six days of the week are godless? When they are in a place of worship they have some sense of God's being there—if they do not fear and tremble, yet they behave with decency and respect—but in other places they dare to act as if they were out of range of God!

Do they fancy that God is not in that secret chamber where they follow out their passions? Do they imagine that He is not in that ribald company where they make mirth of sacred things? Do they imagine that out of man's sight is also out of *God's* sight? Do not some men so act and live as if God were either dead, or else were blind and deaf, utterly oblivious to everything that is done on the face of the earth? How blind must they be who think God blind! May we never fall into this absurdity! May we feel that we cannot *anywhere* consent to sin, for God is there! The whole earth is God's House—shall we abuse the King in His own palace? The skies are the roof of His temple and beneath God's blue sky we ought *never* to find a place to sin. Nowhere in time is there space for evil, nor in the universe is there room for sin.

Yet, alas, how few recognize, "You, God, see me," as being a death-blow to sin? "They know God, but they glorify Him not as God," but think that He is absent either in person or in mind—and that in some secret places they can hide from Him and with impunity follow their own desires. Are there not some, again, and many, who do not admit the true glory of God because *the idea of His sovereignty is very horrible to them?* I lay this charge against many professing Christians—that their god is not the God of the Bible—and that they have no notion of Jehovah, the true God! The one God of Heaven and earth is Jehovah—that God who said of old, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

Certain professed followers of Jesus will not have this God, but they make to themselves a god who is under some degree of *obligation* to his sinful creatures, of whom they say that he is bound to treat all alike! These are guilty of robbing Divinity of its most majestic attribute, namely, sovereignty! They are for dictating to the King of kings and tying the hands of Infinite Compassion, lest the supreme will of God should have too much liberty! I know of no such god as that—the God I worship can never do other than right, yet is He under no obligation to His creatures, but orders all things according to the counsel of His own will!

I believe that if the Lord had denied me mercy, I had so sinned that I could never have impugned His justice. When I see Him save a sinner, I

look not at it as a deed which He was bound to do, but as a spontaneous act, free as the air, full of His own goodness which arises entirely from Himself! “He does according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.” I, for one, am perfectly satisfied with everything that God does, whether of power, justice, or mercy. My heart says, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seems good to Him.” I could have sung the Song of Moses at the Red Sea, when all Egypt was drowned, and found in the drowning of the foe a deep background of joy, because I would have seen in it the carrying out of the Divine will, the reign of righteousness and the avenging of cruel tyranny.

I make bold to say that I would have praised God as the waves went over Pharaoh, for the Lord did it, and He did right! I would have cried with Moses, “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” I expect to be among the number, though some seem as if they would decline the service, who shall forever bless God for all His dealings with mankind—the stern as well as those that seem more tender. The Lord God, even Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, is the God whom I worship! I do not know this new god that has lately come up, who they say is all tenderness and has none of the stern attributes of righteousness and wrath. The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob is the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—and in Him my soul delights! Let Him sway His scepter even as He pleases. His will be done on earth even as it is in Heaven!

Again will we say, Hallelujah, when all His everlasting purposes shall have been fulfilled—the wicked shall be punished and the righteous raised to their Father’s Throne! To know God and to glorify Him as God, is to regard Him as supreme, uncontrolled, the Arbiter of all things, whose will is law. I believe in God on His Throne, God giving no account of His matters, but doing His own pleasure as God over all. Short of this I could not glorify Him as God. There are some others who know God, who fail to glorify Him as God, because *they do not trust Him*. God, in Revelation, has presented Himself as the object of trust to His creatures and He has promised that all who trust in Him shall be forgiven their transgressions through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. Such as trust Him, He declares shall be saved—and He sends out a messenger of mercy to all mankind, proclaiming—“He that believes in Him is not condemned.”

He bids sinners come and trust under the shadow of His wings and He declares that none that come to Him will be ever cast out. Revealing Himself in Christ Jesus, He pleads with guilty men. Asking nothing of them, He entreats them to accept His mercy which He freely presents to them without money and without price! Making no distinction in the Gospel call, He bids men come to Him, saying, “Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth, for I am God, and besides Me there is none else.” When proud man replies, “No, I shall trust in *myself*, trust in my own works, trust in my own prayers, but I shall not trust in Christ,” then he knows God, but he glorifies Him not as God—and when he perishes he will be without excuse! What kind of God is that whom we will not trust?

How do we honor Him when we refuse to believe Him? Do we accept His Godhead, and yet refuse His mercy? This cannot be!

The counts are many against men, but this one more must be mentioned—many know God, but they never glorify Him as God *by submitting themselves to Him and yielding up their members to be instruments of His Glory*. If I glorify God as God, then I desire to obey God's commandments, to spread His Glory, to magnify His name. I desire in all things to please Him, if, indeed, I treat Him as God should be treated. If I know God and yet live for my own profit, for my own honor, for my own comfort—I do not glorify God as God! Oh, Sirs, when the Lord is glorified as God, we yield ourselves to His control without a murmur! He may take what He will, away from us, and we say, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seems good to Him." He may remove every comfort from us and cover us with boils and pain, but we shall sit down with Job upon the dunghill and say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Knowing Him as God will make us submissive to suffer and quick to act. We shall feel the force of Elijah's cry, "If the Lord is God, follow Him." We shall awaken ourselves, by His Grace, to the utmost energy to serve Him when He stands before us as really God! If we serve man and are faithful, we do the best we can for our master. But if God is our Master, oh, what service we are bound to render to Him! What enthusiasm ought to be kindled in our breasts by the belief that we are God's servants! "I am Your servant," is our happy claim, our honored challenge! This it is that makes a man of a man and something more than man!

Oh, to learn this lesson, and to practice it! To glorify God as God will make us akin to angels! Even you Christians may feel that this is much beyond you—but towards it you must always fly. I shrink before my Lord in speaking of Him, but I desire what I have not yet attained—that I may truly glorify Him as my Lord and my God.

II. Now we come to consider the second sin. May what I have to say about it be blessed to many of my hearers by the power of the Holy Spirit! The second sin is—"NEITHER WERE THANKFUL." Did you know, dear Friends, that unthankfulness was such a sin as this? Have you ever thought of it in this light before—that men were without excuse because when they knew God they were not thankful? Unthankfulness is a sin for which there is no excuse if it is attended with knowledge. I fear there are thousands who call themselves Christians who are not thankful—and yet they never thought themselves guilty on that account! Yet, you see, these sinners were without excuse because they were guilty of a great sin before God—and that sin was *unthankfulness*. I tremble both for myself and you when I see lack of thankfulness thus set in the front rank of sins!

How is it that we may be unthankful? I answer, first, *there is in some a lack of gratitude for mercies possessed*. They receive many blessings without making a note of them, or even seeming to know that they have them. Their daily mercies seem to come in always by the back door—where the servants take them in and never tell their master or mistress that they have arrived. They never receive their mercies at the front door with grate-

ful acknowledgments. They still continue as dumb debtors, daily owing more, but making no attempt at a return. The Lord continues to bless them in things temporal; to keep them in health and strength—yes, and to give them the means of Grace and spiritual opportunities—and they live as if these things were so commonplace that there were no reason to thank God! Many professors are of that kind—recipients of countless mercies, but destitute of such common thankfulness as even beasts might manifest.

From them God hears no song of gratitude, no chirp of praise, though birds would charm the woodlands with their minstrelsy—these are worse than the dumb driven cattle, or the fishes in the brook which do, at least, leap up and mean their Maker's praise. Some show this unthankfulness in another way, *for they always dwell most on what they have not*. They have manna and that is angels' food—but then they have no fish—and this is a ready theme for grumbling. They talk very loudly of “the fish we ate in Egypt” and lament those ample feasts provided by the muddy Nile. Moreover, they have none of those delightful vegetables—the leeks, the garlic and the onions. They have none of these rank luxuries and therefore they murmur and call the manna, “light bread.” They put this complaint over and over again to Moses, till Moses must have been sick of them and their garlic!

They said that they could not get leeks, cucumbers and onions—and they were, therefore, most hardly done by, and would not much longer put up with it. Thankless rebels! And have I not known some of God's servants say that they enjoy much of the Presence of their Lord, but they have no riches—and so they are not among the favored ones? Over their poverty they fetch a deep groan! Some live in the Presence of God, so they tell us, and they are full of Divine delights, but yet they are greatly afflicted with aches and pains and all the problems of rheumatism and, therefore, they murmur. I admit that rheumatism is a dreadful pain, but at the same time, to dwell always on the dark side of things and to forget our mercies is a sad instance of ingratitude!

We are, few of us, as thankful as we ought to be. And there are some people who are not thankful at all, for instead of a song concerning their *mercies*, their life is one long dirge for their miseries! Must we always hear the sackbut? Is the harp never to give forth a note of joy? Some show their unthankfulness by *fretting under their supposed ills*. They know from Scripture that even their afflictions are working for their good, yet they do not rejoice in the prospect, or feel any gratitude for the refining process through which the Lord is passing them. Heaven and perfection are left unsung, but the present processes are groaned over without ceasing! Their monotonous note is always *this pain, this loss, this burden, this uncomfortable sensation, this persecution from the world, this unkindness from the saints and so on*—all this goes to show that, though they know God, they do not glorify Him as God, neither are they thankful!

We can be guilty of unthankfulness, also, *by never testifying to the goodness of God*. A great many people come in and out of your houses. Do

you ever tell them about God's goodness to you? Did you ever take up a single 10 minutes with the tale of the Lord's lovingkindness to you? Oh, what backwardness there is to testify to God as God and to all His goodness and love! Our mouths are full of *anything* rather than the goodness of the Lord! Shame on our wicked lips! Some fail, also, in their *singing of God's praises*. I love to be singing in my heart, if I may not sing with my tongue. Is it not a good thing for you housewives, when you are about the house, to sing over everything? I remember a servant that used to sing at the washtub and sing in the kitchen—and when someone asked her why she was always singing, she said that if it did not do anything else, it kept bad thoughts out of her mind. There is a great deal of wisdom in that, for bad thoughts are bad tenants who pay no rent and foul the house.

I knew a dear old Methodist preacher, who is now in Heaven, who, when he came downstairs each morning, was always singing a bit of a hymn. And he did the same in the barn and the field. I have passed him in the street and noted his happy melody—indeed, he was always singing! He never took much notice of anybody, so as to be afraid of being overheard. Whether people heard him or not did not make much difference to him. He was singing to the Lord, not to them—and so he went on singing! I do not think that he had much of a voice, or an ear for music—but his soul was made up of praise and that is better than a musical education! God does not criticize our voice, but He accepts our heart. Oh, to be singing the praises of God every minute of our lives and never ceasing!

Do you not think that many fail in this respect? They are not preparing for Heaven, where all is praise, or they would take up the joyful employment at once. It is plain that many are not thankful to God, for they *never praise Him with their substance*. Yet when the Jew was thankful, he took care to give a portion to the House of the Lord. Before he would eat his corn, he would send his sheaf to the sanctuary. If we are grateful to God, we shall feel that the first thing to do is to give of our substance as an offering of thanksgiving to the Most High. But this does not strike some people, whose religion is so spiritual that they cannot endure to *hear* of money—and they faint at the sound of a collection! Their thankfulness rises to singing an occasional hymn, but it never goes as far as giving a button to the cause of God! I am afraid their thankfulness is not worth more than what they pay to express it—that is to say, nothing at all.

God deliver us from such a state of heart as that and may we never, in any of these senses, be found among those professors, of whom it is said that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were they thankful.

III. Listen carefully to me, now, for two or three minutes while, in the third place, I mention, very briefly and solemnly, what was THE RESULT OF THIS. They knew God, but they glorified Him not as God, neither were they thankful. And the first result of it was that *they fell into vain imaginings*. If we do not glorify God, the true God, we shall soon be found setting up another god. This vain imagination business is being done quite as extensively, now, as in Paul's days. Depart from the Inspiration of the Bi-

ble—and from the Infallibility of the Spirit of God who wrote it—and where will you go? Well, I cannot tell where you will go. One wanders into one vain imagination and then into another, till the dreamers are on all sides.

I expect to see a new doctrine every day of the week now. Our thinkers have introduced an age of inventions, wherein everything is thought of but the Truth of God. We do not want these novelties. We are satisfied with the Word of God as we find it. But if you do not glorify God as God and are not thankful to Him for His teaching, then away you go into vain imaginations! And what next? Well, *away goes the mind of man into all sorts of sins*. The chapter describes unnatural lusts and horribly fierce passions. Men that are not satisfied and thankful—men that have no fear of God before their eyes—it were a shame for us to *think*, much more to *speak*, of what they will do!

A heart that cannot feed at God's table will riot somewhere. He that is not satisfied with the cup that God has filled will soon be a partaker of the cup of devils. An unthankful spirit is, at bottom, an atheistic spirit. If God were God to us, we should not be unthankful to Him. If God were glorified in our hearts and we were thankful for everything that He did, we should walk in holiness and live in submission. And if we do not thus behave ourselves, the tendency will be for us to go from bad to worse, and from worse to the very worst!

This has been done on a large scale by nations whose downward course of crime began with lack of thankfulness to God. It is done on a smaller scale by individuals, to whom departure from God is the beginning of a vicious career. Get away from God and where have you gone? If you do not love Him and delight in Him, where will you stray? May the Lord tether us fast to Himself and even nail us to the Cross! It seems that these people, of whom Paul wrote, fell into all kinds of bitterness, such as envy, murder, deceit, malignity, whispering, backbiting, hating of God. They became spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things and so forth. Well, if your spirit is not sweetened by the adoration and the love of God, it will grow bitter. If love does not reign, hate will rule.

Look at unthankful people. Hear them talk. Nobody's character is safe. There is no neighbor whom they will not slander. There is no Christian man or woman whom they will not misrepresent. The very angels of God would not be safe from suspicion if they lived near people of this kind! But when you glorify God as God and are thankful for everything—when you can take up a bit of bread and a cup of cold water and say with the poor Puritan, "What, all this, and Chris, too?"—then are you happy and you make others happy!

A godly preacher, finding that all that there was for dinner was a potato and a herring, thanked God that He had ransacked sea and land to find food for his children. Such a sweet spirit breeds love to everybody and makes a man go cheerfully through the world. If you give way to the other order of feeling and do not glorify God, but quarrel with Him, and have no thankfulness for His mercies, then you will suck in the spirit of the devil—and you will get into Satan's mind and be of his temper—and, by-and-by,

you will do his works. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, dread unthankfulness! Perhaps you did not think that it was so bad, but it is horrible! God help you to escape from it!

IV. And that you may escape from it, let us finish up by this exhortation. LET US FLY, BY THE HELP OF GOD'S SPIRIT, FROM THESE TWO SINS. *Let as glorify God, as God*, every one of us! "Oh," says one, "I am full of sin." Come and glorify God, then, by confessing it to Him. "Oh, but I am not pardoned." Come and glorify Him by accepting pardon through the blood of His dear Son. "Oh, but I am of an evil heart." Come and glorify Him by telling Him so and asking His Spirit to renew your mind. Come, yield yourself to His sweet Gospel! May His blessed Spirit incline you to do so! Come, take Him, now, to be your God. Have you forgotten Him? Remember Him! Have you neglected Him? Seek Him! Have you offended Him? Mourn before Him! Say, "I will arise and go to my Father." Your Father waits to receive you! Glorify Him as God!

And then, next, let us begin to *be very thankful* if we have not been so before. Let us praise God for common mercies, for they prove to be uncommonly precious when they are once taken away. Bless God that you were able to walk here and are able to walk home again. Bless God for your reason—bless Him for your existence. Bless God for the means of Grace, for an open Bible, for the Throne of Grace, for the preaching of the Word. You that are saved must lead the song. "Bless the Lord, O my Soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name." Bless Him for His Son! Bless Him for His Spirit! Bless Him for His Fatherhood!

Bless Him that you are His child! Bless Him for what you have received! Bless Him for what He has promised to give! Bless Him for the past, the present and the future! Bless Him in every way, for everything, at all times and in all places! Let all that is within you bless His holy name! Go your way rejoicing! May His Spirit help you to do so!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 1:1-22.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—103, 1032, 699.**

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INEXCUSABLE IRREVERENCE AND INGRATITUDE NO. 2257

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 22, 1892.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 13, 1890.**

***“They are without excuse: because that, when they knew God,
they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.”
Romans 1:20, 21.***

THIS first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is a dreadful portion of the Word of God. I should hardly like to read it all through aloud—it is not intended to be so used. Read it at home and be startled at the awful vices of the Gentile world. Unmentionable crimes were the common pleasures of those wicked ages! But the chapter is also a striking picture of heathenism at the *present time*. After a missionary had gone into a certain part of India and had given away New Testaments, a Hindu waited upon him and asked him this question—“Did you not write that first chapter in the Epistle to the Romans after you came here?” “No,” replied the missionary, “I did not write it at all. It has been there nearly two thousand years.” The Hindu said, “Well, if it has not been written since you came here, all I can say is, that it might have been so written, for it is a fearfully true description of the sin of India.”

It is also much more true, even of London, than some of us would like to admit. Even here are committed those vices, the very mention of which would make the cheek of modesty to crimson. However, I am not going to talk about India—they are a long way off. I am not going to speak about the ancient Romans—they lived a couple of thousand years ago. I am going to speak about *ourselves* and about some persons here whom my text admirably fits. I fear that I am speaking to some who are “without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.”

I. The first charge against those who are mentioned in my text is LACK OF REVERENCE. “They knew God,” but “they glorified Him not as God.” They knew that there was a God—they never denied His existence—but they had no reverence for His name. They did not render Him the homage to which He is entitled—they did not glorify Him as God.

Of many this is still true in this form, *they never think of God*. They go from year to year without any practical thought of God. Not only is He not in their words, but He is not in their thoughts. As the Psalmist puts it, “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not at all in his thoughts.” The marginal reading is very expressive—“All his thoughts are, There is no God.” Whether there is a God,

or not, makes no practical difference to the wicked—they have so little esteem for Him that, perhaps, if we could prove that there were no God, they would feel easier in their conscience. There must be something very wrong with you when you would rather that there were no God.

“Well,” said one, “I do not care much whether there is a God or not. I am an agnostic.” “Oh,” I replied, “that is a Greek word, is it not? And the equivalent Latin word is, ‘Ignoramus.’” Somehow, he did not like the Latin nearly as much as the Greek. Oh, dear Friends, I could not bear to be an “ignoramus” or an “agnostic” about God! I must have a God! I cannot do without Him. He is to me as necessary as food to my body and air to my lungs. The sad thing is that many who believe that there is a God, yet glorify Him not as God, for they do not even give Him a thought! I appeal to some here, whether that is not true. You go from the beginning of the week to the end of it without reflecting upon God at all. You could do as well without God as with Him. Is not that the case? And must there not be something very terrible in the condition of your heart when, as a creature, you can do without a thought of your Creator? When He that has nourished you and brought you up, is nothing to you, One of whom you never think?

These people, further, *have no right conceptions of God*. The true conception of God is that He is All in All. If God is anything, we ought to make Him everything! You cannot put God in the second place. He is Almighty, All-Wise, All-Gracious, knowing everything, being in every place, constantly present, the emanations of His power found in every part of the universe! God is infinitely glorious—and unless we treat Him as such, we have not treated Him as He ought to be treated. If there is a king and he is set to open the door or do menial work, he is not honored as a king should be. Shall the great God be made a lackey for our lusts? Shall we put God aside and say to Him, “When I have a more convenient season, I will send for You—when I have more money, I will attend to religion”? Or, “When I can be religious and not lose anything by it, then I will seek You”? Do you treat God so? Oh, beware, this is high treason against the King of Kings! Wrong ideas of God, groveling thoughts of God come under the censure of the text, “When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God.”

Again, dear Friends, there are some who think of God a little, but *they never offer Him any humble, spiritual worship*. Do not imagine that God can be worshipped by anything which is merely mechanical or external—and which is not from the *heart*! A strange god must that god be who is pleased with what some men call worship! I have been into many a Roman Catholic church and seen upon the altar paper flowers that would have been a disgrace to a tap-room! And I have asked, “Is God pleased with this kind of thing?” Then I have been into a better building and I have seen crucifixes and altars adorned like a fine lapidary’s shop—and I have said to myself, “They might adorn a bride, but God cares not for jewels.” Is your conception of God that He desires your gold and your silver, your brass and your fine linen and all these adornments? You think that He is such an One as yourself! Surely you have poor conceptions of God!

When the organ peals out its melodious tones, but the heart is not in the singing, do you think that God has ears like a man, that can be tick-

led with sweet sounds? Why have you brought Him down to your level? He is spiritual! The music that delights Him is the love of a true heart, the prayer of an anxious spirit! He has better music than all your organs and drums can ever bring to Him! If He wanted music, He would not have asked you, for winds and wave make melodies transcendently superior to all your chief musicians can compose! Does He want candles when His torch makes the mountains to be great altars smoking with the incense of praise to the God of Creation? Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I fear that it has been true of many who externally appeared to be devout—"when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God!" Weep over your sins—*then* have you glorified Him as God! Fall on your face and be nothing before the Most High—*then* you have glorified Him as God! Accept His righteousness. Adore His bleeding Son. Trust in His infinite compassion. *THEN* you have glorified Him as God, for, "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." How far, my dear Hearers, have you complied with that requisition?

Further, the people mentioned in my text did not glorify God, *for they did not obediently serve Him*. My dear Hearer, have *you* served God? Have you looked upon yourself as a servant of God? When you awake in the morning, do you ask, "What does God expect me to do today?" When you have summed up the day, have you applied this test, "How far have I endeavored to serve God today?" There are many who are the servants of *themselves*—and there is no master more tyrannical than unsanctified self! Many are toiling like slaves at the galleys for wealth, for honor, for respectability, for something for themselves. But remember, if the Lord is God and He made us, we are bound to serve *Him*. How is it that God has kept you alive these 40 years, perhaps twice forty and you have never glorified Him as God by rendering Him any service whatever? This is a very solemn enquiry. I should like everyone whom it concerns to take it home to his own conscience.

There is another charge to be brought against those who glorified not God, although they knew Him. That is, *they did not trust Him*. The place for man is under the shadow of God's wings. If He made me, I ought to seek Him in the hour of trouble. In the time of my need I should apply to His bounty. If I feel unhappy I should look to Him for comfort. My dear Hearers, are there not some of you who have *never* trusted God? You run to your *neighbors* as soon as you are in difficulties! You trust your old uncle, but you never trust your God. Oh, what a wretched business is this, if God, who is all Truth and all Love, does not have the confidence of His own creatures! Remember how the Lord spoke by the mouth of Jeremiah—"Cursed is the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see good when it comes; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreads out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat comes, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought; neither

shall cease from yielding fruit.” The people mentioned in the text knew God, but they did not trust Him.

In addition to this, *they did not seek to commune with Him*. Are there not some here who never tried to speak to God? It never occurred to you, did it? And God has not spoken to you—at least you have not known whose voice it was when He did speak. It is a very sad business when a boy, who has been at home with his father and mother for years, has never spoken to them. He came down in the morning and ate his breakfast. He came in and devoured his dinner. He took his supper with them by night, but never spoke to them. Would you have a boy of that kind living with you? You would be obliged to say. “John, you must leave—it pains me to send you away, but I cannot bear to have you sitting here in silence. If I speak to you, you never answer me.” Some of you cannot remember the time when you spoke to God, or God spoke to you! It is so very long ago, if it *ever* did occur in your past experience.

There is a man somewhere here who *did* speak to God the other day. He called upon God with a foul and blasphemous oath. When he was telling a lie, he called upon God to witness it. Ah, yes, you have broken the silence, but it would have been better not to have spoken than to have uttered those vile blasphemies against the Most High! Your horrible words have entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth and, as the Lord lives, you will have to answer for them to the great Judge of all men unless you seek His face and find forgiveness through His Son! Our Savior said that for every *idle* word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the Day of Judgement—how much more shall they be required to answer for every evil, false, slanderous, blasphemous word they have spoken? But are there not many persons who have *never* uttered an oath and are scrupulously careful about speaking the truth, who have never had any spiritual converse with God? Wretched creatures, indeed, are you, even though you are healthy and prosperous, you have missed the highest good, the best blessing that man can know!

There are some who, although they know God, *they do not want to be reconciled to Him*. There is a way of perfect reconciliation between God and man. Whoever believes in Christ Jesus is at once forgiven—he is adopted into the family of God, he drinks the wine of the love of God—he is saved with an everlasting salvation! There are many who know this in their minds, but it never excites any desire for it in their hearts. No, whether reconciled or unreconciled, does not trouble them. Do you not know, O man, that the English of it is, “I defy God! I neither want His love, nor fear His hate! I will lift my face before His thunderbolts and dare Him to do His worst”? Oh, fatal defiance of the blessed God! May the Spirit of God work upon your conscience, now, to make you see the evil of this condition and turn from it! While I speak, I feel deeply troubled to have to say what I do, but I am only speaking of what many a conscience here must confess to be true. You live, some of you, knowing God, but not glorifying Him as God.

II. Now I take from my text the second accusation which is certainly quite as sad as the other. Those who are mentioned by Paul are accused

of LACK OF GRATITUDE. It is said of them that, “when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.”

I cannot say anything much worse of a man than that he is not thankful to those who have been his benefactors, but when you say that he is not thankful to *God*, you have said about the worst thing you can say of him. Now look not merely at the people who lived in Paul’s day, but at those who are living now. I will soon prove ingratitude on the part of many. There are many counts in the indictment we have to bring against them in God’s High Court of Justice.

First, *God is despised*. You young men and women who are beginning life, if you are intelligent and wise, say, “We wish that we knew what we ought to do for our own preservation and happiness. And we should also like to know what to avoid lest we should do ourselves harm.” Well, now. The book of the Law of the Ten Commandments is simply the sanitary regulation of the moral world, telling us what would damage us and what would benefit us. We ought to be very thankful to have such plain directions. “You shall.” “You shall not.” But look! God has taken the trouble to give us this map of the way and to direct us in the right road—yet some have despised the heavenly Guide. They have gone directly in the teeth of the Law of God. In fact, it looks as if the very existence of the Law has been a provocation for them to break it! Is not this a piece of dreadful ingratitude? Whenever God says, “You shall not,” it is because it would be mischievous for us to do it. Sometimes, in London, when the ice in the parks is not strong enough to bear, they put up boards on which is the word, “Dangerous.” Who but a fool would go where that danger signal is? The Ten Commandments indicate what is dangerous—no, what is *fatal*! Keep clear of all that is forbidden.

Next, *God’s Day is dishonored* by those who are not thankful to Him. God has, in great mercy, given us a day—one day in seven, wherein to rest, and to think of holy things. There were seven days that God had in the week. He said, “Take six and use them in your business.” No, we must have the seventh as well! It is as if one upon the road saw a poor man in distress and, having but seven shillings, the generous person gave the poor man six—but when the wretch had scrambled to his feet, He followed his benefactor to knock him down and steal the seventh shilling from him! How many do this! There is but one in seven. This is base unthankfulness! May not many here confess that they have been guilty of it? If so, let no more Sabbaths be wasted, but let their sacred hours, and all the week between, be spent in diligent search after God! And then, when you have found Him, the Lord’s-Day will be the brightest gem of all the seven, and you will sing with Dr. Watts—

**“Welcome, sweet day of rest,
That saw the Lord arise;
Welcome to this reviving breast,
And these rejoicing eyes!”**

Moreover, *God’s Book is neglected* by these ungrateful beings. He has given us a Book—here is a copy of it. Was there ever such a Book so full of wisdom and so full of love? Let a man look at it on bended knees, for he may find Heaven between those pages! But, when God has taken the

trouble to make this wonderful Book, there are many who do not take the trouble to read it. Ah, me, what ingratitude! A father's love letter to his son, and his son leaves it unread! Here is a Book, the likes of which is not beneath the cope of Heaven, and God has exercised even His Omniscience to make it a perfect Book for all ranks and conditions of men, in all periods of the world's history—and yet, such is man's ingratitude, that he turns away from it!

But there is something much worse—*God's Son is refused* by the unthankful. God had but one Son—and such a Son—One with Himself, infinite, holy, His delight! He took Him from His bosom and sent Him to this earth. The Son took our nature and became a Servant and then died the death of a felon—the death of the Cross—and all to save us! To save the guilty—men who were His enemies! I feel so guilty, myself, while I am talking about it, that I do not burst into tears. This must be one of the mysteries that the angels cannot comprehend, that after Christ had died, there were found sinners who would not be saved by Him! They refused to be washed in the fountain filled with His blood! They rejected eternal life, even though it streamed from the five great fountains of His wounded body! They chose Hell rather than salvation by His blood! They were so in love with their dire enemy, sin, that they would not be reconciled to God, even by the death of His Son! Oh, Ingratitude, you have reached your utmost limit, now, for you have trod under foot the Son of God and have counted the blood of the Covenant, wherewith He was sanctified, an unholy thing, and have done despite unto the Spirit of Grace! Is it not terrible?

I might stop here, but, for the sake of pricking the conscience of some, I want to say, dear Friends, that there are some persons so ungrateful, that *God's deliverances are forgotten*. Some years ago I spoke with a soldier who rode in the fatal charge at Balaclava. And when he told me so, I took him by the hand—I could not help it! Though he was a stranger to me, the tears were in my eyes, and I said, “Sir, I hope that you are God's man after such a deliverance as that.” Almost all the saddles emptied, shot and shell flying to the right and left, death mowing down the whole brigade, yet *he* escaped! But I did not find that he had given his heart to Christ. Over there is a man who has been in a half-a-dozen shipwrecks and if he does not mind, he will be shipwrecked to all eternity! One here has had yellow fever. Ah, Sir, there is a worse fever than that on you, now! I cannot speak of all the cases here of strange deliverances, but I do not doubt that I address some who have been between the jaws of death! They have looked over the edge of that dread precipice, beneath which is the fathomless abyss! You vowed that if God would spare your life, you would never be what you were before—and in truth you are not—you are *worse* than ever! You are now sinning against the Light of God and in shameful ingratitude. God have mercy upon you!

How often, dear Friends, is there ingratitude on the part of unconverted men in the matter of *God Providence* ignored? Why, look at some of you! You never missed a meal in your lives. When you went to the table, there was always something on it. You never had to lose a night's rest for need of a bed. Some of you, from your childhood, have had all that heart could

wish. If God has treated you so, while many are crushed with poverty, should He not have some gratitude from you? You had a good mother. You had a tender father. You have gone from one form of relationship to another with increasing comfort. You are spared and your mother is spared—your wife and children are spared. Indeed, God has made your path very smooth! Some of you are getting on in business, while other men are failing—some of you have every comfort at home, while others have been widowed and their children have fallen, one after the other. Will you never be grateful? Hard, hard heart, will you never break? Will any mercy bend you? I appeal to some here, whose path has been so full of mercies, that they ought to think of God and turn to Him with sincere repentance and faith!

But one says, “I have had good luck.” What can be worse than that? Here is unthankfulness to God, indeed, when you ascribe His good gifts to, “good luck!” “Well, you know, but I have been a very hard-working man.” I know you have, but who gave you this strength for your work? “I have a good supply of brains while others do not.” Did you make your own brains? Do you not feel that any man who talks about his own wisdom and his own wit, writes, “FOOL,” across his forehead in capital letters? We owe everything to God! Shall we not give God *something*? Shall we have no gratitude to Him from whom all our blessings have come? God forgive us if it has been so—and give us Grace to alter our past course at once!

Once more, there is another piece of ingratitude of which many are guilty, *God’s Spirit is resisted by them*. The Spirit of God comes to them and gently touches them. Perhaps He has done so tonight while you have been sitting here. You have said, “Do not talk quite so plainly to us. Give us a little comfort, a little breathing space! Do not be quite so hard on us.” I hope that it was the Spirit of God rather than the preacher who was dealing with you! At any rate, He has done so a good many times, and you have tried to drive from your heart your best Friend! You have been so ungenerous to Him that when He came to lead you to Christ, you summoned all your strength and the devil came to help you. And, up till now, you have resisted the Spirit of God with some degree of success. The Lord have mercy on you! How true is my text, still, even of many who are found in the House of Prayer, “When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful!”

III. Now I finish with my third point which is that THIS IRREVERENCE AND INGRATITUDE WERE AGAINST KNOWLEDGE. “When they *knew* God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.”

Will you kindly notice that, according to my text, *knowledge is of no use if it does not lead to holy practice*? “They knew God.” It was no good to them to know God for, “they glorified Him not as God.” So my theological friend over there, who knows so much that he can split hairs over doctrines—it does not matter what you *think*, or even what you *know* unless it leads you to glorify God and to be thankful! No, your knowledge may be a millstone about your neck to sink you down in eternal woe unless your knowledge is turned to holy practice.

Indeed, *knowledge will increase the responsibility of those who are irreverent and ungrateful*. Paul says, “They are without excuse: because

that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful." Whatever excuse might be made for those who never heard of God, there was none for these people! My dear Hearers, you also are "without excuse." Many of you have had godly parents. You have attended a Gospel ministry. Your Sunday school teachers and Christian friends have taught you the way of salvation—you are not ignorant! If *you* do not glorify God. If *you* are not thankful to Him, it will be more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of judgment than for you, for they never had the privileges that you have despised!

Remember how the Savior upbraided the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done because they repented not—"Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." I hardly know which is the greater wonder—that the poor people who saw Christ's mighty works did not repent—or that those who would have repented if they had seen those works were not permitted to see them!

I wish, dear Friends, that you could get out of this state of not glorifying God and not being thankful. Surely, you only need to have the case stated and the Spirit of God to speak to your conscience, to cause you to say, "I cannot any longer bear to be in such a dreadful condition without regard to God." May God enable you to repent tonight! Change your mind! That is the meaning of the word, "repent." Change your mind and say, "We will glorify God. There is a Great First Cause. There is a Creator. There must be an Omnipotent, All-Wise Being. We will worship Him. We will say in our hearts, "This God shall be our God, and we will trust Him, if He will but accept us."

Then remember the years that are past. They involve a great debt and you cannot pay it, for, if you go on serving God *without a flaw* to the end of your life, there is the old debt still due! There are the years that are gone and, "God requires the years that are past." Well, now, hear what He has done! He has given His dear Son to "bear our sins in His own body on the tree"—and if you will trust Christ—then know for sure that Christ has put away your sin and you are forgiven! "Look"—that is His Word—"Look unto Me, and be you saved, all you ends of the earth." When the bronze serpent was lifted up, all those who were bitten had to do was to look at the serpent of brass—and everyone that looked, lived! If any man of that crowd had looked at Moses, that would not have healed him. If he had looked at the fiery serpents and tried to pull them off, that would not have healed him. But as he looked to the bronze serpent and, as his eyes caught the gleam of the brass, the deadly serpent's bites were healed and the man lived! Look to Jesus! Look now! May God the Holy Spirit lead you to do so!

"I do not feel fit," says one. That is looking to *yourself*. "I do not feel my need enough," says another. That is trusting to your sense of *need*. Away with everything that is in you, or about you—and just trust *Christ*—and you shall immediately be saved. Whoever in this great congregation will but look to Jesus shall be saved upon the spot! However great your iniquities, however stony your heart, however despairing your mind, look, look,

look, look! And then, when you look to Christ, your ingratitude will be forgiven and it will die. You will love Him who has loved you and you shall be saved and saved forever!

When we received 82 into the Church last Lord's-Day evening, I could not help breathing an earnest prayer that this might be the beginning of a revival. May it come tonight and may many in these two galleries, and down below, be carried away by that blessed tide of mighty Grace that shall sweep them off their feet and land them safe on the Rock of Ages!

Will you, dear Friends, pray for this? I shall feel that even my poor, weak instrumentality will be quite sufficient for the greatest work if I have your prayers at my back. Will you, tonight, at the family altar, or at your own bedsides, make it a special subject of prayer that men and women who knew God, but glorified Him not as God, and were not thankful, may tonight turn to God? If I could get at some of you who are living without Christ, I should like to do what the Roman ambassadors used to do. When they came to a king who was at war with the empire, they said to him, "Will you have peace with Rome, or not?" If he said that he must have time to think it over, the ambassador, with his rod, drew a ring around the man and said, "You must decide before you cross that line, for, if you do not say, 'Peace,' before you step out of it, Rome will crush you with her armies."

There are no doors to the pews, otherwise I would say, "Shut those doors, and do not let the people out until God decides them." Lord, shut them in! Lord, arrest them! Hold them fast and let them not go till each one of them has said, "I believe; help You my unbelief!" May God bless you all, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON **ROMANS 1:1-25**

Verse 1. *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God.* 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 Brothers 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 so that I may preach the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the perishing sons of men!

2. (*Which He had promised afore by His Prophets in the Holy Scriptures*). Notice, Brothers and Sisters, 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 you 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—“called to be Jesus Christ’s.” Those who are called by Christ, are called to be His.

7, 8. *To all that are 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 in which we would 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 to do so. 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 you may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith of you and me.* Paul wanted his faith to establish theirs, and their faith to establish his. Christians grow rich by and exchange of spiritual commodities, but 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 spoke 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 Brothers and Sisters in the Lord!

13. *Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was hindered until now), 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 the empire. God has servants everywhere—He can make Satan, himself, provide the bodyguard for His faithful Apostle's journey!

14. *I am 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. *So, as much as in me, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome, also. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus 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 everyone that believes; 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 of God 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 of God to prevent its entering his heart? I fear that there are some such persons who have come here for years—and the Truth of God 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 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 has showed 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, 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 incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonor 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 forever. 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 forever.” God save all of us from such idolatry as that! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—545, 527, 606.

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EARNEST EXPOSTULATION

NO. 1714

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 1, 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Despise you the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering;
not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”
Romans 2:4.***

The Apostle is intensely personal in his address. This verse is not spoken to us all in the mass, but to some one in particular. The Apostle fixes his eyes upon a single person and speaks to him as, “You.” “Despise you the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” It should always be the intent of the preacher to convey his message to each hearer in his own separate individuality. It is always a very happy sign when a man begins to think of himself as an individual and when the exhortations and invitations of the Gospel are seen by him to be directed personally to himself.

I will give nothing for that indirect, essay-like preaching which is as the sheet lightning of summer, dazzling for the moment, and flaming over a broad expanse, but altogether harmless, since no bolt is launched from it and its ineffectual fires leave no trace behind. I will give nothing for that kind of hearing which consists in the Word of God being heard by everybody in general and by no one in particular. It is when the preacher can “You” his hearers that he is likely to do them good. When each man is made to say, “This is for me,” then the power of God is present in the Word! One personal, intentional touch of the hem of Christ’s garment conveys more blessing than all the pressure of the crowd that thronged about the Master. The laying of His healing hand upon the individual who was suffering had more virtue in it than all those heavenly addresses which fell from His lips upon minds that did not receive the Truth of God for themselves!

I pray that we may come to personal dealings with the Lord, each one for himself, and that the Spirit of God may convince each man and each woman according as the case may stand before the living God. O my Hearer, you are now to be lovingly spoken with! I speak not to you as unto many, but unto you, as one by yourself. Observe that the Apostle singled out an individual who had condemned others for transgressions in which he, himself indulged. This man acknowledged so much spiritual light that he knew right from wrong and he diligently used his knowledge to judge others, condemning them for their transgressions. As for himself, he preferred the shade, where no fierce light might beat on his own conscience and disturb his unholy peace!

His judgment was spared the pain of dealing with his own offenses by being set to work upon the faults of others. He had a candle, but he did

not place it on the table to light his own room—he held it out at the front door to inspect his neighbors who passed by. Ho! My good Friend, my sermon is for you! Paul looks this man in the face and says, “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are, that judges: for in which you judge another you condemn yourself; for you that judges do the same things.” And then he pointedly says to him—“Do you think, O man, that judges them which do such things, and do the same, that you shall escape the judgment of God?” Well did the Apostle aim that piercing arrow—it hits the center of the target and strikes a folly common to mankind!

The poet of the night-watches wrote—

“All men think all men mortal but themselves.”

As truly might I say, “All men think all men *guilty* but themselves.” The punishment which is due to sin, the guilty reckon to be surely impending upon others, but they scarcely believe that it can ever fall upon themselves! A personal doom for themselves is an idea which they will not harbor—if the dread thought should light upon them, they shake it off as men shake snowflakes from their cloaks. The thought of personal guilt, judgment and condemnation is inconvenient—it breeds too much trouble within—and so they refuse it lodging! Vain men go maundering on their way, whispering of peace and safety; doting as if God had passed an act of amnesty and oblivion for them and had made, for them, an exception to all the rules of justice and all the manner of His courts!

Do men, indeed, believe that they, alone, shall go unpunished? No man will subscribe to that notion when it is written down in black and white and yet the mass of men live as if this were true! I mean the mass of men who have sufficient Light of God to condemn sin in others. They start back from the fact of their own personal guilt and condemnation, and go on in their ungodliness as if there were no Great White Throne for them, no last assize, no Judge, no word of condemnation, and no Hell of wrath! Alas, poor madmen, thus to dream! O Spirit of Truth, save them from this fatal infatuation! Sin is always on the downward slope so that when a man proceeds a certain length, he inevitably goes beyond it.

The person addressed by the Apostle first thought to escape judgment and then he came to think lightly of the goodness, forbearance and long-suffering of God. He thinks he shall escape in the future and, because of that, he despises the present goodness and long-suffering of the Most High. Of course he does! If he does not believe in the terrors of the world to come for himself, he naturally reckons it to be a small thing to have been spared their immediate experience! Barren tree as he is, he does not believe that he will ever be cut down and, therefore, he feels no gratitude to the Dresser of the vineyard for pleading, “Let it alone yet another year, till I dig about it, and fertilize it.”

I wish, as God shall help me, to drive hard at the consciences of men upon this matter. I would be to you, my careless Friend, what Jonah was to Nineveh—I would warn you and bestir you to repentance. Oh that the Holy Spirit would make this sermon effectual for the awakening of every unsaved soul that shall hear or read it!

I. First, let me speak this morning to you, O unregenerate, impenitent man, concerning THE GOODNESS OF GOD WHICH YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED. You have known the goodness, forbearance and long-suffering of God. According to the text, “riches” of these have been spent upon unconverted, ungodly men—and upon you as one of them. Let me speak with you first, O man, and remind you how favored you have been of God by being made a partaker of “the riches of His goodness.” In many cases this is true of temporal things.

Men may be without the fear of God and yet, for all that, God may be pleased to prosper their endeavors in business. They succeed almost beyond their expectation—I mean some of them—probably the description applies to you. They rise from the lowest position and accumulate about them the comforts and luxuries of life. Though they have no religion, they have wit, prudence and thrift—and so they compete with others and God permits them to be winners in the race for wealth. Moreover, He allows them to enjoy good health, vigor of mind and strength of constitution—they are happy in the wife of their youth and their children are about them.

Theirs is an envied lot. Death seems, for a while, forbidden to knock at their door, even though he has been ravaging the neighborhood. Even sickness does not molest their household. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Abraham had to prepare a Machpelah and David mourned over his sons, but these have had to make scant provision for a family sepulcher—a hedge has, in very deed, been set about them and all that they have! I know that it is thus with many who do not love God and have never yielded to the entreaties of His Grace. They love not the hand which enriches them! They praise not the Lord who daily loads them with benefits! How is it that men can receive such kindness and yield no return?

O Sirs, you are, today, blessed with all that need requires, but I pray you remember that you might have been in the depths of poverty! An illness would have lost you your situation, or a slight turn in trade would have left you bankrupt. You are well, today, but you might have been tossing to and fro upon a bed of sickness! You might have been in the hospital about to lose a limb. Shall not God be praised for health and freedom from pain? You might have been shut up in yonder asylum, in the agonies of madness! A thousand ills have been kept from you! You have been exceedingly favored by the goodness of the Most High. Is it not so? And truly, it is an amazing thing that God should give His bread to those who lift up their heel against Him—that He should cause His light to shine upon those who never perceive His goodness! That He should multiply His mercies upon ungodly men who only multiply their rebellions against Him and turn the gifts of His love into instruments of transgression!

Furthermore, this goodness of God had not only come to you in a temporal form, O impenitent man, but it has also visited you in a spiritual manner. Myriads of our fellow men have never had an opportunity of knowing Christ. The missionary’s foot has never trodden the cities in

which they dwell and so they die in the dark! Multitudes are going downward, downward who do not know the upward road! Their minds have never been enlightened by the teachings of God's Word and, therefore, they sin with less grievousness of fault. You are placed in the very focus of Christian light and yet you follow evil! Will you not think of this? Time was when a man would have to work for years to earn enough money to buy a Bible. There were times when he could not have earned one even with that toil! Now the Word of God lies upon your table—you have a copy of it in almost every room of your house—is not this a gift from God?

This is the land of the open Bible and the land of the preached Word of God—in this you prove the riches of God's goodness. Do you despise this wealth of mercy? Possibly you have enjoyed the further privilege of sitting under a ministry which has been particularly plain and earnest. You have not had sermons preached before you—they have been preached *at* you—the minister has seized upon you and tugged at your conscience as though he would force you to the Savior. With cries and entreaties you have been invited to your heavenly Father and yet you have not come! Is this a small thing?

What is more, you have been favored with a tender conscience. When you do wrong, you know it and smart for it! What do those wakeful nights mean after you have yielded to a temptation? What does that miserable feeling of shame mean? That fever of unrest? You find it hard to stifle the inward monitor and difficult to resist the Spirit of God. Your road to Hell is made peculiarly hard—do you mean to follow it at all costs—and go over hedge and ditch to Hell? You have not only been awakened by conscience, but the good Spirit has strived with you! You have been almost persuaded to be a Christian. Such has been the blessed work of the Spirit upon your heart that you have, at times, been melted down and ready to be molded by Grace. A strange softness has come over you, and if you had not gathered up all your evil strength—if the devil had not helped you to resist—you would have had, by this time, dropped into the Savior's arms! Oh, the riches of the goodness of God to have thus wooed you and pressed His love upon you! You have scarcely had a stripe, or a frown, or an ill word from God—His ways have been all kindness, gentleness and long-suffering from the first day of your memory until now! “Despise you the riches of His goodness?” O man, answer this, I implore you!

The Apostle then dwells upon the riches of “forbearance.” Forbearance comes in when men, having offended, God withholds the punishment that is due them. When men, having been invited to mercy, have refused it and yet God continues to stretch out His hands and invites them to come to Him. Patient endurance of offenses and insults has been manifested by God to many of you who now hear these words of warning! The Lord knows to whom I speak and may He make you, also, know that I am speaking to you, even to you! Some men have gone back to the very sin of which, for a while, they repented. They have suffered for their folly, but have turned, again, to it with suicidal determination! They are desperately set on their own ruin and nothing can save them. The burnt child has run

to the fire again! The singed moth has plunged, again, into the flame of the candle!

Who can pity such self-inflicted miseries? They are given over to perdition, for they will not be warned. They have returned to the haunt of vice though they seemed to have been snatched from the deep ditch of its filthiness. They have wantonly and willfully returned to their cups, though the poison of former draughts is yet burning in their veins. Yet, despite this folly, God shows forbearance towards them! They have grievously provoked Him when they have done despite to His Word and have even turned to laughter the solemnities of His worship—against their own consciences and to their own confusion—yet when God’s hand has been lifted up, He has withdrawn it in mercy! See how God has always tempered His Providence with kindness to them. He laid them low so that they were sorely sick, but at the voice of their moaning He restored them!

They trembled on the brink of death, yet He permitted them to recover strength. And now, despite their vows of amendment, here they are, callous and careless, unmindful of the mercy which gave them a reprieve. Did you ever think what is included in the riches of forbearance? There are quick-tempered individuals who only need to be a little provoked and hard words and blows come quick and furious! But, oh, the forbearance of God when He is provoked to His face by ungodly men! By men, I mean, those who hear His Word and yet refuse it! They slight His love and yet He perseveres in it. Justice lays its hand on the sword, but Mercy holds it back in its scabbard. Well might each spared one say—

***“O unexhausted Grace
O Love unspeakable!
I am not gone to my own place;
I am not yet in Hell!
Earth does not open yet,
My soul to swallow up:
And, hanging o’er the burning pit,
I still am forced to hope.”***

Our Apostle adds to goodness and forbearance the riches of “long-suffering.” We draw a distinction between forbearance and long-suffering. Forbearance has to do with the magnitude of sin. Long-suffering with the multiplicity of it. Forbearance has to do with present provocation—long-suffering relates to that provocation repeated and continued for a length of time. Oh, how long does God put up with the ill manners of men! Forty years was He grieved with that generation and carcasses fell in the wilderness! Has it come to 40 years yet with you, dear Hearer? Possibly it may have passed even that time and a half-century of provocation may have gone into eternity to bear witness against you! What if I should even have to say that 60 and 70 years have continued to heap up the loads of their transgressions until the Lord says, “I am pressed down under your sins! As a cart that is full of sheaves, I am pressed down under you”?

Yet for all that, here you are on praying ground and pleading terms with God! Here you are where yet the Savior reigns upon the Throne of Grace! Here you are where mercy is to be had for the asking, where free Grace and dying love ring out their charming bells of invitation to joy and

peace! Oh, the riches of His goodness, forbearance and long-suffering! Three-fold is the claim—will you not regard it? Can you continue to despise it? I should like to set all this in a striking light if I could and, therefore, I would remind you of who and what that God is who has exhibited this goodness, forbearance and long-suffering to men.

Remember how great He is! When men insult a great prince, the offense is thought to be highly heinous. If anyone should openly insult our own beloved Queen and continue to do so, all the nation would be clamorous to have the impertinence ended speedily. We cannot bear that a beloved ruler should be publicly insulted! And what do you think of the sin which provokes God? The sin, which, to His face defies Him? The sin that in His very courts resists Him? Shall this always be forborne with? Is there not a limit to long-suffering? Goodness also adds another item to the provocation, for we naturally say, “Why should one so good be treated so cruelly?” If God were a tyrant. If He were unrighteous or unkind, it were not so much amiss that men stood out against Him. But when His very name is love and when He manifests the heart of a Father towards His wandering children, it is shameful that He should be so wantonly provoked.

Those words of Jesus were extremely touching when He pointed to His miracles and asked, “For which of these things do you stone Me?” When I think of God I may well ask, “For which of His deeds do you provoke Him?” Every morning He draws the curtain and gladdens the earth with light—and gives you eyes to see it. He sends His rain upon the ground to bring forth bread for man and He gives you life to eat—is this a ground for revolting from Him? Every single minute of our life is cheered with the tender kindness of God and every spot is gladdened with His love! I am amazed that the Lord does not sweep away the moral nuisance of a guilty race from off the face of earth. Man’s sin must be terribly offensive to God from day to day, and yet He still shows kindness, love, forbearance. This adds an excessive venom to man’s disobedience. How can he grieve such goodness? How can Divine goodness fail to resent such base ingratitude?

Think, also, of God’s knowledge, for He knows all the transgressions of men. “What the eye does not see, the heart does not rue,” is a truthful proverb. But every transgression is committed in the very Presence of God, so that penitent David cried, “Against You, You only have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight.” Transgression is committed in the sight of God, from whose eyes nothing is hidden! Remember, also, that the Lord can never forget—before His eyes all things stand out in clear light—not only the things of today, but all the transgressions of a life. Yet, for all this, He does forbear. With evil reeking before His face, He is slow to anger and waits that He may be gracious. All this while, remember, the Lord is great in power. Some are patient because they are powerless—they bear and forbear because they cannot well help themselves.

But it is not so with God! Had He but willed it, you had been swept into Hell! Only a word from Him and the impenitent had fallen in the wilderness and their spirits would have passed into the realms of endless woe. In a moment the Lord could have eased Him of His adversary—He could have stopped that flippant tongue and closed those lustful eyes in an in-

stant! That wicked heart would have failed to beat if God had withdrawn His power—and that rebellious breath would have ceased, also. Had it not been for long-suffering, you unbelievers would long since have known what it is to fall into the hands of an angry God! Will you continue to grieve the God who so patiently bears with you?

Be it never forgotten that sin is to God much more intolerable than it is to us. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Things which we call little sins are great and grievous evils to Him—they do, as it were, touch the apple of His eyes. “Oh, do not,” He says, “do not this abominable thing that I hate!” His Spirit is grieved and vexed with every idle word and every sensual thought and, therefore, it is a wonder of wonders that a God so sensitive of sin—a God so able to avenge Himself of His adversaries, a God who knows the abundance of human evil and marks it all—should, nevertheless, exhibit riches of goodness and forbearance and long-suffering!

Yet this is what you, my ungodly hearer, have been experiencing many a long year. Here let us pause and oh that each one who is still unsaved would sing most sincerely the words of Watts—

***“Lord, we have long abused Your love,
Too long indulged our sin.
Our aching hearts even bleed to see
What rebels we have been.
No more, you lusts, shall you command,
No more will we obey!
Stretch out, O God,
Your conquering hand,
And drive Your foes away.”***

II. Come with me, Friend, and let me speak to you of THE SIN OF WHICH YOU ARE SUSPECTED. Hear me, unconverted sinner! The sin of which you are suspected is this—“Despise you the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering?” The Lord’s goodness ought to be admired and to be adored—and do you despise it? His goodness ought to be wondered at and told as a marvel in the ears of others—and do you despise it? That I may rake your conscience a little, lend me your ears! Some despise God’s goodness, forbearance and long-suffering because they never even gave a thought to it.

God has given you life to keep you in being and He has indulged you with His kindness, but it has not yet occurred to you that this patience is at all remarkable or worthy of the smallest thanks. You have been a drunk, have you? A swearer? A Sabbath-breaker? A lover of sinful pleasure? Perhaps not quite so, but still, you have forgotten God altogether—and yet He has abounded in goodness to you—is not this a great wrong? The Lord says, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner and the ass his master’s crib: but these, My creatures, do not know, My favored ones do not consider.”

Why, you have no such forbearance with others as God has had with you! You would not keep a dog if it never followed at your heels, but snarled at you! You would not even keep a potter’s vessel if it held no water and was of no service to you! You would break it in pieces and throw it

on the dunghill! As for yourself, you are fearfully and wonderfully made—both as to your body and as to your soul—and yet you have been of no service to your Maker, nor even *thought* of being of service to Him! Still, He has spared you all these years, and it has never occurred to you that there has been any wonderful forbearance in it. Assuredly, O man, you despise the long-suffering of your God.

Others have, perhaps, thought of it, but have never seriously meditated thereon. When we offend a man, if we are right-minded, we not only note the fact with regret, but we sit down and weigh the matter and seek to rectify it, for we would not be unjust to any person. And if we felt that we had been acting unfairly, it would press upon our minds until we could make amends. But are there not some of you who have never given half an hour's consideration to your relation to your God? He has spared you all this while and yet it has never occurred to you to enter into your chamber and sit down and consider your conduct towards Him! It would seem to be too much trouble, even, to *think* of your Creator! His long-suffering leads you to repentance, but you have not repented! In fact, you have not thought it worth your while to consider the question at all. You have thought it far more important to enquire, "What shall I eat and what shall I drink?" Bread and broadcloth have shut out the thought of God! Ah me, you will stand at His judgment bar before long—and then? Perhaps before this week is finished you may have to answer, not to me, but to Him that sits upon the Throne! Therefore I implore you to now, for the first time, give this matter thought! Despise no longer the goodness and long-suffering of God!

This long-suffering is despised, further, by those who have imagined that God does not take any great account of what they do. So long as they do not go into gross and open sin and offend the laws of their country, they do not believe that it is of any consequence whether they love God or not, whether they do righteousness or not, whether they are sober and temperate, or drunken and wanton—whether they are clean in heart by God's Spirit, or defiled in soul and life. You think that God is altogether such an one as *yourself*, and that He will wink at your transgression and cover up your sin—but you shall not find it so! That base thought proves that you despise His long-suffering! Some even get to think that the warnings of love are so much wind and that the threats of God will never be fulfilled. They have gone on for many years without being punished and, instead of drawing to the conclusion that the longer the blow is in falling, the heavier it will be when it does come, they imagine that because it is long delayed the judgment will never come at all! And so they sport and trifle between the jaws of death and Hell.

They hear warnings as if they were all moonshine and fancy that this holy Book, with its threats, is but a bugbear to keep fools quiet. If you think so, Sir, then, indeed, you have despised the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God! Do you imagine that this forbearance will last forever? Do you dream that at least it will continue with *you* for many years? I know your secret thoughts—you see other men die suddenly, but your secret thought is that you will have long space and ample time! You

hear of one struck down with paralysis and another carried off by apoplexy—but you flatter yourselves that you will have plenty of leisure time to think about these things. Oh, how can you be so secure? How can you thus tempt the Lord?

False prophets, in these evil days, play into men's hands and hold out the hope that you may go into the next world wrong and yet be set right in the end! This is a vile flattery of your wicked hearts! Remember that even according to their maundering, *centuries* may elapse before this fancied restoration may occur! A sensible man would not like to run the risk of even a *year* of agony. Half-an-hour of acute pain is dreaded by most people! Can it be that the very men who start back from the dentist's door, afraid of the pinch which extricates an aching tooth, will run the risk of *years* of misery? Take the future of the impenitent even on this footing—it is a thing to be dreaded and by every means avoided! I say, these flattering prophets, themselves, if rightly understood, give you little enough of hope!

But what will come of you if the old doctrine proves to be true and you go away into everlasting fire in Hell, as the *Scripture* puts it? Will you live an hour in jeopardy of such a doom? Will you so despise the long-suffering and forbearance of the Lord? I will not enlarge and use many words, for I am, myself, weary of words. I want to persuade you, even, with tears. My whole soul would attract you to your God, your Father. I would come to close quarters with you and ask—Do you not think that, even though you fall into no doctrinal error and indulge no hazy hope as to either restitution or annihilation, yet, still, it is a dreadful despising of God's mercy when you keep on playing with God and saying to His Grace, "Go Your way for this time; when I have a more convenient season I will send for You"?

The more gentle God is, the more you procrastinate! And the more in tenderness He speaks of pardon, the more you transgress! Is this generous? Is it right? Is it wise? Can it be a fit and proper thing to do? Oh, my dear Hearer, why will you act thus shamefully? Some of you delight to come and hear me preach and drink in all I have to say, and you will even commend me for being earnest with your souls. And yet, after all, you will not decide for God, for Christ, for Heaven! You are between good and evil, neither cold nor hot. I would you were either cold or hot! I could even wish that you either thought this word of mine to be false, or else that, believing it to be true, you at once acted upon it! How can you incur the double guilt of offending God and of knowing that it is an evil thing to do so?

You reject Christ and yet admit that He ought to be received by you! You speak well of a Gospel which you will not accept for yourselves! You believe great things of a Savior whom you will not have to be your Savior! Jesus Himself says, "If I tell you the truth, why do you not believe Me?" "Do you despise the long-suffering of God?" Dare you do it? I tremble as I think of a man despising God's goodness! Is not this practical blasphemy? Do you dare do it? Oh, if you have done it up to now, do it no more! Before yon sun goes down, again, say within your heart, "I will be a despiser of God's goodness no longer. I will arise and go unto my Father and I will say

unto Him—Father, I have sinned. I will not rest until, in the precious blood, You have washed my sins away.”

III. In closing this sermon, I desire to remind you, O ungodly man, of **THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHICH YOU ARE FORGETFUL.** Read my text—“Despise you the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” Now there are many here who know, as a matter of doctrine, that the goodness of God leads them to repentance—and yet they do not know it as a practical Truth of God affecting their lives! Indeed, they so act that it is not true to them at all! Yet, if they do not know this, they are willfully ignorant—not willing to retain in their minds a fact so disagreeable to them. None are so blind as those who will not see. But he who does not see, and yet has eyes, has a criminality about his blindness which is not found in those who have no sight.

Dear Hearer, whether you know this Truth of God, or not, I would remind you that God’s patience with you is meant to lead you to repentance. “How?” you ask. Why, first, by giving you an opportunity to repent! These years, which are now coming to a considerable number with you, have been given to you in order that you might turn to God! By the time you were 21, you had sinned quite enough—perhaps you had, even then, begun to mislead other youths—and to instruct in evil those under your influence. Why did not God take you away at once? It might have been for the benefit of the world if He had done so! But yet you were spared till you were thirty.

Did not each year of your lengthened life prove that the Lord was saying, “I will spare Him, for perhaps He will yet amend and think upon His God. I will give Him more light and increase His comforts. I will give Him better teaching, better preaching. Perhaps he will repent”? Yet you have not done so! Have you lived to be 40 and are you where you were when you were twenty? Are you still out of Christ? Then you are worse than you were, for you have sinned more deeply and you have provoked the Lord more terribly! You have now had space enough. What more do you need? When the child has offended, you say, “Child, unless you beg pardon at once, I must punish you”—would you give a boy so many *minutes* to repent in as God has given you years? I think not!

If a servant is continually robbing you. If he is careless, slothful, disobedient—you say to him, “I have passed over your faults several times, but one of these days I shall discharge you. I cannot always put up with this slovenliness, this blundering, this idleness! One of these times you will have to go.” Have you not so spoken to your female servant and thought it kind on your part to give her another chance? The lord has said the same to you! Yet here you are, a living, but impenitent man—spared, but spared only to multiply your transgressions! Know this, that His forbearance gives you an opportunity to repent! Do not turn it into an occasion for hardening your heart.

But next, the Lord in this is pleased to give a suggestion to you to repent. It seems to me that every morning when a man wakes up still impenitent and finds himself out of Hell, the sunlight seems to say, “I shine

on you yet another day, so that in this day you may repent." When your bed receives you at night, I think it seems to say, "I will give you another night's rest, that you may live to turn from your sins and trust in Jesus." Every mouthful of bread that comes to the table says, "I have to support your body that you may still have space for repentance." Every time you open the Bible, the pages say, "We speak with you that you may repent." Every time you hear a sermon, if it is such a sermon as God would have us preach, it pleads with you to turn unto the Lord and live! Surely the years of your life may suffice you to have worked the will of the Gentiles! "The times of your ignorance God winked at, but now commands men everywhere to repent." Do not life and death, Heaven and Hell, call upon you to do so? Thus you have, in God's goodness, space for repentance and a suggestion to repent.

But something more is here, for I want you to notice that the text does not say, "The goodness of God calls you to repentance," but, "LEADS you." This is a much stronger word. God calls to repentance by the Gospel. God *leads* to repentance by His goodness. It is as though He plucked at your sleeve and said, "Come this way." His goodness lays its gentle hands on you, drawing you with cords of love and bands of a man. God's forbearance cries, "Why will you hate Me? What wrong have I done to you? I have spared you! I have spared your wife and children! I have raised you up from the bed of sickness! I have loaded your board! I have filled your wardrobe! I have done you a thousand good turns—why do you disobey Me? Turn unto your God and Father and live in Christ Jesus."

If, on the other hand, you have not received rich temporal favors, yet the Lord still leads you to repentance by a rougher hand. As when the prodigal would gladly have filled his belly with husks, but could not, and the pangs of hunger came upon him—those pains were a powerful message from the Father to lead him to the home where there was bread enough and to spare. "The goodness of God leads you to repentance." Oh, that you would yield to its sweet leading and follow as a child follows the guidance of a nurse! Let your crosses lead you to the Cross! Let your joys lead you to find joy in Christ! Do you not think that all this should encourage you to repent, since God Himself leads you that way? If God leads you to repentance, He does not mean to cast you away! If He bids you repent, then He is willing to accept your repentance and to be reconciled to you! If He bids you change your mind, it is because His own mind is love!

Repentance implies a radical change in your view of things and in your estimate of matters. It is a change in your purposes, a change in your thoughts and in your conduct. If the Lord leads you that way, He will help you in it. Follow His gracious leading till His Divine Spirit shall lead you with still greater power and still greater efficacy, till at last you find that He has worked in you both repentance and faith—and you are saved in the Lord with an *everlasting* salvation! If "the goodness of God leads you to repentance," then be sure of this, that the goodness of God will *receive* you when you repent, and you shall live in His sight as His well-beloved and forgiven child!

I close now, but I am sorry to do so, for I have not pleaded one-half as I could have wished. Yet what more can I say? I will put it to yourselves. If you were in God's place, could you bear to be treated as you have treated Him? If you were all goodness and tenderness—and had borne with a creature now for 30 or 40 years, how would you bear to see that creature still stand out and even draw an inference from your gentleness to encourage him in his rebellion? Would you not say, "Well, if my long-suffering makes him think little of sin, I will change my method. If tenderness cannot win him, I must leave him. If even my love does not affect him, I will leave him alone. He is given unto his evil ways—I will cease from helping him and see what his end will be"?

O Lord, say not so! Say not so unto anyone in this house! But in Your great mercy make this day to be the beginning of life to many! Oh that hearts may be touched with pity for their slighted Savior, that they may seek His face! Here is the only way of salvation—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." You know how the Master bade us put it. "Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believes and is baptized shall be saved." First, we are to preach faith, whereby we lay hold on Christ. Then Baptism, whereby we *confess* that faith and acknowledge that we are dead and buried with Christ that we may live with Him in newness of life. Those are the two points He bids us set before you—and I do set them before you!

Weary, but not quite wearied out, O impenitent man, I plead with you! Though you have so often been pleaded with in vain, once more I speak with you in Christ's place and say—Repent of your sin! Look to your Savior and confess your faith in His own appointed way. I verily believe that if I had been pleading with some of you to save the life of a dog, I would have prevailed with you a great while ago! And will you not care about the saving of your own souls? Oh, strange infatuation—that men will not consent to be saved—but foolishly, madly, hold out against the mercy of God which leads them to repentance! God bless you, Beloved, and may none of you despise His goodness, forbearance and long-suffering.

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GOD'S GOODNESS LEADING TO REPENTANCE

NO. 2857

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*"The goodness of God leads you to repentance."
Romans 2:4.*

GOD is often exceedingly good to those who are utterly unworthy of such treatment. "He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good." Indeed, sometimes the evil seem to have more of the sunshine than the good have! David said, "I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree." God's forbearance has been misinterpreted and even misrepresented by some who have implied, or actually asserted that God winks at sin and does not care how men behave, but treats all alike whether they are good or evil. Some have wickedly asked, as Job reminded his friends, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?" Many have said, "Do not the wicked prosper? Do they not even die in peace? Is it not written concerning them, 'There are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm?'" This is a misinterpretation of the merciful design of God towards the ungodly and is corrected by the Apostle in the verse from which our text is selected—"Do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?"

The goodness of God to a man of evil life is not intended to encourage him to continue in his sin, but it is meant to woo and win him away from it. God manifests His Infinite gentleness and love that He may thereby kill man's sin and, by His tender mercy, He may win man's hard heart unto Himself—and by His abundant loving kindness, He may awaken man's conscience to a sense of his true position in his Maker's sight, that he may turn away from the sin which he now loves and may seek his God, whom he has despised and neglected. My fellow man, if you are still ungodly, yet you have been prospered by your God, understand clearly the Lord's intention in your prosperity—"The goodness of God leads you to repentance." You must not be so unwise, you must not be so wicked as to say, "I am prospering although I am living in sin and, therefore, I will continue to do so." Remember what the Lord said through Isaiah the Prophet—"The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib." Be you, at least, as wise as these brute beasts are and recognize from Whom your prosperity comes—and then accept as true, God's explanation of

His actions, as given by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle, and believe that “the goodness of God leads you to repentance.”

I. My objective, at this time, is that those who are enjoying the goodness of God, but yet have never repented of sin, may see their conduct in its true light and may be brought to a sincere and hearty repentance of their sin. To that end, I shall, first of all, spend a little time in mentioning **SOME OF THE TOKENS OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD WHICH HE HAS LAVISHED UPON MANY WITH THE VIEW OF LEADING THEM TO REPENTANCE.**

I commence with this remark—*it is a great blessing to have been born of Christian parents*, or even of parents who were respectable and moral. It gives one a good start in life where this is the case. On the other hand, I do not doubt that some have strong propensities to evil which have been at work within them from their very birth, so that they were more likely than certain others were to plunge into gross sin. Therefore, it is no small mercy to have been started in this world under a roof where the name of Jesus was often heard, where holy things were constantly brought before one's eyes, where blasphemy was never heard, where uncleanness would have been put outside the door with the utmost abhorrence! So, if any of you have been the recipients of these marks of God's favor and yet are not godly—perhaps not even moral—it is clear, from our text, that this goodness of God to you ought to lead you to repentance.

Let me just remind you of your gracious mother, who is now, perhaps, with God in Glory. Your godly father, possibly, lives to sorrow over you. If they could have known, when you were a fair-haired boy at home, that you would always be what you now are, they might have wished that you had never been born! Try to recall those early, happy days—imagine that you can hear again your mother's earnest pleadings both with and for her boy. Think once more of how you felt when you were sitting at the table on which the family Bible lay open and morning and evening prayer was offered unto the Most High. And, as you do so, may the Lord, by some soft and gentle voice within your conscience, call you to repentance!

Next, it is a mark of the great goodness and forbearance of God *as He continues to spare the lives of men*. We often marvel that He does not more quickly cut them down as cumberers of the ground! If the first wanton transgression had been followed by a solemn warning and if the next willful sin had involved severe chastisement with the threat that the third offense should be the last, we might not have been surprised—yet God, in His abounding mercy, allows men to sin over and over again, to sin against His Light and knowledge, against rebuke and instruction, against conscience and reason and even against the love of Christ! Singularly enough, God often spares, in an extraordinary manner, the lives of some of the most atrocious rebels against His righteous rule! There are some men who are so wicked that if they were dead, the moral atmosphere of the world would be much purer—yet they live on and seem as if they could not die. Disease after disease has laid them low, for they sin against their own bodies and bring themselves into a truly horrible con-

dition—yet they rise from their sickbed only to sin again more foully than ever!

How is it that such sinners are spared, while an earnest and zealous foreign missionary sickens and dies? And an eminent saint who did but pass through a street where fever raged, was stricken with the disease and speedily carried off by it? I understand why the miscreants are spared when the godly are taken, and I am sure I do, for my text instructs me the goodness of God is manifested in order to lead such sinners to repentance! He spares them that they may turn to Him! The sailor who a little while before was blaspheming the name of the Lord and then working at the pumps, with all his might, to try to save the ship, sees the vessel go down, but he clings to a spar that floats upon the raging sea. His shipmates have been sinking all around him, but he finds himself washed up high and dry upon a rock. To what end, Seaman, are you spared? Is it not that the goodness of God may lead even you, who could scarcely speak without an oath, to repentance? God means, I trust, that you should, henceforth, live a new life and serve Him as you have never yet done.

And the soldier, too. I have heard of him, in the day of battle, when the bullets have whistled close by his ears and comrade after comrade has fallen at his side. I remember speaking, many years ago, with one who rode in that celebrated charge at Balaclava when the saddles were being emptied right and left—yet on to the end he rode—and back again through the valley of death. And, though a stranger to him, I could not help laying my hand upon his shoulder and claiming him for the Christ who had spared his life in that terrible time. Am I addressing anyone who has been in imminent peril of any sort—by railway crash or in shipwreck, in battle or in storm—when it seemed as if you would die yet you did not? Then, surely your preservation means that God was saying to grim Death, “Spare him, for he is Mine. I intend to save his soul as well as to spare his life.” If that is the case with any of you, God's goodness is meant to lead you to repentance.

Nor is this all, though there is great mercy in a godly parentage and in life preserved in times of peril, sometimes *ungodly men enjoy, for many years, the privilege of perfect health*. “I never had a day's illness in my life,” says one. Yet he has not been careful of his constitution—on the contrary, he has done much to injure it. Another says, “I never missed a day's work and never was kept away from business by suffering of any kind. I scarcely know what aches and pains mean.” Well, Friend, God deals with you, in that respect, in a very different way from the treatment He metes out to some of us, who, nevertheless, try to serve Him. Surely, you ought seriously to think of this matter and say to yourself, “He does not even give me as much of the rod as He gives to His own children. It cannot be that He loves me better than He loves them—it must be because I *am not* His child. As a man does not punish another person's boy, but leaves him to go his own way, so I must not reckon that God is especially showing His love to me in this long-continued health and strength—and I must solemnly ask myself, ‘Am I His child?’ And then, on

the other hand, I must say to Him, 'Do You, O Lord, indulge me with health and strength? Do You favor me with this long immunity from pain—I, who never lived to serve You and never even thanked You for all Your goodness to me? Then I am thoroughly ashamed of myself and I implore You, O my gracious Preserver, to forgive my forgetfulness and ingratitude and to receive me, and to put me among Your children!'"

Nor is this all, for I know *some ungodly people who are greatly prospering in this world*. When they started in life, perhaps things were a little hard with them and they thought that if God would but give them enough to eat and drink, it would be a great mercy. Possibly they soon found a position which just suited their capacities but, before long they began to aspire to something higher and God gave it to them. So it has gone on until now! They have pretty nearly all that they could wish to have. Well, dear Friends, if this has been your experience, remember that all has come to you from the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Each one of these blessings has been sent to you marked with some such message as this from the Lord Himself—"Will not My creature consider what return should be rendered to Me for this mercy, and that mercy, and the other mercy which I have given to him—more even than I have given to some of the best of My own people? Will he not turn unto Me and bless the Giver of all this goodness to him?"

I would like to take you by the hand, young man, you who have been signally helped, perhaps, out of a difficulty in business when it seemed as if you must fail. You have, since then, had many severe storms and trials to face, yet you have always been delivered out of them all. And now you have come into a channel where it is all smooth sailing. Is it not time for you to begin to consider your ways and to turn unto the Lord? You were blessed with a happy marriage. Your children are growing up around you and whereas many others have had to bury their offspring, yours have all been spared! Do you not see how God has blessed you in all sorts of ways? Will you not, therefore, give Him your heart? Will you not cast away from you the sin that He hates? Will you not turn unto Him, trusting and loving Christ with all your heart, mind, soul and strength? The goodness of God to you, coming in so many different forms and ways, should lead you to repentance!

Notice, dear Friends, that the Lord does not drive you to repentance. Cain was driven away as a fugitive and a vagabond when he had killed his righteous brother Abel. Judas went and hanged himself, being driven by an anguish of remorse because of what he had done in betraying his Lord. But the sweetest and best repentance is that which comes, not by driving, but by drawing—"The goodness of God *leads* you to repentance." It is a wretched spirit that needs to be continually flogged with the whip of a slaveholder. I hope I am addressing those who can be affected by other motives than those of dread. The good God, the gracious God who has abounded in mercy and goodness so wonderfully to many of you—should you not feel that something is drawing you towards Him? At least do Him the justice to look at Him as He reveals Himself in Christ Jesus and see if He is not worth serving—if it is not meet and right that you

should serve Him! Having provided His Son to be the Savior of sinners, is it not meet that you should turn to Him and find eternal life through believing in Him?

I have only given a brief outline of the many forms of God's goodness to many of us. But your experiences are so different that you must, each one, fill up his or her own. I know that you all have reason to bless God for some special goodness. We sang, just now—

**“Tell it unto sinners, tell
I am, I am out of Hell”—**

but I may add that we are also not in the lunatic asylum, not in the workhouse, not in prison, not upon the bed of sickness. And all these things are tokens of God's goodness to us which ought to lead us to repentance.

II. Now, secondly, I will try to show you IN WHAT WAY THE GOODNESS OF GOD IS AN ARGUMENT FOR OUR REPENTANCE.

First, God has been so good to us, *He cannot be a hard taskmaster*. The ungodly man cannot truly say to God what the man in the parable said to his lord, “I feared you, because you are a stern man.” How can God be stern when He has manifested all this goodness to you? Your house has been without prayer, yet you have had no fire to burn it down, no thieves to ransack it, no fever to invade it. You have lived for forty, fifty, sixty, or even 70 or 80 years without ever serving your Maker—yet you are surrounded with every earthly comfort! After all that, can you call God a hard task-master? No. It is proved beyond all question that God is good and only good—and that He does good even to the unthankful and the evil!

Well, then, what a shame it is that such a generous, magnanimous God as He is should be treated as the careless and indifferent treat Him! When a man is simply a just man, that is well so far as it goes, but he may be hard and stern. But when a man is generous, forgiving, tender-hearted—surely, the most coarse-minded among us would be unwilling to inflict pain upon such a heart as that! But the heart of God is more loving than that of any man who has ever lived—and more tender than ever any mother was with her child. He cannot bear that you should love evil instead of loving Him. And after He has done all this for you of which I have been speaking, why do you turn against Him? Did I hear you make use of a blasphemous expression? For which of all the good things that He has done for you did you blaspheme His holy name? For sparing your life when you had that terrible fever? Or for raising up your dear little child from the very brink of the grave? Do you neglect to worship the Lord? Do you rail at His people? Do you scoff at all religion because of the many tokens of God's goodness that He has manifested toward you? Come, now, be a man! Sink not below the level of a brute, for even a brute will render good for good! It is the devil who renders evil for good, yet you are sinking to his level if you continue in sin and turn not unto God who has dealt so kindly and so graciously with you.

The next reflection to help you to repentance is this. As God has dealt so kindly with you while you have been living in sin, *then it is untrue, as*

you thought, that He is unwilling to forgive. There are many who do not seek God's mercy because they think it is not to be obtained by them—but that is one of the devil's lies. Why, Man, as He has spared you so long, He must be willing to forgive you! There are some who even dare to invoke their Maker's curse upon their own limbs and eyes! If any of you have ever done that and yet the Lord has not done what you blasphemously asked Him to do, the reason for His forbearance must have been that He is full of long-suffering and gentleness! Turn to Him, I pray you and, with broken heart and contrite spirit, ask Him to forgive you—and you shall see how quickly He will do it, for it is still true that “He is good: for His mercy endures forever.” “He delights in mercy.” “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” The great goodness of God to rebellious sinners is proof positive that He is willing to bestow His forgiving mercy upon them as soon as they repent of their sin! And so it should be a great inducement to them to turn unto Him and live.

The argument, however, will appear to be still stronger if, in reading our text, we lay the emphasis upon the personal pronoun—“The goodness of God leads *you* to repentance.” Now, dear Friend, if God has taken the trouble to be especially good to *you*, in order to lead *you* to repentance, you may be certain that He would not have picked you out in this remarkable manner unless He had intended to welcome you if you do but come to Him! I will not point my finger at any particular person, nor will I intentionally direct a glance of my eyes at any special individual. But I feel persuaded that there are some here who have been, in the Providence of God, very signally favored. If your life story could be written, it would, perhaps, scarcely be believed! And as you look back upon difficulties and trials that you have been enabled to surmount, and upon the many blessings that have been showered upon you, it must sometimes seem to you almost like a dream! You cannot understand it! You say to yourself that you have been one of the darlings of destiny! If you have said that, do not talk any more about destiny, but think of what the Apostle says in our text—“The goodness of God leads you to repentance.”

I hope that you are one of His elect, chosen in Christ long before the foundation of the world, and that you have in your heart heard Him say to you, by His Holy Spirit, though not in words audible to your outward ear, “I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” Think of John Newton, the godless sailor reduced to the level of a slave on the coast of Africa. Yet, after going from sin to sin, being spared to stand in the church of St. Mary Woolnoth, for many a year to preach the Gospel of “free Grace and dying love.” So the many fevers from which he suffered could not kill him—and his various shipwrecks could not drown him, for God had ordained that he must come home, find the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, and be His faithful servant all the rest of his days! And you, my Friend, who have long been roaming about the world, must come to that same Savior if you really wish to be saved! You are like a besieged city, yet something more powerful than great guns are now ranged against you. The batteries of Almight-

ty Love have come into the field! Providence after Providence has surrounded you with the gracious artillery of Divine Mercy! You cannot escape! Therefore, surrender to your Best Friend! Surrender to your God! Surrender to holiness, happiness and everlasting life! God help you to do so, for the legitimate argument of undeserved goodness given to the worst of men is that it should lead them speedily to repentance and to eternal life! This personal pronoun is in the singular, so I pray you, my Brother, and you, my Sister, to take home to your own heart the message of the text—"The goodness of God leads you to repentance."

Now I want, just for a minute or two, before I close, to address myself to those who have repented. Beloved Friends, shall I tell you what your experience has been? I think I can, if I tell you what mine has been! First of all, when I really came to know the Lord Jesus Christ, I discovered that He loved sinners. Before I made that discovery, I thought He loved only the good and the righteous. But when I read His Word, I found that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. I thought, for a long while, that He wanted my good works and I had none to bring to Him. But, as I read His Word, I found that He gave Himself for our sins, not for our righteousnesses. Then I understood, as I read His Word, that whoever believed in Him would not be condemned. I believed in Him and I knew at once, from His Word, that I was not condemned—that He had died for me and that my sins were all pardoned!

And, let me tell you, I never repented before as I repented then! It seemed to me if it was really true that He had forgiven me all my sin and suffered and died that He might be able to justly forgive me—that I must have been almost as bad as the devil, himself, to have sinned against Him as I had done. Even while I rejoiced in being pardoned, I felt almost ashamed to look Him in the face and claim His mercy! To think that I should have sinned against such a Friend who was so ready to forgive me my guilt, made me ready to hide my head in the very dust! If He had bidden the thunders of His wrath to roll around me, I would not have been surprised. But when, instead of thunders, He gently said, "I love you and I forgive you," then was my heart broken—

***"Dissolved by His mercy I fell to the ground,
And wept to the praise of the mercy I'd found!"***

After that, I found that He was not only willing to pardon me, but that He had come to robe me in His own righteousness, that I might stand accepted in His place! At this, I wondered much, but when I saw that He really did impute to me His own righteousness and that I, a sinner, stood before God, "accepted in the Beloved," that pulled the sluices up, again, and I repented more than I did before as I realized that I, whom He had ordained to bless with such a wondrous righteousness as that, would ever have been a lover of sin instead of a lover of the Lord!

Then a voice whispered to me that, being pardoned and justified, I was also adopted into the family of God, whereat I wondered, more than ever, how it could be that an heir of wrath should be able to say, "Abba, Father." As I understood this, I said, "Father, I did not know that You were my Father, or I would not have trespassed against You and gone away

from You as I have done." My voice was almost choked, my heart was full, and my tears freely flowed as I grieved that I had so long offended my Father and my God! To make a long story short, I find myself—I thank His name—repenting more and more every day I live! I am more and more angry with myself to think I should not have kept my Father's commands in my mind and served Him with my whole heart. I expect that as I learn more of His goodness, it will always continue to lead me to repentance—and I trust, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you can bear me witness that I do but speak what is also in your mind! The dearer Christ is to us, the blacker is sin in our sight. The sweeter the love of God is to us, the more bitter is the thought of having so long sinned against it. The more you see, in these shoreless, bottomless deeps, what Divine Grace has done *for* you and *to* you, the more you smite upon your breast and cry, "How could I ever have sinned against the Lord as I have done? And how can I sin against Him as I still continue to do?"

"Ah," says one, "but mine is a very bad case, for I have had a relapse. I thought I was saved, once, but I have been just as bad or even worse since then." Ah, but my Master delights to forgive His backsliding children! He has put this invitation in the Scriptures on purpose for *you*—"Turn, O backsliding children, says the Lord; for I am married unto you." Again and again He says, "Return! Return! Return! You, whom the Church, in God's name, has excommunicated, I yet invite you to return! It is an awful thing to lie under the ban of God's Church, for what is so done on earth is confirmed in Heaven, but, though you lie under this ban, I yet invite you to return unto Me, for I will receive you graciously and love you freely."

"Ah," says one, "but I do not feel my need of Christ as I could wish to feel it. I believe it in theory, but I do not feel it as I should." Well, be humbled about this—weep because you do not weep. Be grieved to think that you should be so hard-hearted. But, oh, remember that Christ can cure hard hearts quite as well as sinful ones! Come just as you are. You have a real need of Christ, whether you feel it or not. It is not your sense of need, but your *real* need of Christ that must draw you to Him. O you who are sick—and who is there among us who is not?—Come to the Great Physician and be made whole! I would gladly move your souls if I could, but this is not in man's power. There have been times when I have been able to stir you through and through, as the waves of the sea are moved by the wind, but I know that when man, only, has done this, all the tempest has soon subsided—and you have gone your way and have been as before!

But, oh, if God shall acknowledge this poor and imperfect statement of most precious Truth, then unto Him shall be the glory! Payson says, "Looking back on my sermons, I often wonder that God should ever have blessed a soul through them." And often do I think the same. I pray God to bless the message. Young Man, what say you to hauling down the black flag and running up the blood-red Cross tonight? You may yet be a minister of Christ—perhaps a missionary of the Cross. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, I bid you believe on Him and you shall live! And all of

you who are gathered here, I command you, as well as beseech, implore and entreat you—do not put away from you the Gospel which is preached in your hearing! Trust Christ and you shall live! If you will not do so, it may be that you will never again be exhorted to come to Christ. You may never again be told that He is willing and able to receive you. Oh, will you again go your ways and despise the Lord? Will you go to your merchandise and to your trade and neglect the salvation of your souls—and let them become still worse in this foul disease which ends in death and damnation? “Turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die?”

By that Cross where hung the Son of God in mortal flesh. By those five wounds and by the agonies He endured, I do implore you to look to Him and live! As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so lift I up the Son of Man to you, now, you sin-bitten sinners! Though you feel not the venom, yet look! Look! Look! Sinner, look, and you are saved! By the living God whose splendors of Grace I now proclaim, and whose splendors of wrath you shall one day feel if you reject His Son, look! Look yonder! See the blood! It flows for you, Sinner! See the hands of Jesus—they are nailed fast to the Cross! See His feet—fastened by the nails as if they would stay there till you come to Him! See that heart of His, how it streams with blood to wash away your many sins! O Sinner, look and live!

I cannot say more. God knows I cannot do more. I can only testify to you the Gospel. If you turn not at my message, I must be a swift witness against you at the Day of Judgment! I must say it—I must be a swift witness against you. Your blood is on your own heads! Christ is preached to you. Look and live! Believe and be saved! But reject Him and he that believes not shall be damned! And I can only say, “Amen,” to that if you reject so great a salvation.

Yet, I pray you, think not so much of the Law as of the Gospel, nor think so much of Hell as of the Christ who has delivered His people from Hell! Nor so much of Divine wrath as of God's goodness. It is a good God whom I have to set before you. I never so much wish to be eloquent as when I have to speak of Him and all His love to guilty sinners. What has He done to any of us but that which is good? Even if He has sorely smitten us, it has been in mercy that He has done it. Though you may have lain for weeks upon a sickbed, it was meant to cure your souls of the fatal disease of sin! That limb was broken that your spirit might be healed! That loss of sight was sent that you might learn, by inward sight, to see the Lord Jesus as your Savior! God is all goodness, mercy, love and tenderness—and He has set His own dear Son before you, saying to you, “Believe in Him, and you shall be saved! ‘Come, now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’” Will you not turn unto Him and live? Eternal Spirit, turn them and they shall be turned, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

LUKE 13:11-35.

Verses 11, 12. *And, behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.* Observe the word, "Behold," here. Sometimes, in old books, they used to put a hand in the margin to call attention to something special in the text. So, this word seems as though nobody in the synagogue was worthy of such special notice as the most forlorn and desolate individual there—"a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up." It was to be a happy Sabbath for her, though she did not know it. She used to go to the synagogue, though it must have been painful for her to be present. Possibly she could not even see the minister, she was so "bowed together." It must have been a great surprise to her when the Savior called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity."

13. *And He laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.* I should think she did! We have no record of what she said. She may have merely cried out, "Hallelujah," but the very look of her—her streaming eyes filled with gratitude, her face beaming with delight all tended to glorify God! Even if she had said nothing, her being made straight would, of itself, have glorified God! And just as that once crooked woman could glorify God, so can a guilty sinner, crushed and helpless, glorify God. It was when Christ's hands were laid upon her that she was made straight. Oh, that He would lay His hands on some of you! May this be to you the saving Sabbath of the year, that God may be glorified in you!

14. *And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation. Poor soul! Surely he was more crooked than the infirm woman was, but, alas, he did not get healed.*

14. *Because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, but not on the Sabbath.* The Lord then answered him—and what an answer it was!

15-17. *The Lord then answered him, and said, You hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath? And when He had said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.* His reply was unanswerable.

18. *Then said He.* They were in a right frame for hearing, having been rendered attentive by their admiration for His miraculous work and His wondrous words.

18-22. *Unto what is the Kingdom of God like, and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air*

lodged in the branches of it. And again He said, *Whereunto shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.* That is practically what He was always doing—"journeying toward Jerusalem," toward that great climax of His life—His substitutionary death upon the Cross of Calvary.

23. *Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that are saved?* That is a question that many have asked—and some have vainly tried to answer. What did Jesus reply?

23, 24. *And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate.* Instead of gratifying idle curiosity, He excites to diligence in seeking entrance into the narrow way.

24. *For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* They will only seek, not strive, to enter in. There will also come, in the future, a time when they may seek as they will and strive as they will to enter in, but it will be too late. Once having passed into another world, there will be no hope for any seeker or striver.

25. *When once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut the door and you begin to stand outside, and to knock at the door.* They do not like to go away. They are reluctant to meet their final doom. Oh, that they had been wise enough to cry for mercy when it was to be had! Now they stand and begin to knock—and more than that, they begin to plead.

25. *Saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us!* All this earnestness, all this deference, all this reverence have come too late.

25, 26. *And He shall answer and say unto you, I know not who you are: then shall you begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Your Presence, and You have taught in our streets.* "We were regular hearers of the Word. We observed all the usual forms of religion—we even went to the Communion Table."

27, 28. *But He shall say, I tell you, I know not who you are; depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.* Driven away, yet they could see the saintly ones there and see their own kith and kin there, for they were Jews, and they could see "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets" there, but they themselves were cast out! And what was even worse for them—

29. *And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God.* Rank outsiders! Far-off heathen! Outrageous sinners, harlots—"they shall come" and repent and "sit down in the Kingdom of God," and this shall cut to the quick those who were hearers of the Word, but who perished because they were workers of iniquity!

30. *And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.* Many who, today, seem to be unlikely to be converted—those who are "last" in character—will yet be "first" in repentance. And there are "first" in privileges and even in hopefulness, who

will be “last” in the Great Day of account. May we take home to our hearts this solemn warning!

31. *The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto Him, get You out and depart from here, for Herod will kill You.* Think of the Pharisees being concerned about Christ's life! What an affectation of regard! Yet it was only affectation. We must always be on our guard against the foes of God even when they speak most fairly. Indeed, it is their agreeable, affectionate words that we have most cause to dread!

32. *And He said unto them, Go you and tell that fox.* Jesus called Herod a fox because he wanted to get Christ out of his territory without having the trouble of driving Him away. So he sent this roundabout message to try to make a coward of the Lord and to get Him to go off on His own account.

32. *Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.* That is, “I shall stay My full time here. While I have work to do, I shall do it, and I am not going away until it is finished. I am not afraid of Herod threatening to kill Me, for I am Immortal till My work is done.” He is not even flurried, or put about by such a message as that. Besides, when men mean to bite, they do not usually bark—and if Herod had meant to kill Christ just then, he would not have told Him what he was going to do.

33. *Nevertheless I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following for it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem.* What a sad thing for Christ to have to say! So many holy men had been murdered in Jerusalem that He roughly put it as being true, in the main, that all the Prophets were martyred there—the exceptions only proving the rule.

34. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kill the Prophets and stone them that are sent unto you; how often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen does gather her brood under her wings, and you would not!* There was their weakness—they were like a brood of chickens! There was His power to protect them, like a hen gathers her brood under her wings! Yet there was their infatuation—that they would rather perish than come and be sheltered beneath His almighty wings—“and you would not.”

35. *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, You shall not see Me until the time comes when you shall say, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.* There will be no true glory for Jerusalem until the Jews are converted. There will be no return of Christ to that royal city until they shall welcome Him with louder hosannas than they gave when He rode in triumph through the streets and entered into the Temple. The Lord grant that we may never reject Christ! Let us run, even now, like little chicks, and hide beneath the wings of the Eternal.

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

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

CONCERNING THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD NO. 3154

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 22, 1909.

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 20, 1873.*

***“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance
and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God
leads you to repentance?”
Romans 2:4.***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same verse, are as follows—Sermons #1714, Volume 29—
EARNEST EXPOSTULATION and #2857, Volume 49—GOD'S GOODNESS LEADING TO
REPENTANCE—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

IT is a great sign of love on God's part that He condescends to reason with men. When they had offended against Him, He might have said to them, “I will punish you for your offenses,” and He might have gone His way until the day for carrying out His threat arrived. But instead of doing so, He is unwilling that any should perish. According to His own declaration, He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but would rather that he should turn unto Him and live. And, therefore, He pauses and expostulates. When a man has been greatly offended by another and is very angry with him, he does not usually stay to reason with his opponent—his anger is too hot for that. But if he is of a meek and gentle spirit, and anxious that the quarrel should be ended, he begins to reason with the other man and says to him, “Why did you act so unkindly towards me? Why did you treat me thus? You have acted most unjustly—have you no sense of right? I have not deserved this at your hands—why, then, did you thus deal with me? Come now, do you utterly hate or despise me, or why do you thus continue to annoy and provoke me?” In such a fashion as this, but with Infinite tenderness, the Lord reasons with sinners. So, dear Friend, if you are still unconverted, regard it as a clear proof of God's loving kindness toward you that He again sends to you the word of expostulation! Take it for granted that he desires your good and wishes you well, otherwise He would not have bid His servant say to you, “Do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

From the connection of our text, it would appear that there were some, in Paul's day, as there are in ours, who, seeing the great wickedness of mankind and observing that God did not at once destroy the ungodly, gathered from that fact that they, themselves, might sin with impunity. Seeing that God did not launch His thunderbolts at even the most gross sinners—and strike them with immediate and total destruction by pesti-

lence, famine, or sword—these people wickedly said, “What does it matter what sins or crimes we commit? Evidently God is asleep, or winks at such deeds as these. Or perhaps there is no God at all! Anyhow, let us live in sin and take pleasure therein, for there will be no evil consequences to us if we do so. We may eat the fat, drink the sweet and enjoy ourselves to our hearts’ content and there will be no one to call us to account.” So that from the very fact that God was merciful and gracious, they inferred that they might be sinful and rebellious! And because God’s foot was slow to come in vengeance, they imagined that God’s hand would not be heavy when He did come, and they said, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!” It was to a sinner of this sort that Paul put the question, “Do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering?” I am going to put that question to you who are here—and I pray that the Holy Spirit may put it to the conscience of every unconverted man and woman!

I. Now first LET US HONOR THE GOODNESS, FORBEARANCE AND LONG-SUFFERING OF GOD.

The description given by the Apostle is threefold. “The riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering.” I shall probably not be wrong in saying that God’s “goodness” may refer to the way in which He has overlooked all our past sins, so that He has not yet dealt with us in justice concerning them. His forbearance may refer to our present sins, the transgressions of this day and hour, and His long-suffering may refer to our future sins, for He knows that we shall continue to sin, yet He does not destroy us, but still bears with us. What a heavy weight is upon my mind and heart as I think of the forbearance of God towards the impenitent with regard to their past sins! Why, there are some of you who have committed sins that you would be ashamed to have mentioned—sins against light and knowledge, too, which you knew to be sins, not merely one or two, but very many! It would have been the easiest possible thing in the world for God to have destroyed you, yet He has not done so. How long can you keep your temper when you are provoked? Five minutes? Half an hour? “That is a long time,” you say. Suppose you were insulted to your face, how long would you hold your peace and bear it? An hour? I fear there are not many of you who would do that, but that you would soon give an answer to the man who had dared thus to challenge you. What, then, shall I say of God, who has borne with some here thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, perhaps 80 years, in which the mere fact of their living has been an insult to Him, for they have lived in opposition to His will and His Law and have often defied Him to His face? And in their provoking blasphemy have even invited Him to damn their bodies and souls! Oh, the amazing mercy of a God who can bear with a sinner for 12 months, who can even bear with him for 50 times 12 months and can still stand—and in tones of pity and entreaty say, “Come now, come even *now*, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Then, next, it is no small mercy that God bears with your present sins, so despise not the riches of His forbearance to you now. Most of you have long been hearers of the Gospel. You are sitting in the place where you have sat and heard the Gospel preached hundreds of times—and the very pew you are sitting in might witness against you that although you have so long heard it, you have refused to obey it! You have promised better things, but you have never performed them. You have lied, not to men, but to God! You have lulled your conscience to sleep when God has spoken to you through it and you have even quenched His Holy Spirit when He has striven with you—yet up to this moment, God who, without uttering a word could send your guilty soul to Hell, forbears to do so! He cries, “How can I give you up?” He looks the rebel in the face and says to him, “How can I damn you? How can I cast you into Hell? My compassions are moved towards you. My repentings are kindled together.” It is indeed great Grace for God to do this—and He is doing it now! Every moment that an unconverted man is out of Hell, God is manifesting towards him the riches of His forbearance. And it is no small strain upon Divine Mercy when men continue to sin notwithstanding this forbearance. The Roman lictors used to carry on their shoulders the rods with which prisoners were condemned to be beaten—and in the center of the rods was the axe for the final punishment of death. Those rods were bound with cords having many knots, and the lictors would slowly untie the knots while the judge waited to see if the prisoner would say something that would prevent him from being beaten—but when the last knot was untied, they bared his back to scourge him. The judge still looked at him to see if there was any sign of repentance—and if there was not any, then came the axe! So, with regard to some of you, God has been undoing the knots one by one—yes, and He has beaten you with more than one of His rods—you have suffered from sickness, poverty and many other tribulations. God’s rods are smiting you now, but He is slow to take up the axe. He is stern in His judgment upon the impenitent, but He is full of pity and compassionate—and unwilling to deal the death-blow if it can be prevented! “Turn you,” He says, “turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?” And with all the eloquence of words, He cries to men that they would turn unto Him and live!

Then there is the long-suffering of God with regard to sins that are yet to be committed. O Sinner, you cannot promise that you will not sin in the future! You may foolishly say, “I will not,” but the Ethiopian might sooner change his skin and the leopard his spots as that you, who are accustomed to do evil, might begin in your own strength to do well! The fountain of your heart is foul—so polluted streams must continue to flow from it. You are born of such a race and you have so added to your natural depravity by your constant sinfulness that you will still go on to sin until Grace changes and renews you! How is it that God, who knows this, does not strike you out of existence? Is He going to spare you for another year to still set your hard heart against His love? Sinner, does God mean to spare you for another seven years’ fornication and lust? Will He permit

you to live another 10 years to still be a thief? Shall you have another 20 years in which every Sabbath shall be spent in sin and in which almost every night shall see you reeling as a drunkard through the streets? Oh, if God knows that you will sin like this, how is it that He bears with you? If the destroying angel is told what you will be, he will stand with his sword drawn, or with his hand upon its hilt and say, "Commission me, dread Sovereign, to cleanse the earth of those who blaspheme Your name and break Your Law, and it shall be done!" But God says, "Put your sword into its sheath and wait a little longer! They shall have another appeal, another invitation and another entreaty." Oh, that these might be of use to them and that they might turn unto God, and live!

Beside this threefold appeal in the text, *God's goodness is manifested in great abundance*. "Do you despise *the riches of His goodness* and forbearance and long-suffering?" Truly God's mercy to us has been like a mine of riches. What has God not done for some of us? If I were not, at this moment, a Believer, I would be, of all here present, one of the most ungrateful. I will state my own case knowing it to be similar to that of many others who are present. Cradled in the home of piety, nurtured with the most tender care, taught the Gospel from my youth up, with the holiest example of my parents, the best possible checks all around to prevent me running into sin—yet, notwithstanding all that, sinning and revolting more and more but checked by conscience, as when a steed tries to leap forth, but its rider reins it in—yet still resolved to sin—determined to go further and yet further into it and even being angry with God for checking sin, trying to get the bit between one's teeth and to run away from God and sin worse than before! Then struck down by the hand of God in sickness, alarmed, terrified, resolving to live differently—but being raised up to health again, shaking off serious impressions—and with a laugh going back to the follies of sin. Then once more rebuked, made to tremble, thunderstruck and awed before God—hearing of the precious Savior, yet putting Him off and saying that another day would be soon enough to be a Christian! That is my sad story until Sovereign Grace met with me. And that is also the story of many others present here!

Yet all the while, God has kept you supplied with the blessings of Providence so that you have never suffered want. He has preserved you from the dangers and trials and troubles which a great many others have had to endure. He has placed you where an earnest Gospel ministry never lets you rest in your sin. He has put you where faithful friends plead with you with tears to care about your immortal soul. He has raised you up from sickness, perhaps preserved you in the day of battle, delivering you when many others died all around you. Has God done all this for you and are there in your mind no tender thoughts toward Him, no grateful memories of His great mercy? Oh think of where you might have been long ago! Might they not have said over your dead body, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust?" Yes, long ago there might have been a portion for you in that dread place where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched! Think of the gracious promises that are still proclaimed in

your hearing, that if you return unto the Lord, He will have mercy upon you and will forgive you all your trespasses! Think of the Christ of God who died for sinners on the Cross. Think of the Spirit of God who has come down to earth to strive and plead with sinners. Think of the Father's almighty love which is bestowed upon all those who put their trust in Jesus Christ, His Son. Oh, there have indeed been riches of mercy, riches of goodness, riches of forbearance, riches of long-suffering and, Man, do you *despise* all this? Woman, away yonder, do *you* despise all this? All this mercy has passed before you in one long panorama for many years—what do you say about it? Do you not say, “My God, forgive me that I have so long slighted You?” Or will you still despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering?

I might, if I had time, try to measure the long-suffering of God. And if I did, I should need four lines. *The excellence of God's goodness is manifested by four considerations.* First consider the Divine Person who manifests it. Remember who God is! Think how great He is. No one likes to be insulted by his inferiors, then how can God bear to be insulted by the creatures whom He has made, the creatures who owe Him their very breath? How can God endure to be opposed and defied by one so utterly insignificant and unworthy as man is? Yet He does not crush His rebellious creatures as He well might.

Think next of His Omniscience. We sometimes bear with people because we forget much of what they have said or done, but what would it be to have before your mind's eye all the evil speaking of 20 years ago and all the hard sayings and unkind acts of a long life of enmity against you? Yet, though God has all our sins always before Him and our most secret sins in the light of His Countenance, He still forbears to smite and destroy us!

Think, too, how powerful He is—none can escape from Him when He pursues them. Moses could run away from Pharaoh and hide in the land of Midian, but where could we flee to escape from the vengeance of God if He had resolved at once to punish all those who had rebelled against Him? How could we have stood up against Him? Where are the bars of brass that could resist the Omnipotence of the besieging God? None of His creatures can stand against Him anymore than the stubble can stand against the flame, or the straw against the fire. And yet He has such forbearance that He has put up with us all these years! O blessed God, I love You for Your wondrous patience to me and to my fellow sinners that You still spare us though we have so sorely provoked You!

Then take another measuring line and consider the being to whom God's goodness is manifested—that is, *man*. Think of what man is and then ask yourself if such a little insignificant creature dares to proclaim war against God! Has he the audacity to defy God and to say, “I will not do what You have bid me do?” Why, the ant that crosses your path on a summer evening is not half as insignificant in comparison with you as you are when compared with the Almighty God! And it is man who has received so much from God—man, who could not live an instant without

God's permission and support—who stands up and says that he will not be God's servant and that he will not accept the Savior whom God has appointed! O you heavens, how is it that you do not fall and crush the miscreant? Great God, it is only because You are God that You put up with sinful men so long!

Another measuring line is this—consider the conduct to which God's goodness is a reply. In other words, consider what *sin* is. There is not a person here who has ever seen sin as it really is in God's sight. In the least sin there is more evil than there is even in Hell, for Hell is at least the vindication of Divine Justice, but sin defies that Justice. Sin is an unlimited and unmitigated evil. There are sins that are so wanton, so aggravating, so willful and men go so much out of their way to commit them! There are sins that are repeated over and over—even in spite of chastisement. There are some sins that are so polluting, so defiling in which a man degrades and ruins others as well as himself. And there are some sins so infamous that it is marvelous that God still bears with the men who commit them and that while He holds back the thunderbolts of Justice, He holds out the silver scepter of mercy and says even to the chief of sinners, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved."

Then if we needed one other measuring line, it would be the consideration of the gifts which God's goodness brings. Our common mercies—daily bread, raiment to put on, health for necessary labor, rescue from peril, preservation from death, the institution of the Sabbath, the gift of the Bible, the Gospel of salvation—these are immeasurable blessings! Who, then, can calculate the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God?

I cannot help feeling ashamed of myself while I am talking to you upon this theme, for I have a case to plead for God that I think I ought to plead much better than I do. And if I knew how to do it, I would do it, my gracious, blessed God! Alas, alas, there are some of you who treat God so ill, yet He has never done you any harm and He is always doing you good! If His service were slavery, I would not wonder if you did not serve Him. If to be His children were to be tortured and made unhappy, I could not so much blame you. But as His service is perfect freedom. As His love is ineffable bliss. As His Presence is Heaven begun below, why do you flee from that which is for your own highest happiness and run away from that which is all of God's mercy to you? O Sin, you have made men insane! You have given them over to a madness which makes them see no beauty in God, no charms in the Person of the Redeemer and no attraction in the salvation which He has bought with His own most precious blood! O Divine Spirit, I cannot plead as I would—You come and make men value as they ought, the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God!

II. Now let me briefly try to show you HOW MEN MAY DESPISE THE GOODNESS, FORBEARANCE AND LONG-SUFFERING OF GOD.

First, many persons do it *by never considering that they do receive goodness from God.* They take all that God gives them as a matter of

course and never think about it. If you have been very generous to some poor man and have relieved his needs for several years, I think you must sometimes feel grieved if you find that he takes it quite as a matter of course and never shows any gratitude to you, but *expects* you to still do just as you have so long done. You think to yourself, "I am not bound to help him. It is entirely an act of favor on my part." You do not like to say, "I will not give him anymore," but you are strongly tempted to say so. Now if you have been ungrateful to your God for all His goodness to you, I pray you not to continue so. The swine walk under the oak and eat up the acorns that fall from it, but never grunt out their thanks for them—will you be such swine as that? Oh, be not so! Rather imitate the little chicken which drinks out of the stream and then raises its head as if to thank God. I know that there are many here who would not like to be considered ungrateful, neither are they so to their fellow men. I know you would scorn such a character, yet you are ungrateful to your best Friend who has done far more for you than all the rest of your friends put together! Do not despise His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering by allowing it to remain unnoticed.

Some despise the long-suffering of God *by opposing His design in it*. The design of God's goodness is to make bad men into good men. The design of God's mercy to impenitent sinners is to make them penitent. You say to God, "I will not have You for my God" and He replies, "I will prolong your life. I will prosper you in business. I will multiply My favors to you." Yet you still say, "But I am not going to be moved by all this." God comes to your bedside when you are lying there very ill—the cold sweat of death is standing on your brow and He draws the fever from your system and again prolongs your life—and gives you another 10 years here, yet you say to Him, "I love You none the better even after doing all this for me." Is that right? God has been gently leading you, not driving you, but drawing you towards Himself out of love towards you—do not despise His loving kindness by pulling the other way.

There are some who do even worse than this, for *they pervert the long-suffering and forbearance of God into a reason for being unbelieving*. They say to themselves, "We have got on very well in this world although we have never been religious. We have had a good time of it though we have never prayed. We have been raised up from sickness, though afterwards we never thought about religion anymore, so we may do as we like. God will not be angry with us, He will not stretch out His hand and smite us." Ah, I know nothing that is more perilous to an ungodly man than to go on prospering! But whenever I meet with an ungodly man who is in great trouble, I have a hope that God has chosen that man unto eternal life and that, therefore, He will not let him go to Hell, but puts bars and posts across the road to block the way to Perdition. But as for the man who is prosperous though ungodly, in regard to whom every wind seems to be favorable to his ships and every season gives him better crops than his neighbors have—and whose children are multiplied, and so on—do you know why God acts thus towards him? I can tell you.

I have heard of a Christian woman who had a very wicked husband. He was a dreadful swearer and always opposed her in every good thing, yet she was the kindest wife that a man ever had. One night, or rather, early in the morning, as he sat drinking with his companions, he told them that he had a splendid wife and that if they were all to go home with him, even though it was two o'clock in the morning, if she had gone to bed, she would get up and prepare supper for them without showing the slightest sign of displeasure, but would, for his sake, wait upon them as if they were lords in the land! They went to the house and the husband called for his wife, as she *had* gone to bed. She put on her clothes, came down and got ready such things as she had—and made them all welcome. They asked her why she was so kind to one who was so brutal to her, but she would not answer. Another day she said to her husband, when *he* asked a similar question, “I have prayed for you thousands of times and I have done all I can to bring you to the Savior. Yet there is a dreadful fear in my mind that you will be lost. I am afraid you will continue to sin against God and that you will be sent to Hell, so I have made up my mind that I will make you as happy as you can be while you are here, for I fear that you will never have any happiness hereafter.”

And I believe it is for the same reason that God lets wicked men get rich. “There,” says the Lord, “they shall enjoy themselves while they can. I will give them these things while they are here, for the time will come when I can show them no pity, but My inexorable Justice must drive them from all pleasure forever.” I think if there had been any true manhood in that man whom I have mentioned, he would have said to his wife, “Woman, do you feel like that towards me? Have you loved me so much and prayed for me so long, and have you put up with any inconvenience so that you may do me good? Then, at any rate, I will be unkind to you no longer and I will hear what these things are that you say will make for my peace.” A sane man would talk like that—and if you are sane, I pray you now to heed what your God says to you! This is how He put the case long ago and He might put it to you in the same way—“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner and the donkey his master’s crib, but Israel does not know. My people do not consider.” Which of you would keep an ox or a donkey if it never served you in any way? Which of you would suffer even a dog to be in your house if it always flew at you when you came near it? Yet God has put up with you, His ungrateful creatures, for these many years. Will you never kiss the hand that feeds you? Are you more asinine than a donkey? Are you more of a beast than the ox, itself, is? Oh, may God deliver sinners from continuing such injustice to Him and such cruelty to themselves!

III. Now, lastly, LET US FEEL THE FORCE OF THE LEADING OF GOD’S GOODNESS—“the goodness of God leads you to repentance.”

It ought to be reason enough for our not despising God’s goodness that *it is a very unjust thing to despise it*. I looked in classic history to see if I could find any parallel case to this between man and God—and I

found one something like it. In Alexander's day, a soldier who had been shipwrecked, was hospitably received by a certain person who took him to his house and fed and clothed him. But as soon as the soldier was able to get back to Alexander, he misrepresented the case with many lies, and asked the great commander to give him the house of the man who had entertained him. When Alexander afterwards found out the ingratitude of the wretch who thus tried to deprive his host of his own house in order to get it for himself, he ordered him to be branded on the forehead so that he might be known everywhere as the ungrateful guest! But what branding iron and what coals of juniper shall ever be hot enough to brand the ungrateful being who was created by God, fed by God, put in the way of mercy, invited by Grace—and yet remained ungrateful?

Seldom is man so ungenerous to his fellow man as man is to his God. The very men who would scorn to rob their fellow men of a farthing, go on robbing God without compunction all their lives! Men who are scrupulously just in their dealings with their fellow merchants will persist in injustice to the God who created them! Why is this base conduct? Oh, I pray you, continue it not! I would, with tears in my eyes, entreat you to continue it no longer. Are you not under great obligation to God? You know that He made you. Deep down in your soul there is a voice that says to you, "It is God who keeps you alive." You know that it is so! Then how can you imagine that the Creator and Preserver of all can be forgotten with impunity? Let me give you a text that will remind you how dangerous a thing it is to live in the neglect of God's goodness—"The wicked shall be turned into Hell," (especially notice the next words), "and all the nations that *forget* God." When I began to quote that text, you may have said to yourself, "I am not wicked. I do not do anything outrageous." But listen again to the rest of the verse, "and all the nations that *forget*"—not the nations that swear, or blaspheme, or rebel against God—but "all the nations that *forget God*." "That is only one text," you say. Ah, but here is another and there are many like it—"How shall we escape if we"—what? "If we *neglect*"—that is all—it is only a matter of neglect—"if we *neglect* so great a salvation?" Despising God by neglecting Him—despising Him by forgetting Him—this is a grievous kind of despising that will bring eternal ruin upon men!—

***"Lord, do You the sinner turn!
Rouse him from his senseless state.
Let him not Your counsel spurn,
Rue his fatal choice too late!"***

It may seem to some of you, child's play to face this congregation and to speak as I am now doing. But the Lord knows it is no child's play to me! I feel that I am accountable to God for all of you who, within a short time, will have to stand before my Master's Judgment Seat. And if at the last tremendous day I were summoned to give an account of how I employed this opportunity of speaking to you. And if I should have to confess that I did not tell you plainly that the neglect of God would ruin you forever. If I should have to confess that I was cold and indifferent—as cold and indifferent as you now are—then *my* soul would be crimsoned

with *your* soul's blood! But it cannot be, it shall not be so, for I do entreat you, by the living God and by the Christ who died to save sinners—by the certainty of death, by the certainty of judgment, by the splendors of Heaven and by the terrors of Hell—I do beseech you to consider the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God! Turn unto Him with weeping and with supplication and, above all, turn to the Gospel as it is here declared, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Or, to put it in Christ's own full way, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.”

The Lord bring you all to simple faith in Jesus Christ, His Son, then to obedience to Christ in the matter of Baptism—and then may He preserve you by His Grace until life's last hour, never again to despise, but forever to adore the goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering of God, for His dear name's sake!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 4; 5:1, 2.

Romans 4:1. *What shall we say, then, that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh, has 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 has something to boast about, but not before God.* Certainly, before God Abraham neither gloried nor yet was justified by his works!

3. *For what says the Scripture?* That is the question for us always to ask, “What says 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 works 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 works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.* 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. *Comes 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 justi-

fied 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 400 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 are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of no effect because the Law works 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,* [See Sermons #1347, Volume 23—HOW IS SALVATION RECEIVED? and #2159, Volume 36—THE HOLDFASTS OF FAITH—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] *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 you are one of the faithful, he is your father! And the Covenant which God made with Abraham and his seed was made with you and on your account if you are, indeed, a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ!

16-22. *Not to those only who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations) before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickens the dead and calls those things which are 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 your 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* [See Sermons #733, Volume 13—UNSTAGGERING FAITH and #1367, Volume 23—STRONG FAITH—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] *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 also able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.* O Soul, if you are like one who is dead. If you are devoid of all strength, Grace and savor—if you can but believe in God who can quicken the dead, if you will but

trust your soul in the hands of Him who is able even to raise dry bones out of their graves and make them live—your faith shall be imputed unto you for righteousness! Your faith is that which shall justify you in the sight of God and you shall 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 your God the honor to believe Him—to believe that He cannot lie—to believe that He has never promised what He is not able to perform. If you will do that, it is clear that you are one of Abraham’s seed and the Covenant made with Abraham was made with you 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 offenses and was raised again for our justification.* [See Sermon #2357, Volume 40—THE TWO PILLARS OF SALVATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] See the great Object of saving faith? Christ, once dead, has been raised from the dead—and if you would be saved—you must rely upon the crucified and risen Savior! If you thus believe that Jesus the Crucified is the Christ of God, the anointed Messiah and Redeemer, you prove that you are born of God! And if you trust yourself to the risen and glorified Christ, you have risen in Him and you shall rise to be with Him forever and ever.

Romans 5:1. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* [See Sermon #1456, Volume 25—PEACE—A FACT AND A FEELING—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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, perhaps 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 eyes 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!

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

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

COMING JUDGEMENT OF THE SECRETS OF MEN NO. 1849

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 12 1885,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"The day when God shall judge the secrets of men
by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel."
Romans 2:16.*

IT is impossible for any of us to tell what it cost the Apostle Paul to write the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. It is a shame, even, to speak of the things which are done of the vicious in secret places, but Paul felt that it was necessary to break through his shame and to speak out concerning the hideous vices of the heathen. He has left on record an exposure of the sins of his day which crimson the cheek of the modest when they read it—and makes both the ears of him that hears it to tingle. Paul knew that this chapter would be read, not in his age, alone, but in all ages, and that it would go into the households of the most pure and godly as long as the world should stand—and yet he deliberately wrote it—and wrote it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He knew that it must be written to put to shame the abominations of an age which was almost past shame. Monsters that revel in darkness must be dragged into the open, that they may be withered up by the light.

After Paul has thus written in anguish, he reminds himself of his chief comfort. While his pen was black with the words he had written in the first chapter, he was driven to write of his great delight. He clings to the Gospel with a greater tenacity than ever! As in the verse before us he needed to mention the Gospel, he did not speak of it as, "the Gospel," but, as, "*my Gospel*." "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to *my Gospel*." He felt that he could not live in the midst of so depraved a people without holding the Gospel with both hands and grasping it as his very own. "*My Gospel*," he says. Not that Paul was the author of it; not that Paul had an exclusive monopoly of its blessings, but that he had so received it from Christ, Himself, and regarded himself as so responsibly put in trust with it, that he could not disown it, even for an instant! So fully had he taken it into himself that he could not do less than call it, "*my Gospel*."

In another place he speaks of "our Gospel," thus using a *possessive* pronoun, to show how Believers identify themselves with the Truth of God which they preach. He had a Gospel—a definite form of Truth—and he believed in it beyond all doubt. Therefore he spoke of it as, "*my Gospel*."

Herein we hear the voice of faith which seems to say, "Though others reject it, I am sure of it and allow no shade of mistrust to darken my mind. To me it is glad tidings of great joy—I hail it as 'my Gospel.' If I am called a fool for holding it so, I am content to be a fool and to find all my wisdom in my Lord."—

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

Is not this word, "my Gospel," the voice of love? Does he not, by this word, embrace the Gospel as the only love of his soul—for the sake of which he had suffered the loss of all things and did count them but dung—for the sake of which he was willing to stand before Nero and proclaim, even in Caesar's palace, the message from Heaven? Though each word should cost him a life, he was willing to die a thousand deaths for the holy cause. "My Gospel," he says, with a rapture of delight, as he presses to his bosom the sacred deposit of Truth.

"My Gospel." Does not this show his courage? As much as to say, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God onto salvation to everyone that believes." He says, "my Gospel," as a soldier speaks of, "my colors," or of, "my king." He resolves to bear this banner to victory and to serve this royal Truth even to the death.

"My Gospel." There is a touch of discrimination about the expression. Paul perceives that there are other gospels and he makes short work with them, for he says, "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." The Apostle was of a gentle spirit. He prayed heartily for the Jews who persecuted him and yielded his life for the conversion of the Gentiles who maltreated him. But he had no tolerance for false gossellers! He exhibited great breadth of mind and, to save souls, he became all things to all men. But when he contemplated any alteration or adulteration of the Gospel of Christ, he thundered and lightened without measure! When he feared that something else might spring up among the philosophers, or among the Judaizers, that should hide a single beam of the glorious Sun of Righteousness, he used no measured language, but cried concerning the author of such a darkening influence, "Let him be accursed!" Every heart that would see men blessed, whispers an, "Amen," to the apostolic malediction. No greater curse can come upon mankind than the obscuration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Paul says of himself and his true Brethren, "We are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God," and he cries to those who turned aside from the one and only Gospel, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?" Of all new doctrines he speaks as of, "another gospel, which is not another, but there are some that trouble you."

As for myself, looking at the matter afresh, amidst all the filthiness which I see in the world this day, I lay hold upon the pure and blessed Word of God and call it all the more earnestly, my Gospel—mine in life

and mine in death, mine against all comers, mine forever, God helping me. It is, with emphasis—“*my Gospel.*”

Now let us notice what it was that brought up this expression, “My Gospel.” What was Paul preaching? Certainly not upon any of the gentle and tender themes which we are told, nowadays, ought to occupy all our time! No, he is speaking of the terrors of the Law—and in that connection he speaks of, “my Gospel.”

Let us come at once to our text. It will need no dividing, for it divides itself. First, let us consider that *on a certain day God shall judge mankind.* Secondly, *on that day God will judge the secrets of men.* Thirdly, when He judges the secrets of men, *it will be by Jesus Christ.* And fourthly, *this is according to the Gospel.*

I. We begin with the solemn Truth of God that ON A CERTAIN DAY GOD WILL JUDGE MEN. A judgement is going on daily. God is continually holding court and considering the works of the sons of men. Every evil deed that they do is recorded in the register of doom and each good action is remembered and laid up in store by God. That judgement is reflected, in a measure, in the consciences of men. Those who know the Gospel and those who know it not, alike, have a certain measure of Light by which they know right from wrong. Their consciences are all the while accusing or else excusing them. This session of the heavenly court continues from day to day, like that of our local magistrates. But this does not prevent, but rather *necessitates* the holding of an ultimate great assize.

As each man shines into another world, there is an immediate judgement passed upon him. But this is only the foreshadowing of that which will take place at the end of the world. There is a judgement, also, passing upon nations, for as nations will not exist as nations in another world, they have to be judged and punished in this present state. The thoughtful reader of history will not fail to observe how sternly this justice has been dealt with empire after empire when they have become corrupt. Colossal dominions have withered to the ground when sentenced by the King of kings. Go and ask, today, “Where is the empire of Assyria? Where are the mighty cities of Babylon? Where are the glories of the Medes and Persians? What has become of the Macedonian power? Where are the Caesars and their palaces?” These empires were forces established by cruelty and used for oppression—they fostered luxury and licentiousness—and when they were no longer tolerable, the earth was purged from their polluting existence!

Ah me, what horrors of war, bloodshed and devastation have come upon men as the result of their iniquities! The world is full of the monuments, both of the mercy and the justice of God. In fact, the monuments of His justice, if rightly viewed, are proofs of His goodness, for it is mercy on the part of God to put an end to evil systems when, like a nightmare, they weigh heavily upon the bosom of mankind! The Omnipotent Judge has not ceased from His Sovereign rule over kingdoms—and our own country may yet have to feel His chastisements. We have often laughed among ourselves at the ridiculous idea of the New Zealander sitting on the

broken arch of London Bridge amid the ruins of this metropolis. But is it quite so ridiculous as it looks?

It is more than possible it will be realized if our iniquities continue to abound! What is there about London that it should be more enduring than Rome? Why should the palaces of *our* monarchs be eternal if the palaces of Koyunjik have fallen? The almost boundless power of the Pharaohs has passed away and Egypt has become the meanest of nations—why should not England come under the same condemnation? What are we? What is there about our boastful race, whether on this side of the Atlantic or the other, that we should monopolize the favor of God? If we rebel and sin against Him, He will not hold us guiltless, but will deal out impartial justice to an ungrateful race.

Still, though such judgments proceed every day, yet there is to be a day, a period of time, in which, in a more distinct, formal, public and final manner, God will judge the sons of men! We might have guessed this by the light of nature and of reason. Even heathen peoples have had a dim notion of a day of doom, but we are not left to guess about it—we are solemnly assured of it in Holy Scripture! Accepting this Book as the Revelation of God, we know beyond all doubt that a day is appointed in which the Lord will judge the secrets of men!

By judging is here meant all that concerns the proceedings of trial and award. God will judge the race of men, that is to say, first, there will be a session of majesty and the appearing of a Great White Throne surrounded with pomp of angels and glorified beings. Then a summons will be issued, bidding all men come to judgement, to give their final account. The heralds will fly through the realms of death and summon those who sleep in the dust—for the quick and the dead shall all appear before that judgement Seat. John says, “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.” And he adds, “The sea gave up the dead which were in it and death and Hell delivered up the dead which were in them.” Those that have been so long buried that their dust is mingled with the soil and has undergone a thousand transmutations shall, nevertheless, be made to put in a *personal appearance* before the judgement Seat of Christ!

What an assize that will be! You and I and all the myriad myriads of our race shall be gathered before the Throne of the Son of God. Then, when all are gathered, the indictment will be read and each one will be examined concerning things done in the body, according to what he has done. Then the books shall be opened and everything recorded there shall be read before the face of Heaven. Every sinner shall then hear the story of his life published to his everlasting shame! The good shall *ask* no concealment and the evil shall *find* none. Angels and men shall then see the truth of things, and the saints shall judge the world! Then the great Judge, Himself, shall give the decision—He shall pronounce sentence upon the wicked and execute their punishment. No partiality shall there be seen—there shall be no private conferences to secure immunity for nobles, no hushing up of matters that great men may escape contempt for their crimes! All men shall stand before the one great judgement Seat—

evidence shall be given concerning them all—and a righteous sentence shall go forth from His mouth who knows not how to flatter the great!

This will be so and it *ought* to be so. God *should* judge the world because He is the universal Ruler and Sovereign. There has been a day for sinning—there ought to be a day for punishing. A long age of rebellion has been endured and there must be a time when justice shall assert her supremacy. We have seen an age in which reformation has been commanded; in which mercy has been presented; in which expostulation and entreaty have been used. And there ought, at last, come a day in which God shall judge both the quick and the dead—and measure out to each the final result of life. It ought to be so for the sake of the righteous. They have been slandered; they have been despised and ridiculed; worse than that, they have been imprisoned and beaten and put to death times without number—the best have had the worst of it—and there ought to be a judgement to set these things right. Besides, the festering iniquities of each age cry out to God that He should deal with them. Shall such sin go unpunished? To what end is there a moral government at all? And how is its continuance to be secured if there are not rewards and punishments and a day of account? For the display of His holiness, for the overwhelming of His adversaries, for the rewarding of those who have faithfully served Him, there must be and shall be a day in which God will judge the world!

Why does it not come at once? And when will it come? The precise date we cannot tell. Man nor angel knows that day and it is idle and profane to guess at it, since even the Son of Man, as such, knows not the time. It is sufficient for us that the Judgement Day will surely come. It is sufficient, also, to believe that it is postponed on purpose to give breathing time for mercy and space for repentance. Why should the ungodly want to know when that day will come? What is that day to you? To you it shall be darkness and not light! It shall be the day of your consuming as fully dry stubble—therefore bless the Lord that He delays His coming—and reckon that His long-suffering is for your salvation!

Moreover, the Lord keeps the scaffold standing till He has built up the fabric of His Church. Not yet are the elect all called out from among the guilty sons of men! Not yet are all the redeemed with blood redeemed with power and brought forth out of the corruption of the age into the holiness in which they walk with God! Therefore the Lord waits for a while. But do not deceive yourselves. The great day of His wrath *is coming* and your days of reprieve are numbered! One day is, with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. You shall die, perhaps, before the appearing of the Son of Man, but you shall see His judgement Seat for all that—for *you* shall rise again as surely as He rose! When the Apostle addressed the Grecian sages at Athens, he said, “God now commands all men everywhere to repent because He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained; whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead.”

See you not, O you impenitent ones, that a risen Savior is the sign of your *doom*?! As God has raised Jesus from the dead, so shall He raise your bodies, that in these you may come to judgement! Before the judgement Seat shall every man and woman in this house give an account of the things done in the body, whether they are good or whether they are evil. Thus says the Lord.

II. Now I call your attention to the fact that “GOD WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN.” This will happen to all men, of every nation, of every age, of every rank and of every character. The Judge will, of course, judge their outward acts, but these may be said to have gone before them to judgement. Their *secret acts* are specially mentioned, because these will make judgement to be the more searching.

By, “the secrets of men,” the Scripture means those secret crimes which hide themselves away by their own infamy—which are too vile to be spoken of—which cause a shudder to go through a nation if they are but dragged, as they ought to be, into the daylight. Secret offenses shall be brought into judgement! The deeds of the night and of the closed room; the acts which require the finger to be laid upon the lips and a conspiracy of silence to be sworn. Revolting and shameless sins which must never be mentioned lest the man who committed them should be excluded from his fellows as an outcast, abhorred even of other sinners—all these shall be revealed. All that you have done, any of you, or, are doing, if you are bearing the Christian name and yet practicing secret sin, shall be laid bare before the universal gaze! If you sit here among the people of God and yet, where no eye sees you, you are living in dishonesty, untruthfulness, or uncleanness, it shall all be known and shame and confusion of face shall eternally cover you! Contempt shall be the inheritance to which you shall awake, when hypocrisy shall be no more possible. Be not deceived, God is not mocked! He will bring the secrets of men into judgement.

Especially our text refers to the hidden *motives* of every action, for a man may do that which is right from a wrong motive, and so the deed may be evil in the sight of God, though it seems right in the sight of men. Oh, think what it will be to have your motives all brought to light—to have it proven that you were godly for the sake of gain—that you were generous out of ostentation, or zealous for love of praise! Or that you were careful in public to maintain a religious reputation, but that, all the while, everything was done for self, and self only! What a strong light will that be which God shall turn upon our lives, when the darkest chambers of human desire and motive shall be as manifest as public acts! What a revelation will that be which makes manifest all thoughts, imaginations, lusts and desires! All anger, envy, pride and rebellion of the heart—what a disclosure will these make!

All the sensual desires and imaginations of even the best-regulated—what a foulness will these appear! What a day will it be, when the secrets of men shall be set in the full blaze of noon!

God will also reveal secrets that were secrets even to the sinners, themselves, for there is sin in us which we have never seen and iniquity in us which we have never discovered.

We have managed, for our own comfort's sake, to blind our eyes, somewhat, and we take care to avert our gaze from things which are inconvenient to see—but we shall be compelled to see all these evils in that day when the Lord shall judge the secrets of men! I do not wonder that when a certain Rabbi read in the book of Ecclesiastes that God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it is good, or whether it is evil, he wept! It is enough to make the best man tremble! Were it not for You, O Jesus, whose precious blood has cleansed us from all sin, where should we be! Were it not for Your righteousness, which shall cover those who believe in You, who among us could endure the thought of that terrible day? In You, O Jesus, we are made righteous and, therefore, we fear not the hour of trial, but were it not for You, our hearts would fail us for fear!

Now, if you ask me why God should judge the secrets of men—since this is not done in human courts and cannot be, for secret things of this kind come not under cognizance of our short-sighted tribunals—I answer it is because there is really nothing secret from God. We make a difference between secret and public sins, but He does not! All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do! All deeds are done in the immediate Presence of God who is personally present everywhere. He knows and sees all things as one upon the spot—and every secret sin is but conceived to be secret through the deluded fantasy of our ignorance. God sees more of a secret sin than a man can see of that which is done before his face. “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord.”

The secrets of men will be judged because often the greatest of moral acts are done in secret. The brightest deeds that God delights in are those that are done by His servants when they have shut the door and are alone with Him—when they have no motive but to please Him; when they studiously avoid publicity lest they should be turned aside by the praise of men—when the right hand knows not what the left hand does and the loving, generous heart devises liberal things and does it behind the screen, so that it should never be discovered how the deed was done. It were a pity that such deeds should be left out at the great audit. Thus, too, secret vices are also of the very blackest kind and to exempt them were to let the worst of sinners go unpunished! Shall it be that these polluted beings shall escape because they have purchased silence with their wealth? I say solemnly, “God forbid!” He does forbid it—what they have done in secret shall be proclaimed upon the housetops!

Besides, the secret things of men enter into the very essence of their actions. An action is, after all, good or bad very much according to its *motive*. It may *seem* good, but the motive may taint it and so, if God did not judge the secret part of the action, He would not judge righteously. He will weigh our actions and detect the design which led to them and the spirit which prompted them.

Is it not certainly true that the secret thing is the best evidence of the man's condition? Many a man will not do, in public, that which would bring him shame. Not because he is not black-hearted enough for it, but

because he is too much of a coward. That which a man does, when he thinks that he is entirely by himself, is the best revelation of the man. That which you will *not* do because it would be told of you, if you did ill, is a poor index of your real character. That which you will do because you will be praised for doing well, is an equally faint test of your heart. Such virtue is mere self-seeking, or mean-spirited subservience to your fellow man. But that which you do out of respect to no authority but your own conscience and your God; that which you do unobserved, without regard to what man will say concerning it—that it is which reveals you and discovers your real soul! Therefore God lays a special stress and emphasis here upon the fact that He will, in that day, judge “the secrets” of men by Jesus Christ.

Oh, Friends, if it does not make you tremble to think of these things, it should! I feel the deep responsibility of preaching upon such matters and I pray God, in His infinite mercy to apply these Truths to our hearts that they may be forceful upon our lives. These Truths ought to startle us, but I am afraid we hear them with small result—we have grown familiar with them and they do not penetrate us as they should. We have to deal, Brothers and Sisters, with an Omniscient God—with One who, once knowing, never forgets—with One to whom all things are always present! We are subjects of One who will conceal nothing out of fear, or favor of any man’s person—with One who will shortly bring the splendor of His Omniscience and the impartiality of His Justice to bear upon all human lives! God help us, wherever we wander and wherever we rest, to remember that each thought, word and act of each moment lies in that fierce light which beats upon all things from the Throne of God!

III. Another solemn revelation of our text lies in this fact, that “GOD WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN BY JESUS CHRIST.” He that will sit upon the Throne of God as the Vice Regent of God and as a Judge, acting for God, will be Jesus Christ. What a name for a Judge! The Savior—Anointed—Jesus Christ—He is to be the Judge of all mankind! Our Redeemer will be the Umpire of our destiny!

This will be, I doubt not, first, for the display of His Glory. What a difference there will be, then, between the Babe of Bethlehem’s manger, hunted by Herod, carried down by night into Egypt for shelter—and the King of Kings and Lord of Lords before whom every knee must bow! What a difference between the weary Man full of woes and He that shall then be girt with Glory, sitting on a Throne encircled with a rainbow! From the derision of men to the Throne of universal judgement, what an ascent! I am unable to convey to you my own heart’s sense of the contrast between the “despised and rejected of men” and the universally-acknowledged Lord, before whom Caesar and pontiffs shall bow in the dust! He who was judged at Pilate’s bar shall summon all to His bar!

What a change from the shame and spitting, from the nails and the wounds, the mockery and the thirst and the dying anguish, to the Glory in which He shall come whose eyes are as a flame of fire and out of whose mouth there goes a two-edged sword! He shall judge the nations—even He whom the nations abhorred! He shall break them in pieces like a potter’s

vessel, even those who cast Him out as unworthy to live among them! Oh, how we ought to bow before Him, now, as He reveals Himself in His tender sympathy and in His generous humiliation! Let us kiss the Son, lest He be angry! Let us yield to His Grace, that we may not be crushed by His wrath! You sinners, bow before those pierced feet, which otherwise will tread you like clusters in the wine-press! Look up to Him with weeping and confess your forgetfulness of Him—and put your trust in Him lest He look down on you in indignation! Oh, remember that He will one day say, “But those, My enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring here and slay them before Me.”

The holding of the judgement by the Lord Jesus will greatly enhance His Glory. It will finally settle one controversy which is still upheld by certain erroneous spirits—there will be *no doubt about our Lord’s Deity in that day!* There will be no question that this same Jesus who was crucified is both Lord and God! God Himself shall judge, but He shall perform the judgement in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, truly Man, but nevertheless most truly God. Being God, He is divinely qualified to judge the world in righteousness and the people with His Truth.

If you ask again, Why is the Son of God chosen to be the final Judge? I could give, as a further answer, that He receives this high office not only as a reward for all His pains and as a manifestation of His Glory, but also because men have been under His mediatorial sway and He is their Governor and King. At the present moment we are all under the sway of the Prince Immanuel, God With Us—we have been placed, by an act of Divine clemency, not under the immediate government of an offended God, but under the reconciling rule of the Prince of Peace! “All power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth.” “The Father judges no man, but has committed all judgement unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” We are commanded to preach unto the people and “to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.” (Acts 10:42). Jesus is our Lord and King! It is meet that He should conclude His mediatorial sovereignty by rewarding His subjects according to their deeds.

But I have something to say to you which ought to reach your hearts, even if other thoughts have not done so. I think that God has chosen Christ, the Man Christ Jesus, to judge the world that there may never be a quibble raised concerning that judgement. Men shall not be able to say—We were judged by a superior Being who did not know our weaknesses and temptations and, therefore, He judged us harshly and without a generous consideration of our condition. No, God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ who was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin! He is our Brother, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, partaker of our humanity and, therefore, understands and knows what is in men. He has shown Himself to be skillful in all the surgery of mercy throughout the ages and, at last, He will be found equally skillful in dissecting motives and revealing the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Nobody shall ever be able to look back on that august tribunal and say that He who sat upon it was too stern because He knew nothing of human

weakness. It will be the *loving* Christ, whose tears and bloody sweat and gaping wounds attest His brotherhood with mankind—and it will be clear to all intelligences that however dread His sentences, He could not be unmerciful! God shall judge us by Jesus Christ, that the judgement may be indisputable!

But listen well—for I speak with a great weight upon my soul—this judgement by Christ Jesus puts beyond possibility all hope of any after-interposition. If the Savior condemns, and such a Savior, who can plead for us? The owner of the vineyard was about to cut down the barren tree when the dresser of the vineyard pleaded, “Let it alone this year, also,” but what can come of that tree when the Vinedresser, Himself, shall say to the master, “It must fall; I myself must cut it down”! If your Savior shall become your judge you will be judged, indeed! If *He* shall say, “Depart, you cursed,” who can call you back? If He that bled to save men comes, at last, to the conclusion that there is no more to be done, but you must be driven from His Presence, then farewell to hope! To the guilty, the judgement will, indeed, be a—

“Great day of dread, decision and despair.”

An infinite horror shall seize upon their spirits as the words of the loving Christ shall freeze their very marrow and fix them in the ice of eternal despair! There is, to my mind, a climax of solemnity in the fact that God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

Does not this also show how certain the sentence will be? This Christ of God is too much in earnest to play with men. If He says, “Come, you blessed,” He will not fail to bring them to their inheritance. If He is driven to say, “Depart, you cursed,” He will see it done and into the everlasting punishment you must go. Even when it cost Him His life, He did not draw back from doing the will of His Father, nor will He shrink in that day when He shall pronounce the sentence of doom! Oh, how evil must sin be since it impels the tender Savior to pronounce sentence of eternal woe! I am sure that many of us have been driven, of late, to an increased hatred of sin. Our souls have recoiled within us because of the wickedness among which we dwell. It has made us feel as if we would gladly borrow the Almighty’s thunderbolts with which to smite iniquity! Such haste on our part may not be seemly since it implies a complaint against Divine long-suffering, but Christ’s dealing with evil will be calm, dispassionate and all the more crushing. Jesus, with His pierced hands that bear the attestation of His supreme love to men, shall wave the impenitent away—and those lips which bade the weary rest in Him shall solemnly say to the wicked, “depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” To be trampled beneath the feet which was nailed to the Cross will be to be crushed, indeed! Yet so it is—God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

It seems to me as if God, in this, intended to give a display of the unity of all His perfections. In this same Man, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, you behold justice and love, mercy and righteousness, combined in equal measure. He turns to the right and says, “Come, you blessed,” with infinite suavity. And with the same lips, as He glances to the left, He says,

“Depart, you cursed.” Men will then see at one glance how love and righteousness are one—and how they meet in equal splendor in the Person of the Well-Beloved, whom God has, therefore, chosen to be Judge of quick and dead.

IV. I have done when you have borne with me a minute or two upon my next point which is this—ALL THIS IS ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL. That is to say, there is nothing in the Gospel contrary to this solemn teaching. Men gather to us to hear us preach of infinite mercy and tell of the love that blots out sin—and our task is joyful when we are called to deliver such a message. But oh, Sirs, remember that *nothing* in our message makes light of sin! The Gospel offers you no opportunity of going on in sin and escaping without punishment. Its own cry is, “Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.” Jesus has not come into the world to make sin less terrible. Nothing in the Gospel excuses sin! Nothing in it affords toleration for lust or anger, or dishonesty, or falsehood. The Gospel is as truly a two-edged sword against sin as ever the Law can be!

There is Grace for the man who quits his sin, but there is tribulation and wrath upon every man that does evil. “If you turn not, He will whet His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready.” The Gospel is all tenderness to the repenting, but all terror to the obstinate offender! It has pardon for the very chief of sinners and mercy for the vilest of the vile if they will forsake their sins—but it is according to our Gospel that he that goes on in his iniquity shall be cast into Hell—and he that believes not shall be damned! With deep love to the souls of men I bear witness to the Truth of God that he who turns not with repentance and faith to Christ shall go away into *punishment* as everlasting as the life of the righteous! This is according to our Gospel. Indeed, we had not needed such a Gospel if there had not been such a judgement! The background of the Cross is the Judgment Seat of Christ. We had not needed so great an Atonement, so vast a Sacrifice if there had not been an exceeding sinfulness in sin, an exceeding justice in the Judgment and an exceeding terror in the sure rewards of transgression!

“According to my Gospel,” says Paul. And he meant that the judgement is an essential part of the Gospel creed. If I had to sum up the Gospel, I should have to tell you certain facts. Jesus, the Son of God, became Man. He was born of the virgin Mary; lived a perfect life; was falsely accused of men. He was crucified, dead and buried. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God, from where He shall also come to judge the quick and the dead. This is one of the elementary Truths of our Gospel—we believe in the resurrection of the dead, the final judgement and the life everlasting.

The judgement is according to our Gospel and, in times of righteous indignation, its terrible significance seems a very Gospel to the pure in heart. I mean this. I have read this and that concerning oppression, slavery, the treading down of the poor and the shedding of blood—and I have rejoiced that there is a righteous Judge. I have read of secret wickednesses among the rich men of this city and I have said within myself, “Thank God, there will be a Judgment Day.” Thousands of men have been

hanged for much less crimes than those which now disgrace gentlemen whose names are on the lips of rank and beauty. Ah me, how heavy is our heart as we think of it! It has come like a Gospel to us that the Lord will be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:8). The secret wickedness of London cannot go on forever!

Even they that love men best and most desire salvation for them cannot but cry to God, “How long? How long? Great God, will you endure this forever?” God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world and we sigh and cry until it shall end the reign of wickedness and give rest to the oppressed. Brothers, we must preach the coming of the Lord—but preach it somewhat more than we have done because it is the driving power of the Gospel! Too many have kept back these Truths of God and thus the bone has been taken out of the arm of the Gospel. Its point has been broken. Its edge has been blunted. The doctrine of judgement to come is the power by which men are to be awakened! There is another life! The Lord will come a second time—judgement will arrive—the wrath of God will be revealed. Where this is not preached, I am bold to say the *Gospel* is not preached. It is absolutely necessary to the preaching of the Gospel of Christ that men be warned as to what will happen if they continue in their sins!

Wait a minute, Sir Surgeon! You are too delicate to tell the man that he is ill! You hope to heal the sick without their knowing it? You, therefore, flatter them and what happens? They laugh at you! They dance upon their own graves. At last they die! Your delicacy is cruelty! Your flatteries are poisons! You are a murderer!

Shall we keep men in a fool’s paradise? Shall we lull them into soft slumbers from which they will awake in Hell? Are we to become helpers of their damnation by our smooth speeches? In the name of God we will not! It is the duty of every true minister of Christ to cry aloud and spare not, for God has set a day in which He will “judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.” As surely as Paul’s Gospel was true, the Judgment will come! Therefore flee to Jesus this day, O Sinners!

O you Saints, come hide yourselves, again, beneath the crimson canopy of the atoning Sacrifice, that you may be now ready to welcome your descending Lord and escort Him to His Judgment Seat. O my Hearers, may God bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Revelation 20.*
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—868, 864, 345.**

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GOD JUSTIFIED, THOUGH MAN BELIEVES NOT NO. 2255

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 8, 1892.
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*“For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yes, let God be true, and every man a liar; as it is written, That You might be justified in Your sayings, and might overcome when You are judged.”
Romans 3:3, 4.*

THE seed of Israel had great privileges even before the coming of Christ. God had promised by Covenant that they should have those privileges and they enjoyed them. They had Revelation and a Divine Light, while all the rest of the world sat in heathen darkness. Yet so many Jews did not believe, that, as a whole, the nation missed the promised blessing. A great multitude of them only saw the outward symbols and never understood their spiritual meaning. They lived and died without the blessing promised to their fathers. Did this make the Covenant of God to be void? Did this make the faithfulness of God to be a matter of question? “No, no,” says Paul, “if some did not believe, and so did not gain the blessing, this was their own fault; but the Covenant of God stood fast, and did not change because men were untrue.” He remained just as true as ever and He will be able to justify all that He has said and all that He has done—and He will do so even to the end. When the great drama of human history shall have been played out, the net result will be that the ways of God shall be vindicated notwithstanding all the unbelief of men!

I am going to talk of our text, at this time, first, as giving to us *a sorrowful reminder*—“For what if some did not believe?” It is sad to be reminded that there have always been some who did not believe. Next, here is *a horrible inference* which some have drawn from this grievous fact, that is, because some did not believe, it has been hinted that their unbelief would make the faith of God or the *faithfulness* of God without effect, to which, in the *third place*, the Apostle gives *an indignant reply*—“God forbid: yes, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That You might be justified in Your sayings, and might overcome when You are judged.”

I. Well now, first, we have, here, A SORROWFUL REMINDER. There have always been some who have not believed.

When God devised the great plan of salvation by Grace. When He gave His own Son to die as the Substitute for guilty men. When He proclaimed

that whoever believed in Jesus Christ should have everlasting life—you would have thought that everybody would have been glad to hear such good news and that they would all have hastened to believe it! Christ is so suitable to the sinner—why does not the sinner accept Him? The way of salvation is so simple, so suitable to guilty men! It is altogether so glorious, so grand, that if we did not know the depravity of the human heart, we should expect that every sinner would at once believe the Gospel and receive its blessings! But, alas, some have not believed!

Now, *this is stated very mildly*. The Apostle says, “For what if some did not believe?” He might have said, “What if *many* did not believe?” But he is talking to his Hebrew friends and he wishes to woo them—so he states the case as gently as he can. Remember, dear Friends, the carcasses of all but two who came out of Egypt fell in the wilderness through unbelief. Only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land, but the Apostle does not wish to unduly press his argument, or speak so as to aggravate his hearers and he, therefore, puts it, “For what if *some* did not believe?”

Even in his own day, he might have said, “The bulk of the Jewish nation has rejected Christ. Wherever I go, they seek my life. They would stone me to death, if they could, because I preach a dying Savior’s love!” But he does not put it so. He only mentions that some did not believe. Yet this is a very appalling thing, even when stated this mildly! If all here, except one person, were Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it was announced that that one unbeliever would be pointed out to the congregation, I am sure we would all feel in a very solemn condition. But, dear Friends, there are many more than one here who have not believed on the Son of God and who, therefore, are not saved! If the unconverted were not so numerous there is all the greater need for our tears and our compassion.

The terms of Paul’s question suggest *a very sweet mitigation of the sorrow*. “What if some did not believe?” Then it is implied that some *did* believe! Glory be to God, there is a numerous “some” who have believed that Jesus is the Christ! And believing in Him, have found life through His name! These have entered into a new life and now bear a new character, “being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever.” Beloved, we thank God that the preaching of the Gospel has not been in vain! Up yonder, more numerous than the stars are they that walk in white robes which they have washed in the blood of the Lamb! And down here, in spite of our mourning, there is a glorious company who still follow the Lamb—who is to them, their only hope.

Looking at the other side of the case, it is true that, *at times, the “some” who did not believe meant the majority*. It must be admitted that sometimes, unbelievers are greater in number even among the hearers of the precious Word. Read the story of Israel through, in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, and you will be saddened to find how, again and again, they did not believe. The history of Israel, from the moment they became a nation, is a very painful one. It is full of the mercy of God, but it is also full of treachery of the human heart. In the days of the Judges, the people

served God while a good Judge ruled over them—but as soon as he was dead, they went astray after false gods!

I almost think that the Christian Church is now in the period of the judges. When the Lord raises up, here, one, and there, another, to preach His Word faithfully, the people seem to take heed to it—but when the faithful preachers are gone, many of their hearers turn aside again. Blessed be to God, we expect the coming of the King, soon, and when the King comes, and the period of the Judges shall have ended, then we shall enter upon a time of rest and peace! It may be that even among hearers of the Gospel, those who do not believe are greater in number than those who do believe. My text sounds like a solemn knell and there is something terribly awful about it, like the deep rumbling of underground thunder!

Now, dear Friends, this unbelief has usually been the case throughout all ages *among the great ones of the earth*. In our Savior's day, they said, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in Him?" The Gospel has usually had a free course among the poor and among those who some call, "the lower orders," though why they are said to be lower than others, I do not know, unless it is because the heavier and more valuable things generally sink to the bottom. The Church of God owes very little to kings and princes and nobles. She owes far more to fishermen and peasants. Jesus said, "I thank You, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because You have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight." I suspect that, until the King, Himself, shall come, we shall still find that the common people will gladly hear the Gospel and that, while Christ the Lord will choose, for His own, some from all ranks and conditions of men, it will still be true that, "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called."

I think we may also say, with deep solemnity that *some who have not believed have belonged to the religious and to the teaching class*. In the days of our Lord and His Apostles, the scribes and Pharisees were the greatest haters of the Doctrine of Christ. Those whom you might have supposed being most familiar with the Scriptures—the scribes, would soon have recognized the Messiah—were the men who would not acknowledge Him! So it was with the priests, even the chief priests, the men who had to do with the sacrifices and with the Temple—they rejected Christ, although they were the religious leaders of the people! Do you suppose it is very different, now? Alas, my Friends, we may be preachers, and yet not preach the Gospel of Christ! We may be members of the Church and yet not savingly know the Gospel. We may go in and out of the House of God—and seem to take part in its holy service, and yet, all the while, we may be strangers and foreigners in the Presence of the Most High!

Believers are not always those whom you would suppose to be Believers. The Lord often brings to Himself, as in the case of the centurion, of whom we read this morning—far-off ones, rough soldiers, who were not thought likely to feel the power of such gentle teaching as the Doctrine of the Cross—and they bow before the Savior. But alas, alas! Among those

who appear to be the children of the Kingdom, brought up in the worship of God, there are some, yes, *many*, who have not believed on Christ and, saddest of all, even among those who are the *teachers of others in the things of God*, there are some that have not savingly believed!

Now, dear Friends, if we take the whole range of *the nations favored with the Gospel*, we shall have to say, and say it, as it were, in capital letters, "SOME DO NOT BELIEVE," and that, "SOME," is a very large number! The question of the Apostle is, "What if some did not believe?" Well, if I had to ask and answer that question, at this time, I would say, "What if some *do* not believe?" Then they are lost. "He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." There still remains, to those who hear the Gospel, the opportunity to believe and, believing, they shall find life through the sacred name. Let us pray for them. If some do not believe, let us who do believe, make them the constant subject of our prayers—and then let us tell them what is to be believed—and bear our witness to the saving power of the Gospel!

When we have done that, let us scrupulously take care that our life and conduct are consistent with the doctrines that we teach, so that, if some do *not* believe, they may be won to Christ by the example of those who believe in Him. Oh, that every Christian here would seek to bring another person to Christ! I pray you, Beloved, if you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, be not barren nor unfruitful. If you know the great secret, tell it to others! Proclaim it! Proclaim it! We all need stirring up to this blessed work—I am sure we do. I heard of a Christian who always spoke about Christ to, at least, one person every day. I commend the example for your imitation. How many of us could say that we do that? I know there are some here who do 10 times as much as that. It has grown to be a habit with them to speak of Christ to everyone they meet, but it is not the habit of all who believe. It takes some Christians a long time to begin to say anything for their Lord. Let us try and labor hard, that, if some people do not believe, we may bring them to the Savior that God may have praise from them, also.

II. But now I advance a step further and dwell upon A HORRIBLE INFERENCE drawn from the fact that some did not believe. The inference was that their unbelief had made the faith of God, or the faithfulness of God, altogether without effect. I will translate what Paul said without dwelling on his words.

Some will say, "If So-and-So and So-and-So do not believe the Gospel, then *religion is a failure*." We have read of a great many things being failures nowadays. A little time ago it was a question whether marriage was not a failure. I suppose that, by-and-by, eating our dinners will be a failure, breathing will be a failure, *everything* will be a failure. But now the *Gospel* is said to be a failure. Why? Because certain gentlemen of professed culture and supposed knowledge do not believe it! Well, dear Friends, there have been other things that have not been believed in by very important individuals and yet they have turned out to be true! I am not quite old enough to remember all that was said about the introduction

of the steam engine, though I remember right well going to see one and a railway train as great wonders when I was a boy.

Before the trains actually ran, all the old coachmen and all the farmers that had horses to sell would not believe for a moment that an engine could be made to go on the rails and to drag carriages behind it! And in Parliament they had to say that they thought they could produce an engine that could go at the speed of eight miles an hour. They dared not say more, because it would have been incredible if they did! According to the wise men of the time, everything was to go to the bad and the engines would blow up the first time they started with a train. But they did not blow up and everybody now smiles at what those learned gentlemen (for some of them were men of standing and learning) ventured, then, to say.

Look at the gentlemen who now tell us that the Gospel is a failure! They are the successors of those who have risen up, one after the other, whose principal objective has been to refute all that went before them! They call themselves philosophers and, as I have often said, the history of philosophy is a history of fools, a history of human folly! Man has gone from one form of philosophy to another and every time that he has altered his philosophy, he has only made a slight variation in the same things. Philosophy is like a kaleidoscope—the philosopher turns it round and exclaims that he has a new view of things! So he has, but all that he sees is a few bits of glass which alter their form at every turn of the toy.

If any of you shall live 50 years, you will see that the philosophy to today will be a football of contempt for the philosophy of that period. They will speak, amidst roars of laughter, of evolution—and the day will come when there will not be a child but will look upon it as being the most foolish notion that ever crossed the human mind! I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but I know what has befallen many of the grand discoveries of the great philosophers of the past. And I expect that the same thing will happen again. I have to say, with Paul, “What if some did not believe?” It is no new thing, for there have always been some who have rejected the Revelation of God. What then? You and I had better go on believing and testing for ourselves—and proving the faithfulness of God—and living upon Christ our Lord, even though we see another set of doubters, and another, and yet another, *ad infinitum*. The Gospel is no failure, as many of us know!

Is the Gospel to be disbelieved because some people will not receive it? I think not, dear Friends. As I have already said, many other things have been believed, although some people have not believed them, and the believers have had the best of it, and so they always will. Has the Gospel changed your character? Has the Gospel renewed you in the spirit of your mind? Does the Gospel cheer and comfort you in the day of sorrow? Does it help you to live and will it help you to die? Then do not give it up, even though some do not believe it!

Again, dear Friends, *has God failed to keep His promise to Israel* because some Israelites did not believe? That is the point that Paul aims at and the answer is, “No!” He brought Israel into the Promised Land, though all but two that came out of Egypt died in the wilderness. He did give that

Promised Land to Israel, albeit that, through their unbelief, God smote them and they were destroyed. Yet a nation came up, again, from their ashes and God kept His Covenant with His ancient people and He is still keeping it today. The “chosen seed of Israel’s race” is “a remnant, weak and small.” But the day is coming when they shall be gathered in and then we shall rejoice—for then shall be the fullness of the Gentiles, also, when Israel has come to her own Lord and King. God has not cast away His people whom He did foreknow, nor has He broken His Covenant made with Abraham, nor will He while the world stands, even though many believe not on Him.

Will God fail to keep His promise to anyone who believes on Him? Because some do not believe, will God’s promise, therefore, fail to be kept to those who *do* believe? I invite you to come and try. When two of John’s disciples enquired of Jesus where He dwelt, He said to them, “Come and see.” If any person here will try Christ, as I tried Him when yet a youth as miserable as I could be, and ready to die with despair—if they shall feel in believing such joy as I felt—if they shall experience such a change of character as passed over me when I believed in Christ, they would not tolerate a doubt! What they have known, felt, tasted and handled of the good Word of God, will prove to them that if some believe not, yet God abides faithful! He will never deny Himself. One said that she believed the Bible because she was acquainted with the Author of it, which is an excellent reason for believing it. You *will* believe the Gospel if you are acquainted with the Savior who brings that Gospel to us! Personal dealings with God in Christ, personal trust in the living Savior, will put you out of reach of this strange inference that God will be unfaithful because some do not believe in Him.

I am going a step further. *Will God be unfaithful to His Son* if some do not believe? I have heard, sometimes, a fear expressed that Christ will lose those for whom He dies. I thank God that I have no fear about *that*. “He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” I never come to you and, *in forma pauperis*, ask you to accept Christ—begging and praying you to take Christ because otherwise He will be a loser by you. It is *you* who must beg of Him! He gives Grace as a king bestows his favors. No, more—He lovingly condescends to entreat you to come to Him. Suppose that you wickedly say, “We will not have Christ to reign over us.” If you think that you will rob Him of honor and bring disgrace upon Him by your rejection, you make a great mistake! If you will not have Him, others will. If you who are so wise will not have Christ, there are plenty, whom you reckon to be fools, who will take Him to be their “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” If you who are so frivolous will not have my Lord, you will die in your sins! But there are others who will have Him. Do not think that you can, by any possibility, rob Him of His Glory! “For what if some did not believe?” This Word of God shall yet become true—“The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.” If myriads reject Him, there will be myriads who will receive Him! And in all things He shall have

the preeminence! And He will return to His Father not defeated, but more than a conqueror over all His foes!

To put the question in another shape, "For what if some did not believe?" *Will God alter His revealed Truth?* If some do not believe, will God change the Gospel to suit them? Will He seek to please their depraved taste? Ought we to change our preaching because of "the spirit of the age?" Never! Unless it is to fight "the spirit of the age" more desperately than ever! We ask for no terms between Christ and His enemies except this—unconditional surrender to Him! He will lessen no jot or tittle of His claims, but He will still come to you and say, "Submit yourselves. Bow down and acknowledge Me King and Lord and take Me to be your Savior. Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and besides Me there is none else." If you wait till there is a revised version of the Gospel, you will be lost! If you wait till there is a Gospel brought out that will not cost you so much giving up of sin, or so much of bowing your proud necks, you will wait until you find yourself in Hell! Come, I pray you! Come even now and believe the Gospel! It cannot be altered to *your* taste—therefore alter yourself so as to meet its requirements.

Now suppose that these men, who will not believe, should all concert together to proclaim new views in order to upset the Gospel? You see, up to the present time, they never have agreed. One wing of Satan's army of doubters always destroys the other. Just now the great scientists say to the modern-thought gentlemen and say to them very properly, "If there is no serpent, and no Eve, and no Adam, and no flood, and no Noah, and no Abraham—as you tell us now that all this is a myth—then your whole old Bible is a lie." I am very much obliged to those who talk thus to the disciples of the higher criticism. They thought that they were going to have all the scientists on their side to join them in attacking the ancient orthodoxies. There is a split in the enemy's camp! Amalek is fighting Edom and Edom is contending against Moab!

But suppose they were all to agree? Well, what would happen, then? I thought I saw a vision once, when I was by the seaside. To my closed eyes there seemed to come down to the beach at Brighton a huge black horse which went into the water and began to drink. And I thought I heard a voice that said, "It will drink the sea dry." My great horse grew and grew till it was such a huge creature that I could scarcely measure it, but still it drank, and drank, and drank. All the while the sea did not appear to lower in the least—the water was still there as deep as ever. By-and-by the animal burst and its remains were washed up on the beach—and there it lay dead, killed by its own folly. That will be the end of this big black horse of infidelity that boasts that it is going to drink up this everlasting Gospel!

I remember that Christmas Evans put this Truth of God rather roughly on one occasion. He said, "There was a dog on the hearthrug and there was a kettle of boiling water on the fire. As the kettle kept puffing out steam and hot water, the dog sat up and growled. The more the kettle kept on puffing, the more the dog growled and, at last, he seized the kettle by the throat and, of course, the boiling water killed him." Thus will unbe-

lievers do with the Gospel. They growl at it today, but if they ever join together and really make an attack upon it, the Gospel will be a savor of death unto death to those who oppose it, as it is a savor of life to those who receive it!

Thus have I mentioned this horrible inference.

III. Now I close by speaking very briefly upon AN INDIGNANT REPLY to this horrible inference. In reply to this question, “Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” Paul give *a solemn negative*—“God forbid.” All the opponents of the Gospel cannot move it by a hair’s breath—they cannot injure a single stone of this Divine building. It remains always the same. Let them do what they may, they cannot alter it!

Then Paul utters *a strong expression of dissent*—“Yes, let God be true, but every man a liar.” Can you picture this great host? Here they come, all the men who ever lived, unnumbered millions! They come marching up and we stand like the inspecting general at a review and see them all go by. And as every man passes, he shouts, “The Gospel is not true! Christ did not die! There is no salvation for Believers in Him!” The Apostle Paul, standing as it were at the saluting-point, and seeing the whole race of mankind go by, says, “God is true, and everyone of you is a liar!” “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” You know the way that we have of counting heads, and if the majority goes in a particular direction, we almost all go that way. If you count the heads and there is a general consensus of opinion, you are apt to say, “It must be so, for everybody says so.”

But what everybody says is not, therefore, true. “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” It is a strange, strong expression, but it is not too strong. If God says one thing and every man in the world says another, God is true, and all men are false! God speaks the truth and cannot lie. God cannot change. His word, like Himself, is immutable. We are to believe God’s Truth if nobody else believes it. The general consensus of opinion is nothing to a Christian. He believes God’s Word and he thinks more of that than of the universal opinion of men!

Paul next uses *a Scriptural argument*. Whenever he gets thoroughly red hot and wants an overwhelming argument, he always goes to the Divine treasury of Revelation. He quotes what David had said in the 51st Psalm, “That You might be justified in Your sayings, and might overcome when You are judged.”

God will be justified in everything that He has said. You may take every line of the Word of God and rest assured that God will be justified in having directed the sacred penman to write that line.

God will also be justified when He judges and when He condemns men. When He pronounces His final sentence upon the ungodly, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” He shall be justified even in that dreadful hour.

A very startling expression is used here—“That You might overcome when You are judged.” Think of this enormous evil! Here are men actually trying to snatch the balance and the rod from the hand of God and presuming to *judge* His judgments, and to sit as if they were the god of God! Suppose that they could be daring enough to do even that—the verdict

would be in God's favor! It would be proved that He had neither said anything untrue, nor done anything unjust. We are confident that although some do not believe God, He will be justified before men and angels, and we shall have nothing to do but to admire and adore Him, world without end!

Now, I could say much more, but I will not except just this—I want those who are the Lord's people to be very brave about the things of God. There has been too much yielding, apologizing and compromising. I cannot bear it! It grieves me to see one Truth of God after another surrendered to the enemy. A Brother writes to me, saying, "You do not put so much mirth into your preaching as you used to do. When the captain at sea whistles, then all the sailors feel more cheerful." My Friend adds, "Whistle a bit." I will do so. This is my way of whistling to cheer my shipmates. I believe in the everlasting God and in His unchanging Truth—and I am persuaded that the Gospel will win the day, however long and stern the conflict rages! Therefore, my Brothers and Sisters, be not ashamed of the Gospel, nor of Christ your Lord, who died that He might save you eternally. "Watch you, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." Even if it did come to this, that every other man in the world were against the Truth of God, stand you to His Word, and say, "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

The other word that I have to say is a message to the unsaved. If you are opposed to God, I beseech you give up your opposition at once! The battle cannot end well for you unless you yield yourself to God. He is your Maker and Preserver—every argument we can use ought to convince you that you should be on His side. I pray you remember that, for you to contend with God is for the gnat to contend with the fire, or the wax to fight with the flame! You will be destroyed if you come into collision with Him! Then yield to Him at once. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." What is it to kiss the Son? Why, to accept the Lord Christ as your King and Savior! To ask Him to be your peace and your salvation. Ask Him, now, before that clock ceases striking. I pray that some may at this moment say, "I will have Christ and I will be Christ's!" The Lord grant it! This great transaction done now, it shall be done forever and you and I will meet on the other side of Jordan, in the land of the blessed, and eternally praise Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and made us kings and priests unto God! The Lord be with you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

Portion of Scripture Read before Sermon—Romans 3.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—166, 675, 674.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON
ROMANS 3.

Verse 1. *What advantage then has the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?* If, after all, both Jew and Gentiles were under sin, what ad-

vantage 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 of God 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 lack of faith affect God's faithfulness?

4. *God forbid: yes, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that You might be justified in Your sayings, and might overcome when You are 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 takes 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 pages of history. If God were unjust, how could He judge the world?

7. *For if the Truth of God has 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 are 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! No, 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 deicides and slew the Son of God!

9, 10. *What then? Are we better than they? No, in no way: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are under sin; as it is writ-*

ten. 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."

10 - 12. *There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does 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 seeks after God . . . there is none that does 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 says, it says to them who are under the Law.* The Jews are comprehended here, for they are especially "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 lips, 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 of God can show us our sin, but it cannot take it away. The Law of the Lord is like a mirror. Now, a mirror is a capital thing for finding out where the spots are on your face—but you cannot wash in a mirror—you cannot get rid of the spots by looking in the glass. The Law of God 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 has 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 believes in Jesus.* Where is it? It is to be found in a great many people. It is common enough, but where ought it 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 reason 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? No: 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: yes, 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.

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THE GREATEST FOLLY IN THE WORLD NO. 2545

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*"There is none who understands, there is none who seeks after God."
Romans 3:11.*

We are told that God looked out of Heaven to see if there were any who had understanding, that did seek after Him. If there had been any, God would have seen them, for He sees all things and all persons. If there had been any good people, God would have discovered them. A good man is quick to see other good folks and the good God would soon have spied out good men. But God's description of the character of men, though we may be certain it is not uncharitable or unjust, is not in the least like that which I have heard ascribed to them by flattering preachers. It has become the fashion of the day to talk about the nobility of manhood and the dignity of manhood. I remember that Mr. Whitefield used to say that man, by nature, before the Grace of God comes to him, is half beast and half devil. I shall leave you to judge who is nearer the truth—a good and faithful preacher of the Lord in the days gone by—or the refined flatterers who are taking out of the Bible everything that is objectionable to the superior minds of this 19th Century and who vainly imagine that, in so doing, they shall be accepted of God.

Let me read you what God thinks of men in their natural state. Here is a Divinely-inspired description of their true character. "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none who understands, there is none who seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does 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 mouths are 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." That is God's portrait of man by nature, and He knows the truth about them better than we do! And, as I have already said, He is free from uncharitableness or injustice. There is no motive in God to paint the picture blacker than it is. He gives our photographs in lines of absolute Truth. The light of God is the light of His Truth and what He depicts before us is undoubtedly just as He makes it appear.

What I want you to observe, dear Friends, is that all this is spoken of all mankind—of all unregenerate men—of all who are still in the kingdom of darkness and under the power of sin, whether they are polished,

learned, polite, wealthy, or whether they are illiterate and cast down in the very depths of degradation. "As in water, face answers to face, so the heart of man to man." Differences in station may make a difference in outward conduct, but not a difference in *heart*. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." For, after all, be it never forgotten that the human race is one! The most degraded tribes of men still belong to the one great tribe of mankind—they are our brothers. "God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." What that savage is who has gone furthest aside from the paths of civilization—you and I would have become had it not been for certain influences which have kept us, in some measure, under restraint. The heart of all leopards, of all lions and of all tigers is the same as the heart of all the rest of their savage race. And in heart, all men are alike—they are all evil and if they were let alone, they would all go in one direction or another towards a yet greater evil. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way." And we have all wandered away from God—

***"Each wandering in a different way,
But all the downward road."***

The race is one, there is a solidarity about it, and when God speaks concerning men, He describes the whole race without exception and uses those great all-encompassing, "alls." "They are *all* gone out of the way, they are *together* become unprofitable." And, in order that none should escape, He uses the negatives as well as the positives—"There is *none* that does good, no, not *one*."

"Now, why is it," some will ask, "that all men do not run to the same excess of riot? Surely, they cannot all be alike." Yes, there are many persons who go through life with an almost pure morality, yet their heart was always as evil as that of those who have defiled themselves with outward vice, the reason lying in the fact that they were not so much tempted as were those others—they were not brought under the same conditions. You and I may fancy that we are a great deal better than other people whom we have known, but if we had been exposed as they have been—if we had been left of God as they have been—we would have become as vile as they. And if we have not fallen into one form of sin which men agree in despising, yet we may have gone further in some other form of sin which is so common that men overlook it, but which is just as black and vile in the sight of God! It is our common habit to judge that sin to be the worst which injures men the most.

Therefore, if you call a man a criminal, his blood is up in a moment—he will not allow you to do that. Yet a criminal is a person who has offended against man. If you call him a *sinner*, he says, "Oh, yes! Of course, we are *all* sinners!" That does not seem to be, in his eyes, at all a severe charge because it is only an offense against God! And this shows how completely our hearts are turned upside down and how our judgment is perverted. Otherwise we would at once think it a far greater offense to do dishonor to the great King and Lord of All than to do wrong towards our fellow men! We judge not as we ought and, therefore, some

of us who may wrap ourselves up in the filthy rags of our self-righteousness may, after all, be just as bad at heart as the sinner whom we despise. Yes, that very despising of another is, in itself, a grave offense against the Infinite graciousness of the God who has borne with us in our loathsome pride!

It is true, then—I am not going to prove it, I am not going to dwell longer upon it—but it is true that we have all gone aside from God and turned away from the path of holiness. “There is none who does good, no, not one.” If any differ from this, I would recommend them not to dispute with God. If any still say, “It is not so,” I will not contend with them—it is not *my* statement, it is God’s! He has said it and, as God has drawn man’s likeness, it is not for you or for me to quibble at it, for it must be so. Better far that we should humble ourselves before the all-seeing God and seek to be healed of this desperate disease which in His loving truthfulness He here exposes to our gaze.

Now let us come to the text. “There is none who understands, there is none who seeks after God.” And, first, I want to show you that *not to seek after God argues a lack of understanding*— “There is none who understands, there is none who seeks after God.” The two sentences are parallel and explanatory to one another. Secondly, *this lack of understanding is very common and takes many forms*. Thirdly, *this lack of understanding ought to be removed*. Let us pray that it may be removed in the case of any who are suffering from it.

I. So, first, may the Spirit of God help me to speak upon this Truth of God, THAT NOT TO SEEK AFTER GOD ARGUES A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING. Come, you thoughtful people, you who want to be right, I wish to speak with you as a brother would speak, as one who anxiously desires that you should prove truly wise in this life and make the best of it by preparing for the life that is to come.

First, let me remind you that if you do not seek after God, *you miss the great end of your being*. God has made you and the purpose of your making lies within Himself. We may say to God, concerning all men, as the elders in the Revelation said concerning all things that He has made, “For Your pleasure they are and were created.” If you make a thing, you do so in order that it may serve a certain end—there is some objective which you have in view—and if it does not answer your purpose, you put it aside, for you feel that it is a failure. Why, you would not keep a horse if it did not labor for you! You would not even let a dog live in your house if it did not fawn upon you, or in some way recognize that it ought to love and serve you. And when God made us men, He intended that we should serve Him. He meant that we should find our happiness in doing His will and He has so formed us that if we do not glorify Him, we do not really enjoy life. If we are not holy, we are not happy. I thank my Lord for that kind tenderness which constituted things after this blessed fashion! O Man, would you miss the objective of your being? Would you be designed for a certain purpose and then, after all, prove to be a failure? Oh, I pray that this may not be the case with you! Surely, if you willingly allow it to

be so and, therefore, you do not seek after God, it is because you have no understanding.

Again, he who does not seek after God *neglects his highest duty*. Every honest man wishes to discharge his debts. A right-minded man will not lie under liabilities longer than he can help. He wishes to do what is expected of him in the position he occupies. Now, it must be the first duty of a creature to know, to love and to reverence its Creator. Man is such an amazing being, so fearfully and wonderfully made by the skill and power of God, that he ought, as a creature, at once acknowledge the wisdom and might displayed in his creation! It is his bounden duty to do so. Besides, we are daily fed by God's bounty—we are clothed by His charity, we are nurtured by His loving kindness, we are constantly sustained by His power—and for all these reasons we ought to serve Him. It is the first obligation that we have! Shall not a servant obey his master? Shall not a child reverence his father? And shall not we, indebted as we are to our Lord, overwhelmed with obligation to Him, see to this first and primary duty of our being and seek after the God to whom we owe so much? If we do not, we act most foolishly, and prove that we have no understanding.

Further, the man who does not seek after God *loses his truest life*. They who seek after God, by his Grace, live in a higher sphere than others do. They have truer enjoyments and deeper delights than those which fall to the share of others. He who seeks God, through Christ, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, receives a new and diviner life than belongs by nature to the fallen sons of men. You, who are unconverted may not believe it, but we dare to affirm—and we are honest witnesses—that there is a life which God, alone, can give to men, which is far more exalted above the ordinary life of human beings than a man's life is above that of an ox! There is a heavenly sphere in which the spiritual move which makes them greater and more noble beings than they could have been apart from God. Oh, my Friend, if you are without God, what are you but an impotent rebel against the goodness of His majesty? But if you have found God in Christ, what are you then? You are His child, His heir, a partaker of His nature, indwelt by His Spirit, preserved by His power, and destined to an immortality of glory like that of the Lord, Himself! Can you bear the thought of missing all this blessing? O Man, if there were but a bare possibility of securing this gift, I would recommend you try to obtain it. But, inasmuch as thousands bear witness that this privilege is a matter of fact to them, you will be, indeed, without understanding if you do not seek after God and keep on seeking till you find Him!

Yet further, he who does not seek after God *foregoes the highest form of strength*. There is no power anywhere but the power of God. All the forces of Nature, of which some talk so much, are but the ever-present Deity working according to certain rules of His own making. There is not a leaf that falls trembling from the tree in autumn but the Lord supplies the force that draws that leaf to the ground! God's own power, emanating from Himself, keeps everything in the universe as it is. If, therefore, I can link myself with God—if my heart desires to fulfill His purposes—if in prayer I seek His help and if, by faith, I get it—what a strength I have!

What troubles I can bear, what sorrows I can endure, what labors I can perform, what hopes I can indulge, what elevated joys I can obtain if I have but God with me! O Men, surely you do not love to be feeble! Every man wishes for power—that is an ambition which most, if not all of us, cherish, but the noblest power there is anywhere is that power which God gives to those who seek Him! When God is willing to gird the feeblest of mankind with His own Omnipotence, he who does not come to the Fountain of All Strength is, surely, a man who has no understanding!

Besides, let me also say that he who does not seek after God has missed *the highest glory of his being*. As I think of it, it does seem amazing that I, the creature of an hour, who shall soon dissolve back into dust and be as nothing, yet have within me an immortal spark of heavenly flame and I am permitted, with my soul and mind, to commune with God, to speak to Him and to hear Him speak to me! Yes, it is amazing that I should receive from God His own Self in the Person of His dear Son and, yet more, that I should be allowed to give myself to Him and offer to Him the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise and so to give *Him* pleasure! By nature we are linked to materialism and are but as the dust on which we tread. When it is blown by the wind and flies into our eyes, it seems to say, “I am akin to you! I am your Brother and I have come to make you hurt and to feel your own insignificance.” Yet, for all that, we who have sought after God and who have found Him, are the Brothers of the Eternal Christ and the children of the Everlasting Jehovah! The King of Kings and Lord of Lords has adopted us into His family and put into us the spirit of adoption whereby we cry even to the God of all the earth, “Our Father, who are in Heaven.” This is sublimity, itself, and not to seek to obtain this honor shows a gross lack of understanding—this is, indeed, the greatest folly in the world!

Moreover, my dear Brothers and Sisters, if we do not seek after God and do not find Him, *in the end we shall lose everything*. Suppose we live in this world simply to hoard up money? Is it a sublime thing to have it reported in *The Illustrated London News* that we died “worth” so many thousands of pounds? What is the good of such a notice as that? Or, suppose we gain honor and fame so that our names are handed down to posterity? Will that charm the ear of Death, or keep a single worm from devouring our body in the grave? What is the use of fame—the breath of men’s nostrils—when it is gained by flattery, or by doing that which God would not have us do? Is there anything worth living for except our God? To die without God, oh, what an eternal loss is that! To wake up in the world to come and to have no Heavenly Father, to have no Advocate in the Day of Judgment, to have no Rock of refuge to hide under in the Last Tremendous Day! O Sirs, if you seek not God, you are, indeed, fools! I dare not use any milder expression than that. We are all fools that we did not seek Him earlier, but if we permit age to tell upon us and our God is still not sought, then write upon us that word, “FOOLS!” in capital letters and speak it with an emphasis, for so we deserve to be described! The first thing that a man who wishes to be accounted wise should do is to know his God and to be right with his God.

This must suffice concerning that first point—not to seek after God, argues a lack of understanding.

II. And now, secondly, let me say that THIS LACK OF UNDERSTANDING IS VERY COMMON AND TAKES MANY FORMS.

This is one form of it, *the man sinks to mere brutishness*. He lives for nothing else but this world. I will suppose that he is a poor man. He gets up very early in the morning and trudges off to work. He toils hard all day and when night comes, he returns home, goes to bed and falls asleep. The next morning the big bell rings, the man gets up and he works just as he did yesterday. Six days in the week he works and toils. On the seventh, probably, he rests a bit, but he has no thought of God, even then, and all the week he just keeps on working, working, working, working, working, working! There are thousands upon thousands of our fellow men whose life consists in going round, and round, and round, and round, and round, and round like a poor horse in a mill, never getting a bit further. They are just where they were when they were young and they know no more than they did then. They are just consumers of so much bread and meat—that is about all they are—and sometimes there is not enough of that to satisfy them.

Then look at the upper classes, as they consider themselves. What multitudes there are of them who do not do half as much as the poor man! They have so little to do that they have to invent plans to “kill time!” They call upon one another and leave bits of pasteboard bearing their names and titles. They bow and scrape and talk in an affected style and think themselves wonderfully important, when all the while they are simply wasting their time laboriously doing nothing at all! That is a summary of their whole life. You may take the lives of hundreds of wealthy men and when you have compressed them, they will not make a single square inch of anything that is worth having! Their talk, perhaps, would cover miles of the *Times* newspaper, but the real, true life that there is in multitudes of our fellow citizens in this city is microscopic, or even less than that! Often, there is nothing whatever in it, and the reason is because they do not seek after God. This mode of living turns a man into a mere beast—

“Like brutes they live, like brutes they die.”

The meadow, if it is but flat, and the grass up to their knees quite contents them. If there is a standing pool of water and but few flies, and not much of being driven from meadow to meadow, then they are perfectly satisfied and they say that they have had “a good time!” Poor brutish creatures! God preserve us from being like they! These are they who have no understanding and seek not after God.

Yes, but we have some better people than these! There are some who seem to have understanding, yet they seek not after God because although they think a great deal, and see a great deal, yet they never see God. *They are blind philosophers!* A man goes out among the mountains of Switzerland, or he sojourns among the lakes of Cumberland, or he goes down to stay at the seaside and when he comes back, you ask him what he has seen. He says that he has seen certain laws in action and he

tells you that the laws of Nature are wonderfully operative. You ask him, “did you see God?” He replies that he did not think about God and he did not want to think about Him. To him, there was no God where he went. You know what our Savior said to His disciples—“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” The man who has his heart cleaned has also had his eyes cleansed—and when he looks upon Nature, he admires the Laws which God has made, but he admires much more the God who made them! As he looks up to the sky in the eventide and sees the varied light and shade, he blesses the God whose breath raised up the clouds and whose pencil painted them. There is not a flower in the valley but speaks to him of the Most High, nor even a drop of spray, as it leaps upon the shore from the crest of the wave but makes him remember the God who holds all the waters in the hollow of His hand!

It is a great pity that people should go into any man’s house and see, there, everything except the man, himself. They admire his carpets, they rejoice at the regularity with which the meals are put upon the table. They see that there are certain laws that make provision for the breakfast and the dinner of all the household. They approve of the “laws” which have kept the house clean and the “laws” which have decorated it, and the “laws” which govern everything. But where is the master who made those laws? Alas, they do not want to see him! They like to look at what he has provided. They like to sit with their legs under his mahogany, but they do not want to see the master of the house. Surely, this must arise from a lack of understanding! When I am staying with a friend, I am pleased with his entertainment, but I want to spend as much time as possible with him. And I can truly say that I have been much more pleased to stay with a Christian man, whose means were very straitened, than I have to lodge with some of the great ones of the earth with whom I have had but little Christian fellowship. It is the host—not his dinner—that makes the true enjoyment of a visit and, in the world, it is God, Himself, not His Laws, nor all the products of them, that affords us the highest joy! As he would be unwise who paid a visit and forgot to commune with his friend, but only noticed his house and grounds, so is he most unwise who, in this matchless world, sees everything but Him who is everywhere and who made it all! This is folly, indeed!

There are some people of another kind who, though they seem to do so, do not really seek after God, but only have *a form of religiousness without any reality*. There are persons who go to a church or a chapel, but they have no spiritual understanding and they do not seek after God. Some go to a service because they want to hear a certain man preach—if he is not there, off they run! Some go to see certain ceremonies, or to take part in a mere formal ritual. There are prayers, and collects, and Psalms, and chanting, and so on—and they like that sort of thing—but they do not worship God in it all. Others come to a place of worship where everything is done with the greatest simplicity. They like it, but that is all, they have not sought after God. They have been to a place of worship and they are quite pleased with themselves—they evidently feel that they have done something that is most praiseworthy. The Sunday

has passed very pleasantly and they go to sleep at night, but what do they mean by it all?

What do *you* mean, dear Friend, if I have been describing you? You have gone through this form of worship, but you have not sought after God. I am sick of this empty religiousness! We see it everywhere. It is not communion with God, it is not getting to God. Indeed, God is not in it all. Some even say prayers regularly, have family prayer and read portions of the Bible, too, in due season. But God is not in it all. O Sirs, if you are going to be content with the husks of outward ceremonies and of formal religiousness—and think that you can live on these—you are sadly mistaken! The true life of your soul cannot feed on these outsides—it needs the kernel, which is God Himself! Oh, to seek after God! I would rather find God beneath a shed with half-a-dozen poor working men, than I would go and see the gorgeous ceremonies in a cathedral where God is not present! It is not the place, it is not the form, it is not the garb, it is not the sweet tone of song or music—it is getting near to God that is the all-important matter! Whatever else we do—whether our service is plain as a Quaker's, or gorgeous as a Romanist's, if we do not seek God, it is all nothing—a bottle of smoke and it shall come to nothing. The outward ceremonialist has no understanding, for he does not seek after God.

I shall go a little further, even, than that, for I believe that there are some who make their religion to consist in orthodox beliefs without any real seeking after God. God forbid that I should think or say anything against orthodox beliefs! Be as orthodox as ever you can and hold to nothing but the Truth of God, but, you know, you may say that you believe the Truth of God, you may even fight for it—you may be a Calvinist to the backbone if you think that to be the best form of Christianity—yet, after all, you may never have truly sought after God! What you believe is not unimportant, but it is often *more important that you should seek God in what you believe* and that you should never be satisfied unless you really find Him in it all. You must have a Father in Heaven, or you are orphans, indeed. You must have a Savior, or you are lost forever. You must have the Holy Spirit, the Quickener, or you are still dead in trespasses and sins. These come not by mere outward forms and ceremonies, or by a dead creed—there must be a Divine work upon the inner man, the power of the Spirit of God working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. And we must seek after that, or else we shall have no true understanding and we shall obtain nothing worth having.

III. I must not keep you longer than a minute or two while I just refer to the last point, namely, that THIS LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OUGHT TO BE REMOVED.

I wish that it might be removed even now. My heart longs that it may be so with some dear friends here whom I love. I can see them and I can truly say that, for years, I have never seen them in this place without praying distinctly for them, yet I fear they are not, at present, brought to know the Lord. I would like to say to them—dear Friends, you know that you ought to seek after God and you know that you never will be happy till you do. You are often a good deal troubled about this matter. Then

why not seek the Lord at once? We have often had God's blessing in this House of Prayer and I hope that some will find the Savior at this service. Will *you* be among them? Just listen to these closing sentences of my sermon and try to follow me step by step to the end.

If you would get a good understanding and seek the Lord, begin *by confession*. That is the way for you to commence who have, up to now, neglected concern for your souls. Confess your neglect. Admit your lack of understanding. Acknowledge that it has been an unwise thing to run the awful risks that you have run, for you might have been dead before now—and if you had been taken away, where would you have been? I would not have any of you run these risks any longer! If you are of a speculative turn of mind, speculate with your gold if you can afford to lose it, but do not speculate with your soul! Do not, as it were, gamble with Heaven and Hell, as some are doing. Confess that you have been unwise, for, often, a confession of ignorance is the doorstep to knowledge. He who begins with regret will end with rejoicing! And when you have thus confessed to God, then set your face with determination to seek the Lord.

First, *seek forgiveness for the past*. God proffers it through the precious blood of His dear Son. Then say to Him, "Lord, I trust in Jesus; give me pardon for all the past." Then ask Him to renew you, to give you a new heart that your desires may be changed, that you may not have that longing look after Sodom which was the ruin of Lot's wife, but that you may part with all your friends in the City of Destruction and run from it and seek the Celestial City and joys that last forever! Pray God to help you to do so now.

When that is done, go on your knees and pray to God to manifest *Himself to you*. What you need, beyond all else, is God. I gave you this illustration, the other day, but I repeat it for the benefit of any who were not with us then. Here is a little child that we have picked up in the gutter, a poor, miserable-looking child. Look at it! It is foul, it is diseased, it is starved, it is famished, it is naked, it is ready to die! What does that child need? Now, you mothers, come and look at it and tell me what it needs. Take out your black-lead pencils and a long strip of paper and make out a list of what it needs and, when you have done, I will undertake to tell you what it needs in one word—that little *child needs its mother*. And if it gets its mother, it will get everything else that it needs! What you need, poor Sinner, in order to make you right, is this, and that, and the other—you need such a number of things that I cannot stay to make out the list—but, in one word, *you need your God*. And if you get your God, all will be right with you!

"Oh, but I am such a sinner," says one! God is ready to pardon. "Oh, but I have such troubles!" "As your days, so shall your strength be." "Oh, but you do not know what evil companions I have!" "Certainly I will be with you," says the Lord, and His Presence will make you strong to overcome them all. "Oh, but I am such a wayward, fickle creature!" I know you are, but God says, "fear not, you worm, Jacob; I will help you." Only put yourselves into the keeping of God and all will be well. Do not say, "I

shall go and see such-and-such a good man,” or, “I shall try to have a talk with the Pastor.” You do not need them—they may be of some use to you another time—but, just now, what you need is your God! Oh, if you stop short at your minister, you might just as well have stopped before! He who goes to his priest has gained nothing! If he would really get what he needs, he must go to his God! Judas went to his priest and then went out and hanged himself! And I do not wonder that he did so. But go to God and confess your sin, and trust in Jesus, and you will not need to hang yourself after that. When you have God as yours, then you have rest, peace, pardon, joy, help—help in time and help in eternity.

Oh, happy was the day when first I sought and found the Savior! I have never regretted it. I have never met with a man who did and I shall never meet with such a man! Come, and seek Him. “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.” He waits to be gracious. “Seek you the Lord while He may be found; call you upon Him while He is near.” It seems a very commonplace thing to hear me talk to you in these very simple tones with no kind of pretense at oratory. But I wish, somehow, that I could get hold of the hand of you who hesitate, you who linger, and say to you, “O dear Friend, seek the Lord!” As you love yourself, seek the Lord! As you would be happy, seek the Lord! As you would lead a life that shall be noble and pure, seek the Lord! As you would stand without trembling when the heavens are on fire, seek the Lord! As you would live forever when the sun is turned into a black coal and the moon is like sackcloth of hair, and the stars have fallen like withered leaves from the bough—as you would be eternally blessed, seek the Lord!

And as you would escape the eternal destruction from the Presence of the Lord, seek His face. As you would escape that awful word which Christ pronounced and which, therefore, I dare not soften—“These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” As you would escape that—

**“Come, guilty soul, and flee away
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds”**

and may His good Spirit receive you even now! And to His name shall be praise forever and ever! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
Matthew 15:1-20; 29-39.**

Verses 1-14. *Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But He answered and said unto them, Why do you, also, transgress the Commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, honor your father and mother and, He that curses father or mother, let him die the death. But you say, Whoever shall say to his father or his mother, Whatsoever you might be profited by me, it is a gift to God—then he need not honor his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have you made the Commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, this people draws near unto Me with*

their mouth, and honors Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And He called the multitude and said unto them, Hear, and understand: not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man. Then came His disciples, and said unto Him, Know You not that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying? But He answered and said, Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Teacher and taught, Pharisee and disciple, “both shall fall into the ditch.” Great responsibility rests upon the blind leader but not all of it, for great responsibility also attaches to the blind *follower*. He should not follow a blind leader. He, above all others, needs a leader who can see. It is a pity that the man who can see should follow a blind leader, but if a man cannot see at all, then is he doubly unwise if he has a blind leader.

15, 16. *Then answered Peter and said unto Him, declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are you also yet without understanding? It was not a parable, it was a plain piece of simple language that the Savior had uttered—“not that which goes into the mouth defiles a man, but that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”*

17, 18. *Do you not yet understand that whatever enters in at the mouth goes into the belly, and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.* It is not that which we eat that defiles us. If it is such food as we ought to take, it builds up the body. If it is improper food, it may injure the body, yet it is not, in itself, capable of being regarded as sin. But a *spiritual* thing—a thought, a desire, an imagination—comes out of the heart—and if that is evil, it does defile the man.

19. *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* What a horrible den the heart, itself, must be, then! If all these evils come out of it, what a nest of unclean things it must be! A dreadful sight to the all-seeing God must be an unclean human heart. Let me read this verse again—“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” All these evils come out of the *heart* of man, out of such a heart as yours until it is renewed by Grace. Though you sit very attentively in the House of God, unless His Grace has changed your heart, all these evil things are there and they only need an opportunity to come out and reveal themselves!

20. *These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unclean hands defiles not a man.* You should understand that the washing here meant was not such as you and I give our hands when we feel that we have soiled them with our labor—then it is very proper to cleanse them. But this was a *ceremonial washing* which the scribes and Pharisees would have everybody do, whether his hands were clean or not, before he sat down to meat, and was a mere piece of absurdity, if not something

worse! Yet they magnified it into a most important matter and our Savior, here, shows what an idle thing it was.

Verses 29-32. *And Jesus departed from there and came near unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto Him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and He healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel. Then Jesus called His disciples unto Him and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. Was not that a most gracious utterance? "I will not send them away fasting." What confidence the disciples ought to have had that the people could be fed, and would be fed, when the Master gave that solemn promise, "I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."*

33, 34. *And His disciples said unto Him, Where should we find so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? And Jesus said unto them, How many loaves have you? That is always a good form of enquiry—"How many loaves have you?" How much Grace have you? How many gifts have you? How much ability have you? Are you using it all? Have you consecrated it all to the Master's service?*

34, 35. *And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. It is very amazing that they did as He told them. They could not see anything to eat, and yet, when He bade them sit down, they obeyed Him and did so. Thus the Lord prepares men's hearts for the reception of the Gospel. I do not doubt that whenever we go faithfully forth to break the Bread of Life, the Lord makes the people sit down in readiness to receive it.*

36. *And He took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and broke them, and gave to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. Notice the order of our Lord's action—thanksgiving first, and then the breaking of the bread. We do not always thank God for what we have already received, but the Lord, here, sets us the example of giving thanks for what is yet to come. For the multiplied loaves and fishes, He first gives thanks, and then passes them to His disciples to hand to the multitude.*

37-39. *And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. And He sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.*

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—495, 808, 494.

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

“THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE”

NO. 2608

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1899.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 28, 1883.**

***“The righteousness of God through faith in 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.”
Romans 3:22, 23.***

THE Apostle here says that “there is no difference,” yet he does not mean that all men are alike in all respects. There are very many and important variations among men. It would be quite untrue and unjust to say that there are no differences of character even among unregenerate men, for there certainly are many varieties and gradations of sinners. There are some who have, as it were, sold themselves to work iniquity, and there are others who have, apparently, kept the Commandments of God from their youth up. There are some who delight in all manner of evil and there are others who, though they are not converted, hate the very mention of all the grosser vices and steer clear of such impurity. There are some people, not yet on the Lord’s side, who are like that rich young man of whom it is said that when Christ looked upon him, He loved him, for He saw much in him that was admirable. But, on the other hand, there are some who are manifestly sons of perdition, like Judas, of whom our Lord said that he was a devil. All men are not demons, or demoniacal. All are not equally hardened in heart. All do not go to the same excess of evil. So when Paul said, “There is no difference,” he did not mean that there are no differences of outward character.

Let us not be carried away with the idea that it does not matter what our outward character is—it matters a great deal! It shall be found, at the last, that the greatly guilty shall be greatly punished. “That servant who knew his lord’s will and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.” God is not unjust! Even in taking vengeance upon His adversaries, He strictly observes justice at all times. It is for your good and for the good of those about you that you should be moral, temperate, chaste and honest—and God grant that you may be all that!

There are, then, differences of character among men, and there are, no doubt, differences of disposition which show themselves very early. Some children appear from the very first to be tender and docile, while others manifest a passionate and rebellious disposition. All of us probably know

some friends who are not yet converted, but they are amiable, loving, considerate, kind—they have almost everything we could wish except the one thing necessary—God grant that they may soon have that, also! Though as yet they are not brought to Christ’s feet, they seem to have had a religious tendency from their very childhood and they delight to be found in the House of God and, at least *externally*, in the ways of God. even if their hearts are not, at present, renewed by Grace. There are, alas, others whose dispositions are the very reverse of all this—they seem disposed to everything that is bad. We have met with cases in godly families where young men, from the first moment in which they could have their liberty, have delighted to do that which at last broke their parents’ hearts. They have seemed to be, from the very first, fickle, vain, fond of pleasure, proud, willful and wicked. Beyond all question, there are differences of disposition in different persons. And when Paul says, “There is no difference,” he does not refer either to character or to disposition.

There are also in men who, as yet, are not saved, differences as to their readiness to receive the Word of God. There are some who are like the “honest and good ground” which is already plowed and harrowed—all that is needed is the handful of good Seed—and as soon as it is sown, they will take it in and, in due time, yield a harvest in return. Others are like the stony-ground hearers—apparently ready and prepared for the good Seed. They seem to receive the Word with joy, but, as the hard rock underneath has never been broken up and there has been no subsoil plowing, nothing permanent results from their hearing the Gospel message. There are others, again, who are like the hard-trodden highway—you may sow upon them as much seed as you like, but the only result will be to feed the birds. The fowls of the air will devour whatever is scattered upon them. May none of us be hearers of that sort!

So you see, dear Friends, that there are great differences among men in certain respects. The Apostle is speaking in this passage about one thing—and you must not stretch his meaning beyond that. There is one point in which there is no difference and that is that, “all have sinned.” All have forfeited every claim to personal righteousness! All must be made righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to them—and all who would have that righteousness must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for there is one way of salvation, and only one—and whatever other differences there may be, there is no difference about this matter! If we are saved at all, we must all be saved in one way. My discourse is to run upon these lines. First, *let us enlarge upon the doctrine* that, in the matter of the Gospel and of salvation, “There is no difference.” Secondly, *let us show its practical bearing upon ourselves*. And then, thirdly, *let us rejoice in the doctrine*—let our hearts sing over it—for there is the raw material of many a holy song and Psalm within these few words, “There is no difference.”

I. First, then, LET US ENLARGE UPON THIS DOCTRINE and, in so doing, we will make four observations.

The first is this—*there is no difference as to the message of salvation which is to be delivered to men*. It may be my privilege, at one time, to

speak to a convocation of highly-intelligent well-educated men. If so, I am to preach to them the Gospel of salvation by faith in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, it has often been a great joy to me to preach to assemblies which certainly were not composed of the learned and great, but were gathered from the lowest classes of the people. How glad I have been to preach to them! And I had exactly the same message to deliver to them as to the other congregation—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” If the true preacher of Christ were called to preach before a pit full of kings—as Napoleon once said to a noted singer, “If you will come to me, you shall sing before a pit full of kings”—if it were the preacher’s business to address such an audience as that, he must preach nothing but, “Believe and live!” And if he were called to speak before an assembly of murderers about to die—the very scum of the earth—he could have no more suitable or appropriate message than this, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Go where you may, my dear Brothers, you need not puzzle your head about the sort of Gospel you are bound to preach. To the jailor at Philippi, to the Areopagites on Mars’ Hill, to the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, to Nero at Rome, to barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free—to the very chief of sinners, to the greatest or the least of mankind, you have to deliver but one message—“God has set forth His Son, Jesus Christ, to be the propitiation for sin, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life.” This is the essence of the one message we have to deliver to all men! “There is no difference.”

And, next, *there is no difference as to man’s need of this Gospel*. There are some, as we have already admitted, who have been preserved from gross vice, whose lives have been moral and upright, yet they have as much need of the Gospel as those who are confined in our jails, or those who flaunt their unchastity in our public streets. The Gospel comes to deal with sin—and if a man has but one sin, he cannot get rid of that one sin apart from the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. But all men have not merely one sin, but many sins—they may not all be equally clear and manifest—some of them may be secret sins, but the secrecy of sin does not render it less sinful in the sight of God. There are no secrets from Him, He sees everything. And whether sin is open or covert, whether it is less or more than that of other men, it needs the atoning Sacrifice of Christ to remove it! The putting away of the sin of the most moral person who ever lived requires the propitiation of the Son of God. There is no bath that can take away a single stain of guilt except that—

**“Fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins.”**

All men have evil hearts, albeit their hearts may not all be equally inclined to the coarser vices in which some indulge, yet there is in every sinner the black spot of alienation from God, forgetfulness of God, love of sin and dislike to God when He is thoroughly known. And, to get this out of the heart requires a Divine operation in every case. No man can make his own heart clean. If it were possible for a man to change his arm or his foot, yet it would be clearly impossible for him to change his heart—

that is so vital to himself that there cannot be a change there unless He that made all hearts should make that heart anew! To change the heart of the most amiable maiden requires the work of the Spirit of God as truly as to change the heart of the most debauched wretch that lives! It is no more possible for the honest man than for the practiced thief to make his heart right in the sight of God—it is equally impossible to either of them. Both cases are beyond human power and, therefore, the need of the work of the Spirit of God is the same. All of us, at this moment, either stand stripped naked before God, without a rag to cover us, or else we are wrapped in the glorious and resplendent righteousness of Jesus Christ. The need of the Gospel is the same to every individual in the world! Those who are elevated above their fellow creatures do not stand on high before God—the Queen needs the Grace of God to save her just as much as the poorest of her subjects. “There is no difference” as to the need of salvation.

Next, *this declaration is equally true as to the method of salvation.* The way in which men are saved is the same in every case. “There is no difference.” They do not all feel the same terrors, they do not all experience, to the same extent, the common joys. Each path is peculiar in some respects, yet there is but one road, and that is the narrow way that leads to eternal life. The plan of salvation is this—that we confess and acknowledge that our own righteousness is but filthy rags, that there is nothing in us that can merit anything of God. And, next, that we apprehend that the Lord has put His dear Son into our place, has laid on Him our sin and struck Him with the strokes that ought to have fallen upon us. He, on His part, willingly became our Surety and Substitute. We must believe this if we would be saved. That being done, we must accept what Christ has endured as being borne for us—and trust in it with our whole hearts. We must, in fact, change places with Christ—let Him stand, as He did stand, and be reckoned as the sinner, that we might stand here and be looked upon by God as if *we* had been like His Son—perfectly righteous and without sin. He clothes Himself in our rags and He puts on us His royal robes! Faith appropriates to itself the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and so is clothed with what is called in our text, “the righteousness of God.”

God’s plan of salvation is a grand one and there is no other that can be of use to anybody in the whole world. This is the one way of life—that you acknowledge yourself to be nothing and take Christ to be your All-in-All—that you, with your sin and misery, by a simple act of faith, take to yourself Christ to be your righteousness and your strength—and, this being done, you are accepted in the Beloved, for now is it true of you that the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ, is unto you and upon you seeing that you have believed in Him. “There is no difference,” then, about the method of salvation.

Once more, *there is no difference as to the efficacy of the plan of salvation.* This man believed in Jesus Christ and was saved. So shall that other man be if he believes in Jesus Christ. All who believe in Christ are justified from all things. All who trust in Christ have eternal life and shall

never perish. The blood of Jesus was never yet applied to a conscience without giving it peace. A persecutor is washed and his crimson stains are gone. A thief believes and he is, that day, with Christ in Paradise! Mary Magdalene believes and seven devils are cast out of her. A rough Philippian jailor believes and that night he is baptized, rejoicing in God with all his house. Never sinner yet did try this blessed remedy and find it fail! And none ever shall, for “there is no difference.”

II. Now, in the second place, I want to TURN THIS TRUTH TO PRACTICAL ACCOUNT by showing its bearing upon us.

My first observation is *what a leveler this doctrine is for pride!* There is self-righteousness up there as a crown upon your forehead—it will have to come down, my Friend. You are covered with the beautiful garments of your own good deeds—take them off, Brothers and Sisters—take them off! They are all without merit in the sight of God until you have trusted His Son. All that you have done and all that you think you have done are only as so many cobwebs that must be swept away. There stands the gate through which the most fallen may enter—and you must go through the same gate. There is no private path made for a gentleman like you. There is no royal road to Heaven save only that one royal road which is opened for the very chief of sinners. Down, Mr. Pride! Here is a man who is born of Christian parents and, perhaps, he has listened to the lying logic of the present age which says, “Children born of godly parents do not need conversion—there is something good in them by nature.” I tell you, Sirs, that I begin to tremble for the children of pious parents, for I think that they are more likely to be deceived than any others! They often fancy that they are converted when they are not and they get admitted into churches while they are unconverted. They are not like those who can see a great change in themselves through being taken right out of gross sin—they are very apt to be deceived and have need to be very careful lest they should make a fatal and eternal mistake. Instead of boasting of their godly ancestry, high privilege as it is, let them remember that regeneration is not of blood, nor of birth, nor of the will of man, but of God. And to them, as to all others, Christ’s words apply, “You must be born again.”

There are some who imagine that they can get to Heaven by some special staircase because they are people of rank. Oh, believe me, Sir John, you will have to be saved in the same way as your groom, or not at all! Ah, my lord, everybody bows to you, but you must bow to Christ! You must be saved in the same way as the carpenter, the blacksmith and the chimney-sweep, or not at all. There are no two ways to Heaven! Jesus says, “I am the Way.” There is no other way for your lordship, or your ladyship, in spite of your rank. There is a wealthy man who thinks that everything is to be bought, if he can find the price—but you cannot buy Heaven, Sir. The very stones of the street are of pure gold—you could not buy one of them, you have not enough money! Your wealth goes for nothing in the matter of salvation. You must be saved in the same way as the poorest of the poor. The pauper who was born in a workhouse and has

never left it, has the same way of salvation as you have, for, “there is no difference” of any sort, whatever, with regard to birth, or rank, or wealth.

But someone says, “I am a man of great abilities, a man of education, culture and learning.” I am very glad to hear of it, my dear Sir. But do you expect the Lord is going to make a way of salvation by competitive examination as when people enter the Civil Service? Is there to be a special way of salvation for you Masters of Arts or Doctors of Divinity? It is not so! The Lord knew that the great bulk of people would be nothing of this sort, so He made a Gospel which is adapted to the poor—but is just as suitable for all. Those who are illiterate can, nevertheless, understand the way of salvation by *faith* in Christ and so they are saved and, my dear Sir, you will have to be saved in the same way, or else you will never get to Heaven. I have heard of a king of Sweden who, when he lay dying, had a bishop to pray with him. And when the bishop had finished his prayer, the king said, “Somehow I have derived no comfort from that prayer. I remember once hearing a shepherd pray in a hut when I had lost my way—will you send for him?” They did so, and when the shepherd poured out his heart in his own simple language, then the king saw the Light of God and died rejoicing! “There is no difference”—the king and the shepherd need the same Savior—and must go to Heaven by the same royal road. This doctrine dethrones pride, but that is not all that it does.

Further, *it is a great uplifter of those who are troubled with fears.* “Oh,” says one, “I am such a great sinner! I feel that I am the greatest sinner who ever lived.” Ah, my dear Friend, but “there is no difference.” You will enter Heaven at the same gate through which great *saints* go in if you do but trust the Lord Jesus Christ, for that is what they have to do and so they are saved, and so shall you be! I think that I hear another say, “But I find such evil in my very nature. I have such a hard heart. I cannot feel, I cannot love the Lord as I want to.” Yes, I know all about it and I am very sorry for you, but, my dear Friend, “there is no difference.” You believe that there are some Christians who are very tender of spirit, but the Lord had to *make* them tender—and He can make you tender. The same Lord that saves little children and that brought a young Josiah and an open-hearted Lydia to His feet, can bring you, also, for there is really no difference. It needed a Divine work in their case and it needs the same in yours. “I am very poor,” says one. Yes, but, “there is no difference,” blessed be God! You hardly know where you are going to sleep tonight, but I can tell you where you may rest, not only tonight, but all your days—that is, in Christ Jesus—if you come and put your trust in Him! He does not look to see whether you have a suit of broadcloth or a suit of fustian! “There is no difference” with regard to that matter.

“But I am so ignorant,” says one, “I cannot even read.” I am very sorry for you and I think that you ought to try and learn. At the same time, there is many a man who can read his title clear to a mansion in the skies who does not know A from B! It does not need that you be a scholar in the schools of men to become a scholar in the school of Christ, but, just as you are, trust your soul in His hands and He will teach you all that is essential to be known, for in this matter, “there is no difference.” I

thought I heard someone say, very indistinctly, "Ah, Sir, but I am so old!" Yes, yes, and I think I hear a little boy or girl over yonder say, "But, Sir, I am so young!" Well, come along, both of you! Give me your hand, old Friend, and give me yours, dear child, for "there is no difference" between the oldest and the youngest as to this way of salvation! The child believes and is saved! And the old man believes with a childlike faith and is saved, too!

My text also has a practical bearing in another direction, *it helps to meet singularity of disposition*. There are many persons in the world who believe that they are different from everybody else. I always sympathize very heartily with them because I know that I am, myself, a very odd body, a lot out of all catalogs, I often say, and so are you. You think there never was another like you! Perhaps you think it is a pity that there should be and very likely that is true. You are all by yourself, you say. Well, just listen to me, for my text can set you right—God grant that it may! After all, "there is no difference." Come, you strange Jack—you singular Mary—you that seem to be the odd bird in the nest—there is, after all, no difference! Your heart is evil, your life has been sinful—so has my life been, and so is it with all those round about you! And there is only one way of salvation for you odd people and for all you even people as well! There is not anybody that is so cut on the cross, so strange and so altogether out of harmony with the rest of mankind that he may say, "God left me out of His calculations." No, there is really no difference whatever between you and others in this matter of salvation!

I must make yet one more practical use of my text and that is, *to encourage you who labor for Christ*. Where are you going to serve the Master, my Brother? "Oh," you reply, "I have a very tough bit of ground to till. I teach in a Ragged School on Stint Street and I visit the lodging houses." Another says, "I am trying to do something for Christ in Bethnal Green." Well, Friend, I reckon that I have about as hard a field of labor as you have. "Oh," you say, "but these look like very respectable people." Yes, they look so, but if you could read their hearts, you would see that they are uncommonly like those people on Stint Street and Bethnal Green among whom you are working. "As in water, face answers to face, so the heart of man to man." We all belong to the same race. There is but one blood in all of us. There is the same tendency to sin and the same need of a Savior for these respectable-looking folk as there is for the very roughest and the very dirtiest of mankind!

I think I hear another say, "I am going to Africa as a missionary and I am sometimes afraid as to how I shall get on with the unenlightened people there." Another says, "I am going to India and I do not know how I shall succeed with those learned Brahmins." Another says, "I am going to China. I cannot hope to see many converted among those who are so devoted to Confucianism." Why not? "There is no difference." After all, it is the same sort of soil which we all have to plow either at home or abroad. There may be a slight contrast on the surface, but it all needs the same kind of plowing, the same sort of sowing and the same Divine power to cause the seed to grow! The gate of salvation is just as widely open to

men in China as it is to you who have long been sitting under the sound of the Word. At bottom, “there is no difference” between man and man—they are all sinners, they are all depraved. “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.” I believe that it takes as much Grace to save an Englishman as it does to save a Hottentot. The Grace operates, too, in much the same way. The experience of the two men, when it is related, may sound different because of the varying measure of knowledge of the parties concerned, yet the essential items of all true Christian experience will be found to be the same in every case. Do not, therefore, say, dear Brother, “I shall not go to that place! It is such a difficult place.” I have a notion that such a spot as that is the very best place to which anyone can go. “But there are such crowds of people there.” All the better! It is good fishing where there are plenty of fish. “But, oh, they are so wild!” Just so. But if I were ever to go hunting, I would not hunt poor timid hares, I would like to go after lions, tigers, bears and wolves—there is excitement in such sport as that!

And if you go in for soul-winning, do not be picking and choosing which souls you will try to win. The worse the region is, the more it needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I think that if I were a lamp and I could have my choice as to where I would be hung, I should not wish to be in one of the fine streets where there were plenty of other lamps, but I should like to go down some wretched court where there was no lamp at all, where the people break one another’s heads and steal one another’s goods in the dark, for I should be of more use there! So, dear Friends, be willing to go where you can be of most use! And wherever your sphere of service is, do not be discouraged, for over all men there hangs this motto, “There is no difference.” They have all to be saved in the same way and the Omnipotence that can save one will abundantly suffice for the salvation of another!

III. Now, in closing my discourse, I want to spend a minute or two in bidding you REJOICE OVER THIS GREAT TRUTH.

I rejoice over the fact that there is no difference, in the matters of which I have been speaking, *concerning the whole human race*. I saw a picture of the Tower of Babel by an eminent painter. All the various races of mankind were represented as going off in different directions, some to the North, others to the South, to the West, or to the East, all being scattered over the face of the whole earth. It was a painful sight to see the great family broken up, never, as far as we could see, to be reunited again. But, dear Friends, hear how this text collects the whole family of mankind into one and gathers all these scattered ears of corn and makes one sheaf of them—“There is no difference.” All men are fallen through sin, but whoever, out of them all, believes in Jesus Christ, shall have eternal life! There is one blessed bath of salvation in which all may be washed whiter than snow! There is one remedy, and only one, for the disease of sin—and all who apply to the great Physician are healed forever. I love to see the human race thus reunited.

But there is something better than that. *What glory it is to the Lord Jesus Christ that He should be the only Savior* and that faith in Him should be the only way of salvation! I feel sure that we do not wish the Lord Jesus Christ to be put into competition with someone else in His work as our Savior. No, we want our Lord to have the monopoly in this matter and He has it! None can be saved except by faith in Him, by the application of His precious blood, glory be to His holy name! I feel a very peculiar joy over this Truth of God. I was thinking, as I came along to this service, “Suppose I had to preach a different gospel for every man?” There is a little book entitled, *Every man his own lawyer*. Well, nowadays, according to some people, it seems as if every man is to be his own savior! But if I had, say, a dozen gospels, and I had to sort them out and give the right gospel to the right man, what a fix I would be in! I believe that, oftentimes, I should be giving your gospel to someone else and someone else’s gospel to you—and what a muddle it would all be! But now we have one universal cure! We have a Divine *catholicon*. The blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ will save every man who trusts Him, for “there is no difference.”

Wherever Christ is received, there shall be salvation. This makes it easy work for the preacher and what a blessing it is to you who are Believers, for, suppose you had to say, “Well, I have believed in such-and-such a salvation,” but somebody might say, “That will not save you! You are a No. 2 man and you need No. 2 gospel, not No. 1.” Suppose you should lay hold of that and one of these days your conscience should say to you, “No. 2 is not the medicine that you need, you ought to have No. 6.” Suppose that it ran up to No. 14, No. 17, or No. 20? Why, when you lay dying, you might say, “I have taken the remedy No. 1, but I am afraid that I am a No.20 man. I took this one and it did give me some kind of relief, but I am afraid that I took the wrong medicine.” But now it is one medicine for every disease—one Christ for every sinner—one blood with which to wash us—one salvation with which to rescue us—one righteousness with which to cover us! Therefore, such doubts as I have just mentioned can never come into the minds of those who believe in Jesus—blessed be God for that!

And so to you, dear Hearers, who are seeking after Christ, is it not a great mercy that there is but one name whereby you can be saved? Otherwise the same awkward occurrence might happen to you and you would be saying, “At which door am I to go in?” You might get to the wrong entrance and the man in charge of it might say, “This is not the door for you. You have come to the wrong one, you must go to No. 6, or 7, or 8.” How puzzled we are when we go to Clapham Junction, or some such railway station, to know which staircase we are to go up—and a poor sinner would be much in the same kind of worry to know which way he was to be saved. But when it is just this, “Believe and be saved; look and live; trust yourself to Christ, rest in His atoning Sacrifice and you are saved”—all can understand it!

When God gives us, by His Spirit, a simple faith in Jesus, we at once receive eternal life—and every soul that believes in Jesus Christ has that

life. I pray God to bless this message to you who are still unsaved. Quarrel not with your only hope of salvation! Accept what God provides! Yield yourselves to the Divine decree, for God has decreed that no soul shall enter Heaven but by His Son, "the Way, the Truth and the Life." This name—this *one name*—you must rely on if you would be saved! This way—this *one way*—you must run in if you would enter Heaven! God help you to enter it at once, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 3.**

Verses 1, 2. *What advantage, then, has the Jew? Or what profit is there in circumcision? Much every way; chief, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.* If it is 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 make the faith of God without effect? God forbid! Yes, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That You might be justified in Your sayings, and might overcome when You are judged. But if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who takes 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 has 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 any 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 are 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 twisting the Truth of God 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 way, 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 began righteously, but how soon he fell! And all his descendants have both begun and continued to be sinners. “There is none righteous, no, not one.”

11. *There is none that understands, there is none that seeks 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 all together become unprofitable; there is none that does 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 does 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 about 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 whatever the Law says, it says 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 proven, 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 19th Century world, as well as the world of the 1st 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 of God, 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 mirror—you see your spots as you gaze into it. But no man ever washed his face in a mirror—it shows the spots, but it cannot remove them! The Law of God 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 through faith in 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 His 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 has 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 believes 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 at once begin to boast.

27. *No, 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 make void the Law through faith?* Some will be sure to say so, but it is not true.

31. *God forbid! Yes, 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 honors the Law of God as “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ.” It establishes forever 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 is fulfilled.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—397, 534, 549.

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redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”
Romans 3:24.***

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***“Is it not strange, the dark hour
That ever dawned on sinful earth
Should touch the heart with softer power
For comfort, than an angel’s mirth?
That to the Cross the mourner’s eyes should turn
Sooner than where the stars of Bethlehem burn?”***

Nowhere does the soul ever find such consolation as on that very spot where misery reigned, where woe triumphed, where agony reached its climax. There Grace has dug a fountain which always gushes with waters pure as crystal, each drop capable of alleviating the woes and the agonies of mankind! You have had your seasons of woe, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus. And you will confess it was not at Olivet that you found comfort, not on the hill of Sinai, nor on Tabor. But Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha have been a means of comfort to you. The bitter herbs of Gethsemane have often taken away the bitters of our life. The scourge of Gabbatha has often scourged away our cares and the groans of Calvary have put all other groans to flight.

We have, this morning, then, a subject which I trust may be the means of comforting God’s saints, seeing it takes its rise at the Cross and from there runs on in a rich stream of perennial blessing to all Believers. You note, *we have in our text*, first of all, the Redemption of Christ Jesus. Secondly, *the justification of sinners flowing from it*. And then thirdly, *the manner of the giving of this justification*, “freely by His Grace.”

I. First, then, we have THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN OR BY CHRIST JESUS. The figure of redemption is very simple and has been very frequently used in Scripture. When a prisoner has been taken captive and has been made a slave by some barbarous power, it has been usual, be-

fore he could be set free, that a ransom price should be paid. Now we, being, by the Fall of Adam, prone to guiltiness and, indeed, virtually guilty, were by the irreproachable judgment of God given up to the vengeance of the Law. We were given into the hands of Justice—Justice claimed us to be his bond slaves forever, unless we could pay a ransom, whereby our souls could be redeemed. We were, indeed, poor as owlets, we had nothing wherewith to bless ourselves. We were, as our hymn has worded it, “bankrupt debtors.” All we had was sold. We were left naked and poor and miserable and we could by no means find a ransom. It was just then that Christ stepped in, stood Sponsor for us and, in the place of all Believers, paid the ransom price, that we might in that hour be delivered from the curse of the Law and the vengeance of God! We could then go on our way, clean, free and justified by His blood!

Let me just endeavor to show you some qualities of the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus. You will remember *the multitude* He has redeemed. Not I, alone, nor you, alone, but “a multitude that no man can number.” A number which shall as far exceed the stars of Heaven, as they exceed all mortal reckoning! Christ has bought for Himself some out of every kingdom and nation and tongue under Heaven! He has redeemed from among men some of every rank, from the highest to the lowest, some of every color—black and white—some of every standing in society, the best and the worst, for some of all sorts has Jesus Christ given Himself a Ransom that they might be redeemed unto Himself!

Now, concerning this Ransom, we have to observe that it was all paid and all paid at once. When Christ redeemed His people, He did it thoroughly. He did not leave a single debt unpaid, nor yet one farthing for them to settle afterwards. God demanded of Christ the payment for the sins of all His people. Christ stood forward and to the utmost farthing paid whatever His people owed. The Sacrifice of Calvary was not a partial payment—it was not a partial exoneration—it was a complete and perfect payment and it obtained a complete and perfect remittal of all the debts of all Believers that have lived, do live, or shall live to the very end of time! On that day when Christ hung on the Cross, He did not leave a single farthing for us to pay as a satisfaction to God. He did not leave, from a thread even to a shoelace, that He had not satisfied. The whole of the demands of the Law were paid then and there by Jehovah Jesus, the great High Priest of all His people! And blessed be His name, He paid it all at once, too! So priceless was the Ransom, so princely and munificent was the price demanded for our souls, one might have thought it would have been marvelous if Christ had paid it by installments—some of it now and some of it then. Kings’ ransoms have sometimes been paid part at once and part in dues afterwards to run through years. But not so our

Savior—once and for all He gave Himself as a Sacrifice. At once He counted down the price and said, “It is finished,” leaving nothing for Him to do, nor for us to accomplish. He did not drivel out a partial payment and then declare that He would come again to die, or that He would again suffer, or that He would again obey. But down upon the nail, to the utmost farthing, the Ransom of all His elect was paid and a full receipt given to them. Christ nailed that receipt to His Cross and said, “It is done, it is done. I have taken away the handwriting of ordinances, I have nailed it to the Cross. Who is he that shall condemn My people or lay anything to their charge? For I have blotted out like a cloud their transgressions and like a thick cloud their sins!”

And when Christ paid this Ransom, you will notice that He did it all Himself! He was very particular about that. Simon, the Pyrenean, might bear the Cross but Simon, the Pyrenean, might not be nailed to it. That sacred circle of Calvary was kept for Christ, alone. Two thieves were with Him there, not righteous men, lest any should have said that the death of those two righteous men helped the Savior. Two thieves hung there with Him, that men might see that there was majesty in His misery and that He could pardon men and show His Sovereignty even when He was dying! There were no righteous men to suffer. No disciples shared His death. Peter was not dragged there to be beheaded. John was not nailed to a cross side by side with Him. He was left there alone! He says, “I have trodden the winepress alone. And of the people there was none with Me.” The whole of the tremendous debt was put upon His shoulders! The whole weight of the sins of all His people was placed upon Him! Once He seemed to stagger under it—“Father, if it is possible.” But again He stood upright—“Nevertheless, not My will but Yours be done.” The whole of the punishment of His people was distilled into one cup—no mortal lips might give it so much as a solitary sip! When He put it to His own lips, it was so bitter, He well near spurned it. “Let this cup pass from Me.” But His love for His people was so strong that He took the cup in both His hands and—

**“At one tremendous draught of love
He drank damnation dry,”**

for all His people! He drank it all, He endured all, He suffered all—so that now and forever there are no flames of Hell for them, no racks of torment! They have no eternal woes—Christ has suffered all they ought to have suffered and they must, they shall go free! The work was completely done by Himself, without a helper!

And note, again it was *accepted*. In Truth, it was a goodly ransom. What could equal it? A soul “exceedingly sorrowful even unto death.” A body torn with torture, a death of the most inhuman kind. And an agony

of such a character that tongue cannot speak of it, nor can even man's mind imagine its horror! It was a goodly price. But say, was it accepted? There have been prices paid, sometimes, or rather offered, which never were accepted by the party to whom they were offered and, therefore, the slave did not go free. But this was accepted. I will show you the evidence. When Christ declared that He would pay the debt for all His people, God sent the officer to arrest Him for it. He arrested Him in the Garden of Gethsemane and seizing upon Him, he dragged him to the bar of Pilate, to the bar of Herod and to the judgment seat of Caiaphas—the payment was all made and Christ was put into the grave! He was there locked up in vile durance until the acceptance was ratified in Heaven. He slept there a portion of three days in His tomb. It was declared that the ratification was to be this—the Surety was to go His way as soon as His suretyship engagements had been fulfilled. Now let your minds picture the buried Jesus. He is in the sepulcher. 'Tis true He has paid all the debt, but the receipt is not yet given. He slumbers in that narrow tomb. Fastened in with a seal upon a giant stone, He sleeps still in His grave. Not yet has the acceptance been given from God. The angels have not yet come from Heaven to say, "The deed is done. God has accepted Your sacrifice." Now is the crisis of this world! It hangs trembling in the balance. Will God accept the ransom, or will He not? We shall see. An angel comes from Heaven with exceeding brightness. He rolls away the stone. And forth comes the Captive, with no manacles upon His hands, with the grave clothes left behind Him! He is free, never more to suffer, never more to die. Now—

***"If Jesus had not paid the debt,
He never had been at freedom set."***

If God had not accepted His sacrifice, He would have been in His tomb at this moment! He never would have risen from His grave! But His Resurrection was a pledge of God's accepting Him—He said, "I have had a claim upon You to this hour. That claim is now paid. Go Your way." And Death gave up his royal Captive, the stone was rolled into the garden and the Conqueror came forth, leading captivity captive!

And, moreover, God gave a second proof of acceptance *for He took His only-begotten Son to Heaven* and set Him at His right hand, far above all principalities and powers! And therein He meant to say to Him, "Sit upon the Throne, for You have done the mighty deed. All Your works and all Your miseries are accepted as the ransom of men." O my Beloved, think what a grand sight it must have been when Christ ascended into Glory! What a noble certificate it must have been of His Father's acceptance of Him! Do you not think you see the scene on earth? It is very simple. A few disciples are standing upon a hill and Christ mounts into the air in

slow and solemn movement, as if an angel sped his way by gentle degrees, like mist or exhalation from the lake into the skies. Can you imagine what is going on up yonder? Can you for a moment conceive how, when the mighty Conqueror entered the gates of Heaven, the angels met Him—

***“They brought His chariot from on high,
To bear Him to His Throne,
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried,
‘The glorious work is done!’”***

Can you think how loud were the plaudits when He entered the gates of Heaven? Can you conceive how they pressed on one another to behold how He came conquering from the flight? Do you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the redeemed saints come to behold the Savior and the Lord? They had desired to see Him and now their eyes behold Him in flesh and blood, the conqueror over death and Hell! Do you think you see Him, with Hell at His chariot wheels, with Death dragged as a captive through the royal streets of Heaven? Oh, what a spectacle was there that day! No Roman warrior ever had such a triumph. None ever saw such a majestic sight! The pomp of a whole universe, the royalty of entire Creation—cherubim and seraphim and all powers created—did swell the show! And God Himself, the Everlasting One, crowned all, when He pressed His Son to His bosom and said, “Well done, well done! You have finished the work which I gave You to do. Rest here forever, My accepted One.” Ah, but He never would have had that triumph if He had not paid all the debt. Unless His Father had accepted the Ransom, He had never been so honored! But because it was accepted, therefore did He so triumph. So far, then, concerning the Ransom.

II. And now, by the help of God’s Spirit, let me address myself TO THE EFFECT OF THE RANSOM. Being justified—“justified freely by His Grace through the redemption.”

Now, *what is the meaning of justification?* Divines will puzzle you, if you ask them. I must try the best I can to make justification plain and simple—even to the comprehension of a child. There is not such a thing as justification to be had on earth for mortal men except in one way. Justification, you know, is a forensic term—it is employed always in a legal sense. A prisoner is brought to the bar of justice to be tried. There is only one way whereby that prisoner can be justified—he must be found not guilty and if he is found not guilty, then he is justified—that is, he is proved to be a just man. If you find that man guilty, you cannot justify him. The Queen may pardon him but she cannot justify him. The deed is not a justifiable one—if he is guilty concerning it—he cannot be justified on account of it. He may be *pardoned*. But no royalty, itself, can ever wash that man’s character. He is as much a real criminal when he is

pardoned as before. There is no means among men of justifying a man of an accusation which is laid against him except by his being proved not guilty. Now, the wonder of wonders is that we are proved guilty and yet we are justified—the guilty verdict has been brought in against us—and yet, notwithstanding, we are justified! Can any earthly tribunal do that? No. It remained for the Ransom of Christ to effect that which is an impossibility to any tribunal upon earth! We are all guilty. Read the 23rd verse, immediately preceding the text—“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” There the verdict of guilty is brought in and yet we are immediately afterwards said to be justified freely by His Grace!

Now, allow me to explain *the way whereby God justifies a sinner*. I am about to suppose an impossible case. A prisoner has been tried and condemned to death. He is a guilty man. He cannot be justified because he is guilty. But now, suppose for a moment that such a thing as this could happen—that some second party could be introduced who could take all that man’s guilt upon himself! Who could, in effect, change places with that man and by some mysterious process, which of course is impossible with men, *become that man*. Or take that man’s character upon himself. He, the righteous man, putting the rebel in his place and making the rebel a righteous man—we cannot do that in our courts. If I were to go before a judge and he should agree that I should be committed for a year’s imprisonment instead of some wretch who was condemned yesterday to a year’s imprisonment, I could not take his *guilt*! I might take his *punishment*, but not his guilt. Now, what flesh and blood cannot do, Jesus Christ, by His redemption, did. Here I stand, the sinner. I mention myself as the representative of you all. I am condemned to die. God says, “I will condemn that man, I must, I will—I will punish him.” Christ comes in, puts me aside and stands Himself in my place. When the plea is demanded, Christ says, “Guilty.” He takes my guilt to be His own guilt! When the punishment is to be executed, Christ comes forth. “Punish Me,” He says—“I have put My righteousness on that man and I have taken that man’s sins on Me. Father, punish Me and consider that man to have been Me. Let him reign in Heaven. Let Me suffer misery. Let Me endure his curse and let him receive My blessing.” This marvelous Doctrine of the changing of places of Christ with poor sinners is a Doctrine of Revelation! It never could have been conceived by Nature! Let me, lest I should have made a mistake, explain myself again. The way whereby God saves a sinner is not, as some say, by passing over the penalty. No! The penalty has been paid. It is the putting of another person in the rebel’s place. The rebel must die. God says he must. Christ says, “I will be the Substitute for the rebel. The rebel shall take My place. I will take his.” God consents to it. No earthly monarch could have power to consent to

such a change, but the God of Heaven has a right to do as He pleases! In His infinite mercy He consented to the arrangement. "Son of My love," He said, "You must stand in the sinner's place. You must suffer what he ought to have suffered. You must be accounted guilty just as he was accounted guilty. Only then will I look upon the sinner in another light. I will look at him as if he were You. I will accept him as if he were My only-begotten Son, full of Grace and Truth. I will give him a crown in Heaven and I will take him to My heart forever and ever." This is the way we are saved. "Being justified freely by His Grace, through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

And now, let me further go on to *explain some of the characteristics* of this justification. As soon as a repenting sinner is justified, remember, he is justified for *all* his sins. Here stands a guilty man. The moment he believes in Christ, he receives his pardon at once and his sins are no longer his. They are cast into the depths of the sea. They are laid upon the shoulders of Christ and they are gone. The man stands a guiltless man in the sight of God, accepted in the Beloved. "What?" you say. "Do you mean that literally?" Yes I do. That is the Doctrine of Justification by Faith. Man ceases to be regarded by Divine Justice as a guilty being. The moment he believes on Christ, his guilt is all taken away. But I will go a step further. The moment the man believes in Christ, he ceases to be guilty in God's esteem! And what is more, he becomes righteous, he becomes meritorious—the moment when Christ takes his sins *he* takes Christ's righteousness, so that when God looks upon the sinner who but an hour ago was dead in sins, He looks upon him with as much love and affection as He ever looked upon His Son! Christ Himself has said it—"As the Father loved Me, so have I loved you." He loves us as much as His Father loved Him! Can you believe such a Doctrine as that? Does it not pass all thought? Well, it is a Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Doctrine whereby we must hope to be saved. Can I to any unenlightened person illustrate this thought better? I will give him the parable we have given to us in the Prophets—the parable of Joshua the High Priest. Joshua comes in, clothed in filthy garments—those filthy garments represent his sins. Take away the filthy garments. That is pardon. Put a miter on his head. Clothe him in royal raiment—make him rich and fair—that is justification. But where do these garments come from? And where do those rags go? Why the rags that Joshua had on go to Christ and the garments put on Joshua are the garments that Christ wore! The sinner and Christ do just what Jonathan and David did. Jonathan put his robes on David. David gave Jonathan his garments—so Christ takes our sins—we take Christ's righteousness and it is by a glorious substitution and interchange of places, that sinners go free and are justified by His Grace!

“But,” says one, “no one is justified like that, till he dies.” Believe me, he is—

***“The moment a sinner believes
And trusts in his crucified God,
His pardon at once he receives—
Salvation in full, through His blood.”***

If that young man over there has really believed in Christ this morning, realizing by a spiritual experience what I have attempted to describe, he is as much justified in God’s sight right now as he will be when he stands before the Throne of God! Not even the glorified spirits above are more acceptable to God than the poor man below who is once justified by Divine Grace! It is a perfect washing, it is perfect pardon, perfect imputation—we are fully, freely and wholly accepted through Christ our Lord! Just one more word, here, and then I will leave this matter of justification. Those who are once justified are justified irreversibly. As soon as a sinner takes Christ’s place and Christ takes the sinner’s, place there is no fear of a second change! If Christ has once paid the debt, the debt is paid and it will never be asked for again! If you are pardoned, you are pardoned once and forever! God does not give man a free pardon under His own promise and then afterwards retract it and punish the man—far from God to do such a thing! He says, “I have punished Christ. You may go free.” And after that, we may “rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” that, “being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And now I hear one cry, “That is an extraordinary Doctrine!” Well, so some may think, but let me say to you, it is a Doctrine professed by all Protestant Churches though they may not preach it! It is the Doctrine of the Church of England, it is the Doctrine of Luther, it is the Doctrine of the Presbyterian Church—it is professedly the Doctrine of all Christian Churches—and if it seems strange in your ears, it is because your ears are estranged and not because the Doctrine is a strange one! It is the Doctrine of Holy Writ, that none can condemn whom God justifies and that none can accuse those for whom Christ has died, for they are totally free from sin! So that, as one of the Prophets has it, God sees no sin in Jacob nor iniquity in Israel. In the moment they believe, their sins being imputed to Christ, the sins cease to be theirs and Christ’s righteousness is imputed to them and accounted theirs, so that, by God’s Grace, they are accepted!

III. And now I close up with the third point, upon which I shall be brief and I hope very earnest—THE MANNER OF GIVING THIS JUSTIFICATION. John Bunyan would have it that there are some whose mouths are set a watering for this great gift of Justification! Are there not some here who are saying, “Oh, if I could be justified! But, Sir, can I be justified? I have been a drunkard, I have been a swearer. I have been every-

thing that is vile. Can I be justified? Will Christ take my black sins and am I to take His white robes?" Yes, poor Soul, if you desire it. If God has made you willing, if you confess your sins, Christ is willing to take your rags and give you His righteousness, to be yours forever. "Well but how is it to be obtained?" one asks. "Must I be a holy man for many years and then get it?" Listen! "Freely by His Grace." "*Freely*," because there is no price to be paid for it! "*By His Grace*," because we do not deserve it! "But, O Sir, I have been praying and I do not think God will forgive me unless I do something to deserve it." I tell you, Sir, if you bring in any of your deservings, you shall never have it! God gives away His Justification *freely*. If you bring anything to pay for it, He will throw it in your face and will not give His Justification to you. He gives it away *freely*. Old Rowland Hill once went preaching at a fair. He noticed the chapmen selling their wares by auction. So Rowland said, "I am going to hold an auction, too, to sell wine and milk, without money and without price. My friends over there," he said, "find a great difficulty to get you up to their price—my difficulty is to bring you down to mine!" So it is with men. If I could preach Justification to be bought by you at a sovereign a piece, who would go out of the place without being justified? If I could preach Justification to you by walking a hundred miles, would we not be pilgrims tomorrow morning, everyone of us? If I were to preach Justification which would consist in whippings and torture, there are very few here who would not whip themselves and that severely, too! But when it is *freely, freely, freely*, men turn away! "What? Am I to have it for nothing at all, without doing anything?" Yes, Sir, you are to have it for *nothing*, or else not at all. It is "*freely*." "But may I not go to Christ, lay some claim to His mercy and say, Lord, justify me because I am not as bad as others?" It will not do, Sir, because it is "by His Grace." "But may I not indulge a hope, because I go to Church twice a day?" No, Sir. It is "by His Grace." "But may I not offer this plea that I mean to be better?" No, Sir. It is "by His Grace." You insult God by bringing your counterfeit coin to pay for His treasures!

Oh, what poor ideas men have of the value of Christ's Gospel if they think they can buy it! God will not have your rusty farthings to buy Heaven with! A rich man once, when he was dying, had a notion that he could buy a place in Heaven by building a row of almshouses. A good man stood by his bedside and said, "How much more are you going to leave?" "Twenty thousand pounds." he said "That would not buy enough for your foot to stand on in Heaven, for the streets are made of gold there and, therefore, of what value can your gold be? It would be accounted nothing when the very streets are paved with it." No, Friends, we cannot buy Heaven with gold nor good works, nor prayers, nor anything in the world! So how can we get it? Why we ask for it! As many of us as know

ourselves to be sinners may have Christ for asking for Him! Do you know that you need Christ? You may have Christ! “Whoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely.” But if you cleave to your own notions and say, “No, Sir, I mean to do a great many good things and *then* I will believe in Christ.”—Sir, you will be damned if you hold onto such delusions! I earnestly warn you, you cannot be saved so. “Well, but are we not to do good works?” Certainly you are—but you are not to trust in them! You must trust in Christ wholly and *then* do good works afterwards. “But,” says one, “I think if I were to do a few good works, it would be a little recommendation when I came.” It would not, Sir. They would be no recommendation at all. Let a beggar come to your house in white kid gloves and say he is very badly off and needs some charity—would the white kid gloves recommend him to your charity? Would a good new hat that he has been buying this morning recommend him to your charity? “No,” you would say, “you are a miserable imposter. You do not need anything and you shall not have anything either! Out with you!”

The best livery for a beggar is rags and the best livery for a sinner to go to Christ in is for him to go just as he is—with nothing but sin about him! “But no,” you say, “I must be a little better and then I think Christ will save me!” You cannot get any better, try as long as you please. And besides—to use a paradox—if you were to get better, you would be all the worse, for the worse you are, the better to come to Christ! If you are all unholy—come to Christ! If you feel your sin and renounce it, come to Christ! Though you have been the most debased and abandoned soul, come to Christ! If you feel yourself to have nothing about you that can recommend you, come to Christ—

**“Venture on Him, venture wholly;
Let no other trust intrude.”**

I do not say this to urge any man to continue in sin. God forbid! If you continue in sin, you must not come to Christ. You cannot. Your sins will hamper you. You cannot be chained to your galley oar—the oar of your sins—yet come to Christ and be a free man. No, Sir, it is *repentance*. It is the immediate *leaving off the sin*. But mark you, neither by repentance nor by the leaving of your sins, can you be saved. It is Christ, Christ, Christ—Christ only!

But I know you will go away, many of you, and try to build up your own Babel Tower to get to Heaven. Some of you will go one way to work and some another. You will go the ceremony way—you will lay the foundation of the structure with infant Baptism, build Confirmation on it and the Lord’s Supper. “I shall go to Heaven,” you say. “Do not I keep Good Friday and Christmas? I am a better man than those Dissenters! I am a most extraordinary man. Do I not say more prayers than anyone?” You

will be a long while going up that treadmill before you get an inch higher—hat is not the way to get to the stars! One says, “I will go and study the Bible and believe right Doctrine and I have no doubt that by believing right Doctrine I shall be saved.” Indeed you will not! You can be no more saved by believing right Doctrine than you can by doing right actions! “There,” says another, “I like that, I shall go and believe in Christ and live as I like.” Indeed you will not! For if you believe in Christ, He will not let you live as your flesh likes. By His Spirit He will constrain you to mortify its affections and lusts. If He gives you the Grace to make you believe, He will give you the Grace to live a holy life afterwards—if He gives you faith, He gives you good works afterwards! You cannot believe in Christ unless you renounce every fault and resolve to serve Him with full purpose of heart. I think at last I hear a sinner say, “Is that the only door? And may I venture through it? Then I will! But I do not quite understand you. I am something like poor Tiff, in that remarkable book, ‘*Dred.*’ They talk a great deal about a door, but I cannot see the door. They talk a great deal about the way, but I cannot see the way, for if poor Tiff could see the way, he would take these children away by it. They talk about fighting but I do not see anyone to fight, or else I would fight.”

Let me explain it then. I find in the Bible, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” What have you to do, but to believe this and trust in Him? You will never be disappointed with such a faith as that! Let me give you another illustration I have given hundreds of times but I cannot find another as good, so I must give it again—Faith is something like this. There is a story told of a captain of a man-of-war, whose son—a young lad—was very fond of running up the rigging of the ship. And one time, running after a monkey, he ran up the mast till at last he got on to the main truck. Now, the main truck, you are aware, is like a large round table put onto the mast so that when the boy was on the maintop. There was plenty of room for him, but the difficulty was—to use the best explanation I can—that he could not reach the mast that was under the table, he was not tall enough to get down from this maintop, reach the mast and so descend. There he was on the maintop—he managed to get up there, somehow or other—but down he never could. His father saw that and he looked up in horror. What was he to do? In a few moments his son would fall down and be dashed to pieces! He was clinging to the maintop with all his might, but in a little time he would fall down on the deck and there he would be—a mangled corpse. The captain called for a speaking trumpet. He put it to his mouth and shouted, “Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea.” It was, in truth, his only way of escape. He might be picked up out of the sea, but he could

not be rescued if he fell on the deck! The poor boy looked down on the sea. It was a long way. He could not bear the idea of throwing himself into the roaring current beneath him. He thought it looked angry and dangerous. How could he cast himself down into it? So he clung to the maintop with all his might, though there was no doubt that he must soon let go and perish. The father called for a gun and pointing it up at him, said, "Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea, or I'll shoot you!" He knew his father would keep his word. The ship lurched on one side, over went the boy into the sea and out went brawny arms after him! The sailors rescued him and brought him on deck.

Now, we, like the boy, are in a position of extraordinary danger, by nature, which neither you nor I can possibly escape by ourselves. Unfortunately, we have got some good works of our own, like that maintop, and we cling to them so fondly that we will never give them up. Christ knows that unless we give them up, we shall be dashed to pieces, at the last, for that rotten trust must ruin us. He, therefore, says, "Sinner, let go of your own trust and drop into the sea of My love." We look down and say, "Can I be saved by trusting in God? He looks as if He were angry with me and I could not trust Him." Ah, will not Mercy's tender cry persuade you?—"He that believes shall be saved." Must the weapon of destruction be pointed directly at you? Must you hear the dreadful threat—"He that believes not shall be damned?" It is with you now as with that boy—your position is one of imminent peril in itself and your slighting the Father's counsel is a matter of more terrible alarm—it makes peril more perilous! You must do it, or else you perish! Let go of your hold! That is faith when the poor sinner lets go of his hold, drops down and so is saved! And the very thing which looks as if it would destroy him, is the means of his being saved!

Oh, believe on Christ, poor Sinners! Believe on Christ! You who know your guilt and misery, come! Cast yourselves upon Him! Come and trust my Master and as He lives, before whom I stand, you shall never trust Him in vain! No, but you shall find yourselves forgiven and go your way, by His Grace, rejoicing in Christ Jesus!

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

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

JUSTICE VINDICATED AND RIGHTEOUSNESS EXEMPLIFIED NO. 3038

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
EARLY IN THE YEAR 1865.**

***“Being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has 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 who believes in Jesus.”
Romans 3:24-26.***

THE death of our Lord Jesus Christ answered many valuable purposes. It manifested the manifold Wisdom of God. To angels in Heaven and to saints on earth, God never appeared so infinitely wise as in the ordaining of the plan of salvation by the substitution of His Son for guilty sinners. That death also revealed God’s amazing love. It proclaimed to astonished worlds how “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Atonement of Christ answered the purpose, moreover, of purifying His people. That He might sanctify the people by His own blood, He suffered outside the camp. He loved His Church and gave Himself for it, we know, “that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” The Cross has also been the great battering-ram for breaking down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. It is by Christ’s blood that we are made one. “Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” Caste is abolished and invidious distinctions are set aside. There is no longer in Christ Jesus barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, circumcised or uncircumcised, but Christ is All-in-All. That same atoning Sacrifice also broke down the wall which separated both Jew and Gentile from God—“that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” The alienation prevailed till the reconciliation was effected by the precious blood of Jesus. We remain enemies in our minds by wicked works until we see the great love with which He loved us, and then that love melts our heart and makes us friends of God.

Time would fail me did I attempt to enter into anything like an enumeration of the blessed purposes which the blood of Christ serves before God and among men. Try, if you can, to calculate the inestimable

value of the air you breathe, how every plant feeds upon it, or upon some portion of it—how every creature, whether on the loftiest mountains, or in the deepest mines, must have a portion of it or else he can no longer exist. Think of the force with which it operates upon the world in wind and tempest. Need I do more than suggest to you the infinite number of ways in which the air becomes valuable, not merely as an accessory to our comfort, but as a necessity of our life? Yet, how infinitely more precious is the blood of Jesus Christ which in every way and in every place becomes efficacious to the everlasting salvation of all Believers! That water which sustains the life of leviathan, and of an infinite multitude of fishes, is your drink and mine. It makes glad the meadows, it fertilizes every field and gives to the farmer his harvest, but while it does this, it has other uses which we cannot stop here to discuss. See how it bears today upon its bosom the commerce of the world and becomes the highway of nations? When you shall have recalled all the excellencies of the water with which God has girdled the globe, you shall then have but opened a parable thoroughly inadequate to represent the immeasurable benefits which come to us through Christ—and the innumerable forms which those benefits assume! We know that it has an operation in the highest Heaven—certainly it has saved us from the deepest Hell.

Do you see that Cross on which Jesus died? What is it more than a simple piece of transverse wood? I see it in vision. I see it growing till its top reaches the most excellent glory, lifting up the elect to the very Throne of the Most High! I see its base sinking deep as our helpless miseries could plunge us in hopeless ruin, going down till it reaches even the depths of the vengeance of God. I see its arms spread till all whom God has chosen are sheltered beneath them and all mankind receive some favors which never would have come to them if it had not been that there the Savior of sinners offered the one availing Sacrifice for sin. As when the servant of Elijah saw a little cloud, the size of a man's hand, and the Prophet marked in that the sign of abundance of rain—so, when I see the Cross of Calvary, it is as a little cloud, but faith beholds it spread all over Heaven and then drop down in mighty showers of mercy to fructify the earth and bless the children of men! If you would count the drops that fall from that cloud, you must grasp "infinity" in your comprehension!

According to our text it appears that one main purpose of the Sacrifice of Christ was the manifestation of the righteousness of God. The Apostle twice over assures us that this was the case, "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation . . . to declare His righteousness." And as if this were not enough, "to declare, *I say*, at this time His righteousness." What a grand thought! *The death of Jesus Christ is a resplendent manifestation of Divine Righteousness!* When we have mused upon that, we will proceed to notice that Divine Righteousness—the moral government of the Almighty—is, *by the death of Christ, cleared of two difficulties to which reference is made.* Then we shall close by noting *the lessons which this great Doctrine teaches.*

I have nothing new to say this evening—I would be ashamed of myself if I had. This is the old Doctrine, this is the soul-saving Truth of God. It is blessedly simple and we thank God that it is and that, therefore, the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. It is plain to him that understands and if the Lord gives us understanding in this thing, we certainly have here the beginning—and we shall soon have in it the end of wisdom!

I. Jesus' DEATH, THEN, MANIFESTED DIVINE JUSTICE IN THE VERY HIGHEST DEGREE.

The expulsion of our first parents from the Garden of Eden manifested the Justice of God, but not fully. They were only expelled from Paradise, but their lives were spared. In strict justice they would have died. "In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." Though that curse was not confined to natural death, it certainly included it. Had Justice there been fully vindicated, the human race would have been utterly destroyed. The expulsion of the sinner does not so fully set forth God's Righteousness as does the Expiation of the Savior.

The Justice of God was exhibited in dreadful forms when the deluge came and swept the race of man from the earth. Yet why was yonder ark freighted with the chosen eight? Were they not sinners? If Justice is come out in its full strength, why does it permit so many as eight to escape? The number may be few, but the principle is infringed. In strict, severe justice, apart from the Atonement, not even Noah could have escaped, and certainly not his unrighteous son Ham. The eight, as they are floating yonder, indicate the exercise of some other prerogative than that of absolute and naked justice.

Then comes the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. See them, with the other cities of the plain, licked up by tongues of fire! Behold the light smoke as it ascends and clouds the heavens! But here was only Divine Justice upon one atrocious sin—a sin which will forever bear the name of the place in which it came to its worst height. It was not the declaration of God's Justice against sin as sin, so much as against sin in a certain form when the virus of evil had been most banefully developed!

Hark to the shriek that goes up from the midst of the Red Sea, when the waters that stood upright as a heap, suddenly descend and lock in their death-woosing arms the multitudes of Egyptian chivalry! Do you not see here the Justice of God? You do, but you do not see it so completely, because a multitude of sinners, in front, have escaped by this very destruction! I grant you that, here, a most blessed type of our Lord Jesus Christ is conspicuous, but there is not a complete declaration of Divine Justice, for had Divine Justice slaughtered all sinners on that occasion, Israel would have been drowned as well as Egypt! There rather the pride of Pharaoh was subdued than the sin of Egypt. That judgment fell only upon the chief of Egypt, the chief of all her strength was smitten there—but judgment must come upon the little as well as upon the great when it comes from the hand of the Most High in its absolute force!

Of all the other judgments which we find mentioned in Holy Scripture, it is enough to say that they were manifestations of Divine Justice, but

they were not such manifestations of it as we have in Christ. If I might use such a metaphor, Divine Vengeance slept and all those judgments were but its startings in its sleep. God had not yet laid bare His terrible right arm—judgment was then His strange work. He did not put both His hands to the tremendous work of punishment as He did afterwards, when His only-begotten Son stood before Him—the Just in the place of the unjust, and the Guiltless with the guilt of man upon His shoulders!

The death of Christ did more clearly set forth the righteousness of God than all these put together. In some respects, even Hell itself cannot so exhaust the vindication of Infinite Justice. Do you object to this last assertion? You may well do so till I explain my meaning. It needs a whole eternity to set forth, in Hell, all the Justice of God in the punishment of sin. To manifest to those who suffer, being impenitent, all the vengeance of incensed Deity demands an ageless age of years, countless and endless. Behold the Lamb of God! In Christ you have set forth at once all the fullness of the vengeance of God against the sins of men. See the cup of trembling drained to its utmost dregs. See the baptism accomplished. He sank beneath the swelling waves of vindictive wrath, but, lo, He rises again! He has finished the endurance and paid the debt that none could reckon. There is more of the vindication of Justice on the Cross than can be seen at any one time, or at any one point, in the lowest depths of Hell!

The death of Christ gloriously set forth Divine Justice *because it taught manifestly this Truth of God, that sin can never go without punishment.* It is a law of God's moral universe that sin must be punished. He has made that as necessary as the law of gravitation. The law of gravitation He may suspend—the law of justice, never. He will by no means spare the guilty. "The soul that sins, it shall die." "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." As the Lord had appointed the salvation of His people, even this, the dearest desire of His soul, does not lead Him to tamper with His inviolable Law. No, a Substitute shall be provided, who shall to the utmost farthing pay whatever His people owe. Upon His head the fire-cloud shall discharge itself, and into His bosom shall be emptied out the coals of fire. No pardon without punishment! If the question is asked, "Why not?" It is enough to say that as long as God rules the universe, He rules it in wisdom, and His Wisdom knows that it would be unsafe if sin were at any time permitted to be blotted out apart from satisfaction received. Christ, therefore, must Himself give a satisfaction for sin, that this rule may be declared and written upon the forefront of the skies—God will not pardon sin by overlooking it—there must be redemption before there can be remission!

This was also shown very clearly in what the Savior had to endure. A part of the penalty of sin is *shame*. The wicked will rise "to shame and everlasting contempt." Rebellion against God is the most contemptible thing that angels ever heard of. The devil will be recognized, at last, as the worst of fools and become the object of intense mockery. But see our Savior! When He takes the sinner's place, "He is despised and rejected of men." His own disciples, as it were, hid their faces from Him! "He was despised and we esteemed Him not." He is the song of the drunk!

Reproach has broken His heart. They that sit in the gate speak against Him. They spit in His face! They bow the knee and hail Him with mock homage. They put Him to the death of a slave—they give Him the pre-eminent place of shame as center of the three crucified ones. Never was shame more shameful than in the experience of our Lord. Here God seemed to declare, once and for all, how shameful in His sight sin was. When sin lay but by imputation upon His own dear Son, His Son must be an object of scorn to the universe!

Transcendent was His *sorrow* as well as His shame. We cannot comprehend His meaning when He said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." Your sympathies can never interpret those pangs of heart which forced the blood to stream from every pore.

His physical sufferings alone are enough to make us faint if we would but think of them aright. As for His soul's sufferings, which were the soul of His sufferings, here is enough to melt our hearts away in grief that we should ever have caused Him thus to die. When the Lord thus emptied out all His quivers, and shot every arrow into the heart of His dear Son—when all His waves and His billows went over Him—when deep called unto deep and there was the noise of God's waterspouts, and Christ was made to sink in deep mire where there was no standing—then God declared most loudly what an intolerable evil sin is, how supremely just He is and how jealous of His Justice.

In the Savior's sufferings, shame and sorrow were deepened, both of them, *by Divine desertion*. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" has the grief of ages in it! Here you have tremendous pangs distilled and given to Christ in quintessence. "*Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?*" is a more desperate cry than ever came from lost souls. Every word of it was emphatic, every syllable needs to be pronounced with the awful force of one who is in the pangs of death and in the pangs of Hell, for the Savior could truly say, "The sorrows of death compassed Me, and the pains of Hell got hold upon Me. I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech You, deliver My soul." No answer came, for God had forsaken Him! His enemies persecuted and took Him, and there was none to deliver Him. Herein, in the leaving of His own Son, His only-begotten Son, His ever-obedient Son, God showed His intense Righteousness and hatred of sin!

Nor was Christ spared the last pinch—one would have thought that He might have been spared that—*He died*. Here shame, sorrow and desertion reached the culminating point—the Savior dies. The holy soul is parted from the pure and blessed body. He suffers the very pangs of death. He yields up the ghost. Though Immortal, He dies! Brightness of the Father's Glory, He slumbers in the tomb! See Him, Believer, as the disciples take Him down, drawing out the nails, one by one, so tenderly! See Him as they lay Him in the sheet which the holy women had prepared, and wrap Him up in the spices which Nicodemus in his love, and Joseph of Arimathaea in his bounty, had brought! See the Savior, as they put Him in the tomb and go away sorrowing, for the stone is laid and the seal is set upon Him! See Him, I say! See Him, whom angels

worship, “over all God, blessed forever,” sleeping thus a captive in the grave! Does not Jehovah here reveal how He hates sin in that He spared not His own Son? The Christ must die when sin and expiation come into contact, even though that contact is but by imputation!

To one more point I must call your attention. *The excellency of the Person who suffered all this is the great platform upon which God displays His Righteousness.* He who suffered this was the Just One—of spotless nature—a King. “The King of the Jews.” He was the Messiah, the Shiloh whom God had foreordained to be the Mediator of the Covenant. No, more than that—He was the Son of the Highest, being begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary! Mounting higher still, He was, Himself, “very God of very God.” It is a great mystery, one which, however, we receive with reverence.

The hand that was stretched out to the nail is the very hand that wields the scepter of universal empire! The heart that was pierced is the very heart which will beat on throughout eternity in love to His people! Yet more, the very Being who thus became capable of suffering, was He who built the heavens and scattered the stars like dust along the sky! Who bespoke the light and said, “Light be,” and sent forth the Spirit to brood over chaos, and brought order out of its confusion! “Without Him was not anything made that was made.” He is the express image of His Father’s Glory and Person—“in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” I merely talk—this theme demands an angel’s tongue to sing! Sing of Him, spirits before the Throne of God, in your rapturous song—sing of Him in wonder that He should ever leave your happy choirs and forsake the Throne of His eternal Glory to become a man! Sing of Him when He stripped Himself of His azure mantle and did hang it on the sky—and took away His golden rings and hung them up like stars—and laid aside the vestments of His glorious reign and came to dwell in humble garments of clay! Oh, mysterious love! He came to suffer, bleed and die! Oh, mystery of Righteousness, that such an One as this should have to bleed, should have to smart, even to the uttermost, and be obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross! Never, then, did Righteousness receive such vindication as when God, the mighty Maker, having assumed flesh, in that flesh died for man, the creature’s sin!

II. THIS GREAT MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST, as I understand the text, INTELLIGIBLY CLEARS GOD’S MORAL GOVERNMENT OF TWO GREAT DIFFICULTIES.

When Christ became a Propitiation, He declared God’s Righteousness for the remission of sin. We are pardoned through the forbearance of God. For thousands of years men lived and sinned, and yet were justified—rebelled, and yet were forgiven—wandered, yet were restored. I say, for thousands of years poor fallible men claimed complete righteousness and entered into the rewards which belong exclusively to those who are justified before God. There they go, streaming up to Heaven, a long bright line of patriarchs, Prophets, warriors for the holy cause, kings, priests and saintly men and women who believed in God—and this was imputed to them for righteousness. Now here we are in a difficulty. A just God is saving all these sinners and taking them to Heaven without any sort of

vindication of His Justice! But Christ comes in and declares the Righteousness of God, “for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God,” and all the difficulties of the antediluvian, Patriarchal, and Mosaic times are cleared up at once.

Another difficulty, with which you and I are far more concerned, is *how God can be just, and yet the Justifier*. The Apostle says that this was cleared up, “To declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness; that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus.” This is the great problem which the world has been trying to solve. I know of no religion except Unitarianism—which is not a religion, but a philosophy—which ever pretends to do without a sacrifice. It is remarkable that no religion can be popular except that which deals with a sacrifice for sin. And where this is left out in any man’s ministry, you very soon find there are more spiders than hearers, and very soon the place which might have been crowded under an Evangelical ministry, grows empty. It is a happy circumstance that it is so, but it is a very significant one. If a man were to open a shop for the sale of bread and were to sell nothing but stones, it is certain that he would have but few customers. The baker’s shop is the last that is shut up in the parish. When all other trades die out, his will live, for men must have bread. And so if every other good thing should pass away, the Gospel, because it meets the needs of common humanity, is quite certain to survive them all. Dr. Patten, the other Sabbath morning, said to me after service, “I am often asked why so many people come to the Tabernacle and, my dear Friend,” he said, “I cannot give any answer except this one, that you try to preach that which the soul needs, the essential and vital point of how men are saved and justified before God through Jesus Christ. And so,” he said, “if you keep to that old theme, there is no fear but what there will be enough hungry souls to come and feed upon that bread.” And so I think it is. This I know, if a man would have a subject that will never grow stale and never wear out, let him preach Christ Crucified! You need not go to philosophies, nor turn over the books in your libraries to find some novelty—the old story is more novel than the new! There is nothing so new as Christ! We may say of Him, “You have the dew of Your youth,” for Christ Jesus and His Sacrifice exactly meet the common needs of our humanity!

Well, there is a Sacrifice provided and that Sacrifice, dear Friends, I say, answers the question which God has put into every man’s mind—“How can I be saved, and yet God be just?” Man has the conviction, though he may not express it, that God is just. Every sinner knows that sin must be punished! He may trifle with that knowledge, but he cannot destroy it and he never can get any peace of mind, when his conscience is really awakened, till he learns this great Truth—God punished Christ instead of you! Christ has so honored the Law of God that, without God being unjust, or being thought to be so, He can forgive you! There has been such a satisfaction offered to God’s violated purity that He can be discovered to be infinitely pure—no, severely just and yet, at the same time, infinitely gracious and merciful! O Soul, have you ever caught a

glimpse of this matter? My heart remembers when I first understood that. Though those words, "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth," were the channel of my comfort, yet the ground of it was this—I did see that Christ suffered for me, that Christ stood as a Substitute for Believers and that precious Doctrine of Substitution was the window of light to my dark soul!

Hear, you Sinners, hear this! God demands of you two things—first, that you should keep His Law. You cannot do this, for you have already broken it! If you never sinned again, you have put yourselves out of court. On Sinai's mountain there is no safety for you. Even Moses said, "I do exceedingly fear and quake," when Sinai was altogether on a smoke. But God demands more than this. He demands *punishment* for the sins that are past, as well as a perfect obedience for the years to come. Can you bear this? Can you endure the flames of Hell and the terrors of His vengeance? Your heart quails at the thought! Well, as Christ has come into the world, He has provided for both. He knows your need. Christ has kept the Law of God for you and Christ has suffered the penalty of that Law, too. You have two answers to the Most High—and when conscience says, "You must be punished, for you are guilty," you can say, "No, not I! Christ was punished for my sins. God will never punish two for one offense—first the Substitute, and then the sinner for whom He was a Substitute." And when conscience says, "Ah, but you cannot bring in a perfect righteousness," you can answer, "Yes, I can, for Christ has worked out and brought in a perfect Righteousness. And He gives this to me, according to His own name and title, 'JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU,' The Lord Our Righteousness."

Oh, that we might have Grace, dear Friends, to understand that all that God wants of us is found in Christ! You think there is something for you to *do* in order to save yourself, but Christ *has* saved all who will be saved—saved them already, virtually! And you shall be saved actually when, by humble faith, you receive the salvation which Christ has worked out. To add to Christ anything of your own would be to tack on your own filthy rags to His gold and silver-threaded garments! To bring your filthy lucre to eke out the golden payment which He has laid down at God's Throne. Do not do this, Sinner! God is content with Christ—be you content with Him and as you see how God is just, see also how you may be happy and at peace!

III. And now I conclude by drawing TWO PRACTICAL LESSONS.

First, *let us see what an evil thing sin is and how God hates it.* Christian, do you hate it too? Loathe it! Never endure it. If I had to pass the place where some dear friend of mine was murdered, I should dread the very spot. But if there lived on earth the man who had stabbed my dearest friend in the heart, I think I could never bear him affection, but I should feel moved to stir the officers of justice to pursue him. Now, *your sins have murdered your Savior.* Revenge here is holy. In other places it must be very doubtful, but here it is sacred. Seize your sins! Where are they? Seize yourselves and you have them. If you feel any anger against the murderer of Christ, turn to your mirror and see his face. There stands the man who slew his Friend. There stands he who killed his

Friend who died to save him! Yes, in the very act and suffering of murder that Friend gave Himself up to bleed and die for the good of His murderers! Shall I spare the sins, then, that nailed my Savior to the tree? O Christian, how you ought to hate the very thought of sin! Sometimes we are very severe upon the sins of others—how much more severe ought we to be upon our own! Truly, a man's foes are they of his own household! The very thought of sin, the word of sin, the very garments spotted with the flesh should be hated by the Christian. The Lord give us to feel more and more of this! We shall only get it, however, by living more where the groans of Calvary can meet our ears and the sight of the Savior's wounds can melt our hearts!

Then, *let us see our sad condition if we are not delivered from sin.* If Christ became the Object of His Father's wrath when sin was only imputed to Him, how angry must God be, everyday, with the wicked whose own sins lie upon them! There can be no more dreadful thought to a sinner than this—if we will look at it in that light—that God spared not His own Son! Surely, if the Judge smites His own Son so severely, He will not spare you, His enemy! Ah, you who have no Savior and who have never looked to Christ to take away your sins, what will you do when you have to stand before the bar of God? Christ needed to be Omnipotent to endure the stroke of His Father's sword—what will you do when God's dreadful voice cries, "Awake, O sword, against My foe; against the man that despised My Son and trampled on His blood"? The wrath of the Lamb is the worst thing a sinner can ever feel. "The wrath of the Lamb!" Think of that! When love turns to anger, it is cruel as the grave. To despise Incarnate Love is to entail upon yourself infinite misery! They who perish without the knowledge of Christ, perish happily compared with you! It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for you if you have despised Christ!

My Hearers, I have tried as best I can to preach Christ to you and to lift Him up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. But some of you will not look at Him. I fear you will never and that you will die in your sins. It was but the other day that I heard of one of your number who, after listening to this voice, suddenly went into eternity in a moment! And the same is happening to very many. You will not be able to say, at the last, that you never heard of Christ, or that I covered Him up amidst a multitude of gaudy periods and high-sounding words! I have set forth Christ Jesus in all the naked beauty of His mysterious Sacrifice. Look to Him, Souls! If I have never been able to move your heart before, may God move it now! Look to Jesus! Is salvation such a thing to be trifled with, that you can live without it? Are the joys of being reconciled to God such trifles that you will not have them? If you had to die like dogs, it would be worthwhile to prove the happiness of being reconciled to God in this life. But, oh, remember the world to come! You shall soon pass through the gates of the grave—the death-sweat will settle on your brows—the night of death shall seal your eyes. What will you do, in those few solemn moments when the last sands are trickling from the hourglass, without a Savior?

Say not that these are things not to be talked of because they are too distant! Men and women, they will come to you. Tomorrow, before next Sabbath bells shall toll, you may be hurried to the land where the sound of the church-going bell is never heard. May God lead you to lay hold of Christ, now, for if not, there remains for you nothing but the fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation! The trumpet sounds, the dead awake, Jesus sits upon the Great White Throne, the heavens are opened, the angels come to gather God's harvest and it is gathered into the garner. But now they come to reap the vintage—and with their sickles they cut down cluster after cluster of the wild vines of sin. Oh, if you are there, you must be gathered with the rest, cast into the winepress of the wrath of God and, oh, how tremendous will that be, when He who once tread the winepress for His people, shall come to tread the winepress of His wrath for the last time! How dreadful when, to use the prophetic words of the Revelation, the blood flows forth even unto the horses' bridles! Oh, tremendous vengeance of an incensed God, whose mercy has been despised and whose Grace has been put away!

I am not in the habit of often using such strong words. I rather love to plead the love of Jesus Christ to souls, but strong words must sometimes be used, or slumbering souls will never awake. Why will you perish? Do you choose your own destruction? Why do you choose it? Come, let a Brother lead you back! Here, in these seats, cover your eyes, and let the silent confession go up to Heaven. Look to Jesus Crucified! Fly to those dear wounds of His. A Substitute for sinners! There He hangs, and bleeds, and dies—

***“There is life for a look at the Crucified One!
There is life at this moment for you”—***

if you believe in Him. God give you the Grace to believe, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 3:19-31; 4:1-21.**

Romans 3:19, 20. *Now we know that what things soever the Law says, it says 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 has 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 believes in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the Law of faith. Faith’s empty hand receives the free gift of Grace—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 yet 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: yes, we establish the Law.*

Romans 4:1-8. *What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he had something to boast about, but not before God. For what says the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of Grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 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. *Comes 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 were 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 also comes to all of us who believe. What a mercy it is that there is, in this sense, no distinction between Jew and Gentile! 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 belongs 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, you 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 are heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of no 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 even been made known.*

15-17. *Because the Law works 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 you 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 quickens the dead, and calls those things which are 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 “calls those things which are 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 your 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.*

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

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

JUSTIFICATION, PROPITIATION, DECLARATION NO. 3488

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1915.

*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 9, 1870.*

*“Being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has 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 who believes in Jesus.”
Romans 3:24-26.*

I think, dear Friends, some of you will be saying, “There is that same old Doctrine again that we are so continually hearing,” and I am sure if you do say it I shall not be surprised. Nor, on the other hand, shall I make any sort of excuse. The Doctrine of Justification by Faith through the substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ is very much to my ministry what bread and salt are to the table. As often as ever the table is set, there are those necessary things. I regard that Doctrine as being one that is to be preached continually, to be mixed up with all our sermons, even as, under the Law of God it was said, “With all your offerings you shall offer salt.” This is the very salt of the Gospel! Indeed, it is impossible to bring it forward too often. It is the soul-saving Doctrine—it is the foundation Doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! It is that by which God is pleased to bring many into reconciliation with Himself. As the schoolmaster takes care to ground his scholars well in grammar, that they may get hold of the very roots of the language, so must we be rooted and grounded in this fundamental and cardinal Truth of God—justification through the righteousness of Jesus Christ! Martin Luther, who used to preach this Doctrine very vehemently and forcibly, yet declared that he felt as if he could knock the Bible about the peoples’ heads if he could by any means get this Doctrine into them—for as soon after they had learned it, they forgot it! Over and over, and over again must the Christian minister continue to insist upon this Truth—that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And forever and ever, as long as the world stands, must he continue to repeat the Truth of God, that we are justified through the righteousness of our Redeemer and not by any righteousness of our own!

I do not intend at this time to try and preach a sermon, but rather give an “outline exposition” again of this Doctrine. And if you turn to the text, I think we can very well divide it, and very properly, too, into three parts, and head it with three words of, Justification, Propitiation and Declaration. *Justification*—“Being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” *Propitiation*—“Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation though faith in His blood to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins.” And then we come to the third—the *Declaration*—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 who believes in Jesus! First, then, here is something about—

I. JUSTIFICATION.

The sense of this term is, in this place, and in most others, to declare a person to be just. A person is put on trial, he is brought before the judge. One of two things will happen—he will either be acquitted or justified, or else he will be condemned. You and I are all virtually before the judge and we are, at this moment, either acquitted or condemned, either justified or under condemnation! It is not possible that any one of us should be acquitted on the grounds of our not being guilty, for we must all confess that we have broken the Law of God thousands of times! It is not possible for any of us to be declared just on the ground of our own personal obedience to the Law of God, for to be just through our own obedience we must have been perfect—but we have not been perfect! We have broken the Law, we still continue to break it and, by the works of the Law, it is clear we cannot be just—cannot be justified. The Lord, even the God of Heaven and earth, has planned and promulgated a way by which He can be just and yet can declare the guilty to be just—a way by which, to use the words of our text, He can be just and yet the Justifier of him who believes. That way is simply this, *a way of substitution and imputation*. Our sins are taken off of us and laid upon Christ Jesus, the innocent Substitute, “For He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us.” Then, when this is effected, the righteousness which was worked out by Jesus Christ is taken from Him and imputed—reckoned—unto us, so that the rest of the text comes true, “That we may be made the righteousness of God in Him.” We are found in Him not having our own righteousness which is of the Law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith. You see, we did not keep the Law of God, but broke it. We were, therefore, condemned! Jesus came and stood in our place, headed up the whole race that He had chosen, became their Representative, completely kept all the Law for them, also suffered the punishment due for all their breaches of the Law, becoming a Substitute, actively and passively obeying the Law and suffering its penalty! And now what He did is imputed to us, while what we did by way of sin was of old imputed to Him and He was made a curse for us—as it is written, “Cursed is everyone that hangs

on a tree.” If you ask me how this can be a just thing to do, I reply, God has determined it and it is not possible that He should have determined anything that was not just!

But, moreover, there was an original reason for it, for our first ruin came upon us through our first parent, Adam. Our first fall was not our doing, but the doing of the man who stood as our representative! Perhaps had we, each one of us, at the first separately and distinctly sinned, without any connection with him, redemption might have been as impossible to us as we have reason to believe it is to fallen angels! But inasmuch as the first sin was in connection with the federal headship of the first Adam, it became possible and right that there should be *a salvation through a second federal headship*, even Jesus Christ, the Second Adam. “As by man came death, so by Man also comes the resurrection from the dead.” As by man sin came into the world and the race perished, so by the second glorious Man, Christ Jesus, Divine Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life! But you need not question the justice of the plan. The Sovereign against whom you have offended deigns to accept it—and what God accepts we need not hesitate to rely upon! If the offended One is satisfied to proclaim us just, we may be perfectly satisfied with what He shall do toward us, for if He justifies, who can condemn? If He acquits, who dare accuse? We may boldly say, if once we are acquitted, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?”

Now notice what the text says of this plan of Justification. It tells us that, as far as we are concerned, *it is given to us freely!* Being freely justified, God forgives the sinner’s sins gratis, freely—not on account of any repentance of his, meritoriously considered—not on the ground of any resolutions of his which might bribe the Eternal mind—not on account of penance, or suffering endured or to be endured, but He puts sins away freely because He chooses to do it—for nothing! Without money, without merit, without anything that could move Him but His own grand Nature, for He delights in mercy—“Being freely justified.”

And then to make it still clearer, it is added, *by His Grace*, which is not a tautology, though it is a repetition. We are justified, not by any debt due to us, not because God was bound to justify, but because out of His own abundant love and rich compassion He freely makes the guilty to be pardoned and the unrighteous to be justified by the righteousness of Christ! I know it has been said by some that we make out that there is no such thing as free pardon and free justification because we set the righteousness of Christ as the procuring cause of both. I grant you we do! But we equally strenuously hold the pardon to be free, and the Justification to be free, though it is through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus—free to us, free so far as the heart and mercy of God is concerned—and only through Redemption—because God must be just, He

must be righteous, He cannot separate sin from the penalty! He is a Sovereign, but He never, in His Sovereignty, violates righteousness! And it would be a sovereign act of *unrighteousness* if He passed by sin without awarding to it the punishment which He threatened should follow it—an act which it is not possible for God to do, for He must be just and He has, Himself declared He will by no means clear the guilty! Still, the justification is free to you, free to every soul that will have it, free to every man that believes in Jesus!

Now note this justification is put before you as being *through the Redemption*, which is in Christ Jesus. There is a price paid—it is through the Redemption. There is an intervening suffering and an intervening obedience. We are not justified freely without Redemption, nor justified by His Grace without the intervention of the atoning Sacrifice. Oh, how men labor to get rid of this! There are certain persons who think themselves philosophic, who will do all they can to throw dirt into the face of this Doctrine of Substitution, but it is the very soul, head, foundation, corner, and keystone of the entire Gospel! If it is left out, I hesitate not to say that the Gospel preached is another gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you—

***“In vain the guilty conscience seeks
Some solid ground to rest upon.
With vain desire the spirit breaks,
Till we apply to Christ alone!
Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find.
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind!
But if Emmanuel’s face appears,
My hope, my joy, begins!
His Grace forbids my slavish fear,
His love removes my sins.”***

We cannot give up the Doctrine of Redemption, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus! This is it, Soul—listen to it—you are justified freely, but it cost the Savior dearly! It cost Him a life of obedience! It cost Him a death of shame, of agony, of suffering—all immeasurable! There was your cup of wrath which you must drink forever, and which you could never drain to the bottom! It must be drunk by someone! Jesus drinks it, sets the cup to His lips, and the very first drop of it makes Him sweat great drops of blood falling to the ground! But He drinks right on, though head, and hands, and feet are all suffering—drinks right on, though He cries, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Drinks right on, I say, until not one black drop or dreg could be found within that cup and, turning it upside down, He cries, “It is finished! It is finished,” as He gives up the ghost. At one tremendous draught of love, the Lord has drunk condemnation dry for every one of His people for whom He shed His blood! “Justified freely by His Grace through the Redemption which

is in Christ Jesus.” There was a Redemption by substitutionary suffering, a Redemption by vicarious obedience, a Redemption by interposition of Christ on our behalf—

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

Do you understand this, Sinner? Do you understand this? If you do not, then God help you to grasp it now, for it is a thing of the present—is it not here a present participle?—being justified freely, that is, *now*, justified *now*! O Sinner, you are now condemned, but if you now will look to Jesus standing as the Victim in your place. If you will *now* trust in Jesus dying in your place—you shall *now* be just, your sins shall *now* be forgiven—the righteousness shall *now* be yours and you shall know the meaning of that text, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Do you see, then, what justification means? Oh, may you enjoy it! It will make you leap for joy if you do! And now the second word is—

II. PROPITIATION—a reference here to the Mercy Seat, the covering in—in our own words it is a reconciliation, a something by which God is propitiated—an Atonement by which God and man are made one, a propitiation—a something which vindicates the injured honor of God, which comes in to make amends to the Divine Law for human offenses.

Now concerning this propitiation, let us speak, and may the Holy Spirit give us utterance. You say, O Sinner, “How shall I come before God? How shall I draw near to the Most High God?” What would you give to be saved? All that you have, you would freely present—if you had bullocks and sheep upon a thousand hills and their blood could cleanse you—you would pour it out in rivers! You ask again, “What is the propitiation I can bring?” God tells you. Here He tells you that He has provided a Propitiation in the Person of His dear Son. And I would have you notice first of all *who it was that provided it*—whom God had set forth. Admire the love of this—that the God who was angered, is the God who finds the Propitiation! Against God the sin was leveled! God Himself finds the way of being gracious towards sinners. How safe it must be to accept a Propitiation who God, the offended One, Himself proposes! Notice next that it is said that *God has set this forth*. The margin has it, “Has foreordained it.” The Atonement of Christ is not a new idea—it is an old determination of the Most High and it is no close secret! God has published it—set it forth. By His Prophets in His Word—by His preachers in all your streets—God has set forth Christ to be the Propitiation for human sin! It is His own arranging, His own—and the publication to you tonight is by His own authority! Oh, regard this and you who seek His mercy leap to think that it comes to you certified in such a way!

But then notice that *the main point in this Propitiation is the blood*. “Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith

in His blood.” Some cannot bear to hear about the blood of Jesus and yet, under the old Law it was written, “It is the blood which shall make atonement for sin.” And again, “Without shedding of blood there is no remission,” and again, “The blood is the life thereof,” and again, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you,” that is to say, that which makes Atonement for human sin is not the life of Christ as an *example*—nor the actions of Christ as a vindication of righteousness—but *the suffering of Christ—the death of Christ*. Everyone knows that this is what is meant by the blood. In the blood-shedding, Jesus suffered! His body suffered—inwardly His soul bled, His spirit suffered—His soul-sufferings were the soul of His sufferings! Then came death. Death was the penalty of sin. Jesus died, literally died—and the heart’s blood came forth, mingled with water from His pierced side. God is pleased to pardon us because Jesus suffered—and the main point of comfort is the Cross—the Cross of the Crucified, the dying Savior! Do not let your minds wander away from this, you that are seeking peace with God. Your hope is not so much at Bethlehem as at Calvary. Your consolation is not to be found in the Second Advent but in the First Advent—and the death that closed it. You are not to look to Christ in His Glory for your comfort, but to Christ in His humiliation! Christ in His expiatory sufferings as your only hope! The blood, the blood, the blood—it is there the propitiation lies—and to that our faith must turn our eyes. It is so. Yes, it is so—

***“My sins deserve Your wrath, my God!
Your wrath has fallen on Your Son!”***

My sins turned away Your face—You have turned away Your face from Him. My sins deserved death—He has died. My sins deserved to be spit upon—to be mocked—to be cast out as felons. All this He has endured as if He were my sin, and is it not so? “He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Brothers and Sisters, I do declare my conscience never knew any peace until I understood this Truth of God, but ever since then I have no Rock I build on but this—Christ in my place, and I in Christ’s place! I am safe in Him and He was chastened, bruised, wounded, slain, instead of me! He it is. Propitiation through the blood. But the text says, “*Through faith in His blood.*” So, then, this shows you that no propitiation has had any effect with regard to us until we have faith in the blood! I can never know that God has blotted out my sin until I have faith! And what is faith but trust? And then, when I trust the blood of Jesus, my sin is all forgiven me in one moment. When I humbly rely upon my Savior’s finished work, “Though sins were as scarlet, they become as wool; though they were red like crimson, they are whiter than snow.” Do you know—I hardly know how to talk about this Truth of Propitiation. It makes my heart so leap for joy that I cannot find words to tell you! I do know that I, and that you, and that every Believer under Heaven is as clear before God of every sin as if he or she had never sinned! And is accepted before

God as if his whole life had been perfect obedience—and all because that Propitiation blood and the dear merits of our once Crucified, but now Glorified Redeemer stands in our place! *If I might have a perfect righteousness of my own, I would not—I would sooner have my Lord's, for my righteousness, were it perfect, were but the righteousness of a man—but His is the righteousness of God and man, God-Man! Oh, it is not merely immaculate and complete—it overflows with merit!* Truly I say again, could we have a righteousness of our own, it were wise to leave it and to have the righteousness of Jesus Christ wrapped about us by an act of faith, that we might forever stand not only accepted, but, “*accepted in the Beloved.*” Why, it is the very glory of the acceptance that the acceptance comes to us in Christ!

Thus have I dwelt as well as our short time allows upon the Propitiation. And now a word about—

III. THE DECLARATION.

The great objective, it appears, of the Redemption, and of the Gospel, is to show how God is just and yet the Justifier of such as believe. And Paul very properly divides the effect of Christ's death into two parts. First, he says that that *death declared God's righteousness as to the sins that were past*, through the forbearance of God.

Before our Savior came into the world, there had passed over the world some thousands of years. Our chronology talks about four thousand years. I do not know that. I never did believe in the chronology which is appended by human judgment to our Bibles. It may be, or it may not be correct. However, it may be four thousand years. During that time a very large number of sinners lived and a large number of sinners were saved. The transgressions of the Patriarchs, the transgressions of Israel under the Law, were remitted and these persons were justified by faith, and accepted—but how? There had been no offering of blood. True, the bullocks and the lambs were offered, but these could never put away sin. These were brought often, as if to show that the work was not done. The text tells us that this was through the forbearance of God. In the foresight of the Atonement to be offered, God remitted—passed over, as the word is—the sins of *those of His children who lived before Christ was sent*—before the penalty was endured by the Substitute! It is a glorious thought, this Atonement of Christ acting forward, before it was finished, before it was presented—and multitudes entering Heaven and enjoying happiness as Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the saints did, when, as yet not a drop of that blood which saved them had been shed, not a pang of the agony which made up the Atonement had yet been endured! Now had God passed over all this sin, and no Atonement was, after all, presented, His justice would not have been declared. But our Savior ultimately coming and suffering, all was a declaration of the righteousness of God concerning the sins that were past. It was proven that

He had in His mind's eye this great Sacrifice when He passed by sin—that He had not unjustly remitted it without demanding the penalty.

But then the Apostle gives us the other half of the great result of Christ's death! He says, "To declare, I say, *at this time*, His righteousness." That is, *today*—while we read this passage. "To declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness, that still as for us who live after the Passion, He might be just and the Justifier of him who believes in Jesus." The atoning Sacrifice of Christ looks forward, and will look all down the ages till He comes!—

***"His precious blood shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Is saved to sin no more."***

All the sins of His people, both past and present and to come, were laid on Christ—the whole mighty mass of all the sin of all His people that ever have believed, or ever shall believe on Him—all were transferred to His head and laid on Him! And He suffered for them all. And He made an end of all their transgressions and brought in everlasting righteousness for them all! Here is the grand Truth of God, the grandest Truth of Inspiration!

Now I shall spend the last few minutes of our time in reminding you that I have not, Beloved, been beating about the bush, nor preaching to you a Doctrine that may or may not be true! I have not been holding up to you some angle of an eccentric creed. Behold before you that which will be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death! Not with words of man's wisdom, but in simplicity have I tried to tell you God's way of pardoning and justifying men. At your peril reject it! As you shall answer for it before my Master's bar in that day when He shall summon you to give an account, oh, I beseech you by the living God—accept the Propitiation which God sets forth! Here are no harsh terms! Here are no rigorous conditions! There stand the words, "Believe and live!" As it is written, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved: He that believes not shall be damned." I have told you what this believing is. It is an unfeigned act of reliance upon the Incarnate God suffering in your place. If you believe on Him, or trust Him, that is the indisputable evidence that He was a Substitute for you—that the load of your guilt is gone—that the stone that lay at the door is removed and you are saved! Go not about, I pray you, to seek another righteousness. All the righteousness you need, Christ presents you freely with! Do not say that you are guilty—it is true you are—but this mode of salvation was meant for the guilty! Object not because you feel unfit. All the fitness that is needed is that you do but confess you are unfit and take freely what God presents you! No sin of yours shall ruin you if you believe, but no righteousness of yours shall save you if you will not believe!

This is God's way to save men. Will you set up another? Will you dare play Antichrist with Christ? He has declared His righteousness in the

Substitution of the Savior. Do you fail to see that righteousness, or seeing it, will you not admire it? Will you not adopt the plan which manifests it? Accept it, Sinner! It is all a Brother's heart and voice can say, accept it! Oh, if you knew the joy it would bring you, you would accept it now! I bear my witness personally. Burdened with sin, utterly lost, as much as you, I heard this gladsome news! I heard the message which said, "Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth." I did look. I was as unfit as you—as undeserving as you—but the moment my eyes caught sight of the great Surety on the ground of Gethsemane, bleeding for me, and on the Cross dying for me—I saw that if God had punished Him for me, He could be just, and yet never punish me! No, that if Christ were punished in my place, to punish me after Christ had died for me would be injustice altogether! And tonight I hide myself beneath the wings of Jesus, the great Surety, and my only shelter in the storm—

***"Rock of Ages cleft for me
Let me hide myself in Thee."***

In His pierced side my soul does find a shelter from the blast of Divine Wrath. It is peace *now!* It is joy *now!* It is salvation *now* with me! Why should not it be so with you? You did not come here to find Him. No, but God brought you here to find you! Is it not written, "I will call them a people who were not a people, and her beloved who were not beloved." "I am found," He says, "of them that sought Me not." Oh, may He be found by you tonight! You did not know the way to be saved—you do know it now. Do not add to your guilt by knowing what you don't practice, but *now*, NOW trust Him! Oh, may the Holy Spirit work faith in you. "Tis but a little faith," says one. Little faith will save you, but Christ deserves great faith! Oh, He is a true Christ—He cannot lie. Oh, can you not lay hold of Him? Do you see but the hem of His garment? Is it but a raveled thread that hangs out? Touch it, touch it with your finger and you shall be made whole! What if you cannot believe as you should? Believe as you can! Say with him of old, "Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief." Lift up the cry of the publican, "God be merciful—be *propitiated* towards me, a sinner! Jesus, I will have You! Have me!"

The Lord grant it, and may many in this place be saved tonight, to the praise and the glory of His Grace wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. Amen and amen!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 15:1-17.**

Thus speaks the Lord Jesus—**Verse 1.** *I am the true vine.* Many questions have been raised about which is the true Church. The Savior answers them, "I am the true vine." All who are united, really united, to the

ever-living Savior are members of the true Church. Find them where you may, if they are one with Christ, they are His—they are parts of the Divine Vine—they belong to His Church.

1. *And My Father is the vinedresser.* 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 vinedresser." All preachers, all teachers are but, so to speak, the pruning tool in the hand of the great Vinedresser. "My Father is the vinedresser."

2. *Every branch in Me that bears not fruit He takes 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 vinedressers 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 amenable to the discipline of the Church and are removed.

2. *Every branch in Me that bears not fruit, He takes away and every branch that bears fruit—*What of that? "He purges it (prunes 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 is 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 have you better. You have such capacities for bearing fruit that He wants to see those capacities developed. The lapidary does not place upon the wheel the stone that is not precious, but that which is, and so your affliction is no mark, therefore, of your lack of Grace, but of your having it! "Every branch that bears fruit, He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

3. *Now you are pruned.* 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 of God pruning off the useless branches! And there were others who were grieved by His Words. 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 oh, 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; neither can you, except you abide in Me.* It is keeping in Christ, then, that is the vital matter! There is the root of the whole business, to be one with Jesus by vital union, deriving the sap of our life entirely from Him!

5. *I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in Me, and I in Him, the same brings 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 often warm of heart. The very novelty of the thing keeps him near his Master, but oh, take care of slackening! You that have been pilgrims a long time, 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 fervor, without which there is no spiritual health.

5. *He that abides in Me, and I in Him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing.* Not “you will do less,” or, “you will do least,” but you 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 seemed 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 though these appeared to be all that the others were, after a while they were discovered and cast into the fire and burned.

7. *If you 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 you do this, “You shall ask what you 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 and women who jealously watch themselves, and zealously obey their Lord and Master.

8, 9. *Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples. As the Father has 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 the words again, “As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you; continue you in My love.” He confirms us in it and bids us live in the enjoyment of it!

10. *If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love. You shall know it. You shall live in it—it shall be the air 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 you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knows not what his master is doing: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you. You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatever you shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it to you.* A second time He puts this remarkable prevalence of prayer side by side with walking in the Lord's commandments! Oh, you 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*? 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 His Spirit make you pure in life, for then shall you be successful at the Mercy Seat!

17. *These things I command you, that you love one another.* Jesus, send us this spirit of love, we beseech you!

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

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

CHRIST SET FORTH AS A PROPITIATION NO. 373

A SERMON DELIVERED ON GOOD FRIDAY MORNING, MARCH 29, 1861,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Christ Jesus whom God has set forth to be a
propitiation through faith in His blood”
Romans 3:25.*

We commenced the services in this place by the declaration that here Christ shall be preached. Our Brother who followed us expressed his joy that Christ was preached herein. He did rejoice, yes, and would rejoice and our friends must have observed how throughout the other services there has been a most blessed admixture not only of the true spirit of Christ but of pointed and admirable reference to the glories and beauties of His Person.

This morning, which is the beginning of our more regular and constant ministry we come again to the same noble theme. Christ Jesus is today to be set forth. You will not charge me for repeating myself—you will not look up to the pulpit and say, “Pulpits are places of tautology.” You will not reply that you have heard this story so often that you have grown weary of it, for well I know that with you the Person, the Character and the work of Christ are always fresh themes for wonder. We have seen the sea, some of us hundreds of times and what an abiding sameness there is in its deep green surface—but who ever called the sea monotonous?

Traveling over it as the mariner does, sometimes by the year together, there is always a freshness in the undulation of the waves, the whiteness of the foam of the breaker, the curl of the crested billow and the frolicsome pursuit of every wave by its long train of brothers. Which of us has ever complained that the sun gave us but little variety—that at morn he yoked the same steeds and flashed from his ear the same golden glory, climbed with dull uniformity the summit of the skies, then drove his chariot downward and bade his flaming coursers steep their burning hooves in the western deep?

Who among us has complained of the monotony of the bread that we eat? We eat it today, tomorrow, the next day, we have eaten it for years that are passed and though we have other savory matters therewith, yet still the one unvarying food is served upon the table and the bread remains the staff of life. Surely I know that as Christ is your food and your spiritual bread—Christ is your sun, your heavenly light. As Christ is the sea of love in which your passions swim and all your joys are found, it is not possible that you as Christian men and women should complain of a monotony in Him. “He is the same yesterday, today and forever,” and yet He has the dew of His youth.

He is the manna in the golden pot which was always the same, but He is the manna which came from Heaven which was every morning new. He is the rod of Moses which was dry and changed not its shape, but He is

also to us the rod of Aaron which buds and blossoms and brings forth almonds. I come, then, now to preach Christ crucified, as God has set Him forth to be a propitiation for us through faith in His blood.

To begin at once, then, we shall notice first, *what is meant here by God's setting forth Christ as propitiation*. Secondly, we shall dwell upon the Truth which may very naturally be drawn from the first—*Christ the propitiation, as looked upon by the believer*. And then, thirdly, putting the two together, I mean inverting the two thoughts, we shall look at *Christ as set forth by us and looked upon by God*.

I. First then, the text says of Christ Jesus, "WHOM GOD HAS SET FORTH TO BE A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD."

The words "set forth" in the original may signify "foreordained." But according to eminent critics it has also in it the idea of setting forth as well as a "fore-ordaining." Barnes says, "The word properly means *to place in public view*. To exhibit in a conspicuous situation, as goods are exhibited or exposed for sale, or as premiums or rewards of victory were exhibited to public view in the games of the Greeks." So has God the Father set forth, manifested, made conspicuous the Person of the Lord Jesus as the propitiation of sin.

How has He done this? He has done it first by *ordaining Him in the Divine decree* as the propitiation of sin. Christ did not take upon Himself the office of High Priest without being chosen thereunto as was Aaron. As surely as every member of Christ's body is elect according to the foreknowledge of God, as certainly as in God's Book all His members were written which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them, so certainly was the Head Himself ordained the chosen of God. As our poet puts it—

***"Christ be My first elect He said
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head."***

Perhaps some might say there could be no election where there was no room for choice. But how do we know that there was no room for choice? We can scarce imagine that angel or archangel could have been set forth as propitiation for sin. Who can tell whether the Almighty mind might not have devised another plan? Who shall dare to limit the Holy One of Israel? At any rate there was this choice between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Divine Wisdom conjoined with Divine Sovereignty and chose and appointed and determined that Christ Jesus, the Second of the Mysterious Three, should be the propitiation for our sins.

When Christ comes into the world, He comes as One of whom all eternity had spoken—He is the Child born—born from the womb of destiny. He is the Lamb whom God had appointed from before the foundation of the world. Long before this world was made, or Adam fell, Christ had been set forth. In the volume of the Book it had been written of Him, "I delight to do Your will, O God." I think those who are afraid of looking back upon the great decrees of God because they say they are secrets have a fear where no fear is appropriate. There is never fear, my Brethren, of our meddling with secret things. If they are secret, it is quite certain that we shall not meddle with them. Only let it be announced once and for all that they are secret and there is no one who *can* betray the secrets of God.

But things that are revealed belong to us and to our children and this is one of the things that is revealed, this is the decree and we will declare it. The Lord said unto Christ, "You are My Son, this day have I begotten You and He has said unto Him moreover, I will make Him My First-born, higher than the kings of the earth." And all this that He may be the "propitiation for our sins by faith in His blood."

And next, God had set forth Christ to be a propitiation for sins *in His promises before the advent*. Did He not set Him forth most plainly in the garden where we fell? Was He not plainly revealed afterwards in the ark in which Noah was saved? Did not God speak constantly, not only by verbal promises, but by typical promises, which are just as sure and certain as those which are spoken in words? Did He not to a hundred seers and to multitudes of holy men and women, constantly reveal the coming of Him who should bruise the serpent's head and deliver His people from the power of the curse?

It is wonderful to see how engaged the Holy Spirit was through every age and era in ordaining types, in bringing forth representations and symbols in which Christ should be set forth as being the appointed propitiation for sins through faith in His blood. But the great setting forth was *the actual doing of the deed* when Jesus Christ came forth from the chambers of mystery and revealed Himself in the manger—when God set Him forth by angelic messengers appointed to be His attendants—set Him forth by the star in the East which should guide the distant strangers to the place where the young Child was.

He set Him forth afterwards by preserving His life in the midst of imminent perils, fulfilling promises made concerning His infancy in the place where He was hidden from Herod's fury and in the spot where He was educated and brought up. Throughout the life of Christ, how constantly did His Father set Him forth! The voice of God was in the voice of John—"Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world." And on the Cross itself, "when it pleased the Father to bruise Him and put Him to grief," what an exhibition was there of Christ to the eye of Jew and Gentile, of prince and peasant, of the learned Greek, of the ruler Roman—that God had appointed Christ to be the full propitiation for sin.

I think, my dear Friends, while we must always regard the Cross as being the representation of Christ's love to His Church, we must also view it as being God setting forth to man the way by which He will accept man, pardon his sin, hear his prayer and be reconciled with His erring creatures.

But, O my dear Friends, this is not all, God the Father set forth Christ since then by signs following. What a setting forth that was of Christ the Propitiator, *when the Holy Spirit came down* on Pentecost! And what have all conversions been since then? Have they not been repeated seals to the testimony that Christ is the appointed Redeemer of men and that through Him the faithful are justified and accepted? You, I trust—many of you—had such a special setting forth of Christ in your own hearts. You can set your seal to the text before us for Him has God set forth in you as being the propitiation.

By effectual grace your eyes have been opened—by infinite love your stubborn heart has been melted. You have been turned from every other hope and every other refuge. You have seen Christ to be the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. Constrained by an omnipotent influence which you neither could nor would resist you have received Him as the Sent of God, have taken Him as being God’s Messiah and your only refuge. God *in you*, then, has graciously fulfilled the text, “Him has God set forth to be a propitiation.”

But now, to change the subject for a moment and yet to continue on the same point—what is it that God has so manifestly set forth? We have seen *how* he has done it—we turn now to *what*? Sinner, listen and if you have already accepted that which the Father has revealed, let your joy become full. God has set forth Christ as being a propitiation. The Greek word has it *ilasthrion* which, being translated, may mean a mercy seat or a covering. Now God has said to the sinner, “Do you desire to meet Me? Would you be no longer My enemy? Would you tell Me your sorrows? Would you receive My blessing? Would you establish a commerce between your Creator and your soul? I set forth Christ to you as being the Mercy Seat, where I can meet with you and you can meet with Me.”

Or take the word as signifying a covering—as the mercy seat covered the tables of the Law and so covered that which was the cause of Divine ire, because we had broken His commandment. “Would you have anything which can cover your sin? Cover it from Me, your God, so that I need not be provoked to anger? Cover it from you so that you need not be cowed with excessive fear and tremble to approach Me as you did when I came in thunder and lightning upon Sinai? Would you have a shelter which shall hide altogether your sins and your iniquities? I set it forth to you in the Person of My bleeding Son. Trust in His blood and your sin is covered from My eyes—no, it shall be covered from your own eyes, too. And being justified by faith, you shall have peace with God through Jesus Christ your Lord.”

Oh that we may have grace to accept now what God the Father sets forth! The Romish priest sets forth this and that, our own Romish hearts set forth such-and-such-another thing but God sets forth *Christ*. The preacher of doctrine sets forth a *dogma*. The preacher of experience sets forth a *feeling*. The preacher of practice often sets forth an *effort*. But God puts before you *Christ*. “Here will I meet with you. This is the place of My rest—glorious to Me, safe to you. Come to Christ! Come to Christ and you will come to Me.” The Lord Almighty comes to Christ and there He comes to you. God, then, has set forth Christ Jesus—made Him conspicuous as being the mercy seat and the great hider of sin.

What has He set forth? He has set forth Christ before every one of you, in the daily preaching of the Word and in yon Inspired Book as His anointed to do His work, suffering in the place of all who believe on Him. He has set Him forth as nailed to Calvary’s Cross that *your sins* might be nailed there. Set Him forth as dying, that your sins might die—no, buried that your iniquities might be buried—risen, that you might rise to newness of life. Ascended, that you might ascend to God. Received in triumph, that you might be received in triumph, too. Made to reign, that you might

reign in Him forever loved, forever crowned, that you in Him may be forever loved and forever crowned, too.

Christ has God the Father set forth, that by faith in His blood your sins being put away, you might enjoy the blessing of complete justification. "Who is he that condemns, Christ has died, yes rather, has risen again and sits at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Thus, then and in these respects, has God the Father set forth Christ.

II. And now I proceed in the second place—and may the Spirit of God descend more visibly into our midst than at present—to speak upon a duty, a privilege rather, which so naturally rises out of God's having shown forth His Son as being the propitiation through faith in His blood. That privilege is that **WE SHOULD LOOK TO CHRIST AND LOOK TO CHRIST ALONE AS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS AND TAKE CARE THAT OUR FAITH IS SIMPLE AND FIXED SOLELY ON HIS PRECIOUS BLOOD.**

A very common mistake is to look to our sense of need as being at least in some degree a propitiation for sin. Repentance is an absolute duty and a Christian grace—a grace without which there can be no salvation. But there has been a strong temptation upon many minds to make *repentance* a preparation for Christ and to regard a sense of need as being a kind of wedding garment in which they may approach the Savior. How many read that promise, "Come unto Me all you that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest," and they fondly imagine that if they could be more weary and more heavily laden then they would have rest?

Whereas, being weary and heavy laden gives no man rest. It is *coming to Christ* that gives him rest. It is not the being weary and the being heavy laden. And I have known some ministers who preach what is called a deep experience and law-work and preach very rightly, too, because many of the people of God have to endure this. But I think they lead the people into error, for the people imagine that this law-work, this deep experience has something to do with the propitiation of their sins. Now, my Hearers, the sins of God's people are taken away by the *blood of Christ* and not by any repentance of their own.

I have already guarded my statement and now I will make it as bold as possible. I say that repentance of sin does in no way contribute to the removal of that sin meritoriously. I say that our sense of need does not take away our guilt, nor help to take it away. But the blood, the blood, the blood alone, pure and unmixed, has forever washed the people of God and made them whiter than snow. So, poor Heart, if your soul is as hard as a nether millstone, if your conscience seems to yourself to be seared by long habits of sin, if you cannot force tears from your eyes and scarcely can get a groan from your heart—yet you are groaning today because you cannot groan, weeping because you cannot weep and sorrowing because you cannot sorrow—hear you, then, this Gospel message. God the Father has set Christ forth to be your propitiation! Not your tender conscience, not your groans, not your sense of need, not your law-work, not your deep experience. He is enough without any of these—have faith in *His blood* and you are saved!

But again—many have fallen into another mistake. They make their propitiation depend upon their *evidences*. I would be the last to say, “Away with evidences, away with evidences,” for they are good things in their proper place. But there are too many persons who always judge of their past conversion and ultimate salvation by present evidence. Judge Brethren, whether you could ever form a proper estimate of the world by its appearance on any one day. If I had taken you out a month ago into the fields, you would have declared that the trees were dead. What signs of life would you have perceived? The bulbs were buried in the ground—you might have taken a solemn oath that flowers were banished and you might have imagined that because there were none, there never would be any.

But what was your evidence of the world’s state worth? Look at it now—the buds are bursting on the trees. The flowers are springing from the sod. Everything is hastening on towards spring and summer. Why as it is absurd and ridiculous for us to judge of the world’s estate by the fact that there was a cloud today and there was a shower of rain yesterday and therefore infer that the sun has lost its force and will never shine—it is just as ridiculous to judge of our standing before God by our present standing, according to our evidences on some one day.

The right way to read evidences is this. First, my Soul, whether you are saved or not, look to Christ as a poor guilty sinner. When you have done this, then read your evidences—then—*not till then*. Then the blessed evidence will be a confirmation. The witness of the Spirit will confirm your faith. But if you look to your evidences *first* you will be foolish indeed. It is as in a reflector—first, let us have the light, then will the reflector be of use to us to increase and reflect back the light. But I take my reflector into a dark place and look for light in it, I shall find none. I must first see to the light itself and then to the reflection of it.

Our graces are the reflection of Christ’s love. They are the tokens of it but we had better go to Christ first and then look to the tokens afterwards. I am sure if you, as a spouse, had offended your husband you would find but very sorry comfort in looking at those little tokens of love which in the past he had conferred on you. You would go to him first, ask him whether his love was still firm, whether he had forgiven the fault and when you had received the assurance of his unabated and pure affection, could you go upstairs to the secret drawer and look over the love notes and the love tokens—but they would have afforded you sorry comfort before.

So with any child who has been chastened by his parent—if he thinks that his father is angry with him he will not, if he is a wise child, a simple-hearted child, go up to the nursery and look at the gifts which his father gave him—but going to his father’s knee he will look up, with a tear in his eye and say, “Father do you love me? Can you forgive your child?” And, when he has had the personal token, the kiss of acceptance, then may the child go back and see in every mouthful that he eats and every garment which he wears, the sure token of his father’s continued affection. Evidences are good as second things, but as first things they are usurpers and may prove anti-Christ to Christ.

Whatever my evidences may say, if I believe in the precious blood, there is not a sin against me in God's Book and in the teeth of everything which might make me tremble—

***“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that His blood was shed for me
And that He bids me come,”***

I come again and come afresh to Him whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for our sins.

Friends, I may surprise you by what I am about to say, but there is another fault into which we sometimes fall, namely, looking to God's *promises* instead of looking to Christ as the propitiation of sin. The text does not say that God the Father has set forth promises. Indeed He has given us exceedingly great and precious promises and they are true *in Christ*. We often err by going to promises instead of going to Christ. I know many Christians who, when they are in distress, take up the Bible to find a promise—a very good and a very admirable plan, if, mark—it is preceded by something else. If they go to Christ *first*, they may come to the promise *afterwards*.

“Yes,” says one, “but suppose a promise is fulfilled.” Very good. You have comfort out of it, but I say suppose the promise is *not* fulfilled? What then? Why it is just as sure for all that—whether the promise is fulfilled or not. Fulfillment is not *my* duty—*my* business is to take Christ whom God the Father has set forth as the propitiation of my sins and if in searching this Book through there is not a single promise which I dare lay hold of, if I cannot find one bottle filled with the rich wine of consolation—if I can lay hold on no bunch of the grapes of Eshcol, still, God the Father has set forth *Christ* whatever else He has not set forth—and my eye looks to Christ and to Christ alone,

There is a man who very much desires an estate. At the same time his heart is smitten with the beauty of some fair heiress. He gets the title deeds of her estate. Well, the title deeds are good, but the estates are not his though he has got the title deeds. By-and-by he marries the lady and everything is his own. Get the heiress and you have got the estate. It is so in Christ—promises are the title-deeds of His estates. A man may get the promise and not get Christ and then they will be of no more use to him than the deeds of another man's estate would be to me, if I am not the lawful proprietor.

But when my soul is married unto Christ, then I am heir of all things in Him and with Him. Why, Christian, what right have you to say, “that promise is not mine because it is not fulfilled.” Your right to the promise does not lie in its being *fulfilled*, nor yet in *your* power to lay hold of it. Every promise that is in the Bible belongs to every man who is *in Christ* and belongs to him as much one day as another day, because Christ is his at all times, evermore the same. Oh, I do not know whether I can put this exactly as I mean it. What I mean is that the devil has often tempted me with, “You have not had a promise sent home to your heart for months, you are no child of God, you cannot get that sweetness out of such-and-such a passage that some men can.”

I reply to Satan in this way, “Well, God has never said He has set forth the *promise* to be a propitiation through faith but He has set forth *Christ*

and my soul accepts that which God has *set forth* and if ever a promise is applied to me, the promise is mine for all that and in faith I will lay hold on it and defy you to rob me of it when my soul has laid hold on Christ." Oh, that we lived more on Christ and less on anything but Christ—nearer to Christ's Person, more surely resting on Christ's blood—more simply accepting Him as our All in All.

I have not yet done on this second head—A remark or two suggest themselves to me now. God has set forth Christ to be the propitiation through faith in His blood and we ought to accept Christ as being an *all-sufficient propitiation*. I believe in Christ today. But if some sin lies upon my conscience and I am worried and troubled about it, ought I not to perceive at once that I have failed to accept Christ as an all-sufficient propitiation? Whether my sin is little or it is great, whether it is fresh or old, it is the same sin and blessed be God, it has all been atoned for through Christ the propitiation!

We ought to take Christ as being the death of every sin and of all sin—as having expunged and wiped out the great debt as well as the little—the ten thousand talents as well as the one hundred pence. We have never gotten the full idea of Christ till we know that every sin of thought, of word, of deed that the believer has ever been guilty of finds its death, its drowning, its total annihilation in the propitiation which God has set forth. Oh, we want to come where Kent was, when he said—

***"Now free from sin I walk at large
My Savior's blood's my full discharge.
At His dear feet my soul I lay
A sinner saved and homage pay."***

Well, but when we have come as far as this we need to add a second thought. God has set forth Christ to be not only an all-sufficient but an *immutable* propitiation for sin. Christ is as much my soul's propitiation when my soul has fallen into sin as when I have stood firm and resisted temptation, if I am a believer. "That is putting it," you say, "in a bold and almost Antinomian way." I cannot help it. It is true—it is true that the propitiation of Christ is never more, never less. It cannot be more, it is complete. It cannot be less, for it is the same yesterday, today and forever.

That man who has been washed in blood is spotless. His doubts and fears have not spoiled his appearance. His powerlessness yesterday in prayer, his despondency a week ago, his all but complete unbelief last month do not mar the perfection of Jesus' righteousness—do not take away from the complete achievement of the pardon of his sin by precious blood. I do believe and hold and rejoice in that precious Truth—that our standing before God, when we have believed in Jesus—depends no more upon *our* frames and our feelings than the sun itself in its native glory depends upon the clouds and darkness that are here below.

The same—the same in all its splendor, the same undimmed, as full of glory, as full of majesty, the righteousness and blood of Christ abides. And we, standing before God in Him—not in ourselves, are ever complete in Him. Ever accepted in the Beloved—never more so, never less so. "Strong meat this," says one. Be it strong—nothing short of this will ever satisfy the tried Christian in the hour when sin rolls over his head. If any man can make a bad use of the doctrine of the real substitution of Christ and

the standing of Christ's people in Christ's place every day—if any man can make a licentious use of that, his damnation is just. He has no part nor lot in this matter.

But I know this—I am not to be restrained from the comfort of a doctrine because some licentious vagabond chooses to destroy his soul with it. Still there stands the glorious Truth. And nothing short of this is the full glory of Christ's atonement—that when once He shed His blood and when once that blood has been applied to us, by *it* and *it* alone we stand completely pure and are as pure one day as another day—perfect, complete accepted, made secure and safe in Christ Jesus the Lord. “Him has God the Father set forth to be a propitiation for sin.” My soul accepts Him today as it did yesterday and knows that the sin is put away forever.

III. Now I shall come to my third and last point. Turn the thoughts over. We have said God sets forth Christ and we looked at Him. Now, as a matter of duty and privilege, we must SET FORTH CHRIST and GOD WILL LOOK AT HIM.

The preacher, standing here as he does today before this immense assembly knows that without God's looking upon the ministry it will be vain and void. How shall God's eye be secured? How shall His presence be guaranteed? If in this pulpit Christ is set forth, God will look down upon that Christ set forth and honor and bless the Word. Brethren, I might preach clear doctrine, but God might never look down upon doctrine. For I could point you to churches with a tear in my eye, because I am able to do so, where conversions are rare things. The *doctrine* is high, high enough—perhaps so high as to have become putrid.

I will not say that, but I do know some churches where there has not been an addition to the church by the stretch of ten or a dozen years together and I have known the reason. Christ was not set forth and therefore God did not look down on what was set forth. I have known, too, churches—and with equal sorrow do I mention them—where *practice* has been preached, but not Christ. People have been exhorted to do ten thousand things. Moral duties presented before the people in pleasing and well-polished essays have taken the place of the Cross of Christ and there have been no conversions. By degrees the attendance has become very slender—for where Christ is not preached, it is a strange thing—there are some exceptions to the rule, but still the rule is—there are not many to listen.

Only preach Socinianism and what a splendid hunting-ground this tabernacle will be for the spiders! Give up Christ and preach philosophy—you need not have an organ and a skillful person to play the people out of the church—they would never need that. They will never come in. So is it. Those flimsy doctrines never can prevail because no one will listen to them—they are not attractive. They look as if they would attract all—but none can receive them. The secret being that God will not look down on any man's ministry unless that man sets forth what *God sets forth*—Christ Jesus as the propitiation of our sins.

It is not a question as to whether there will be conversions when Christ is set forth. That is certain. Some good brethren quote the text, “Paul *may* plant and Apollos *may* water, but”—and they are a long while upon the

“but,” and they pervert the text a little, “but God gives the increase.” Now the text does not say any such thing. It says, “Paul plants and Apollos waters, God gives the increase.” They are all linked together—Paul does not plant in vain—Apollos does not water in vain. God gives the increase—*sure* to do it and if there are not souls saved there is always some reason for it. And the reason to which I would look—leaving now the inscrutable sovereignty of God out of the question for a moment—the reason would be either that Christ is not preached or else He is preached in such a way as He never ought to be preached—with cold-heartedness, with want of zeal, with want of tenderness.

Only let Christ be preached by an earnest heart—though there be no eloquence or though the elocution is defective—Christ being set forth, God the Holy Spirit will come forth and the Word *must* and *will* be blessed. His Word shall not return unto Him void. It shall prosper where He has sent it.

But again, as in the ministry we must set forth Christ if we would have God’s smile, so you, my Brothers and Sisters, in your pleadings for the souls of men must set forth Christ. What a mass of wickedness is hereabouts. What tens of thousands in this immediate neighborhood who know nothing of God. Here is a city with very nearly three millions inhabitants. It is not a city but an empire in itself. What shall we do when we are on our knees? I confess I have sometimes found myself utterly unable to express my desires in prayer to God for this city. When you once get a notion of its sin, its infamy, its dens, its innumerable missionaries teaching Satanic doctrines, its multitudes of men and women whose likelihood it is to ensnare the simple ones, it is an awful burden to carry before God!

You cannot pray for London except in sighs and groans. Good old Roby Flockhart, who stood for many years in the streets of Edinburgh used to be much laughed at. But he preached every night in the week and had during the winter months a little lantern which he put upon a stick and then stood in a corner and preached to the passers-by. He preached with a great power, but much eccentricity. That good man was eminent in his prayers when alone. A gentleman told me that he went one night to see poor Robert, he was extremely poor. The candle had been blown out and he stumbled his way up two or three pair of stairs and came at last to Flockhart’s room.

He opened the door and he could not see the good old man, but he could hear him say, “O Lord, dinna forget Edinboro, dinna forget Edinboro, turn not away Your hand from auld Reekie, dinna forget her, Lord. Your servant will never give You rest till You pour out Your spirit upon Edinboro.” My friend stood still and there was that old man alone with his God—my friend had never heard such groaning and crying. It seemed as if he could even hear the falling of his tears while he prayed for God to bless Edinburgh and to pour out His Spirit upon that city. He made some noise and the old man said, “There is somebody there I suppose.”

He struck a light and found he had taken one of the pillows of his bed to kneel upon by the side of an old chair which was about the only furniture, with the exception of the bed. He would pray for Edinburgh by the hour together and then go out to preach, though many laughed at and

hooted him. Oh, one wants to feel like that for London, too, kneeling there till one's knees are sore, crying, "Do not forget London, do not forget London. Lord do not turn Your face from London. Make bare Your arm in this great city."

But how are we to make our prayers prevail with God? Brethren, we must show forth *Christ* in prayer and then God will look upon our prayers. The Methodist cry which was once heard at the prayer meeting when a poor Methodist brother could not go on and someone at the far end of the chapel cried out, "Plead *the blood*, Brother, plead *the blood*"—that old Methodist cry has force and power in it. "Plead the blood." God cannot, cannot, cannot resist the cry of the blood of Christ. Abel's blood demanded vengeance and it had it. Christ's blood demands pardons and shall have it, must have it—our God cannot be deaf to the cry of His own Son's blood. And if you and I and all of us together can plead the precious blood of Christ for London, a revival must come, will come, shall come and the face of the times shall be changed. God's arm shall be revealed and, "all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it."

Yet once again and here with affectionate earnestness—I come to plead personally with each of you. Soul, are you this morning sick of self and longing to be saved? Do your sins condemn you? Do the lusts accuse you, does your conscience flog you? Have you been to God in prayer? Have you sought for mercy and has no mercy come? Have you read the Bible to find a promise? Has no promise dropped with honey to you? Come, I pray you and obey the Word of God which I utter in your hearing—come and take CHRIST and show Christ's blood to God and He will, He must smile upon you. If you cannot take the promise, take the BLOOD. If you cannot come before God with any feelings come with CHRIST in your hands.

"May I trust Christ?" says one. *May* you?! You are *commanded* to do it! He that believes not has made God a liar *because* he believes not. He that believes has set to his seal that God is true. Sinner, God is satisfied with Christ. Does He satisfy God and will He not satisfy you? The eternal Judge has accepted Jesus and do you refuse Him? The Lord has opened the door and stands at it. Is the door good enough for the king and yet not good enough for a rebel like yourself? "*But.*" Away with your "buts!" You want to bring something to *add* to Christ—is He enough to reconcile God and not enough to reconcile you? "But," "but," again. So God thinks the precious blood to be a sufficient price and you think it is not?

Oh fool and slow of heart, how dare you think that God has not set forth enough but you must add to it! Instead of this, I pray you in Christ's stead, believe in Christ as you are. *Whoever* you may be, *whatever* your past life has been, *whatever* your present feelings now are—entrust your soul with Christ and God declares that your sins are put away. Put your soul as it is—I care not how black with sin, it matters not how depraved it is—put it here on that mercy seat which God has set forth and you have put it where God commanded you put it and its salvation rests no more with *you*. You have put your salvation into Christ's hands, it is His business to save you and He will do it—

***"I know that safe with Him remains
Protected by His power
What I've committed to His hands***

Till the decisive hour.

I do not know how it is, but this simple doctrine is the hardest doctrine to make clear. It seems so easy and yet many will mystify and doubt it. “What, no good *works*, no good *feelings*!” All these things are *fruits* of grace—but salvation does not *depend* upon good works—they are a *result* so salvation. Salvation is *in Christ*, wholly in Christ—in Christ alone—and the moment any of you do trust Him genuinely to be your sole and only Savior you have accepted God’s propitiation and God has accepted you. It is not possible for the Lord, unless He could reverse His nature, stain His honor, belie His Character, make His Word a farce and the atonement of Christ a falsehood—to reject any man under Heaven who believes in Christ and takes Him to be His All in All.

This day is called Good Friday—may it be a good Friday to some of you. Perhaps I have some here to whom I have preached these last seven years and yet you have remained unsaved. I am clear of your blood if you had only heard but this one morning sermon, for God witnesses I know not how to put the plan of salvation more clearly than I have done. “God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation through His blood.” I bid you look to Christ bleeding, to Christ sweating drops of blood, Christ scourged, Christ nailed to the Cross and if you believe in Christ’s blood He is the propitiation of your sins.

But I can do no more than this. It is mine to preach, it is mine to pray and mine to plead. Oh may God the Holy Spirit give you grace to receive, to accept, to yield to this blessed proclamation of free mercy. Other salvation there is none. You may rack your soul with pain and wear out your bones with toil, but there is rest nowhere but here, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that with his heart believes and with his mouth makes confession shall be saved.” “For he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.”

What shall I say? Instead of pleading further with you I would plead with God in private that many of you may now try whether Christ cannot save you. Rest yourself *on* Him, trust yourself *with* Him and He will be as good as His word and *save you* now and save you even to the end. The Lord add His blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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GRACE EXALTED—BOASTING EXCLUDED

NO. 429

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 19, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law?
Of works? No, but by the law of faith.”
Romans 3:27.*

PRIDE is most obnoxious to God. As a sin, His holiness hates it. As a treason, His sovereignty detests it. As a rebellion, the whole of His attributes stand leagued to put it down. God has touched other sins with His finger, but against this vice He has made bare His arm. There have been, I know, terrible judgments against lust—but there have been ten times as many against that swelling lust of the deceitful heart. Remember, the first transgression had in its essence, pride.

The ambitious heart of Eve desired to be as God, knowing good and evil, and Adam imagined that he should be lifted up to Divine rank if he dared to pluck and eat. The blasting of Paradise, the sterility of the world, the travail of human birth, the sweat of the brow, and the certainty of death may all be traced to this fruitful mother of mischief, pride.

Remember Babel and how God has scattered us and confounded our tongues. It was man's pride which led him to seek for an undivided monarchy that so he might be great. The tower was to be the rallying point of all the tribes and would have been the central throne of all human grandeur—but God has scattered us—that pride might not climb to so high a pitch. Pride, you have indeed suffered severe strokes from God. Against you has He furbished His sword and prepared His weapons of war.

The Lord, even the Lord of Hosts has sworn it, and He will surely stain the pride of all human glory and tread all boasting as straw is trod for the dunghill. Talk no more so exceedingly proud. Let no arrogance come out of your mouth, for the bows of the mighty have been broken and the haughtiness of man has been bowed down. Remember Pharaoh and the plagues which God brought on Egypt, and the wonders which He worked in the field of Zoan.

Remember the Red Sea, and Rahab cut, and the dragon broken. Think of Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty architect of Babylon, driven out to eat grass like the oxen till his nails grew like birds' claws and his hair like eagles' feathers. Remember Herod, eaten of worms, because he gave not God the glory. And Sennacherib, with the Lord's hook in his jaws, turned by the way he came to the place where his sons became his slayers.

Time would fail to tell of the innumerable conquerors, and emperors, and mighty men of earth who have all perished beneath the blast of Your rebuke, O God, because they lifted up themselves and said, "I am, and there is none beside me." You have turned wise men backward and made their knowledge foolishness and no flesh may glory in Your Presence.

Yes, when pride has sought to shelter itself in the hearts of God's chosen people, still the arrows of God have sought it out and have drunk its

blood. God loves His servants still, but pride even in them, He abhors. David may be a man after God's own heart—but if his pride shall lift him up to number the people, then he shall have a choice between three chastisements. And he shall be happy to choose the pestilence as being the least of the plagues.

Or if Hezekiah shall show to the ambassadors of Babylon his riches and his treasures, there shall come to him the rebuke—"What have they seen in your house?" And the threat—"Behold they shall take your sons to make them eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." Oh, Brethren, forget not that God has uttered the most solemn words as well as issued the most awful judgments against pride. "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." "Him that has a high look and a proud heart will I not suffer." "Pride and arrogance do I hate."

"The Lord will destroy the house of the proud." "The day of the Lord shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty, and upon everyone that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low." "I am against you, O you most proud, says the Lord God of Hosts." There are hundreds of terrible texts like these but we cannot now recount them all.

Now mark, to put an everlasting stigma upon human vanity and to hurl once and for all mire and filth upon all human glorying, God has ordained that the only way in which He will save men shall be a way which utterly excludes the possibility of man's having a single word to say by way of vaunting. He has declared that the only foundation which He will ever lay shall be one by which man's strength shall be broken in pieces and by which man's pride shall be humbled in the dust.

To this subject I ask your attention this morning. It is to enlarge and amplify the sentiment of the text that I seek. "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith."

We shall notice first of all, *the rejected plan of Law*. Then we shall note *the excluded vice*. Having so done, we shall notice in the third place, *that the very fact that boasting is excluded permits of the reception of the worst of sinners*. And we shall close by observing *that the same system which excludes boasting includes humble and devout gratitude to God for His Grace and mercy*.

I. First, then, THE REJECTED PLAN. There are two ways by which man might have been forever blessed. The one was by works—"This do and you shall live. Be obedient and receive the reward; keep the commandment and the blessing shall be yours, well earned and surely paid." The only other plan was—"Receive Grace and blessedness as the free gift of God; stand as a guilty sinner having no merit, and as a rebellious sinner deserving the very reverse of goodness—but stand there—and receive all your good things, simply, wholly and alone of the free love and sovereign mercy of God."

Now, the Lord has not chosen the system of works. The word *Law*, as used twice in the text, is employed, it is believed by many commentators, out of compliment to the Jews, who were so fond of the word, that their antagonism might not be aroused. But it means here, as elsewhere in Scripture, plan, system, method. There were two plans, two systems, two methods, two spirits—the plan of works and the plan of Divine Grace. God has once and for all utterly refused the plan of merit and of works and has

chosen to bless men only and entirely through the plan, or method, or law of faith.

Now, Brethren, we have put the two before you, and we beg you to mark that there is a distinction between the two, which must never be forgotten. Martin Luther says—“If you can rightly distinguish between works and Grace, thank God for your skill and consider yourself to be an able Divine.” This, indeed, is the bottom of theology and he who can understand this clearly, it seems to me, can never be very heterodox. Orthodoxy must surely follow and the right teaching of God must be understood when we once and for all are able to discriminate with accuracy between that which is of man—works—and that which is of God—faith—and Divine Grace received by faith.

Now, the plan of salvation by works is impossible for us. Even if God had ordained it to be the way by which men should labor to be saved, it is certain that none would have been saved by it, and therefore, all must have perished. For if you would be saved by works, remember O Man, that the Law requires of you *perfection*. One single flaw, *one* offense and the Law condemns you without mercy. It requires that you should keep it in every point and in every sense and to its uttermost degree—for its demands are rigorous in the extreme.

It knows nothing of freely forgiving because you can not pay—but like a severe creditor, it takes you by your throat and says, “Pay me all.” And if you cannot pay even to the uttermost farthing, it shuts you up in the prison of condemnation, out of which you can not come. But if it were possible for you to keep the Law in its perfection outwardly, yet, remember that you would be required to keep it in your *heart* as well as in your external life.

One single motion of the heart from the right, one reception of even the shadow of a passing temptation, so as to become a partaker of sin, would ruin you. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and your neighbor as yourself.” Fail here and oh, who among us can be such a hypocrite as to think he has not failed ten thousand times—fail here—and though your life were virtuous, though your exterior were such as even criticism itself must commend, you still perish because you have not kept the Law and yielded its full demands.

Remember, too, that it is clear you can never be saved by the Law, because if up to this moment your heart and life have been altogether without offense, yet it is required that it should be so even to your dying day. And do you hope that as temptations come upon you thick as your moments, as your trials invade you numerous as the swarms which once thronged from the gates of Thebes, you will be able to stand against all these? Will there not be found some joint in your harness? Will there not be some moment in which you may be tripped up—some instant when either the eye may wander after lust, or the heart set on vanity?

Can you say you would *never* stretch out your hand to touch that which is not good? Oh, Man, remember, we are not sure that even this life would end that probation, for as long as you should live and be God’s creature, duty would still be due and the Law still your insatiable creditor. Forever would your happiness tremble in the scales. Even in Heaven itself

the Law would follow you. Even there, as your righteousness would be your *own*, it would never be finished. And even from yonder shining battlements you might fall and amid those harps, wearing that white robe, *if you were to be saved by your own works*, there might be a possibility of perishing!

The obedience of a creature can never be finished. The duty of a servant of the Law is never over. So long as you were the creature of God, your Creator would have demands upon you. How much better to be accepted in the Beloved and to wear His finished righteousness as our glory and security! Now in the face of all this, will any of you prefer to be saved by your works? Or, rather, will you prefer to be damned by your works? For that will certainly be the issue, let you hope what you may.

Now I suppose that in this congregation we have but very few—there may be some—who would indulge a hope of being saved by the Law in itself. But there is a delusion abroad that perhaps God will modify the Law, or that at least He will accept a sincere obedience even if it is imperfect. That He will say, “Well, this man has done what he could and, therefore, I will take what he has given as though it were perfect.”

Now, remember, against this the Apostle Paul declares peremptorily, “By the works of the Law shall no flesh living be justified,” so that that is answered at once. But more than this, God’s Law cannot alter, it can never be content to take less from you than it demands. What said Christ? “It is easier for Heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the Law to fail.” And again, He expressly said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

The Law’s demands were met and fulfilled for Believers by Christ. But as far as those demands are concerned to those who are under it, they are as great, as heavy, and as rigorous as ever they were. Unless His Law could be altered, and that is impossible, God cannot accept anything but a *perfect obedience*. And if you are hoping to be saved by your sincere endeavors to do your best, your hopes are rotten things. They are delusions, falsehoods—and you will perish wrapped up in the shrouds of your pride.

“Yes,” some say, “but could it not be partly by Grace and partly by works?” No. The Apostle says that boasting is excluded and excluded by the law of faith. But if we let in the Law of works in any degree, we cannot shut out boasting, for to that degree you give man an opportunity to congratulate himself as having saved himself. Let me say broadly—to hope to be saved by works is a delusion. To hope to be saved by a method in which Divine Grace and works are co-acting, is not merely a delusion but an *absurd* delusion.

It is contrary to the very nature of things—that Divine Grace and merit should ever mingle and co-work. Our Apostle has declared times without number that if it is of Grace, it is not of works, otherwise Grace is no more Divine Grace. And if it *is* of works, then it is not of Grace, otherwise work is no more work. It must be either one or the other. These two cannot be married, for God forbids the bands. He will have it all Grace or all works, all of Christ or all of man. But for Christ to be a make-weight, for Christ to supplement your narrow robes by patching on a piece of His own, for Christ to tread a part of the winepress, and for you to tread the rest—oh, this can never be!

God will never be yoked with the creature. You might link an angel with a worm and bid them fly together! But God with the creature? The precious blood of Jesus with the foul ditch-water of our human merits? Never! Never! Our paste gems, our varnished falsehoods, our righteousnesses which are but filthy rags—put with the real, true, precious, everlasting, Divine things of Christ? Never! Unless Heaven should blend in alliance with Hell, and holiness hold dalliance with impurity, it must be one or the other—either man's merit, absolutely and alone—or unmixed, unmerited favor from the Lord.

Now, I suppose if I were to labor ever so arduously to hunt out this evil spirit from the sons of men, I should miss it, still, for it hides in so many shapes. Therefore let me say that in no shape, in no sense, in no single case and in no degree whatsoever, are we saved by our works or by the Law. I say in no sense, because men make such shifts to save alive their own righteousness. I will show you one man who says, "Well, I don't expect to be saved by my honesty. I don't expect to be saved by my generosity, nor by my morality. But then, I have been baptized. I receive the Lord's Supper. I have been confirmed. I go to Church, or I have a sitting in a meeting house. I am, as touching the ceremonies, blameless."

Well, Friend, in that sense you cannot be saved by works, for all these things have no avail whatever upon the matter of salvation, if you have not *faith*. If you are saved, God's ordinances will be blessed things to you. But if you are not a Believer you have no right to them. And with regard to Baptism and the Supper, every time you touch them you increase your guilt. Whether it is Baptism or the Lord's Supper, you have no right to either, unless you are saved already. They are both ordinances for Believers and for Believers, only. These ordinances are blessed means of Divine Grace to living, quickened, saved souls.

But to unsaved souls, to souls dead in trespasses and sins, these outward ordinances can have no avail for good but may increase their sin, because they touch unworthily the holy things of God. Oh, repose not in these! Oh, dream not that a priestly hand and sacred drops, or a God-ordained Baptism in the pool, can in any way redeem you from sin, or land you in Heaven—for by this way salvation is impossible. But if I drive the lover of self-righteousness out of this haunt, he runs to another.

You will find others who suppose that at least *their feelings*, which are only their works in another shape, may help to save them. There are thousands who think, "If I could weep so much, and groan so deeply, and experience so much humiliation, and a certain quantity of repentance, and so much of the terrors of the Law, and of the thunders of conscience, *then* I might come before God." Souls, Souls, this is work-mongering in its most damnable shape, for it has deluded far more than that bolder sort of work-trusting, which says, "I will rely upon what I *do*."

If you rely upon what you *feel*, you shall as certainly perish as if you trust to what you *do*. Repentance is a work of the Holy Spirit, and to be convinced of sin by God the Holy Spirit is a holy privilege. But to think that these other things in any way win salvation is to run clean counter to all the teachings of the Word, for salvation is of the Free Grace of God, alone. There are some, moreover, who believe that if their feelings cannot do it, still their *knowledge* can. They have a very sound creed. They have

struck out this doctrine and that. They believe in justification by faith, and their sound creed is to them a confidence. They think that because they hold the theory of justification by faith, therefore they shall be saved.

And oh, how they plume their feathers! How they set up their peacock tail because they happen to be orthodox! With what awful pride do they exult over their fellow professors because they hold *the* truth and all the rest of the Church, they think, is deluded with a lie. Now this is nothing but salvation by works, only they are works performed by the *head* instead of by the hands.

Oh, Sirs, I will tell you—if you rest in creeds, if you hope to be saved because you can put your hand to the thirty-nine articles of an Episcopalian prayer book, or to the solemn league and covenant of the Presbyterian, or to the confession of faith of the Calvinist—if you fancy that because you happen to receive truth in the head you shall be saved, you know not the Truth of God but still cling to Satan's lie—that salvation is of *man* and not of God!

I know that self-righteousness was born in our bones and that it will come out in our flesh and even that man in whom its reigning power is kept down will still feel it sometimes rising up. When he has preached a sermon and has got on pretty well, the devil will come up the pulpit stairs and say, "Well done." When he has prayed in public and has had unusual fluency, he will have to be careful lest there should be a whisper behind—"What a good and gifted man you are." Yes, and even in his hallowed moments, when he is on the top of the mountain with his Lord, he will have to watch, even there, lest self-congratulation should suggest—"Oh, Man, greatly-Beloved, there must surely be something in you, or else God would not have done thus unto you."

Brethren, when you are thinking of your sanctification, if you are tempted to look away from Christ—away with it! And if when you are repenting of sin you cannot still have one eye on Christ, remember it will be a *repentance* that will need to be repented of, for there is nothing in ourselves that can be offered to God.

There is a stench and putridity in everything that is done of the Creature, and we can never come before God except through Christ Jesus, who is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. I have thus tried to denounce the plan which God has rejected.

II. I shall now, in the second head, SHOW THAT BOASTING IS EXCLUDED, for in a blessed sense God has accepted the second plan, namely, the way of salvation by faith through Divine Grace.

The first man that entered Heaven, entered Heaven by faith. "By faith Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain." Over the tombs of all the goodly who were accepted of God, you may read the epitaph—"These all died in faith." By faith they received the promise. And among all yonder bright and shining throng, there is not one who does not confess, "We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

The plan, then, which God has chosen, is one of Divine Grace, alone. I will try and picture that plan before our mind's eye. We will imagine Boasting to be exceedingly desirous to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. He marches to the door and knocks. The porter looks out and demands,

“Who stands there?” “I am Boasting,” says he, “and I claim to have the highest seat. I claim that I should cry aloud and say, Glory be unto man, for though he has fallen, he has lifted himself up and worked out his own redemption.”

And the angel says, “But have you not heard that the salvation of souls is not of man, nor by man, but that God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion? Get you gone, Boasting, for the highest seat can never be yours, when God, in direct opposition to human merit, has rejected the Pharisee and chosen the publican and the harlot, that they may enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”

So Boasting says, “Let me take my place, then, if not in the highest seat, yet somewhere amid the glittering throng. For instance, let me take my place in the seat of *election*. Let it be said and taught, that albeit God did choose His people, yet it was because of their works which He foresaw and their faith which He foreknew and that, therefore, foreseeing and foreknowing, He did choose them because of an excellence which His pre-scient eye discovered in them. Let me take my seat here.”

But the porter says, “No, you can not take your place there, for election is according to the eternal purpose of God, which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world was. This election is not of works but of Grace and the reason for God’s choice of man is in Himself and not in man. And as for those virtues which you say God did foreknow, God is the Author of all of them if they exist, and that which is an effect cannot be a first cause. God foreordained these men to faith and to good works and their faith and good works could not have been the cause of their foreordination.

Then straight from Heaven’s gate the trumpet sounded—(“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 calls it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger”). Then Boasting found that as works had no place in election, so there was no room for him to take his seat there and he bethought himself where next he could be.

So after a while Boasting says to the porter, “If I cannot mount the chair of election, I will be content to sit in the place of conversion, for surely it is man that repents and believes.” The porter did not deny the truth of that, and then this evil Boasting said, “If one man believes and not another, surely that must be the act of the man’s will. And his will being free and unbiased, it must be very much to that man’s credit that he believes and repents and is therefore saved. For others, having like opportunities with himself and having the same Grace no doubt, reject the preferred mercy and perish, while this man accepts it and therefore let me at least take my seat there.”

But the angel said in anger, “Take your seat there? Why, that were to take the highest place of all, for this is the hinge and turning-point and if you leave that with man then you give him the brightest jewel in the crown. Does the Ethiopian change his skin and the leopard his spots? Is it not God that works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure? Of His own will He begat us with the Word of Truth and it is not of the will of man, nor of blood, nor of birth. Oh, Boasting, your free will is a lie!

It is not man that chooses God but God that chooses Man. What did Christ say—“You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you.” And what did He say to the ungodly multitude, “You will not come unto Me that you might have life.” In which He gave the death-blow to all ideas of free will—when He declared that man *will not* come to Him that he might have life. And then He said again, in another place, as if that were not enough, “No man can come unto Me except the Father which has sent Me draw him.”

So Boasting, though he was glad not to admit it, was shut out and could not take his place in Heaven upon the stool of conversion. And while he stood there but little abashed, for bashfulness he knows not, he heard a song floating over the battlements of Heaven from all the multitude who were there, in accents like these, “Not unto us, not unto us but unto Your name, O Lord, be the praise”—

***“It was the same love that spread the feast
That gently forced us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin.”***

But then,” said Boasting, “if I may not have so high a place, let me at least sit on the lowly stool of perseverance and let it at least be said that while God saved the man and is therefore to have the glory, still the man was faithful to Grace received. He did not turn back unto perdition but watched and was very careful and kept himself in the love of God and therefore there is considerable credit due to him. For while many drew back and perished and he might have done the same, he struggled against sin. And thus by his using his Grace he kept himself safely. Let me sit, then, on the chair of perseverance.”

But the angel replied, “No, no, what have you to do with it? I know it is written, ‘keep yourselves in the love of God,’ but the same Apostle forbids all fleshly trust in human effort by that blessed doxology—‘Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the Presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.’ That which is a command in one Scripture is a Covenant promise in another, where it is written, ‘I will put My fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from Me.’”

Oh, Brethren, well do you and I know that our standing does not depend upon ourselves. If that Arminian doctrine, that our perseverance rests somewhere in our own hands, were true, then damnation must be the lot of us all. I cannot keep myself a minute, much less year after year—

***“If ever it should come to pass,
That sheep of Christ should fall away;
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day.”***

But what says the Scripture?—“I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand, . My Father who gave them Me is greater than all and none is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.” And what says the Apostle—“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.”

I have not time to quote all the innumerable passages, but it is absolutely certain that if there is one doctrine in Scripture more clearly revealed than another, it is the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints by the power of the Holy Spirit. The man who doubts that precious Truth of God has quite as much reason to doubt the Trinity, to doubt the divinity of Christ, or the fact of the atonement. For nothing can be more clear in the plain, common sense meaning of the words than this—that they who are in Christ have, even today, eternal life and shall never perish.

Now, since this perseverance is not dependent upon our works, but like all the rest of salvation, is an efflux from the bottomless love of God, boasting is manifestly excluded. But once again and lastly, Boasting sometimes asks to be admitted a little into glorification. I fear sometimes that a doctrine which is popular in the Church, about degrees of glory, is not altogether unassociated with that old self-righteousness of ours which is very loath to die.

“One star differs from another star in Glory” is a great truth—but this the stars may do without differing in degrees. One star may shine with one radiance and another with another. Indeed, astronomers tell us that there are many varieties of color among stars of the same magnitude. One man may differ from another, without supposing a difference in rank, honor, or degree. For my part, I do not see anything about *degrees* in Glory in Scripture, and I do not believe in the doctrine—at least if there are degrees, mark this—they cannot be according to *works* but must be of Divine Grace alone.

I cannot consider that because one Christian has been more devoted to Christ than another, therefore there will be an eternal difference, for this is to introduce works. This is to bring in again the old Hagar marriage and to bring back the child of the bondwoman, whereof God has said, “The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with My son, even with Isaac.”

Oh, Brethren, I think we can serve God from some other motive than that base one of trying to be greater than our Brethren in Heaven. If I should get to Heaven at all, I do not care who is greater than I am, for if anyone shall have more happiness in Heaven than I shall, then I shall have more happiness, too. For the sympathy between one soul and another will there be so intense and so great, that all the heavens of the righteous will be my Heaven. And therefore, what you have, I shall have, because we shall all be one in fellowship far more perfectly than on earth.

The private member will there be swallowed up in the common body. Surely, Brethren, if any of you can have brighter places in Heaven, and more happiness and more joy than I, I will be glad to know it. The prospect does not excite any envy in my soul now, or if it did *now*, it certainly would not *then*—for I should feel that the more *you* had the more *I* should have. Perfect communion in all good things is not compatible with the private enrichment of one above another.

Even on earth the saints had all things common when they were in a heavenly state and I am persuaded they will have all things common in Glory. I do not believe in gentlemen in Heaven and the poor Christians behind the door. I believe that our union with each other will be so great

that distinctions will be utterly lost, and that we shall all have such a joint communion and interest and fellowship, that there will be no such thing as private possession, private ranks and private honors. We shall there, to the fullest extent, be one in Christ.

I do believe that Boasting is shut out there. But I think that if there were these degrees in glory, I mean if they are dependent on works done on earth, Boasting would at least get his tail in. If it did not insinuate its whole body, it would at least get some of its unhallowed members over the wall, whereas, the text says it is excluded. Let me enlarge this one word and then proceed. It does not say, "Boasting, you are to be allowed to come in and sit down on the floor." No, shut the door and do not let him in at all.

"But let me in," he says, "and I will be quiet." No, shut him out altogether. "But at least let me put my foot in." No, exclude him—shut him out altogether. "But at least let me sometimes go in and out." No, shut him out altogether. Exclude him—bolt the door—put double padlocks on it. Say once and for all, "Boasting, get you gone. You are hurled down and broken in pieces and if you can refit yourself and come once more to the gate to ask admittance, you shall be driven away with shame." It is *excluded*. It cannot be let in, in any sense, in any term, nor in any degree.

As Calvin says, "Not a particle of boasting can be admitted, because not a particle of work is admitted into the Covenant of Grace." It is of Divine Grace from top to bottom, from Alpha to Omega. It is not of man nor by man, not of him that wills, nor of him that runs but of God that shows mercy and therefore, boasting is excluded by the law of faith.

III. And now, thirdly and very briefly. Beloved in Christ Jesus, what a precious Truth of God I have now to hold up to the eyes of poor lost sinners, who today are aware that they have no merits of their own. Soul, THE VERY GATE WHICH SHUTS OUT BOASTING, SHUTS IN HOPE AND JOY FOR YOU.

Let me state this Truth of God broadly, that the ignorant may catch it. You say today, "Sir, I never attend the House of God and up to this time I have been a thief and a drunkard." Well, you stand today on the same level as the most moral sinner and the most honest unbeliever, in the matter of salvation. They are lost, since they believe not, and so are you. If the most honest is saved, it will not be by their *honesty* but by the Free Grace of God. And if the most evil would be saved, it must be by the same plan.

There is one gate to Heaven for the most chaste and the most debauched. When we come to God, the best of us can bring nothing, and the worst of us can bring no less. I know when I state it thus, some will say, "Then what is the good of morality?" I will tell you. Two men have fallen overboard. One man has a dirty face and the other a clean one. There is a rope thrown over from the stern of the vessel and only that rope will save the sinking men—whether their faces are fair or foul. Is not this the truth? Do I therefore underrate cleanliness. Certainly not—but it will not save a drowning man.

Nor will morality save a dying man. The clean man may sink with all his cleanliness and the dirty man may be drawn up with all his filth, if the rope does but get its hold of him. Or take this case. Here we have two per-

sons, each with a deadly cancer. One of them is rich and clothed in purple, the other is poor and wrapped about with a few rags. And I say to them—“You are both on a par now, here comes the Physician Himself—Jesus, the King of disease—His touch can heal you both. There is no difference between you whatever.”

Do I therefore say that the one man’s robes are not better than the others rags? Of course they are better in some respects but they have nothing to do with the matter of curing disease. So morality is a neat cover for foul venom but it does not alter the fact that the heart is vile and the man, himself, under condemnation. Suppose I were an army surgeon and there had been a battle. There is one man there—he is a captain and a brave man. He led his rank into the thick of the battle and he is bleeding out his life from a terrible gash. By his side there lies a man of the rank and file, and a great coward, too, wounded in the same way.

I come up to both of them and I say, “You are both in the same condition. You have both the same sort of wound and I can heal you both.” But if either of you should say, “Get you gone. I’ll have nothing to do with you,” your wound will be your death. If the captain should say, “I do not want you. I am a captain, go and see to that poor dog yonder.” Would his courage and rank save his life? No, they are good things but not saving things. So is it with good works, men can be damned with them as well as without them if they make them their beast.

Oh, what a Gospel is this to preach in our theatres. To tell those hedgebirds, those who are full of all manner of loathsomeness, that there is the same way of salvation open to them as to a peer of the realm, or a bishop on the bench. That there is no difference between us in the way of mercy, that we are all condemned. That there may be degrees as to our guilt but that the fact of our condemnation is quite as certain to the best as to the worst!

“Oh” you say, “this is a leveling doctrine!” Ah, bless God if you are leveled. “Oh,” you say, “but this cuts at everything that is good in man!” Ah, thank God, if it kills everything in which man glories, for that which man thinks to be good is often an abomination in the sight of God. And oh, if all of us together, moral or immoral, chaste or debauched, honest or unholy, can come with the rope about our neck and with the weeds of penitence upon our loins and say, “Great God, forgive us. We are all guilty, give us Grace. We do not deserve it. Bestow upon us Your favor, we have no right to it but give it to us because Jesus died.”

Oh, He will never cast out one that way, for that is the way of salvation. And if we can put our hand this morning—no matter though it were black last night with lust, or red up to the elbow with murder—yet if we can put our hand on Jesus’ head and believe on Him—the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleans us from all sin. Where is boasting now? You who have done so much for humanity—you cannot boast—for you have nothing to boast of. You fine gentlemen and noble ladies, what do you say of this?

O be wise and join in the prayer, “But You, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!” And may the Lord then pronounce over us His sentence, “You are clean, go and sin no more. Your iniquities are all forgiven you.”

IV. I close by just observing, that THE SAME PLAN WHICH SHUTS OUT BOASTING LEADS US TO A GRACIOUS GRATITUDE TO CHRIST.

We are sometimes asked by people, “So you think that such a thing is necessary to salvation?” or, perhaps, the question is put in another way, “How long do you think a man must be godly in order to be saved?” I reply, dear Friend, you cannot understand us, for we hold that these things do not save in any sense. “Why, then,” they say, “are you baptized?” or, “Why do you walk in holiness?” Well, not *to save* myself but *because I am saved*. When I know that every sin of mine is forgiven, that I cannot be lost, that Christ has sworn to bring me to the place where He is—then I say, Lord what is there that I can do for You?

Tell me. Can I burn for You? Blessed were the stake if I might kiss it. If You have done so much for me, what can I do for You? Is there an ordinance that involves self-denial? Is there a duty which will compel me to self-sacrifice? So much the better—

***“Now for the love I bear His name,
What was my gain I count my lost;
By former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to His Cross.”***

This is the way to do good works. And good works are impossible until we come here. Anything that you do by which *to save yourself* is a selfish act, and therefore cannot be good. Only that which is done for God’s glory is good in a Scriptural sense.

A man must be saved before he can do a good work. But when saved, having nothing to get and nothing to lose—standing now in Christ, blessed and accepted—he begins to serve God out of pure gratitude and love. Then, virtue is possible and he may climb to its highest steep and stand safely there without fear of the boasting which would cast him down. He will feel, even then, that his standing is not in what he has *done*, nor in what he *is*, nor in what he *hopes* to be but in what *Christ did* and in the, “It is finished,” which made his eternal salvation secure.

O for Divine Grace, that we may live to the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0 . Ages Software, 1.800.297.4308

HOW IS SALVATION RECEIVED?

NO. 1347

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 1, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“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.”
Romans 4:16.

WE shall turn during yet another Sabbath morning to one of the great vital Truths of the Gospel. I feel it to be more and more important to bring forward the fundamental doctrines since they are, in certain quarters, placed so much in the background. I met with a remark the other day that even the evangelical pulpit needs to be evangelized—I am afraid it is too true and, therefore, we will give such prominence to the Gospel and to its central Doctrine of Justification by Faith, that no such remark shall be applicable to us. We have heard it said that if an instrument could be invented which would serve the same purpose towards sermons as the lactometer does towards milk, you would, with great difficulty, be able to discover any trace of the unadulterated milk of the Word of God in large numbers of modern discourses.

I shall not subscribe to any sweeping censure, but I am afraid there is too much ground for the accusation. In abundance of sermons, the polish of the rhetoric is greatly in excess of the weight of the doctrine and “the wisdom of words” is far more conspicuous than the Cross of Christ. Besides, the Gospel is always needed. There are always some persons who urgently need it and will perish unless they receive it. It is a matter of hourly necessity! There may be finer and more artistic things to speak about than the simplicities of Christ, but there are certainly no more useful and requisite things.

The signposts at the crossroads bear very simple words, generally consisting of the names of the towns and villages to which the roads lead. But if these were painted out and their places supplied with stanzas from Byron, or stately lines from Milton, or deep thoughts from Cowper or Young, I am afraid there would be grievous complaints from persons losing their way! They would declare that however excellent the poetry might be, they thought it an impertinence to mock them with a verse when they needed plain directions as to the king's highway! So let those who will, indulge in poetical thoughts and express them in high-flown language—it shall be ours to set up the signposts marking out the way of salvation and to keep them painted in letters large and plain—so that he who runs may read.

There is another reason for giving the Gospel over and over, again and again. It is the reason which makes the mother tell her child 20 times,

namely, because 19 times are not enough! Men are so forgetful about the things of Christ and their minds are so apt to step aside from the Truth of God, that when they have learned the Gospel they are very easily bewitched by falsehood and are readily deceived by that “other gospel” which is not another! Therefore we need to give them “line upon line and precept upon precept.” I scarcely remember the old rustic rhyme, but I remember hearing it sung in my boyish days when the country people were planting beans according to the old plan of putting three into each hole—I think it ran thus—

**“One for the worm and one for the crow,
And let us hope the other will grow.”**

We must be content to plant many seeds in the hope that one will take root and bear fruit! The worm and crow are always at work and will be sure to get their full share of our sowing and, therefore, let us sow the more! Come we, then, to our text and to the Gospel of faith. Last Lord’s Day the theme was, “For whom is the Gospel meant?” And the reply was, for *sinners*. The question, today, is, “How is the Gospel received?” The answer is, by *faith*. Our first head shall be the fact— “it is of faith.” Secondly, the first reason for this— “that it might be by Grace.” And thirdly, the further reason— “to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.”

I. First, then, here is THE FACT—it is of faith. What does the “it” refer to? It is of faith. If you will read the context, I think you will consider that it refers to the *promise*, although some have said that the antecedent word or thought is, “the inheritance.” This matters very little, if at all—it may mean the inheritance, the Covenant, or the promise, for these are one. To give a wide word which will take in all—the blessedness which comes to a man in Christ, the blessedness promised by the Covenant of Grace is of faith—in one word, salvation is of *faith*!

And what is faith? It is believing the promise of God, taking God at His word and acting upon that belief by trusting in Him. Some of the Puritans used to divide faith improperly, but still instructively, into three parts. The first was *self-renunciation*, which is, perhaps, rather a *preparation* for faith than faith itself. In it a man confesses that he cannot trust in himself and so goes out of self and all confidence in his own good works. The second part of faith, they said, was *reliance* in which a man, believing the promise of God, trusts Him, depends upon Him and leaves his soul in the Savior’s hands. And then they said the third part of faith was *appropriation* by which a man takes to himself that which God presents in the promise to the Believer—he appropriates it as his own, feeds upon it and enjoys it.

Certainly there is no true faith without self-renunciation, reliance and at least a measure of appropriation—where these three are found, there is faith in the soul. We shall, however, better understand what faith is as we proceed with our subject, if God the Holy Spirit will be pleased to enlighten us. Dear Friends, you can easily see that the blessing was of *faith* in Abraham’s case—and it is precisely the same with all those who, by faith, are the children of believing Abraham! First, it was so in the case

of Abraham. Abraham obtained the promise by faith and not by works nor by the energy of the flesh. He relied alone upon the Divine promise.

We read in the 17th verse—“(As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations), before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickens the dead and calls those things which are not as though they were.” Abraham’s faith consisted in believing the promise of God and this he did firmly and practically. He was far away in Chaldea when the Lord called him out and promised to give him a land and a seed. And straightway he went forth, not knowing where he went. When he came into Canaan, he had no settled resting place, but wandered about in tents, still believing most fully that the land in which he sojourned as a stranger was his own.

God promised to give him a seed and yet he had no children. Year followed year and in the course of nature he grew old and his wife was long past the age of child-bearing—and yet there was no son born to them. When at last Ishmael was born, his hope in that direction was dashed to the ground, for he was informed that the Covenant was not with Ishmael—believing Abraham had stepped aside to carnal expediency and had hoped, in that way, to realize the lingering promise! But he had 14 more years to wait—till he was 100 years old and till Sarah had reached her 90th year! Yet he believed the word of the Lord and fell upon his face and laughed with holy joy and said in his heart, “Shall a child be born unto him that is 100 years old?” So, too, when Isaac was born and grown up, he believed that in Isaac should the Covenant be established. Nor did he doubt this when the Lord bade him take Isaac and offer him up as a sacrifice! He obeyed without questioning, believing that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead, or in some other way to keep His word of promise.

Now consider that *we* have multiplied promises and those are written down in black and white in the Inspired Word, which we may consult at any time we please, while Abraham had only, now and then, a *verbal* promise—and yet he clung to it and relied upon it. Though there was nothing else to rely upon and neither sign nor evidence of any offspring to fulfill the promise that he should be heir of the world and father of many nations, yet he needed no other ground of confidence but that God had said it and that He would make His word good. There was in Abraham, also, an eye to the central point of the promise—the Messiah—Jesus, our Lord.

I do not know that Abraham understood all the spiritual meaning of the Covenant made with him. Probably he did not. But he did understand that the Christ was to be born of him, in whom all nations should be blessed. When the Lord said that He would make him a blessing and in him should all nations of the earth be blessed, I do not suppose Abraham saw all the fullness of that marvelous word—but he did see that he was to be the progenitor of the Messiah. Our Lord, Himself, is my Authority for this assertion—“Abraham saw My day, he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). Though there appeared to this man, old and withered, with a wife 90 years of age, no likelihood that he should ever become a father, yet did he fully believe that he would be the father of many *nations*—and that

upon no basis whatever but that the living God had so promised him and, therefore, so it must be!

This faith of Abraham we find considered no difficulties whatever. "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall your seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about 100 years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief." Brothers and Sisters, these were, in themselves, terrible difficulties—enough to make a man fear that the promise did but mock him—but Abraham did not consider anything beyond the promise and the God who gave it! The difficulties were for *God* to consider—not for him! He knew that God had made the world out of nothing and that He supported all things by the word of His power and, therefore, he felt that nothing was too hard for Him!

His own advanced years and the age of his wife were of no consequence. He did not take them into the reckoning, but saw only a faithful Almighty God and felt content. O noble faith! Faith such as God deserves! Faith such as none render to Him but those whom He calls by Irresistible Grace! This it was which justified Abraham and made him the father of Believers! Abraham's faith, also, gave glory to God. I stopped in the middle of the 20th verse just now, but we must now complete the reading of it. "But was strong in faith, giving glory to God." God had promised and he treated the Lord's promise with becoming reverence. He did not impiously suspect the Lord of falsehood, or of mocking His servant, or of uttering to-day what He might take back tomorrow.

Abraham knew that Jehovah is not a man, that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. Abraham glorified the Truth of God and, at the same time, he glorified His power! He was quite certain that the Lord had not spoken beyond His line, but that what He had promised He was able to perform. It belongs to puny man to speak more than he can do—full often his tongue is longer than his arm—but with the Lord it is never so. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Abraham adoringly believed in the immutability, truth and power of the living God—and looked for the *fulfillment* of His words!

All this strong, unstaggering faith which glorified God rested upon the Lord alone. You will see that it was so by reading the 21st verse. "Being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able, also, to perform." There was nothing whatever in his house, his wife, himself, or anywhere else which could guarantee the fulfillment of the promise. He had only God to look to—*only*, did I say?—What could a man have more? Yet so it was. There were no signs, marks, tokens, or indications to substantiate the confidence of Abraham! He rested solely upon the unlimited power of God! And this, dear Brothers and Sisters, is the kind of faith which God loves and honors—which needs no signs, marks, evidences, helps, or other buttresses to support the plain and sure Word of the Lord—but simply knows that Jehovah has said it and that He will make it good!

Though all things should give the promise the lie, we believe in it because we believe in God. True faith ridicules impossibility and pours contempt upon improbability, knowing that Omnipotence and Immutability cannot be thwarted or hindered. Has God said it? Then so it is! Dictum! Factum! Spoken! Done! These two are one with the Most High! Well, now, the faith of every man who is saved must be of this character. Every man who receives salvation receives it by a faith like that of Abraham, for, my Brothers and Sisters, when we are saved we, too, take the promise of God and depend upon it! To one Believer, one Word of God is applied. To another, some sweet Word, most sure and steadfast, is discovered upon which we fix our hope and find an anchor for our spirit. Yes, and as we search the Word by *faith*—we take each promise as we find it and we say, “*this is true,*” and, “*this is true,*” and so we rest upon all of them!

Is it not so with all of you who have peace with God? Did you not gain it by resting upon the promises of God as you found it in the Word and as it was opened up to you by the Holy Spirit? Have you any other ground of confidence but God’s promise? I know you have not, my Brethren, nor do you desire any! And we, also, believe in God over the head of great difficulties. If it were difficult for Abraham to believe that a son should be born to him, I think it is harder for a poor burdened sinner, conscious of his great guilt—conscious that God must punish him, also, for that *guilt*—to believe, nevertheless, in the hopeful things which the Gospel prophesies unto him!

Can I believe that the righteous God is looking upon *me*, a sinner, with eyes of love? Can I believe that though I have offended Him and broken all His Laws, He, nevertheless, waits to be gracious to *me*? While my heart is heavy and the prospect is black around me and I see nothing but a terrible Hell to be my eternal portion—can I, at such a time, believe that God has planned *my* redemption and given His Son to die for *me*—and that now He invites *me* to come and receive a full, perfect and immediate pardon at His hands? Can the Gospel message be true to such a worthless rebel as I am?

It seems as if the Law and Justice of God set themselves against the truth of such wonderful deeds of mercy as the Gospel announces! And it is hard for a stricken heart to believe the report—but the faith which saves the soul believes the Gospel promise in the teeth of all its alarms and, notwithstanding, all the thunders of the Law! Despite the trepidation of the awakened spirit, the Holy Spirit enables it to accept the great Father’s promise, to rest upon the propitiation which He has set forth and to quiet itself with the firm persuasion that God, for Christ’s sake, does put away its sin.

At the same time another grand miracle is also believed in, namely, *regeneration*. This seems to me to be quite as great an act of faith as for Abraham to believe in the birth of a child by two parents who were both advanced in years. The case stands thus—here am I, *dead* by nature—dead in trespasses and sins. The deadness of Abraham and Sarah, according to nature, was not greater than the deadness of my soul to every

good thing. Is it possible, then, that I should live unto God? That within this stony heart there should yet throb eternal life and Divine Love? That I should come to delight in God? Can it be that with such a depraved and deceitful heart as mine should yet rise to fellowship with the holy God and should call Him my Father and feel the spirit of adoption within my heart?

Can I, who now dread the Lord, yet come to rejoice in Him? “Oh,” says the poor troubled sinner, “can I, that have fought against the Throne of God. I that even tried to doubt His existence—can I ever come to be at perfect peace with Him so that He shall call me His friend and reveal His secrets to me and listen to my voice in prayer? Is it possible?” The faith which saves the soul believes in the possibility of regeneration and sanctification—no, more—it believes in Jesus and obtains for us power to become children of God and strength to conquer sin! This is believing God, indeed!

Look this way, yet again, for here is another difficulty. We know that we must persevere to the end, for only he that endures to the end shall be saved. Does it not seem incredible that such feeble, fickle, foolish creatures as we are should continue in faith and the fear of God all our lives? Yet this we must do! The faith which saves, enables us to believe that we shall persevere, for it is persuaded that the Redeemer is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him, that He will perfect that which concerns us, that He will suffer none to pluck us out of His hands and that having begun the good work in us He will carry it on! This is faith worthy of the father of the faithful!

Once again, let us behold another difficulty for faith. We believe, according to God’s promise, that we shall one day be “without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” I do believe that this head shall wear a crown of glory and that this hand shall wave a palm branch. I am fully assured that He will one day sweetly say to me—

***“Close your eyes that you may see
What I have in store for thee.
Lay your arms of warfare down,
Fall that you may win a crown.”***

We, all, who are Believers in Jesus, shall one day be without fault before the Throne of God! But how is this to be? Surely our confidence is that He who has promised it is able to perform it! This is the faith which finds its way to Glory—the faith which expects to enter into the Redeemer’s joy because of the Redeemer’s love and life!

Brothers and Sisters, in this matter we see the difficulties, but we do not *consider* them—we count them as less than nothing since Omnipotence has come into the field. “Thanks be unto God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We know that our Redeemer lives and that because He lives, we shall, also—live and be with Him where He is! At the end of the chapter we are told that this saving faith rests in the power of God as manifested in Jesus— “If we believe in Him who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.” Beloved, we believe that Jesus died, as certainly died as ever any man died—

and yet on the morning of the third day He rose again from the dead by Divine power.

It is not, to us, an incredible thing that God should raise the dead! We, therefore, believe that because God has raised the dead He has raised us, also, from our death in sin and that He will raise our bodies from the tomb after they shall have slept, awhile, in the earth. We believe, also, that our Lord Jesus died for our offenses and put them away. Our faith builds upon the substitution of the Lord Jesus on our behalf and it rests there with firm confidence. We believe, also, that He rose again because His substitution was accepted and because our offenses were forever put away—rose again to prove that we are justified in Him! This is where we stand! I expect to be saved, not at all because of what I *am*, nor of what I *can do*, nor because of anything I ever shall *be able* to be or to do—but only because God has promised to save those who believe in Jesus Christ through what the Lord Jesus has suffered in their place.

Because Jesus has risen to prove that His suffering was accepted on the behalf of Believers, there do we rest and trust, and that is the way in which every Believer is saved—that way and no way else. Even as Abraham believed, so do we! Here is the fact—it is of faith.

II. Now we come to the second point. Here we are to consider THE FIRST REASON why God has chosen to make salvation by faith, “that it might be of Grace.” Now, dear Friends, the Lord might have willed to make the condition of salvation a mitigated form of works. If He had done so, it would not have been of Grace, for it is a principle which I need not explain now, but a fixed principle, that if the blessing is of Grace it is no more of works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. And if it is of works, it is no more of Grace, otherwise work is no more work.

As water and oil will not mix, and as fire and water will not lie down side by side in quiet, so neither will the principle of merit and the principle of free favor. You cannot make a legal work to be a condition of a gracious blessing without at once introducing an alien element and really bringing the soul under the Covenant of Works and so spoiling the whole plan of mercy! Grace and *faith* are congruous and will draw together in the same chariot, but Grace and *merit* are contrary, the one to the other, and pull opposite ways and, therefore, God has not chosen to yoke them together. He will not build with incongruous materials or daub with untempered mortar. He will not make an image partly of gold and partly of clay, nor weave a linsey-woolsey garment—His work is all of one piece and that one piece is all Grace!

Again, in Abraham’s case, inasmuch as he received, by faith, the blessing which God promised him, it is very evident that it was of Grace. You never heard anyone ascribe Abraham’s salvation to his merits and yet Abraham was an eminently holy man. There are specks in his life—and in whose life will there not be found infirmities?—but he was one of the grandest characters of history. Still, no man thinks of Abraham as a self-justifying person, or as at all related to the Pharisee who said, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men.” I never heard anybody hint that

the great Patriarch had reason to glory before God. His name is not “the father of the innocent,” but, “the father of the faithful.”

When we read of Abraham’s life, we see that God called him by an act of Sovereign Grace, made a Covenant with him as an act of Grace and that the promised child was born—not of the power of the flesh, but entirely according to promise. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life in the life of the Patriarch and it is illustrated in a thousand ways whenever we see his faith receiving the promises! The holiness of Abraham, since it arose out of his faith, never leads us to ascribe his blessedness to anything but the Grace of God!

Now, inasmuch as we are saved by faith, every Believer is made to see in himself that, in his own instance, it is by Grace. Believing is such a self-renouncing act that no man who looks for eternal life thereby ever talked about his own merits except to count them but dross and dung. No, Brothers and Sisters, the child of the promise cannot live in the same house with the son of the bondwoman. When Isaac grows up, Ishmael must depart—the principle of believing unto everlasting life will not endure a hint about human merit. Those who believe in Justification by Faith are the only persons who can believe in salvation by Grace!

The Believer may grow in Grace till he becomes fully assured of his own salvation, yes, and he may become holiness unto the Lord in a very remarkable manner, being wholly consecrated to God in body, soul and spirit. But you will never hear the believing man speak of his experience, or attainments, or achievements as a *reason* for glorying in himself, or as an argument for becoming more confident as to his safety. He dares not trust his works, or states of feeling, for he feels that he stands by *faith*. He cannot get away from simple *faith*, for the moment he attempts to do so, he feels the ground going from under him and he begins to sink into horrible confusion of spirit. Therefore he returns to his rest and resolves to abide in faith in his risen Savior, for there he abides in the Grace of God.

Through the prominence given to faith, the Truth of God of salvation by Grace is so conspicuously revealed that even the outside world is compelled to see it, though the only result may be to make them raise trivial objections. They charge us with preaching too much concerning Grace because they hear us magnifying and extolling the plan of salvation by *faith*. They readily perceive that a gift promised to faith must be a gift of Grace and not a *reward* for services done. Only begin to preach salvation by works or ceremonies and nobody will accuse you of saying too much of Grace! But keep to faith and you are sure to keep to the preaching of Grace!

Moreover, faith never did clash with Grace. When the sinner comes and trusts Christ and Christ says to him, “I forgive you freely by My Grace,” Faith says, “O Lord, that is what I need and what I believe in. I ask You to deal with me even so.” “But if I give you everlasting life, it will not be because you deserve it, but for My own name’s sake.” Faith replies, “O Lord, that, also, is precisely as I desire! It is the sum and substance of my prayer.” When Faith grows strong and takes to pleading in prayer (and oh

how mighty she is with God in supplication, moving His Omnipotence to her mind), yet all her pleadings are based on Grace—none of them upon the merit of the creature! Never yet did Faith borrow weapons from Mount Sinai! Never once did she ask as though the favor were a debt, but she always holds to the promise of the gracious God and expects all things from the faithfulness of her God.

Yes, and when Faith grows strongest and attains to her highest stature and is most full of delight, so that she dances for very joy, yet she never, in all her exultation, boasts or exalts herself! Where is boasting, then? It is excluded! By the Law of works? No, but by the Law of *faith*! Faith and carnal boasting never yet walked together! If a man should boast of the strength of his faith, it would be clear evidence that he had none at all, or at least that he had, for the time, fallen into vainglorious presumption. Boasting? No, Faith loves to lie low and behave herself as a little child. And when she lifts herself up, it is to exalt her Lord, and her Lord, alone.

Faith, too, is well calculated to show forth the Grace of God, because Faith is the child of Grace. “Ah,” says Faith, “I have grasped the Covenant. I have laid hold on the promises, I have seen Christ, I have gazed into Heaven, I have enjoyed foretastes of eternal joys! But (she says) I am of the operation of God—I would never have existed if the Spirit of God had not created me!” The Believer knows that his faith is not a weed suitable to the soil of his heart, but a rare plant—an exotic which has been *planted* there by Divine Wisdom—and he knows, too, that if the Lord does not nourish it, his faith will die like a withered flower.

He knows that his faith is a perpetual *miracle*, for it is begotten, sustained and preserved by a power not less mighty than that which raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead! If I met with an angel in a hovel I should know that he was not born there, but that he came from above. And so is it with faith—its heavenly descent is manifest to all! Faith, then, tracing her very existence to Grace, never can be anything but the friend, the vindicator, the advocate and the glorifier of the Grace of God—therefore it is of faith that it might be by Grace!

III. Now, thirdly, there is A FURTHER REASON for faith and Grace being the Lord’s chosen method of salvation—“To the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.” Look at this, dear Friends, very carefully. Salvation was made to be of faith and not of works that the promise might be sure to all the seed, for first, it could not have been sure to us Gentiles by the Law, because in a certain sense we were not under the Law of Moses at all. Turn to the text and you find that it runs thus—“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.”

That is to say, the Jew, receiving the seal of circumcision and coming under the ceremonial Law, eating its Passover and presenting its sacrifices, might possibly have been reached by a legal method. But we who are Gentiles would have been altogether shut out. As to the Covenant according to the flesh, we are aliens and have never come under its bonds or participated in its privileges and, therefore, Grace chooses to bless us by

faith in order that the Gentile may partake of the blessing of the Covenant as well as the Jew.

But there is a still wider reason—it is of faith because the other method has failed, already, in every case. We have all broken the Law and so have put ourselves beyond the power of ever receiving blessing as a reward of merit. Failure at the outset has ruined our future prospects—and from now on—by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified. What remains, then, if we are to be saved at all, but that it should be of faith? This door, alone, is open! Let us bless God that no man can shut it!

Again, it is of faith that it might be sure. Now, under the system of works nothing is sure. Suppose, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you were under a Covenant of salvation by *works* and you had fulfilled those works up till now, yet you would not be sure. Are you 70 years of age and have you kept your standing till now? Well, you have done a great deal more than father Adam did, for though he was a *perfect* man without any natural corruption, I do not suppose that he kept his first estate for a *day*. But after all you have done for these long years you may lose everything before you have finished your next meal! If your standing depends upon your own works, you are not safe and can never be safe till you are out of this present life, for you might sin and that *one* offense against the conditions would destroy the Covenant!

“When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall even die thereby.” But see the excellence of salvation by Grace—when you reach the ground of faith in the promises, you are upon terra firma and your soul is no longer in jeopardy. Here is a sure foundation, for the Divine promise cannot fail! If my salvation depends upon the Lord and is received by me on the ground that the Lord has decreed it, promised it in Covenant and ensured it to me by the blood of Jesus Christ, then it is so mine that neither life nor death nor Satan nor the world shall ever rob me of it! If I live to the age of Methuselah, my faith will have the same promises to rest upon—and clinging there she will defy the lapse of years to change her immutable security.

The promise would not be sure to *one* of the seed by any other means than that of Grace through faith, but now it is sure to all the seed. Moreover, if the promise had been made to works, there are some of the seed to whom, most evidently, it never could come. One of the seed of Abraham hung dying upon a cross and within an hour or two his bones were broken that he might the more quickly die and be buried. Now, if salvation to that poor dying thief must come by *works*, how can he be saved? His hands and feet are fastened up and he is in the very grip of Death—what can *he* do? The promise would not have been sure to him, my Brothers and Sisters, if there had been any active condition! But he *believed*, cast a saving eye upon the Lord Jesus and said, “Lord, remember me,” and the promise was most sure to him, for the answer was—“Today shall you be with Me in Paradise”!

Many a chosen one of God is brought into such a condition that nothing is possible to him except faith, but Grace has made the act of believing

divinely possible. Well was it for those bitten by serpents that all that was asked of them was a *look*, for this was possible even when the hot venom made the blood boil and scalded all the frame with fever! Faith is possible to the blind, the lame, the deaf, the dumb! Faith is possible to the almost-idiot, the desponding and the guilty! Faith can be possessed by babes and by the extremely aged, by the illiterate as well as by the instructed! It is well chosen as the cup to convey the living water, for it is not too heavy for the weak, nor too huge for the little, nor too small for the full-grown.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, I have done when I have said just this. I will ask you who have believed in Christ, one question—you who are resting in the promise of God, you who are depending upon the finished work of Him who was delivered for your offenses—how do you feel? Are you rejoicing in your unquestionable safety? As I have turned this matter over and thought upon it, my soul has dwelt in perfect peace! I cannot conceive anything that God Himself could give to the Believer which would make him more safe than the work of Christ has made him. God cannot lie! Are you not sure of this? He must keep His promises! Are you not certain of this? What more do you need? As a little child believes its father's words without any question, even so should we rest on the bare, naked promise of Jehovah! And in so doing we become conscious of a peace that passes all understanding, which keeps our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus.

I dare not say otherwise, nor be silent, for I am conscious of being able to say—"therefore being justified by faith, I have peace with God." In that place of the soul, much love springs up and inward unity to God and conformity to Christ. Faith believes her God and trusts Him for time and eternity, for little things and great things, for body and for soul and this leads on to still higher results! O blessed God, what a union of desire, heart and aim exists between You and the soul that trusts You! How are we brought into harmony with Your mind and purposes! How is our heart made to delight in You! How completely is our soul "bound up in the bundle of life with the soul of the Lord our God"!

We grow up into Him in all things who is our Head, our Life, our All. I charge you, dear children of God, "as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." Live in His peace and abound in it more and more. Do not be afraid of being too peaceful, "rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." When you have to condemn yourself for shortcomings, yet do not question the promises of the Lord! When sin overcomes you, confess the fault, but do not doubt the pardon which Jesus still gives you! When sharp temptations and severe trials arise from different quarters, do not suffer them to carry you by storm—let not the stronghold and castle of your spirit be captured—"let not your heart be troubled." Stagger not at the promise through unbelief, but hold to it whether you walk in the sunshine or in Egyptian darkness. That which the Lord has promised He is able, also, to perform. Do not doubt it! Lean hard on the faithful promise and when you feel sad at heart, lean harder and harder still, for, "faithful is He that has promised, who, also, will do it."

Last of all, you sinners here this morning who have heard all about this salvation by trusting—I charge you do not rest till you have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ and rested in the great promises of God. Here is one—“I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more forever.” Here is another which is very cheering—“Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Call upon Him in prayer and then say, “Lord, I have called, and You have said I shall be saved.” Here is another gracious word—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Attend you to these two commands and then say, “Lord, I have Your Word for it that I shall be saved, and I hold You to it.” Believe God, Sinner!

Oh that He would give you Grace this morning, by His Holy Spirit, to say, “How can I do otherwise than believe Him? I dare not doubt Him.” O poor tried Soul, believe in Jesus so as to trust your guilty soul with Him. The more guilty you feel yourself to be, the more is it in your power to glorify God by believing that He can forgive and renew such a guilty one as you are! If you lie buried like a fossil in the lowest stratum of sin, yet He can quarry for you and fetch you up out of the horrible pit—and make your dry, petrified heart live! Do you believe this? “If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes.”

Trust the promise that He makes to every Believer that He will save him! Hold to it, for it is not a vain thing! It is your life! “But what if I obtain no joy or peace?” Still, believe the promise, and joy and peace will come. “But what if I see no signs?” Ask for no signs! Be willing to trust God’s Word without any other guarantee but His truthful Character and you will thus give Him glory. “Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.” Believe that Jehovah cannot lie and as He has promised to forgive all who believe in Jesus, hang on to that Word and you shall be saved!

Sinners, I have set before you the way of salvation as simply as I can, will you have it or not? May the Spirit of God sweetly lead you to say, “Have it? Yes, that I will.” Then go in peace and rejoice from now on and forever! God bless you. Amen.

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THE HOLDFASTS OF FAITH

NO. 2159

**The preacher begs the reader, before perusing the sermon,
to read the two portions
of Scripture which were used in the public service—
*Genesis 15:1-6 and Romans 4.***

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 17, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations,) before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickens the dead, and calls those things which are not as though they were.”
Romans 4:16, 17.***

ABRAHAM had received an assurance from the Lord that he was to be the father of many nations. His faith in this promise underwent great trials. Where there is the sweet honey of promise, there the wasps of doubt will be gathered together. A promise calls for faith, but through our natural depravity it awakens unbelief and there is a struggle around the sacred promise such as that represented in the prayer, “Lord, I believe: help You my unbelief.” Satan, with slimy flattery, decoys men into a belief of his lie, but the God of Truth gives us His bare promise and bids us believe it—and when questions suggest themselves He does not relax His claim but bids us still believe.

True faith, as the work of God, is not a thing to be put down—it is a conquering Grace and makes a brave fight against wicked unbelief. While doing so, Faith has her eyes open and she, in due season, spies out grounds of confidence. She looks at God Himself. She considers the days of old. She remembers her own experience at the right hand of the Host on High and thus she lifts her eyes to the hills from where comes her help. When Faith has discovered a helpful Truth of God she makes immediate use of it as a holdfast, even as Abraham did in the case now before us.

The great difficulty with Abraham was *death*. Death was around him on every side. God had promised him life and life more abundantly, for he was to be the father of many nations and have a seed as many as the stars of Heaven for multitude. But as to all possibility of his being a father, his body was now dead. He was 100 years old and withered with age—how could he become a father of nations? Sarah, also, as to being a mother, was practically dead for she was 90 years old. How should she bear sons unto Abraham?

Further on the Lord bade him, when Isaac was miraculously born, to offer him as a sacrifice and Abraham was willing to do even that at God's command. He believed that in Isaac should his seed be called and there-

fore he looked that God should “raise him up, even from the dead; from where also he received him in a figure.” The Patriarch’s faith settled down upon *God’s power to quicken the dead* and he found in that unquestioned Truth a foundation for the firmest confidence. The Truth of God’s power to quicken the dead met all the difficulties of Abraham’s position. He argued—“What if my body is dead? God can quicken it. What if my wife is, in this matter, as one dead? By God’s power she can receive strength. What if my son, when growing up, should be dead on the altar? He that made me the promise can raise him up from the dead, for what He has promised He is able to perform.” Abraham’s faith was a nail fastened in a sure place. He knew Jehovah as “God, who quickens the dead” and that resurrection word was, to his faith, a shout of victory!

Abraham had a second holdfast in *the creating power of God*. The Lord had spoken to him concerning his seed as though it existed and had said, “I have made you a father of many nations.” As though these nations were already born, He had changed his name from Abram to Abraham, which means “father of a multitude.” Yet, when he entered his tent, no child fondly climbed his knee, no babe smiled from the arms of Sarah! “To me You have given no seed,” was the humble statement of the believing Patriarch. He felt that Jehovah could call forth from non-existence a people as many as the stars of Heaven, for He had said, “so shall your seed be.”

You know what it is to call a servant. You say, “Mary,” and there she is. You have called one who is and she appears at your call. But God calls the things that are not as though they were, and lo, they appear at His bidding! He says, “Light be,” and light was. He says, “Let there be a firmament,” and the blue sky overarches the whole earth. When He calls for fish or fowl, for plant or beast, they answer to the call. So Abraham argues—“If God calls for descendants for me, they will come. Though there are no signs of my being a father and, speaking after the flesh, it is impossible, yet God, who calls everything out of nothing, can call for a numerous progeny for me and that progeny will come.” Thus, you see, in the hour of trial, Abraham’s faith fell back upon the two facts of resurrection and creation and there it rested in peace.

I desire, at this time, without wisdom of words, in great simplicity to teach this one lesson. It is a very plain lesson, but if it is well learned it will be a well of strength and solace to you. God raises the dead, and creates out of nothing—and therefore He can carry out the promises of His Gospel. Get this worked into your own souls and you will be strong in faith. Once strong in faith you are strong everywhere, for as a man’s faith is, so is he. If your faith shall learn to stay herself upon eternal principles and find her rest in the Omnipotence of God, you will become like Abraham, a prince among men—and this service will bring you a life-long blessing.

Before I plunge into the sermon, let me speak a word to anxious men and women who are not yet saved, but who long to be partakers of life in Christ Jesus our Lord. You are in a conflict of soul just now. The Lord has set before you the promise, “He that believes on the Son has everlasting

life.” This you would gladly believe but you are staggered by the greatness of the mercy. How is God able to justify the ungodly? How can He have fellowship with *you*, for you are defiled with sin? You seem to yourself to have been such a monster of unbelief and enmity against God that you can never be put among the children.

“How can these things be?” is the inquiry of your trembling spirit. Can a lion become a lamb? Can a sinner be turned into a saint? Can the leopard lie down with the kid? Can a rebel become a companion of those who fear the Lord? Can a man who merits the fiercest wrath of God yet live in His love and delight himself in His favor? Is it not beyond belief that one steeped in evil should, at last, be found without fault before the Throne of God? God promises eternal life to all who believe on His Son Jesus, but how can it be fulfilled? Here is the struggle. I want you, dear Friend, before I go fully into my subject, to pick up at once the thread of it and say, “I see where the preacher is driving. He wants me to believe that God can do anything which He has promised to do, seeing that He can raise the dead and call the things that are not as though they were.”

Get this one thought into your mind and I hope it will be a help to you in the hour of conflict between faith and feeling. First, let me try and show *the time for the exercise of such a faith*, or, when shall we rest on resurrection and creation? Secondly, let us look upon *the basis of this faith*. And then, thirdly, let us sum up *the outcome of such a faith*. If we really get such a faith, it will be fruitful in abundant blessing.

I. THE TIME FOR SUCH A FAITH AS THIS. To believe God unstaggeringly in the teeth of appearances—when is the best time for this? This duty is not at its best when all goes well with us, for when we walk by *sight* we scarcely walk by faith! When the soul is full of joy there is wide space for gratitude, but narrower room for faith. “What a man sees, what does he yet hope for?” The light of fleeting day is not for perceptions which deal with eternity—faith’s hour of prime is midnight. Even a horror of great darkness affords her a better opportunity for communion with the Covenant God.

Faith beholds her visions in the night—she needs not earthly light. A blind man loses nothing by the set of sun and faith loses nothing by the removal of outward evidences. Faith has worked many of her greatest deeds in hours which seemed least suitable for her undertakings. Like David’s hero, she slays her lion in the pit in the time of snow. Like Jacob, she wrestles with the angel and wins the victory when night has fallen on all the world. Sunshine-faith comes and goes—true faith stands sentry at all hours! Fair-weather faith is poor stuff—give me winter-faith which has warmth within it when the blasts from the north freeze flesh and blood even to the bone!

First, *as to trusting God on account of the resurrection*, we shall find it greatly in season *when our soul is at first made to feel its spiritual death*. I am addressing some who mournfully cry, “How can I be saved? I am as dead as the earth I stand upon. I feel nothing—

I hear, but seem to hear in vain,

Insensible as steel;

***If anything is felt, 'tis only pain
To find I cannot feel.'***

“My heart is as iron hardened in the forges of Hell. I am without God and without hope—and yet I do not mourn over my sin, nor feel my awful position as I ought to do. I fear I am dead in trespasses and sins and I ask with the Prophet, ‘Can these dry bones live?’”

Now is a special time, poor Sinner, for believing in God that quickens the dead. NOW is your choice opportunity for testing the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus, who said, “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” God can keep His promise of Grace to you, even to you, if you believe, for He quickens the dead. You believe that all the dead shall rise at the last day—can you not believe that, though you are spiritually dead, God can quicken you? Can you not believe in the power of the Lord to carry out His Word? If resurrection has been worked by Him, all things are possible with Him. If you are as a dead man—as stiff and cold to heavenly things as though you were a corpse—yet God can quicken you into newness of life.

Is not this plain enough? Do you believe this? If you can believe it, you are on the way to salvation! If you can trust God in Christ to make you live, man, you live! The very fact that you trust in Christ Jesus for eternal life proves that you *have* eternal life! Jesus said, “He that believes in Me has everlasting life.” Even now, while conscious of so much death, believe in God who quickens the dead!

Next, there is another notable occasion for faith—when the child of God is *in apprehension of death through soul trouble*. He is crying like David in the 88th Psalm, “My soul is full of troubles and my life draws near unto the grave.” Though not absolutely dead as to spiritual things, yet the little life which remains is weak, faint, slumbering and lethargic. I think I hear you cry, “I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that has no strength: free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom You remember no more: and they are cut off from Your hand.” Now is the season to glorify God by believing the promise!

You have the sentence of death in yourself so that you may not trust in yourself but in the Lord alone. Your old sins rise up and accuse you—your present evil tendencies, like a rotting body of death, surround you—you find no comfort or joy in life. It seems as though God has given you up and left you to perish. Though once you rejoiced before Him, you are forced to sigh as one forsaken of his God, shut up for destruction. Now, even now, you are on a vantage-ground for glorifying the Lord by faith. It may be that at this time you enjoy nothing when you go up to religious services. And in reading or praying at home the chill of death makes every godly exercise a burden. You are so harassed with fears, so worried with cares, so tortured with regrets and so tried with temptations that you are forced to cry, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Come, my Brother. Come, my Sister, look to the Strong for strength! You can do nothing, it is clear—therefore cast yourself on Him who is able

to quicken the dead! Is there not foothold here? To you, even to you, though you are moaning out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" to you, I say, comes this brave hope, "The Lord is risen, indeed," and he that believes in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live! Believe that promise, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." And that other, "I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Surely, if you remember that God quickens the dead, you can believe that He will preserve your soul when heart and flesh fail you!

To another character is a like opportunity offered. *When death threatens to reach us through temporal trouble*, then may we believe in Him that quickens the dead. It may be that the arrows of death have slain your dearest and best and, at the same time, you have suffered crushing losses in business, sickness of body and crosses in your family circle. You think you could truly say with David, "All Your waves and Your billows have gone over me." If God does not soon interfere, you will either be dead, or worse than dead. You cry, "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up." Listen, my Brothers and Sisters, listen hopefully!

You believe that the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised! Surely, He that can raise the myriads of the dead can deliver you out of your killing troubles. He can bring you through the valley of the shadow of death and give you beauty for ashes. I know He can, and so do you! Doubt no longer, but rest in the life-giving God and He will deliver you. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all"—and so He will deliver you. One more case occurs to me. This is a very sad one to my own heart. *When death crushes down the Church* and there seems no sign of revival, then should we believe in the God of Resurrection. The carnal man cares nothing for the condition of the Church of God, but the spiritual man takes pleasure in her stones and favors the dust thereof.

Some of us would sooner suffer personal calamity than see the cause of God and Truth in a low condition. It may be that in the Church of which you are a member you pine under a blight. Little prayer, no Christian fellowship, very few conversions, very little desire to win souls—your heart sinks within you, for death is all around! You look abroad and there is the same state of things. We are sweltering in false doctrine and suffocating in worldliness! In many quarters, religion itself seems dead and buried beneath a mound of rubbishing entertainments. What then? Where shall we turn for comfort? There are a few good, faithful men left, but it will be vain to trust in *them*—what can they do?

We resolve to hold fast by the faith, ourselves, but we dare not trust to resolves for a witchery is abroad which would fascinate the very elect. Here is our mainstay—God is able to quicken the dead! Of the stones of Jordan's river, He is able to raise up children unto Abraham! The Lord God is able, from the slums and dens of London, to call a people that shall maintain His Truth! God that quickens the dead can either work the seven-fold miracle of arousing His dead Church and making it a power to

bless the world or He can set existing Churches on one side and call them a people that were not a people, and her Beloved that was not Beloved. Have faith in God that quickens the dead that none of His promises or purposes will fall to the ground!

I turn now to the other ground of Abraham's hope. He had no child and yet God tells him that he shall have a seed as numerous as the stars of Heaven! How is the man of God to believe this? *His second holdfast is the creating power of God*—He calls the things which are not as though they were. He can create as well as quicken. When can we use this fact as a reason for faith? Friend, look to this *when necessary Graces are lacking in your heart*. Though you cannot find one of the saving Graces within your soul, yet believe in the promise of the Lord. What if within your bosom at present there seems to be neither repentance, nor faith, nor hope, nor love?—the Lord can create them all within you! He can call the things that are not and they will appear.

Those of us who carry about with us a body of flesh and blood are sometimes horribly cast down. When we look within, even by the candle of the Word, there are times when we cannot find in our own souls anything which we would wish to find—peace has fled, love is languishing, holiness is grieving, joy is banished—we are not fruitful, nor useful, nor happy. And yet we cannot give up our faith—we would gladly have it strengthened. Then let us believe in Him who makes all things new. He will create in us the new heart, the right spirit and call out Graces which are not ours as yet. “Well,” cries a child of God, “I think I can find faith and a little love, but what shall I do *when joy and peace are gone?* I have lost the rest I once enjoyed. I cannot sing as once I did when I thought I could out-sing the seraphim because my indebtedness to infinite love was greater than theirs.”

Ah, well, dear Friend! God can create joy and peace and put them in your soul as new gifts from Heaven, for He “calls those things which are not as though they were.” Believe for faith, believe for hope, believe for peace, believe for joy! These Graces are set upon lower Graces—“Grace for Grace.” You rise not on stepping stones of your dead selves, but on the ladder of the creating God who has said, “I create the fruit of the lips. Peace, peace to him that is far off and to him that is near, says the Lord, and I will heal him.”

I spoke just now in reference to temporal troubles—there is a grand platform for faith *when no help is visible*. When you cannot see any friend who will assist you, nor any way in which you can help yourself, then trust in the Creator who can make a way. Our friends, like swallows, soon quit us when our summer is over, but God's promise is not dependent upon man's faithfulness. We do not see how we can be delivered, but then the Lord's way is in the sea and His footsteps are not known. My dear Friend, do you not believe in God, your Maker, who calls things that are not as though they were? He can deliver you by means unknown to yourself! Lean hard upon the creating arm. Trust in God, though the fig trees do not blossom, though there are no cattle in the stall, nor flock in the

fold, nor corn in the barn. Trust in the promise, “You shall dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” The Lord that made Heaven and earth can set bread on your table and put clothes on your back.

Once again let me speak of *the Church in evil days*. Let us trust the Creator concerning His new creation. You bemoan yourself because you are not clothed with power from on high to bring sinners to Jesus. When you get into your class you feel yourself to be as a dry tree and not as Aaron’s rod, which budded and brought forth almonds. If you preach, you feel unfit for the hallowed employ. What is worse, the same weakness is almost everywhere. Few seem raised up to preach with power and to lead on the hosts of God to victory. This is very sad—but suppose death is everywhere—death in the pew, death in the pulpit, death among the prophets and death among the people? The Lord, who calls things that are not as though they were, has but to give the word and great will be the company of them that publish it! Our royal Leader has hidden forces at His command!

Sir Walter Scott speaks of the highland chieftain, in the lone glen, who gave his shrill whistle and straightway an army arose where none had been seen before—

***“From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken-bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warriors armed for strife.”***

Thus can our Lord garrison His Church in a moment! In her desolation He can people her with such multitudes that she shall ask, “Who has begotten me these?” The Lord can send martyrs if they are needed, confessors, preachers, writers and consecrated men and women of every sort. Let us have no timorous thoughts, but let us glorify God by firm faith.

Thus have I set before you the fact that our times of deadness and discontent are grand seasons for believing in Him that quickens the dead and calls all things into being.

II. Secondly, we will observe upon how these things are manifest to us—resurrection and creation. We shall speak of THE BASIS OF THIS FAITH. If our faith is to be based on resurrection, what do we know about it? Paul seems to pass over every other resurrection and to dwell only upon *the resurrection of our Lord*. See the closing verses of this chapter—“If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification.”

Brothers and Sisters, you believe that our Lord was crucified, pierced to the heart, dead and buried. A stone was rolled to the mouth of the grave and that stone was sealed and guarded lest the body should be stolen—but yet He rose from the dead. It gladdens my heart to hear a great multitude sing—

***“Death cannot keep his prey—Jesus, my Savior!
He tore the bars away—Jesus, my Lord!
Up from the grave He arose,***

***With a mighty triumph o'er His foes He arose a
Victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"***

Realize that Resurrection more and more, for *there* lies your hope. Hear this! Our Lord “was delivered for our offenses.” God gave Him up to justice as if He had said, “Take Him away: I have laid on Him the transgressions of My people—take Him to the place of chastisement. Condemn Him, scourge Him, crucify Him, for He is made a curse for My people. I have delivered Him up, I have left Him and forsaken Him.”

See the soldiers lead Him through the streets of Jerusalem! Look, they fasten His hands and feet with nails to the cruel Cross! Behold Him lifted up to die in extreme agony! He dies—they take down those precious limbs, wrap them in white linen and place them in the sepulcher. He is delivered unto the grave for our offenses. There went all my sin and the sins of all Believers—He made an end of sin in His death. The wrath of God was spent upon Him for those sins which were made to meet in the Person of the Well-Beloved and now those sins are gone forever. How do we know? We know that it is so because our Surety is set free! To meet our debt He was put in prison. When He paid the debt, He would be liberated, but not till then. When He was raised again it was because our justification was accomplished. A public declaration was given that the debt was discharged and the everlasting righteousness was brought in.

Right well do we sing—

***“He bore on the tree the sentence for me,
And now both the Surety and sinner are free.”***

If Christ is raised from the dead, Believers are no more guilty before God for their guilt must have been put away, or else their Representative would not have risen! If God has let our Representative and Substitute go, we are free! What a glorious Rock this is! Cannot you get upon it—the Resurrection of your blessed Lord? This is a fact proved beyond any other fact in history and means this to us—He has completed the work by which His people are saved. Hallelujah!—

***“If Jesus had not paid the debt
He ne'er had been at freedom set”***

but in the prison of the grave He would have been incarcerated to this hour. God, who has raised His Son and thereby set free His people, may well be trusted to fulfill every promise.

To this I add that we know that all the dead will rise and surely on this ground we may rest in the Almighty God. We have seen others spiritually quickened and made to live unto God, yes, more, in the case of many of us, we, who were dead in trespasses and sins, have been quickened and therefore, knowing of a surety that God quickens the dead, we are persuaded that what He has promised He is able to perform. We are eternally secure in a risen Savior because all the promises are in Him are yes and amen—and the fact of His rising proves that He can do all things for us.

If you desire another basis for your faith—and we hardly think you do—there is *Creation*. If you wish to strengthen your faith, behold *Creation*

and you have not far to go—your own body is full of wonders. See the fields with their ripe harvest! Wander in the woods and forests—mark the hills and valleys, the rippling brooks and flowing streams and the wide expansive ocean. Look up to the sun, the clouds, the sky. Go out at night and watch the moon and stars. Who made all these? Who leads them out in their order? Who built the pillarless arch which covers all things? Who created everything, from the tiniest atom up to the greatest world? Who but God?

Surely He that made all these can make me a new creature in Christ Jesus! He that made all these things can make me meet to be a partaker with the saints in light! If He chooses to be a Potter, as He does, He can make me revolve upon His wheel and with every touch of His finger He can impart beauty to me till He has made me symmetrical in holiness and fit for the Master's use. We, seeing the works of His hand all around us, ought to believe in Him without a doubt. Mungo Park, the African traveler, lost his way in the wilds and then and there was cheered by viewing a tiny moss and marking its singular beauty. He saw the finger of God in that small object and felt sure that the great God would take care of him.

So may *we* be taught faith by every created thing—the Creator can do all things. When you have looked at creation, remember Providence, which is a prolongation of the creative act. The power which made all things upholds them. The Lord keeps them in their places or they could not remain. They tell us nowadays that the universe stands because of law. Is there any power about a mere law? No, my Friends—law requires the almighty power of the living God! Nowadays, philosophers are quick to claim for men freedom of action—and the Lord, who *made* man, is spoken of as if He were no free agent but the mere slave of laws. Everybody is now to be a free agent except the living God! Is this philosophy? Is this reason? Is God the captive of His own laws? I know no such God!

He does all things. Natural laws are but the summary of God's usual way of working—but the laws neither hinder God in anything, nor perform anything as of themselves. He Himself causes everything to abide, or to change, as seems good to Him. As you see everything upheld by the word of His power, surely you have good ground for believing in His power to keep His promise to you! Meanwhile, a creation work of Grace is going on around you. If you do not feel it in yourself, my Brothers and Sisters, you can soon see it in others. Speak to the people of God and they will tell you—and to new converts and they will *show* you. The story of what Free Grace has done is ever telling, yet untold.

One will tell you, "I was a drunkard and the Lord converted me." Another will confess, "My feet had almost gone, but the Lord preserved me." Another will declare, "I was in the furnace and the Son of Man walked in the fire with me." Another will testify, "I was brought low and He helped me." You will have abundant evidence that Grace-Creation is going on continually and that God is working great wonders in the midst of His people! Be of good courage and put your trust in the God of the new Creation. I wish the Grace of God would bring every one of you as far as we

have now come, namely, to believe that He who raises the dead and creates out of nothing, can do for us what we need. We have an Almighty God to deal with—and His Grace is linked with His Omnipotence—and His love is as large as His power.

I want you to trust Him. Oh, if you have never done so, do it now! God help you! If you are holding on to anything but God in Christ Jesus, let it go—let it go at once! You will not get hurt by falling into the unseen arms. I have heard of one who, wandering in the night, came to what he thought to be an awful precipice, and as he was about to fall, in sheer desperation he caught the root of a tree and held there for dear life. His arms were weary. His hands were ready to fail him, but he held on with a death-grip. At last he was obliged to give up his hold and when he had done so, down he fell—and you expect me to add that he was dashed to pieces. No, he only fell a few inches upon a soft bed of moss, for he was not near a precipice after all!

When you let go all other trusts, you think it an awful thing to fall into your Savior's arms, but it is not so—it is not a dangerous venture, but a wise reliance. If faith falls, she falls upon the bosom of her God. If you trust Him who loved you unto death, you are safe and happy. Give up all earthly confidence, all human hope—and repose in Jesus Crucified and you shall find rest unto your souls.

III. But now, let us review THE OUTCOME OF THIS FAITH. May we all see the same results in ourselves through the Holy Spirit! Abraham believed and *looked at things from God's standpoint*. "As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations, before Him whom he believed, even God." Abraham looked at the promise as Abraham and he could not see how it could be. He had no child and his wife was old. But God calls him by the name which signified "Father of a multitude," because He viewed him as such. And the Lord talked to him about his household after him—about their number—and about their being strangers in a strange land. To God's foreseeing eye, Abraham was what he was to become—He calls the things that are not as though they were.

Now, faith has the wonderful property of becoming like the God in whom it trusts and of looking at things as God sees them. How I wish, my dear, tried Brothers and Sisters, you could see your troubles as God sees them—namely, as means to your advancement in Divine Grace! Look at affliction today as a process that is enriching you! Sinner, when you believe in Jesus, God looks at you as saved, justified, forgiven and quickened into eternal life! If you believe in Jesus, see yourself as God sees you. It is a great thing for a sinner, dead in himself, to say, "And yet I live." But assuredly he may say it! It is a great thing for one consciously guilty to say, "And yet I am justified." Still, it is true and it is no presumption to believe it! Oh, this is a grand art, to look at things from God's point of view!

Faith takes the Omnipotence of God and girds herself with His almighty power—and then she takes the foresight of God and though it does not yet appear what we shall be—Faith perceives that in Christ, the poor, trembling and guilty soul is made pure, spotless and glorious before God! Be-

liever in Jesus, know yourself to be what the Gospel says you are and hold on to that knowledge! However desperate the tug may be, never let go your conviction that God's view of you in Christ is the true one. God sees the truth of things and teaches faith to see the same. Justification by faith is no fiction—it is a fact that the Believer is just, is saved, is complete in Christ Jesus! God give us to see this fact even as He sees it, and then, being justified by faith, we may have peace with God.

Next, you see that Abraham *considered his body now dead*. Our Authorized Version runs thus—"He considered not his own body now dead." The Revised Version has—"He considered his own body now as good as dead." It is a curious fact that among the ancient manuscripts there are two readings of almost equal value—one with the "not," and one without it. I think both mean the same thing. You say, "How is that?" He considered his own body to be dead, but he did not make any consideration of that fact, but believed in God all the same. He considered it so far as to be fully aware of it, but he did not consider it so as to raise a question about the fulfillment of the promise. He considered it to be true that he was past having a son in the strength of Nature, but he considered that he should have a son through the power of the promise. God could work out His purpose as well with Abraham and Sarah in old age as in their youth.

O poor seeking Soul, listen to this! Know yourself to be spiritually dead! Think as badly of yourself as ever you like, for you are *worse* than you think you are, but after you have considered the fearful fact of your lost estate, do not go on to consider it as any hindrance to God in the work of His Grace. Jesus is able to save you over the head of all your death, guilt and corruption. If you have been a thief, a Sabbath-breaker, a liar, a swearer, a murderer—He can forgive you! And if today you feel so dead that you can do nothing towards your own salvation, yet if you will believe His promise, He that can raise the dead can save you from the guilt and power of sin! Do not consider your helpless state to be any barrier to Free Grace, for the love of God will triumph over all your loathsomeness and death!

Abraham, as the outcome of his faith, *obeyed God in all things*—a very essential point, this. Believing God, he left his estates in Ur of the Chaldees and came to Canaan to live in tents and wander about like a gypsy, that he might dwell where the Lord had called him to sojourn alone—a stranger in a strange land. If you believe the promise of the Gospel, you will come out from the world. You will come out from sin and you will become one of those strangers who follow Jesus where ever He goes. God will be your Leader. Christ will be your Commander. And though *in* the world, you will not be *of* the world. All true Believers, like Abraham, obey. Obedience is faith in action. You are to walk in the steps of the faith of father Abraham. His faith did not sit still—it took steps—and you must take these steps, also, by obeying God because you believe Him. That faith which has no works with it is a dead faith and will justify no one. How should a dead thing justify? Faith, knowing a thing to be true, acts upon that truth and is thus itself justified, or proved to be justly called *faith*.

And then the result was that *Abraham enjoyed the promise*. I have often thought of the old man laughing at the thought of the birth of a son to him in his 100th year. Two people may do the same thing and in the one it may be right, and in the other it may be wrong. Sarah laughed because she thought it absurd and could not *believe* it. But Abraham laughed because he *did* believe it and realized it. He knew it would be so and he began to laugh with joy and gladness! Oh, for more of such laughing! He believed himself to be the father of many nations and the old man laughed, and laughed again! It seemed such a fountain of happiness to him. If you believe, you will laugh, too.

We have too much crying among us. Oh, for a little more filling of the mouth with laughter and the tongue with singing, for the Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad! It is not a fiction, it is a fact. The Lord has given us eternal life in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us laugh and laugh again, for an unutterable joy of heart floods our spirit! Bunyan pictures Christiana as saying to Mercy, "What was the matter that you did laugh in your sleep tonight?" And Mercy said, "But are you sure I laughed?" When she told her dream, Christiana said, "Laugh, yes, well you might to see yourself so well." She laughed because she dreamed she had been welcomed into Glory. To faith this is no dream. We have had many dreams of this sort and we know that we are saved by Grace, adopted of the Father, united to the Son, indwelt by the Holy Spirit—visions most true—and these have made us laugh with an inward, inexpressible delight! The more steadfastly we believe, the more of this rapturous joy we shall experience.

Best of all, because of this, *Abraham was accounted righteous*. And who accounted him righteous? Well, not the sons of men—they knew him as righteous only by his outward character. God accounted him righteous because he had faith! The moment you believe in his risen Son, God counts you righteous and as you keep on believing, God accounts you righteous. "Oh, but I am a poor, imperfect creature!" God counts you righteous. "I strive after holiness, but I am not what I want to be." God counts you righteous. God never makes mistakes. He never miscounts. If He counts a man righteous, that man is righteous, depend upon it—righteous in such a way that he may stand before the Judgment Seat of God at the last and none shall be able to lay anything to his charge—

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

Believe, and you shall be accounted righteous! The Lord help you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Genesis 15:1-6; Romans 4.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—122 (SONG I), 621, 193.

UNSTAGGERING FAITH

NO. 733

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 3 1867,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“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.”
Romans 4:19-21.*

IT was God’s purpose that Abraham should be a surpassingly excellent example of the power of faith. He was to be “the father of the faithful,” the mirror, pattern and paragon of faith. He was ordained to be the supreme Believer of the patriarchal age, the serene and venerable leader of the noble army of Believers in Jehovah, the faithful and true God. In order to produce so eminent a character it was necessary that Abraham’s faith should be exercised in a special and unequalled manner. The power of his faith could not be known except by putting it to the severest tests. To this end, among other trials of his faith, God gave him a promise that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed, and yet for many a year he remained without an heir.

The promise, when originally given, startled Abraham, but he did not doubt it. We read that he laughed—laughed with holy joy at the thought of so great and unexpected a blessing! It startled also his wife Sarah. She did, however, doubt it—when she laughed it was the laugh of incredulity. The fulfillment of the promise was long delayed. Abraham waited with patience, sojourning as a stranger in a strange land, having respect unto the covenant which the Lord had made with him and with his unborn seed.

Not a shadow of doubt crossed the mind of the holy Patriarch. He staggered not at the promise through unbelief and though he came to be 100 years old, and his wife Sarah was almost equally as advanced in years, he did not listen to the voice of carnal reason but maintained his confidence in God. Doubtless he had well weighed the natural impossibilities which laid in the way, but he overlooked the whole and being fully persuaded that if God had promised him a son the son would certainly be born, he entertained a holy confidence and left the matter of time in the hands of the Sovereign Ruler.

His faith triumphed in all its conflicts. Had it not been that Sarah and Abraham were both at such an advanced age there would have been no credit to them in believing the promise of God. But the more difficult, the more impossible the fulfillment of the promise seemed to be, the more wonderful was Abraham's faith and he still held to it that what God had promised He was able to perform! If I may so say, there was in Abraham's case a double death to stand in the way of the promise—not one difficulty in itself insuperable, but two—two absolute impossibilities.

And yet, though one impossibility might have been enough to stagger any man, the two together could not cause his faith to waver! He considered not the natural impediments. He allowed them no space in the account—they seemed to be less than nothing in the presence of the truth and power of the Almighty God. The Most High God had given a promise, and that fact overrode 10,000 adverse arguments! His was that noble confidence of which we sing—

***“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone.
Laughs at impossibilities
And cries, ‘It shall be done!’”***

By such unquestioning confidence Abraham brought glory to God. It glorifies God greatly for His servants to trust Him—they then become witnesses to His faithfulness—just as His works in creation are witnesses of His power and wisdom. Abraham was a noble instance of the power which the truthfulness of God exerts over the human mind. When under all discouragements he still “believed God.” His heart said of the living God, “He cannot lie. He will perform His promise.” While glorifying God, Abraham reaped a present consolation to himself and in the end he had the joy of receiving the promise. His early laugh of joy was remembered and commemorated in his son Isaac, that child of promise, whose name was “laughter.”

The Patriarch himself became one of the most honored of men, for it is written, “Him that honors Me I will honor.” Brothers and Sisters, this is the point to which I want to bring you—that if God intends to make you or me, any one of us, or all of us together to be distinguishing exhibitors of the Divine Grace of faith—we must expect to be passed through very much the same trials as Abraham. With regard to the object upon which our faith is exercised, it is most probable that we shall be made to feel our own weakness and even our personal death. We shall be brought very low, even into an utter self-despair.

We shall be made to see that the mercy we are seeking of God is a thing impossible with *man*. It is very probable that difficulties will rise before us till they are enough to overwhelm us! Not only one range of mountainous impossibilities, but another will be seen towering up behind the first till we are pressed beyond measure and led to an utter despair of the matter as considered in ourselves. At such a crisis, if God the Holy Spirit is work-

ing with mighty power in us, we shall still believe that the Divine promise will be fulfilled. We shall not entertain a doubt concerning the promise! We shall remember that it remains with God to find ways and means—and not with ourselves. We shall cast the burden of fulfilling the promise upon Him with whom it naturally rests.

Go on, then, in steady, holy, confident joy, looking for the end of our faith and patiently pleading until we reach it. The Lord will honor and comfort us in so doing, and in the end He will grant us the desire of our hearts, for none that trust in Him shall ever be confounded, world without end.

Let us, this morning, firmly lay hold upon this general principle, that God will empty us of self completely before He will accomplish any great thing by us, thus removing from us every pretext for claiming the glory for ourselves. At such seasons of humiliation it is our privilege to exercise unabated faith, for the fulfillment of the promise is not imperiled, but rather may be looked upon as drawing near. May the Holy Spirit guide us while we endeavor to apply the general principle to distinct cases.

First, we shall view it in application to the individual worker for Christ. Then, secondly, we shall take it in connection with the Church associated or Christian service. Thirdly, we shall apply it briefly to the case of a pleader wrestling with God in prayer. And, fourthly, we shall show its bearing upon the case of a seeker, showing that he, also, will have to feel his own natural death and utter helplessness, and then faith will find all needful Grace stored up in the promise-giving God.

I. To THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER we have a message. I trust I address many Brothers and Sisters who have wholly consecrated themselves to the service of God and have been for months or years perseveringly toiling in the Redeemer's cause. Now, it is probable, very probable, indeed, that you are more than ever conscious of your own spiritual weakness. "Oh," you say, "if God intends to bless souls, I cannot see how they can be blessed through *me*. If sinners are to be converted, I feel myself to be the most unfit and unworthy instrument to be used by God in the whole world. If He shall be pleased to smile upon the endeavors of such an evangelist, or such a pastor, or such a zealous Christian, I shall be very grateful and not at all surprised. But if He should ever bless *me* it will be a most astonishing thing! I shall scarcely be able to believe my own eyes."

Such a lowly sense of our own unfitness is common even at the beginning of real Christian labor and arises from the unexpected and novel difficulties with which we are surrounded. We are then unused to Christian labor, and whether we have to speak in public or to plead with individual sinners we do not feel at home with the work at first, and are oppressed with a sense of weakness. We have not gone this way before, and being quite new at the work, Satan whispers, "You are a poor creature to pre-

tend to serve God. Go back to your retirement, and leave this service to better men.”

Dear Friends who are thus tempted, take comfort from the Word of God this morning! It is necessary to any great blessing that you should *feel* your weakness, and see death written upon all carnal strength. This is a part of your preparation for great usefulness! You must be made to feel early in the work, if you are to have an early blessing, that all the glory must be of God. Your fancied excellence must fade away and you, yourself, must become in your own esteem as feeble as a little child.

I think, however, that a sense of *weakness* grows on the Christian worker. To continue in harness year after year is not without its wear and tear. Our spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak, and faintness in pursuing reveals to us that our own strength is perfect weakness. Personally, I feel my own spiritual inability much more strongly than I did when I began to preach the Gospel. There was a novelty and an excitement, then, about the exercise which gave a degree of spurious facility in it. But now it comes almost every day in the week twice each day. This constant utterance—the proclamation of the same Gospel—finds out the weak joints in our armor!

One is not weary of it, thank God, but still there is a languor which creeps over us and the old novelty and flash which apparently helped us is now gone. And we feel much more vividly than at first that without the energy of the Holy Spirit we can do nothing, absolutely nothing. You experienced Sunday school teachers, and you parents seeking the conversion of your children are, I doubt not, much more conscious now that all your strength must come from above than you once were. You held as a sort of orthodox creed that you were nothing, but *now* you feel that you are *less* than nothing!

The more earnest your labors for the Lord, the more clear will be your sense of your own nothingness. There are times when a lack of success or a withering of our cherished hopes will help to make us feel most keenly how barren and unfruitful we are until the Lord endows us with His Spirit. Those whom we thought to be converted turn out to be merely the subjects of transient excitement. Those who stood long, and for years appeared to honor the Cross of Christ, turn aside and pierce us through with many sorrows, and then we cry out, “Woe is me! How shall I speak any more in the name of the Lord?”

Like Moses, we would have the Lord send by whomever He would send, but not by us. Or like Elijah we hide ourselves for fear, and say “Let me die, I am no better than my fathers.” I suppose there is no successful worker who is quite free from times of deep depression, times when his fears make him say, “Surely I took up this work myself through presumption. I ran without being called. I have willfully thrust myself into a position where I am subject to great danger and great toil, without having the

strength which is required for the place.” At such moments it only needs another push from Satan, a little withdrawing of God’s hand to make us, like Jonah, go down to Joppa and see if we can find a ship to take us away to Tarshish that we may no longer bear the burden of the Lord.

My Brother, my Sister, I am not sorry if you are passing through this fiery ordeal. If your strength is dried up like a potsherd. If your strength is shriveled like a skin-bottle that has been hanging up in the smoke. If you feel as though your personal power was altogether paralyzed, I do not regret it! For know you not that it is in your *weakness* God will show His own strength, and when there is an end of you there will be a beginning of Him? When you are brought to feel, “Neither have I any strength, nor know I what to do,” *then* will you lift up your eyes to the Strong One, from whom comes all your true help—and then will His mighty arm be made bare.

In laying down the general principle drawn from the text we observed that there existed a double difficulty, and that even this did not abate Abraham’s confidence. It may be that a sense of our own unworthiness is not our only discouragement, but that our sphere of Christian effort is remarkably unpromising. You did not know, my dear Friend, when you commenced your evangelistic efforts, how hard the human heart was. You were like young Melancthon—you thought you could easily conquer the human heart. But you now discover that old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon!

You had heard of other Brethren who preached or taught without success, and you said to yourselves, “There must be something very wrong in them or in their doctrines. I will not fall into their errors. I, at least, will be wise and discreet. My methods shall be more Christ-like, more suitable, more effective. I shall surely win souls.” But now you find that hearts with you are as hard as hearts with other men. In that little Sunday school class of yours the boys are still obstinate, the girls still frivolous. You had not reckoned upon this. You accepted it as matter of doctrine that they were depraved, but you supposed that under *your* treatment that depravity would soon disappear.

You are disappointed, for the children seem even worse than others. The more you try to influence their hearts the less you succeed. And the more earnest your endeavors to bring them to Jesus the more, it seems, the sin that dwells in them is provoked. It is possible that you are called to labor where the prejudices of the people are against the Gospel, where the temptations and habits and ways of thought are all dead against the chance of success. We constantly meet with Brethren who say, “I could prosper anywhere else, but I cannot succeed where I now am.” Perhaps they complain, “It is a population of working men,” and this they look upon as a dreadful evil, whereas I believe that no class will better reward the labors of the earnest preacher of the Gospel.

Or else they say, "They are all rich people, and I cannot get at them," whereas where there is a will there is a way. Or the neighborhood is subject to the influence of some established Church, or all taken up with other congregations. There is sure to be found difficulty, and Christian work never does succeed to any great extent until the worker perceives the difficulties and rates them at their proper rate. The fact is, to save a soul is the work of *Deity!* To turn the human will towards holiness is the work of *Omnipotence!* And unless you and I have made up our minds to that, we had better go back to retirement and meditation, for we are not ready for labor!

You tell me your particular sphere is one in which you can do nothing. I am glad to hear it! Such is mine! Such is the true position of every Christian worker—he is called by God to do impossibilities—he is but a *worm*, and yet he is to thresh the mountains and beat them small. Will he do it? Yes, that he will, *if his faith* is equal to the work. If God but enables him to call in Divine strength, the *absence* of human strength will be gain to him! And the difficulties and impossibilities will only be as a platform upon which God shall be uplifted and God's strength the better displayed.

Settle it in your heart, my dear Friend, that there is great labor to be accomplished if souls are to be won! And in that class, or that tract distributing, that hamlet, that preaching station, there is a work *quite out of your reach*. And if you do not enlist the power of a heavenly arm, you will come back and say, "I have labored in vain and spent my strength for nothing." It is well for you to know it. Here are *you* without power, and the work *cannot* help you, *will not* help you. It will bring every obstacle to impede you. You without strength and the work *more* than human! See your position and be prepared for it.

Yet the godly worker has that which sustains him, for he has a promise from God! Abraham had received a promise. "In you and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Grasping this with unrelaxing hold, he knew the difficulties and weighed them. But having done so, he put them away as not worth considering. God had said it, and that was enough for him! To him the promise of God was as good as the fulfillment! Just as in trade you often consider some men's bills to be as good as cash, so in this case God's promise was as good to Abraham as the fulfillment itself.

Now, Brother, if you and I are to be successful in our work for God, we, too, must get hold of a promise. I think I hear you say, "If I heard a heavenly voice saying to me, 'Go and labor, and I will give you success,' I should doubt no more. If I could have a special revelation, just as Abraham had to him, personally, that would alter the case. But I have not received such a special promise, and am therefore full of fear." Now, observe—God gives His promises in many ways! Sometimes He gives them to

individuals, at other times to classes of character—and which is the better of the two? I think you should prefer the second.

Suppose God had given to you, personally, a promise, your unbelief would say, “Ah, it is all fancy. It was not the Lord, it was only a dream.” But now God has been pleased to give the Revelation, in your case, to *character*. Shall I quote it? Here it is: “He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” Now is not that yourself? Your name is not there, but your *character* is, for you have gone forth, you have wept, and you have carried forth precious seed. The Lord declares that such an one shall doubtless come again rejoicing!

Now, although your *name* is not in the Book absolutely, it is there *virtually*, and the promise is just as sure to you. If any man of honor were to issue a promise that all persons appearing at his door at such an hour should receive relief, if he did not give relief to all who appeared, he would be quite as guilty of breach of promise as though he had picked out all the persons by name and given them the promise. The promise is not affected by the absence of the name if the *character* is there described.

I will give you another promise: “My Word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please. It shall prosper in the thing where I sent it.” Have you delivered God’s Word, my dear Friend? There is the question! If you have, then God declares it shall not return unto Him void! It shall prosper in the thing where He sent it. And that promise is quite as good as though your particular initials had been affixed to it, or it had been spoken to you by the voice of an angel in the visions of the night! A promise, however given, is equally binding upon a man of honor. And a promise from God, no matter how delivered, is sure of fulfillment!

All you have to do is to lay hold upon it! I have gone forth weeping, and I have sown precious seed, therefore God says I shall come again rejoicing, bringing my sheaves with me! I cannot create the sheaves, and the sheaves as yet do not appear in the field, but I shall have them, for what God has promised He is able also to perform. The thing is to get a promise distinctly and clearly before your mind’s eye and then to defy all discouragements! Oh my Brethren, may you be so weak that you may be as dead, and yet at the same time may you be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might because your faith has made the Omnipotence of God to be at your command!

Abraham, having his full conviction that God would fulfill His own promise, was happy about it. He was cheerful, rejoicing, comforted, feeling as content to wait as he would have been to receive the blessing at once. He was always full of sacred joy and thus always glorified God. Those who saw the holy Patriarch’s serenity of mind naturally enquired who was his God, and when they heard of the Most High they glorified the God of

Abraham. In due season the promise came, and the patriarchal tent was glad with a gladness which never left it. Abraham spoke well of his God, and his God dealt well with him. I want you, Christian workers, to seek as before God to tread in the steps of Abraham. While fully aware that you are powerless in yourselves, rest upon the promise of God—go to your work counting no risks, making no calculations—but *believing* that where God's promise is concerned, the bare suspicion of failure is not to be endured.

Perhaps next to Abraham there was not, in the olden times, a man of more childlike faith than Samson. One weeps over his many infirmities, but one admires the marvelous simplicity of his dependence upon God. When a thousand foes are in array against him he never calculates. He is all alone, unarmed and bound with cords. He snaps his bonds, and seizing the jawbone of an ass, he flies at the hosts of the armed men as if he had a thousand helpers—and they but an equal match for him—and heaps upon heaps he dashes them down till he cries, "With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men."

He was a man who, if God had said, "Shoulder the world like Atlas," would have carried it as readily as he did the gates of Gaza. He had no thought but of *God's* power, and he was reckless of danger when he felt that God was with him. See him in that memorable death deed! See him taking hold of the pillars after he had been left of God, blind, and shut up in prison all those dreary months! He has even now enough confidence in God to believe that He will help him at the last! Depend upon it, Brethren, it is great faith that can believe in God after times of desertion.

But look! He puts his hands upon those ponderous pillars! He prays, and then he tugs and strains! Down, down they come, and Israel's God is avenged upon Israel's foe! That is the kind of spirit I should like to get into my *own* soul—a spirit conscious that it can do nothing *alone*. Conscious that the work is beyond *human* possibility, but equally clear that it can do *everything*! That through God there is nothing beyond the range of its capacity.

II. Dear Friends, members of this Church, I want your earnest attention while I try to show the bearing of this upon THIS CHURCH AND EVERY CHURCH IN A SIMILAR CONDITION. We have set our hearts upon a thorough revival of religion in our midst. Some of my Brethren associated with me in the Deaconship and Eldership have made this a matter of constant prayer to God—that we may see, this year, greater things than we have ever seen! And there are many in the membership of the same mind who have besieged the Throne of God with constant applications.

It will be, as a preparation for the work which God will work among us, a very blessed thing for us as a Church to feel how utterly powerless we are in this matter. God has blessed us these thirteen years! We have en-

joyed continued prosperity. We have scarcely known what to do with the blessing God has given us! Truly in our case He has fulfilled the promise, "I will pour out My blessing upon you so that you shall not have room to receive it." But I fear that our temptation is to lean upon an arm of *flesh*—to suppose there is some power in the *ministry*, or in our *organization*, or in the *zeal* which has characterized us.

Brethren, let us divest ourselves of all that pride—that detestable, abominable, soul-weakening vice—which is as evil and as hurtful to us as it is abominable to God! We can no more save a soul than make a world, and as to causing a genuine revival by our own efforts, we might as well talk of whirling the stars from their sphere! Poor helpless worms we are in this matter. If God helps us we can pray, but without His aid our prayer will be mockery! If God helps us we can preach, but apart from Him our preaching is but a weary tale told without power or energy. You must, each of you, ask the Lord to take you down into the depths of your own *nothingness* and reveal to you your utter *unworthiness* to be used in His work! Try to get a deeply humiliating sense of your own weakness.

As a Church we want to be kept low before the Lord. Why, what are *we* as a Church? There are some sad sinners among us who are such clever hypocrites that we cannot find them out! And there are others who walk so ill that we fear they are tares among the wheat. The best of us are far from being as good as we should be! We have all grave accusations to bring against ourselves. If the Lord Jesus were to write on the ground here and say, "He that is without fault among you, let him throw the first stone at lukewarm Christians," I do not know who is the oldest and whether he would try to go out first, but I should follow very closely at his heels! We are all verily guilty before the Lord! We have not done as we ought, nor as we might—we are unworthy that He should use us! And if He should write, "Ichabod," in letters of fire over this Tabernacle, and leave this House to be desolate as Shiloh was of old, He might well do it and none could blame Him. Let us all confess this.

Next, there is not only difficulty in ourselves but difficulty in the work. We want to see all these people converted to God, and truly some of our hearers are hopeless enough, for I have been preaching to them for ten or twelve years and they are not a whit the better but the worse for it—they have grown Gospel-hardened! My voice used to startle you once, and the honest Truth of God made you *feel*—but it is not so now. You are as used to my voice as the miller to the click of his mill. You are made ready for the uttermost wrath of God—for there is no place that can prepare a man for Hell so readily as the place of rejected invitations and neglected admonitions.

Yet, dear Hearers, we desire to see you converted, and by the Grace of God we hope to see it! But what can we do? The preacher can do nothing, for he has done his best to bring you to Christ and has failed. And all that

any of our most earnest friends can suggest will fail, also. The work is impossible with *us*, but do we therefore give up the attempt? No, for is it not written, “I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek you My face in vain”? We cannot seek God’s face in vain, and if this Church continues to pray as it has done, an answer of peace must be given us! We do not know how the promise is to be fulfilled, but we believe it *will* be fulfilled, and we leave it with our God.

There is another promise, “He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.” Christ must see of His soul’s travail. He must see of it in this place, too! We expect to see men converted in this place, and to hear multitudes of sinners crying, “What must I do to be saved?” We have God’s promise for it! *We* cannot do it, but *He* can. What shall *we* do? Why, just in joyous confidence continue steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord! Go again to our knees in prayer feeling that the result is not haphazard! Jesus pleads His wounds and cannot be denied. The Lord cannot draw back from His Word. He must do according to His people’s desires when He Himself *writes those desires upon their hearts!*

And when they have grown into earnest striving, and wrestling, and mounted into believing expectations they must be fulfilled! If we can only get a dozen men and women among you really humbled before God to feel your own emptiness, and yet to believe the promise, I expect to see within the next few months a blessing of such an extent as we have never received before. God send this, and His be the glory!

III. For a minute—if there had been time, I should have liked to apply this principle TO EVERY PLEADING SOUL that is wrestling with God in prayer, but as I have not the time I will dismiss it in these words. Dear Friends, if your heart has been set upon any special object in prayer. If you have an express promise for it (and mark, that is indispensable), you must not be staggered if the object of your desire seems farther off now than when you first began to pray. If even after months of supplication the thing should seem more difficult now of attainment than ever it was, wait at the Mercy Seat in the full persuasion that although God may take His time, and *that* time may not be *your* time, yet He must and will redeem His promise when the fullness of time has come.

If you have prayed for the salvation of your child, or husband, or friend, and that person has grown worse instead of better, do not cease praying! If that dear little one has become more obstinate and that husband even more profane, still God must be held to His Word! And if you have the faith to challenge His attributes of faithfulness and power, assuredly He never did and never will let your prayers fall fruitless to the ground! And I repeat the word that you may be sure to carry that away with you—let not the fact that the answer seems farther off than ever be any discouragement to you. Remember that to trust God in the *light* is nothing—but to trust Him in the dark—*that* is faith!

To rest upon God when everything witnesses with God is nothing, but to believe God when everything gives Him the lie—that is faith! To believe that all shall go well when outward Providences blow softly is any fool's play, but to believe that it *must* and *shall* be well when storms and tempests are round about you, and you are blown farther and farther from the harbor of your desire—this is a work of Divine Grace! By this shall you know whether you are a child of God or not—by seeing whether you can exercise faith in the power of *prayer* when all things forbid you to hope.

IV. I desire to spend the last five minutes in addressing THE SEEKER'S UNSTAGGERING FAITH. Surely among this throng there must be some of you who long to be saved! If so, it is likely that since you have begun to seek salvation, instead of being more happy, you are far more miserable. You imagined at one time that you could believe in Jesus whenever you liked—that you could become a Christian at your own will at any moment! And now you wake up to find that the will is present with you, but how to perform that which you desire, you find not!

You *desire* to break the chains of sin, but those sins were far easier to bind than to loose. You *want* to come to Jesus with a broken heart, but your heart refuses to break. You long to *trust* Jesus, but your unbelief is so mighty that you cannot see His Cross—you cannot look with the look which makes a sinner live! Will you think me cruel if I say I am *glad* to find you in this poverty-stricken state? I believe that in your case you must know your own powerlessness, you must be brought to feel that as far as salvation is concerned you are dead, utterly dead.

Every sinner must learn that he is by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and that the work of salvation is a work impossible to him—it is high above—out of his reach. I want you to know that more and more, and if it should drive you to a thorough self-despair, none will be more thankful than I shall be, for *despair* is the nearest way to *faith* in our philosophy. Self-despair throws a man upon his God. He feels that he can do nothing and he turns to One who can do all things. Now, Friend, if you are as I have said, convinced of your *nothingness*, the next thing is, can you find a promise?

There is one I pray the Lord to give you this morning: “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Have you called upon the name of the Lord? That is to say, have you cried to Him, “God be merciful to me a sinner”? Well, if you have not, I pray you do it *now*. If you so call you *must* be saved. True, you cannot save yourself! I am glad you know that. But what you *cannot* do, in that you are weak through the flesh, God *will* do, for there is His promise, “Whoever comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

Now, will you come? If so, you cannot be cast out! “Whoever believes on Him is not condemned.” Do you believe on the Lord Jesus? Do you take Him now to be your Savior? If you do, your personal lack of power

shall be no hindrance. You have no power whatever, but there is none needed in you! When Christ raised the dead he did not rake among the ashes to find a lingering spark of vitality, but He said, "Live!" And if you are as dead as Lazarus of whom Martha said, "Lord, by this time he stinks," the voice of mercy can yet make you live! Can you believe this? If you can believe in Jesus you shall be saved!

If you can believe that Jehovah Jesus, the Son of God, can save you, and if you can rest upon His merits—though in *you* there is no grain of merit, though in *you* there is no vestige of power or spiritual strength—this shall not stand in your way! And though your sins are as damnable as those of Satan, and your iniquity of heart as deep as Hell itself, yet if you can trust in Jesus to save you, difficulty vanishes before the merit of His blood! I know you say, "If I felt happy I could trust Christ. If I felt tender, if I felt holy." No, Friend, you would not be trusting *Christ*, you would be trusting your *feelings*, and your *tenderness* would be your confidence!

But now you have no feeling of tenderness or holiness that can recommend you to God. Come, then, as you are—wretched, undone, self-condemned, and self-aborred—come and cast yourself upon the mercy of God as He reveals Himself in the bleeding Body of His dear Son! And if you can do this you will glorify God. "Oh," you say, "how could such a poor soul as I am ever bring glory to God?" Sinner, I say it is in your power, if God enables you, to bring more glory to God in a certain sense than the living saint can, for the living saint only believes that God can keep him alive, but for you, under a pressing sense of guilt still to believe that Jesus can give you perfect liberty and save you—oh, this glorifies Him!

There is not an angel before the Throne of God who can believe such great things of God as you can! An angel has no sin. He cannot, therefore, believe that Jesus can put away his sin, but *you* can. "If you believe in Jesus, though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool. Though they are red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow." If you do God the honor to believe that He can do what He has said—if you rest in Jesus—*you* shall have the comfort, *He* shall have the glory, and your soul shall have the salvation! Emptied of self you have no life, no strength, no goodness! In fact you have nothing to recommend you, but come as you are and the Lord will bless you and give you the desire of your heart, and unto Him be the glory! Amen.

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STRONG FAITH

NO. 1367

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 15, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But was strong in faith, giving glory to God.”
Romans 4:20.***

ABRAHAM is the father of the faithful. When children have a noble father it is a good thing for them to be fully conversant with his character and, therefore, we shall do well to consider the life of the great Patriarch, especially marking that grand excellence which makes him the father of Believers, namely, his faith. Nor should we fail to observe the strength of his faith, for in him it reached a very high degree. He was not only a Believer, but he was an unstaggering Believer. He did not only trust God, but he trusted God most firmly in the teeth of all contradiction—not so much as considering the difficulties—but believing in God without questioning.

Oftentimes I have exhorted unbelievers to faith, but now my word is directed to those who have faith already, bidding them manifest *more* faith. Where there is the *root* of faith, we plead for the *growth* of faith. Where there is life, our desire is that it may be found more abundantly. If you have not believed at all, then the Gospel cries to you, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!” But if you *have* believed, its voice is, “Grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

We cannot talk to unbelievers upon the subject of strong faith because they have none to begin with—if they had even the weakest faith, it would save them and become the germ of the highest assurance—but without a beginning, how can they be exhorted to increase? There must, first of all, be the seed of faith in the heart and then it will be wise to water it, but to water barren ground is lost labor. Have you given glory to God by believing in the Lord Jesus? Then you may glorify Him more by a stronger confidence, but not till then! Those who have faith in God are constantly to be exhorted to grow in all Graces and especially in the most important and fundamental Grace of faith. They are permitted to pray, “Lord, increase our faith,” with the assurance that, “He gives more Grace.”

My present address will have strong faith for its subject. Let those who have believed strive after it. Is it necessary for me to remind you that as faith, at first, is the work of the Holy Spirit, so must any real *growth* in it be of Divine operation? Any addition to faith which could come to you by or from the *flesh*, if such a thing were supposable, would be an adulteration of faith and not an increase of it! That which is born of the flesh is flesh and only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Even if an increase of faith could come to us by the will of man and *not* by Divine working, it would not be worth having, for it would be a counterfeit.

Only the sap of the trunk can make the branch grow. He who gave you faith at the first must give you more faith if you are to become strong in it.

Yet there is the parallel Truth of God never to be forgotten—that while faith is the gift of God—it is, also, our own act! The Holy Spirit works faith in us, but we, ourselves, believe. The Holy Spirit does not believe for us—what has He to believe? It would be altogether absurd to conceive of the Holy Spirit as believing or repenting! Nor, if such a thing were possible, could it be of any benefit to us, for the faith which saves the soul must be *personal* and cannot be performed by proxy. Faith is both God's gift and man's act. The Lord is the Author of our faith, but we, ourselves, believe.

In the same manner, though the strengthening of our faith will come through the Spirit of God, yet must it be our own act and deed—we must, ourselves, believe more firmly, and our own heart must be exercised to attain to the highest privilege. As unbelief is a sin for which the unbeliever must be held responsible, even so is the feebleness of faith a fault for which we are blameworthy. We are duty bound to believe in God without wavering and if we neglect the matter we shall be held guilty concerning it. It is our duty to believe and to believe in the highest degree—and though some professors can never see the consistency of the two statements that faith is the gift of God and yet the duty of man—we are sure that the one is as true as the other.

And so, while I shall earnestly refer you to the Spirit of God for strength in order to obtain more faith, yet I shall not apologize for unbelief, or treat strong faith as a work of our own, for which God has no claim upon us. I most earnestly declare the responsibility of each Believer and claim from him, as the righteous due of a faithful God, that he, from now on, believe in Him more fully than he has ever done. May the remarks I offer be used by the Holy Spirit to the increase and establishment of your confidence in God!

I. Our first point is this—STRONG FAITH, WHEREVER IT EXISTS, IS SUPPORTED BY ABUNDANT REASONS. It is never chargeable with being unreasonable fanaticism or blind credence. It is a sound, prudent, justifiable thing. For, first, all the reasons which justify our believing in God at all, justify our believing in Him most firmly and continually. You do not need that I dwell upon this, because it is self-evident. It can never be right to believe unless the statements are true—and if true they deserve undivided faith. If you have trusted your soul with your Redeemer because of the efficacy of His atoning blood, that argument pleads with you to trust Him yet more steadfastly and confidently.

If anything is strong enough for you to trust your eternal destiny to, your trust ought not to be tintured with suspicion, or soured with mistrust—it ought to be unalloyed as pure gold and immovable as a granite rock. Either no confidence or great confidence can be logically defended! A divided heart cannot be justified by reason. Dear Brothers and Sisters, little faith will save you if it is true faith, but there are many reasons why you should seek an *increase* of it, and among the best, this forcible one—Your conscience cannot justify the weakness of your faith, nor answer the question, “Therefore do you doubt?”

If you believe at all, why do you doubt at all? If God is worthy of trust, He is worthy of abundant trust! If it is well to lean on Him at all, it must be well to lean hard. Is the Lord faithful? Then do not both trust and mis-

trust, believe and disbelieve! Is the promise sure? Then do not believe it a little and doubt it a little! Elijah spoke concerning Jehovah and Baal, "If Jehovah is God serve Him, and if Baal is God serve him." So, also, would I demand in this matter—if the Gospel is a lie, deny it. But if it is a Truth of God, believe it! Be no longer content to mingle unbelief with faith, as if this were the utmost credence that God's children could give to their own Father! It is time that this mental twilight came to an end and that the day is known to be day and the night to be night.

Hesitating and questioning, hoping and fearing make but a lame walk for a Christian pilgrim and are unreasonable and indefensible. As the legs of the lame are not equal, so such a state of mind has not the balance which a wise man should seek after. If you go up to the ankles in the river of faith, go further, even up to the loins, or to full swimming depth, for, if it is right to enter into faith's stream at all, every possible argument proves that the deeper you go, the better. Reasons for strong faith may be found in abundance in the Character of God. He is not like ourselves, for in Him is no mixture of truth and falsehood, wisdom and folly, power and weakness!

Our reliance upon man must be cautiously given and measured out with great prudence, for man is only man, but, "the Lord is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent." His Character absolutely demands implicit faith, insomuch that while meditating upon this subject, I felt ashamed of myself that I should need to pray for faith in God. It is a clear evidence of our dire depravity that we should need to be helped to believe in One who cannot lie! It seems inevitable that a creature should trust its Creator and especially such a Creator! And it would be inevitable if that creature were not exceedingly depraved.

For a child to trust its father is natural, so natural that no one counts it a virtue. How astounding is our moral perversity that we should be so far gone out of our right condition of heart that we have to argue ourselves into believing our God—and even then succeed not till the Holy Spirit gives us faith! It ought to be a very difficult thing for a Christian to doubt his heavenly Father. In fact, it ought to be impossible, seeing that the Divine Character is incapable of falsehood! Beloved, should we not have strong faith who believe in a God whose very essence is pure truth? Where deception is inconceivable, doubt should be impossible!

You believe that a shadow of untruth never stained the Character of your God—why, then, do you not render to Him strong faith? You believe, also, that God is infinitely wise and, therefore, He has never spoken rashly nor promised what it might be wiser to withhold. The promise was not delivered in haste, or so unguardedly that it might be necessary to retract it and, therefore, no alteration can be supposed. The Covenant of Promise stands secure even as to its jots and tittles. If it had been foolish, it might pass away, but since it is ordered by eternal Wisdom, it will outlast the everlasting hills.

Come, then, Beloved, should not the utmost confidence be rendered to Him whose every Word is steeped in Infallibility? Should you not believe with all your heart and soul and strength in Him whose Truth stands fast like the great mountains? Moreover, O man of God, you believe in One

who is Omnipotent and, therefore, your believing should be strong. You know how to answer that question, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" for you believe that with God all things are possible. If it is so, then His true Word spoken in wisdom can readily enough be carried out. He has but to will it and it is done! God's Word is fact—for Him to purpose is to perform—can there, then, arise any condition or circumstance which He cannot meet? Then why these doubts?

In the Presence of an Almighty Promiser, unbelief is as ridiculous as it is sinful. "The Strength of Israel will not lie," neither may we treat Him with mistrust. You know, also, that your God is Immutable. All things change, but your God knows no shadow of a turning! He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." Is He the same? He does not take back the Word that goes out of His mouth, nor reverse His Divine decree—why, then, question and suspect Him? Better far to believe immutably in an Immutable God! Can you not rest in Him who says "I am Jehovah; I change not"? You believe, also, that He is the God of Love, full of goodness, mercy and loving kindness. What a wanton insult it is to mistrust One who cannot be unkind, whose very Nature it is to bless His creatures and whose innermost soul is set upon loving and blessing His own elect!

Have you confided in Him? Then does He not assure you that He has engraved your name upon the palms of His hands? Has he not said that He has loved you with an everlasting love and, therefore, with loving kindness He has drawn you? Will you fly in the face of changeless love and coldly question it? Can it be possible to trust it too confidently? Surely all these things and much more, in the glorious Character of the beloved God, demand of us the strongest imaginable faith! Then, again, when I turn my eyes from pure Deity to Him who is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, even our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, it appears incongruous that the blessed Son of God should be received with meager confidence.

God dwelt among men in human flesh. You know it is true, that Jesus, the Son of God, abode upon the earth throughout a lowly life amidst poverty and shame! And, (wonder of wonders), at last He poured out His heart's blood for our redemption! And can we entertain a doubt of His ability to save? Do we see those drops of blood from His hands and heart, sealing the Everlasting Covenant, and can we doubt? Abraham had strong confidence when he saw the smoking furnace and the burning lamp passing between the pieces of the slain victims. What ought our confidence be when we behold the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, ratifying the Eternal Covenant by His own death? Surely if the Patriarch could find rest in the sight of the type, only, we ought to rest without thought of fear. When faith beholds the Divine antitype, no thought of disquietude should ever arise again!

My Soul, what more do you need? Is there not, here, more than enough of solemn pledge and surety? Are not fountains of assurance opened in the bleeding Savior which are deeper than all fear and higher than all hope? That wondrous Sacrifice is as high above your thoughts, at their best, as the heavens are above the earth! And will you return doubts and fears as a fit recompense for such a Divine confirmation of eternal love? O

Lord, help Your servants to be strong in faith! One other reason is, perhaps, of less weight than those which have gone before, but I cannot withhold it. It is this—we ought to give to God strong faith because there is no evidence to the contrary, nor any supposable evidence which could justify mistrust.

All down the ages those who have trusted in Him have never been confused. Our fathers trusted in Him and He helped them to suffer and to bear, to attempt and to accomplish, to live and to die. We read just now, in the 11th Chapter of Hebrews, the record of what the Lord worked in those who believed in Him. Now, on the other side, per contra, there stands nothing. Has one child of God come forward wringing his hands and saying, “God has not fulfilled His Word and His promises are false”? We have stood, many of us, at the bedside of dying saints and the truth generally comes out there. But there is not one among us, most familiar with such scenes, who ever heard a solitary Believer declare that it is a mistake to confide in the blood of Jesus, or an error to rest in the faithfulness of God!

Somewhere, or other, this thing would have come out if it had been so! If the Lord had been false to *one* of His people we should have had a sure record of it! And I think we might have trusted the devil and his followers, who delight in infidelity, to have circulated such a report, pretty largely, all over the world—if they had known of one such an instance! But they have not one to report! “He forsakes not His saints.” Furthermore, I will appeal to your own experience—have you experienced anything which casts suspicion upon the Character of God? Has the Lord been a wilderness unto you? When you have trusted Him, has He failed you? Will you put your finger upon a promise which He has broken? Search the Bible through and through and find, if you can, one single Word of His against which you must write, “false.”

Oh, no! The promise tarries sometimes, but it never lies! There is a waiting time for the testing of your faith, but in the end it will be seen that He has withheld no good thing from them that walk uprightly and you will have to say, at last, like gray-headed Joshua, “There failed not one of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.” Brothers and Sisters, ought we to doubt our God when we have no cause to show for it? Is there any apology for little faith since we cannot remember any instances of prayers unheard, deliverances denied, or mercies refused? We have nothing of the kind to quote and, therefore, when we doubt the Lord we are guilty of wanton distrust—may the Lord forgive us and deliver us from it!

So much upon that first point, the strongest faith is supported by abundant reasons.

II. And now, secondly, according to the text, STRONG FAITH PRODUCES THE MOST DESIRABLE RESULTS. We have not time to go into many of these, but we will dwell upon one, the one mentioned in the text, “Strong in faith, giving glory to God.” Why, this is what we live for—to glorify God! Every man who is truly a child of God feels that he has no objective which at all approaches to this in importance—his chief end is “to glo-

rify God and enjoy Him forever.” Well, then, since strong faith answers to that end, we ought earnestly to desire it! But how does it appear?

Well, strong faith glorifies God because it treats Him like God. Unbelief is practical atheism—denying the truthfulness of God, it takes away what is a part of the essential Character of God and mars His very existence. I would not say a word to grieve those who have but little faith, for the least faith is *saving* and is most precious, but still, weak faith does not treat God like God—it bounds and limits the Holy One of Israel! It believes Him up to a point, or under such-and-such circumstances—which questions His Omnipresence and Omnipotence!

Strong faith treats God according to His infinite Character. It does not suspect Him, because it knows Him to be the God of Truth. It does not doubt the possibility of His accomplishing His promises because it knows Him to be God All-Sufficient. It does not question His faithfulness, because it knows Him to be absolutely Immutable. Alas, we often deal with God as if He were like ourselves, or like our fellow men. We are fickle and we suppose that He is also. Our fellow men promise and fail us, and we act as if our God were like the sons of man, who are but worms.

O Beloved, it robs God of His Glory when we act towards Him otherwise than as He is! But it glorifies Him when we gain a Scriptural conception of what He is and act towards Him under that aspect—and what is that but to trust Him without staggering? To me, when I look at it calmly, the strongest faith does not appear to be a wonder—it is only what the Lord has a *right* to receive. Considering the folly and depravity of man, faith is a marvelous production of Divine Grace. Yet looked at from the Godward side of it, the strongest possible faith in God is only what God may justly claim! Do you agree with me, O Believers? Does not your Lord deserve to be trusted at all times?

Further, strong faith brings glory to God because it treats Him as a Father and acts towards Him in a childlike spirit. It is very beautiful to see the confidence which our children repose in us. Why, even when the man is utterly unworthy of respect, you will see the little child still believing in his father. And as for those who are favored with parents who are wise and gracious, there is—there should always be—an implicit reliance upon father’s judgment. I have known boys quote their father with as implicit a reliance as Christians quote Scripture, or as confidently as a Catholic quotes a bull of the Pope. Indeed, what is a father, after all, but the papa, the pope, of His child, to a very great degree, and though that confidence may be mistaken, yet it is natural to the child to feel it. And it is a sad pity that it should too often be rudely repressed by the father’s folly.

Now, every child of God ought to have unlimited confidence in God. Is He not my Father? Can my Father do an unkind thing to me? Can my Father be untrue? Can my heavenly Father be false or changeable? Impossible! The child of God does not boast of his faith, for it is only a simple childlike trust, yet it glorifies God more than all the efforts of proud reason, for it calls Him by the name which He loves and it puts Him into the place which He delights in, namely, that of Father to His own chosen.

Again, strong faith honors God because it strengthens all the other Graces and these all bring glory to God. Without the Graces of the Spirit

in him, a man cannot glorify God. Therefore, that which will produce in our character all those various lights which are the reflections of the Divine excellence as it shone in the Lord Jesus, is the chief means of our glorifying God and is to be prized. Faith is the root of whatever things are lovely and pure and of good repute. And in proportion as it is strong, all these precious things flourish. Therefore it greatly tends to magnify the Lord. Strong faith peculiarly glorifies God because it gives a striking testimony to the world.

I do not think the world notices, much, the common faith of ordinary Christians. The faith which ordinarily relies upon God in good times, the outside world does not think much of. But even carnal minds are compelled to view with astonishment the faith which glories in God when all temporal things are swept away. The faith which can practice eminent self-denial, or which can achieve, through the power of God, enterprises which appear foolhardy to mere reason—that is the faith which attracts the eyes of men! Then they see your strong faith and they glorify your Father which is in Heaven! I pray God that we may always have such a faith that it may be worthwhile for men to study it.

I have known some faith which would have required a man to put a microscope to his eye to be able to perceive it at all. And when we have declared that little faith saves the soul, the worldling has replied, “Well, it is a very small concern, at any rate.” Brothers and Sisters, ask that your faith may grow! Let it embrace God heartily! Let it rest in Him without fear and even the ungodly will be obliged to confess that this is the finger of God! Strong faith glorifies God, again, because it enables Him to work great works in us and through us. As our Savior could not do many mighty works in a certain place because of their unbelief, so is God hampered with regard to some of us because we have such little confidence in Him.

He has given to some men all the abilities necessary for the conversion of many souls, all the knowledge, all the utterance and a large part of the zeal—but they do not believe in Him and, therefore, they are not established. Some men’s words actually create distrust in the minds of others, for they, themselves are so diffident in spirit that they rather hinder the children of God in their progress than help them to advance in the Divine life. Search, O my Brothers and Sisters, whether it is not so! He who has little faith will be made useful according to the littleness of his faith, but, if he had more, the Master might use him more. If we trusted more, our life would be holier, happier, serener, more close with God and more useful. And why should we not? Give me a reason why we should not! Oh, Spirit of the living God, why should we not? Help us, now, to be strong in faith, giving glory to God!

III. Now I advance to a third observation which, I trust, may give some comfort to those who are little in Israel. **STRONG FAITH, WHICH GIVES GLORY TO God, MAY BE EXERCISED BY PERSONS WHO ARE OTHERWISE EXCEEDINGLY WEAK.** What a joy this is to you who are sufferers in body! You do not often creep out of your bed which is now growing so hard through your having laid upon it these months. It is quite a holiday for you to be found in the House of God now and then. Well, dear Brother,

dear Sister, you cannot do Apostolic work and range a continent, fervently blazing out the Truth of God, but you *can* have strong faith in God!

You may exhibit a placid patience, a sweet resignation, a sacred hopefulness as to the future. You may exhibit a Divine disdain as to the fear of death and, if these abound in you, the circle of friends who know you and tenderly watch you, are receiving from your example the utmost benefit and, perhaps, though you may not be able to enter into active service, you may be tutoring others by the strength of your faith—and they may accomplish great things as the result of your example. At any rate, the weakness of your body need not prevent your exercising the strong faith which glorifies God.

So, too, dear Friends, you may have but few talents. You may be conscious that you have no brilliance of intellect, that you are not persons of remarkable parts or attainments and, yet you may glorify God by strong faith! You need not be a genius in order to give glory to God, for the strength of your faith will do it! Many a man who is of slender intellect glorifies God far more than your great thinkers do because the great thinker is too often filled with a high conceit of his own thoughts and will not follow God's Word. The poor unintellectual Believer rises superior to him by taking the intellect of God to be his guiding star.

You can glorify God, dear Brothers and Sisters, by holding firmly to the Truth of God which you understand so little, but which you love so heartily. Though you do not know the whole of its meaning, you are in much the same condition as your more advanced Brethren, for who knows the whole meaning of God's mind? What you *do* know, you are resolved to hold with an iron grip and, by so doing, you greatly honor your Lord. Some saints are conscious of weakness of every sort, but they must not, therefore, think that they cannot honor God by strong faith. Abraham, of whom the text is spoken, was a special instance of this. He was so old that his body was now dead and yet he believed that he would be the progenitor of the chosen seed! He knew that death was written upon him as to all that matter and yet he was quite certain that God, who had promised, would certainly perform.

Do you feel, this morning, almost dead spiritually? Dear lover of Jesus, have you wandered from Him so that your consciousness of life in Him is dimmed and you hardly know whether you are in Him or not? Are you so lethargic your soul cleaves to the dust? Now is the time to trust Him! When sin abounds, when fears are thickest, when temptations are most furious, when need comes upon you like an armed man—then is the time to trust in God! Summer weather faith is poor stuff, but a faith which bums on through the long, dark, dreary winter—a faith which is not dampened by the rain nor buried by the snowstorm—this is faith, indeed, and glorifies God!

The depth of your weakness is just the height of your possibilities of honoring the Lord. If you are nothing, so much the more room for God to be everything! If you are unworthy, the more room for confidence in the righteousness of Christ! And if you are dead, you are the better able to prove the Truth of your Lord's words concerning the Believer, "though he were dead, yet shall he live." God grant us Grace that whatever our cir-

cumstances or conditions, we may have the same conquering faith towards God.

IV. Now, fourthly, THIS STRONG FAITH VARIES AS TO ITS MANNER OF WORKING, very much, according to the person and his circumstances. There is one thing that strong faith does not do which some think it would be sure to do—it never blusters and it never talks big and boasts of what it will accomplish. “Though all men should forsake You, yet will not I,” is not the language of strong faith—that is the prattle of Master Peter with his pride uppermost! Some men are, in their own opinion, in such a fine condition that they could push the whole world before them and drag the Church after them—I do not know what they think they could not do!

Yes, but there is a great deal of difference between confidence in yourself and confidence in God. I have noticed that the faith which goes forth against the world with the dauntless courage of a lion is the very faith which lies down like a lamb at Jesus’ feet. The next thing to, “I can do all things,” is, “Without Christ I can do nothing.” Consciousness of personal weakness attends a brave reliance upon God and shows itself in modesty and quietude of manner. Barking dogs do not often bite and those men who promise much, very seldom perform. Strong faith has a quiet tongue and does the daring deed without preliminary boasting. It does not advertise its coming victories, but falls upon the Midianites in the dead of night—and with its lamps and pitchers puts them to the rout.

Point me to one boastful word that ever fell from Abraham. All the Scriptural heroes of faith were *doers*—not braggarts. David said little to his envious brothers, but he brought home the giant’s bleeding head and bade its dumb mouth tell of what he had done. Faith exercises itself, as in the case of Abraham, by believing God’s Word! God had said many things to Abraham and Abraham believed them all. That is a rare thing nowadays! The school of modern thought, which considers itself to be the most infallible thing now extant, always cuts and shapes divinity according to its own views of what it ought to be. In fact, it has a god of its own, cut out of the brown paper of its philosophies—a god of soft effeminacy who is no more like the Jehovah of Abraham than the Venus of Paphos.

These men believe not what the Bible says, but what they imagine it *ought* to say. Their doctrinal views are like the camel which was evolved by a German philosopher out of his own consciousness. He had never seen one, but he produced it according to his own notion of what it ought to be and he was very strong against humps. He would never believe that a real camel had a hump because his consciousness did not suggest such a thing! Much of intellectual religion nowadays is just that—we have certain gentry about who evolve a gospel out of their own brain—and of course they utterly despise the Gospel which actually exists because it is not like their model. We are asked to bow down and worship the calf which comes out of their furnace, but that we shall not do while our faith is strong.

We believe God’s every Word as far as we know it. If I know a doctrine to be in God’s Word, it is Infallible to me. If I have ever, in thought, gone beyond that which is revealed, I do heartily repent of such presumption. Brothers and Sisters, do you agree with me? If I see in God’s Book two Truths which I cannot square with one another, I believe them both! There

is a middle term somewhere, though I know not where to find it. And for the present I believe without that explanatory Truth of God. There are the two things—God has said them and they must be true—it is mine to believe them. Let God be true and every man a liar! This is where strong faith is needed in these days—we need a settled creed and a clear, comprehensive view of the revealed Truth of God—even if we should, in consequence, be called old-fashioned or imbecile, we need to be more old-fashioned than ever!

I am a Radical in many things, but in the doctrines of the Gospel I would have you to be Conservative to the backbone—never yielding any point of the Truth of God to the most brilliant thinker that the world can produce! Thinkers are not appointed to tinker up a gospel for us! Thank God, we already have a perfect Gospel! Their shifting gospel changes about every 10 years and comes out spick and span as a new theology—but we have grasped the old Infallible Truths of God and we mean to hang on to them for dear life, being strong in faith, giving glory to God!

But Abraham's was not only *receptive* faith. His was a faith which *obeyed* the precept. The test of his obedience was the strange command to take his only son and offer him up for a sacrifice. But he went to do it and, in God's account, he *did* do it, for he had the will to do it at God's bidding. You and I must be willing to do *what* God tells us, *as* God tells us, *when* God tells us, *because* God tells us—and only strong faith will be equal to such complete obedience. Then Abraham's faith awakened in him great expectations. He was looking for an heir, an heir from whom should spring a seed as the stars of Heaven for multitude!

He expected that quite as confidently as you and I expect tomorrow. We shall be full of expectation if we have strong faith. If we are looking for blessings, expecting prayers to be answered and promises to be fulfilled, that is strong faith. We shall not cry, "How wonderful!" every time a prayer is answered, but we shall reckon it a matter of necessity that God should stand to every Word that comes out of His mouth. May the Lord give you such strong faith as this and may it work in this fashion. But time chides me, as it did the Apostle when *he* entered upon this subject. You may well pardon me if I am wordy, for even so was he until he said, "Time would fail us to speak of Gideon and Jephtha," and so on.

V. Our last point is, FAITH IS ESPECIALLY TO BE EXPECTED IN CERTAIN QUARTERS. Here I wish to speak very pointedly and personally to all my Brothers and Sisters in Christ. Dear Friends, there ought to be strong faith in us who know God. "They that know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, Lord, have not forsaken them that seek You." And if He does not forsake the seekers, much less will He forsake those who have found Him and trusted in Him! Brothers and Sisters, there are some you can trust till you know them, but if it is true that when you do know them you can no longer trust them, it proves that they have a bad character. Now, you who know the Lord ought never to throw your God under such a suspicion! If you know Him, trust Him! I know you will.

We expect strong faith, next, from those who have had a long experience of Him. We can almost forgive you young people who have just started in the Christian life if you are vexed with doubts and fears, though

truly, God does not deserve them even of you! But when your sires begin to doubt, what shall we say of them? What? Have you known Him 50 years and cannot trust Him? What? My dear Brother, has the Lord kept you till you are seventy? How long do you expect to live? To eighty? Well, He has been good to you for 70 years, cannot you trust Him for the last ten? What? tested Him over and over again and never found a flaw in His fidelity—you have been in deep waters and kept from sinking—and yet are you mistrustful?

What are those things upon your feet? Shoes of iron and brass! He said they should be. Are you afraid that after all these years you will be foot-sore and shoeless? He promised, “as your days so shall your strength be.” How has it been? “Why,” you say, “it has been so up to this moment.” Then why not to the end? Speak well of the bridge which has carried you over so many times! As I have already said, you cannot put your finger upon a single instance in which the good Lord has deceived you! And if you never doubt your Lord till you have reason for it, you will never doubt Him at all! Come, come, let those of us who have been 25 years in the ways of God put aside our childish doubts! Yet I guarantee you this is easier said than done and, though we talk thus and we know it is true and right, alas, our nature goes readily astray into a wicked and provoking distrust of God!

Further, dear Friends, those ought to trust Him who have lived in fellowship with Him. If you have been on the top of Tabor. If you have known the kisses of His mouth and tasted of His love, which is better than wine, if you have tasted unprecedented joy in His arms, in the full assurance of faith and the enjoyment of perfect love—why should you come down from the mountain and distrust Him? God forbid that we should do this! May the recollection of the hill Mizar and the Hermonites come freshly over our minds, this morning, and may we rest in our God! Those who are getting near to Heaven ought not to distrust Him. I see upon some of you the marks of the coming end. The snowflakes of many winters lie on your brows, no, the wind has blown even those away from some of you and left the summit bare!

You will soon behold your Lord! Your eyes will soon see the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off. Do not let it be among the last memories of earth that you doubted your Beloved! Oh, you who have known Him from your youth and have proved His faithfulness till you have come to palsied age, do not, now, begin to suspect your gracious God! You do not doubt the partner of your bosom who has shared your sorrows for half a century and has been the comfort of your life—you do well to trust in her, for it is said of such—“The heart of her husband does safely trust her.” But surely, she is not to be relied upon as implicitly as your God! Oh, dear aged Brother, permit one who is but a little child compared with you, to entreat you. Console and cheer the younger people by the exhibition of confidence and serenity worked in you by strong faith!

Lastly, we who are teachers of others ought to have strong faith in God. I think we may, at times, profitably mention our own doubts and fears for the encouragement of those who are terribly downcast, but it ought always to be done with very great prudence and much regret. I remember

once speaking of my own trembling, when preaching, and a venerable Brother said to me afterwards, "I do not think, dear Pastor, that you were right in speaking of your own transgressions so freely. You encouraged the people, certainly, by what you said about yourself, but I hardly think they ought to be encouraged. Now, suppose you were to go into the pulpit and say, 'there are some of you who are thieves. It is very wrong of you, but still do not despair, for I thieve a little myself.' Why, you know," he said, "you would not be doing good, but harm! And yet thieving is not more truly a sin than doubting God—in fact there is the utmost sin in unbelief."

I replied to my good Brother that he was right and I thanked him for the correction. Whenever, dear Hearers, you catch any of us who are teachers doubting and fearing, do not pity us, but scold us! We have no right to be in Doubting Castle! Pray do not visit us there. Follow us as far as we follow Christ, but if we get into the horrible Slough of Despond, come and pull us out by the hair of our heads if necessary, but do not fall into it yourselves! Never say, "My beloved pastor went there and, therefore, I may go there." No, but say, "Even our minister fell into that error and, therefore, I will keep as far from it as ever I can, for if the teacher slips, the disciple may easily do so and, therefore, I must very carefully watch against unbelief."

Brothers and Sisters, we shall never succeed in winning sinners to faith if we preach what we do not intensely believe. I do verily believe that the sinner is lost and that unless Grace saves him, he is lost forever. I believe that eternal punishment will fall upon him unless he repents and believes in Jesus Christ. I believe that Jesus shed his precious blood and that whoever believes in Him is saved beyond all fear of destruction, saved by the blood of the Lamb. We must preach in a believing manner, knowing our message to be true, or else men will die in unbelief! And, what is more, I do not think we shall have many conversions unless we expect God to bless His Word and feel certain that He will do so. We must not wonder and be astonished if we hear of a dozen or two conversions, but let the astonishment be that thousands are *not* converted when they hear such Divine Truth and when we ask the Holy Spirit to attend it with Divine energy.

God will bless us in proportion to our faith! It is the rule of His Kingdom. "According to your faith so be it unto you." O God, give Your ministers more faith! Let us believe You firmly! Oh, that we could believe You up to the fullest possible measure of faith and never doubt You again! If the enemy number thousands, give us the faith of Samson to throw ourselves upon them and in the name of God to smite them! And though we, ourselves, as to all power to convert others are as dead men—and though the sinner is dead—yet help us to believe that souls can be begotten, again, by the preaching of the Gospel—and let us preach with confidence in Your Divine power. O Lord, grant this to us, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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

“JESUS OUR LORD”

NO. 2806

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1902.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 1, 1877.**

***“Jesus our Lord.”
Romans 4:24.***

“JESUS our Lord” is a somewhat unusual form of expression to be used in the Scriptures. We have many references to, “Jesus Christ,” and to, “our Lord Jesus Christ,” but there is only one other passage in which this occurs. Yet, to me, it seems to be inexpressibly sweet. I shall be devoutly grateful to God if, in my sermon, I am able to convey to you even a tittle of the sweetness which I have drawn from this expression for my own enjoyment.

It is part of faith to accept very great contrasts and if we look, for a moment, at the words of our text, “Jesus our Lord,” and especially if we look at the connection in which they are found, we shall see a great contrast. Jesus, the “Man of Sorrows,” and yet, “our Lord” Jesus! Thoughts of sorrow, rejection and shame cluster around that blessed and ever-musical name, yet He is “our Lord” in the highest and Divine sense—our Lord and our God! Faith has learned to think of Him, even before His birth, as the Christ of God, and to give heed to the angel’s message to Joseph, “You shall call His name, Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” Faith also bows at the manger with the worshipping shepherds and with the wise men from the East presenting gifts, realizing that the Infant is the Infinite and that the Babe of Bethlehem is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Faith sees Jesus in the humble garb of a Galilean peasant, moving about in the company of a band of fishermen. She sees that He is a friend of publicans and sinners, yet she believes Him to be the Son of the Highest, though flesh and blood have not revealed that great Truth of God to her. Even in His humiliation, she knows Him as Lord of the sea who made the stormy waves lie still at His command, and as the Master of diseases, before whom all manner of sicknesses, and even devils, themselves, fled apace. She knows Him to have been a suffering Man, yet she calls Him, “Lord.” Yes, even though, on the Cross, she beholds, with tearful eyes, His agony and death—yet even there she salutes Him as Lord! She did so in the dying thief’s prayer, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And she has done it thousands of times

since. And now, today, though the name of Jesus of Nazareth is bandied about and to many it is only a byword and the despised Galilean has, as yet, only a partial sway over the sons of men, yet Faith sees Him exalted to the highest heavens and she acknowledges Him as both Lord and God!

And these things which I said were contrasts which it was the part of Faith to accept, have ceased to be contrasts with her now, for now Faith sees but little contrast between Christ's death and His reigning in Glory! In fact, she understands that the one is the outgrowth of the other, especially as she reads such a passage as this, "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. Therefore God also has 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."

Faith delights to think that Christ's being Lord is the actual fruit of His having died and having risen again from the dead, for she comprehends the meaning of the Apostle Peter, at Pentecost, when he said to the Jews, "This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses...Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Faith has quick ears and she has heard Jehovah speaking in the same language as that which saluted David's ears, "Jehovah said unto My Lord, Sit You at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool." Even when Faith sees Jesus Christ under the most humiliating circumstances, she perceives how, out of that very humiliation, His mediatorial Kingdom has grown and she delights to acknowledge that glorious fact—and with adoring reverence she calls Him, "Jesus our Lord."

Before I finish this introduction to my discourse, I want to remind you, Beloved, that notwithstanding all the sweetness with which the name of Jesus is associated, and the blessed condescension by which He has brought Himself so near to us, yet our faith never takes liberties with Him, or forgets that He is, "Jesus our Lord." He is, "Jesus." Oh, the ineffable sweetness of that dear, precious and consoling name! But He is also, "Jesus our Lord." And you will always find that in proportion as faith grows, reverence grows. Unbelief is presumptuous, but faith is always humble. The more you know of Jesus as your Savior, saving you from sin, the more you will also recognize Him as your Lord. No one rebels against Christ because he believes in Him, but, because we believe in Him, He becomes our Lord and we learn to obey Him. That is the spirit I long to have reigning in all our hearts—the spirit of devout, worshipful reverence towards "Jesus our Lord."

First, I shall try to show you that *Christ's tender condescensions endear this title to us*. Secondly, *that our loving hearts read that title with*

peculiar emphasis. And, thirdly, that we find special sweetness in that word "our"—"Jesus our Lord."

I. First, then, I want to show you that CHRIST'S TENDER CONDESCENSIONS ENDEAR THIS TITLE TO US—"Jesus our Lord."

First, dear Friends, we claim to give Him this title specially because He is Man. "Jesus our Lord," says the Apostle, "who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." We worship Him all the more reverently and affectionately because He is Man as well as God. We call Him, "Jesus our Lord," as if we thereby meant to appropriate Him especially to ourselves. We can even say to the angels, "He is your Lord, for He created you and He sustains you. And you delight to do Him homage, yet He is not an angel. He took not upon Him the nature of angels. He never redeemed you with His precious blood, neither is He so near akin to you as He is to us. He never called you His brethren, but He is Jesus our Lord, for He was born of a woman and made under the Law, and became a partaker of our human nature and, therefore, He is not ashamed to call us brethren—and He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh."

It is a delightful thought to us that the Kingdom of "Jesus our Lord" has no bounds to it. Indeed, we can hardly imagine how wide is His dominion or how numerous are His subjects! It may be that there are innumerable beings in yonder starry worlds—as countless as the sands on the seashore—and that Jesus is Lord over all these. Yet He bears such a special relationship towards this little planet and this poor race of fallen men and women, that this round earth calls Him hers as no other world can call Him! And we, His people, call Him ours as no other creatures can, for, just as truly as He is God, so is He also Man. Behold, on the very Throne of God above, there sits a Man like ourselves! The men of Israel said that they had 10 parts in the king and more right to David than Judah had—and we have 10 parts in the Son of David and more right to Him than all the rest of His creatures have! His tender condescension, in becoming Man, endears to us the title, "Jesus our Lord." We call Him Lord with all the greater willingness and delight because He loved us and gave Himself for us. You remember the argument of the Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, "You are not your own, for you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." He who bought us with such a price claims us as His own and none of us, I trust, will dispute His claim. We rightly sing—

***"To Him that loved the souls of men
And washed us in His blood.
To royal honors raised our head
And made us priests to God.
To Him let every tongue praise
And every heart love!
All grateful honors paid on earth,
And nobler songs above!"***

We call Him Lord because He has made us to be new creatures in Him and because, as our Shepherd, He has not only led us and fed us, but because He has laid down His life for us who are the sheep of His flock. Now that He has done this for us, He must be our Lord and He shall be our Lord! Every drop of His blood shall be a jewel in the crown which He shall wear as He exercises His rightful Sovereignty over us. Every scar on His blessed body shall be to us a token of His true royalty and all that He has endured and suffered—even the wormwood and the gall—all this shall be but another token of the gracious Sovereignty to which we most cheerfully submit ourselves! Brothers and Sisters in Christ, do you not feel that because He died for us, we do all the more, and certainly none the less, call Him “Jesus our Lord”? Thus again His tender condescension endears the title to us.

Further, *in all the privileges that are accorded to us in Him, He is our Lord.* They, all of them, remind us of His lordship and sweetly, yet effectually, enforce that lordship over us. Are we not His Church and is He not the Head of the Church? We acknowledge no other head! The Church of Christ finds supreme delight and satisfaction in His headship. Are we the members of His mystical body? Then let us remember that He is never called an arm or an eye—He is always the Head, controlling the whole body. Are we the flock which He has purchased with His own blood? Then He is the Shepherd of that flock. Does He make some of us to be the under shepherds of His flock? Then He is the Chief Shepherd and when He shall appear, we “shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away.” Does He make us to be a spiritual house? Then He will dwell in that house as its Lord and Master. Are we, through His Infinite Love, united to Him in the bonds of sacred marriage? Then He is our Husband and it becomes our delight to bow to His will and yield ourselves absolutely to His control. Are we dead and buried with Him and do we expect to rise from the dead? He “is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence.” Do we expect to enter into Glory? When we do, we shall see the Lamb in the midst of the Throne of God and we shall bow before Him as Lord of all. Are we looking for the splendors of the millennial age and expecting to share in them? We shall then behold Him reigning here as King and breaking His enemies into pieces like potters’ vessels. You cannot draw near to Jesus without being impressed with the thought of His Lordship over you as well as His Divine condescension toward you. In fact, it is in His condescension that His Divine Lordship comes out more than anywhere else!

Once more, in our dearest fellowship at the Communion Table He is, “Jesus our Lord.” Some of us are coming, presently, to the Table where Jesus deigns to sit and eat with us, and there is no fellowship closer than that which this memorial supper so sweetly yields us. Yet you must have noticed, I think, how Paul, in his account of the institution of this ordinance, constantly uses the expression, “the Lord.” “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.” Why did He not simp-

ly say, “Jesus”? Further on, he says, “You do show the Lord’s death till He comes.” And that those who, “drink this cup of the Lord, unworthy, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, not discerning the Lord’s body.” All through, the Apostle speaks of Christ as the Lord who sits at the head of the table as the king presides in his palace. He is our dearly-beloved Spouse, of whom we may truly say, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” Yet is He still the King and we feel that even in all the nearness of communion that He permits us to enjoy with Him, there is still a distance as to quality and rank between Him and ourselves—and so we call Him Master and Lord—and we do well in speaking thus. We probably never feel how much He is our Lord till we come to the Communion Table. His very condescension makes this blessed title to become more bright to us and to be better understood by us.

II. I think I have said enough upon that first head to make it clear, so I will turn to the second one, which is this, OUR LOVING HEARTS READ THE TITLE WITH PECULIAR EMPHASIS. Oh, that we might suck the sweetness out of these words, “Jesus our Lord!” George Herbert wrote—

“How sweetly does ‘My Master’ sound! ‘My Master!’”

I may alter the words a little and say—

**“How sweetly does ‘Jesus our Lord’ sound! ‘Jesus our Lord!’
As ambergris leaves a rich scent unto the taster,
So do these words a sweet content,
An oriental fragrance, ‘Jesus our Lord.’”**

So, our loving hearts read this title with peculiar emphasis, for, first of all, *we never yield this title to anybody but to Him*—“Jesus our Lord.” We say, with the Prophet, “O Lord our God, other lords beside You have had dominion over us: but by You only will we make mention of Your name.” Moses was once lord over us—we put the Lord out of His rightful place and sought to serve the Law—but now we know that while “Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant”...Christ is “a Son over His own house.” Beloved, I charge you to let the Lord Jesus be the only Lord of your conscience! Obey none beside Him for He, alone, has the right to rule over you. I fear that there are some who take a thing for granted because some one of my Master’s servants said that it was so. He was an eminent servant and highly favored by his Master and, therefore, they take what he says for law. But we, who also are our Master’s servants, beseech you never to look to us as though we were masters, for, “one is your Master, even Christ, and all you are brethren.” It is a blessed day for any man when he is able to cast off every yoke except the yoke of Jesus Christ! Blessed shall we be if, henceforth, “Jesus our Lord” and He, alone, shall receive our complete obedience and the loyal homage of our hearts. Thus, we emphasize this title by reserving it for our Master.

We also render it to Him with the emphasis that arises from *great willingness*. We are not only willing, but anxious that Jesus should be our sole Lord and Master. And we feel angry with ourselves that we did not let Him be our Master years ago. We are so glad that He is our Lord that we wish never again to grieve Him—never to have a will of our own—never to do anything but what would perfectly accord with His rule over

us. I know that every saved one feels just like that and says, “O Lord, rule over me! Be You my only Lord! I wish it with intense desire and most cheerfully acknowledge that this is Your rightful title.”

And every true Christian pronounces this phrase, “Jesus our Lord,” with the emphasis of *unreservedness*. We desire that Christ Jesus should be our Lord in everything—and Lord over every part of our being. Each one of us has said to Him, “My Lord, do just what You will with me. If I can the better glorify You by patient endurance or by active service, only give me the necessary Grace and I will not fail to acknowledge You as my Lord.” Have you not, Beloved, given up to the Lord Jesus everything that you have? Have you not felt that you love Him better than husband, or wife, or child? Do you not feel that your spirit, soul and body all belong to Him and that you desire to consecrate to Him all your goods, all your hours and all your powers? Are you keeping back from Him any of your substance? Do you reckon that anything you have is your own? If so, you are not true to Jesus your Lord, for he who truly loves Jesus and who knows that he is one of those who are redeemed by Him, says with all his heart that Jesus is his Lord, his absolute Sovereign, His Despot, if that word may be used in the sense of Christ having unlimited monarchy and supreme sway over the soul! Yes, O, “Jesus our Lord,” You shall be the autocratic, imperial Master of our heart and of the whole dominion of our manhood!

The Church of God, in a very special manner, calls Jesus “our Lord,” for *there is not, and there cannot be any Head of the Church except the Lord Jesus Christ*. It is awful blasphemy for any man on earth to call himself Christ’s “vicar and the head of the church.” And it is an usurpation of the crown rights of King Jesus for any king or queen to be called the head of the church, for the true Church of Jesus Christ can have no Head but Jesus Christ Himself! I am thankful that there is no head to the Church of which I am a member save Jesus Christ, Himself, nor dare I be a member of any church which would content to any headship but His. You may put some other interpretation upon the title, but if it means what is meant, in Scripture, by the term, “the Head of the Church,” it is an infringement of the crown rights of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The true Church of Christ keeps that title only for her Lord and will not acknowledge another head. Nobody can make new laws for the true Church of Christ. You know that parliament makes laws which tell which way you shall turn when you say your prayers and what clothes you shall put on, and I know not what besides, but that is a poor parody of the true Church which submits to such lordship as that!

If I were a member of a church whose laws were made by a parliament that might consist of Jews and Gentiles, atheists and skeptics, I would be out of it as quickly as I could! There is no lawmaker for the Church of God but Jesus Christ, Himself, and no one can take His place! And no one will be allowed to take it when the Lord wakes up His people to be loyal to what is written in this blessed Bible. This is our Statute-Book and we acknowledge no other but that which King Jesus has given us.

"To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light of God in them."

Do you say that these are matters of little importance! Ah, Sirs, the Covenanters of Scotland bled and died for this which you call an unimportant matter—that Christ alone is Lord of His Church! You may call it a small thing if you like, but that teaching which is contrary to it is the mother of a thousand mischiefs to this, our beloved land, and is doing it inconceivable damage. I pray that there may come to all sections of the Church of Christ—Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopalian—this one resolve, "We will get back to Holy Scripture and to the sole Headship of Christ, cost whatever it may." If all of us should ever get to that point, we should get closer to one another than we now are, for we should be all one in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Once more, dear Friends, *we call "Jesus our Lord" forever*. When the true Church takes Jesus Christ to be her Lord, it is in a marriage bond that shall never be dissolved. And when any individual soul takes Jesus Christ to be her Lord, she takes Him to have and to hold, in life and in death, in time and throughout eternity! Is it not so? Then a very precious thought which arises out of this Truth of God is that however poorly we do our duty as His servants, He will carry out to the fullest, His Character as our Lord! A lord, you know, takes care of his servants. He sees that they do not die of starvation and he protects them and, as far as he can, sees that they do not need any good thing. I always feel quite certain that if we faithfully serve our Lord, He will keep us in our needs and, having food and clothes, we ought to be content. His promise to the upright is, "Bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." If you get anything over and above bread and water, you may know that He has given you more than He promised—and He will keep you in your needs till you need them no more—and then He will give you those spotless garments of light and joy in which you shall serve Him forever and ever!

"Jesus our Lord" is not like that Amalekite who, when his Egyptian servant was sick, left him to die. He is not like some masters whom we have known, who, the moment a servant is taken ill sends him off, caring not whether he dies or lives. Our Lord and Master never discharges His old servants—He never turns them adrift. Remember the Psalmist's testimony and petition—"O God, You have taught me from my youth: and up to now have I declared Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not." Nor will He. He is a good Master whom we serve—the best of all masters—"Jesus our Lord!"

III. Now I come to the third point, which is that WE FIND MUCH SWEETNESS IN THAT LITTLE WORD IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR TEXT, "Jesus *our* Lord."

It is very sweet because it *helps us to remember our personal interest in Christ*. My Brothers and Sisters, let me remind you that you can never truly say, "Our Lord," till you have first said, "My Lord." It is blessed to be able to say it as David did, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit You at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool." David claimed

this blessed Son of his as his Lord, and he did well in doing so. And it is a very sweet thing when any of us is also able to say, “Jesus Christ, the Son of David, and the Son of God, is my Lord.” It is truly blessed to be able to say, as Thomas did, “My Lord and my God.” Each one of you needs to have the personal conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord to you. I would even like to say this if I only said it as tremblingly as Mary Magdalene did when she supposed that she was talking to the gardener, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” It is still better if we can say this as Paul once said it, “Yes 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.” This title, “Jesus our Lord,” reminds me, and I hope it also reminds you of the time when you first said—

**“‘Tis done! The great transaction’s done!
I am my Lord’s and He is mine—
He drew me and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice Divine.”**

There is, however, even more sweetness than this in the expression, “Jesus our Lord,” for *it brings us into fellowship with all the saints*. “Our Lord”—then, David, Thomas, Mary Magdalene and Paul—we have the same Lord that you had! Yes, and we seem to join with all the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the whole company of the Apostles and the noble army of martyrs as we say, “Jesus our Lord.” Yes, and all the great company who served their Master here with patience, labored for Him with diligence and have now gone to their reward—we are one with all of them—we have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” This term, “Jesus our Lord,” seems to draw a circle around all the elect of God, the whole host of the redeemed out of every nation, kindred, tribe, tongue and people in every land and every age! It seems to remind me of a kind of clanship which exists among all Believers. Just as the old Highland clansmen, when they saw the head of the clan, all felt intense enthusiasm at the very sight of him—for he was the great center and meeting place for all the divers families in the clan—and with him leading them they rushed forward to victory or death with the utmost enthusiasm, so, when I look you in the face, Beloved, we may differ very greatly in station, in ability and in a thousand things, but *your* Lord is *my* Lord, so we are Brothers and Sisters in Him and we clasp hands around Him and say, “Jesus our Lord.” This one peerless name wakes us all to enthusiasm and holy daring—

**“Jesus, the name high over all,
In Hell, or earth, or sky”—**

stirs our very blood as nothing else can and we feel a closer tie than ever to all the saints. This one touch of Grace has made us all akin. The blessed name of “Jesus our Lord” has banded us all together in one holy brotherhood and we join in singing—

**“One family we dwell in Him,
One Church above, beneath.”**

And, further, the *example of "Jesus our Lord" will foster practical love to one another*. It will if it works rightly, for we shall remember what our Lord did and seek to follow His example. Do you remember what He did on the night when He was betrayed? "He rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciple's feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." After He had done so, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Master and Lord: and you say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you." After such an example as that, we ought to be willing to do *anything* for one another! We should feel as if "Jesus our Lord" constrained us to make any sacrifice and to take the humblest and lowliest place, so long as we might be of service to anyone else who also calls Him Lord!

And, Brothers and Sisters, what a *death-blow this title ought to deal to all pride!* Diotrefes still loves to have the pre-eminence but would he love it if he really knew "Jesus our Lord" as He has revealed Himself in His Word? This Brother wants more respect shown to him. That Brother must have some office given to him and that Sister must be held in high esteem or she will not be happy. Ah, yes, and you remember that there were two Apostles whose mother asked for them that they might sit, one at the right hand and the other at the left hand of Christ in His Kingdom! And when the other Apostles were moved with indignation against the two brothers, our Lord said to them, "You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (that is, your servant), and whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." As we recall this act and these words, we cry, "Down, pride! You are not lord! Down, ambition! You must not wish to rule! Down, every proud thought, that only 'Jesus our Lord' may rule absolutely over us!"

Now, dear Friends, are you enjoying the sweetness of this title? Do you feel as if you wish to roll it under your tongue as a sweet morsel? Then I will not detain you longer except to say just these two things. First, this title, "*Jesus our Lord,*" gives us great confidence in our common service. As a Christian Church, we are all working for Jesus. I hope I may say that the members of this Church are all seeking the Glory of God. Then, let us remember what our Lord said to His disciples before He went back to His Father, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go you, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." March on, then, you armies of the living God, for Christ is your Lord and He has given you your commis-

sion—and it is His power which will make your march to be victorious! Does any man think of turning his back in the day of battle when he has such a Captain as this to lead him? Does anyone dream of defeat, or talk in a half-hearted way of what the issue of the conflict is certain to be? “Jesus our Lord” is the world’s Creator—He that can shake Heaven, and earth, and Hell with His word! So, in His name let us set up our banners and march onward, confident of victory!

The thought with which I close is one that ought to yield considerable comfort to many of you. *Our common joy in “Jesus our Lord” becomes an evidence of Grace.* Have you felt a gracious sweetness stealing over your soul because Jesus Christ is your Lord? Then listen to these words of the Apostle Paul—“Therefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.” Anyone can repeat these words, but you cannot say them aright—as I hope you have been saying them—with an ineffable sweetness stealing over your soul as you said them—“but by the Holy Spirit.” Go your way, therefore, you whose heart has leaped at the very sound of those three words, and say, “I have the witness of the Holy Spirit within my spirit that I am a saved soul, or else I would never have said, in my inmost heart, ‘Jesus our Lord.’” O Brother or Sister, here is a sign that cannot lead you wrong, for you have the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, to tell you that you could not say that in your inmost soul but by the Holy Spirit! Come, then, Beloved, and worship “Jesus our Lord.” Continue to worship Him! Continue to love Him! Continue to trust Him! Continue to serve Him! Continue to magnify Him among the sons of men!

But to you who love Him not and who have not accepted Him as your Lord, I can only say, in God’s own words, “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” And this other verse which is, to my mind, the most awful in the whole Book of God, yet it was uttered by one who loved the souls of men beyond all conception, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,” that is, “let him be accursed at Christ’s coming.” God save you from that terrible doom, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALMS 2; 110.**

Psalm 2:1-3. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.* This was what they did when they took the Lord of Life and Glory, dragged Him to the judgment seat and then nailed Him to the accursed tree. “This is the heir,” they said, “let us kill Him and the inheritance shall be ours.” They

thought that they had destroyed the power of Christ, the appointed and Anointed King, and that He would never reign among the sons of men.

4. *He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.* God might well laugh at their folly, for they were really executing His will all the while they were rebelling against Him! They were really laying the foundation stones of His mediatorial throne in fair colors and cementing them with His own most precious blood, for it was by His Cross that He climbed to His crown! Well did Peter say to the Jews, on the day of Pentecost, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

5, 6. *Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion.* In the Resurrection, God lifted up the head of Christ above all the sons of men and made them see that all their craft and cruelty had been displayed in vain.

7, 8. *I will declare the decree: the LORD has said unto Me, You are My Son; this day have I begotten You. Ask of Me, and I shall give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession.* The risen Christ is pleading, and pleading successfully, before the Throne of God on high. And His plea is that the heathen may be given to Him for His inheritance—and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.

9. *You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.* He does this even now in the working of His Providence, but He will do it still more manifestly at the Second Advent, when Christ will not allow the kings of the earth to any longer set themselves against Him, but He will finally destroy their power and prove Himself to be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords even here below.

10-12. *Be wise now therefore, O you kings: be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son.* That is the Lord Jesus Christ—“Kiss the Son.”

12. *Lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.*

Psalm 110:1. *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.* Here we see the Christ—whom we just now saw as risen from the dead and acknowledged as the Son of God—seated upon the Throne of God. “Jehovah said unto my Adonai, Sit You at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

2. *The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion: rule You in the midst of Your enemies.* No sooner was Christ ascended into Heaven than, out of the midst of His Church—the earthly Zion—the scepter of His power was stretched forth and its might was displayed among the sons of men! Witness what happened on the day of Pentecost, which was but the beginning of Christ’s ruling in the very midst of His enemies, who then became His friends and yielded their hearts and lives to Him so that Jerusalem, where He had been crucified, became the very center of His

Kingdom on earth, from which His servants went forth to evangelize the world!

3. *Your people shall be willing.* They shall be willingness itself.

3. *In the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: You have the dew of Your youth.* That is, as soon as the ascended Christ began His reign in Heaven, and the power of His Church begin to be felt on earth, there was a willing people coming forward in the beauty of holiness, like priests clad in their sacred robes. Such the early Christians truly were—and they were as numerous, as refreshing and as bright to the world as the sparkling dew of the morning. Then, indeed, had Christ the dew of His youth most clearly manifested! Multitudes of young hearts yielded to Him and His Church on earth seemed to have had a new birthday when He ascended up on high and led captivity captive!

4. *The LORD has sworn, and will not relent, You are a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.* That is, a Priest without predecessor or successor—a Priest who was at the same time a king—a Priest of the Most High God who was greater, even, than Abraham, the friend of God. Jesus our Lord is not a priest after the order of Aaron, for He came not of that line, but He was “a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

5. *The Lord at Your right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.* When that Last Great Day shall come, Christ shall no longer patiently wait for the overthrow of His enemies—He shall win a complete victory over them!

6. *He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries.* Thus will You, O Lord, cut down all evil principles and everything that is opposed to You!

7. *He shall drink of the brook in the way.* That is, He shall not be wearied with thirst, as Samson was, but He shall hasten on in His mighty achievements, without pausing to rest, until He has fully accomplished the whole of His great task.

8. *Therefore shall He lift up the head.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—317, 382.

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

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THE TWO PILLARS OF SALVATION

NO. 2357

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, APRIL 22, 1894.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 19, 1888.**

***“We believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised, again, for our justification.”
Romans 4:24, 25.***

FAITH—true, saving faith—is in all ages the same. It may exercise itself upon different things, but the faith of Abraham is the same faith as that which was in the heart of Paul—and the faith of Paul was precisely the same faith as that which is in the heart of every Believer at the present moment! We have “like precious faith” with the godly of all the ages. It is always the same faith as it is always the same God and the same Savior.

Paul shows us, in this chapter, that there is a remarkable likeness between the faith of the Believer, now, and the faith of Abraham. Abraham's faith went this length—he believed in God as able, even, to quicken the dead, and that is precisely what we believe! He believed that he, himself, when he was more than a hundred years old, with his wife equally advanced in age, could be so quickened by the power of God that they should be the parents of a seed which God had promised and, although Sarah once laughed, and I should imagine that Abraham, sometimes, had his fainting fits, yet they persevered in the solemn conviction that it should be even as the Lord had promised. And the day came when Sarah laughed in another sense, for a child was born to her, whose name was called, “Isaac,” that is, “Laughter,” because of the joy with which he filled his parents' hearts and home! Thus, you see, Abraham believed that God could quicken the dead—he, himself, and his wife, being as though they were dead as to all possibility, in the ordinary course of nature—an heir should be born to them.

Further on in the Patriarch's history, God tried his faith again. He bade him go and take his son, his only son, whom he loved, and offer him up as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Abraham only wished to know what God commanded and he was prompt in obeying. It was not for him to reason why, or make reply—it was for him to *obey*—so he went his three days' journey, his much-loved son bearing the wood for the sacrifice. They went to the top of the mountain and Abraham drew his knife to slay his son. His hand was divinely stopped in due time and a ram was offered in the place of Isaac. One reason why Abraham was able to give this crowning proof of obedience was that he was sure that God would keep His promise and that, even if his son must die, God would raise him from the dead! This seems to have been the point to which his faith al-

ways came—that God could raise the dead, that He could work what men call impossibilities—that what was not within the range of human nature was quite easy to that eternal arm to whose power there is no limit!

Now, Beloved, this is one of the articles of our Christian faith—to believe that God can raise the dead. You and I believe, if we are true Believers, that God brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep. We believe that Jesus assuredly died and that He was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, but that on the third day He rose, again, and left the tomb, no more to die. This we most firmly believe to be a matter of *fact*—not a fiction, or a piece of poetry—but a matter of *fact*, like any other reliable history, and we accept it without question. We also believe that we, too, though we may die, shall live again and that, although worms may devour this body, yet in our flesh we shall see God! At the sound of the archangel's trumpet, the dead in Christ shall rise and all the dead from land or sea shall gather before the Great White Throne. However scattered the particles of their bodies may have been, in ten thousand devious ways, it matters not—the body that was sown in weakness shall be raised in power—that which was sown a corruptible body shall be raised in incorruption!

This we unfeignedly believe and our faith also believes that, even now, as to spiritual things, though by nature we are dead to the things of God, yet He can raise the dead. When we feel heavy and dull, and the music of our worship drags wearily, we believe that God can quicken us and, though we know many who are, this day, without spiritual life, and far from God by wicked works, we go and speak to them the everlasting Gospel with the full persuasion that God can raise the dead, even those who are dead in trespasses and sins! Though they were dead, yet shall they live! We believe this and rejoice in it!

Thus I think I have shown you that the faith of Abraham is a fair specimen of the faith of all Believers and in this way he is the father of all Believers—and all the children bear a family likeness. In each case, they have faith in Him who can quicken the dead.

Now let us come to our text, and I will handle it briefly with the intense desire that if anybody wants to find the way of salvation, he may find it *tonight*. True faith is of this character—"We believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised, again, for our justification."

I. First, OUR FAITH LOOKS TO GOD THE FATHER IN THE MATTER OF SALVATION. We do not, alone, look to Jesus Christ, as some say that we do, but, "we believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead." Not on, "Jesus, our Lord," alone. We do believe on Him, but we also equally believe on God that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead.

On this point there is an erroneous faith in two ways and one is sorry to see either form of this error, since it mars the beauty of Divine Truth. *Some overlook the Father.* They speak of Jesus as though we were indebted to Him and to Him, only, for our salvation. We are immeasurably indebted to Him, blessed be His name! But Jesus does not save without the Father, or apart from the Father, or against the Father's will! I like

the expression that is used in the Book of Genesis concerning Abraham and his son when they were going to the Mount of Sacrifice—it is written, “They went, both of them, together.” And in the great Sacrifice that was made for human sin, I may say of the Divine Father and His equally Divine Son, “They went, both of Them, together.” There was a secret agreement and concurrence between the Father and the Son concerning our redemption, and the Father has our love and gratitude, even as the Son has. Jesus gave Himself for us, but the Father gave Jesus, His other Self!

Jesus says, “I and My Father are One.” I might say, in a certain sense, that it was God the Father who suffered for us, for He gave His Son, whom He loved, to suffer on our behalf. He gave up the darling of His heart and, in the Person of His Son, He became our Savior. It is, “God, our Savior,” as well as, “Jesus Christ, our Savior.” Never dissociate the Father from the Son in the work of redemption! Jesus did not come into this world to die to make His Father gracious. No, the Covenant of Grace was made from eternity and Jesus came to fulfill a stipulation of the Covenant through which it behooved Him to suffer. The Father’s love is from everlasting and the death of Jesus is one of the streams that flow from that eternal Fountain. The Father is to be praised, for He delivered up His Son and raised His Son, again, from the dead. And we must never forget the Grace which He has, in this way, manifested for our salvation! Therefore, let us never fall into the error of those who overlook the Father’s part in our redemption.

It is an equally pernicious error if we overlook the Son. Oh, how many talk about God, pray to God and speak of God’s mercy—but what have they to do with God if they ignore or despise His Son? *God* will not hear you. He will not answer your prayers if you do not come to Him by Jesus Christ! There is but one way of coming to the Father and that is through His Son, Jesus Christ! And you cannot approach God without the one Mediator between God and men. Why did He ordain a Mediator and why did that Mediator shed His blood, if you and I can come to God without His propitiatory Sacrifice? No, Beloved, we believe on Jesus Christ as well as the Father. We believe on the Father, but we believe on Him as the God that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead! It is not the Father without the Son who saves, nor the Son without the Father—nor these two without the Divine and ever-to-be-blessed Holy Spirit! It needs the whole Trinity to make a Christian! And the whole Trinity, co-operating in a Divine Unity, must be praised and adored for our salvation!

But, now, what does the text say in bidding us trust to God the Father in our salvation? Well, it says, first, that *He delivered up His Son*. Of Jesus, we here read, “who was delivered for our offenses.” We know who it was that delivered Him, for we have in this same Epistle the text, “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?” It was the Father who delivered His Son to be arrayed in human flesh. It was the Father who delivered His Son to be despised and rejected of men. It was the Father who delivered up His Son to the traitor’s kiss and to the cruel handling of the Roman soldiers. It was the Father who delivered up His Son to the scourge and then to the Cross—and to the bitterness of death, itself! The

Father gave up His Son to die for sinners! This was the supreme proof of the Father's love to us.

And then, next, we are told that, in due season, it was the Father who *raised up Jesus from the dead*—"We believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead." The Resurrection of Christ is spoken of in different ways in Scripture, but among other declarations it is expressly said to have been worked by the power of the Father. Well, then, we have to thank Him for a living Christ, a risen Christ! It was the Father who breathed the life, again, into that dead body and brought our Redeemer back to life. It was the Father who bade the angels roll away the stone from the mouth of the sepulcher when the resurrection morning dawned.

And remember that, as these two things—the delivering up of Christ and the raising of Christ from the dead—are ascribed to the Father, so the two fruits that come of them are also of the Father. The first fruit is *the pardon of sin*—"Who was delivered for our offenses." The second fruit is *justification*—"And was raised, again, for our justification." These are both the work of the Father! It is the Father who forgives and it is the Father who justifies. "It is God that justifies," said Paul, when he was carried away with a sort of Divine ecstasy. "It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?" So, then, we cannot truly trust to Jesus apart from the Father. To come back to the point on which I have already spoken to you—to try to drive that nail home and even to clinch it—*we do not look to Jesus apart from the Father*, any more than we look to the Father apart from Jesus! This is the true Scriptural faith, "We believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised, again, for our justification."

Now, Soul, if you would be saved, before anything else it is necessary that you should trust your soul in the hands of God, the faithful Creator, beholding always associated with those hands, the Lord Jesus Christ, God and Man, who has died and risen, again, to put away your sin! Such a faith now exercised will save you at once and will save you forever and ever!

II. Now I advance a step farther and come to the second head, THE FAITH WHICH SAVES THE SOUL CONCERNS ITSELF WITH JESUS CHRIST AS OURS. Listen to this—*true faith looks to nothing else that is ours*. When it looks within, this faith sees nothing there worth having and nothing worth trusting to for salvation. Therefore it cries out against its own righteousness, which is of the Law, and desires to count it only as filthy rags! It views Jesus Christ, however, as its real treasure.

Do you notice, in my text, the word, "our," three times over? Just mark with a pencil under that little pronoun each time it is mentioned. *True faith receives Jesus Christ as "our" Lord Jesus*. "Jesus *our* Lord," our Jesus, our Savior—not only *a* Savior, but *our* Savior—and being Lord as well as Savior, we acknowledge Him as our Lord, Jesus, we take Him to be our Lord. This is how He, Himself, puts it, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me," and this we desire to do. This, then, is the true, unfeigned faith which saves the soul—the faith which appropriates Jesus as our Savior and as our Lord!

And the next appropriation is that *true faith sees Christ as delivered for “our” sins*. “Who was delivered for our offenses.” That means your offenses and mine—“our offenses.” Oh, my dear Hearers, it is of little use to believe in Jesus Christ as delivered for the offenses of those who lived in the ages past—we must believe that He was delivered for *our* offenses! It will not save us to believe that Jesus Christ was delivered for the sins of nations far remote from us. No, but we must believe that He was delivered for *our* offenses. This is the faith that says, “Jesus Christ bore my sins in His own body on the tree.” Grasp the Savior as *your* Sin-Bearer. “Look unto Me,” He says, “and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” Look unto Him, look unto Him at this moment—you are saved the moment that you look! Trust Him as your Savior! Touch Him, as did the woman of old—it shall suffice you if you can but touch Him by faith and straightway you shall be saved from all your transgressions—for true faith believes “He was delivered for our offenses.”

And then next, *true saving faith appropriates Christ as raised for “our” justification*. It is a Scriptural doctrine that we are justified through the death of Christ, but you must not leave it merely as a doctrine—you must take it to yourself by faith and make it an *experience*, as the text says—“Who was raised, again, for our justification.” For whose justification? For *yours*, dear Friends, and mine—“for *our* justification.” I like the word, “our,” sometimes better than the word, “my.” When I get quite alone, I sometimes pray, “*My* Father in Heaven.” Still, I am thankful that the Lord did not so word the model prayer that He gave to His disciples, but that He put it, “*Our* Father”—that is, the Father of you, me and all of us who love His dear name and trust His dear Son.

Yes, Jesus was raised for *my* justification—I praise Him for that glorious fact! I see in front of me every morning, when I am washing, that passage, “Who loved me and gave Himself for me,” and I thank the Lord that it is true. But, still, I like this word, “our,” in our text—“Who was raised, again, for our justification.” Does “our justification” mean your justification, dear Friends, as well as mine? Who will ride with me in the double-seated chariot of this precious pronoun, “our,” saying, “He was raised, again, for *our* justification”?

Thus have I taught you two lessons. The first, that our faith looks to God the Father in salvation. And secondly, that our faith concerns itself with Christ as *ours*.

III. Now, thirdly, OUR FAITH FOR SALVATION RELIES ON CHRIST’S DEATH AND RESURRECTION—“Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised, again, for our justification.”

Observe, then, that *a faith which only deals with the historical narrative of Christ’s life will not save you*. If you believe that there was such a Person as Jesus Christ, even if you truly believe that He was both God and Man. If you believe all that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote, and all the Epistles, as well, yet, if you believe this only in the sense that they are *historically* true, you have not yet attained to saving faith! You must go beyond that if you are to possess the faith mentioned in our text.

Note, next, that *faith in the beauty of Christ's life will not save you*. Of late there has risen up a set of infidels of a very superior character to the old-fashioned ones, in some respects. Instead of abusing the Christian religion, they have written lives of Christ and they have poured out all kinds of laudation upon the wonderful and lovely Character of the Man, Christ Jesus. Now, mark you, I think that Christ does not like their praise any better than He did the blasphemies of those who came before them, because, if Jesus of Nazareth was not the Son of God, if He was not really God, the Son, He could not have been a good Man! His moral Character, though admirable in many respects, would have been spoiled by the fact that He allowed Himself to be *worshipped* and that He spoke of Himself in such a way that millions of us believe Him to be truly God! And knowing and foreseeing, as such a Man must have done, that this would be the result of His teaching, He was a gross impostor if He was not very God of very God! Therefore, if you believe Christ's Character to be beautiful, if you do not also believe Him to be the Son of God, you are not yet on the right track—you have not the faith of God's elect—you have to go on another road than that if you would come, at last, to the Heaven where He is.

There are some who do not truly believe, although they have *faith in the accuracy of Christ's teaching*. "Yes," they say, "He is a wonderful Teacher and whatever He taught is true"—but they do not practically believe that. It is merely the doctrine that they take, and not the God, the Christ, who gave the doctrine! They simply exercise their brain intellectually, but they do not trust Him, *spiritually*, with their heart. They do not trust God who raised Christ from the dead. In fact, after all, they do not build upon the two main foundation stones of saving faith, namely, the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I venture also to say that you may have the most orthodox *faith in Christ's Godhead* and *believe in Jesus as being Lord*, but if that is all you believe, you have not yet obtained salvation. The faith that saves centers in Him, "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised, again, for our justification." If you would be saved, fix your eyes upon the sufferings of the Son of God—

**"See, my Soul, your Savior see,
Prostrate in Gethsemane."**

I know that a sight of His life will do you good. It will be an example to you, but you are not bid to look to that for your salvation. Your eyes are to be fixed upon Him as delivered for your offenses. You are to see Him as accused of sin, though in Him was no sin. You are to see Him as made sin for you, as your Substitute, standing in your place, and suffering in your place, delivered for your offenses. If you can see this, then you have your eyes fixed upon that which will save you—the Father laying your sin upon the Son, making it to lay upon Him. The Father smiting the Son as if He were not only a sinner, but all the sinners in the world rolled into one till His Son cries, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" "Who was delivered for our offenses"—there lies your only hope! If you will not have Jesus Christ as your Substitute, dying in your place, I know of no door of salvation for you! But if you will take Him as God de-

livers Him, not for your righteousness, but *for your sins*, to bear for you what you ought to bear, and pay for you what you could never have paid—if you will have Him so, then you have taken Christ in the right way!

But you must also believe in Him as risen from the dead. He did rise from the dead and He always lives to make intercession for us—and it is under that aspect that you are to be justified, cleansed by a dying Savior, clothed by a risen Savior, washed from your iniquity by His precious blood, raised into acceptance with the Father by His everlasting life when He rose from the dead and led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious, also!

Behold, then, the Jachin and Boaz, the two massive columns that support the temple of our salvation! Between these two great Truths of God—Christ's death for us and Christ's Resurrection for us—lies the King's highway to eternal life. And there is no other road to salvation!

IV. So I close with the fourth point, OUR FAITH SHOULD LEARN TO SEE THE DISTINCT RELATION OF EACH WORK OF CHRIST TO ITS END—"Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised, again, for our justification." At first, for a poor sinner, it is enough that he trusts Christ and does no more. But it is for our comfort and edification to learn to distinguish the blessings that flow from certain Divine Fountains—to look along the various roads of the great King to see what comes this way and what comes that.

First, then, dear Friends, *our forgiveness comes from the death of Christ*—"Who was delivered for our offenses." There is no pardon of sin apart from Christ being delivered for our offenses. Of late I have heard things that I never dreamed of, before—alleged, even, by professedly Christian *ministers*, against the fundamental Doctrines of God's Word! And some have even dared to say that the Substitution of Christ—His suffering in our place—was not just! Then they have added that God forgives sin without any Atonement whatever, but, if the first is not just, what shall I say of the second? If God continually forgives sin without taking any care of His moral government. If there is nothing done for the vindication of His justice, how shall the Judge of all the earth do right? Then, the very foundations of the universe would be removed and what would the righteous do? Depend upon this, whatever modern philosophy may say, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins," that is to say, without an Atonement, and an Atonement consisting of the giving up of a Life of infinite value, there is no passing by of human transgression!

But how is it that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is available for the pardon of sin? I answer, first, in part from the majesty of His Person. Being God, when He took upon Himself our nature, and became God and Man, He had about His complete and adorable Person a Divinity and majesty utterly indescribable! And for Him to die was a greater honor to the stern justice of God than for the whole mass of rebellious men to be cast into Hell! There was such a vindication of Divine justice in Christ being nailed to the tree, that it is not conceivable that anything else could ever have so established the foundations of morality and right-

eousness. Oh, Sirs, Christ is infinitely better than all of us put together! As the Son of God and God, the Son, He is greater than all the rest of men throughout all ages—and greater than all the holy angels, too—and if He must suffer, if He must die when sin is but *imputed* to Him, and is not really His own, then God is truly just in taking vengeance even on His Only-Begotten Son when He stands in the sinner's place!

The next reason why Christ's death for us was so efficacious is found in the freeness of His own condition. As God, He was not bound to come under the Law. Indeed, it must have seemed inconceivable that He ever could do so! I could not make an Atonement for you because whatever I could do for God is already due from me to God. If I give all that I have, I cannot pay my own debt, so I certainly cannot pay yours! But our Lord Jesus Christ owed nothing to the Law of God! It was not possible that He could be personally indebted to it and, therefore, all that He did was, as it were, a surplus which He set to the account of the guilty men whose Substitute He became.

The excellence of His Atonement also lay in the absolute perfection of His Character. He was the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot. There is no excess in Him and there is nothing lacking—and such a character as this entitled Him, when He came to suffer, to say that He did not suffer for Himself. The Messiah laid down His life and was cut off, "but not for Himself," since He was without sin and was under no obligation to the Law.

And then, again, His Headship towards His people put Him in a position in which He could fitly become a Sufferer in our place. Look, Sirs, the first cause of your fall did not lie in yourselves. Your father Adam sinned long ago, and you fell in *him*. Do you blame God for that arrangement and begin to complain? Behold the door of hope there is for you in this fact! Because you fell through *one* representative, you can be restored by Another! When the angels fell, I suppose that they sinned separately, and that they had no federal head as we had. They transgressed, each individual spirit for himself and, therefore, they fell hopelessly and eternally—and none of them can ever be lifted up again. But our fall, happily for us, was in our Covenant head, Adam. There is a solidarity of the race—Adam was the head of it and when he sinned, we fell in him. Our fall being in that way—it is retrievable by the Divine device of another Head coming in and keeping the Law of God for us, and suffering the penalty of it in our place that, thereby, we might be restored. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, I wish you felt as much joy and delight as I do in this wonderful Doctrine of Christ being delivered for our offenses! I go to sleep at night upon it. "Yes," you say, "it makes you sleep." It does and I wake in the morning with it, and it keeps me awake all day with a stern resolve to serve my Lord and Master while I can, come what may of it! Restful as this Truth of God is to the heart, it is also stimulating to the highest degree. Believe it and you will find rest unto your soul and you, also, will be stirred up to serve your God while yet 'tis called today!

But I find, next, we are told that being thus saved from sin by Christ's death, *we are justified by His Resurrection*—"Who was raised, again, for our justification." What does this mean?

I sometimes tell you that Jesus Christ was put in the prison of the grave as a Hostage for us. He had paid our debt, but He must wait in the grave till the certificate that the debt was paid was registered in the court of Heaven. That being done for three days and nights—roughly so styled, but very short, all of them—down flew the bright messenger from Heaven, bearing the writ and warrant that the Hostage must go free, for the debt was paid and the whole liability was discharged. Then the stone was rolled away and when the angel had rolled it away, what did he do? He went and sat down upon it. It always seems to me that when the angel sat down, there, he seemed to say, “Now, Death and Hell, roll the stone back if you can”—but they could not! The keepers fled far away and Jesus Christ, Himself, came out to newness of life. And now both the sinner and his Substitute are cleared, the captive and the Hostage are both set free! He that owed the debt is cleared by his Substitute and the Substitute, Himself, is cleared, for He has paid all that Infinite Justice could demand and He has received a clean bill of deliverance! Thus He comes forth out of durance vile, raised from the dead by His Father’s hand. That resurrection is your justification!

Now just look at this matter for a minute in another way. Suppose that Jesus Christ had never risen and I were to tell you that He had made a complete Atonement and died for our sins, but that He was still dead and in that grave? Why, if you believed the message, you would always be troubled! You could not feel any confidence in a *dead Christ*—you would say, “He sees corruption, yet the true Christ was never to see corruption. He is dead and what can a dead Christ do for us?” Beloved, the dying Christ has purchased for us our justification, but the *risen Christ* will see that we get it! The risen Christ has come to bring it to us and herein we rest!

Oh, that you would all rest in the finished work of Jesus on the Cross which is set forth to you in all its brightness by His rising again from the dead! Put the two parts of our text together, “Who was delivered for our offenses,” “and was raised, again, for our justification.” You need them both! Trust in them both! Trust in the Savior who died upon the Cross, and trust in the Christ who rose, again, and is now the living Christ! Trust, in fact, in Christ as He revealed Himself to John in Patmos—“I am He that lives, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of Hell and of death.” Lord Jesus, as such we trust You, as such we trust You now, and we are saved!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
*Romans 3; 4:16-25.***

Romans 3:1, 2. *What advantage, then, has 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 of God—“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: yes, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That You might be justified in Your sayings, and might overcome when You are judged.* Whatever men did under the old Law, however faithless they might be, God was still true and faithful.

5, 6. *But if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who takes 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,” he says, “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 has more abounded through my lie unto His Glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we are 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 said, “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 understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does 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 understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.”

13-16. *Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they have wed 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 sins 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, broadening, tending downwards and, especially, “there is no fear of God before their eyes.”

19. *Now we know that what things soever the Law says, it says 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 objective of God’s Law to shut every man’s mouth—and when we come to that condition, 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 mirror. If you want to be cleansed from your stains, you must go somewhere else. The objective 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 can never 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 has 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 believes 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 would have merited whatever we earned by our own excellence and we might have gloried in it.

27-31. *No, 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: yes, we establish the Law.*

Chapter 4:16. *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 are circumcised or not, and the promises made to him belong to them also.*

17, 18. *(As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations), before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickens the dead, and calls those things which are 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 your seed be. He was an old man, with a very aged wife, yet the Lord promised that he would 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 need—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 offenses, and was raised, again, for our justification. May the Lord bless to us our meditation upon this precious portion of His Word!*

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PEACE—A FACT AND A FEELING

NO. 1456

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

*“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God
through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
Romans 5:1.

WONDERFUL is the power of faith. In the Epistle to the Hebrews our Apostle tells us of the marvelous exploits which it has worked in subduing kingdoms and obtaining promises, in quenching the violence of fire and stopping the mouths of lions, in braving perils and doing deeds of prowess. Still, to us personally, one of the most wonderful of its effects is that it brings us justification and consequent peace. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” If we know the justifying power of faith and the way in which, like a hand, it puts upon us the matchless garment of the Savior’s righteousness, we shall value that faith as our first parents did the gracious hand of God which made coats of skins and covered their nakedness. The little faith we have will make us crave for more! And every need we feel will make us long to prove its virtue in our own souls to meet our own personal case by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Now, faith brings to the soul, according to the text, two blessings. It is not the *creator* of these things, but the conveyance, the channel, the conduit pipe through which these favors come to us. First, *it brings us a state of peace*—“being justified by faith.” And, secondly, *it bring us a sense of peace*—“we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I. Our first thoughts shall be about that most important of all matters—A STATE OF PEACE WITH GOD. In our natural state we have no peace. God is angry with us because we are sinful and we are at variance with God because He is holy. God cannot agree with us—“Can two walk together except they are agreed?” And we cannot agree with God, for “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.” There is a breach between the rebellious creature and the righteous Creator. Sad that it should be so, but such is the case by nature with every man that is born of woman. We are set against the Lord. We kick against His Providence, we rebel against His commands, we resist His Holy Spirit, we reject His love as manifested in the death of Christ and we would live and die in this hostility if it were not for His almighty Grace.

Before we can enjoy peace within our hearts there must be a state of peace established between us and God. We must submit ourselves to the Lord and He must forgive the past and make with us a Covenant of peace, or else there is no peace for us. “There is no peace, says my God, unto the wicked.” Let me briefly explain to you the way in which we come to possess peace with God. We are condemned criminals, though we do not consider ourselves to be in such a critical condition. We persist that we are

righteous! We decline to acknowledge the jurisdiction of God's Law and we refuse to acknowledge the justice of its sentence. Therefore, before we can have peace with God we must be brought into court, hear the indictment against us and be put on our trial.

When thus arraigned we must put in our plea. Do you plead, "Not guilty"? Then, Man, you challenge your Accuser to bring forward the evidence which will soon spoil your conceit and crush you with its weight! Before there can be peace between us and God *we must, with all our hearts, plead "guilty."* We must confess the truth, for God will never agree with liars, nor with those who indulge self-deception. He is a God of Truth and dissemblers can have no communion with Him. Being guilty, we must take the place of the guilty—it is our proper position—and it is due to the Judge of all the earth that we take it. To refuse to do so is contempt of court! There is mercy for a sinner, but there is no mercy for the man who will not acknowledge himself a sinner. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." But if any man says that he has no sin he is a liar and the truth is not in him. And there cannot be peace between him and God while he is in that humor.

It seems a stern demand and very galling for our pride, to have to stand in the dock and in answer to the question, "Guilty or not guilty?" reply, "Guilty, Lord, guilty. Whatever the consequences may be, guilty." But to some of us it no longer seems to be difficult because we could not now plead otherwise! We are so conscious of our guilt that we cannot escape from a sense of it. "If I wash myself with snow water and make my hands ever so clean, yet shall You plunge me in the ditch and my own clothes shall abhor me." We cannot look upon a single day without being convicted of sin and, in reviewing our past lives from our childhood, we are over and over constrained to blush at the memory of our waywardness and our willfulness, our perverseness and our provocation. The faults and the follies that have tracked our course haunt us till our very looks would tell the truth though our tongues were silent.

To plead guilty has now become a positive, though a painful, relief to us. It is the ending of a vain show which we found it hard to keep up. It is coming to the bottom of the matter and knowing the worst of our case. Dear Hearer, before you can have peace with Heaven you must take up your true position and plead guilty! I pray the Holy Spirit to lead you to do so. It is His work to convict us of sin and if He shall exercise His Divine office upon any of us, we shall no longer profess like the Pharisee that we are not as other men, but like the publican we shall heartily pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Supposing that with confusion of face, contrition of heart and awakened conscience we admit and acknowledge our inexcusable guilt, *the next thing requisite to our peace is that we should admit the justice of the Divine sentence* and revere, instead of reviling, the Judge of all the earth, against whom we have so grossly revolted! There are men who will say, "Yes, I am guilty and sinful, but still, the penalty is out of proportion to my criminality. I cannot believe that God will deal so severely with the offenses of His creatures." Now, however rational such reflections may

sound, they certainly are not acceptable with God. Of this thing, my Friend, I guarantee you—if the Holy Spirit has ever shown you sin in its natural hideousness and deformity—you will think nothing too bad for it. You will cry from the depths of your soul, “Let it be condemned, let it be punished.”

I would not, if I could, lift a finger to prevent God from punishing sin. Whatever a man sows, that must he reap—the *result* of sin must follow its commission. The foundations of society would be undermined and there would be no living in the world if there were no laws, or if laws might be violated with impunity. There would, indeed, be no proof that there was a great Judge of all the earth if He did not do right. And if He does right, He must punish sin, for it ought to be punished. Were I the judge of the quick and the dead, the first thing that I would do would be to condemn myself, for I deserve condemnation and punishment, Neither would it yield my heart the least comfort to be told that God could wink at sin. I want not such a God, neither could I endure to think that the Law of righteousness was thus relaxed.

My conscience would not be relieved of a sense of obligations I could not deny, nor of impurities I could not cleanse, nor of wrongs I could not rectify by a suspicion that the Majesty of Heaven had threatened a damnation which did not exist! I pray the Spirit of God to bring you, my Hearer, not only to be convinced of sin, but of righteousness and of judgment to come. God is righteous in fixing a day in which He will judge the world by the Man, Christ Jesus, according to our Gospel. This appears to be a painful process, to be bound to confess your guilt and then to bare your neck to the sword of vengeance and say, “You will be justified when You judge, and will be clear when You condemn, for against You, You only, have I sinned and done this evil in Your sight.” Yet, there cannot be any peace with God till we come to it—because there can be no peace with the God of Truth where there is any prevarication. Lasting peace must be founded upon everlasting Truth. The fact is, we are guilty and we deserve the punishment which God apportions to guilt—and we must agree with that Truth of God, grim as it looks, or else we cannot be friends with God.

The next essential to our receiving justification is this—the prisoner is guilty, sentence is pronounced and he admits the righteousness of it—he is asked if he has anything to say why the sentence should not be executed and he stands speechless! And now comes in the abounding *mercy of God, who, in order to our peace, finds a Substitute to bear our penalty, and reveals to us this gracious fact.* He puts *His Son* into the sinner’s place! Voluntarily does the Divine Savior take upon Himself our nature and come under the Law—and by a Sovereign act, Jehovah lays upon Him the iniquity of us all! That sin, having been laid on Christ, He has borne it and carried it away. In His own body He bore it on the tree. The transgressions of His people were made to meet upon His devoted Person—those five wounds tell what He suffered! That marred Countenance bears the tokens of His inward grief! And that cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” indicates to us, as far as we are able to understand it,

what He endured when He stood in the sinner's place the Sin-Bearer and the Sacrifice.

When the Lord enables the soul to perceive that Christ stood in its place, then the work of appropriating the justification is going on. Christ died, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God," for He, "made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." He was, "made a curse for us: as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." Christ has once suffered for sin and this is the foundation of our peace. The point wherein faith comes into contact with pardon is when faith believes that the Son of God did come and stand in the sinner's place. And when faith accepts that Substitution as a glorious gift of Grace and rests in it, and says, "Now I see how God is just, and smites Christ in my place. Seeing He condemned me before I had personally sinned, because of Adam's sin, I see how He can absolve me, though I have no righteousness, because of Christ's righteousness. In another did I fall and in Another do I rise! By one Adam I was destroyed: by another Adam am I restored! I see it! I leap for joy as I see it and I accept it as from the Lord."

This is not quite all, for now here stands the guilty one who has acknowledged the sentence and he has seen the sentence executed upon Another. What then? *He takes his place as no longer liable to that sentence.* The penalty cannot be exacted twice. It were neither in accord with human or Divine righteousness that two individuals should be punished for the same offense unless both were guilty. When God devised the plan of Substitution, the full penalty demanded of the guiltless Surety was clearly intended to bring exemption to the guilty sinners. That Jesus should suffer vicariously and yet those for whom He paid the penalty in drops of blood should obtain no acquittal could not be! When God laid sin upon Christ, it must have been in the intent of His heart that He would never lay it on those for whom Christ died.

So then, there stands the man who was once guilty, but he is no more condemned because Another has taken upon Him the condemnation to which he was exposed. Still more, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ came voluntarily under the Law, obeyed the Law, fulfilled the Law and made it honorable according to the Infinite purpose and will of God, the righteousness of Christ is *imputed* to the Believer. While Christ stands in the sinner's place, the believing sinner stands in Christ's place! As the Lord looked upon Christ as though He had been a sinner, though He was not a sinner, and dealt with Him as such, so now the Lord looks upon the believing *sinner* as though he were righteous, though, indeed, he has no righteousness of his own! And He loves him and delights in his perfect comeliness, regarding him as covered with the mantle of his Redeemer's righteousness and as having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing!

This is wonderful doctrine, and it is the doctrine of the Word of God. It is the doctrine whereon faith can feed and rest! And when faith receives it, she says to the soul, "Soul, you are free from sin, for Christ has borne your sin in His own body on the tree. Soul, you are righteous before God, for the righteousness of Christ is yours by imputation." Without any

works of your own, you are yet justified according to the righteousness of faith, even as faithful Abraham, of whom it is written, "He believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This is a wonderful exchange, the putting of Christ where the sinner was and of the sinner where Christ was!

And, now, what does the court say? The court says, "Not guilty! Absolved! Acquitted!" And what is the condition of the man towards God? Why, he can say—

***"Now freed from sin, I walk at large;
My Savior's blood's my full discharge.
At His dear feet my soul I lay,
A sinner saved I'll homage pay.***

NOW do I love the Lord and I know that the Lord loves me." By this process we have come to the Truth before God and we have dealt with each other on the line of Truth. There has been no fabrication or falsehood. Justice has been vindicated, mercy has been magnified and we are justly forgiven. Strange fusion of vehement Grace and vindictive wrath! Behold how Judgment and Mercy have linked hands together in the Person of the dying, bleeding, rising Son of God! This is the way by which we obtain justification. The soul may well have a settled peace when it has realized and received such a justification as this, seeing it is a peace consistent with justice. The Lord has not winked at sin. He has not treated sin as if it were a trifle. The Lord has punished transgression and iniquity. The rod has been made to fall and the blessed shoulders of our Lord have been made to smart under the infliction.

If justice had never been satisfied, the human conscience would not have been content. The proclamation of unconditional mercy would never have satisfied a human mind. If we had to preach to you that God forgave you irrespectively of an atonement, no awakened conscience would welcome the tidings. We would still have to confront the question, "Where is justice, then?" We should be unable to see how the Law could be vindicated, or the moral government of God maintained. We are quite at rest when we see that there is as much justice as there is mercy in the forgiveness of a believing soul and that God is as glorious in holiness when He passes by sin as He would have been if He had cast the whole race into the abyss of unfathomable woe!

Nor need there be any morbid apprehension as to whether all the evidence that could be produced against us at our trial has been brought forward. Nobody can come in and say "Though you have been exonerated upon a partial trial, upon a more searching investigation your guilt could have been proven." We can reply, "But it *was* proven!" There was the best of evidence to prove it, for we confessed it! There was no other evidence needed and nothing further could have been brought since we pleaded guilty to every charge! If you bring any further accusation, we can only say that we pleaded guilty without reserve. It was all in the indictment—we did not attempt, for a moment, to cloak or conceal any guilt we had incurred. We confessed it all before the Lord and admitted to it—but since the Lord Jesus Christ took it all, there is no cause for reopening the proceedings! There cannot be a second trial through a writ of error—the case

is thoroughly disposed of—the prisoner has pleaded guilty to the capital charge and has borne the utmost penalty of the Law by his Substitute, which penalty God Himself has accepted. His acquittal is such as he can rest upon with implicit reliance.

Moreover we know that, being justified, we are now at peace with God because there cannot be any more demands made against us. All that was against us, Christ took away! “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” The death of our great Redeemer has abounding merit in it, seeing that He was the Son of God. All the transgressions and iniquities that could ever be raked up against us were all laid to His charge and His Atonement, by one offering, has put an end to them all. We are not afraid, therefore, that anything fresh will be raised against us. Again, our acquittal is certified beyond all question and the certificate is always producible. Somebody might say to a prisoner, “How do you know that you were acquitted?” He cannot produce any writing. On the record of the court it stands, and yet, perhaps he has no means of access to the court record.

But, Beloved, you and I have a writ of acquittal which is always visible. Faith can see it tonight. “What is that?” you ask. It is the risen Christ, for Jesus Christ, “died for our sins and *rose again* for our justification.” You all know how that was. He was cast into the prison of the grave until it had been certified that our liabilities were fully discharged and—

**“If Jesus never had paid the debt
He never had been at freedom set.”**

He was our Hostage and His body was held in durance till it was certified that there was no further claim against any one of His people. That done, He rose again from the dead for our justification. He is at the Father’s right hand and He could not be there if any of our iniquity remained on Him. He took our sins but He has our sins no longer, for on the Cross He discharged and annihilated them all so that they ceased to be—and He has gone into Glory as the Representative and the Substitute of His people, cleared from their imputed liabilities—clean delivered from anything that could be brought against Him on their account.

So long as we see the Lord Jesus sitting on the Throne of Glory, we may boldly ask, “Who is he that condemns? Christ has died, yes rather, has risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” We know our justification to be forever complete and beyond challenge, for Jesus keeps the place of acceptance for us! And lastly, on this point, it was a justification from the very highest court. You know how it is in law—a matter may be decided in your favor, but there is an appeal to a higher court—and such are the glorious uncertainties of law that a sentence which has been confirmed in several courts may, after all, be reversed when it comes before the highest authorities. But you and I pleaded guilty before *God*. There is no higher authority than that of God Himself! When Jesus stood in our place, *we* did not put Him there—nor did *He* put Himself there—it was the act and deed of the Eternal Father! Is it not written—“The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”?

It is not only true as a matter of personal faith that—

“I lay my sins on Jesus,”

but as a matter of fact of a far earlier date the Lord laid them on Him! There is no higher authority than the Lord's and therefore do we cry, "it is God that justifies, who is he that condemns?" We have been taken into the highest court of all and there we have been cleared through Jesus' blood—have we not cause to be fully at peace with God—"being justified by faith"? Precious doctrine! Oh to rest in it with a childlike confidence from now on and for evermore!

II. I now come to the second part of the subject, which is this. Faith brings us into the state of peace which I have explained and afterwards FAITH GIVES US THE SENSE OF PEACE. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Will you please notice that the *sense* of peace follows upon the *state* of peace. We do not get peace before we are justified, neither is peace a means of justification. No, Brethren, we are *first* justified. "While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." God justifies the ungodly. We have no peace till that is done. There may *seem* to be peace, but it is a horrible peace—the peace of death and of daring presumption.

It is the peace when a man says, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace, and talks about rest when he has a conscience seared as with a hot iron—and a mind drugged with presumption so that he sleeps that awful sleep which is the presage of waking up in Hell! From such peace may God deliver us! But real peace—the peace *of* God—and peace *with* God must spring out of our being justified in the way which I have been trying to describe. The man who is justified according to the text has, at this moment, a sense of peace with God, but this is *only* true of those who are justified by faith. Here I want you to observe—for every word is instructive—that we have peace with God, "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Many children of God lose their peace, in a measure, and part of the reason of it is because they begin to deal with God absolutely. None of us will ever experience true peace with God except through Jesus Christ. I like that strong expression of Luther, bald and bare as it is, when, in commenting on the Epistle to the Galatians, he says, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God." If you have anything to do with God *absolutely*, you will be destroyed! There cannot be any point of contact between absolute Deity and fallen humanity except through Jesus Christ, the appointed Mediator. That is God's door—all else is a wall of fire! You can, by Christ, approach the Lord, but this is the only bridge across the gulf.

Whenever you, dear Soul, begin to deal with God according to your own experience, according to your own frames and feelings, or even according to the exercises of your own faith—unless that faith keeps its eye on Christ—you will lose your peace! Stand out of Christ and what a wretched creature you are! Have you attempted to approach the Eternal King without His chosen Ambassador? How presumptuous is your attempt! The Throne of Divine Sovereignty is terrible, apart from the redeeming blood! Peace with God must come to us by the way of the Cross. Through our Lord Jesus Christ we gain it and through Him we keep it.

There are some among you who, I trust, are really Believers in Christ who are constantly prone to fret and say, "I have no lasting peace. I am a

Believer in Jesus and I have a measure of peace at times, but I do not enjoy fullness of peace.” Well, now, we must look at this a little and the more closely we inspect it, the more convinced we shall be that peace is the right of every Believer. What is there now between him and God? Sin is forgiven! What is more, righteousness is imputed! He is the object of eternal love! He is *more* than that—he is the object of Divine complacency! God sees him in His Son and loves him. Why should he not be at peace? “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God,” said Jesus, “believe also in Me.” Christian, there is no ground of quarrel between you and your heavenly Father. God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you. To you the Lord virtually says, “Come now and let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet, I have made them as wool. Though they are red like crimson, I have already made them as snow.”

When He says, “They shall be,” He is speaking to the sinner, but to you they are so. You are justified. Why have you not peace, then? You have a claim to it and you ought to enjoy it. What is the reason why you do not possess it? I will tell you. It is your *unbelief*. You are justified by faith, remember. And it is by faith that you obtain peace with God—when you are doubting and fearing instead of simply believing—when you are questioning and grumbling—then it is that you lose your peace! But in proportion as your faith stands, so will your peace with God abide. I feel certain that the text tells us that every justified man has peace with God—and if so, why is it that I hear poor souls crying, “I believe, but I do not enjoy peace”? I think I can tell you why it is. You make a mistake as to what this peace is. You say, “I am so dreadfully tempted. Sometimes I am drawn this way and sometimes the other, and the devil never lets me alone.” Listen. Did you ever read in the Bible that you were to have peace with the devil?

Look at the text—“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace *with God*.” That is a very different thing from having peace with Satan! If the devil were to let you alone and never tempt you, I should begin to think that you belonged to him for he is kind to his own in his own way, for a while. He has a way of whispering soft things into their ears and then with dulcet notes and siren songs he lures them to eternal destruction. But he worries with a malicious joy those whom he cannot destroy, for in their case he has great wrath, knowing that his time is short. He expects to see you soon in Heaven, out of gunshot of him and so he makes the best of his opportunities to try, if he can, to distress and injure you while you are here. You will soon be so far above him that you will not be able to hear the Hell-dog bark and so he snaps at you now to see if he can hurt you, as once he did your Master when he wounded His heel.

You never had a promise of being at peace with the Prince of Darkness, but there is another promise which is far better! It is this—“The Lord shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” A bruise it shall be when we have him under our feet—we will triumph like our Master in the breaking of his head. Till then, depend upon it, the enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman will continue and there will be no truce to the war. Do I hear another tried one saying, “Alas, it is not the devil, it is

myself that I fear. I feel the flesh revolting and rebelling. Lusts that I thought were slain have a terrible resurrection. When I would do good, evil is present with me. Sin assails me with all awful power by reason of the weakness of my spirit and the strength of my flesh, and I cry, ‘O wretched man that I am!’”

Listen again. Did the Lord ever promise that you should have peace with the flesh? Oh no, the moment you were converted there began a battle between the flesh and the spirit—and that battle will last till that flesh of yours shall lie low in the dust from where it came and your spirit, delivered from its bondage, shall ascend to God! You must not suppose that as long as you are in this body, the flesh will *help* you. Ah no, you will cry with Paul, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” You are harassed and hampered by the rising corruption of your nature and it will still rise. Your Brethren will still say of you, “What will you see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.” The flesh is striving against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh—and though the lion shall, one day, lie down with the lamb, the flesh will never agree with the spirit. As the Lord has war with Amalek forever and ever, so there is war between the spirit and the flesh so long as the two are in the same man. There is no promise of peace with the flesh, then, but we have peace with God.

“Ah,” says another, “I have little peace, for I am surrounded by those that vex me. When I serve the Lord they malign and misrepresent me with scoff and slander. They take up an evil report against me. Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul is among lions, even among them that are set on the fire of Hell. They give me no rest.” Yes, but I smile as I think of it. Did you ever dream of having peace with the *wicked*? Peace with such as turn aside to their crooked ways? Peace with the workers of iniquity? Vain thought! Peace in this world where your Lord was crucified? Peace with those that hate you for His sake? Why, did He not say to you at the first, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

What? Do you expect to wear a crown of gold where Jesus wore a crown of thorns? The confessors and martyrs of ancient times never reckoned upon peace with the world. Nor did the Apostle Paul, for he said, “The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.” You have no promise of the world’s love, but you have a promise of this sort, “These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” “And this is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith.” I pray you, then, do not misconstrue the text! It does not say that you shall either have peace with the devil, or peace with the flesh, or peace with the world—but it does say that you have peace with God, which is infinitely better!

“Still,” says one, “I find that I sin every day and I hate myself for sinning. I cannot get to my bed at night but I feel grieved in my soul that I

am not more like Christ and that I cannot grow in Grace as I desire. I do not seem to make the advance in the Divine Life that I hoped I would and I am full of sin. Whatever I do is stained with defilement. Wherever I go, I seem to fall one way or another into something that wounds my conscience and hurts me.” Yes and the Lord never said that you should have peace with *sin*. I am delighted to find that sin stings you and that you hate it. The more hatred of sin the better! A *sin-hating* soul is a *God-loving* soul. If sin never distresses you, then God has never favored you. Unless you hate sin, you do not love holiness, and if you hate sin, you cannot have any peace with it. You will never be satisfied till you are perfect—and when will you be perfect? Why, when you wake up in your Lord’s likeness! That will be the hour of your perfection, but till then sin will vex you. Then shall you have no Canaanite to harass you and there shall be war with Amalek no more, when the last enemy is slain, when sin is extirpated and you shall be near and like your God! You have no promise of peace with sin, nor need you wish for one, for you have peace with God!

To come back, again, to what is promised and, indeed, to what is not only promised but really bestowed and communicated to us—“Being justified by faith, *we have peace with God.*” Most assuredly we do enjoy peace with God in this respect—that *we know He loves us*. He would not have given His Son to die for us if He had not. He would not have devised this matchless plan of Justification if He had not loved us. Moreover, we feel a fervent love to Him in return. We do not love Him as we wish to do, nor as we hope to do, but we do love Him for all that. We can say, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”—

**“Yes, I love You and adore,
Oh for Grace to love You more.”**

Of the excellence and virtue of this peace we have daily, hourly proof, for *we are now not afraid to go to our Covenant God* for all necessary things and to seek His face for help in time of trouble. Why, to some of us this resorting to God has become so habitual that we speak with Him every hour of the day!

Nothing happens but we fly to Him for counsel or for succor. We no longer ask leave to do so, for He has given to us the private key and the perpetual permit of access. We have not always such settled peace with our fellow creatures, for at times we so much lack of confidence in them that we could not divulge to them our troubles—but we have peace with God! We have such an amity that we can always have recourse to Him, assured of His sympathy and His readiness to come to our relief in every time of need. Our habit of prayer proves that we have peace with God—we would not *think* of praying to Him if we believed that He was our adversary, or if we doubted His good-will. If we felt any enmity in our hearts to Him we should not go to Him as we do, with a childlike hope in time of distress.

This peace with God makes us *delight in Him*. I am sure that every soul here that has been justified by faith delights in God. You do not always feel Him equally near, but when He is near it is the joy of your spirit. What are the best and happiest moments you ever know? Are they not those in

which you have communion with God? What days can you reflect upon with the greatest satisfaction and ardently wish to have repeated? Are they not those in which His majesty and mercy have been so revealed to your spirit that with mingled awe and sweetness you have realized intensely His power and His Presence? Oh, what a good God He is! Bad as we are, how good He is! Now, take care that you indulge this delight often. If you delight in anything else, you will be an idolater. And remember, He has said, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desire of your heart."

You cannot be too delighted with your God! Is He not Perfection itself? Are we not, in all respects, rejoiced to have such a God? We would not have one attribute changed nor one appointment of His sovereign will in the least degree moved from its order. Let Him be as He is and do as He pleases and our souls shall delight in Him. "Yes, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Now, when you can delight in God, though you cannot delight in yourself, it shows that you have peace with Him and are justified!

Then, Brothers and Sisters, this peace also shows itself in our *acquiescing in all that He does in His rough Providences*. You know that a hypocrite is like a strange dog that will follow a man as long as he casts him a bone or a bit of meat. But a true Believer is like a man's own dog that will follow him when he gives him nothing, and even when he deals him a cuff or a blow. A true Believer says, "Shall I receive good from the hand of the Lord, and shall I not also receive evil? If He chastens me, I would sooner be chastened by my Father than I would be caressed by Satan." It were better to smart till one were black and blue under the rod of God, than to be set upon a high throne by the world or the devil. When he offers you the kingdoms of this world, be sure that you say to the foul fiend, "Get you behind me!" But when the Lord hands you the bitter cup, be sure to say, "Your will be done," and take it cheerfully at His hands. If we feel an agreement with our Lord's will, it shows that we are at peace with Him.

One more evidence of being at peace with God is when you can, *with confidence, look forward to the time of your departure out of this world* and say, "I can die, if You, O Lord, are with me." When you can fall in with the words of the hymn we were singing just now—

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

We are not afraid of the day of judgment because we have peace with God and, therefore, we are not afraid to die. There is concord and harmony between the righteous God and His redeemed people and fear is banished. He has given us His Spirit to dwell in our hearts and now we desire that each rising wish may be prompted by His will. Our mind is agreed with the mind of God. He wishes us to be holy and we wish to be holy. He would kill sin in us and we long to have it killed. He wishes us to obey and we desire to obey. He would have us seek His Glory and we desire that He should be glorified in us, in our whole spirit, soul and body. The lines of our life run parallel with the life of God, though upon a lower level—we

can never be as He is in the Glory of His Nature, but we desire to be holy as He is holy.

The life within us is Divine, for we have been begotten again by Himself and, from now on we are in Christ and Christ in us—and so we are at peace with God. Go your way, my Brothers and Sisters, and swim in this peace! Bathe your weary souls in seas of heavenly rest until you come to the place where not a wave of trouble shall ever roll across your peaceful breasts and may the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly and preserve you blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 5.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—775, 397, 708.**

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

DEAR FRIENDS—The sermon is so long that only a line or so is left for me. I will say the less of myself. The warm sunny days which I have spent in this retreat are, by God’s blessing, bringing back to me health and strength. I shall be happy, indeed, if my mental and spiritual vigor should also be renewed by the removal of the daily care which pressed upon me. If it is so, my hearers shall be the gainers, for all my strength has been and always shall be laid out in my ministry.

I am right glad to hear that special services are commencing at the Tabernacle and I entreat all the Brothers and Sisters there to throw all their energies into them. Pray that the Holy Spirit may work mightily and glorify the Lord Jesus in the midst of the congregations! And then set to work to fetch in the people from the outside. Gather them! Gather them from hedges and highways and crowd the Gospel feast! The preachers are among you whom God has widely blest, but how can they benefit the people if they do not come to hear them? Make the services known and press those to come who do not usually attend public worship.

We long to see souls saved—do we not? My heart cannot be content while men are being lost! I cannot be among the crowds to preach, but my inmost soul prays for those who are indulged with that privilege and for you, also, who have the joy of helping in the work of the Lord. I am bound to thank those generous friends who continue to send aid to the various works under my care—the Lord reward them.

To each and all my hearers and readers I send my hearty Christian salutations,

C. H. SPURGEON
MENTONE

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JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

NO. 3392

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1914.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S DAY EVENING, APRIL 28, 1867.

*"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace
with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
Romans 5:1.*

WE desire this evening not to preach upon this text as a mere matter of Doctrine. You all believe and understand the Gospel of Justification by Faith, but we want to preach upon it tonight as a matter of experience, as a thing realized, felt, enjoyed and understood in the soul. I trust there are many here who not only know that men may be saved and justified by faith, but who can say in their own experience, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and who are now, at the present moment, walking and living in the actual enjoyment of that peace!

Wishing to speak of the text, then, in this sense, I shall ask you to accompany me not only with your ears and with the attention which you usually give so generously, but also with the eyes of your self-examination, asking yourselves, as we proceed, step by step, "Do I know that? Have I received that? Have I been taught of God in this matter? Have I been led into that Truth of God?" And our hope will be that some person to whom these things have hitherto been merely external and, therefore, valueless, may be led by God to get hold of them, so that they may be matters of soul, heart and conscience—so that they may enjoy them and find themselves where once they feared they would never be, namely, in a state of reconciliation with God—happily enjoying peace with the Most High.

Our first thought shall be some plain, earnest talk concerning—

I. A FEW PRELIMINARY DISCOVERIES WHICH A MAN MAKES BEFORE HE GETS PEACE WITH GOD.

These, I do not think, are by any means foreign to the text, or merely imported to it, but belong rightfully to it. You see that Paul, before he came to this justification by faith, had been *speaking about sin*. It would not have been possible for him to have given an intelligent definition of justification without mentioning that men are sinners, without informing them that they had broken God's holy Law and that the Law, by and of itself, could never restore them to the favor of God. Now, some of these things of which I am going to speak are absolutely necessary, if not to my

sermon, yet certainly to your spiritually understanding even so much as one jot or tittle of what it is to be justified by faith!

Well, then, what are these things? The first discovery that a man is led by the Spirit of God to make before he is justified is that it is important to be justified in the sight of God. Many people do not know this. You shall step into a shop this evening and find a man at the counter, and you say to him, "Well, do you never go to a place of worship?" "No," he would say, "but I am quite as good as those who do." "How so?" "Well, I am a great deal better than some of them." "How is that?" "Well, I never failed in business. I never duped people in a limited liability company. I never told lies. I am no thief. I am not a drunk—I am as honest as the days are long in the middle of June—and that is more than you can say of some of your religious, people." Now, that man has got a hold of one part of a good man's character. There are two parts, but he can only see one, namely, that man is to be just to man. He sees that, but he does not see that man is to be also just to God. And yet if that man were really to think a little while, he would see that the highest obligations of a creature must be not to his fellow creatures, but to his Creator—and that however just a man may be to another man, yet if he is altogether unjust to God, he cannot escape without the severest penalty! But oh, the most of men think that so long as they keep the laws of the land, so long as they give to their fellow men their due, it matters not though God's day should be a subject of scorn, God's will be used as men will and God's Law trodden under their feet! Now, I think that everyone here who will but put his fingers to his brow for a moment and think, that he will see that even though a man may go before the bar of his country and say before any judge or jury, "I have in nothing injured my fellow man. I am just before men," yet it does not make the man's character perfect. Unless he is also able to say, "And I am also just before the Presence of the God who made me and whose servant I am," he has only kept one half—and that the less important of God's Law for him.

It cannot help being—it must be important to the highest degree that you and I should stand on good terms with the great God unto whom we shall so soon return in the Great Day when He shall say, "Return you children of men." We must then render up our souls to Him who created us. Well, you can surely go as far as that with me—that it is necessary. You do feel, do you not, a desire in your heart to be just before your Maker? I am thankful that you can go so far.

The next thing is this. A man, when the Spirit of God is bringing him to Christ, discovers that *his past life has been marred badly by serious offenses against the Law of God*. Before the Spirit of God comes into our soul, we are like being in a room in the dark—we cannot see in it. We cannot discover the cobwebs, the spiders, the foul and loathsome things that may be lurking there. But when the Spirit of God comes streaming into the soul, the man is astonished to find that he is what he is! And especially if he sits down and opens the Book of the Law and, in the light of

the Divine Spirit, reads that perfect Law and compares it with his own imperfect heart and life! He will then grow sick of himself, even to loathing and, sometimes, despair! Take but one command. Perhaps there are some here who will say, "I know I have been very chaste all my life, for the command says, 'You shall not commit adultery,' and I have never broken it—I am clean there." Yes, but now hear Christ explain the command, "He that looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." Now, then, who among us can say that we have not done that? Who is there upon earth, if that is the meaning of the command, who can say, "I am innocent"? If the Law of God, as we are told by Scripture, has to deal not with our outward actions, alone, but with our words, and with our thoughts and with our imaginations—if it is so exceedingly broad that it applies to the most secret part of a man—then who of us can plead guiltless before the Throne of God? No, dear Brothers and Sisters, this must be understood by you and by me, before we can be justified, that we are full of sin! What if I say that we are as full of sin as an egg is full of meat? We are all sin! The imagination and the thought of our heart is evil and only evil, and that continually. If some of you plume yourselves with the notion that you are righteous, I pray God to pluck those fine feathers off you and make you see yourselves, for if you never see your own nothingness, you will never understand Christ's All-Sufficiency! Unless you are pulled down, Christ will never lift you up! Unless you know yourselves to be lost, you will never care for that Savior who came "to seek and to save the lost." That is a second discovery, then, that it is important to be just before God, but that on account of the spirituality of God's moral Law and our consequent inability to keep it perfectly, we are very far from standing in that position.

Then there comes another discovery, namely, that consequently *it is utterly impossible for us to hope that we ever can be just before God on the footing of our own doing*. We must give it up, now, as an utterly lost case. The past is past—that can never be blotted out by us! And the present, inasmuch as we are weak through the flesh, is not much better than the past. And the future, notwithstanding all our fond hopes of improvement, will probably be none the better! And so, salvation by the works of the Law becomes to us a dreary impossibility! The Law said, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law, to do them." I was conversing on one occasion with one of our most illustrious Jewish noblemen. And when I put to him the question—he believed himself to be perfectly righteous, and I believe if any man could be so by his moral conduct, he might have fairly laid claim to it—but when I said to him, "Now, there is your own Law for it, 'Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law, to do them'—have you continued in all things?" He said, "I have not." "Then," and I found that to be a question for which he, at any rate, had no answer—

and it is a question, which, when properly understood, no man can answer except by pointing to the Cross of Christ and saying, "He was made a curse for us that we might be made a blessing." Unless you and I keep the Law of God perfectly, it matters little how near we get to perfection! It is as though God had committed to our trust a perfect crystal vase and had said, "If you keep that whole, and present it to me, you shall have a reward." But we have cracked it, chipped it—ah, my Brothers and Sisters, the most of us have broken it and smashed it to pieces! But we will suppose that we have only cracked it a little. Yes, but even then we have lost the reward, for the condition was that it should be perfectly whole—and the slightest chip is a violation of the condition upon which the reward would have been given! But you say that you will not break it farther. But you have broken it! You have thrown yourselves out of the list. It sometimes seems hard when you tell people that if they have violated the Law in one point, they have broken the whole of it—but it is not so hard as it looks to be, for if I tell a man who is going down a coal mine on a long chain that if he breaks one link of the chain, it does not matter though all the other hundreds or thousands of links may be sound—if there is only one link that is broken—down will descend the basket and the poor miner will be dashed to pieces! Nobody thinks that is difficult. Everybody recognizes that as being a matter of mechanical law that the strength of a chain must be measured by its weakest part. And so, the strength of our obedience must be gauged by the very point in which it fails. Alas, our obedience has failed and, through it, no one of us can ever be just before God!

Now, I want to stop a minute and put the question round the galleries and below stairs. Have you all got as far as that? It is important to be just before God—we see that we are not so—do we see that *we cannot be so*? Are we quite convinced that by our own obedience to the Law of God, it is hopeless for us to think of standing accepted before the Most High? I pray the Eternal Spirit to convince you all of this, or you will keep on knocking at the door until you are quite sure that God has nailed it up forever! And you will go scrambling over that Alp and tumbling down this precipice until you are convinced that it is impossible for you to climb it—and then you will give up your desperate endeavor and come to God in God's way—which is quite another way from your own! I trust that we are all convinced of this.

Let us notice one more preliminary discovery. A man, having found out all this, suddenly discovers that inasmuch as he is not just before God and cannot be, *he is at the present moment under condemnation!* God is never indifferent towards sin. If, therefore, a man is not in a state in which God can justify him, he is in a state in which God must condemn him! If you are not just before God, you are condemned at this very moment! You are not executed, it is true, but the condemnation has gone forth against you and the sign that it is so is your unbelief, for, "He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the

Son of God.” How some of you would spring up from your seats tonight if all of a sudden you got the information that you had been condemned by the courts of your country! But when I say that you have been condemned by the Court of Heaven, this glides across your conscience like drops of water, or oil over a marble slab! And yet, my Hearers, if you did but know the meaning of what I am saying—and I pray God the Holy Spirit to make you know it, it would make your very bones quiver! God has condemned you! You are out of Christ! You have broken His Law! God has lifted His hand to smite you! And though His mercy tarries for awhile, yet days and hours will soon be gone—and then the condemnation shall take the shape of execution—and where will your soul be, then? Now, you must have the sentence of condemnation passed in your own soul, or else you will never be justified, for until we are condemned by ourselves, we are not acquitted by God! Again I pause and say, Do you feel this, my dear Hearer? If you do, instead of despairing, be hopeful! If you have the sentence of death within you, be thankful for it, for now shall life be given you from the hand of God’s Grace!

Having occupied, perhaps, too much time over that, we now come more immediately into the text to—

II. SHOW THE GOSPEL LEARNING WHICH IS TAUGHT TO US BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

That Gospel learning I may give you in a few sentences, namely, these, that inasmuch as through man’s sin, the way of obedience is forever closed, so that we—none of us—can ever pass by it to a true righteousness, God has now determined to deal with men in a way of mercy, to forgive them all their offenses, to bestow upon them His love, to receive them graciously and to love them freely! He has been pleased, in His Infinite Wisdom, to devise a way by which, without injury to His Justice, He can yet receive the most undeserving sons of men into His heart and make them His children—and can bless them with all the blessings which would have been theirs had they perfectly kept His Law, but which now shall come to them as a matter of gift and undeserved Grace from Himself.

I trust we have learned that that there is a plan of salvation by Grace and, by Grace alone—and it is a great thing to know that where Grace is, there are no works!

It is a blessed thing to never muddle in your head the Doctrine of working and the Doctrine of receiving by Grace, for there is an essential and eternal difference between the two. I hope you all know that there can be no mixing of the two. If we are saved by Grace, it cannot be by our own merits! But if we depend upon our own merits, then we cannot appeal to the Grace of God, since the two things can never be mingled together. It must be all works or else all Grace. Now, God’s plan of salvation excludes all our works. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” It comes to us upon the footing of Divine Grace, pure Grace alone. And this

is God's plan, namely that inasmuch as we cannot be saved by our own obedience, we should be saved by Christ's obedience! Jesus, the Son of God, has appeared in the flesh, has lived a life of obedience to God's Law and, in consequence of that obedience, being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross! And our Savior's life and death make up a complete keeping and honoring of that Law of God which we have broken and dishonored. And God's plan is this—"I cannot bless you for your own sakes, but I will bless you for His sake. Looking at you, I must curse you, but I have laid the curse on Him and now, looking at you *through Him*, I can bless you though you deserve it not. I can pass by your undeserving. I can blot out your sins like a cloud and cast your iniquities into the depths of the sea through what He has done. You have no merits, but He has boundless merits! You are full of sin and must be punished, but He has been punished instead of you—and now I can deal with you." This is the language of God put into human words, "I can deal with you upon terms of mercy through the merits of My dear Son." This is the way in which the Gospel comes to you, then. If you believe in Jesus—that is to say if you trust Him—all the merits of Jesus are your merits and are imputed to you. All the sufferings of Jesus are your sufferings. Every one of His merits is imputed to you. You stand before God as if you were Christ, because Christ stood before God as if He were you—He in your place, you in His place. Substitution! That is the word! Christ, the Substitute for sinners! Christ standing for men and bearing the thunderbolts of the Divine opposition to all sin! He "who knew no sin, being made sin for us." Man standing in Christ's place and receiving the sunlight of Divine favor, instead of Christ.

And this, I say, is through trusting, or believing! God's way of your getting connection with Christ is through your reliance upon Him. "Therefore, being justified"—how? Not by works! That is not the link, but—"being justified by *faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ offers to God the substitution—through faith we accept it—and from that moment God accepts us!

Now, I want to come to this, dear Friends. Do you know this? Have you been taught this by the Spirit of God? Perhaps you learned it in the Assembly's Catechism when you were but children. You have learned it in the various classes since then, but do you know it in your own soul and do you know that God's way of salvation is through a simple dependence upon His dear Son? Do you so know it that you have accepted it and that you are now resting upon Jesus? If so, then thrice happy are you!

But, going further, I have now to dwell for a minute or two upon—

III. THE GLORIOUS PRIVILEGE OF THE TEXT.

We have led you, and I hope the Spirit of God has led you, too, through the preliminary discoveries and through the great discovery that

God can save us through the merits of Another! Now let us notice this glorious privilege word by word.

“Being justified.” The text tells us that every believing man is at the present moment perfectly justified before God. You know what Adam was in naked innocence in Paradise. Such is every Believer. Yes, and more than that. Adam could talk with God because he was pure from sin and we, also, have access with boldness unto God our Father because, through Jesus’ blood, we are clean. Now, I do not say that this is the privilege of a few eminent saints, but here I look around these pews and see my Brothers and Sisters—scores and hundreds of them—all of whom are tonight just before God—perfectly so! Completely so—so just that they never can be otherwise than just—so just that even in Heaven they will be no more acceptable to God than they are here tonight! That is the state into which faith brings a poor, lost, guilty, helpless, good-for-nothing sinner! The man may have been everything that was bad before he believed in Jesus, but as soon as he trusted Christ, the merits of Christ became his merits and he stands before God as though he were perfect, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” through the righteousness of Christ!

Note, however, as we have noticed the state of justification, the means whereby we reach it. *“Being justified by faith.”* The way of reaching this state of justification is not by tears, nor prayers, nor humbling, nor working, nor Bible-reading, nor Church-going, nor Chapel-going, nor sacraments, nor priestly absolution, but by *faith*—which faith is a simple and utter dependence and believing in the faithfulness of God—a dependence upon the promise of God because it is God’s promise—and is worthy of dependence. It is a reliance with all our might upon what God has said! This is faith—and every man or woman who possesses this faith is perfectly justified tonight!

I know what the devil will say to you. He will say to you, “You are a sinner!” Tell him you know you are, but that for all that, you are justified. He will tell you of the greatness of your sin. Tell him of the greatness of Christ’s righteousness. He will tell you of all your mishaps and your backslidings, of your offenses and your wanderings. Tell him and tell your own conscience, that you know all that, but that Jesus Christ came to save sinners, and that although your sin is great, Christ is quite able to put it all away. Some of you, it seems to me, do not trust in Christ as sinners. You get a mingle-mangle kind of faith. You trust in Christ as though you thought Christ could do something for you—and you could do the rest. I tell you that while you look to yourselves, you do not know what faith means! You must be convinced that there is nothing good in yourselves—you must know that you are sinners and that in your hearts you are as big and as black a sinner as the very worst and vilest—and you must come to Jesus and leave your fancied righteousnesses, and your pretended goodnesses behind you! And you must take Him for eve-

rything and trust in Him. Oh, to feel your sin, and yet to know your righteousness—to have the two together—repentance on account of sin, and yet a glorious confidence in the all-atoning Sacrifice! Oh, if you could understand that saying of the spouse, “I am black, but comely”—for that is where we must come—black in myself, as black as Hell, and yet comely, fair, lovely, inexpressibly glorious through the righteousness of Jesus!

My dear Brothers and Sisters, can you feel this? If you cannot feel it, do you believe it? And do you sing in the words of Joseph Hart—

***“In your Surety you are free,
His dear hands were pierced for thee!
With your Savior’s vesture on,
Holy as the Holy One.”***

For so it is—you stand before God as accepted as Christ is accepted and, notwithstanding the inbred sin and corruption of your heart, you are as dear to God as Christ is dear and as accepted in the righteousness of Christ as Christ is accepted in His own obedience!

Have we got so far? That is the point on which I want to enquire this evening. Have you got as far as to know at this moment that it is through faith we are justified? If so, I shall conduct you just one step farther, namely to observe—and this is coming back, while it is also going forward—that “we are justified by faith *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” There is the foundation! There is the mainspring! There is the tree that bears the fruit! We are justified by faith, but not by faith in itself. Faith in itself is a precious Grace, but it cannot in itself justify us. It is “*through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Simple as the observation is, I must venture to repeat it tonight because it is hard for us to keep it in mind. Remember that faith is not the work of the Spirit within, but the work of Christ upon the tree! That upon which I must rest as my meritorious hope is not the blessed fact that I am now an heir of Heaven, but the still more blessed fact that the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me! My dear Brothers and Sisters, when all is fair weather within, there is such a temptation to say, “Well, now, it is all right with me, for I feel this and I feel that.” Very good, these evidences are in their places, but oh, when it grows dark and when, instead of these gracious evidences, you get equally clear evidences that you are not perfect—when you have to say, “Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” You will find that instead of your beautiful evidences, you will have to fly to the Cross! There was a time when I, too, could take a great deal of comfort in what I believe is the Spirit of God’s work in my soul. I do thank God for it, and bless Him for it now, but I trust I have learned to walk where poor Jack the huckster, walked—

***“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all!
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All.”***

Brothers and Sisters, it is down on the ground that we must live! We must build upon the Rock, itself! On the top of some mountains men sometimes build heaps of timber, so as to get a little higher. Well, now,

some of these rickety platforms, you know, get shaky, but when you get right down on the mountain, itself, it never shakes and you are perfectly secure there! So sometimes we get to building up our rickety platforms of our experience and our good works—all very well in their way, but then they shake in the storm! Depend upon it, that the soul that clings to the Rock, notwithstanding all that the Holy Spirit has done for it, and having nothing, then, to depend upon, more than the poor dying thief had when, without a single good work, he had to hang on the dying Christ, alone—oh, believe me, that soul is in the safest place to live in—and the most blessed place to die in! None but Jesus! None but Jesus for a poor sinner when he is torn from his cups and his sins! And none but Jesus for the aged saint when he stays himself upon his bed to bear his last testimony—

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

“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And now, to crown all, there is here the precious, precious privilege which such men enjoy—“we have *peace with God*.” I know that this may seem a trifle to thoughtless people, but not to those who think! I cannot say that I sympathize with those people who shut their eyes to the beauties of Nature. I have heard of good men travelling through fine scenery and shutting their eyes for fear they should see! I always open mine as wide as ever I can because I think I can see God in all the works of His hands—and what God has taken the trouble to make, I think I ought to take the trouble to look at! Surely there must be something to see in a man’s works if he is a wise man—and there must be something worth seeing in the works of God who is All-Wise! Now, it is a delightful thing to say, when you look upon a landscape lit up with sunlight and shaded with clouds, “Well, my Father made all this. I never saw Him, but I do delight in the work of His hands—He made all this and I am perfectly at peace with Him.” Then as you are standing there, a storm comes on. Big drops begin to fall. There is thunder in the distance. It begins to peal louder and louder. Presently there comes a flash of lightning. Now, those who are not at peace with God may go and flee away, but those who are perfectly at peace with Him may stand there and say, “Well, it is my Father who is doing all this. That is His voice, the voice of the Lord which is full of majesty.” I love to hear my Father’s voice. I am never as happy as in a tremendous storm—and when the lightning flash comes, I think—well, it is only the flashing of my Father’s eyes! Now, God is abroad—He seemed as if He had left the world before, but now He comes riding on the wings of the wind! Let me go and meet Him. I am not afraid!

Suppose you are out at sea in a storm. You are justified by faith, and you say, “Well, let the waves roar! Let them clap their hands! My Father holds the waters in the hollow of His hand, why should I be afraid?” Let me say to you that it is worth something to believe that God can put us

in a calm state of mind when “earth is all in arms abroad.” It is just so with the Believer when temporal troubles come. There comes crash after crash until it seems as though every house of business would come down. Nothing is certain. Man has lost confidence and reliance in his fellow man. Everything is going bad. But the Christian says, “God is at the helm. The whole business of business is managed by the great King—let the sons of earth do as they will, but—

**“He everywhere has sway,
And all things serve His might.”**

It is something to feel that my Father cannot do me a bad turn. Even if He should use His rod upon me, it will do me good, and I will thank Him for it, for I am at perfect peace with Him.

And then to come to die and to feel, “I am going to God and I am glad to go, for I am not going like a prisoner to a judge, but like a wife espoused goes to her husband—like a child home from school to the parents’ arms. Oh, it is something to die with a sense of peace with God! Surely every thoughtful man will feel that! Now, if you trust Christ, you shall be justified by faith. Being justified, your heart shall feel that perfect peace is brought into it, so that you shall meet your Father’s will with perfect equanimity, let it be what it may! Come life, come death, it shall not matter to you, for all is right between God and your soul!

Oh, I wish it were so with all present! It may be so if God the Spirit brings you to rest in Jesus. No, it *shall* be so, my dear Friend! It shall be so with you tonight! Though you never thought it would be when you came in here, yet you see it all now. It is simply believing, simply trusting! Oh, believe Him! Trust Him and it shall be the joy of your soul to have a peace with God which as the world did not give you—so the world shall never take away! But you shall have it forever and ever! God grant it to each one of us! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
LUKE 15:25-32.**

Most of us recognize the beauty of this parable as it concerns the prodigal and his boundless forgiveness by the father, but few of us probably have seen how the elder brother has his portrait also painted by our Lord and how He sets forth the self-righteous professor who hates to have prodigals made much of.

25. *Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing.* This was the better one of the two. I have heard him often greatly blamed and so he deserves to be. But for all that, he was a true son. He was not at home. He was out at work. There are some Christians that are all for work and never seem to have any fellowship and communion. They are always active, but they are not always contemplative. He was in the field.

26. *And he called one of the servants and asked him what these things meant.* He was a gloomy spirit—good, solid, regular, constant—but not very joyful. He took things rather severely, so he did not understand what this amusement could mean. “Some of the Salvation Army got in here,” he said. “Some of those boisterous Methodist people got here and I do not like it. I am more regular than that. I do not like these rows and uproars. He asked of the servant what these things meant.

27, 28. *And he said unto him, Your brother is come: and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in.* No, I dare say he was glad his brother was back, but he did not like such a fuss made over him. He was glad to see a wandering one restored, but why, why, why should there be all this extravagance of joy concerning this wandering young fellow who had been no better than he should be? Why all this delight? And there are some kinds of Christians who always feel that when there is a sinner introduced into the Church, “Well, I hope that it will turn out a genuine case,” and always that is the first thought! They are afraid that it cannot be. They have never sinned in that way. They have been kept by the Grace of God from outward transgression and they are half afraid to hear of these outrageous sinners being brought in and so much joy made over them. “He was angry, and would not go in.”

28. *Therefore came his father out, and entreated him.* He was worth fetching in. There was a good deal of solid worth in his character and his father kindly came to ask him to come in and share the joy.

29. *And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years have I served you.* You may read it, “slaved for you.”

29. *Neither transgressed I at any time your commandment: and yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends.* Here have I been constant in the House of Prayer, regular at my Sunday school class—and yet I get little or no joy from it. I go on just in the regular path of duty but I have no music and dancing! I have a great many doubts and fears, but very little exhilaration, very little delight.

30. *But as soon as this, your son, was come, which has devoured your living with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf.* He has been a great sinner and he is newly converted—and he has got all the joy! He has been running, anyhow, and yet he is full of assurance, full of delight, full of confidence. How can this be? I am a staid Christian having but slight joy, and he is but newly converted, but confident and full of delight. You have killed the fatted calf for him! But even one of the little kid goats you have never given me. You have given him the fatted calf.

31. *And he said unto him, Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.* Why did not this son wake up to his privileges? Instead of not having a kid, he might have had whatever he liked! “All that I have is yours.” He had been put into such a position as that, instead of being badly treated as he, perhaps, would half accuse his father of treating

him. "Son, you are always with me. You live at my table. My house is your house. I love you and delight in you. All that I have is yours."

32. *It was meet*—It was right, it was proper, it was fitting—

32. *That we should make merry, and be glad, for this, your brother.* "You call him my son, but he is your brother, and I remind you of it—this, your brother."

32. *Was dead, and is alive again: and was lost, and is found.* So if there are any here that do not take the joy which they ought in the conversion of great sinners, let them hear the gentle persuasive voice of God. You, as Believers, have everything! Christ is yours. Heaven is yours. You are always with God and all that He has belongs to you. But it is proper and fit that when a sinner returns from the error of his ways, they should ring the bells of Heaven and make a fuss over him, for he was dead and is alive again! I hope that you and I will never catch the spirit of the elder brother. Yet I remember that Krummacher says that he sometimes found that same spirit in himself. There was a man in the village where Krummacher lived, who was a great drunkard and everything that was bad. But all of a sudden he came into a very large sum of money and became a wealthy man. Krummacher felt, "Well, this hardly looks like the right thing—so many good, honest, hard-working people in the parish still remaining poor, and this worthless man has suddenly become wealthy and well-to-do." It seemed a strange way in the order of Providence. Oh, we ought to rejoice and be glad when another person prospers! And we ought to wish that his prosperity may be blessed to him.

I remember a minister years ago, when first Mr. Moody came, saying that he did not believe that Mr. Moody was sent of God, "Because," he said, "I find that many of the people who are converted under him never went to a place of worship before. It is only the riffraff that are brought in." There is a nasty elder brother spirit! The riffraff were just the people that we wanted to bring in and if they had never been to a place of worship before, it was time that they should go! It was a mercy that they were brought in! Oh, instead of ever sniffing at sinners as if we were better than they, let us welcome them with all our heart and praise the heavenly Father that He so lovingly takes them in!

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

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

PEACE BY BELIEVING

NO. 510

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

*“Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace
 with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 Romans 5:1.*

A MOMENT’S contemplation would suffice to arouse any man to the terror of the position involved in being at war with God. For a *subject* to be in a state of sedition against a powerful monarch is to commit treason, and to incur the forfeiture of his life. But for a *creature* to be in arms against its Creator! For a *thing* that depends for its existence upon the will of God—to be at enmity with the God in whose hand its breath is! For a soul to know that God, who is terrible in His power, and Almighty to protect or to destroy, is his foe! That He whose anger endures forever, and His wrath burns even unto the lowest Hell, is his chief and grand Enemy—this is an appalling thing, indeed!

Could any man but understand and realize this, smitten through with terrors as great as those which surprised Belshazzar when he saw the handwriting on the wall, he would cry out in anguish, and he would make a thrilling appeal for mercy. God is against you, O sinful man! God is against you, O you who have never submitted yourself unto His Word! God is against you! And woe unto you when He shall rend you in pieces, for none can deliver you out of His hand! Happy! Happy beyond all description is the man who can say with our Apostle, “We have peace with God.” But wretched! Wretched, again, beyond all description! Wretched must that man be who is at war with his own Maker, and sees Heaven itself in arms against him!

Chiefly, now, we shall endeavor to talk of *the peace which the Believer enjoys*. And then I shall have *a few words of counsel, warning, and encouragement for those who have not this peace with God, or who may have had it, but for a time have lost the enjoyment of it*.

I. In speaking of THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH THE CHRISTIAN ENJOYS, we will commence with some remarks upon its basis. There is the widest possible difference between a man being just in his own eyes, and his being *justified* in the sight of God. Yet, perhaps no fallacy is more common than to mistake the one for the other. Then, as a natural consequence of building on a weak foundation, the structure, however fair to look upon, is insecure. The *peace* in which multitudes of professors delight themselves is merely peace with their own conscience and not in any sense peace with God.

I know of no greater contrast than there is between that peace which is a mere stagnation of thought, a lull of anxiety, or a blindness to danger, and that soul-satisfying peace which passes all understanding. The true

peace of God flows like a river in unceasing activity. It preserves a tranquil frame amidst storm, tempest, and tribulation—by all of which it is frequently assaulted. It is a part of the panoply of God with which a Christian is clothed, to withstand principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in the evil day. Or, to change the figure, Christ gave His disciples this peace as a charm, when, as He was about Himself to depart, and go to the Father, He sent them forth to be buffeted about in the world.

Just so in the text. If you pursue the subject in the next few verses, you will find that this peace with God is given first, and afterwards comes experience of tribulations everywhere else. We ourselves, Brothers and Sisters, have proved it. There is a natural disposition of sin to defile, but the blood of Christ speaks peace in the conscience. There is a constant tendency of the world to destroy our hope, but the peaceful word of Jesus comforts us. “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” There is a painful proneness of human strength to fail, but the promise supports us—“This One shall be peace when the Assyrian comes into our land.” And this true peace gives to the Believer an inward sense of God’s acceptance. As Moses never lost sight of the goodwill of the Dweller in the bush, so, too, there is a more blessed assurance of goodwill in the faith that always realizes, “God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.”

And now, as to the experimental basis of that peace which the Believer has with his God—it must have some solid rational ground. It must have some basis which judgment may estimate. I know some who have an apprehension of peace with God that has no foundation whatever. Let me describe the person. “Are you living in peace with God, my Friend?” “Yes,” says he, “thank God, I have enjoyed a sense of peace for twenty years.” “How did you get it?” “Well, as I was walking one day, in great distress of mind, on such-and-such a road, a feeling of comfort came over me, and it has remained with me ever since.” “Yes, but, Friend, what is the reason of your hope? What is the ground of your confidence that you have peace with God?”

“Well, you see, I felt comfortable, and I believe that I have felt comfortable ever since.” “No, no. That’s not the matter at which I aim. What is the *ground*? What is the doctrinal proof? What is the matter of fact that gives you comfort?” “Well, do not press me,” he says, “for I do not know. Only this I know—I did feel happy, and I have felt happy ever since. And I have not had any doubt.” That man, mark you, if I am not mistaken, is under a delusion. If I err not, it is very possible that that man has received a draught of the opium of Hell. Satan has said to him, “Peace, peace,” where there is no peace. He is going undisturbed, and quiet, down to the place where he shall lift up his eyes and discover too late his error.

The peace of a Christian is not such a lull of stupefaction as that. It has a reason. It has some groundwork. And when you come to pull it to pieces, it is as completely a logical inference from certain facts as any deduction that could be drawn by mathematical precision. Let me, however, bring up a few more who think they have peace but build their supposition on wrong grounds. Here is a man who very flippantly and joyously

says, "Peace with God, Sir? Yes, peace with God. I enjoy the unbroken satisfaction that I have made my peace with Him." "Well, how?" "Why, you see, some years ago I never went to a place of worship on Sunday at all, and I felt one day that I was doing wrong. Here was I going to the theater most nights, and I was doing my trade in a very bad way, and now and then I took too much drink.

"I was doing a great many things that were wrong, and I thought it was time for me to turn over a new leaf, and I have done so. Now I generally go to a place of worship twice on the Sunday. I may now and then indulge myself—well, who is there that never does anything wrong? But still there is very great amendment in me. If you ask my wife, she sees a wonderful change. And if you ask my workpeople, they will say I am a different man from what I used to be. Now, I think I am not like the man you brought up just now, with no ground for his peace. I think I have a very good ground for mine, for I am deserving very well of my Maker now. I feel now, if I go to a place of amusement where I ought not, I cannot pray that night. But the next night I try over again, and manage to get through my form of prayer. On the whole I am doing so well that I think I may say I have a good bottom and ground for saying that I am at peace with God."

Now, let this man be reminded that it is written, "By the works of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." All these moral things of which he has spoken are good enough in themselves. They will be very excellent in the temple of Christianity if they are placed at the top. But, if they are used as foundations, a builder might as well use tiles and slates and chimney-pots for foundations and cornerstones as use these reformatory actions as a ground of dependence. Man! Do you not perceive that your foundation is not an even and secure one? For what about the past? What is to become of the sins already committed? How are you to get rid of these? Do you suppose that the payment of future debts will discharge old liabilities?

Go to your tradesman and tell him that you owe him a very great sum of money, and you cannot pay him a farthing of it. Do you expect he will not sue you in court because you never intend to get into his debt any more? I think he will tell you that is not a method of business he understands. Certainly this is not the way in which God will deal with you. Your old sins! Your *old* sins! Your OLD sins! What about those? Those debts unpaid? Those crimes as yet unburied? Let your conscience give them a resurrection in your memory tonight. What about these? Surely you can have no peace with God while these remain unforgiven!

Besides, you have an inward conviction that you have not peace with *God*, but only peace with yourself. You do feel a little better sometimes, but it is a very poor sort of confidence that you have, for a little sickness shakes it. How would you like to die now? Would you wrap yourself up in these miserable rags of yours and say, "Lord, You know I have sinned, but then I have done my best to make up for it." You know and feel that this bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself on, and this coverlet too narrow for a man to wrap himself in. Renounce this confidence, for it is one that will never stand before God!

To give an instance of yet another case—one in which I tread on more delicate ground. Beloved, there are some who have peace which they explain to you in such a way that while I trust they have a peace with God, I fear they misunderstand the ground of it. Some true Christians will talk to you in this way—“I hope I am at peace with God now, for my faith is in active exercise. My love is fervent. I have delightful seasons in prayer. The eyes of my hope are no longer dim, and my patience can endure many things for Christ. My courage did not fail me yesterday in the midst of Christ’s enemies. My graces are vigorous. The Spirit of God has been blowing across my soul as over a garden. And all the graces, like flowers, have yielded their best perfume, and therefore I feel that I have peace with God.”

Oh, Believer, Believer! Are you so foolish as having begun in the Spirit by faith, to be made perfect in the flesh by your own doing? Remember, if you have peace, if you put your peace here upon your graces, then there will come another day—perhaps it may come tomorrow—when all those graces will droop like withered flowers, yielding no perfume! Instead of beauty there shall be baldness. Instead of ornament there shall be decay. There will come a day when you shall see yourself in your true natural colors, and discover yourself, like Job, and cry out as he did, “Lord, I am vile!” What will you do, then, with your peace? Why, if you have begun to look to your graces in any way for peace, then you are looking to a fickle source.

You are going to the cistern, instead of living by the fountain! You are using Hagar’s bottle, instead of sitting like Isaac at the well to drink from never-ceasing streams. Yet this is an evil into which we are so apt to fall after having done well for the Master, and being helped to serve Him. It is true we do not trust in these things. I hope God has delivered us from self-righteousness. Yet there is just that, “Now I *must* be a child of God—now I *must* truly be an heir of Heaven—for see how I have been sanctified! Mark how I have been edified and built up in the faith.” Ah, Brothers and Sisters! There is the cloven foot there! Be on your guard! It is an unclean thing. It will bring you into pain and bondage. It will make you sick, and put your feet in the stocks, and thrust you into the inner dungeon before long. Flee from it as you would from a serpent. Stand ever under the dear Cross of Christ, looking up to His wounds, rejoicing in His all-sufficiency, and building your peace there, and there alone.

I fear, too, that there are not a few who, I trust, have genuine peace, but who, nevertheless, are tempted to found their confidence upon their enjoyments. We have our enjoyments—God be thanked for this. Oh, there are times when our communion is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ! We have not been into Heaven, but we have heard some of the songs of the angels on the other side the pearly gates. Or, if not the songs, we have heard the echo of them in our hearts. There are times when we have been in prayer and our soul has been like the chariots of Aminadab, swift and strong. We have had our seasons, as it were, of witnessing the

Transfiguration! We can remember Tabor's mount—well can we remember the hill Mizar, and the Hermonites—for there He spoke with us.

We have had our experience of Jacob's dream, as well as our fellowship with Jacob's wrestling. We have seen the Lord, and by faith have put our finger into the print of the nails, and thrust our hand into His side. He has kissed us with the kisses of His love, and His love is better than wine. But the tendency is to say, "Now I *have* peace with God. Now I *must* be reconciled to Him. Now I will press out the wine of comfort from these grapes." If we do this, let us remember that perhaps tomorrow we may be in Gethsemane. We may have our times of agonizing and fruitless prayer. We may be in the valley of despondency, or in the blacker valley of the shadow of death.

Brothers and Sisters, present joys, promises applied with power, whispers of Christ's love, sweets of His Covenant, delighting ourselves in the Lord—what then? Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, we shall find ourselves weak, because we have taken our *comforts* to be the basis of our peace, instead of continuing to look solely and only to *Christ*. Let me warn you, Beloved, though this may not seem a case as dangerous as some others, yet let me warn you that it is essential to our comfort that we should stand to this and to this only—being *justified by faith*—we have peace with God. Our peace is solely the result of a justification achieved through faith and not the result of enjoyments, nor of graces, much less of good works, or of any foolish irrational impression which we may think we have been favored with.

Where, then, does lie the Christian's conviction of his peace with God? Well it lies in this—that he is justified by faith. The process is plain. It is as clear, I say, as a proposition in Euclid. Christ stood in my place before God. I was a sinner doomed to die. Christ took my place. He died for me. Well, then, how can I perish? How can I be punished for offenses which have been punished already in the Person of my Substitute? God demands of me perfectly to keep His Law. I cannot do it. Christ has done it for me—kept the Law—magnified it, made it honorable. What more can God demand of me? I, a sinner, am washed in Jesus' blood. I, guilty, am clothed in Jesus' righteousness.

You say "How? I cannot see it is so." True, it is so by *faith*. God says that he who believes in Christ shall be saved—I believe in Christ—therefore I am saved. He says, "He that believes on Him is not condemned." I believe on Him. Therefore I am not condemned—this is clear reasoning enough. Very well, then, the man who has believed in Christ has his sins forgiven, and the righteousness of Christ imputed to him. Therefore he is at peace with God. Now this is reasoning which no logic can deny. There is a rebel—first he is pardoned, next merit is imputed to him—and he is at peace with his king, and a rebel no longer. There is a child. He has offended. His Father takes him, accepts him for his elder Brother's sake, and he is at peace with his Father.

The thing is clear enough. Here is a reason for the hope that is within us, which we may give with meekness and fear! It is true, never with diffidence and timidity! We may venture to give it in the presence of the old

dragon, and defy him to break its force. We might give it, even, in the midst of a congregation of assembled demons and defy them, if they can, to break its power. We may give it in the presence of the Eternal God, for He will never deny the Word on which He has caused us to hope. "Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." It stands forever.

Stand here, and you stand so fast that no howling tempest of temptation can sweep you down. Stand to this, that Christ has finished your salvation for you, that He has done everything that Omnipotent Justice can ask. He has endured all the penalty, drained the cup of wrath, obeyed the Law completely, given to Divine equity all it can demand—and therefore, believing in His name, standing in His righteousness, accented in His suretyship—you must have peace with God. This is the basis of the Christian's peace—one on which he may sleep or wake, live or die—and live eternally, without condemnation or separation from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Continuing our remarks on this subject, we shall now turn your attention to the channel of this peace. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God *through our Lord Jesus Christ*."

Take it for a certain fact, then, that we are justified as the result of what Christ has done for us, seeing that He, "was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification." And the experience, insofar as we have assurance of our being personally justified, is the result of our trusting Christ. What then? How are we to enjoy the comfort of it? There are times when we begin to doubt whether we are justified. Brethren, we must not come to our *faith* to get comfort, but to the primary *cause* of our justification. The channel through which the comfort comes is *Jesus Christ*. So then, though justification by faith, is, in itself, a well of comfort, even from that well we cannot get it, except we use *Christ*—who dug the well—to be the Bucket to draw the water up from its depths.

It must come through Christ. I will suppose, then, that I am in doubt and fear tonight, and want to get my peace restored—how shall I seek it? Through Jesus Christ, the Surety and Substitute Himself. How? First, by believing in Christ over again, just as I did at the first. Christ tells me that He came to save sinners. I am a sinner, therefore He came to save me. He says He can save me. This looks reasonable. He is very God. He is perfect Man. He has suffered and offered a complete atonement. He tells me He is *willing* to save me. This also appears reasonable, for why else should He die, if He did not wish to save?

Then He tells me if I will trust Him, He will save me. I trust Him, and I have not the shadow of a doubt that He will be as good as His word. If He is faithful and just—of which who dares to breathe a suspicion?—this soul of mine, in Heaven, must be. It is committed to the Redeemer's charge with every pledge that God can give, with more security than we could ever ask. In Him I trust—in Jesus, and in Jesus, only. Brothers and Sisters, this is how you must get your peace with God tonight—through Je-

sus Christ—by going to Him. By a simple faith, just as you went at the first.

Some silly people who have got high doctrine in their heads, so high that it smells offensive in the nostrils of those who read the Scriptures—they say we teach that man is saved by mere believing. We do—by mere believing. There is a poor, starving man over there. I give him bread—his life is spared. Why do not these people say this man was saved by mere eating—by mere eating! And here is another person whose tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth by thirst, and is ready to die. I give him water, and he drinks, and his eyes sparkle—and the man is saved by mere drinking. And look at ourselves—why do we not drop down dead in our pews? Just stop your breath a little while and see. Surely we all live by mere breathing.

All these operations of nature that touch the vital mysteries may be sneered at as merely this, or merely that. And in like manner to speak with disparagement of, “mere believing,” is stupid nonsense. And yet, let me say it in my sense of the term—we are saved, we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ by mere believing—by the simple act of trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if I would get my peace made more full and perfect, having come to Christ by faith, I must continue to get peace from Him by meditation upon Him. For the more I go to Christ believingly, the deeper will my peace be. If I believe in Christ, and do not know much of Him, my faith will necessarily be somewhat slender.

But if I continue, “to comprehend with all saints what are the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge,” then my little faith will become strong faith. The bruised reed shall become a cedar, and the smoking flax shall become a beacon flaming to the very skies! I must take care, above all, that I cultivate communion with Christ, for though that can never be the *basis* of my peace—mark that—yet it will be the *channel* of it. If I live near to Christ, I shall not know fear. What sheep is afraid of the wolf when it is close to the shepherd’s hand? What child fears when it hangs upon its mother’s breast? Who should know fear when he is covered with the eternal wings, and underneath him are the everlasting arms?

“While His left hand is under my head, and His right hand does embrace me,” I cannot but be at peace, and that peace, if my communion is continued, will be like a river—deep and broad—my righteousness being like the waves of the sea. It is Christ, the substance of my salvation! Christ, the sum of all my hope! Christ who performs all things for me, and Christ made of God all things to me! As Christ was the first means of giving us peace, so He must still be the golden conduit through which all peace with God must flow to our believing hearts. And all this through the act of merely believing, or merely trusting in Him! By looking to Him I drew all the faith which inspired me with confidence in His Grace. And the word that first drew my soul—“Look unto Me”—still rings its clarion note in my ears. There I once found conversion, and there I shall often find refreshing and renewal.

Having thus glanced at the basis of our peace, and the channel through which it flows, let us pass on to notice its *certainty*. I like to read these rolling sentences of Paul, without an “if,” or a “but,” in them—“Therefore, being justified, we have peace with God.” He talks as logically as if he were a mathematician, and as positively as though he could see the thing written before his eyes. Oh, how different is this from the way in which some talk—“I hope,” “I trust,” “I sometimes hope my poor soul may have peace with God.” Now where this language is genuine, it deserves sympathy—but I believe in many cases it is cant.

There is a certain class of professors who think strong faith is pride, and doubts and fears are humility. Therefore they look upon these base-born thorns as though they were choice flowers, and they will cull them together like a bouquet of nettles and noxious weeds—a fool’s bouquet of flowers. Have you ever seen it in the magazines? I have observed it very frequently. Or they will dig up a nasty ugly thorn, put it in a flower pot, place it in an ornamental situation, display it outside the window, and call you all to admire it, as being a special, a wonderful piece of Christian experience.

Well, one likes to see a thorn when it is developed to the highest degree, but as soon as seen, one likes to see it burned. And so with these doubts and fears. It is very well for us to know how far doubting and fearing may go, but we think we would like to have them plucked up by the roots and destroyed as soon as possible. Let those who are the subjects of these doubts be sympathized and cheered, but let their doubts and fears be rooted out utterly. O Christian Brothers and Sisters, it is not impudence, it is not presumption to believe what God tells you. If he says “You *are* justified,” do not say “I *hope* I am.”

If I should say to some poor man—one terribly poor—“I will pay your rent for you tomorrow,” and he should say, “Well, well, I hope you will,” I should not feel pleased with him. If you should say to your child tomorrow morning, “Well William, I shall buy you a new suit of clothes today,” and he should say, “Well, Father, I sometimes hope you will, I humbly trust, I hope I may say, though I sometimes doubt and fear, yet I hope I may say I believe you,” you would not encourage such a child as that in his uncomely suspicions. Why should we talk thus to our dear Father who is in Heaven? He says to us, “I give unto you eternal life, and you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of My hand.” Is it humility for us to reply, “Father, I do not believe you, I cannot think it is possible”?

Oh, no! That is true humility which sits at the feet of the Promiser because it is humble—looks up into the face of the Promiser because it is trustful—and coats on the word of the promise, because it is sincere. He *will* perform it. Away with you, you Fiends that make me doubt! His honor is engaged to the carrying out of His Covenant. He *will* perform it. He says by faith in Christ I am justified. Therefore I say, I am justified, and have peace with God, nor shall anyone stop me of this glory—I have peace with God through Jesus Christ. I should like to hear you all talking in this way and getting rid of that old Babylonian jargon of “ifs,” and “buts,” and

doubts and fears! Be fully persuaded that what He has promised He will fulfill, as those who *do* believe what God has said, just because He has said it. Here is the certainty of justification by faith.

And now, as to the effect produced. When a man can say he has peace with God—what then? Why, the first effect is JOY. Who can be at peace with God, and have Him for a Father, and yet be miserable? I think I told you one night that, years ago, I was waited upon by a woman who wished to convert me to a novel sect that had come up with a false prophet at its head. She talked much and talked long, and talked all to no purpose. At last I told her I thought it best that she should tell me her way in which she wished to be saved, on condition that she would let me tell her mine.

I need not tell you what *she* said, but I said, "This is how I hope to be saved—it is said in God's Word, 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' And it is also written, 'he that believes on Him shall be saved.' Now, I do trust in Him, and I believe that, therefore, I shall be saved. No, more, I *am* saved and my sins are all forgiven. A perfect righteousness, namely, that of Christ, is cast about me, and I am so saved today that nothing by any possibility shall ever destroy me. I am saved forever." The woman said, "If I believed that that were true, I would very gladly give up my faith for anything so bright as that. But you," she said, "you ought to be the happiest man in the world." And I said, "I thank you for that word and so will I be, God helping me, for I ought to be. I have the utmost cause."

And so should every Believer feel he ought to be, because this great salvation, this solid hope, this rocky foundation for our everlasting peace should give us quiet, and calm, and security, till our joy should overflow and become an anticipation and an foretaste of the joy of Heaven. This peace should give the Believer, beyond, and in addition to his joy, a calm resignation, no, a delightful acquiescence in his Father's will. Now smite me if You will, my Father, for I am Your friend and You are mine. Now send the flames, for it shall only chasten, but cannot kill. Now take away my goods, for You are my All, and I cannot lose You. Now let the floods of trouble come, for You are my ark, and though the floods come around me higher and higher, still I shall abide in You, secure from reach of harm, while You shut me in!

Thus with calm composure the Believer walks along over life's hills and dales. And when he comes to the valley of the shadow of death he fears no evil, for his God is with him, His rod and His staff do comfort him. What fear is there to the man that is at peace with God? Life?—God provides for it. Death?—Christ has destroyed it. The grave?—Christ has rolled away the stone and broken the seal. Affliction, tribulation, famine, peril, or the sword? "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us." To have peace with God, Beloved, I cannot tell you what innumerable streams of good shall flow to you from this ocean of pleasure, and these rivers of delight. I have but skimmed over one of these placid streams. There are hundreds of blessed practical results that are sure to follow from a certain conviction of our peace with God through Jesus Christ.

II. In drawing to a close, I want to address myself to **THREE CHARACTERS** ~~WHICH HAVE NO DOUBT ARE REPRESENTED HERE IN~~ THIS LARGE CONGREGATION.

There is a man here tonight—I know he is here, though I do not know his name—a man who many years ago was a professor of religion. He has never been easy in his conscience since he forsook the ways of God. There has been some trembling hope sometimes in him that there was a little life, not quite extinct. And since he has come in here, he feels quite like a stranger in the House of Prayer, where once faces were so familiar. And there is, perhaps, a groaning in his spirit as he says, “O that I knew the way of peace, and the sense of peace for which in happier days I once enquired. I have lost my roll, if I ever had it. I have lost my character, and with my character, my faith—and with my faith my hope. Can I ever be at peace with God?”

Backslider, if you have ever been called by Divine Grace, let me ask you this question. Do you remember the time when you had a hope? Say, does not memory revive before you that time, when on your knees in agony, you did cry unto Him that hears prayer, and the mercy came, and your spirit rejoiced in pardon bought with blood? Man, do you remember it? The tear is on your cheeks now. You were not a hypocrite—let us hope that it was not all hypocrisy—not all a lie and a delusion. You did feel, then, that Christ could save. And you did trust yourself with Him.

Now then, Man, do the same tonight—and the dew of your youth will be restored unto you. Your leprosy is white upon your brow, but wash in Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall come again unto you, even as a little child. Jehovah seeks you. He cries unto you tonight, and by the lips of His ambassador says, “Return, O backsliding children, return unto Me for I am married unto you, says the Lord. You have wearied Me with your sins, you have made Me to serve with your iniquities, but I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions for My name’s sake, and will not remember your sins.”—

***“To your Father’s bosom pressed,
Once again a child confessed,
From His house no more to roam.
Come, and welcome, Sinner come.”***

“Oh, but I have forsaken Him.” Lay aside your “buts,” and “ifs.” He bids you come. Away with you, you doubts and fears, and black despairing thoughts! The sinner comes, and Jesus meets him. There is the kiss of His love. “Take off his rags, clothe him, put shoes upon his feet, bring forth the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry, for this, My son, which was dead, is alive again, he was lost and is found.” O, I wish I could persuade you—though you are growing old now—I wish I could persuade you to fling yourself at the foot of His dear Cross again! His hands are still nailed—He has not moved them yet. His feet are still fast—He has not stirred from the place where He waits for you—His arms still open wide. O believe Him! He is love, still, and the blood is mighty, still, and the plea in Heaven is all-prevailing, still. “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.”

Then I wanted to have said a word to some here who are not backsliders, exactly, but they have lost their peace for a little time. Many young Christians are subject to these little fits in which their evidence gets dark, and they lose their peace. I have no need to say more to you, Brothers and Sisters, while you are walking in darkness and see no light. "Let him trust," is a prophetic admonition—it shall be mine tonight. When you cannot see a single reason why you should be saved except that God says you shall, let that be enough for you. When you have nothing here, or there, or anywhere to look to. When there is no hope for you except in that Man whose wounds are bleeding, always think that is enough—because it is—and come to Christ just as you came at first.

I find it very convenient to come every day to Christ as a sinner—as I came at first. "You are no saint," says the devil. Well, if I am not, I am a sinner—and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Sink or swim, there I go— I have no other hope—

***"And when your eye of faith is dim,
Still trust in Jesus, sink or swim.
And at His footstool bow your knee,
For Israel's God your peace shall be."***

On Christ with all my weight I lean. And as I throw myself upon my bed to sleep, so on Christ will I stretch myself full length to rest—for He is able and He is willing. And if He can fail, then He fails me and fails all His Church. But if He cannot, then I shall see His face in Glory everlasting!

By your leave, I must have two or three words with those who never had peace. I shall be brief. I have no doubt I address many here who never had faith, and you are wanting to get it. I ask you, first of all, not to seek peace at all as the first object. For, if you want peace before you get Divine Grace, you want the flower before you get the root—and you will be apt to be like little children who, when they have a piece of garden given them, will go and pluck up the flowers out of their father's bed, and put the flowers into their own ground and then say, "What a nice garden I have got!"

But to their dismay, on the morrow all is withered. Better put the roots in, and wait a week or two till they sprout—and then the flowers will be living ones, not borrowed ones. Do not seek after peace first. Seek after CHRIST first. Peace will come next. Still, I pray you, do not think that peace is a qualification for Grace. If you fancy this, you will be in error, indeed. You are to come to Christ as Nicodemus did, by night, that is, in the night of your ignorance, in the night of your fear and trouble. You must come just as you are, bringing nothing to Christ, but coming empty-handed. No money, no price, no fee, "nothing to pay."

He asks of you nothing but that you would take all gratis from His liberal hand. And will you please remember that if you put your eye on anything *but* Christ, or anything *with* Christ—so as to disturb your whole thought and attention from being directed exclusively to Him—then peace will be an impossibility to you. If your eye is single, your whole body shall be full of light. But if you mix another trust, and so your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. Do not trust your *repentance!* Do not

trust your *faith*! Do not rely upon your *feelings*! Do not depend upon your *knowledge*—above all, do not depend upon your sense of *need*.

Do not come to Christ as a *sensible sinner*—do not come trusting Christ, feeling that you are a man who has a *right* to come—that you answer to a certain character that *may* come. But come because you are a *sinner*. Because you have *nothing* to recommend you. Because, if God should search you through and through, He could not find a point in you, a spot in you large enough to put the point of a pin upon that which was good. Come because you are vile, to be pardoned. Come, because you are black in sin, to be washed. Come, because you are penniless, to be made rich.

Look for nothing else except in Christ. Write this for your motto—“None but Jesus.” Oh, men and women, and Brothers and Sisters, if those Israelites of old, who were inside their houses that night, had gone outside to the lintel of their doorpost and said, “Now here is this lintel made of very common wood, we will paint and grain it.” And if they had then gone inside and trusted to the painting and graining of the lintel, the destroying angel would have found them out and destroyed them. If, again, they had said, “We will write up our name over the door—it is a respectable name. We will record the list of our charities and good works over the door,” the angel would have smitten through the whole, and there would have been a wailing through the house as through the houses of the Egyptians.

But what did they do? They took the *blood*. They marked the lintel and the two side posts and smeared them with a crimsoned stain. Then in they went, and sat contentedly down—or stood at last in peace—and ate the Passover with joy. And, while the shrieks of Egypt went up in the cold midnight air, the sons of Israel went up also into Heaven, for the angel of death, when he spread his wings on the blast, had seen the blood and by that mark he knew that he must pass by that habitation and smite none that were there.

The word of the Lord was not “When I see your *faith*,” but “when I see the *blood*, I will pass over you.” Oh, Soul, if you trust Christ, the blood is on your brow tonight! Before the eyes of God no condemnation. Why, then, need you fear? You are safe, for the blood secures every soul that once is sheltered thereby. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. But if you believe not, trust where you may, you shall be damned. God help you to believe in Christ for His name’s sake. Amen.

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THE PERSONAL PENTECOST AND THE GLORIOUS HOPE

NO. 1904

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 13, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And hope makes us not ashamed, because the love of God is shed
abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”
Romans 5:5.*

PENTECOST is repeated in the heart of every Believer. Let me give you a little bit of historical analogy to illustrate the text. The Lord's disciples were made to sorrow at His Cross. Sore was the tribulation which came upon them as they thought upon His death and His burial in Joseph's sepulcher. But after a little patience and experience, their hope revived, for their Lord rose from the dead and they beheld Him ascending into Heaven. Their hopes were bright concerning their Lord who had gone into Glory and had left them a promise to come again and to make them takers of His victory. After that hope had been begotten in them, they were, in due time, made partakers of the Holy Spirit, whose Divine influence was shed abroad upon them so that they were filled with His power. Then were they made bold. They were not ashamed of their hope, but proclaimed it by the preaching of Peter and the rest of them. The Holy Spirit had visited them and, therefore, they fearlessly proclaimed to the world the Lord Jesus, their hope of Glory.

Truly, history repeats itself. The history of our Lord is the foreshadowing of the experience of all His people! That which happens to the First-Born befalls, in measure, to all the Brethren. We have before us in our text an admirable example. First comes our tribulation, our agony, our cross-bearing. Out of our patience and experience there arises, in due season, a blessed hope—we are quickened by our Lord's resurrection life and come forth from our sorrow! He raises us up from the grave of our woe. Then comes the Divine visitation of the Holy Spirit and we enjoy our Pentecost—“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” I trust we know what this means and are now enjoying it. Consequent upon that visitation, our hope becomes clear and assured—and we are led to make a full outspoken testimony concerning our hope and that blessed One who is the Substance of it. I hope that many of us have already proved that we are not ashamed and that others of you will yet do so. Our God has visited us in mercy and endowed us with the Holy Spirit who is His choice gift to His children. The Holy Spirit dwelling in us has caused us to know and feel the love of God and now we

cannot but speak and tell others of what the Lord has made known to us! Thus, on a small scale, have we rehearsed a portion of early Church history in our own personal story. You shall find that not only in this case, but in all cases, the life of the Believer is in miniature the life of Christ! He who originally said, "Let Us make man in Our image," still, in the new creation, follows the model of Christ in the new-making of chosen men!

Now let me give you a little passage of *experimental mystery*. You have it here spread before you in a little map of the inner life—"Tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." This passage can only be fully understood by those people of God who have had it written in capital letters on their own hearts. "Tribulation works patience," says the Apostle. *Naturally* it is not so. Tribulation works *impatience* and impatience misses the fruit of experience and sours into hopelessness! Ask many who have buried a dear child, or have lost their wealth, or have suffered pain of body and they will tell you that the *natural* result of affliction is to produce irritation against Providence, rebellion against God, questioning, unbelief, petulance and all sorts of evils!

But what a wonderful alteration takes place when the heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit! Then, but not till then, tribulation works patience! He that is never troubled cannot exercise patience. Angels cannot personally exhibit patience since they are not capable of suffering. It is necessary to the possession and exercise of patience that we should be tried—and a great degree of patience can only come by a great degree of trial. You have heard of the patience of Job—did he learn it among his flocks, or with his camels, or with his children when they were feasting? No, verily, he learned it when he sat among the ashes and scraped himself with a potsherd—and his heart was heavy because of the death of his children. Patience is a pearl which is only found in the deep seas of affliction and only Divine Grace can find it there, bring it to the surface and adorn the neck of faith with it!

It comes to pass that this patience works in us experience, that is, to say, the more we endure, the more we test the faithfulness of God, the more we prove His love and the more we perceive His wisdom. He that has never endured may believe in the sustaining power of Grace, but he has never had *experience* of it. You must put to sea to know the skill of the Divine Pilot and you must be buffeted with tempest before you can know His power over winds and waves. How can we see Jesus in His full power unless there is a storm for Him to turn into a calm? Our patience works in us an experimental acquaintance with the truth, the faithfulness, the love and the power of our God. We bow in patience and then we rise in happy experience of heavenly support! What better wealth can a man have than to be rich in experience? Experience teaches. This is the real High School for God's children. I scarcely think we learn anything thoroughly without the rod of affliction. Certainly we know best that which has been a matter of personal experience. We need that Truth of God should be burned into us with the hot iron of affliction before we know it effectively—after that,

no man may trouble us, for our heart bears the brand of the Lord Jesus! Thus patience works experience.

It is rather amazing that it should then be said, “and experience works hope”—not amazing in the sense of being questionable, for there is no hope so bright as that of the man who knows, by experience, the faithfulness and love of God. But does it not seem singular that this heavy tribulation, this grievous affliction, this painful chastisement should, nevertheless, bring forth for us this bright particular light, this morning star of hope, this herald of the everlasting day of Glory? Brothers and Sisters, how wonderfully does Divine alchemy fetch fine gold out of metal which we thought to be worthless! The Lord, in His Grace, spreads a couch for His own upon the threshing floor of tribulation and there, like Boaz, we take our rest! He sets to music the roar of the floods of trouble. Out of the foam of the sea of sorrow He causes to arise the bright spirit of “hope that makes not ashamed.”

This passage from which we have taken our text is a choice extract from the inner life of a spiritual man! It is a fragment of the Believer’s riddle—let him read it that has understanding.

Before I plunge into my subject, let me point out to you that this text is none other than the House of God and the gate of Heaven. Behold a Temple for the worship of the Divine Trinity in my text. Read the fifth and sixth verses together—“The love of God (*the Father*) is shed abroad in our hearts by *the Holy Spirit* which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time *Christ* died for the ungodly.” Behold the blessed Three in One! It needs the Trinity to make a Christian! It needs the Trinity to cheer a Christian! It needs the Trinity to complete a Christian! It needs the Trinity to create in a Christian the hope of Glory! I always like these passages which bring us so near to the Trinity. Let us pause a while and adore—“Glory be unto the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end! Amen.” It is most sweet to be called upon to offer special worship unto the one God in the Trinity of His Divine Persons and to feel your heart readily inclined thereto, as we do at this hour. By faith we bow with the hosts of the redeemed before the all-glorious Throne of God and worship Him that lives forever. How heartily may we do this when we think of the unity of the Sacred Three in our salvation! We have Divine Love bestowed by the Father, made manifest in the death of the Son and shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit! Oh, to feel, at this moment, communion with the Triune God! Let us bow before the sacred majesty of Jehovah and then, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, let us enter the Temple of our text!

The text runs thus: “Hope makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” The Apostle had worked up the subject till he came to the hope of Glory. When he had reached that height, he could not help saying something concerning it. Turning away from his main subject, as is often his custom, he makes a diversion and gives us a few glowing sentences upon the Believer’s hope.

Our first head will be *the confidence of our hope*—the hope makes not ashamed. Secondly, *the reason of this confidence*, which I hope we are enjoying, today, for we are so confident about our hope that we shall never be disappointed in it because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. Thirdly, we shall have a word or two to say upon *the result of this confidence of hope*, since, for this cause we bear testimony to the world and declare that we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

I. First then, consider THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR HOPE. *We are not ashamed of our hope*. Some persons have no hope, or only one of which they might justly be ashamed. Ask many who deny the Scriptures, what is their hope for the future. “I shall die like a dog,” says one. “When I am dead that’s the end of me.” If I had such a wretched hope as that, I certainly would not go about the world proclaiming it! I would not think of gathering a large congregation like this and saying to you, “Brothers and Sisters, rejoice with me, for we are all to die like cats and dogs.” It would never strike me as being a matter to be gloried in. The Agnostic knows nothing and, therefore, I suppose he hopes nothing. Here, also, I do not see much to stir enthusiasm. If I had no more hope than that, I would be ashamed.

The Romanist’s best hope when he dies is that he may come right in the end, but that, in the meantime, he will have to undergo the purging fires of “purgatory.” I do not know much about that place, for I cannot find mention of it in Holy Scripture—but those who know it well, because they invented it, and keep its keys—describe it as a dreary region to which even great bishops and cardinals must go! I have seen, *personally seen*, invitations to the faithful to pray for the repose of the soul of a late eminent cardinal—and if such is the lot of the princes of the church of Rome, where must ordinary people go? There is no great excellence in *this* hope. I do not think I should call you all together in order to say to you, “Rejoice with me, for when we die we shall all go to ‘purgatory.’” You would fail to see the special ground of rejoicing. I do not think I would say much about it and when anybody questioned me about it, I would endeavor to evade the point and declare that it was a deep mystery which had better be left to the clergy!

But *we are not ashamed of our hope*, we Christian people who believe that those Believers who are absent from the body are present with the Lord! We look for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God! We are not ashamed to hope for Glory, immortality and eternal life!

We are not ashamed of the object of our hope. We do not believe in gross carnal delights as making up our Heaven. We do not believe in a Muslim paradise of sensual delights, or we might very well be ashamed of our hope! Whatever imagery we may use, we intend, thereby, pure, holy, spiritual and refined happiness such as the False Prophet would not have regarded as a sufficient bait for his followers. Our hope is this—that our Lord will come a second time and all His holy angels with Him. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father! We

believe that if we fall asleep before that time, we shall sleep in Jesus and shall be blessed with Him. "Today shall you be with Me in Paradise," is not for the thief, only, but for all of us who have trusted our souls with the crucified Savior. At His coming we expect a glorious resurrection. When He shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel and the voice of God, then shall our souls be restored to our bodies and our complete manhood shall live with Christ! We believe and are sure, that from that day we shall be forever with Him. He will give us to be partakers of His Throne, of His crown and of His Heaven—and that forever and ever!

The more we talk about the promised bliss, the more we feel that we could not be ashamed of the hope of Glory! The ultimate reward of faith, the ultimate reward of a life of righteousness, is such that we joy and rejoice in prospect of it. Our glorious hope contains, within it, purity and perfection, freedom from all sin and the possession of every virtue. Our hope is that we shall be like our perfect Lord and shall be with Jesus where He is, that we may behold His Glory. Our hope is fulfilled in that promise, "Because I live, you shall live, also." We shall not merely exist, but *live*, which is another and a higher matter. Our life shall be the life of God in our spirits forever and ever! We are not ashamed of this hope! We press forward to the attaining of it!

Furthermore, *we are not ashamed of the ground of our hope*. Our hope rests upon the solemn promises of God which He has made to us by His Prophets and Apostles—and confirmed in the Person and work of His dear Son. Inasmuch as Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead, we that are one with Him by faith, are sure that we shall rise again from the dead and live with Him. The fact of Christ's Resurrection is the assurance of our resurrection! And His entrance into Glory is the pledge of our glorification because we are made one with Him by the purpose and Grace of God. As we fell in Adam by virtue of our being in him, so we rise and reign with Jesus because we are in Him. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living—yet is He the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob and, therefore, these men are yet alive! Even thus do we believe concerning all who die in the faith that they have not ceased to be, but they all live unto Him. Our hope is founded not upon reasoning, which, possibly, may dimly prove the immortality of the soul and the future reward of the righteous, but upon God's Revelation which states it clearly and plainly and leaves no room for question. If this Book is a lie, our hope must be given up. But inasmuch as we have not followed cunningly devised fables, but have received the testimony of faithful eyewitnesses of our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, we believe the Holy Record and are not ashamed of our hope! What God has *promised* is sure—and what God has *done* fully confirms the same and, therefore, we have no fear.

And, Brothers and Sisters, *we are not ashamed of our personal appropriation of this hope*. Somebody may sneeringly say to us, "You expect to be in Glory, do you?" Yes, we do and we are not ashamed to acknowledge the soft impeachment, for our confidence is well grounded. Our expectation is not based upon any proud claim of personal merit, but upon the

promise of a faithful God! He has said, "He that believes in Him has everlasting life." We do believe in Him and, therefore, we know that we have eternal life! He has declared in His Word that, "whom He justified, them He also glorified"—and we are justified by faith, therefore we shall be glorified! Our hope is not based on mere *feeling*, but on the *fact* that God has promised everlasting life to them that believe in His Son, Jesus. We have heard our Lord pray, "Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory." We believe that the Father gave us to Jesus because we have been led to put our trust in Him and *faith* is the sure sign and token of Divine election. Therefore, being Christ's, we expect to be with Him where He is. Reading in the Word of the Lord the words, "that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," we hold on to that promise and know that we have everlasting life! This seems to us to be a strictly logical argument. Unless it is a mistake and God has not said that the Believer shall live forever, then we are under no delusion in expecting so to live. God's Word is the most sure thing that can be and we are not ashamed to hold on to any claim which truthfully arises out of it! We dare believe that God will keep His Word to us and to all other Believers.

Brethren, *we are not ashamed as to the absolute certainty that our hope will be realized*. We believe that if, indeed, we are justified by faith and have peace with God, we have a hope of Glory which will not fail us in the end, nor on the way to the end. We do not expect to be deserted and to be left to fall from Grace, for, "He has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you." We do not expect to be left to ourselves, which would mean our sore and certain ruin, but we expect that He who has begun a good work in us will perfect it unto the day of Christ—we are certain that He who has worked this hope in us will justify that hope by fulfilling it in due time. He will preserve us through long life if we are to live long; will maintain a living hope in us when we come to die and will remember, even, our dust and ashes when these are hidden in the tomb. "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" It is written, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." And so it shall be. He shall not perish *from* the way, nor *in* the way. Has He not said, "I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me?" He keeps the feet of His saints. "I give unto My sheep," He says, "eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Never shall we be deceived in our trust in Jesus! No man shall say, "I trusted the Lord Christ to keep me, but He has not kept me. I rested in Jesus to preserve me in spiritual life, but He has not preserved me." Never! We shall not be ashamed of our hope!

II. As I have introduced to you that confidence which makes Believers—especially tried and experienced Believers—full of hope which makes us not ashamed, my second objective is to dwell upon THE REASON OF THIS CONFIDENCE. Why is it that men who possess the good hope are so far from being ashamed of it that they rejoice in it?

My answer, is first, because *that hope has for one of its main supports the love of God*. I expect, one day, to sit among the angels and to behold

the face of my Best-Beloved, but I do not expect this because of anything *in* me, or anything which may ever be done *by* me, but simply because of the infinite love of God! I trust not to my love of God, but to God's Love to me! We trust Him because He loves us. We are sure that He will fulfill our hope because He is too loving to fail us. It is from the love of God that all our hopes begin and it is upon the love of God that all our hopes depend! If it were not for the Father's love, there had never been a Covenant of Grace. If it were not for His infinite love, no atoning Sacrifice had been provided. If it were not for His active love, no Holy Spirit would have quickened and renewed us. If it were not for His unchanging love, all that is good in us would soon pass away. If it were not for love almighty, love immutable, love unbounded, we would never hope to see the face of the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off. He loves us and, therefore, He leads us, feeds us and always keeps us. Do not your hearts confess this? If that love could be suspended for a moment—if its power were, for an instant, to cease, where would we be? We fall back upon the love of God as the final reason of our hope in Him.

Observe, dear Brothers and Sisters, the actual cause of our confidence is that *the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit*. Let me try and explain what this means. The Holy Spirit is in the heart of every Believer and He is occupied in many gracious acts. Among other things, He sheds abroad the love of God in the heart in which He resides. The figure is taken from a box of precious perfume being poured out in a chamber. There lies the slumbering scent within the alabaster box—it is a very choice thing, but no one has yet perceived its odor. The love of God brought within the soul is that rare fragrance, but till it is shed abroad, it is not enjoyed. Now the Holy Spirit takes that box, opens it and the sweet savor of Divine Love streams forth and fills all the capacity of the Believer. This love penetrates, permeates, enters and occupies the entire being. A delightful perfume streams through the entire room when the odor of roses is poured out and even so, when the love of God is thought upon by the devout heart and the Holy Spirit helps its meditations, the theme fills the mind, the memory, the imagination, the reason and the affections! It is an engrossing subject and is not to be confined to any one faculty any more than you could keep the aroma of spices within a certain narrow space.

Moreover, as perfume gives delight to the nostrils, so the love of God, when shed abroad in the power of the Holy Spirit, *imparts a singular sweetness to our emotions*. All the garments of the Lord of Love smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia. Where can such sweetness be as in the love of God? That the eternal and the infinite One should really love men and love them at such a rate as He has done, is a Truth of God at once surprising and gladsome! It is a root from which springs the lily of perfect joy. This is an ivory palace wherein every dweller is made glad. You may meditate upon that love till you are ravished and carried away by it—and your soul, before you are aware, becomes like the chariots of Amminadib!

Yet again, wherever perfume comes, it not only spreads itself abroad and gives delight to all who are in the place, but *it abides there*. Take the

ointment away if you will, but the sweet odor remains for many an hour in the room which was once filled with it. Some scent appears to abide forever. You went to your drawer the other day and there was a delicious flavor of lavender, yet there had been no lavender there since last summer—fragrance lingers! A few drops of the true oil will perfume a wide space and remain long after the vase from which it was poured has been taken away. The love of God, when it comes into the heart and is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, who is the great Master of the art of diffusing love, abides in the heart world without end! All other things may cease, but love abides. For a moment we may seem to forget the love of God amidst the business of the world, but no sooner is the pressure removed than we return unto our rest. The sweet perfume of Divine Love overcomes the rankness of the odor of sin and never quits the heart that has once known its exceeding deliciousness.

If I change the figure, I may say that the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit like one of yonder rain clouds, black with exceeding blessing, which pours forth a shower of innumerable silver drops, fertilizing every place on which they fall, making the drooping herbs to lift up their heads and rejoice in the Heaven-sent revival! After a while, from that spot where the rain fell, there rises a gentle steam which ascends to Heaven and forms fresh clouds—thus is the love of God poured upon our heart and shed abroad in our nature till our spirit drinks it in and its new life is made to put forth its flowers of joy and fruits of holiness and, by-and-by, grateful praise ascends like the incense which in the Temple smoked upon Jehovah's altar. Love is shed abroad in us and it works upon our heart to love in return.

To leave the figures—the shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart by the Holy Spirit means this—He imparts to us an *intense appreciation* and sense of that love. We have heard of it, believed in it and meditated upon it and, at last, we are overpowered by its greatness! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” We cannot measure such love! We become affected by it. We are filled with wonder and admiration. Its greatness, its singularity, its speciality, its infinity—all these amaze us! It is shed abroad in our hearts. Then there comes an *appropriation* of it. We cry, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” We begin to feel that God's love was not only love to men in general, but love to ourselves in particular and we are now fairly carried off our feet! In a belief of this special love to us we are ready to dance for joy. Faith perceives that it is even so and then we praise the Lord upon the high-sounding cymbals.

Then follows, as a matter of course, that *return of love* which the human heart must feel—we love Him because He first loved us. We doubted His love once, but we cannot doubt it now. If we were asked three times, “Do you love Me?” we would answer humbly, but most emphatically, “Lord, You know all things, you know that I love You. I could not live without loving You. I would rather a thousand times that I had never been born than be without love to You and, though I do not love You as I ought, and my heart craves after a far greater love, yet I do love You in deed and in truth. You know that I do and I should be false to my own conscious-

ness if I denied it.” This is to have the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit which is given to us—to know it, enjoy it, appropriate it, rejoice in it—and come under its Divine influence. May this bundle of myrrh never be removed from the chamber of my soul!

But I want you to notice *the special sweetness which struck our Apostle* as being so amazingly noteworthy. He goes on to tell us what most affected him. He says, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” That is the first point to be dwelt upon—that God should give His Son to die for the *ungodly*. That God should love those who love Him, that God should love His renewed people who are striving after holiness is, indeed, delightful. But the most overpowering thought of all is that He loved us when there was nothing good in us whatever! He loved us from before the foundation of the world! Regarding us as being fallen and lost, His love resolved to send His Son to die for us! Jesus came not because we were good, but because we were evil! He gave Himself, not for our righteousness, but for our sins! The moving cause of love in God was not excellence in the creature then existing or foreseen to exist, but simply the good pleasure of the God of Love! Love was born of God, Himself. It was so great in the heart of God that—

**“He saw us ruined in the Fall
Yet loved us notwithstanding all.”**

He loved us when we hated Him! He loved us when we opposed Him, when we cursed Him, when we persecuted His people and blasphemed His ways. Marvelous fact! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would bring home that Truth of God to our hearts and make us feel its energy! I cannot put the thought fitly before you, much less shed it abroad within you, but the Holy Spirit can do it—and then how charmed you will be, how humbled and yet how full of praise to the Most High God!

The Apostle is not content with bringing that point before us—he would not have us forget that Christ *died for us*. Brothers and Sisters, that Christ should love us in Heaven was a great thing. That He should then come down to earth and be born in Bethlehem was a greater thing. That He should live a life of obedience for our sakes was a wonderful thing. But that He should *die*—this is the climax of Divine Love’s sacrifice—the summit of the Alp of love! Some sights in the world astonish us once or twice and then grow commonplace, but the Cross of Christ grows upon us. The more we know of it, the more it surpasses knowledge! To a saint who has been saved 2,000 years, the sacrifice of Calvary is even more a marvel than when first he saw it! That God, Himself, should take our nature and that in that nature He should die a death like that of a felon upon a gallows to save us, who were His enemies, is a thing which could not be believed if it had been told us on less authority than the Divine! It is altogether miraculous! And if you let it take possession of your soul until it is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, you will feel that there is nothing worth knowing, believing, or admiring when compared with this! *Nothing* can ever rival in interest the Cross of Christ. Let us study what books we may, the knowledge of a crucified Savior will still remain the most sublime of all the sciences.

Furthermore, the Apostle then goes on to say that *the Lord must always love us, now that we are reconciled*. He puts it thus—If God loved us when we were enemies, He will surely continue to love us, now that we are friends. If Jesus died for us when we were rebels, He will refuse us nothing, now that He has reconciled us. If He reconciled us by His death, surely He can and will save us by His life. If He died to reconcile enemies, surely He will preserve the reconciled. Do you see the whole argument? It is very full of reasons for the upholding of our hope of Glory and causing us not to be ashamed of it. When the great God makes us feel the exceeding greatness of His love, we banish all doubt and dread. We infer from the Character of His love as seen in the past that He cannot possibly cast us away in the future! What? Die for us and then leave us? What? Pour out His heart's blood for our redemption and yet permit us to be lost? Will He manifest Himself to us as He does not to the world, robed in the crimson of His own Atonement through death, and then will He, after all, say to us, "Depart, you cursed"? Impossible! He changes not! Our hope has for the keystone of its arch the unchanging love of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever! The Holy Spirit has so shed abroad the love of God in Christ Jesus in our hearts that we feel quite sure that no one can separate us from it and, so long as we are not divided from it, our hope of Glory is sure as the Throne of the Eternal!

Once more—the Apostle reminds us in the 11th verse that, "*we have now received the atonement*." We already feel that we are at one with God. Through the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus we are at peace with God. We love Him—our quarrel with Him is ended—we delight in Him, we long to glorify Him. Now this delightful sense of reconciliation is a satisfactory assurance of Grace and Glory. The hope of Glory burns in the golden lamp of a heart reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Inasmuch as we are now in perfect accord with God, longing only to be and to do just what He would have us to be and to do, we have the beginnings of Heaven within us, the dawn of the perfect day! Grace is Glory in the bud. Agreement with God is the seed-corn of perfect holiness and perfect happiness. If we are under the dominion of holiness. If there is no wish in our soul but what we would take back if we knew it to be contrary to the mind of our holy Lord, then are we assured that He has accepted us and that we have His life in us and shall finally come to His Glory. He that has brought His enemies to be His hearty friends will not permit this gracious work to be undone, or His holy purpose to fail! In our present delight in God we have the earnest of our endless joy in Him and, therefore, we are not ashamed of our hope.

One word more on this point—note well that the Apostle not only mentions the love of God and its being shed abroad in our hearts, but he mentions *the Divine Person by whom this has been done*. The shedding abroad of God's love in the heart has been worked by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Only by the Holy Spirit could this have been done. Would you ever have been charmed with the love of God through the influence of the devil? Would you ever have been overpowered and filled with excessive joy in the love of God through the power of your own fallen human nature? You judge! They that have felt the love of God shed abroad

in their heart can say without a doubt, "This is the finger of God; the Holy Spirit has worked this in me." Nothing short of the Holy Spirit can effect it. "Thank God," says one, "I sat under an earnest ministry!" So you might and yet have never felt the love of God within your heart! We can shed that love abroad by preaching, but we cannot shed it abroad *in the heart*. A higher influence than that of human orator must deal with the inner nature!

Perhaps you were alone in your chamber, or walking by the roadside when the sweet savor of Divine love stole into your soul. Oh the love of God! The amazing, immeasurable, incomprehensible love of the Father! Oh, to feel this till our very souls are inflamed with it and our unloving nature is all on fire with love to the great Lover of the souls of men! Who can do this but the Holy Spirit? And how come we to have the Holy Spirit but by the free gift of God, whose gifts and calling "are without repentance"? God does not give and take—His gifts are ours forever. If the Holy Spirit has been given to you, is He not the pledge of God's love? Does not the New Testament describe Him as the earnest of the inheritance? Is not an earnest the security for all the rest? Does the Holy Spirit set His seal to a document which, after all, is so faulty that it will not effect its purpose? Never! If the Holy Spirit dwells in you, He is the guarantee of everlasting joy. Where Grace is given by His Divine indwelling, Glory must follow it. The Holy Spirit, when He comes into the soul, comes that there He may take up His dwelling place—and there He will abide till we shall be caught up to the higher realms, to behold our Lord's face forever!

III. Lastly, let us hint at THE RESULT OF THIS CONFIDENT HOPE. Let the context instruct us.

First, this confident hope breeds *inward joy*. The man that knows that his hope of Glory will never fail him because of the great love of God, of which he has tasted, that man will hear music at midnight! The mountains and the hills will break forth before him into singing wherever he goes! Especially in times of tribulation he will be found "rejoicing in hope of the Glory of God." His most profound comfort will often be enjoyed in his deepest affliction because then the love of God will especially be revealed in his heart by the Holy Spirit, whose name is, "the Comforter." Then he will perceive that the rod is dipped in mercy, that his losses are sent in fatherly love and that his aches and pains are all measured out with gracious design. In our affliction, God is doing nothing to us which we should not wish for ourselves if we were as wise and loving as God is. O Friends! You do not need gold to make you glad! You do not even need health to make you glad—only get to know and feel Divine love and the fountains of delight are unsealed to you—you are introduced to the banquets of happiness!

This brings with it the Grace of *holy boldness* in the avowal of our hope. Christian people do not often enough show worldlings the joy of their hope. We do not wear our best liveries, nor say enough of the joy of being in the Lord's service, nor speak enough of the wages which our Lord will pay at the end of the day. We are as silent as if we were *ashamed* of our hope! We even go mourning, although we have reason to be the happiest

men on God's earth. I fear we have not enough experience of Divine love shed abroad in our hearts. If the perfume were within, it would be perceived by those who are around us. You pass a factory of perfume and at once perceive that sweetness steals abroad. Let us make worldlings know the fragrance of our joyous hope—especially let us tell those who seem most likely to laugh at us—for we have learned by experience that some of these are most likely to be impressed. Often has a new convert written to a worldly friend to tell him of his great change and of his new joy—and that worldly friend has put the letter aside with a sneer or a jest. But after a while he has thought it over and he has said to himself, "There may be something in it. I am a stranger to this joy of which my friend speaks and I certainly need all the joy I can get, for I am dull enough." Let me tell you that all worldlings are not such fools as some would take them for—they are aware of an unrest within their bosoms and they hunger after something better than this vain world can give them! So that it frequently happens that as soon as they learn where the good is, they accept it.

Even if they do not hunger, I do not know any better way of making a man long for food than yourself to eat. The looker-on feels his mouth water. All of a sudden his appetite arrives. In the parable of the prodigal son, the servants were ordered to bring forth the best robe and put it on him and to put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet—but the father did not tell them to take the son and make him eat! What he said was, "Let us eat and be merry." He knew that at the sight of others feasting, his hungry son would eat. When you who belong to the Divine family, eat and drink in happy fellowship and are merry with the Lord in feasting upon love Divine, the poor hungry brother will desire to join you and he will be encouraged to do so.

Come, then, you that have a hope of Glory, let all men see that you are not ashamed of it! Act as decoys to others—let the sweet notes of your happy life charm them to Jesus! May the Lord cause you to spread abroad what He has shed abroad and may that which perfumes your heart also perfume your house, your business, your conversation and your whole life! May we so enjoy true godliness that we may never bring shame upon it, nor feel shame concerning it!

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THE HEART PERFUMED

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*“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts
by the Holy Spirit who was given unto us.”
Romans 5:5.*

As one reads the opening verses of this Chapter, one cannot help saying, “What marvelous treasures are those which belong to the people of God!” Hezekiah took the Babylonian ambassadors through all his varied treasure houses and herein he did evil—but if you can conduct your mind through the spiritual treasure houses and the minds of your friends in the same direction, you will do well. What is the wealth of God’s people? Who can count it? It is wondrous and beyond conception! The Apostle seems to have taken up a whole handful of brilliants in the first verses of this Chapter and he now holds them up, one by one, and lets them glitter in the light, no not merely a handful plucked at random, but they seem to be striving together, for one follows on after the other! “Therefore” is the link which connects justification with “peace,” and then there is a connection between this “peace” and “access,” and from this “access” to God we go on to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” And when we have got as far as this string of pearls, the Apostle adds, “And not only so,” and then he holds up a cluster—and when he has spoken of them he adds that “tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and”—another, “and”—“experience hope,” and then another, “and”—“and hope makes not ashamed.” And then at the end of this string of jewels he brings up the language of the text—“Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given unto us.”

I suppose the allusion in the text is to the pouring out of water—the love of God being to us like a spring shut up, a fountain sealed until the Holy Spirit comes—and then the love of God flows in, a pure and crystal stream being shed abroad in our hearts!

But perhaps another figure may suit us as well tonight. The love of God is comparable to precious spikenard, but it is in the alabaster box. The Holy Spirit opens that box and then the sweet perfume is “shed

abroad” in our hearts, not merely “shed,” but, “shed abroad.” Not only poured out as the oil was on Aaron’s head, but running down to the skirts of his garments and perfuming all the room, just as it did in his case.

Now observe, to some extent we can shed abroad the love of God in this house. While the preacher is preaching of it, there will be a sweet savor Christ. There is, as it were, a spiritual perfume in the assembly of the righteous whenever Jesus Christ is spoken of, for, “Your name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love You.” But the text means something more than this. It is the love of God shed abroad, not in the assembly, but in the heart. The one is the aggregate, but this is the *individual and personal sense* of it—not in the house, I say, but in the heart! The preacher sheds abroad this love when he preaches of Christ, but he cannot shed it abroad in the heart. He can only speak of it. He cannot bring it home to your own personal realization. It must be shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, but if it once gets there, the sweet perfume of it is always recognized by your inner man. It is not the preacher—neither is it the letter of this Book—it is the Holy Spirit who most graciously comes there to shed abroad the love of God in your heart! Oh, see, then, how much we are indebted to the third Person of the blessed Trinity! With what reverence should we always speak of Him! With what rapture should we love Him! With what devotion should we adore Him! The love of God, itself, is, even to us, as spikenard unperceived until He brings it to the spiritual senses and makes it sweet to us! The love of God is like light to a blind eye until the Holy Spirit opens that eye! It is like food and raiment to a dead man until the Holy One of Israel comes and gives us life to enjoy these mercies. Oh, then, may the Holy Spirit now be here in each one of us, to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts!

I shall first, then, and for a very little time, speak of the precious ointment which is here said to be shed abroad, namely, the love of God. Secondly, upon the shedding of it abroad. Thirdly, upon the blessed results of its being shed abroad in the heart and then, fourthly, upon some matters which tend to hinder our enjoyment of the shedding abroad of this love in our hearts. First, let us speak of—

I. THE PRECIOUS OINTMENT WHICH IS HERE SPOKEN OF—“the love of God.” Now, although I have to speak of this, yet it is a thing which, as to its essence, is not to be spoken of. It is to be enjoyed and to be felt, but no words can convey its unmistakable sweetness!—

***“The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know.”***

No words, either of the pen or the tongue will ever be able to convey it either to hearer or reader. We receive the love of God doctrinally and I

think we do well to do so. We may speak of it in various theological senses. We may declare the love of God to be in some respects universal—for, “His tender mercies are over all His works” and, “the Lord is good to all.”

But we may delight most of all to speak of it in its discriminating and distinguishing character, as revealing itself in the full blaze of its splendor to those whom He has chosen unto Himself.

I believe the preacher does well who descants upon this love of God in its eternity, who says of it that it is an ancient thing, more ancient than the hoary mountains, or the aged sea, who speaks of it as an unchangeable and inimitable thing, abiding forever fast to those chosen ones who possess it. He does well, I believe, who speaks of it as being without an end, who shall declare in God’s name that Christ, having loved His own who were in the world, loves them to the end and that this is but a picture of the great love which is in God our Father towards us—that having loved us once, He will never cease to love us, but we shall always be the object of His heart’s affection. But, Brothers, it is very easy to *talk doctrinally* about the love of God, but you may not know anything about the love of God when you know all that! If I were to give a description of a father’s love to some poor orphan, here, I dare say I might make him feel envious. I might make him desirous to have something of the kind, but it would be quite impossible by any mere words to tell him what a father’s love really is if he had never known it. It would be something like showing a skeleton to an angel who wished to see a man. A man is something more than a set of bones, nerves, muscles and ligatures—you cannot present the man by any description that you may give, however anatomically correct! Neither can you describe the love of God by merely doctrinally giving an outline of it, as the theologian would do, for there is vastly more there than the mere theologian has ever learned! You know some people have a herbarium in which they preserve specimens of various plants. Among the Alps you are asked by persons to buy collections of the flora of such-and-such districts. Well, you may buy them, and you will be interested in them when you get them home, but when you turn over the leaves and find the plants dried between the papers, they are nothing at all like what they are as they bloom on the Alps! The gentian has not the marvelous yellow blooms which startles you as you find it on the side of the glaciers. It is a dry, dead thing now—you cannot convey to your friends what the flower is really like when at home—to know that fully you must take them to see it! So is it with theology—it is easy to preserve the living things of the Truth of God in a dry form, but you have not really understood them until you have seen them in life and known them by experience!

Again, you may think about the love of God *historically* and what a wonderful topic is here! Begin—where? Well, since there is no beginning, begin where you will. Begin with the council chambers of eternity! Begin with the purpose, the election, the Covenant, the suretyship engagement. Then go on to the love revealing itself in the first promise—love sparing guilty man, love manifesting itself by slow degrees through the mist and smoke of the Mosaic ritual and, at last, bursting into its full splendor upon the Cross in the Person of the dying Savior! Then go on to love developing itself in our experience, beginning by convincing us of our folly and our danger and proceeding until it takes us into the arms of God, and puts us there forever in the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision! But, my dear Friends, you know reading the story of a battle cannot give you any idea of the battle itself! Every man who has heard the sound of the cannon and has marked the pain and misery of those who fall beneath the sword of war will tell you that no description, however graphic, can ever make you feel what a battle is. So with regard to the love of God. You may give the history of it with the greatest accuracy, but when you have given it all, you do not know what it is unless you have really tasted and handled it in your own soul's experience! So that if I am to speak of this ointment, I know not where I shall find words. I must rather ask that you may have it shed abroad in your hearts.

I think there is a way, too, of speaking of the love of God in such a *manner as to get none of it*. I think that arguing over practical Gospel Truths is about the surest way of depriving you of the unction and the savor of them. I think we ought to treat Divine Truth very much as the true mother treated her child when they were before Solomon. Let us not rend it. But there are some who rend it anyway, as long as they can keep their share of it. Oh, yes, for a hair's breadth of a doctrine, for some infinitesimal point, for one Greek article, or a half a word, some men would mar the fellowship of the saints and drive away some of the best-beloved of God out of their communion! They are like the simpletons who, to find out who shall drink a jug of milk, spill it altogether and neither of them get a drop of it. They have some choice of rare fruit, but they trample it under their feet in a strife as to who should eat it! Let us beware of so doing with the love of God—and yet we have sometimes felt that we have handled themes connected with the love of God in such a controversial spirit as to take the bloom from the surface and the very juice from the grape.

After all, dear Friends, the best we can say of the love of God is just this—you must know it and feel it for yourselves. But oh, the wondrous love! Angels marvel at it! To think that God should love His sinful creatures! You will marvel at it, even in Heaven! When you shall have grown

accustomed to wonders, this will still strike you as being a great marvel. I believe you will—

***“Sing with rapture and surprise
His loving kindness in the skies”***

and that when you have dived into the greatest deeps that your intellect can bear, you will find the wondrous depth of love both beneath and above you! When your faculties shall have been expanded to the heavenly size and you shall be elevated to become the peer of the angelic host, even *then* you shall feel that the love of God surpasses your powers of knowledge and comprehension!

This, then, is all we will say concerning it, that the love of God is the precious ointment. But secondly, the text says—

II. THIS LOVE OF GOD IS “SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS.”

What does this mean? Does it mean our merely knowing that God is Love? We must know that as a preliminary step, but oh, the shedding abroad of the love of God is vastly more than that! It does not mean merely prizing that love, the coming into a state of desiring after it. When we feel that it must be a precious thing to be beloved of God. That is a very proper state of mind, but it is not what is meant here. It is not even believing in the love of God. That is the Christian’s privilege and should be his constant position—believing that God loves him, resting confident that even under affliction’s cross the love of God is still the same—and that if God should hide His face, yet His heart is not changed. But the love of God shed abroad is more than that. It is not even the waiting for visits from God’s face. It is a sweet thing to sit at Christ’s door and wait until He comes to us. If I may not feast at the table, I may be grateful to be allowed to hunger and thirst to do it! Next to having Christ, a real longing after Him is one of the most precious gifts of the Holy Spirit. But still, a great deal more than this is meant here. It is not even remembering former love-visits. That is often very consolatory—

***“Our former favors we recount
When with Him on the holy mount.”***

And we sometimes think on the Hermonites and the hill Mizar, and find great comfort in the thought that He did once shine upon us—He did once show His love to us and we rejoice greatly. But the shedding abroad of His love is more than this. It is not the remembrance of a thing, however precious, that is past and gone, but the deep enjoyment of something that is now present!

What is it, then? Well, is it not just this? When the Holy Spirit brings home to our souls a sense of the love of God, we no longer entertain the slightest doubt—we are *assured of God’s love to us*. We are now far past the range of questioning. It is no longer with us—

“Tis a point I long to know

Oft it causes anxious thought.

It is there and we know it is there! I called today upon a friend whose business calls him to the use of many perfumes. And I was shown into his little room where there were various articles with which the perfumes were made. Now, I can suppose him to lose one of those pots of perfume, but I cannot suppose him to lose it and not know where it is when it is shed abroad, for then he cannot help smelling it and perceiving it—and then he says, “Why, here it is—the room is filled with it.” So when the love of God is shed abroad, you do not ask where it is! Your heart is filled with it. All your passions and powers are flavored and scented with it. It is not, “Where is it?” but, “Here it is!” Oh, the joy of saying, “Here it is!” If all the powers of earth and Hell combined say that God does not love me, I can deny and refute them all, for I feel that love shed abroad in my heart! It is a clear perception of the fact that God loves me as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ! It is a persuasion of the Presence of the Holy Spirit, of the sealing of the Spirit, of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are born of God!

And even more than that. It is a thing that *we hardly need a witness about*. It is a consciousness, a perception, of the love of God as it is shed abroad in our soul, so that this love of God being shed abroad seems to us to mean that it is deeply and intensely enjoyed. Treasure it up in the bottle and you do not enjoy the perfume—shed it abroad and then all the fragrance fills the room and every nostril is regaled. Oh, there are times when we are as full of Heaven as we can hold this side of the Jordan! And when we know Christ’s love because He kisses us “with the kisses of His mouth” and we drink deep draughts of His love, it is better than wine! We do not look on at the feast—we feed! We do not admire the rich clusters—we take them and drink the nectar thereof! We do not look from Pisgah’s brow, as did Moses, with the eyes of faith—we come to the woods that drop with honey and, like Jonathan, we dip our spear into it and feel that our eyes are enlightened as doves’ eyes. Oh, Christian! You know what this means! You have had it in the prayer chamber when you have been alone with God! You have had it in the depth of trouble—some of you have had it on a sick bed, some in the furnace—and yet so manifestly was Christ with you there that the furnace glowed with joy as with the pain you felt! You rejoiced in Christ Jesus and as your tribulations abounded, so your consolations also abounded. The love of God was enjoyed by you—you felt it, you were ravished with it!

Where the love of God is shed abroad, *it fills the whole man*. There are some perfumes which if you once spill but a few drops of them, you would not only know it yourself, but everybody else would know it, too. “Gently,” said my friend, when he was showing me a certain perfume and I was going to pour out a drop, “if you do not want to smell of that for a

month, do not do that,” and as I did not particularly desire to smell of anything for so long a time as that, I kept my fingers off! If you could once get the love of God shed abroad in your heart, you would be flavored by it—and when it is once shed abroad, there, it will be there to all eternity! There will be no fear of its being taken away from us when it is once fully poured out in all its glorious efficacy into our hearts. You must have felt it, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, when from morning till night the whole day was full of the love of God! When you woke, you did not know how it was, but instead of a care and a fear about the day, you woke with a hymn, a verse, a comfortable promise, as though you had put a wafer made with honey between your lips when you went to sleep and it had been melting there till it had sweetened your mouth and your whole soul! And when you went downstairs, it did not matter whether things went cross or not—they seemed to you to go well all the day, for your will was, through this love of God, brought to *His* will—and that pleased you which pleased Him!

You were very rich, today, not that you had more than formerly, but you had the love of God to sweeten all! You were today kept from using the tongue too freely—you did not need to speak about the great many things which once had engrossed your conversation because your meditation of Him was sweet and you wanted to speak with Him. That day persons noticed you—they could not help it. If your face did not shine, your conversation did! And if you met with any of God’s people who had a spiritual taste to appreciate your conversation, they remembered that you dropped pearls of soul-enriching from your mouth, for you spoke as one who had “been with Jesus and learned of Him.”

Do you remember, too, locking up your heart at night and giving God the key? And then when you woke up remembering David’s words, “When I wake I am still with You”? Perhaps you did not remain with Him long, but, whether longer or shorter, it was the best exposition that could have been given you of the meaning of our text, “The love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit.”

I know this, dear Friend, if you have ever known this, you will thirst and hunger after it again! This wine of Heaven is such that if a man drinks of it, the more he drinks, the more he needs. If you have ever eaten the Bread of Heaven, the bread of earth will never satisfy you! If you have ever eaten of the bread which drops from Heaven, and on which angels feed, the food of common mortals will have lost its sweetness for you! You have been made to feast at the “feast of fat things, full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well-refined”—you have been taken up from where men grovel and where you are, yourself, now groveling—and on the wings of eagles you have been made to mount into a clearer atmos-

phere! And you will feel heavily oppressed in the dense smoke of this world and you will be wanting to be away with Christ again. Perhaps you are singing—

***“Ah, woe is me that I
In Meshech sojourn long!
That I in tents do dwell,
To Kedar which belong!”***

But it shall not always be so. You shall soon see His face if you seek after Him and again shall the “love of God be shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” And now, may God help us, while for a few minutes we go over what we have said, and ponder—

III. THE RESULTS OF THIS LOVE BEING SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS.

I have anticipated some of these already, but we remind ourselves more definitely that the love of God in our hearts *sweetens everything*. It sweetens our duties and they become *privileges*—

***“’Tis love that makes our willing feet
In swift obedience move.”***

Oh, when you feel that God loves you, how you can watch and pray! Then you can fight and wrestle! “All things are possible to him that believes,” and more than all is possible to him that loves! When the heart gets the love of God in it, it—

***“Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, ‘It shall be done!’”***

A Believer may have the most desperate enterprises and they may involve the most serious self-denial, but they will be accomplished with readiness when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart. It sweetens all our trials. Trials are scarcely trials when we see them coming from a Father’s hand. The gardener wept, you know, when he found that his choicest rose had been cut. But when he knew that it was the Master who had taken it, he wept no more, for the Master had a right to it. There are no murmurings in the heart of him who can say, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” And, Beloved, it sweetens, I am certain, all our pursuits. We are very apt to think that our engagements in the world are too humble, too obscure—and then they become a drudgery when we think so. Do you not know that Jesus counts the very hairs of your head and He seems to intimate by that, that your very humblest pursuits are the objects of His careful observation? He knows *where* you are, *what* you are and what you have to do—and He knows how to sweeten it all! But when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, how cheerfully the poor woman, with her eyes all weary and red, plies her needle and how the hard-toiling man finds his load grow light! Poverty seems to grow rich and the hut and the hovel seem to grow into a mansion—and even rags seem to glisten like robes

when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart! Have you never heard how the martyrs used to sing at the stakes? Why was it? Not because the fire was made of roses—they did not find the firewood to be less hot to them than they would have been to others—but it was because the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts and, therefore, they could endure all things for Christ's sake, seeing that love was theirs. It sweetens all.

Then again, *it overpowers all other things*. There are some perfumes that if they were let loose in a room, would overpower and kill all others. There may be other sweet scents in the chamber, but just unstop this bottle and now where are they? They are all swallowed up, as Aaron's rod swallowed up Egypt's rods! When the love of Jesus fills our souls we have love towards our dear friends and relatives—God forbid that we should not! But still, the love we have to Jesus seems to swallow them all up—His love towers above all other loves, like some mighty Alp above mole-hills! Best of all, when this love masters the soul, it kills all evil loves. During cholera times, people are very anxious to get something that will destroy all noxious vapors and bad smells. Ah, there is many a bad odor in our hearts! There is the old swamp of natural depravity which is capable of spreading death and destruction every time we encounter it. But when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, how effectually it kills this! Then the love of sin dies! The loving principle within subdues and tramples underfoot all lusts and all corruption—and we rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ and are not daunted by the conflict we feel within. This love kills all evil. And how blessedly it *destroys all doubt*! As I have said, when you are smelling a perfume you cannot doubt but that it is there. If you go into a field at this time of the year, you might walk all down a path and not know that there was any game there, but as soon as ever the partridges begin to fly, or the hares begin to run, you know immediately that there is game there because you can see it. So when our graces are slumbering and we do not know that they are there, as soon as ever they get into active exercise, then we discover them and we are sure of them! So is it with the love of God. When it has been slumbering in our hearts, we have had some doubt—but when it is poured out and shed abroad—its fragrance fills the entire man and then doubts and fears are given to the winds!

And where this perfume is, once more, *it is quite sure to communicate itself from the man, instrumentally, to his fellows*. He who has been in beds of spices will smell, thereof, and they who sit with their Lord will bear away some tokens of His companionship. All the ways of the Lord Jesus are full of perfume, because “His garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.” And when your garments smell of the same, through having been with Him, you will communicate something of the savor, in-

strumentally, to those whom you meet. God grant you Grace to seek this as a holy ambition, that, having the love of God in your hearts, it may be as when one has a candle lit and others bring their candles to his, and he imparts the light, for it makes him none the poorer, while they rejoice therein. And now, to conclude, I think we all who love the Lord desire to feel His love shed abroad in our hearts, but we sometimes mourn because we do not feel it. What, then, is

IV. THE REASON WHY WE DO NOT FEEL THE LOVE OF GOD SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS?

May it not be, Brothers and Sisters, because *we have restrained prayer?* The common sin of God's people is slackness in prayer. If there is one sin that needs to be preached about more than another just now, it is the sin of the omission of secret dealings with God. This is the secret of our spiritual leanness, the secret of many of our trials, of our lack of joy, our loss of confidence in God.

Neglect the prayer chamber? Why, the merchant might as well neglect his office and counting house! This is the place where you will be impoverished if you neglect it. I am persuaded more and more the longer I observe myself, and certainly the longer I observe others, that when we grow weak on our knees, it is a sign of weakness throughout the entire man. How can you expect to know much of the love of God if you will not go with Him? If you give no time to meditation, if you have no season for searching the Scriptures, if you have no periods for communion with God, why wonder if you should miss enjoyment with Him?

I am persuaded, too, that a great many of us lose a good deal *through neglecting the means of Grace*. I do not think that this applies to the most of you as a congregation. I believe there are none who frequent the assembling of themselves altogether as much as you do. I have no cause to complain. There are some of you who are always here as often as the doors are opened—and Prayer Meeting and Lecture Nights are no burden to you. You come with willing feet to meet with your God. But it is not so with some professors. Step into most of the places of worship in London and look at the weeknight service—and in some country places they have to give up theirs because there are not enough to come to make it worth their while to hold such meetings. There is a sad deficiency in some places of a love of the means of Grace. There are some professors who, when they get by the seaside, or a little away in the country, are always glad of an excuse not to go out to hear the Word of God. They know but little of the emotion of David when he counted that to be a dry and thirsty land when he could not go up to the public worship of God! Brothers and Sisters, we must use the means of Grace or else, as we despise them, we must not expect a blessing! We must dig the well when we go through the

valley of Baca. We must not depend upon that well, for it does not, in this case, fill from the bottom—it is filled from above! But still, the well must be dug. There must be our gracious exertions and then there shall come the Divine blessing.

May we not also say that many Christians lose much joyous fellowship with Christ *because of idleness*? Christ is a worker. If we are idlers, we shall not have communion with Him. “The Father,” says He, “works hitherto, and I work.” If your possessions are unconsecrated, if your talents are unused, if your time is misspent, you cannot wonder if the Lord Jesus Christ should give you the whip! The “whip is for the ass, and the rod for the fool’s back.” Idle Christians must expect to feel the whip or the rod, but if we will do what we may for Christ, we shall have sweet consolation in the doing of it, and the love of God shall be shed abroad in our hearts!

Worldliness, too, is a bar to the shedding abroad of the love of God in our hearts. Those who do as worldlings do, who can be amused and interested as they are, must not wonder if the love of God is not shed abroad in their hearts. I am very far from desiring to keep Christians from certain places of amusement where the amusement is simple, and only such as may be derived from social fellowship, science, music and so on. But I am satisfied that the frequenting of such places, even the very best, must be unfavorable to the piety of the very best Christian. You will gain but very little compared with the risk you run of losing very much! If these things charm you, it is not likely that Christ will charm you longer. If you get worldly, you cannot be spiritual at the same time.

Is it not, also, very probable *that our little faith* prevents this love of God from being shed abroad in our hearts? If we trusted Christ more and honored Him more by resting upon the faithful love of His Father, would we not find His love shed abroad in us?

And may it not also be *our ingratitude as to past favors*? We have not thanked God enough for the comfortable seasons that we have enjoyed and, therefore, He keeps us hungering until we thank Him for what He did in days gone by.

And, dear Friends, is it not because we do not sincerely seek conformity to the likeness of our Savior, that we have not, as we might, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts? It is even this, my Brothers and Sisters, it is even this! If you have ever known the sweetness of the love of Christ, you understand that I cannot exaggerate when I praise it. It is the sweetest, best and happiest thing of which a mortal can sing. It is a bliss which angels might envy—the sense of the love of God in a man or woman’s heart! Then how is it that you and I can endure to be without it? The true wife would be grieved, indeed, if she had a doubt as to her hus-

band's love—she could not be happy unless she could have an assurance of being its possessor. And oh, how is it that we can bear ourselves when we are saying, “Does He love me?” How is it we can endure, as some professors do, day after day, not to have a word from His lips, or a smile from His countenance? Do we really love Him, or is it all mere talk? Has our heart any deep affection for Him, or is it only formal profession? Have we caught it up from others? Have we stirred merely natural emotions in ourselves and then thought we loved Him? Oh, I do hope we may say, “It is not so, we do love Him! We would be very wretched if we did not. We might sooner wish to die than cease to love Him. He is the Chief among ten thousand to our hearts—we feel He is.”

Oh, then, without making vows and resolutions which we shall soon break, let us pray, “Oh, Savior, shed abroad Your love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit! Oh, God the Father, reveal Yourself in all the fullness of Your love to us now and we may never lose a sense of it, but have it abiding with us forever!” What a Church would this be if we all had fellowship with Christ! Oh, how trivial would the world's troubles become! We would then go on serving the Master like seraphs. I think we would scarcely rest day nor night, but be always praising and blessing His dear name! This place would be a paradise! We would have to bless God so continually and our songs might rival those before the Throne of God! “The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak,” but, “we have a High Priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.” Let us draw near to Him with confidence and let this be the burden of our prayer, “Abide with me! Continue with me, for Your love's sake, Amen.”

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

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

THE PERFUMING OF THE HEART

NO. 829

DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 6 1868,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”
Romans 5:5.*

THE Apostle sets before us a ladder like that which Jacob saw—the foot rests upon the earth, but the top ascends to Heaven. Tribulation is the foot, but we mount as we see that it works patience. And we climb again, for patience works experience. And we ascend yet once again, for experience sustains hope, and hope that makes not ashamed climbs up to the very heart of God—and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. I might compare these verses to those songs of degrees which were sung by the people as they went up to the Temple—as they halted at each stage of the pilgrimage they sang a fresh Psalm—and so David said, “They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appears before God.”

The pilgrim sets out from the dull and desolate vale of tribulation. He journeys on to patience, and lifts up his Psalm under the shadow of the rock. He removes his tent and journeys on to experience—beneath its wells and palm trees he refreshes himself. Soon he marches on again from experience to hope, and never stops till the love of God is shed abroad in his heart and he has reached the New Jerusalem where he worships the ever blessed God and drinks full draughts of His eternal love.

In this text it seems to me as though our great Melchisedec, the Lord Jesus, came forth to refresh His warring and wayfaring people with bread and wine. You read of tribulations—these are the battles of the faithful—and in them they overcome even as Abraham overthrew the kings and made them as driven stubble before his bow. The Lord's warriors are often faint and weary in them, but the love of God is graciously shed abroad in their hearts—and this is that sacred bread and wine that refreshes the Lord's people in their time of hunger. It becomes a sweet morsel to refresh them by the way and keep them in good spirits till they eat the heavenly bread and drink the new wine all fresh and sparkling at the table of the marriage banquet. There they shall sit forever and ever with the glorious Bridegroom.

This morning, if we may be so helped of the Holy Spirit, we shall, first of all, say a little upon the love of God. Then upon the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. And then upon the confirmation which this gives to our hope, since the Apostle tells us that our hope is not ashamed for this reason—that the love of God cheers and sustains us, being shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

I. First, then, some little upon THE LOVE OF God—a theme for breadth and depth like unto the vast Atlantic—whereon my little skiff loses itself as a mere speck on the infinite expanse! How shall I profess fully to express Truths of God so vast that the greatest divines might lose themselves and the most eloquent of speakers might fail? The love of God—how shall I attempt to speak of it? I must but skim the surface! To dive into its depths were impossible for me.

Think, for a minute, first of all, of what it is—the love of God. Now the *pity* of God towards the suffering I can understand because of the goodness of His Nature. The *kindness* of God towards the needy I can comprehend because of the liberality of His Character. That He should have *compassion* upon such as are ignorant and out of the way—that He should look constantly with tenderness upon those that are sorely broken and ready to perish is easy enough for me to believe.

But this is *not* what is spoken of in the text. It is not compassion, nor tenderness, nor pity—it is LOVE—which is something *more* than all these. You pity the beggar whom you could not love. You have compassion upon the villain in whom you could have no complacency. You look with tenderness upon sufferers who have nothing in their character or in their persons to attract your affection. Men usually think that they have gone far enough when they have rendered kindness. Even if the heart glows with no affection, they, as a rule, take this to be the rendering of *love* towards their neighbor. When they have permitted their compassion and tenderness to exhibit themselves, they feel that all is done that is demanded of them.

But the text speaks not of this, but of *love*—direct attachment and affection—and of the love of *God*. I beseech you, my Brothers and Sisters, as you sit here, lift up your souls—bid your understandings stand on tiptoe and endeavor fully to grasp the idea of *Divine love*. If you are in Christ Jesus, this day God loves you, but to what shall I liken love as it streams from the heart of Jehovah? We try to guess at what God's love to one of His people may be by our love to our own children, to our spouse, to our friend. Now, in a far higher degree and sublime sense, and after a loftier sort, even so God loves the people of His choice. Consider this, Believer, and be astonished that love should come from God to such a one as yourself!

The Lord loves *you*. He has a complacency and a delight in *you*. *You* give *Him* pleasure! He watches for your good! You are one of His household! Your name is written on His heart! He loves you! Can you catch the thought? If so, there is no praise that can express your gratitude! Solemn silence will, perhaps, be the only vehicle that shall seem fitting for your soul's adoration! Revolve the personal thought again and again in your soul! He that made the heavens and the earth loves *me*! He whose angels fly as lightning to obey His behests—the tramp of whose marching shakes both Heaven and earth—whose smile is Heaven and whose frown is Hell, loves *me*!

Infinite, Almighty, Omniscient, Eternal, a Mind inconceivable, a Spirit that is not to be comprehended—but He, even He—has set His love upon

the sons of men, and upon *me*. Let each Believer say in his heart, "Upon me among the rest." Oh, but this is astounding, this is marvelous! He has said to us what He never said to angels, for unto which of the angels said He at any time, "You are My son"? To which of all the glorified spirits has He said, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you"? Where do you read that He shed His blood for angels, or poured out His heart for seraphim and cherubim?—

***"Never did angels taste above
Redeeming Grace and dying love."***

God's dearest love has been hoarded up for worms, saved for the creatures of a day, reserved for us poor ephemera who are and are not—that we should be favored above all that live! It is not for tongues to tell out this wonder, but spiritual minds helped from on high may feel, in solemn stillness, what a mystery is here. If you would have, this morning, this love shed abroad in your hearts, I must ask you to consider carefully who it is that loves you, namely, the Most High God!

To be loved, I have already said, is a sublime thought. But to be loved of Him is a right royal thing, surpassing thought as far as the Heaven is above the earth! A courtier will often think it quite enough for him if he has the favor of his prince. What does that favor mean? It means riches. It means pleasure. It means honor. All that the courtier needs is wrapped up in the royal smile. And, Believer, what does the love of the King of kings mean to you? If you estimate it rightly, not only all that you now need, but all that you can *ever* need—all that the flights of fancy or the conceptions of understanding can bring before you are contained in that one fact—the Lord loves you!

When Jehovah loves He brings His power to help His love. He brings His infinite wisdom to contrive ways for delighting the objects of His choice. And every other attribute of His transcendent Nature works and co-operates with love for the good of the chosen ones. You have all things if you have your Father's love, O child of God! Here all your aspirations may sit down content—to be loved of God is enough, and more than enough, for the largest wish! Caesar's imperial couch is hard compared with the bosom of God—Caesar's scepter is a cumbersome thing compared with the ring of love which surrounds our finger.

Give us but the Father's love, and who will may have the Indies! Yes, let the worlds be given to whom God may please, as men give husks to swine, if we may but have His love, it is enough—our soul is filled to the brim, and flows over with satisfaction! Consider, I say, who it is that loves you and surely your heart will leap at the very sound of His name, and feel it to be a matchless thing to be loved of Jehovah, the only living God! Think, yet again, of what He is who so loves you. Very much of the value of affection depends upon the object from whom it comes. It would be a very small thing, certainly, to have the complacency of some of our fellow creatures, whose judgment is so perverted that their praise might almost be considered censure!

To have the love of the good, the holy, and the excellent—this is truest wealth—and so to enjoy the love of *God* is an utterly priceless thing! No mention can be made of coral. And as for rubies they shall not be men-

tioned in comparison therewith. God, the thrice Holy One who cannot love that which is unholy and defiled, cannot take complacency in that which is contrary to Himself—yet looks on us through His Son, and, viewing us in Christ Jesus, sees no sin in Jacob, neither iniquity in Israel—and, therefore, can love us with complacency and delight. Oh, how this exalts us! We are *nothing* in ourselves—but how this makes us feel the gentleness of the Lord in making such base things to be so great by merely loving them!

Don't you see how graciously the Lord can fit a man to *be* loved and then can shed abroad within his heart an abundance of love which would have been an unknown thing unless Divine Grace had changed and renewed it? To be loved of God! O Sirs, some think it a great thing to be applauded of the crowd—but watch the breath of the multitude—how soon it is blown aside! From men upon whom it was most lavished, from them it is soon taken! What do you think of the approval of the wisest and best of men? What is their wisdom but folly in the sight of God? And what is their approbation often but a mistake? But to be approved of Him before whom the heavens are not pure and who charged His angels with folly! Beloved, this is such a thing as might make you sit down and lose yourselves in blissful meditation even until you found yourselves in Heaven!

Still farther to lead your minds into this love of God, let me remind you of the remarkable characteristics of that love. The love of God towards His people is a Heaven-born affection. It sprang from no source but itself. God loves His people because He will love them and for no other reason known to us. Divine love is not caused by any excellence in the *creature*, either created or foreseen—its springs are within itself! We do not believe in the eternity and self-existence of matter, but we do believe in the eternity and self-existence of Divine love! The Godhead seeks no reason for love to fallen men beyond its own determination and purpose.

The Lord chose His people at the first in the exercise of His Sovereign will. He loved them, then, because “He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.” He then united them to Christ, and viewing them as Christ's bride—beholding them as members of Jesus' body, He loved them with Divine complacency—the love not springing from anything in *them*, but altogether from that which is within Himself and in His own dear Son. His love is a causeless love so far as outward causes are concerned—caused only by the fact that God in His Nature and Essence is Love!

As this love was uncreated, so it is self-sustaining. It is like Deity itself. It borrows nothing from without. It bears its life and strength within its own heart. The Lord loves you today, Christian, not because of anything *you* are doing, or *being* or *saying* or *thinking*. He loves you because His great heart is full of love and it runs over to you. I do rejoice to think that this love sits on no precarious throne nor borrows leave to be. It lives and shall live as long as *God* lives! None shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! And so long as God exists, this fire of love, fed upon its own fuel, unsupplied by any human hands, shall continue to flame forth towards the chosen seed.

This love, too, it is sweet to remember, is utterly unbounded and altogether unequalled. You cannot say of God's love it has gone so far and shall go no further. It is impossible to conceive a point beyond its glorious tide! But if there were such a point, it would yet reach it, for the love of God glories to be without limit of any kind towards His people. He loves us much better than we love our children, for we often love them so badly that we bring them up to evil and we tolerate them in sin. He loves us better than we love ourselves, for self-love it is that ruins us—but God's love it is that saves us and lifts us up to Heaven and to perfection.

There is no love that can any more be compared with God's than the faint gleam of a candle can be likened to the blaze of the sun at noonday. He loves His people so much that He gives them all that He has. Earth, with all its Providential arrangements, He consecrates to them that all things may work together for their good! Heaven itself He gives them, and since He wills it so, they shall even sit upon the Throne of Christ, to reign with Him. As for His own Son, His choicest and greatest treasure—a treasure the like of which Heaven and earth could not match—"God spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all. How shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things?"

The Divine love has no shore. Enterprising mariner, your thought may spread its sail and catch the favoring wind of the eternal Spirit, but if you shall fly on and on, forever and forever over ceaseless waves of new discovery, yet shall you never find a limit either to the infinite God or to His infinite love, for the two are as one! As the Father has loved Christ, even so has He loved His people, and herein let them rejoice, for they rest. A love without a parallel! Blessed be God for it!

So, Beloved, let us reflect, too, that this love is unvarying and unsleeping. He never loves them *less*. He cannot love them more. God loves each one of His people as much as if there were only that one created being in all Heaven or earth and as if there were no other object for Him to set His love upon. For the multiplicity of the saints does not diminish the infinite love which each one enjoys. The Lord would not love better the one—the only redeemed one—if but one had been bought with blood, than He loves each one ransomed from the Fall. A greater excess of love there cannot be! God loves His people with all His heart—diminution of love there shall not be, for He has said that there is neither variableness nor shadow of a turning with the Father of Lights. He changes not—therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Brethren, how sweet it is to think that though a mother's love towards a child cannot, when her weariness has worn her out, keep her awake every night when the child is sick—and perhaps the little one may be in great need while the mother necessarily is asleep—yet this can never happen to our God! No fatigue, no exhaustion, no faintness can ever make a pause in the Lord's loving oversight of the Believers! Never for a single moment does He forget His Church. His heart always beats high towards His elect, and at every moment He shows Himself strong for the defense of those that trust Him.

If there were a minute in which God left you, child of God, you might, indeed, be wretched! But since there is no such period, rejoice exceedingly in the daily Presence of your heavenly Father and endeavor to walk worthy of it. Let every day be a holy day bright with the light of this constant love. Put on your garments as though they were priestly vestments! Go forth to your daily labor as to sacerdotal service! Go to your house as to a temple! Come here to the assembly of God's saints like a great congregation of priests who come together on the feasts of the Most High to offer sacrifices to their ever present God! Well may you, into whose eyes this love has gleamed, and upon whose hearts the Divine warmth of this love is perpetually streaming, live after a nobler fashion than the common herd of men!

Lastly upon this matter of the love of God, we triumphantly believe that it is undying and unfailing. God will never cease to love the objects of His choice. They shall grow gray with age but not His love. They shall live on when this poor earth has melted and the elements have dissolved, but His love shall remain with them! It shall not perish in the conflagration, nor shall the Covenant of His Divine Grace be consumed. They shall live on when the universe has gone back to its original nothingness, if so the Lord ordains it, but in the eternities to come still shall that love of God be ever fresh and ever new!

To my mind it always seems to be the very sweetest part of the Gospel, that when the love of God has once been shed abroad in a man's soul and he has really enjoyed it and known, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, that he is the object of the Divine affection, there is no fear that he shall ever be driven from the Divine Presence, or become an outcast and an apostate! For whom Jesus loves He loves even to the end. He keeps the feet of His saints—none of those that trust in Him shall be desolate. He gives unto His sheep *eternal* life, and they shall never perish—neither shall any pluck them out of His hand.

“Because I live, you shall live also,” He says. Oh, precious Truth of God! The very marrow and fatness of the Word of God! May you have the Grace to *feel* it, as well as *believe* it—to *rejoice* in it as well as *understand* it—and so may the love of God be shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit which He has given unto you.

II. THE LOVE OF GOD IS SHED ABROAD. Shall we try to illustrate these words by common things? Here is an alabaster box of very precious ointment. It holds within the costly frankincense of the love of God—but we know nothing of it—it is closed up, a mystery, a secret. The Holy Spirit opens the box and now the fragrance fills the chamber in which the 10,000 times 10,000s of the elect are sitting, for now the love is shed abroad. Every spiritual taste perceives it! Heaven and earth are perfumed with it!

Frequently at the great Roman games the emperors, in order to gratify the citizens of Rome, would cause sweet perfumes to be rained down upon them through the awning which covered the amphitheatre. Behold the vases, the huge vessels of perfume! Yes, but there is nothing here to delight you so long as the jars are sealed. But let the vases be opened and

the vessels be poured out—and let the drops of perfumed rain begin to descend—and everyone is refreshed and gratified. Such is the love of God. There is a richness and a fullness in it, but it is not perceived till the Spirit of God pours it out like a rain of fragrance over the heads and hearts of all the living children of God.

See, then, the need of having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit! Observe that no one can shed abroad the love of God in the heart but the Holy Spirit. It is He that first puts it there. Men live in neglect of this love till He first impresses them with a sense of the value of it. And they continue to seek after it in vain till He opens the door and introduces them into the secret chamber of its mystery. It is the Holy Spirit who educates us in the art of Divine love! Not a letter can we read in God's love-book till we are taught of the Holy Spirit! He is the great Master of the house, the great Steward bringing forth the precious things of God to our souls.

No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit, much less can a man be assumed that he is the object of eternal love but by a revelation made to him by the Holy Spirit who makes this delightful Truth of God clear to his mind. Do you enquire in what way is the love of God shed abroad? I reply that to the best of my knowledge and experience, the gracious operation is somewhat upon this wise—the Holy Spirit enables the man to be assured that he is an object of the Divine love in the first place.

The man comes to the Cross as a guilty sinner, looks up to the five wounds—those dear fountains of pardoning Grace—trusts himself in the living Savior's hands, and then he cries, "I am saved, for I have God's promise to that effect. Now, since I am saved, I must have been the object of the Lord's love! There must have been a marvelous love which gave that blessed Son of God to bleed for me." The man does not doubt it. He is assured of it in his own spirit and then the Spirit of God, whose operations are far beyond all our knowledge, confirms the testimony of his conscience.

We need not attempt to comprehend the working of the Holy Spirit, for as we know not even how the wind blows, much less shall we know how the Comforter works. But this we know, that He adds a confirmatory testimony to the witness of our own hearts. He bears witness with our spirits that we are born of God, and so we become *infallibly* and beyond all possibility of mistake assured that the love of God is ours, and that we have a part and an interest in it. Then, the next thing the Spirit of God does, is to make the man clearly understand what kind of love this is which God gives to him. He leads him not all at once, perhaps, but by degrees, into all the Truth of God.

He takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to the Believer's heart, till the Believer understands that this love of God to him is such a love as I have been describing just now. He clearly perceives Jehovah's love in its length and breadth, and height—and wonders at it for all the marvels which it has worked! This admirable enlightenment is no small part of the shedding abroad of the love of God. A man must *know* before

he can enjoy, and in proportion as the eyes of his understanding are opened will he be able to enter into the delightful experience of the secret love of Jesus. And then comes the point—the essence of the matter—the Holy spirit enables the soul to *meditate* upon this love.

He casts out the cares of the world, lifts it up above doubts and fears, and temptations. He makes a blessed quiet, a Divine Sabbath within the heart—and then the man, while he meditates—finds a fire begins to burn within his soul! Meditating yet more, he is, as it were, carried off his feet, lifted up from the things of the earth. Meditating still, and considering, and weighing, he comes to be in an amazement—he marvels, he is astonished—and then he is filled with strong emotion. He is devoutly grateful. “Blessed be the Lord,” he says, “Who has remembered my low estate and has loved one so unworthy.”

He breaks out into a song like that of the Virgin, “My soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.” Then while gratitude is still within his soul, a Divine resignation to all the Master’s will keeps rule within him. Jehovah loves me—then what matters though every bone should ache and the heart should throb, and the head be heavy? What matters though the cottage walls are bare and the table is but scantily famished? My Father, do as You will! Then follows a rapturous leaping over this devout calm! A joy unutterable, next akin to Heaven fills the heart—and this joy sometimes takes the character of *ecstasy* until whether the man is in the body or out of the body, he cannot tell, only God knows!

Then if he is alone, perhaps time flies and he seems to anticipate eternity, forgetting the lapse of hours. And if he is in company with others, his lips teach many—his words are better than pearls, and his sentences than strings of coral. The Master’s love makes him to wear a brightness about his countenance and a transfiguration glory about his character which others who have tasted of the like, understand—but which to the worldling seems to be the effect of madness or of drunkenness with new wine—like that of the famous Pentecostal morning! Yes, Brothers and Sisters, if you know what it is to have the love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit, you will perhaps wonder that I cannot paint it better, but I would like any of you to try!

You shall find it far easier to *enjoy* it than to *depict* it, for this seems to me to be one of those things in its heights and depths which it were almost unlawful for a man to utter! This master-thought of Jehovah’s love to us bears us as on eagles’ wings! It takes us up beyond the smoke and din and dust of this poor world! It sets us in the heavenly places at the right hand of Christ! It enthrones us! It puts a crown upon our head! It ennobles us, wraps us about with the white linen that we are to wear forever! It makes us, while yet we are poor, to be as angels in the midst of the sons of men!

May the Lord give us this soul-elevating influence more and more! May this transcendent experience be our constant and daily enjoyment as we are ripening for Heaven, and it will not be long before the gates of pearl

shall open to admit us into the Presence of God for which this experience is a most fitting preparation!

III. Lastly, this inexpressible sweetness of which we have spoken becomes THE CONFIRMATION OF OUR HOPE. Hope rests itself mainly upon that which is not seen. It builds itself upon the promises of God, which eyes have not beheld. Still it is exceedingly sweet to us, while we are in this body, if we receive some evidence and token of Divine love which we can positively enjoy even now.

You remember Master Bunyan in the Pilgrim, how he writes the dialogue which took place when the Pilgrim was met by Atheist? Atheist snaps his fingers and he cries, with jeer and laugh, "You fools! You are seeking for a New Jerusalem and there is no such place! I have been seeking this city these 20 years but find no more of it than I did the day I first set out. I tell you there is no such thing as a world beyond the stream! There are no harps of gold, no brightness—you are deceived men."

"But," said Hopeful, "how say you so? Did we not see the gate of the city from the Delectable Mountains?" He might have added, "I do remember, when I stood with the shepherds on the top of Mount Clear, that I saw the city. I looked through the telescope and I saw it, and therefore I am *not* deceived. I follow after that which my eyes have gazed upon." See you then how the present enjoyments of Divine love in the soul become to us arguments for the reality of the things which we are hoping for—and our hope is not ashamed because God gives to us, even here, such emotions of spiritual delight that we anticipate the raptures of the hereafter and confidently press forward to reach the promised rest!

Why, blessed be God, there are some of us who do not need Butler's Analogy, or Paley's evidences to back our faith! We have our own analogy and our own evidences within our own souls, written by the holy Spirit on the day when we tasted that the Lord is gracious! No Jesus Christ!? With whom, then, have we spoken all these years, and upon whose bosom have we leaned? No Holy Spirit!? What mysterious agency, then, is that which strings the chords of our soul and fetches superhuman music from them, causing us to delight in sublime and celestial themes to which once we were strangers?

What is that power which casts us down to the earth in solemn awe of the Great Invisible, and then again bears us out of ourselves up to the seventh Heaven? No Father God!? Tell not His children so barefaced a lie! It was not long ago, I am informed, that a certain infidel lecturer gave an opportunity to persons to reply to him after the lecture and he was, of course, expecting that some young men would rise to bring the general arguments for Christianity which he was quite prepared to overturn and laugh at. But an old lady, carrying a basket, and wearing an ancient bonnet and altogether dressed in the antique fashion which marked both her age and her poverty, came on the platform.

Putting down her basket and umbrella, she began, and said, "I paid three-pence to hear of something better than Jesus Christ, and I have not heard it. Now let me tell you what religion has done for me, and then tell me something better, or else you've cheated me out of the three-pence

which I paid to come in. Now,” she said, “I’ve been a widow 40 years. I had 10 children and I trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ in the depth of poverty, and He appeared for me and comforted me, and helped me to bring up my children so that they have grown up and turned out respectable. I was often very sorely pressed, but my prayers were heard by my Father in Heaven and I was always delivered.

“Now you are going to tell me something better than that? Better for a poor woman like me? I have been to the Lord sometimes when I’ve been very low, indeed, and there’s been scarcely anything for us to eat, and I’ve always found His Providence has been good and kind to me. And when I lay very sick—I thought I was dying—and my heart was ready to break at leaving my poor fatherless little ones—there was nothing kept me up but the thought of Jesus and His faithful love to my poor soul! And you tell me it was all a mistake? Now, tell me something better, or else why do you cheat us of these three-pence? Tell us something better.”

Well, poor soul, the lecturer was a good hand at an *argument*, but such a mode of controversy was novel and not readily met. And therefore he gave up the contest, and merely said, really the dear old woman was so happy in her deception that he should not like to undeceive her. “No,” she said, “that won’t do. Facts are facts. Jesus Christ has been all this to me, and I could not sit down in the hall and hear you talk against Him without coming and saying this, and asking you whether you could tell me something better than what He has done for me. I’ve tried and proved Him, and that’s more than you have.”

Ah! It is that! It is the testing and proving of God! It is the getting the love really shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit which affords us an argument which cannot be answered! Experience is the iron file against which the viper breaks his teeth but cannot prevail! God gives us, even here, a foretaste of Heaven’s supernatural enjoyment in the forms of peace, calm, bliss, exultation and delight. This may seem fanatical talk to some, and a mere dream to others—but, Sirs, we are as honest men as you are and we as much claim to be believed when we assert that we enjoy these things as you claim our credence when you make an assertion. And if this convinces you not and you still doubt us, rest assured that it convinces *us*, and that shall suffice!

The love of God shed abroad in the heart makes our hope so that it is not ashamed. See, Brothers and Sisters, the love of God is often shed abroad in the heart when we are very sick. When pain is most severe, joy has often been at its fullest. This love has come to paupers in the union house and turned the workhouse into a palace. It has come to the dying in the hospitals and made the wards to ring with heavenly music! It has come to some of us in nights of the deepest depression through which the human mind could pass—and it has lifted us right up out of the mist and the cloud, and set us in the sunlight of God!

Now, these things coming at such times tend greatly to make the child of God feel that his hope is as sure in the dark as it is in the light—and that he can trust his God though all things should seem to belie the promise. These things are of such an elevated nature that they help to

maintain an elevated hope. If our comforts were gross and carnal—to be received by the mouth or by the ears—of what service would they be to that high and holy hope which comes from God Himself? But the enjoyments of which I have been speaking in the reception of the Divine love in the heart are so elevating that they precisely suit the character of our hope, and our hope is confirmed. For, Beloved, a sense of the love of God confirms everything that we hope for!

If God loves me, then I am forgiven! If God loves me, then I am secure! If God loves me, then my circumstances are well ordered! If God loves me, then He will bear me through my trials! If God loves me, then He will keep me from the touch of sin! If God loves me, He will not suffer temptation to overcome me, but He will keep me pure and holy, and receive me to Himself at the last! If God loves me, then the Heaven which He has prepared for His people must be mine! And with those that have gone before, I shall see His face! I shall drink draughts of His love and be with Him forever and ever! Like a master-key that locks up every lock in the house, so does the sense of the love of God lock up every treasure in the Covenant of Grace! And if we have it within us it affords us admission to every blessed thing so that we may take at our will, and rejoice in God on account of it!

Now I have no more to say upon this point, upon which I have spoken so exceedingly feebly to my own consciousness. But I would to God that you all knew, *spiritually*, even the little that I can tell you. To hear of Divine love with the *ear* is nothing—it is like the rattle of the dishes in the ear of a hungry man when there is nothing given to him to eat. To understand this *theoretically* is nothing. It is like being able to cast up thousands of pounds upon the slate, but having not a farthing in the purse.

My dear Hearer, what is *your* hope? What are *you* resting upon? Has your hope anything to do with the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit? Depend upon it—if your hope is founded on *anything* that you have done for yourself, or that any *man* may do for you—it will not excite in your soul a sense of the love of God! The thought of it, if it is a mere ceremonial hope, will excite no such emotions as those I have described. But if your hope is true and genuine, fixed on the Rock of Ages, built on the Substitutionary Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, then the thought of that hope will make *you love God*—and a sense of God's love to you will sway you to obedient service! Such a hope will endure the hour of trial, but no other hope will.

And what will you do if your hope shall fail you? What will you do if, at last, you are made ashamed of your hope? O see then, Sirs! See, then, the overwhelming downfall which awaits you! The house was hastily built. It was fair and lofty, with many-colored windows and fine gables and rare ornaments. But the floods are out! The rain descends! The wind blows and where is the palace now? Its foundation was on sand and it is gone like a dream! See the fragments of it floating down the torrent, while the owners are washed away and lost! And so shall it be with your fine hopes, O self-righteous or careless!

O build on rock, on the rock of what *Christ* has done! Build with a humble faith! Build with an earnest love! Build not with wood, hay and

stubble, but build with gold, silver and precious stones of love, and trust, and holy fear! And when the deluge comes you shall laugh at it and sing in the midst of storm, for God is your Preserver and under His wings shall you trust. Ah, I would that everyone now listening to this voice could enter into so bright a hope and enjoy such a love! And if they long to do so, behold the open door! The entrance into a good hope is by the door of Divine love!

And would you see Divine love, there it shines in its resplendence on yonder Cross where the Son of God, made flesh, gave His hands to the nails and His feet to be fastened to the wood. There, where every nerve is a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on! Where His whole body is tortured with pangs unutterable, and the soul pressed as beneath the feet of Deity, in the winepress of eternal wrath! There, Sinner, *there* is your hope!

Not your tears, but *His* blood! Not your sufferings, but *His* woes! Not your penance, but *His* agonies! Not your life nor your death, but *His* life and death. O look to Him! “There’s life in a look at the Crucified One.” Guilty one, depraved one, you all but damned one—look through the mists of Satan’s temptations and the dews of your tears—look to Jesus dying on Calvary and you shall live this day! God help you by His blessed Spirit so to look—yours shall be the salvation, and His the honor of it. Amen and Amen!

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THE SAD PLIGHT AND SURE RELIEF

NO. 1184

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

***“For when we were yet without strength, in due time
Christ died for the ungodly.”
Romans 5:6.***

As I was sitting, the other day, with an aged Believer who is a local preacher among our Wesleyan friends, he said to me, “I cannot hope, in the course of nature, to stand up in the pulpit many more times. Therefore, every time I preach now, I preach of nothing but Jesus Christ. And I said to the people the other day, ‘You will say when I am dead and gone, Poor old Mr. So-and-So will come and preach to us no more. But as he got older and older the more he preached about Jesus Christ, till for the last few months of his life the old man never spoke about anything but his Master.’” Then, as if confidentially addressing himself to me, he said, “I should like to leave just that impression upon the people’s minds when I am taken from them.”

The resolution seems to me so good that I think that it might be taken up by us who are younger and adopted as our own. Paul, before he was, “Paul the aged,” said, “I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” There is nothing like striking at the center and keeping to vital points. And if we are keeping to Christ crucified, we are keeping to that which will save souls, which will build up Believers and which will glorify God. But, dear Friends, if we might be allowed to go astray from this subject sometimes, yet certainly not on an evening like this, when we are about to gather around the Lord’s Table which is loaded with the memorials of our Redeemer’s passion. To-night, you who are Believers in Jesus ought to have no eyes for any object but Him, no ear for any sound but that which tells of Him—indeed, no hearts with which to relish any theme save your crucified Lord. Blind, deaf, dead to every worldly consideration, let us be just now, all alive, all awake and all aglow with love to Him and the desire to have fellowship with Him.

Our text brings us at once to the Cross and it sheds a light upon our former estate. Let us see where we were and what was needed to make us the children of God. Do you ask, How did our Redeemer view us when He died for us? The response is here clearly given, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Thus we have a two-fold description of the state in which Christ viewed mankind when He shed the blood of redemption. The men for whom His Propitiation was offered, were “without strength,” and they were “ungodly.” If you or I have

any part or lot in the matchless death of Jesus, we must feel ourselves to have been in just this condition, for it cannot have any relation to any persons but those who, by nature, are “without strength” and “ungodly.”

I. THAT EACH MAN FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED WAS WITHOUT STRENGTH IS OBVIOUS. He was *legally weak*. Before God’s bar he had a weak case, a case without strength. He stood up as a prisoner to be tried and of all the cases that were ever brought into court his was the most destitute of power. He was without strength. To make the case our own, as it really is ours, we could not deny the charge that we had broken the Law. We could not set up an *alibi*, nor could we put in a plea of extenuation. The fact was clear. Our own conscience vouched for it, as well as the record of God’s Providence.

We could not make apologies, for we sinned willfully, sinned against light and against knowledge, sinned repeatedly, sinned without any necessity and sinned with an extravagant willfulness. We sinned with many different aggravations. We sinned after we knew sin to be exceedingly sinful before God and extremely injurious to ourselves. Yes, we sinned deliberately and presumptuously when we knew the penalty—when we understood what we should lose for lack of obedience and what we should incur as the chastisement of transgression. I say again, man’s case is well described as being extremely weak.

Looked at legally, it is utterly without strength. No advocate who understood the case would have ventured to plead it, except that one glorious Advocate who *did* plead it, but at the cost of His own life. He knew that if He undertook it and stood up to plead with God for us, He must die for it, for it was a case in which, before the Law, we were without strength. We had no good works to be a setoff for our sin. We had no hope of ever performing any in the future which could ever stand in the place of the good works which ought to have been done in the past. The case, put however it might be, broke down utterly—and the prisoner himself, if, indeed, able to speak the truth, would be compelled to say—

**“Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must confess You just in death.
And if my soul is sent to Hell,
Your righteous Law approves it well.”**

We were without strength. It was a bad case, altogether, and could not be defended. And man, by nature, is morally weak. We are so weak by nature that we are carried about like dust and driven to and fro by every wind that blows. We are swayed by every influence which assails us. Man is under the dominion of his own lusts—his pride, his sloth, his love of ease, his love of pleasure. Man is such a fool that he will buy pleasure at the most ruinous price. He will fling his soul away as if it were some paltry toy and barter his eternal interests as if they were but trash. For some petty pleasure of an hour he will risk the health of his body. For some paltry gain, he will jeopardize his soul. Alas! Alas! Poor Man, you are as light

as the thistledown which goes this way or that, as the wind may turn. In your moral constitution you are as the weathercock which shifts with every breeze.

At one time man is driven by the world—the fashions of the age prevail over him and he foolishly follows them. At another time a clique of small people, notables in their little way, is in the ascendant and he is afraid of his fellow men. Threats awe him, though they may be but the frowns of his insignificant neighbors. Or he is bribed by the love of approbation which may possibly mean no more than the nod of the squire, or merely the recognition of an equal. So he sacrifices principle and runs with the multitude to do evil. Then the evil spirit comes upon him and the devil tempts him—and away he goes! There is nothing which the devil can suggest to which man will not yield while he is a stranger to Divine Grace. And if the devil should let him alone, his own *heart* suffices. The pomp of this world, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life—any of these things will drive men about at random.

Look at them rushing to murder one another with shouts of joy! Look at them returning blood-red from the battlefield! Listen to the acclamations with which they are greeted because they have killed their fellow men. Look at how they will go where poison is served to them—they will drink it till their brain reels—and they fall upon the ground intoxicated and helpless. This is pleasure which they pursue with avidity and having yielded themselves up to it once, they will repeat it over and over till the folly of an evil hour becomes the habit of an abandoned life! Nothing seems to be too foolish, nothing too wicked, nothing too insane for mankind. Man is morally weak—a poor, crazy child. He has lost that strong hand of a well-trained perfect reason which God gave him at the first. His understanding is blinded and his foolish heart is darkened. And so Christ finds him, when He comes to save him, morally without strength.

Now, I know I have described exactly the condition of some here. They are emphatically without strength. They know how soon they yield. It is only to put sufficient pressure upon them and they give way despite their resolutions, for their strongest resolves are as weak as reeds—and when but a little trial has come, away they go back to the sins which in their conscience they condemn—though nevertheless they continue to practice them. Here is man's state, then—legally condemned and morally weak!

But, further, man is, above all things, *spiritually without* strength. When Adam ate of the forbidden fruit he incurred the penalty of death and we are all involved in that penalty. Not that he at once died naturally, but he died *spiritually*. The blessed Spirit left him. He became a soulish or *natural* man. And such are we. We have lost the very Being of the Spirit by nature. If He comes to us, there is good need He should, for He is not here in us by *nature*. We are not made partakers of the Spirit at our natural birth. This is a *gift* from above to man. He has lost it and *the spirit*—that

vital element which the Holy Spirit implants in us at regeneration—is not present in man by his original generation. He has no spiritual faculties, he cannot hear the voice of God, he cannot taste the sweets of holiness. He is dead, yes, and in Scripture he is described as lying like the dry bones that have been parched by the hot winds and are strewn in the valley dry, utterly dry.

Man is dead in sin. He cannot rise to God any more than the dead in the grave can come out of their sepulchers by themselves and live. He is without strength—utterly so. It is a terrible case, but this is what the text says, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Putting all these things into one, man, by nature, where Christ finds him, is utterly devoid of strength of every sort for anything that is good—at least anything which is good in God’s sight—and acceptable unto God. It is of no use for him to sit down and say, “I believe I can force my way into purity.” Man, you are without strength till God gives you strength! He may sometimes start up in a kind of alarm and say, “It shall be done,” but he falls back again, like the madman who, after an attack of delirium, sinks, again, to his old state. It will *not* be done. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” If so, then he that is accustomed to do evil may learn to do well. Not till, by his own unaided strength can he perform any right and noble purpose.

Now, what am I talking about? Man has no strength of his own at all! He is without strength and there he lies—hopeless, helpless, ruined, and undone, utterly destroyed—a splendid palace all in ruins, through whose broken walls sweep desolate winds with fearful wailings. Man is like a place where beasts of evil names and birds of foulest wings do haunt—a palace majestic even in ruins, but still utterly ruined and quite incapable of self-restoration. “Without strength.” Alas! Alas! Poor humanity! The persons for whom Christ died are viewed by Him from the Cross as being “ungodly,” that is to say, men without God. “God is not in their thoughts.” They can live for the month together and no more remember Him than if there were no God. God is not in their hearts. If they do remember Him, they do not love Him. God is scarcely in their fears. They can take His name in vain, profane His Sabbaths and use His name for blasphemy. God is not in their hopes. They do not long to know Him, or to be with Him, or to be like He is. Practically, unconverted men have said, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice?”

If they do not say it in so many words, they imply it by a daily neglect of God. Even if they take up with religion, yet the natural man sticks to the sentiments or the ritual that belong to his profession. Subscribing to a creed, or observing a series of customs, he remains utterly oblivious of that communion with God which all true religion leads us to seek—and therefore he never gets to God. He adapts himself to the outward form, but he does not discern the Spirit. He listens to pious words, but he does

not feel them. He joins in holy hymns, but his heart does not sing. He even gets down on his knees and pretends to pray, but all the while his heart is wandering far from God. He does not commune with his Maker and he *cannot*, for he is alienated from his Creator, or, as the text puts it, he is ungodly.

“Now,” you say, “you have made man out to be a strange creature.” Believe me, I have not painted the picture one-half as black as it is, nor can I. But do not be angry with me for so painting it. So much the better for you, for now you see there is no man too bad to be included in this description—without strength and ungodly. For such as these did Christ die! The description of the men for whom Christ died has not one letter of goodness in it. It describes them as hopelessly, helplessly bad. Yet for such Christ died. O Sirs, I am not going to tell you that Christ died for saints! He died for sinners, not for the godly, but for the ungodly! He did not die for the strong in Divine Grace, strong in morals and the like, but for those who were without strength!

Truly I know He died for the saints, but who made them saints? When He died for them they were sinners! I know He died for those whom He has made “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,” but who made them strong? When He died for them they were as weak as others. All the difference between Peter in Heaven and Judas in Hell is a difference made by free rich Sovereign Grace! There was the same raw material to begin with in one as in another, and Jesus Christ looked upon men, not at their best, when He laid down His life for their redemption, but at their worst! This is clear, yes, it is self-evident—had they been whole they would not have needed a physician—if they had not been lost they would not have needed a Savior!

If the disease had not been very bad they would not have needed so matchless a medicine as the blood of Christ—if they had not been helplessly lost, there could have been no necessity for Omnipotence to step in to effect their rescue! And had not the ruin been terrible to the last degree, it would not have been demanded that God, Himself, should come in human flesh and make expiation for guilt by His own death upon the Cross. The glory of the remedy proves the desperateness of the disease. The grandeur of the Savior is a sure evidence of the terribleness of our lost condition. Look at it, then, and as man sinks, Christ will rise in your esteem—and as you value the Savior, so you will be more and more stricken with terror because of the greatness of the sin which needed such a Savior to redeem us from it!

Thus I have described the way in which Christ viewed us when He died for us. I only wish the Spirit of God would give to poor trembling sinners the comfort which this doctrine ought to give. You will say, “Oh, I am one of the worst in the world.” Christ died for the worst in the world! “Oh, but I have no power to be better.” Christ died for those that were without

strength. "Oh, but my case condemns itself." Christ died for those that legally are condemned. "Yes, but my case is hopeless." Christ died for the hopeless! He is the hope of the hopeless. He is the Savior, not of those partly lost, but of the wholly lost! Your case, however bad it may be, must come within the sweep of the glorious arm which wields the pierced hands! Christ came to save the very vilest of the vile!

II. But now, secondly, the text tells us WHEN CHRIST INTERPOSED TO SAVE US. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." What does it mean by, "due time"? Why, it means that the death of Christ occurred at a proper period! I cannot suggest any other period in time which would have been so judiciously chosen for the death of the Redeemer as the one which God elected. Nor can I imagine any place more suitable than Calvary, outside the gates of Jerusalem. There was no accident about it. It was all fixed in the eternal purpose and for infinitely wise reasons.

We do not know all the reasons and must not pretend to know them. but we do know this, that at the time our Savior died, sin among mankind in general had reached a climax. There never was a more debauched age. It is impossible to read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and to understand its testimony, without feeling sick at the depravity it records. It is such a desperate and altogether truthful description of the infamous vices into which men had fallen in those days, that we feel that they must have gone, in fact, beyond all that we could suppose that the vilest imagination could have fabled! Indeed, so far as our modern time is concerned, the annals of crime are silent as to such atrocities. And for the most of us, it surpasses our belief that licentiousness should ever have grown so extravagant in committing willful violations of nature and indulging a propensity to revel in loathsome folly and unnecessary vice.

Their own satirists said that there was no new vice that could be invented. Any person who has passed through Naples by Herculaneum and Pompeii, and seen the memorials of the state of society in which those cities existed, will almost rue the day in which he ever saw what he did—for there is no morgue that is so foul as was the common life of the Romans of that age. And, in all probability, the Romans were as good as any other nation then existing upon earth. Their very virtue was but painted vice! What little of virtue had existed among mankind before was gone. Socrates and Solon, so much vaunted everywhere, were in the habit of practicing vices which I dare not mention in any modest assembly. The very leaders of society would have done, openly, things which we should now be committed to prison for mentioning—which it is not lawful to think!

Society was rotten through and through. It was a stench and offensive to the utmost by its corruption. But it was then, when man had got to his worst, that on the bloody tree Christ, Himself, was lifted up to be a standard of virtue—to be a bronze serpent for the cure of the multitudes of

mankind who everywhere were dying of the serpent bites! Christ came at a time when the wisdom of man had got to a great height and, whenever it does get to a great height, man becomes an extraordinary fool! The various masters of philosophy were then going up and down the earth seeking to dazzle men with the brightness of their teaching. But their science was absurdity and their morals were a systematized immorality. Putting the whole of it together, whatever was true in what they taught, our most common Sunday school child understands. But the bulk of it was altogether foolishness, couched in paradoxical terms to make it look like wisdom. "The world by wisdom knew not God."

But, surely, man had a religion at that time! He had, but *man's* religion—well, the less we say about the religion which existed when Christ came into the world the better. One of their own poets, speaking of the Egyptians, ridiculed them by saying, "O happy people, who grow your gods in your own kitchen garden!"—for they worshipped leeks and onions! These well-trained and tutored people embalmed the ibis and the cat, and made these objects of religious reverence. If you had stepped into the temple of Isis anywhere, you would soon have discovered emblems of the utmost obscenity. And the holy rites of the common religion of the period—the *holy* rites, I say—done in honor of God were acts of flagrant sin! The temples were abominable and the priests were abominable beyond description. And where the best part of man, his very religion, had become so foul, what could we expect of his ordinary life?

To give a boy a Lempriere's Dictionary, as schoolmasters do, is, I believe, to debauch that boy's mind, though the most of its execrable records concern the religion of the period of which I am now speaking. If such were the religion of the time, O God, what must its *irreligion* have been? But was there not a true religion in the world, somewhere? Yes, there was and it was in Judea. But those who inherited the canon of Divine Revelation, what manner of men were they? Not one bit better than the heathen, for they were gross hypocrites! Tradition had made void the Law of God. Ritualism had taken the place of spiritual worship. The Pharisee stood with uplifted eyes and thanked God that he was not as other men were—when he had in his pocket the deeds of a widow's estate of which he had robbed her!

The Sadducee came forth and vaunted his superior light and intelligence, while at the same time he betrayed his gross darkness and his dire skepticism, for he said that there was no angel, or resurrection, or spirit. The best men of the period in Christ's days said to Him, because He was holy, "Away with such a fellow from the earth!" I have heard men tell of king killers, as if they were strange beings. But, O earth, you are a regicide! No, you are worse than that, you are a Deicide, for did you not put the Son at God, Himself to death? A certain flowery orator once said, "O Virtue, you are so fair and lovely, that if you were to come on earth all

men would adore you.” But Virtue *did* come on the earth, clothed not in helmet and in royal cape, nor with iron hand to crush the sons of men, but He came in the silken garments of love and peace, personified by the Incarnate Savior! And what said the world to Virtue? They said, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” And the only answer the world could give to the question, “Why, what evil has He done?” was, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” They would not have Him live upon the face of the earth!

Now, it was when men had got to this pitch, in due time, that Christ came to die for them. If He had sat up in Heaven and launched His thunderbolts at them. If, from the heights of Glory, He had commissioned His mailed seraphim and sworded cherubim to come and sweep the whole race away—and bid the bottomless Pit open wide her jaws and swallow up these disgusting creatures—none could have blamed Him. They deserved it. But, instead of that, the pure and Holy One comes down to earth, Himself, to suffer and to bleed and die, that these wretches—yes, that *we*—might live through Him!

Thus I have described how He looked upon us and at what time He came.

III. But now, thirdly—and, oh, that these lips had language, or that this heart could do without poor lips to tell this tale—WHAT DID HE DO FOR US? There we were. Do not think that you are any better than the rest, or the worst, of our fallen race. If the current social habits and the spread of Christian light make us outwardly better, we had only to have been put in the circumstances of those heathen—and we should soon have been as bad as they. The heart is corrupt in every case—and yet Jesus came.

What did He do for us? Well, first, He made the fullest degree of sacrifice that was possible. To lift us up He stooped. He made the heavens and yet He lay in Bethlehem’s manger! He hung the stars in their places and laid the beams of the universe—and yet He became a carpenter’s son, giving up all His rank and dignity for love’s dear sake! And then when He grew up, He consented to be the Servant of servants, and made Himself of no reputation. He took the lowest place—“He was despised and rejected of men”—He gave up all ease and comfort, for He had not where to lay His head. He gave up all health of body, for He bore our sickness and He bared His back to the smiters that the chastisement of our peace might fall upon Him. He gave up the last rag He had, for they took His own clothes from Him, and upon His vesture did they cast lots. He gave up, for the world, all esteem.

They called Him a blasphemer. Reproach broke His heart, but He gave that heart up for us. He gave His body to the nails and His heart to the spear—and He could do no more. When at last He gave his life, “It is finished,” He said. And they took down His mangled body from the tree and laid it in the grave. Self-sacrifice had reached its climax! Further, He could

not go, but He could not have saved us if He had stopped short of that. So lost, so utterly lost were we, that without this extreme self-devotion—till it could be said, “He saved others; Himself he could not save—without this self-devotion, I say, He could not have saved so much as one of us! In the fact that Christ’s self-sacrifice went so far I see evidence of the extreme degree of our need.

It may be thought, perhaps, that I speak in excitement when I describe the lost estate of man. Sirs, I have felt that lost estate in my own soul and I do but tell you what I know! And if you had ever felt it—and I pray God you may, if you never have—you would admit that it cannot be exaggerated. But look at this. I challenge any reasonable man to controvert the position. Would He who is “God over all, blessed forever,” have come from the height of Heaven, given up all that is grand and honorable, have made Himself of no reputation and have humbled Himself even to the death, to save us, if it had not been a most terrible ruin to which we were subject? Could there need such a mighty heave of the eternal shoulders if it had not been a dead lift, indeed? Here is something more than a Samson needed to pull up the gates, posts and bars of our great dungeon—and carry all away upon His mighty shoulders that we might never be prisoners again.

The splendid deed of Grace which Christ has accomplished was not a triviality, it could not be, and therefore there must have been some dire and urgent ruin imminent upon the sons of men for Christ to make so tremendous a sacrifice as to bleed and die for us! And, mark, Brothers and Sisters, while this death of Christ was to Him the height of sacrifice. And while it proved the depth of our ruin, it was the surest way of our deliverance! Behold how man has broken the Law! Can *you* help him? Can you help him, you pure spirits that stand around the Throne of God? Can you help him? Can you come and encourage him, cheer him, give him hope that, perhaps, he may do better? Your encouragements are all in vain, for you encourage him to do what cannot be done! He is so ruined that the case is beyond your aid.

But suppose God, Himself, should take account of it? Yes, now *there* is hope for him! But, perhaps, God should show His pity and give His counsel—that would not go far in helping him. Then were the hope but slender. But what if God will go as far as ever God can go—does that need correction? No, let it stand! I cannot speak more correctly than that. I know of nothing that God, the Eternal, Himself, could do more than to become Incarnate and, in human flesh, to bleed and die for man! God has here shown all the attributes and perfections of His Godhead. What can I say more? He has purposed and effected the utmost that Infinite Love can do for our infinite wretchedness! Well, if God will do so much that no more can be done, and God is Infinite, then, depend upon it, that is the surest

thing to be done! It claims admiration and defies argument while it excites inquiry.

Do you ask how He will do it? Well, Christ shall take upon Himself the responsibility for this sin. He shall stand in the sinner's place. He shall be punished as if *He* had committed the sin, though in Him was no sin! The vials of wrath that were due to human transgression shall be poured upon Him. The sword of Justice that ought to be sheathed in the sinner's breast shall be plunged into the Savior's heart. Ah, was there ever such a plan devised? The Just dies for the unjust! The offended Judge, Himself, suffers for the offense against His own Law! Oh, matchless plan! This, indeed, makes sure work for man—for now it takes him, sinful and lost as he is—and puts Another in his place who is able to bear his sin and puts man into the place of that Other. Yes, hear it! It puts the sinner into the Savior's place—and God looks upon the Savior as if He had been the sinner! And then upon the sinner as if *he* had been the Perfect One. There is a transposition! Christ and the sinner change places! He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

This is the way to do it. Yes, and this is the way to sweep out of the path all attempts on our part to help, for this was so great a work that Jesus Christ, Himself, must sweat while He did it! He must bleed His soul away to accomplish it. O you self-righteous ones, stand back! With broken limbs and dislocated bones you come hobbling up to help this glorious Champion. Away with you! You are without strength and you are ungodly by nature. What can *you* do in this great enterprise? Christ has done it and every part of it is such a wondrous transaction that the very majesty thereof might make self-righteousness cover its face and fly away abashed, crying, "O God, I must lie down and die. I cannot live. I have seen the righteousness of Christ and there is no more room for me!" Come, Brothers and Sisters, since my words fail to set out what the Savior has done, I want you to think it over and I want you to love Him.

For my part, I want to love and adore Him, too, with all my heart, soul and strength, for dying for me, for standing in my place, that I, a lost, condemned and all but *damned* sinner, might yet live and be justified and be loved and adopted and accepted—and at last crowned with glory for His dear sake!

IV. Time fails me and, therefore, I must hurry to the last point, which is, What then? What then? "Christ died for the ungodly." What then? Then sin cannot shut any man out from the Grace of God if he believes. The man says, "I am without strength." Christ died for us when we were without strength. The man says, "I am ungodly." Christ died for the ungodly. I remember how Martin Luther hammers on that word, "He gave Himself for our sins." "There," says Martin, "it does not say He gave Himself for our *virtues*. He thinks better of our sins than our virtues," he says. "He gave Himself for our sins." He never says a word about our excellencies—never

a syllable about our goodness. Rotten trash! But He gave Himself for our *sins!*”

“Oh,” says a man, “I would come to Christ if I were cleaner.” Man, He did not die for the clean—He died for the filthy, that He might make them clean. “I would come to the Great Physician,” says one, “if I were whole.” Man, He never came to die for those that are whole! The physician does not come to cure those that are whole, but those that are sick. Look at it in this light. If you have committed every crime in the whole catalog of sin, no matter what that crime may be, if you will repent of it and look to Christ, there is pardon for you! There is more—there is a new life for you—and a new heart for you. There is a new birth for you, so complete you shall be no more a child of Satan, but a child of God! And that is to be had *now*. Oh, the splendor of the Grace of God! Our sins stand like some tremendous mountain, and the Grace of God plucks that mountain right up by its roots and hurls it into the sea!

It shall never be seen again. Christ’s blood shall cover it. Christ shall be seen and not you. He will stand between you and God, and God will see *you* through the wounds of Christ if you believe in Him—and you shall be “accepted in the Beloved.” I have not put this too strongly, either. The text says, “When we were without strength He died for the ungodly,” and it is to the ungodly and those without strength that this message is sent. But, what then? What more? Why, then, Jesus will never cast away a Believer for his future sins—for if when we were without strength He died for us, if, when we were ungodly, He interposed on our behalf—will He leave us now that He has made us godly?

Did you notice the argument of the whole chapter as it was read to you just now? It is the strongest and most unassailable argument that I can deem possible. The Apostle declares that, “God commends 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; 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 through His life.”

Notice the triple cord of reasoning employed here. When we were enemies, He blessed us. Much more, now that we are reconciled. When we were enemies, He reconciled us—will He not now *save* us? Shall those who are reconciled be afterwards left to perish? And since we are so freely and fully saved by the death of Christ, much more shall we be saved by His life! If His *death* did so much, much more must His *life* be a motive for our confidence. Oh, it is clear! It is clear! It is clear! Though I may have backslidden and may have sinned, yet I have only to go back to my Father and say, “Father, I have sinned,” and I am still His child and He will fall upon my neck and kiss me! And I shall yet sit at His table and hear music

and dancing, because He that was lost is found! It is clear, now, from the text.

Again, it is equally clear that every blessing any child of God can need he can have. He that spared not His own Son, when we were without strength and ungodly, cannot deny us inferior blessings now that *we* are His own dear children! Go, child of God, go with confidence to your heavenly Father! He gave you Jesus, what can He keep back from you? What then? Let us ask the question once more and I think a spontaneous outflow of gratitude should furnish the reply. If, when we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly, let us praise Him! Let us praise Him! Let us praise Him! Oh, if He came when there was nothing to draw Him—when, if He looked us through and through He could not see a good point in us—if He loved us so that He would save us when we were altogether bad, hopeless and helpless, why, the very least thing we can ever do is to love Him and praise Him as long as we have any being!

I am of that old woman's mind who said, "If Jesus Christ does save me, He shall never hear the end of it." Nor shall He. We will talk of it and we will praise Him. And we will bless Him for it as long as immortality endures. "What, does Christ Jesus take the utterly unworthy?" Yes, just so! Then, when He takes them, how they will serve Him! Love Him? *Love* Him? Is there any question about it? When He has forgiven me everything freely and saved me by the shedding of His own *blood*, can I not love Him? I were worse than a devil if I did not love Him! Yes, while this heart can beat—while memory holds her throne—His name shall be dearest of all names, and His service the pleasure of my life, if He does but give me Grace to stand to this!

Do you say the same, Beloved? I am sure you do! And may He of His mercy touch the heart of some great sinner tonight! Perhaps there is a woman that is a sinner, here. Oh, that you may come to wash His feet with your tears and wipe them with the hairs of your head, because of His love to you! Perhaps there is some thief here. Oh, that you might be with Him in Paradise! And I am sure, if He pronounces you absolved, you will sing more sweetly in Heaven than any other, because of what He has done for you! Blessed be Your name, O Son of God, forever and forever! And all our hearts say, "Amen."

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 5.

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FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE?

NO. 1191

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 6, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON.
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Christ died for the ungodly.”
Romans 5:6.

IN this verse the human race is described as a sick man whose disease is so far advanced that he is altogether without strength—no power remains in his system to throw off his mortal malady, nor does he desire to do so—he could not save himself from his disease if he would, and would not if he could. I have no doubt that the Apostle had in his eyes the description of the helpless infant given by the Prophet Ezekiel. It was an infant—an infant newly born—an infant deserted by its mother before the necessary offices of tenderness had been performed. It was left unwashed, unclothed, unfed. It was a prey to certain death under the most painful circumstances—forlorn, abandoned, hopeless.

Our race is like the nation of Israel. Its whole head is sick and its whole heart faint. Such unconverted men are you! Only there, in this darker shade in your picture, we see that your condition is not only your calamity, but your *fault*. In other diseases men are grieved at their sickness—but this is the worst feature in your case—you love the evil which is destroying you! In addition to the pity which your case demands, no little blame must be measured out to you—you are without will for that which is good. Your “cannot,” means “*will not.*” Your inability is not physical but moral—not that of the blind who cannot see for want of eyes—but of the willingly ignorant who refuse to look!

While man is in this condition, Jesus interposes for his salvation. “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,” according to “His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins.” The pith of my sermon will be an endeavor to declare that the reason of Christ’s dying for us did not lie in our *excellence*—but where sin abounded Divine Grace did much more abound. The persons for whom Jesus died were viewed by Him as the opposite of good. He came into the world to save those who are guilty before God, or, in the words of our text, “Christ died for the ungodly.”

Now to our business. We shall dwell first upon *the fact*—“Christ died for the ungodly.” Then we shall consider the *plain inferences* from that fact. And, thirdly, proceed to think and speak of *the proclamation* of this simple but wondrous Truth of God.

I. First, here is THE FACT—“*Christ died for the ungodly.*” Never did the human ear listen to a more astounding and yet cheering Truth! Angels desire to look into it. And if men were wise, they would ponder it day and night. Jesus, the Son of God! Himself God over all! The infinitely glorious One! Creator of Heaven and earth—out of love to men stooped to become a

Man and die! Christ, the thrice holy God, the pure-hearted Man in whom there was no sin and could be none, espoused the cause of the wicked! Jesus, whose doctrine makes deadly war on sin, whose Spirit is the destroyer of evil, whose whole Self abhors iniquity, whose Second Advent will prove His indignation against transgression—yet undertook the cause of the impious—and even unto death pursued their salvation!

The Christ of God, though He had no part or lot in the Fall and the sin which has arisen out of it, has died to redeem us from its penalty and, like the Psalmist, He can cry, “Then I restored that which I took not away.” Let all holy beings judge whether this is not the miracle of miracles! *Christ*, the name given to our Lord, is an expressive word. It means “Anointed One,” and indicates that He was sent upon a Divine errand, commissioned by supreme Authority. The Lord Jehovah said of old, “*I have laid help upon One that is mighty. I have exalted One chosen out of the people.*” And again, “*I have given Him as a Covenant to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people.*” Jesus was both set apart to this work and qualified for it by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. He is no unauthorized Savior, no amateur Deliverer, but an Ambassador clothed with unbounded power from the great King!

He is a Redeemer with full credentials from the Father! It is this ordained and appointed Savior who has “died for the ungodly.” Remember this, you ungodly! Consider well who it was that came to lay down His life for such as you are! The text says Christ *died*. He did a great deal besides dying, but the crowning act of His career of love for the ungodly, and that which rendered all the rest available to them, was His *death* for them. He actually gave up the ghost, not in fiction, but in fact. He laid down His life for us, breathing out His soul, even as other men do when they expire. That it might be indisputably clear that He was really dead, His heart was pierced with the soldier’s spear and out of it came blood and water. The Roman governor would not have allowed the body to be removed from the Cross had he not been duly convinced that Jesus was, indeed, dead.

His relatives and friends who wrapped Him in linen and laid Him in Joseph’s tomb were sorrowfully sure that all that lay before them was a corpse. The Christ really died. And in saying that, we mean that He suffered all the pangs incident to death—only He endured much more and worse, for His was a death of peculiar pain and shame—and it was not only attended by the forsaking of *man*, but by the departure of His God! That cry, “My God, My God! Why have You forsaken Me?” was the innermost blackness of the thick darkness of death! Our Lord’s death was penal—inflicted upon Him by Divine Justice—and rightly so, for on Him lay *our* iniquities—and therefore on Him must lay the suffering. “It pleased the Father to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.”

He died under circumstances which made His death most terrible. Condemned to a felon’s gallows, He was crucified amid a mob of jesters, with few sympathizing eyes to gaze upon Him. He bore the gaze of malice and the glance of scorn. He was hooted and jeered by a ribald throng who were cruelly inventive in their taunts and blasphemies. There He hung, bleeding from many wounds, exposed to the sun, burning with fever and devoured with thirst. He was under every circumstance of contumely, pain

and utter wretchedness. His death was, of all deaths, the most deadly death. And emphatically, "Christ died."

But the pith of the text comes here, that, "Christ died *for the ungodly*." He did not for the righteous, nor for the reverent and devout, but for the *ungodly*. Look at the original word and you will find that it has the meaning of "impious, irreligious, and wicked." Our translation is by no means too strong, but scarcely expressive enough! To be ungodly, or godless, is to be in a dreadful state. But as use has softened the expression, perhaps you will see the sense more clearly if I read it, "Christ died for the *impious*"—for those who have no reverence for God. Christ died for the godless, who, having cast off God, cast off with Him all love for that which is right. I do not know a word that could more fitly describe the most irreligious of mankind than the original word in this text. And I believe it is used on purpose by the Spirit of God to convey to us the Truth, which we are always slow to receive, that Christ did not die because men were *good*, or *would be good*, but died for them as *ungodly*—or, in other words—"He came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Observe, then, that when the Son of God determined to die for men, He viewed them as ungodly and far from God by wicked works. In casting His eyes over our race, He did not say, "Here and there I see spirits of nobler mold—pure, truthful, truth-seeking, brave, disinterested and just—therefore, because of these choice ones, I will die for this fallen race." No, but looking on them *all*, He whose judgment is Infallible returned *this* verdict—"They are all gone out of the way. They have altogether become unprofitable. There is none that does good, no, not one." Putting them down at *that* estimate, and nothing better, Christ died for them!

He did not please Himself with some rosy dream of a superior race yet to come, when the age of iron should give place to the age of gold—some halcyon period of human development in which civilization would banish crime—and wisdom would conduct man back to God. Full well He knew that, left to itself, the world would grow worse and worse, and that by its very wisdom it would darken its own eyes! It was not because a golden age would come by natural progress, but just because such a thing was *impossible*, unless He died to procure it, that Jesus died for a race which, apart from Him, could only develop into deeper damnation! Jesus viewed us as we really were, not as our pride fancies us to be! He saw us to be without God, enemies to our own Creator, dead in trespasses and sins, corrupt and set on mischief! And even in our occasional cry for good, searching for it with blind judgment and prejudiced heart so that we put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, He saw that in us was no good thing, but every possible evil, so that we were lost—utterly, helplessly, hopelessly lost apart from Him.

Yet, viewing us as in that Graceless and Godless plight and condition, He died for us! I would have you remember that the view under which Jesus beheld us was not only the true one, but, for us, the *kindly* one. Had it been written that Christ died for the better sort, then each troubled spirit would have inferred, "He died not for *me*." Had the merit of His death been the perquisite of honesty, where would have been the dying thief? If of chastity, where the woman that loved much? If of courageous

fidelity, how would it have fared with the Apostles, for they all forsook Him and fled? There are times when the bravest man trembles lest he should be found a coward. He has the most disinterested frets about the selfishness of his heart and fears the most pure would be staggered by his impurity! Where, then, would have been hope for one of us if the Gospel had been only another form of Law and the benefits of the Cross had been reserved as the *rewards* of virtue?

The Gospel does not come to us as a premium for virtue, but it presents us with forgiveness for sin. It is not a reward for health, but a medicine for sickness. Therefore, to meet all cases, it puts us down at our worst and, like the good Samaritan with the wounded traveler, it comes to us where we are. "Christ died for the impious" is a great net which takes in even the leviathan sinner—and of all the innumerable creeping sinners which swarm the sea of sin—there is not one kind which this great net does not encompass! Let us note well that in this condition lay the need of our race that Christ should die. I do not see how it could have been written, "Christ died for the *good*." To what end for the good? Why would He need to die for them? If men are perfect, does God need to be reconciled to them? Was He ever opposed to holy beings? Impossible!

On the other hand, were the good ever the enemies of God? If there are such, would they not of necessity be His friends? If man is by nature just with God, to what end should the Savior die? "*The Just for the unjust*," I can understand. But the "Just dying for the just" were a *double* injustice—an injustice that the just should be punished at all—and another injustice that the Just should be punished for them. Oh no! If Christ died, it must be because there was a penalty to be paid for *sin* committed. Therefore He must have died for those who had committed sin. If Christ died, it must have been because "a fountain filled with blood" was necessary for the cleansing away of heinous stains. Therefore it must have been for those who are defiled.

Suppose there should be found anywhere in this world an unfallen man—perfectly innocent of all actual sin and free from any tendency to it? Then there would be a superfluity of cruelty in the crucifixion of the innocent Christ for such an individual! What need has he that Christ should die for him, when he has in his own innocence the right to live? If there is found beneath the covering of Heaven an individual who, notwithstanding some former slips and flaws, can, by *future* diligence, completely justify himself before God, then it is clear that there is no need for Christ to die for him, either! I would not insult him by telling him that Christ died for him, for he would reply to me, "Why did He? Cannot I make myself just without Him?" In the very nature of things it must be so, that if Christ Jesus dies, He must die for the ungodly.

Such agonies as His would not have been endured had there not been a cause. And what cause could there have been but sin? Some have said that Jesus died as our *example*—but that is not altogether true. Christ's death is not *absolutely* an example for men, for it was a march into a region of which He said, "You cannot follow Me now." His *life* was our example, but not His death in *all* respects, for we are, by no means, bound to surrender ourselves voluntarily to our enemies as He did—we are told that

when persecuted in one city, we are to flee to another. To be willing to *die* for the Truth of God is a most Christly thing, and in *that* Jesus is our example. But into the winepress which He trod—it is not ours to enter—the *voluntary* element which was peculiar to His death renders it inimitable.

He said, “I lay down My life of Myself; no man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.” One word of His would have delivered Him from His foes. He had but to say, “Be gone!” and the Roman guards would have fled like chaff before the wind! He died because He willed to do so. Of His own accord He yielded up His spirit to the Father. It had to be as an Atonement for the guilty. It could not have been as an *example*, for no man is bound, voluntarily, to die. Both the dictates of Nature and the command of the Law require us to preserve our lives. “You shall not kill,” means, “You shall not voluntarily give up your own life any more than take the life of another.” Jesus stood in a special position and, therefore, He died. But His example would have been complete enough without His death, had it not been for the peculiar office which He had undertaken.

We may fairly conclude that Christ died for men who needed such a death and, as the *good* did not need it for an example—and in fact it is not an example to them—He must have died for the ungodly. The sum of our text is this—all the benefits resulting from the Redeemer’s passion and from all the works that followed upon it, are for those who, by nature, are ungodly. His Gospel is that sinners believing in Him are saved. His sacrifice has put away sin from all who trust Him and, therefore, it was offered for those who had sin upon them. “He rose again for our justification,” but certainly not for the justification of those who can be justified by their own works! He ascended on high and, we are told, He “received gifts for men, yes, for the rebellious, also.” He lives to intercede and Isaiah tells us that, “He made intercession for the transgressors.”

The aim of His death, Resurrection, Ascension and eternal life is for the sinful sons of men. His death has brought pardon, but it cannot be pardon for those who have no sin—pardon is only for the *guilty*. He is exalted on high “to give repentance,” but surely not to give repentance to those who have never sinned and have nothing to repent of! Repentance and remission both imply previous guilt in those who receive them. Unless, then, these gifts of the exalted Savior are mere shams and superfluities, they must be meant for the really *guilty*. From His side there flowed out water as well as blood—the water is intended to cleanse polluted Nature, then certainly not the nature of the sinless, but the nature of the impure—and so both blood and water flowed for sinners who need the double purification.

Today the Holy Spirit regenerates men as the result of the Redeemer’s death. And who can be regenerated but those who need a new heart and a right spirit? To regenerate the already pure and innocent would be ridiculous! Regeneration is a work which creates life where there was formerly death. It gives a heart of flesh to those whose hearts were originally stone and implants the love of holiness where sin once had sole dominion. Conversion is also another gift which comes through His death—but does He turn those whose faces are already in the right direction? It cannot be! He

converts the sinner from the error of his ways. He turns the disobedient into the right way. He leads the stray sheep back to the fold.

Adoption is another gift which comes to us by the Cross. Does the Lord adopt those who are already His sons by nature? If children already, what room is there for adoption? No, but the grand act of Divine love is that which takes those who are “children of wrath, even as others,” and by Sovereign Grace puts them among the children and makes them “heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ.” Today I see the Good Shepherd in all the energy of His mighty love going forth into the dreadful wilderness. For whom is He gone forth? For the 99 who feed at home? No, but into the desert His love sends Him, over hill and dale, to seek the *one lost* sheep which has gone astray!

Behold, I see Him awakening His Church, like a good housewife, to cleanse her house. With the bosom of the Law she sweeps and with the candle of the Word she searches, and what for? For those bright new coined pieces fresh from the mint which glitter safely in her purse? Assuredly not! But for that lost piece which has rolled away into the dust and lies hidden in the dark corner. And lo! Grandest of all visions! I see the Eternal Father, Himself, in the infinity of His love, going forth in haste to meet a returning child! And whom does He go to meet? The elder brother returning from the field, bringing his sheaves with him? An Esau who has brought him savory meat such as his soul loves? A Joseph whose godly life has made him lord over all Egypt?

No, the Father leaves His home to meet a returning Prodigal who has companied with harlots and groveled among swine! He who comes back to Him is in disgraceful rags and disgusting filthiness! It is on a *sinner's* neck that the Father weeps! It is on a *guilty* cheek that He sets His kisses! It is for an unworthy one that the fatted calf is killed and the best robe is worn! And the house is made merry with music and with dancing for him! Yes, tell it, and let it ring round earth and Heaven—Christ died for the ungodly! Mercy seeks the guilty! Grace has to do with the impious, the irreligious and the wicked! The Physician has not come to heal the healthy, but to heal the sick! The great Philanthropist has not come to bless the rich and the great, but the captive and the prisoner! He puts down the mighty from their seats, for He is a stern leveler! He has come to lift the beggar from the dunghill and to set him among princes, even the princes of His people!

Sing, then, with the holy Virgin, and let your song be loud and sweet—“He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty.” “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” O you guilty ones, believe in Him and live!

II. Let us now consider THE PLAIN INFERENCES FROM THE FACT. Let me have your hearts as well as your ears, especially those of you who are not yet saved, for I desire you to be blessed by the Truths uttered. And oh, may the Spirit of God cause it to be so! It is clear that those of you who are ungodly—and if you are unconverted you are that—are *in great danger*. Jesus would not interpose His life and bear the bloody sweat and

crown of thorns, the nails, the spear, the unmitigated scorn and death, itself, if there were not solemn need and imminent peril! There is danger, solemn danger, for you! You are already under the wrath of God. You will soon die and then, as surely as you live, you will be lost, and lost forever! As certain as the righteous will enter into everlasting life, you will be driven into everlasting punishment. The Cross is the danger signal to you. It warns you that if God spared not His only Son, He will not spare you! It is the lighthouse set on the rocks of sin to warn you that swift and sure destruction awaits you if you continue to rebel against the Lord. Hell is an awful place or Jesus had not needed to suffer such infinite agonies to save us from it.

It is also fairly to be inferred that *out of this danger only Christ can deliver the ungodly—and He only through His death*. If a less price than that of the life of the Son of God could have redeemed men, we would have been spared. When a country is at war and you see a mother give up her only boy to fight her country's battles—her only well-beloved, blameless son—you know that the battle must be raging very fiercely and that the country is in stern danger. For, if she could find a substitute for him, though she gave all her wealth, she would lavish it freely to spare her darling. If she were certain that in his heart a bullet would find its target, she must have strong love for her country—and her country must be in dire straits before she would bid him go.

If, then, "God spared not His Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all," there must have been a dread necessity for it. It must have stood thus—either *He* die, or the *sinner* must, or Justice must—and since Justice could not, and the Father desired that the sinner should not, then Christ *must*. And so He did. Oh, miracle of love! I tell you, Sinners, you cannot help yourselves, nor can all the priests of Rome or Oxford help you! Let them perform their antics as they may, Jesus, alone, can save! And that only by His death! There on the bloody tree hangs all man's hope. If you enter Heaven it must be by force of the Incarnate God's bleeding out his life for you! You are in such peril that only the pierced hands can lift you out of it. Look to Him, at once, I pray, before the proud waters go over your soul!

Then let it be noticed—and this is the point I want constantly to keep before your view—that *Jesus died out of pure pity*. He must have died out of the most gratuitous benevolence to the undeserving, because the character of those for whom He died could not have attracted Him, but must have been repulsive to His holy Soul. The impious, the godless—can Christ love these for their *character*? No, He loved them notwithstanding their offenses, loved them as creatures fallen and miserable, loved them according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses and tender mercies—from pity—and not from admiration. Viewing them as ungodly, yet He loved them! This is extraordinary love! I do not wonder that some persons are loved by others, for they wear a potent charm in their countenances, their ways are winsome and their characters charm you into affection—"but God commends His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

He looked at us and there was not a solitary beauty spot upon us. We were covered with “wounds, bruises and putrefying sores,” distortions, defilements, pollutions and yet, for all that, Jesus loved us! He loved us because He would love us, because His heart was full of pity and He could not let us perish. Pity moved Him to seek the most needy objects so that His love might display its utmost ability in lifting men from the lowest degradation and putting them in the highest position of holiness and honor. Observe another inference. If Christ died for the ungodly, *this fact leaves the ungodly no excuse if they do not come to Him* and believe in Him unto salvation. Had it been otherwise they might have pleaded, “We are not fit to come.” But you are ungodly and Christ died for the ungodly—why not for *you*?

I hear the reply, “But I have been so very vile.” Yes, you have been impious, but your sin is not worse than this word, ungodly, will compass. Christ died for those who were wicked, thoroughly wicked. The Greek word is so expressive that it *must* take in your case, however wrongly you have acted. “But I cannot believe that Christ died for such as I am,” says one. Then, Sir, mark! I hold you to your words and charge you with contradicting the Eternal God to His teeth and making Him a liar! Your statement gives God the lie! The Lord declares that, “Christ died for the ungodly,” and you say He did not! What is that but to make God a liar? How can you expect mercy if you persist in such proud unbelief? Believe the Divine Revelation! Close in at once with the Gospel. Forsake your sins and believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall surely live.

The fact that Christ died for the ungodly renders self-righteousness a folly. Why need a man pretend that he is good if “Christ died for the ungodly”? We have an orphanage and the qualification for our orphanage is that the child for whom admission is sought shall be utterly destitute. I will suppose a widow trying to show me and my fellow trustees that her boy is a fitting object for the charity. Will she tell us that her child has a rich uncle? Will she enlarge upon her own capacities for earning a living? Why, this would be to argue *against* herself, and she is much too wise for that, I guarantee you, for she knows that any such statements would damage, rather than serve, her cause. So, Sinner, do not pretend to be righteous! Do not dream that you are better than others, for that is to argue against yourself! Prove that you are not, by nature, ungodly, and you prove yourself to be one for whom Jesus did *not* die!

Jesus comes to make the ungodly godly and the sinful holy—but the raw material upon which He works is described in the text, not by its goodness, but by its badness—it is for the *ungodly* that Jesus died! “Oh, but if I felt!” Felt what? Felt something which would make you better? Then you would not so clearly come under the description here given. If you are destitute of good feelings, thoughts, hopes and emotions, you are ungodly, and, “Christ died for the ungodly.” Believe in Him and you shall be saved from that ungodliness. “Well,” cries out some Pharisaic moralist, “this is dangerous doctrine.” How so? Would it be dangerous doctrine to say that physicians exercise their skill to cure sick people and not healthy ones? Would that encourage sickness? Would that discourage health? You know better!

You know that to inform the sick of a physician who can heal them is one of the best means for promoting their cure. If ungodly and impious men would take heart and run to the Savior, and by Him become cured of impiety and ungodliness, would not that be a good thing? Jesus has come to make the ungodly godly, the impious pious, the wicked obedient and the dishonest upright! He has not come to save them *in* their sins, but *from* their sins—and this is the best of news for those who are diseased with sin. Self-righteousness is a folly and despair is a crime since Christ died for the ungodly! None are excluded but those who exclude themselves! This great gate is set so wide open that the very worst of men may enter, and you, dear Hearer, may enter now!

I think it is also very evident from our text that when they are saved, *the converted find no ground of boasting*, for when their hearts are renewed and made to love God, they cannot say, “See how good I am,” because they were not so by nature—they were ungodly and, as such, Christ died for them. Whatever goodness there may be in them *after* conversion they ascribe it to the Grace of God, since by nature they were alienated from God and far removed from righteousness. If the truth of natural depravity is but known and felt, Free Grace must be believed in—and then all glorying is at an end! *This will also keep the saved ones from thinking lightly of sin*. If God had forgiven sinners without an Atonement, they might have thought little of transgression. But now that pardon comes to them through the bitter griefs of their Redeemer, they cannot but see it to be an exceedingly great evil.

When we look to Jesus dying on the Cross we end our dalliance with sin and utterly abhor the cause of so great suffering to so dear a Savior. Every wound of Jesus is an argument against sin. We never know the full evil of our iniquities till we see what it cost the Redeemer to put them away! Salvation by the death of Christ is the strongest conceivable promoter of all the things which are pure, honest, lovely and of good report. It makes sin so loathsome that the saved one cannot take up even its *name* without dread. “I will take away the name of Baal out of your mouth.” He looks upon it as we should regard a knife rusted with gore with which some villain had killed our mother, our wife or child! Could we play with it? Could we bear it about our persons or endure it in our sight? No, accursed thing! Stained with the heart’s blood of my Beloved, I would gladly fling you into the bottomless abyss! Sin is that dagger which stabbed the Savior’s heart and therefore must be the abomination of every man who has been redeemed by the atoning Sacrifice.

To close this point. Christ’s death for the ungodly is *the grandest argument to make the ungodly love Him when they are saved*. To love Christ is the mainspring of obedience in men—how shall men be led to love Him? If you would grow love, you must *sow* love. Go, then, and let men know the love of Christ to sinners, and they will, by Divine Grace, be moved to love Him in return. No doubt all of us require to know the threats of the wrath of God—but that which sooner touches my heart is Christ’s free love to an unworthy one like myself. When my sins seem blackest to me, and yet I know that through Christ’s death I am forgiven, this blest assurance melts me down—

“If You had bid Your thunders roll,

***And lightning flash, to blast my soul,
I still had stubborn been.
But mercy has my heart subdued,
A bleeding Savior I have view'd,
And now I hate my sin."***

I have heard of a soldier who had been put in prison for drunkenness and insubordination several times and he had been also flogged, but nothing improved him. At last he was taken in the commission of another offense and brought before the commanding officer, who said to him, "My Man, I have tried everything in the martial code with you except shooting you. You have been imprisoned and whipped, but nothing has changed you. I am determined to try something else with you. You have caused us a great deal of trouble and anxiety, and you seem resolved to do so still. I shall, therefore, change my plans with you—I shall neither fine you, flog you, nor imprison you—I will see what *kindness* will do, and therefore I fully and freely forgive you." The man burst into tears, for he reckoned on a round number of lashes and had steeled himself to bear them. But when he found he was to be forgiven and set free, he said, "Sir, you shall not have to find fault with me again."

Mercy won his heart. Now, Sinner, in that fashion God is dealing with you! Great sinners! Ungodly sinners! God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways. I have threatened you and you hardened your hearts against Me. Therefore, come now, and let us reason together—though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "Well," says one, "I am afraid if you talk to sinners like *that*, they will go and sin more and more." Yes, there are brutes everywhere who can be so unnatural as to sin because Grace abounds, but I bless God there is such a thing as the *influence* of love! And I am rejoiced that many feel the force of it and yield to the conquering arms of amazing Grace. The Spirit of God wins the day by such arguments as these! Love is the great battering ram which opens gates of brass!

When the Lord says, "I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities," then the man is moved to repentance. I can tell you hundreds and thousands of cases in which this infinite love has done all the good that morality, itself, could ask to have done. It has changed the heart and turned the entire current of the man's nature from sin to righteousness. The sinner has believed, repented, turned from his evil ways, and become zealous for holiness! Looking to Jesus he has felt his sin forgiven and he has become a new man, to lead a new life! God grant it may be so, this morning, and He shall have all the glory of it.

III. So now we must close—and this is the last point—THE PROCLAMATION OF THIS FACT that "Christ died for the ungodly." I would not mind if I were condemned to live 50 years more and never to be allowed to speak but these five words, if I might be allowed to utter them in the ear of every man, woman and child who lives—"CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY!" It is the best message that even angels could bring to men! In the proclamation of this, the whole Church ought to take its share. Those of us who can address thousands should be diligent to cry aloud—"Christ

died for the ungodly.” But those of you who can only speak to one, or write a letter to one, must keep on at this—“Christ died for the ungodly.” Shout it out, or whisper it out! Print it in capital letters, or write it in a lady’s hand—“Christ died for the ungodly.”

Speak it solemnly! It is not a thing for jest. Speak it joyfully! It is not a theme for sorrow, but for joy! Speak it firmly. It is an indisputable fact. Facts of science, as they call them, are always questioned—this is unquestionable! Speak it earnestly, for if there is any Truth of God which ought to arouse a man’s soul, it is this—“Christ died for the ungodly.” Speak it where the ungodly live—and that is at your own house. Speak it, also, down in the dark corners of the city, in the haunts of debauchery, in the home of the thief, in the den of the depraved. Tell it in the jail and sit down at the dying bed and read in a tender whisper—“Christ died for the ungodly.” When you pass the harlot in the street, do not give a toss with that proud head of yours, but remember that “Christ died for the ungodly.” And when you remember those that injured you, say no bitter word, but hold your tongue and remember, “Christ died for the ungodly.”

Make this forever the message of your life—“Christ died for the ungodly.” And, oh, dear Friends, you that are not saved, take care that you receive this message. Believe it! Go to God with this on your tongue—“Lord save me, for Christ died for the ungodly and I am one of them.” Fling yourself right on to this as a man commits himself to his lifebelt amid the surging billows. “But I do not feel,” says one. Trust not your *feelings* if you do, but with no feelings and no hopes of your own, cling desperately to this, “Christ died for the ungodly.” The transforming, elevating, spiritualizing, moralizing, sanctifying power of this great fact you shall soon know and be no more ungodly! But first, as ungodly, rest on this, “Christ died for the ungodly.”

Accept this Truth, my dear Hearer, and you are saved! I do not mean, merely, that you will be pardoned. I do not mean that you will enter Heaven. I mean much more! I mean that you will have a new heart! You will be saved from the love of sin, saved from drunkenness, saved from uncleanness, saved from blasphemy, saved from dishonesty. “Christ died for the ungodly”—if that is really known and trusted in, it will open in your soul new springs of living water which will cleanse the Augean stable of your nature and make a temple of God of that which was before a den of thieves! The mercy of God through the death of Jesus Christ—and a new era in your life’s history—will at once commence! Having put this as plainly as I know how, and having guarded my speech to prevent there being anything like a flowery sentence in it. Having tried to put this as clearly as daylight, itself—that “Christ died for the ungodly”—if your ears refuse the precious blessings that come through the dying Christ, your blood is on your own heads, for there is no other way of salvation for anyone among you!

Whether you reject or accept this, I am clear. But oh, do not reject it, for it is your life! If the Son of God dies for sinners and sinners reject His blood, they have committed the most heinous offense possible! I will not venture to affirm, but I do suggest that the devils in Hell are not capable of so great a stretch of criminality as is involved in the rejection of the

Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Here lies the highest love—the Incarnate God bleeds to death to save men—but men hate God so much that they will not even have Him as He dies to save them! They will not be reconciled to their Creator though He stoops from His loftiness to the depth of woe in the Person of His Son on their behalf! This is depravity, indeed, and desperateness of rebellion! God grant that you may not be guilty of it! There can be no fiercer flame of wrath than that which will break forth from love that has been trampled upon—when men have put from them eternal life—and done despite to the Lamb of God!

“Oh,” says one, “would God I could believe!” “Sir, what difficulty is there in it? Is it hard to believe the Truth? Dare you belie your God? Are you steeling your heart to such desperateness that you will call your God a liar?” “No, I believe Christ died for the ungodly,” says one, “but I want to know how to get the merit of that death applied to my own soul.” You may, then, for here it is—“He that *believes* in Him”—that is, he that trusts in Him, “is not condemned.” Here is the Gospel and the whole of it—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned.” I am but a poor weak man like yourselves, but my Gospel is not weak! And it would be no stronger if one of “the mailed cherubim, or accorded seraphim” could take the platform and stand here instead of me! He could tell you no better news!

God, in condescension to your weakness, has chosen one of your fellow mortals to bear to you this message of infinite affection. Do not reject it! By your souls’ value, by their immortality, by the hope of Heaven and by the dread of Hell, lay hold upon eternal life! And by the fear that this may be your last day on earth, yes, and this evening your last hour, I do beseech you, now, “steal away to Jesus.” There is life in a look at the Crucified One! There is life at this moment for you. Look to Him now and live! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Ezekiel 16:1-14; Romans 5:1-11.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—174, 502 (vs. 4, 5, 6), 553.

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FOR WHOM IS THE GOSPEL MEANT? NO. 1345

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 25, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick:
I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”
Mark 2:17.*

*“Christ died for the ungodly.”
Romans 5:6.*

*“God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were
yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
Romans 5:8.*

*“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”
1 Timothy 1:15.*

LAST Thursday evening, with considerable difficulty, I stood here to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and I handled one of the simplest imaginable texts, full of nothing but the very plainest elements of the Gospel. Within a very few minutes I had a harvest for the sermon. The congregation was slender, for you know how ill a night it was, and how little you expected that your pastor would be able to preach, but three souls came forward uninvited to acknowledge that they had found peace with God. How many more there were I do not know, but these three sought out the Brethren and bore a good and hearty confession to the blessed fact that, for the first time in their lives they, had understood the plan of salvation.

Now, it seemed to me that if a plain Gospel theme was so promptly profitable, I had better keep to the same subject. If a farmer finds that a certain seed has paid him so well that he never had a better crop, then he will keep to that seed and sow more of it. Those processes of farming which have been successful should be persevered in and even used upon a larger scale. So this morning I shall just preach the A B C of the Gospel, the first rudiments of the art of salvation. And I thank God this will be no new thing to me. May God the Holy Spirit, in answer to your prayers, grant us a reward this morning after the same proportion as last Thursday and, if so, our heart will be exceedingly glad.

Out of a very great number I have selected the four texts which I have just read to set forth the Truth of God that the mission of our Lord related to sinners. What did Christ come into the world for? For whom did He come? These are questions of the greatest importance and they are clearly answered in Scripture. When the children of Israel first found manna outside the camp, they said to one another, “Manna?” or, “what is it?” for they knew not what it was. There it lay, a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost upon the ground. No doubt they looked at it and rubbed it

in their hands and smelled it. And how glad they were when Moses said, "This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat." It was not long before they put the good news to the test, for each man gathered his arms full and took it home and prepared it according to his liking.

Now, concerning the Gospel, there are many who might call out, "Manna?" for they know not what it is. Very frequently, too, they make a mistake as to its bearings and its objectives, dreaming that it is a kind of improved Law, or an easier system of salvation by works and, therefore they err, also, in their idea of the persons for whom it is designed. They imagine that surely the blessings of salvation must be meant for *deserving* persons and Christ must be the Redeemer of the meritorious! On the principle of, "good for the good," they infer that Grace is for the excellent and Christ for the virtuous. Therefore it is a most useful thing for us continually to be reminding men what the Gospel is and for whom it is sent into the world, for, though the great mass of you know full well and do not need to be told, yet there are multitudes around us who persist in grave mistakes and need to be instructed over and over again in the very simplest of the Doctrines of Grace.

There is less need for laborious explanations of profound mysteries than for simple explanations of plain Truths of God. Many men need only a simple latchkey to lift the latch and open the door of faith—and such a key, I hope God's infinite mercy may put into their hands this morning! Our business is to show that the Gospel is intended for *sinner*s—that it has an eye to *guilty* persons—that it is not sent into the world as a reward for the good and for the excellent or for those who think they have any measure of fitness or preparation for the Divine favor. We need to show that it is intended for law breakers, for the undeserving, for the ungodly, for those who have gone astray like lost sheep, or left their father's house like the prodigal.

Christ died to save SINNERS and He justifies the ungodly. This Truth of God is plain enough in the Word, but since the human heart kicks against it, we will the more earnestly insist upon it.

I. First, EVEN A SUPERFICIAL GLANCE AT OUR LORD'S MISSION SUFFICES TO SHOW THAT HIS WORK WAS FOR THE SINFUL. For, dear Brothers and Sisters, the descent of the Son of God into this world as a Savior implied that men needed to be delivered from a great evil by a Divine hand! The coming of a Savior who would, by His death, provide pardon for human sin, supposed men to be greatly guilty and to be incapable of procuring pardon by any works of their own. You would never have seen a Savior if there had not been the Fall. Eden's withering was a necessary preface to Gethsemane's groaning.

You would never have heard of a Cross and a bleeding Savior on it if you had not first heard of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and of a disobedient hand which plucked the forbidden fruit. If the mission of our Lord did not refer to the *guilty*, it was an altogether unnecessary errand as far as we can see. What justifies the Incarnation except man's ruin? What explains our Lord's suffering life but man's guilt? Above all, what explains His death and the cloud under which He died but human sin? "All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord has laid on Him the

iniquity of us all”—that is the answer to an otherwise unanswerable riddle. If we give a glance at the Covenant under which our Lord came, we soon perceive that its bearing is towards guilty men.

The blessing of the Covenant of Works has to do with men who are innocent. And to them it promises great blessings. If there had been *salvation* by works, it would have been by the Law, for the Law is upright and just and good. But the new Covenant evidently deals with sinners, for it does not speak of the reward of merit, but it freely promises, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” If there had been no sins and iniquities, and no unrighteousness, then there had been no need of the Covenant of Grace of which Christ is the Messenger and the Ambassador.

The slightest glimpse at our Lord’s official Character as the Adam of a new Covenant should suffice to convince us that His errand is to guilty men. Moses comes to show how the holy should behave, but Jesus comes to reveal how the unholy may be cleansed! Whenever we hear the mission of Christ spoken of, it is described as one of mercy and of Grace. In the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, it is always the mercy of God that is extolled—according to His mercy He saved us. He, for Christ’s sake, according to His abundant mercy, forgives us our trespasses. “The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth by Jesus Christ.” “The Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many.”

The Apostle Paul, who most fully expounds the Gospel, makes Grace to be the one word upon which he rings the changes—“Where sin abounded Grace did much more abound.” “By Grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.” But, Brothers and Sisters, mercy implies sinfulness—there can be no mercy extended to the just, for Justice, itself, secures every good thing to them. Grace, too, can only be for offenders. What Grace is needed by those who have kept the Law and deserved well at Jehovah’s hands? To them eternal life would be a matter of debt, a fairly earned reward! But when you talk of Grace, you at once shut out merit and introduce another principle. Mercy can only be exercised where there is sin and Grace cannot be manifested except to the undeserving.

This is plain enough, and yet the whole tenor of some men’s religion is based on another theory. The fact is, when we begin to study the Gospel of the Grace of God we see that it turns its face always towards sin, even as a physician looks towards disease, or as charity looks towards distress. The Gospel issues its invitations, but what are the invitations? Are they not addressed to those who are burdened with a load of sin and laboring to escape from its consequences? It invites every creature because every creature has its needs, but it especially says, “Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts.” It invites the man who has no money, or, in other words, no merit. It calls to those who are needy, thirsty, poor, naked—and all these are but used as figures of states produced by sin!

The very gifts of the Gospel imply sin—life is for the dead, sight is for the blind, liberty is for the captives, cleansing is for the filthy, absolution is for the sinful. No Gospel blessing is proposed as a *reward* and no invitation is issued to those who claim the blessings of Grace as a matter of *right*—men are invited to come and receive them freely according to the Grace of God. And what are the commands of the Gospel? Repent. But who repents unless a sinner? Believe. But believing is not according to the Law—the Law speaks only of *doing*. Believing has to do with sinners and with the method of salvation by Grace. The Gospel representations of itself usually look sinner-ward. The great king who makes a feast finds not a guest to sit at the table among those who were naturally expected to come—so from the highways and hedges men are *compelled* to come in.

If the Gospel describes itself as a feast it is a great feast for the blind, the crippled and the lame. If it describes itself as a fountain, it is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. Everywhere, in all that it does and says and provides to men, the Gospel proves itself to be the *sinner's* friend. The motto of its Founder and Lord still is, “this Man receives sinners.” The Gospel is an hospital for the sick—none but the guilty will ever accept its benefits. It is medicine for the diseased—the whole and the self-righteous will never relish its saving draughts. Those who imagine that they have some excellence before God will never care to be saved by Sovereign Grace. The Gospel, I say, looks *sinner-ward*. That way, and that way only, does it cast its blessings.

And Brothers and Sisters, you know that the Gospel has always found its greatest trophies among the most sinful. It enlists its best soldiers not only from among the guilty but from among the most guilty. “Simon,” said our Lord, “I have something to say unto you—A certain man had two debtors, the one owed him 500 pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him more?” The Gospel goes upon the principle that he who has had much forgiven loves much. And so its gracious Lord delights to seek out the most guilty and to manifest Himself to them with abundant and overflowing love, saying “I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your transgressions.”

Among great transgressors it finds its warmest lovers. When once it has saved them, it receives from them the heartiest welcome and in them it obtains the most enthusiastic adherents. Great sinners, when saved, crown free Grace with its most illustrious diadems. Well may we be sure that it has its eye towards sinners since it is among the chief of sinners that it finds its highest glory. There is one other reflection which, also, lies very near the surface, namely, that if the Gospel does not look towards sinners, to whom else could it look? There seems to have been a revival, lately, of the old quibbling spirit, so that proud Pharisees constantly tell us that the preaching of justification by faith is overdone and that we are leading people to think less of morality by preaching up the Grace of God.

This often refuted objection is coming forth again because Protestantism is losing its sap and soul. The very force and backbone of the Reformers' teaching was that great Doctrine of Grace, that salvation is not of works but of the Grace of God, alone! And because men are getting away

from the Reformation and drifting into Romanism, they are casting into the background this grand Truth of God of Justification by Faith, alone, and pretending to be afraid of it. Most men are knaves and fools upon this matter! I put to all such, this one question—To whom, Sirs, would the Gospel look, if not towards sinners, for what are *you* but sinners? You who talk about morality being injured, about holiness being ignored—what have *you* to do with either?

The people who usually urge these objections, as a rule, had better be quiet on such topics. In general these fierce defenders of morality and holiness are exceedingly lax, while believers in the Grace of God are frequently charged with Puritanism and rigidity. He who stands out most to speak against the Doctrines of Grace is frequently the man or woman who needs Grace most, while the very man who cries down good works as a ground of trust is just the person whose life is carefully directed by the statutes of the Lord! Know you, O men, that there lives not on the face of the earth a man upon whom God can look with pleasure if He considers that man on the ground of His Law. “They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no not one.”

Not one heart is sound and right before God by nature! Not one life is pure and clean when the Lord comes to examine it with His all-searching eyes! We are all shut up in the same prison as the guilty—if not alike guilty, yet guilty according to the proportion of our light and knowledge—and each one justly condemned! We have all erred in heart and have not loved the Lord! To whom, then, could the Gospel look if it did not cast its eyes sinner-ward? For whom else could the Savior have died? Who is there in the world for whom the benefits of Grace could be designed?

II. Secondly, THE MORE CLOSELY WE LOOK, THE MORE CLEAR THIS FACT BECOMES, for, Brothers and Sisters, the work of salvation was certainly not performed for any of us, who are saved, on account of any goodness in us! If there is any goodness in us, it was put there by the Grace of God and it certainly was not there when first the heart of Jehovah’s love began to move towards us.

If you take the first sign of salvation that was actually *visible* on earth, namely, the coming of Christ, we are told, concerning it, that, “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” So that our redemption, my Brothers and Sisters, was effected before we were born! This was the fruit of the Father’s great love, “wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins.”

There was nothing in us going before which could have merited that redemption, indeed the very idea of meriting the death of Jesus is absurd and blasphemous! Yes, and when we were living in sin and loving it, there were preparations made for our salvation—Divine love was busy on our behalf when we were busy in rebellion. The Gospel was brought near to us. Earnest hearts were set praying for us. The text was written which would convert us and, as I have already said, the blood was spilt which

cleanses us and the Spirit of God was given who should renew us. All this was done while as yet we had no breathings of soul after God!

Is not that a wonderful passage in Ezekiel where the Lord passed by and saw the helpless infant cast out in the open field while it was yet unswaddled and unwashed and was foul and polluted in its own blood? He says that it was a time of love and yet it was a time of pollution and loathing. He did not love the chosen baby because it was well-washed and fitly clad—He loved it when it was foul and naked. Let every believing heart admire the freeness and compassion of Divine love—

***“He saw me ruined in the Fall,
Yet loved me, notwithstanding all.
He saved me from my lost estate,
His loving kindness, oh, how great!”***

When your heart was hard. When your neck was obstinate. When you would not repent nor yield to Him but rebelled yet more and more, He loved you—even *you*—with supreme affection!

Why such Grace? Why, indeed, but because His Nature is full of goodness and He delights in mercy? Is not mercy seen to be evidently extended towards the sinful and not exerted because of some goodness moving thereto? Look a little closer, still. What did our Lord come into the world to do? Here is the answer. “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.” He came that He might be a Sin-Bearer—and do you think He came to bear only the little, trifling sins of the best sort of men, if such sins there are? Do you suppose that He is a little Savior who came to save us from little offenses?

Beloved, it is Jehovah’s darling Son that comes to earth and bears the load of sin, a load which, when He bears it, He finds to be no fictitious burden, for it forces from Him bloody sweat! So heavy is that load that He bows His head to the grave and even unto death beneath it. That stupendous load which lay on Christ was the heap of our sins—and, therefore, as we look into the subject, we perceive that the Gospel must have to do with sinners. No sin? Then the Cross is a mistake! No sin? Then the “Lama Sabachthani” was a just complaint against unnecessary cruelty!

No sin? Then, O Redeemer, what are those glories which we have so eagerly ascribed to You? How can You put away sin which does not exist? The existence of great sin is implied in the coming of Christ and that coming was occasioned and rendered necessary by SIN, against which Jesus comes as our Deliverer! He declares that He has opened a fountain, filled with the blood of His own veins. But what for? A cleansing fountain implies *filth*. It must be, Sinner, that somewhere or other there are filthy people, or else there had not been such an amazing fountain as this, filled from the heart of Christ! If you are guilty, you are one who needs the fountain, and it is opened for you! Come with all your sin and foulness about you and wash this morning, and be clean!—

***“’Twas for sinners that He suffered
Agonies unspeakable!
Can you doubt you are a sinner?
If you can—then hope farewell.
But, believing what is written—
‘All are guilty’—‘dead in sin,’***

***Looking to the Crucified One
Hope shall rise your soul within.***

Brothers and Sisters, all the gifts which Jesus Christ came to give, or at least most of them, imply that there is sin! What is His first gift but pardon? How can He pardon a man who has not transgressed? With all reverence do I speak—there can be no such thing as pardon where there is no offense committed. Propitiation for sin and blotting out of iniquity both require that there must be sin to be blotted out, or what is there real about them? Christ comes to bring justification and this shows that there must be a lack of natural holiness in men, for if not, they would be justified by themselves and by their own works. And why all this outcry about justification by the righteousness of the Son of God if men are already justified by a righteousness of their own? Those two blessings, and others of the same kind, are clearly applicable only to sinful men. To no other men can they be of any use.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came girded, also, with Divine power. He says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.” To what end was He girded with Divine power unless it was because sin had taken all power and strength from man, and man was in a condition out of which he could not be lifted except by the energy of the eternal Spirit? And what does this imply but that Christ’s errand bears upon those who, through sin, are without strength and without merit before God? The Holy Spirit is given because man’s spirit has failed—because sin has taken the life out of man and made him dead in trespasses and sins—therefore the Holy Spirit comes to quicken him into newness of life, and that Spirit comes by Jesus Christ. Therefore the errand of Jesus Christ is manifestly to the *guilty*.

I will not omit to say that the great deeds of our Lord, if you look at them carefully, all bear upon sinners. Jesus lives—it is that He may seek and save that which is lost. Jesus dies—it is that He may make a propitiation for the sins of guilty men. Jesus rises—He rises again for our justification and, as I have shown, we would not need justification unless we had been naturally guilty. Jesus ascends on high and He receives gifts for men—but note that special word—“Yes, for the rebellious, also, that the Lord God may dwell among them.” Jesus lives in Heaven, but He lives there to intercede. “Therefore He is able, also, to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”

So take whatever part of His glorious achievements you please and you will find that there is a distinct bearing towards those who are immersed in guilt. And Beloved, all the gifts and blessings that Jesus Christ has brought to us derive much of their radiance from their bearing upon sinners. It is in Christ Jesus that we are elect and, to my mind, the glory of electing love lies in this—that it pitched upon such undeserving objects. How had there been any election had it been according to *merit*? Then men would have taken rank by right according to their own deeds! But election’s glories are brilliant with Grace and Grace always has for its foil and background the unworthiness of the objects towards whom it is manifested. The election of God is not according to our works, but it is a gracious election of sinners! Adore and wonder!

Turn to effectual calling and see how delightful it is to view that calling as a calling from among the dead, as a calling of the things that are not as though they were, as a calling of condemned ones into forgiveness and favor! Turn next to adoption. What is the glory of adoption, but that God has adopted those who were strangers and rebels to make them His children? What is the peculiar beauty of regeneration but that He has been able to raise up children, from these stones, unto Abraham? What is the beauty of sanctification, but that He has taken such unholy creatures as we are to make us kings and priests unto God and to sanctify us wholly—spirit, soul, and body?

To my mind it is the glory of Heaven to think that yonder white-robed choristers were once foully deified—those happy worshippers were once rebels against God! It is a happy sight to see the unfallen angels who have kept their first estate perfectly pure and forever praising God. But the vision of fallen *men* divinely restored is more full of the Glory of God! Lift, as they may, their joyful voices in perpetual chorales, the angels can never reach the special sweetness of that song—“We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” They cannot experimentally enter into that Truth of God which is of Jehovah’s name its crowning glory—“You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood.”

Thus I have abundantly shown that the further we look, the more clear it is that the Gospel is aimed at sinners and especially intended for their benefit.

III. Now, thirdly, it is evident that IT IS OUR WISDOM TO ACCEPT THE SITUATION. I know that, to many, this is a very unpalatable doctrine. Well, Friend, you had better have your palate altered, for you will never be able to alter the doctrine! It is the Truth of the everlasting God and cannot be changed. The very best thing you can do, since the Gospel looks towards sinners, is to get where the Gospel looks—and I can recommend this to you, not merely on the ground of policy, but on the ground of honesty—because you will be only in your right place when you get there.

I think I hear you raising objections. “I do not admire this system. Am I to be saved in the same way as the dying thief?” Precisely so, Sir, unless there should happen to be even more Grace shown towards you than to him. “But you do not mean to assert that in the matter of salvation I am to be put on a level with the woman that was a sinner? I have been pure and chaste and am I to owe my salvation just as much to the absolute mercy of God as *she* did?” Yes, Sir, I do say that, exactly as it stands. There is but *one* principle upon which the Lord saves men and it is that of pure Grace. I want you to understand this.

Even if it grinds like grit between your teeth and makes you angry, I shall not regret it so long as you know what I mean, for the Truth of God may yet find entrance into your soul and you may yet bow before its power. Oh, you children of godly parents, you young people of excellent morals and delicate consciences, to you I speak, even to you! Rejoice in your privileges, but do not *boast* in them, for you, too, have sinned! You have sinned against light and knowledge. You know you have! If you have not plunged into the grosser sins in act and deed, yet in desire and in imagination you have gone far enough astray—and in many things you

have offended grievously against God. If, with these considerations before you, you take your place as a sinner, you will not be disgraced but be merely standing where you certainly are!

And then, remember, if you get the blessing this way, you will have obtained it in the safest possible way. Suppose there are a number of guest chambers and I have my seat in one of the best of them. I may have no right to be there. I am eating and drinking of what is provided for superior guests, but my ticket does not mark me out as one of these and, therefore, I am ill at ease. Every mouthful that I eat I think to myself, "I do not know whether I shall be allowed to remain here. Perhaps the Lord of the feast will come in and say to me, 'Friend, how came you in here?' and I must begin, with shame, to take the lowest room." Brothers and Sisters, when we begin at the bottom and sit in the lowest room, we feel safe. We are satisfied that what we do get is meant for us and will not be taken away from us.

Perhaps, also, when the king comes, he may take us up to a higher room. There is nothing like beginning in the lowest place. When I lay hold of the promise as a saint, I have my doubts about it. But when I grasp it as a *sinner*, I can have no question! If the Lord bids me feed on His mercy as His child, I do it! The devil may whisper that I am presuming, that I never was really adopted by Grace—but when I come to Jesus as a guilty, undeserving sinner, and take what the Lord freely presents to me upon believing—the devil himself cannot tell me that I am not a sinner, or if he does, the lie is too transparent and causes me no distress! There is nothing like having an indefeasible title—and if the description given to you in the title is that you are a sinner, it is an indisputable one—for depend upon it, you are a sinner! So the sinner's place is your true place and your safest place.

Another blessing is it is a place into which you can get directly, even at this very moment. If the Gospel looks towards men in a certain state of heart in which there are commendable virtues, then how long will it take me to raise my heart to that state? If Jesus Christ comes into the world to save men who have a certain measure of excellence, then how long will it take me to obtain that excellence? I may be taken sick and die within the next 30 minutes and hear the sentence of eternal judgment—it would be poor Gospel to tell me that I might possibly obtain salvation if I attained a state which would take me several months to reach! At this hour I, a dying man, know that I may be gone out of this world and beyond the reach of mercy within an hour—what a comfort it is that the Gospel comes to me and gives itself to me just now, even as it finds me! I am already in that position in which Grace begins with men, for I am a sinner, and I have only to admit that I am so.

Now then, poor Soul, just sit down before the Lord and say, "Lord, does Your Son come to save the guilty? I am such and I trust Him to save me. Did He die for the ungodly? I am such, Lord, I trust in His blood to cleanse me. Was His death for sinners? Lord, I take up the position! I plead guilty! I accept the sentence of Your Law as being just, but save me, Lord, for Jesus died." It is done! You are saved! Go in peace, my Son. Your sins, which are many, are forgiven you! Go, my Daughter, go your way

and rejoice! The Lord has put away your sin—you shall not die, for he that believes is justified from all sin. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile! Get, then, into your true position—accept the situation in which Grace considers you to be. Do not talk of justice and merit, but appeal to pity and love.

A certain man had, several times, plotted against the first Napoleon and eventually, being entirely in the emperor's hands, the sentence of death was pronounced upon him. His daughter earnestly pleaded for his life and at last, having obtained an audience with the Emperor, she fell upon her knees before him. "My girl," said the Emperor, "it is of no use to plead for your father, for I have the clearest evidence of his repeated crimes, and it is but justice that he should die." The girl replied, "Sire, I do not ask for justice, I beg for *mercy*. It is upon the mercifulness of your heart and not upon the justice of the case that I rely." She was heard patiently and her father's life was spared at her request.

Imitate this appeal, and cry, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness." Justice owes you nothing but death—mercy alone can spare you. Have done with every idea of making out a good case—admit it to be a bad one and plead guilty! Cast yourself upon the mercy of the court and ask for mercy, free mercy, undeserved mercy, gratuitous favor! This is what you *must* ask for and as in law they have a form of suing called in *forma pauperis*, that is, in the form of a pauper, adopt the method and as a man full of necessities beg for favor at the hands of God, in *forma pauperis*, and it shall be bestowed upon you.

IV. Now I close this discourse with the next point, which is, THIS DOCTRINE HAS A GREAT SANCTIFYING INFLUENCE. "There," says one, "I do not believe that. Surely you have been holding out a premium to sin by saying that Christ came to save nobody but sinners and does not call anybody to repentance but the sinful." My dear Sirs, I have heard all that sort of talk so many times that I know it by heart—the same objections were raised against this doctrine in Luther's day by the Papists and, since then, by workmongers of all classes! There is nothing substantial in their notion that free Grace is opposed to morality—it is only their fancy.

They dream that the doctrine of justification by faith will lead to sin, but it can be proved by history that whenever this doctrine has been best preached, men have become most holy! And whenever this Truth of God has been darkened, all manner of corruption has abounded. Gracious doctrine and gracious living fitly go together—and legal teaching and unlawful living are generally found associated. Let us show you the sanctifying power of this Gospel. Its first operation in that direction is this—when the Holy Spirit brings the truth of free pardon home to a man, it completely changes his thoughts concerning God.

"What?" he asks, "Has God freely forgiven me all my offenses for Christ's sake? And does He love me notwithstanding all my sin? I did not know He was such an One as this, so gracious and kind! I thought He was hard! I called Him a tyrant, gathering where He had not strewed—but does He feel towards me like this? Then," says the soul, "I love Him in return." There is a complete reversal of feeling—the man is turned right round as soon as he understands redeeming Grace and dying love. Con-

version follows on a sight of Grace. Moreover, this grand Truth of God does more than turn a man, it inspires, melts, enlivens and inflames him. This is a Truth which stirs the deeps of the heart and fills the man with lively emotions.

Before, you talked to him about doing good, about right, justice, reward and punishment—he heard it all and it may have had a measure of influence over him—but he did not deeply feel it. Such teaching is too cold to warm the heart. Then the Truth comes home to the man and appears to him to be new and exciting. It runs like this—God, out of His free mercy, forgives the guilty and He has forgiven me! Why, this awakens him, stirs him up, touches the fountain of his tears and moves his whole being! Perhaps at the first hearing of the Gospel, he does not care for it, and even hates it. But when it comes with power, it obtains a wonderful mastery over him! When he really receives its message as his own, then his cold heart of stone is turned to flesh! Warm emotion, tender love, humble desire and a sacred longing after the Lord are all excited in his bosom.

The quickening power of this Divine Truth, as well as the converting power of it, can never be too much admired. Besides, this Truth, when it enters the heart, deals a deadly blow at the man's self-conceit. Many a man would have become wise, only he thought he was already! And many a man would have been virtuous, only he concluded that he had already attained that, too! Behold, this doctrine smites upon the skull all confidence in your own goodness and makes you feel your guilt! And in so doing, it removes the great evil of pride. A sense of sin is the very threshold of mercy! A consciousness of shortcoming, a grief because of past offenses are necessary preparations for a higher and a nobler life. The Gospel digs out the foundation, makes a great vacuum and so makes room to lay in their places the glorious stones of a noble spiritual character.

Moreover, where this Truth of God is received, there is sure to spring up in the soul a sense of *gratitude*. The man who has had much forgiven will be sure to love much in return. Gratitude to God is a grand mainspring for holy action. Those who do right in order to be rewarded for it are acting selfishly. Selfishness is at the bottom of their character—they abstain from sin only lest self should suffer—and they obey only that self may be safe and happy. The man who does right, not because of Heaven or Hell, but because God has saved him and he loves the God who saved him, is the truly right-loving man. He who loves right because God loves right, has risen out of the fog of selfishness and is capable of the loftiest virtue, yes, he has in him a living spring which will well up and flow forth in holy living so long as he exists.

And, dear Brothers and Sisters, I think you will all see that free forgiveness to sinners is very conducive towards one part of a true character, namely, readiness to forgive others, for he who has been forgiven much himself is the very man who finds it easy to pass by the transgressions of others. If he does not, he may well doubt whether he has been forgiven! If the Lord has blotted out his debt of a thousand talents, he will, readily enough, forgive the hundred pence which his brother owes him.

Last of all, some of us know and we wish that all knew by personal experience, that a sense of undeserved favor and free forgiveness is the very

soul of enthusiasm—and enthusiasm is to Christianity what the lifeblood is to the body! Were you ever made enthusiastic by a cold discourse upon the excellence of morality? Did you ever feel your soul stirred within you by listening to a sermon upon the rewards of virtue? Were you ever made enthusiastic by being told of the punishments of the Law? No, Sirs—but preach up the Doctrines of Grace—let the free favor of God be extolled and mark the consequences! There are people who will walk for many miles and stand without weariness by the hour together to hear this! I have known them labor many a weary mile to listen to this doctrine!

Why? Because the preacher was eloquent, or because he put it well? Not so! It has sometimes been badly spoken and in uncouth language—and yet this doctrine has always awakened the people. There is something in the soul of man that is looking out for the Gospel of Grace! And when it comes, there is a hungering to hear about it! Look at the Reformation times, when death was the penalty of listening to a sermon—how the people crowded at midnight! How they journeyed into the deserts and the caves to listen to the teaching of these grand old Truths of God! There is sweetness about mercy, Divine Mercy freely given, which holds the ear of man and stirs his heart!

When this Truth of God enters the soul, it breeds zealots, martyrs, confessors, missionaries, saints. If any Christians are in earnest and full of love to God and man, they are those who know what Grace has done for them. If any remain faithful under reproaches, joyful under losses and crosses—they are those who are conscious of their indebtedness to Divine Love. If any delight in God while they live and rest in Him as they die—they are the men who know that they are justified by faith in Jesus Christ who justifies the ungodly.

All glory be to the Lord who lifts the beggar from the dunghill and sets him among princes, even the princes of His people! He takes the very cast-offs of the world and adopts them into His family and makes them heirs of God by Jesus Christ! The Lord grant us all to know the power of the Gospel upon our sinful selves! The Lord endear to us the name, work and Person of the Sinner's Friend! May we never forget the hole of the pit from where we were drawn, nor the hand which rescued us, nor the undeserved kindness which moved that hand! From now on let us have more and more to say of Infinite Grace. "Free Grace and dying love." Well does the old song say, "Ring those charming bells." Free Grace and dying love—the sinner's windows of hope! Our hearts exult in the very words! Glory be unto You, O Lord Jesus, ever full of compassion. Amen.

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THE UNDYING GOSPEL FOR THE DYING YEAR NO. 2341

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 31, 1893.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 20, 1889.

*“For when we were yet without strength, in due time
Christ died for the ungodly.”
Romans 5:6.*

BELOVED Friends, whatever the condition of a child of God is, he is not without hope. A believer in the Lord Jesus Christ may be very sorely tried. His afflictions may be multiplied and they may be very keen, but, even in that condition, he has hope. It is not possible for him to be forsaken of God—his God *must* help him. If the worst comes to the worst, and he is altogether forsaken of men and sees no way of escape out of his tremendous difficulties, still, his God must help him. He has no right whatever to be afraid!

The argument of our text is this—since the Lord Jesus Christ saved us when we were ungodly and came to our rescue when we were without strength—we can never be in a worse condition than that! And if He, then, did the best thing possible for us, namely, *died* for us, there is nothing which He will not do. In fact, He will give us all things and He will do all things for us, so as to keep us safely and bear us through. The argument is that, looking back, we see the great love of God to us in the gift of His dear Son for us when there was nothing good in us—when we were ungodly, when we had no power to produce anything good—for we were without strength. At such a time, even at such a time, Christ came on wings of love and up to the bloody tree He went—and laid down His life for our deliverance! We, therefore, feel confident that He will not leave us, now, and that He will not keep back anything from us whatever we may need. He has committed Himself to the work of our eternal salvation and He will not be balked of it. He has already done too much for us to ever run back from His purpose and, in our worst estate, if we are in that condition, tonight, we may still confidently appeal to Him and rest quite sure that He will bring us up even to the heights of joy and safety! That is the drift of the text and of the sermon tonight.

There are three grand points of consolation suggested by the text. The first lies in this one line, “*Christ died for the ungodly.*” The second lies in this sentence, *Christ died for us “when we were yet without strength.”* And there is a rich vein of comfort in the third statement, that *Christ died for us “in due time.”* “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Time is often a

very important element when one is in trouble. In the nick of time Christ came for our deliverance—and so He will again.

I. The first point of consolation in our text is this—if any child of God, here, is in sore dismay and bowed down by reason of trouble, fancying that God will leave him—let him first meditate on this word, “CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY.”

I should like to have this sentence put up at the corner of every street, “Christ died for the ungodly.” I am afraid that it would cause a great many observations to be made. Some would kick at it very heavily, but there are others who would leap very joyfully at the sight of it. “Christ died for the ungodly.” Does it mean what it says? The common notion, not expressed in so many words, but harbored in many minds, is that Christ died for the *godly*—that Christ died for *good people*—but the text says, “Christ died for the *ungodly*.” “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” I say again that the current notion, unexpressed but still believed, is that Christ came into the world to save *saints*. This is not true. He came into the world to save sinners, or, to come back to the very words of the text, “Christ died for the *ungodly*.”

I remember reading of a young woman who had long been in great distress of conscience. She found comfort from an utterance of Mr. Moody Stuart in prayer, when he quoted these words of my text, “Christ died for the ungodly.” She had never caught at that idea before—she had always been trying to see something *good* in herself and she thought that if she could spy out some good thing in herself, then she would know that Christ died for her! It was like a new revelation when she really understood that Jesus Christ came into the world to save *sinners* and that He “died for the ungodly.”

Now this must be true, for Scripture puts it so plainly, “Christ died for the ungodly.” It must be true for, in the first place, *there was nobody else to die for but the ungodly!* In this same Epistle, Paul says that all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, are under sin. As it is written, “There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.” So he sums us all up with his sweeping condemnation, “None righteous, no, not one.” And so, if Christ had died for *anybody*, He must have died for the ungodly, since the whole human race has degenerated into that condition! And that is the state by nature of every man that is born of woman. Some are openly ungodly. Many are religiously ungodly, a very dangerous, because very deceitful, condition—having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. This first point is clear, then—Christ must have died for the ungodly since there was nobody else for whom to die.

And, next, *only the ungodly needed that He should die for them.* If you are godly, if you are good, if you have perfectly kept the Law of God, what have you to do with Christ? You are already saved! In fact, you are not lost, and so you do not need any saving. If you have kept all the Commandments from your youth up, you may well say, “What do I lack?” If

you are so good that you could hardly be better and have a most respectable robe of righteousness of your own in which to appear before God, I ask again, What have you to do with Christ? Why should He die for a man who has not any sins that need washing away? O you self-righteous, look to the sparks of your own fire, for Christ will kindle no fire for you! O you who believe your own characters to be all that they should be, and who rest your hope on that fallacy, I say again, why should Christ come to be a Physician to those who are not sick? Why should He come to give alms to those who are not poor? Why should He lay down His life to bear the sins of those who have no sins? "Christ died for the ungodly" because nobody but the ungodly needed that He should die for them.

There is one point that we must mark, *Christ did die for the ungodly*. His form of death was just that which the ungodly deserved—He died by sentence of the Law of God. He died nailed to the Cross—He died the death of a felon with a thief on either side of Him. He died in the dark, crying, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" He died, not as One who had, Himself, sinned, but He died as sinners have to die, for He took upon Himself the sins of the ungodly. And being found standing in their place, He felt the scourge of God that should have fallen upon the ungodly. Scourge, did I say? He felt the *sword* of God that would have slain the ungodly, as it is written, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts." Christ really died for the ungodly. They tell us that He died to confirm His testimony, in which respect His death is no better than the death of any martyr who dies to confirm *His* testimony! But the text says, "Christ died for the ungodly." They say that He died as the completion of His life, which many a good man has done and, therein, the Cross has no pre-eminence. But the text says, "Christ died for the ungodly" and we shall stand to it that this is true. "Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." They turn around and say, "That is *your* theory of the Atonement." I beg your pardon—it is *the Atonement*. It is not a theory at all and there is no other Atonement but the Substitution of Christ in the place of the ungodly! He died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. This is the true and only Doctrine of Atonement—and he that receives it shall find comfort by it—but he that rejects it does so at peril of his own soul. "Christ died for the ungodly." I cannot speak plainer words than Paul, Inspired by the Holy Spirit, has written! There let them stand, "Christ died for the ungodly."

Now then, I want you, who are the people of God, to pick up the argument out of this Truth of God. If Christ did this crowning act of dying for the ungodly, do you think that He will ever cast away the man who has peace with God? Read the first verse, again, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, if He died for you when you had no peace with God, when, in fact, you had no God at all—when you were ungodly, that is, not under the influence of God—when you were enemies to God by wicked works. If Christ died for you, *then*, will He not save you *now*? If you feel within your heart, tonight,

a sweet reconciliation to God, your heavenly Father, then, whatever your trouble is, do *not* believe that God can leave you! Whatever the deep depression of your spirit, do not imagine that He can forsake you! He that died for you as ungodly will certainly save you, now that you have peace with God through Him.

More than that, when you have read those words in the first verse, “We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” go on to the second verse, “By whom, also, we have access by faith.” Why, you are one of those who can go to God when you will and speak with Him as a man speaks with his friend! By faith you are permitted to come to God in prayer, in praise and to walk with God in the Light as He is in the Light! Come, Beloved, if Christ died for you when you were dead, when you were ungodly, will He, *can* He leave you, now that He has given you access to the Father by Himself? You come in and out of His house like a home-born son—and if He loved you so as to *die* for you when you were a stranger to God—do you think that He will leave you, now that you have access to God through Him?

Go on a little farther and you find it written, “and rejoice in hope of the Glory of God.” A little while ago, you know, you had no hope of Glory—you had no expectation of ever getting to Heaven. Poor soul that you were, your glory was your shame! Your glory was worldly pleasure and worldly gain. But now you “rejoice in hope of the Glory of God.” God has given you that good hope through Grace! Sometimes, when it is fine weather with you, you climb to the top of Mount Clear and, looking toward the Celestial City, you can almost see the light of it. Sometimes, when the wind blows the right way, you have heard some stray notes from the harps of angels—and you have wished yourself among them! Some of you know that the hope of Heaven has often burned within your heart—well, then, Beloved, if the Lord has given you that hope, can He disappoint it? If Christ died for you when you had no hope, when you did not want a hope, when you were ungodly—think of the weight of this argument to you who rejoice in hope of the Glory of God! It is mightier than a thousand Nasmyth hammers, for it smashes every doubt to shivers! He that died for the ungodly will certainly save those who have a good hope of Heaven!

Once more. You are, at this time, so far from being ungodly that the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit which is given to you. You know that it is so—you feel that God loves you. If you do not feel it, tonight, you *have* felt it. You have realized the love of God in your heart, as though a bottle of perfume of roses had been broken and the perfume had filled all your spirit. You have said to yourself, “Jesus loves me.” You have been over-joyed with that thought and you have also said, “I know that I love Him.” You have felt the goings forth of your spirit like the melting of the ice in the springtime. Every little brook that had been frozen up within your nature has leapt in gracious liberty beneath the sunlight of Divine Love. Well now, do you think that the Lord has taught you to love Him—and has shown you that He loves you—and will yet forsake you?

You say, "O Sir, you do not know what my trial is!" No, I do not, but your heavenly Father does, and if He loved you when you were ungodly, will He cast you away, now that He has shed His love abroad in your heart? "Oh, but I have lost the very staff of bread! I do not know how I am to get a living." No, but you have the living God to depend upon and, after giving His Son to save you, He will surely give you bread! He will not let you famish. "Ah, but, my dear Sir, the beloved of my heart is laid low! There is, in the cemetery, the dearest object of my affection." Is it really so? I thought that He left the dead some time ago. I thought that the dearest object of your affection had gone up to the right hand of the Father! Is it not so? "Ah, that is not what I mean, Sir! I mean that I have lost one whom I fondly loved." I know that you have, but do you think that the Lord has turned against you because He has permitted this trial to come upon you? How can He ever desert those for whom He died? And if He died for them when they were ungodly, will He not live for them, now that He has shed His love abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit?

I cannot work this out for you. I want you to go home and work it out for yourselves. If any of you are cast down, here is the first well of comfort at which you may drink full draughts of Divine consolation—"Christ died for the ungodly." Then He must help those who are trusting in Him.

II. Now we come to a second well, to see whether we can draw waters of comfort out of it, also. According to our text, CHRIST DIED FOR US, "WHEN WE WERE YET WITHOUT STRENGTH."

I must only say a word or two, here, because the time will not allow me to enlarge. First, *we were naturally in a lost condition through the Fall*, when we were born into this world, and we lived in it for years, "without strength" to do that which was right. When we began to wake up a little to thoughts of God and Divine things, we heard the Truth of God preached, but we were still without power of access even to the Gospel. We were told to repent, but our hard heart would yield no waters of repentance. We were told to believe in Christ—the preacher might as well have commanded the dead to rise out of their graves! Christ was set before us in all His beauty, yet our blindness was such that we could not appreciate His loveliness. The Bread of Life was put on the table before us, but such was our obstinacy that we would not believe it to be bread and we would not eat of it. We were "without strength."

And further on, when the will came and the Lord began, by His Grace, to work upon us, we had a will to repent, we had a will to believe and we had a will to come to Christ—*yet we were without the Graces which are now our strength*. I remember well the time when I had to say, "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not." "I would, but cannot repent. I would, but cannot believe." A rock was in the heart—a stone was laid over the mouth of the well of consolation! We were "without strength." But when we were in that sad state, without one of the Graces which are now our strength, without one of those holy fruits of the Spirit which are now the source of our consolation—even then, "when we were yet without strength," Christ died for us! When every sinew was snapped, every bone broken, every power gone, life, itself, evaporated—for

we were dead in trespasses and sins—even *then* Christ died for us! Well now, Brothers and Sisters, this is true—do you believe it? I want you to get the argument out of this Truth of God, for it is this—if the Lord Jesus loved us enough to die for us when we had no strength whatever, then He will certainly save us now that He has given us strength!

Just look and see what kind of strength He has given us. According to the context, He has given us peace. What strength is theirs who have peace with God! I can do all things when I know that God is on my side. Well, has He given me the strength that comes out of confidence in Him, perfect reconciliation with Him—and will He *now* let me be destroyed by the enemy? It cannot be!

In addition to peace, He has given us access to Himself. What a strength there is in being able to go to God in prayer! By faith we can go to God whenever we are in need! And am I able to go to my heavenly Father and tell Him all my trouble and cast my burden upon Him—and did His dear Son die for me when I was without strength and will He leave me, now that I can go to Him in prayer? O Beloved, it is impossible! I cannot imagine His turning against us.

Moreover, according to the third verse, He has now given us patience. We have had a deal of trouble, but it has worked patience. The Lord knows that at one time you had no patience at all. You used to, like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, kick every time He struck you, but now you often hold your tongue and quietly endure His chastening rod. Patience is a great strength to a man, or a woman—if you can be patient, you are strong. Well now, if Christ loved you so as to buy you with His blood when you were impatient, has He given you this strength to be patient under His hand, and do you think that He will destroy you?

And, in addition to patience, He has given you a good deal of experience. I speak to ever so many of God's people, here, who are experienced Christians. You have gone up hill and down dale, you have tried and proved the faithfulness of God—you have known by experience your own weakness and your own folly—but you also know God's faithfulness and God's strength. Do you think that the Lord has given you all this experience and then that He means to play the fool with you? Do you think that He gives and takes away, again, like little children in their play? What? Has He put you through all these paces and drilled you in this style and is He *now* going to drum you out of the army? No, no! Believe nothing of the kind! He that has given you patience and experience will keep you to the end.

And then, in addition to that, He has given you hope, for patience works experience and experience, hope. A hope that makes not ashamed. Has God really given you a hope? "Oh! "says one, "it is sometimes a very poor hope." Yes, but is it hope in Christ? Do you hope in His mercy? Then remember this text, "The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy." The smallest hope, if it comes from God, tremble as it may, is better than the proudest presumption that ever came from self-righteousness! If the Lord Jesus has given you a hope in His blood, a hope in His intercession, a hope in His eternal faithfulness, ah,

believe me, if He loved you when you had no hope, He will never cast you away, now that you have a hope that He has, Himself, given you!

Only once more upon this point. We read in the fifth verse of the “Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” Now listen. If, when we were yet without strength, Christ died for us, will He not save us, now that He has given us the Holy Spirit? Think of it, Christian! The Holy Spirit has come to live in you! Poor and despised, or illiterate and unknown, yet within you dwells the Spirit of God! That body of yours is a temple—that is God’s Word, not mine—“Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?” Well now, if Christ bought you with His blood when you were no temple, but were a defiled place—I know not to what vile thing to compare you—will He let you be broken down, now that He has made you a temple and the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in you?

I know that I must be speaking to somebody, tonight, in great trouble. I am sure that I am. I have it upon my soul that I am addressing some true child of God who is at his wits’ end, driven to the utmost extremity of sorrow. Dear Friend, believe in your God! Let not a doubt come in about Him. The Son of God died for you upon the Cross when you were ungodly and without strength—and He cannot, must not, shall not be suspected of any wish to cast you off, or of any possibility of change in His love to you. My Brothers and Sisters, I would say to you, in your trouble, tonight, what Hopeful said to Christian when He was in the Death River and cried out, “I sink in deep waters.” Hopeful said to him, “Be of good cheer, my Brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good.” So I feel the bottom, tonight, my Brother, my Sister, even if you do not—it is a good bottom and you will never be swept away from it if you are trusting in Jesus! He that brought you into the water, if He makes the tide rise up to your chin, will teach you to swim! When you cannot walk any further, you shall find waters to swim in and there is no water so deep that the child of God can drown in it! You may go as low as the grave, but you will never go any lower. “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” There is always One who is ready to catch you when you are at your very worst as to circumstances and trials. Therefore, be of good cheer! Magnify God in the fire and rest assured that He who gave Himself up to die for you, will never lose you, but will keep you even to the end.

Now I come to the last point, which is also full of consolation. I think that I heard someone heave a deep sigh and say, “Ah! It may be as you say, it may be all true, and I trust that it is, but I am in such trouble that if I do not get help directly, I shall be done for. I have, to cry, ‘Make haste, O God, make haste for my help!’ I need a God who can do what David’s God did when ‘He rode upon a cherub and did fly: yes, He did fly upon the wings of the wind.’” That is the kind of God that you need, yes, and that is the kind of God that you have! He will come flying to your deliverance, as I will now try to show you.

III. Here is the third well of consolation, CHRIST DIED FOR US IN DUE TIME—“In due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

I cannot tell you how much marrow I have found in this bone, “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” The teaching of this verse seems to be

something like this. It means, first, that *Christ died for us when justice required His death*. Suppose that I owe a debt? I am thankful that I do not, but suppose that I did owe a very heavy debt and that it had to be paid, say, on Tuesday morning. And there is a friend who has undertaken to pay it for me. The bill is due at 12 o'clock and he says that he will pay it for me. Now suppose that my friend goes in on Wednesday morning and pays the amount. It is very good of him, but still, you see, I lose my reputation for discharging my liabilities "in due time." I did not meet the bill on Tuesday at twelve. True, there are only 24 hours lost, but still, I am not the man that I was in the trade I follow—I have been a defaulter. Now, I like to think of this fact, that I, a poor sinner, over head and ears in debt to God's Justice, have not only paid Him through my great Surety, but I have paid Him to the minute! "In due time" my Surety came and discharged my debt for me! "In due time Christ died for the ungodly."

This verse also means that *Christ died in due time as to every Believer*. In God's Book of Remembrance there is no claim for late payment or delay against any believing sinner. There is no note, there, saying, "This sinner's Surety died late." No, but when Justice demanded the debt, Justice received full payment from those dear hands that were nailed to the Cross for me. "In due time Christ died for the ungodly." It was the time appointed in the eternal decree. It was the time arranged in the everlasting counsels of Grace—and Christ was there to the tick of the clock. He went up to the Cross on the day when it was agreed that He would finish transgression and make an end of sin—and bring in everlasting righteousness! He made Atonement—He died for the ungodly, "in due time."

Well, now, do you see what I am driving at? You need help, you say, you need deliverance. Very well. The greatest help that you ever needed was for someone to stand and be a Daysman for you—and to pay your debts to Infinite Justice and your Lord did it—and did it in the nick of time! "In due time." Will He not, therefore, deliver you in due time?

Besides, He has given you patience—"Tribulation works patience." He will help you before you have done with your patience. "I cannot hold out much longer," says one. You shall not have any need to hold out much longer! The Lord is on the way to deliver you and before your stock of Grace-worked patience shall quite have run out, He will come to you!

Read the next word—"And patience, experience." Your experience, as long as ever it will profit you, will be painful. But when it is no longer an experience that will do you good, it will not be painful. Remember how Paul writes in this same Epistle, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." And if He has called you, He will let you suffer as long as the experience of the suffering will *work for your good*, but no longer! In due time He will bring you out of that trying experience.

And He will bring you out before your hope gets to be ashamed. Read those words again—"And experience, hope: and hope makes not ashamed." The Lord will not let your trouble go so far that you will have to say, "I was deceived; I must give up being a Christian." God will not leave

you in the hour of need. He will help you in due time, before your expiring hope quite gives up the ghost. Be of good courage about that!

And He will come and help you while your love yet remains. Did I not hear you say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. He may flog me; but I am still His child, and I love Him, and I will kiss His hand, and His rod, too"? Well, well, if that is your language, He must come to help You in due time! He must deliver you before that love is driven out of your heart.

Yes, and let me say that while you are now without strength, He who died for you while you were without strength in the fullest sense, will come and help you. I thank God, tonight, as I have done many a time before, for being brought into great straits. Sometimes it has been very plain sailing for years. I remember once saying to myself, "Well, in former days, in the great needs for the College and the Orphanage, I have experienced wonderful miracles of deliverance. Then I seemed to step, like a giant, from the top of one mountain to another, right over the valleys! And now I go along the valleys gently and simply." I have half wished to see another lofty mountain and another yawning chasm open, that I might see what God would do—and *I have had them!* During the last two years, though I have said little about them, I have had many a crevasse open up before me. The ice has seemed to split asunder and I have looked down into the blue depths. But I have gone on just as steadily and God, in His mercy, has made the way just as easy as if my path had all been as smooth as a lawn after the garden roller had been over it! It is a glorious thing to have a big trouble, a great Atlantic billow that takes you off your feet and sweeps you right out to sea—and lets you sink down into the depths, into old ocean's lowest caverns, till you get to the foundations of the mountains—and there see God and then come up again to tell what a great God He is and how graciously He delivers His people! He will deliver you, He must deliver you! The argument of the text is this, "In due time Christ died for the ungodly," therefore, in due time He must help the godly.

Now I finish with two observations. First, the Gospel of sinners is the comfort of saints. If ever you saints need a bit of real comfort, you must just go to God as sinners. I do not think that there is anything better or wiser, whenever you really need to be solidly cheered, than to begin, again, where you began at first. When the devil says to me, "You are no saint," I say to him, "Nor are you, either." "Ah!" he says, "You are a deceiver," and I reply, "And so are you." "Ah!" he says, "But you are mistaken, your experience has been a delusion, you are no child of God." "What am I, then? Tell me, if you know so much about me." "You are a sinner," he says. "All right, Satan! I thank you for that word, for Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." So I begin again—and if you begin again like that, you will very often find that this is a short cut to comfort. If it comes to a question between the devil and you whether you are a saint or not, you will have a hard battle to fight, let me tell you.

One of you may say, "I know that I am a saint." Well, well, well, "let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips." "Oh, but I know," says one. Very well, go on knowing it, but if the devil once gets you in the sieve in which he had Peter, I question

whether you will know your head from your heels! Under a strong temptation you will very soon begin, almost, to doubt your own existence! Instead of arguing the question of your saintship with Satan, who is an old lawyer and knows many things that you do not know, you had better say, "Whether I am a saint or not, I am not going to dispute. But I am a *sinner* and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

Believer, when you were a boy, you used to drink at a certain old well. How cold the water was, how refreshing! When you feel very thirsty and the pumps are dry, go back to the old well, and get a draught of the Living Water there. I find that I have to do that every now and then. While I thank God for present enjoyments and sweet experiences of communion with Himself, I like to go back to the old well, and just drink as I drank at the first. I remember how I did drink the first time from that well, "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all you ends of the earth." I think I drank so much that time that I was like behemoth who trusts that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth! There was much in that text, but there was none too much for me, and I seemed to drink it all in. I recommend you to do the same—take a great draught of the Grace of God, tonight, thirsty child of God! Stoop down, with your mouth right over the well, for the Living Water comes springing straight up to your lips! And then drink as a cow drinks in the summertime, all that you can take in—and go on your way rejoicing!

The Gospel of sinners is the comfort of saints! That is one observation, and the other is this—the comfort of saints is the Gospel of sinners, for, if the Lord has done great things for any one of His people, what reason is there, poor Sinner, why He should not do the same for you? If the Lord Jesus Christ has loved John Smith, why should He not love Mary Smith. And if the Lord Jesus Christ has saved Tom Jones, why should He not save Harry Jones? I mean that since He does not love because of any worthiness in us, but simply because He wills to love us, as it is written, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," then you may come, you guilty ones, to this Sovereign Dispenser of undeserved mercy and touch the silver scepter of His Grace and be saved tonight!

May His sweet Spirit bring you! Do not let any of us raise a question about whether we are saints or sinners, but let us all come together—let us come en masse to the Cross! Let the whole of us now fly to Calvary and stand and look up to Him, the eternal Son of God, bleeding and dying on the Cross! And let us all believe, now, that He can, that He will, that He does save, no, that He *has saved our souls*. God grant us Grace to do it, for His dear name's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 5.

Verse 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 works patience; and patience experience, and experience hope: and hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit 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 Spirit, 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 perhaps 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 commends 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 of God, 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 wings—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. *Therefore, 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 offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has 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 offenses unto justification. For if by one man’s offense 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 offense 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 offense 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 of God 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, You shall not covet.”

20, 21. *But where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound: that as sin has reigned unto death, even so might Grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.* Blessed be His holy name! Amen.

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END OF VOLUME 39

**ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GRANT BROTHER EMMETT O’DONNELL
GRACE TO BE FAITHFUL TO THIS WORK.**

THE OLD, OLD STORY

NO. 446

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, MARCH 30, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“In due time Christ died for the ungodly.”
Romans 5:6.***

THERE is a doctor of divinity here tonight who listened to me some years ago. He has been back to his own dwelling place in America and he has come here again. I could not help fancying, as I saw his face just now, that he would think I was doting on the old subject and harping on the old strain. That I had not advanced a single inch upon any new domain of thought but was preaching the same old Gospel in the same old terms as ever. If he should think so he will be quite right.

I suppose I am something like Mr. Cecil when he was a boy. His father once told him to wait in a gateway till he came back and the father, being very busy, went about the city. And amidst his no numerous cares and engagements, he forgot the boy. Night came on and at last when the father reached home, there was great enquiry as to where Richard was. The father said, “Dear me, I left him early in the morning standing under such-and-such a gateway and I told him to stay there until I came for him. I should not wonder but what he is there now.”

So they went and there they found him. Such an example of simple childish faithfulness is no disgrace to emulate. I received some years ago orders from my Master to stand at the foot of the Cross until He came. He has not come yet but I mean to stand there till He does. If I should disobey His orders and leave those simple Truths of God which have been the means of the conversion of souls, I know not how I could expect His blessing. Here, then, I stand at the foot of the Cross and tell out the old, old story, stale though it may sound to itching ears, and worn threadbare as critics may deem it, it is of Christ I love to speak of—Christ who loved and lived, and died—the Substitute for sinners, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

It is somewhat singular but just as they say fish go bad at the head first, so modern Divines generally go bad first upon the head and main doctrine of the substitutionary work of Christ. Nearly all our modern errors, I might say *all* of them, begin with mistakes about Christ. Men do not like to be always preaching the same thing. There are Athenians in the pulpit as well as in the pew who spend their time in nothing but hearing

some new thing. They are not content to tell over and over again the simple message, "He that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has everlasting life." So they borrow novelties from literature and garnish the Word of God with the words which man's wisdom teaches.

The doctrine of Atonement they mystify. Reconciliation by the precious blood of Jesus ceases to be the cornerstone of their ministry. To shape the Gospel to the diseased wishes and tastes of men becomes far more deeply their purpose, than to remold the mind and renew the heart of men that they receive the Gospel as it is. There is no telling where they will go who once go back from following the Lord with a true and undivided heart. From deep to deep descending, the blackness of darkness will receive them unless Divine Grace prevents. Only this you may take for a certainty—

***"They cannot be right in the rest,
Unless they speak rightly of Him."***

If they are not sound about the purpose of the Cross, they are rotten everywhere. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." On this Rock there is security. We may be mistaken on any other points with more impunity than this. They who are built on the Rock, though they build with wood and hay and stubble, and to their sore confusion, for what they build shall be burned, they themselves shall be saved. Now that grand doctrine which we take to be the keystone of the evangelical system, the very cornerstone of the Gospel, that grand doctrine of the Atonement of Christ we would tell you again, and then, without attempting to prove it, for that we have done hundreds of times, we shall try to draw some lessons of instruction from that Truth of God which is surely believed among us.

Man having sinned, God's righteousness demanded that the penalty should be fulfilled. He had said, "The soul that sins shall die." And unless God can be false, the sinner must die. Moreover, God's holiness demanded it, for the penalty was based on justice. It was just that the sinner should die. God had not appended a more heavy penalty than He should have done. Punishment is the just result of offending. God, then, must either cease to be holy, or the sinner must be punished. Truth and holiness imperiously demanded that God should lift His hand and smite the man who had broken His Law and offended His majesty.

Christ Jesus, the second Adam, the federal Head of the chosen ones, interposed. He offered Himself to bear the penalty which they ought to bear, to fulfill and honor the Law which they had broken and dishonored. He offered to be their Surety, a Substitute, standing in their place and stead. Christ became the vicar of His people, vicariously suffering in their place, vicariously doing in their place that which they were not strong

enough to do by reason of the weakness of the flesh through the Fall. This which Christ proposed to do was accepted of God.

In due time Christ actually died and fulfilled what He promised to do. He took every sin of all His people and suffered every stroke of the rod on account of those sins. He had compounded into one awful draught the punishment of the sins of all the elect. He took the cup. He put it to His lips. He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, while He tasted the first sip, but He never resisted and drank on, on, on, till He had exhausted the very dregs. And turning the vessel upside down He said, "It is finished!" And so, at one tremendous draught of love the Lord God of Salvation had drained destruction dry. Not a dreg, not the slightest residue was left. He had suffered all that ought to have been suffered. He finished transgression and made an end of sin.

Moreover, He obeyed His Father's Law to the utmost extent of it. He fulfilled that will of which He had said of old—"Lo, I come to do Your will, O God: Your Law is My delight." And having offered both an atonement for sin and a complete fulfillment of the Law, He ascended up on High. He took His seat on the right hand of the Majesty in Heaven, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool, and interceding for those whom He bought with blood that they may be with Him where He is. The doctrine of the Atonement is very simple. It just consists in the substitution of Christ in the place of the sinner—Christ being treated as if *He* were the sinner, and then the transgressor being treated as if *he* were the Righteous One.

It is a change of persons—Christ becomes the sinner. He stands in the sinner's place. He was numbered with the transgressors. The sinner becomes righteous. He stands in Christ's place and is numbered with the righteous ones. Christ has no sin of His own but He takes human guilt and is punished for human folly. We have no righteousness of our own, but we take the Divine righteousness. We are rewarded for it and stand accepted before God as though that righteousness had been worked out by ourselves. "In due time Christ died for the ungodly," that He might take away their sins.

It is not my present object to prove this doctrine. As I said before, there is no need to be always arguing what we know to be true. Rather let us say a few earnest words by way of *commending this doctrine of the Atonement*. And afterwards I shall propound it *by way of application to those who as yet have not received Christ*.

I. First, then, BY WAY OF COMMENDATION. There are some things to be said for the Gospel which proclaim the Atonement as its fundamental principle. And the first thing to be said of it is, that in comparison with all modern schemes, *how simple it is!* Brethren, this is why our great gentle-

men do not like it—it is too plain. If you will go and purchase certain books which teach you how sermons ought to be made, you will find that the English of it is this—pick all the hard words you can out of all the books you read in the week and then pour them out on your people on Sunday—and there is a certain set of people who always applaud the man they cannot understand.

They are like the old woman who was asked when she came home from Church, “Did you understand the sermon?” “No.” She answered, “I would not have the presumption.” She thought it would be presumption to attempt to understand the minister. But the Word of God is understood with the *heart* and makes no strange demands on the intellect. Now, our first commendation on the doctrine of the Atonement is that it commends itself *to the understanding*. The wayfaring man, though his intellect is but one grade beyond an idiot, may get a hold on God’s Truth of substitution without any difficulty.

Oh, these modern theologians, they will do anything to spirit away the Cross! They hang over it the gaudy trappings of their elocution, or they introduce it with the dark mysterious incantations of their logic—and then the poor troubled heart looks up to see the Cross and sees nothing there but human wisdom. Now I say it again, there is not one of you here that cannot understand this Truth of God, that Christ died in the place of His people. If you perish, it will not be because the Gospel was beyond your comprehension. If you go down to Hell, it will not be because you were not able to understand how God can be just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly.

It is astonishing in this age how little is known of the simple truths of the Bible. It seems to be always admonishing us how simple we ought to be in setting them forth. I have heard that when Mr. Kilpin was once preaching a very good and earnest sermon, he used the Word, “Deity,” and a sailor sitting down below leaned forward and said, “Beg your pardon, Sir, but who’s he, pray? Do you mean God Almighty?” “Yes,” said Mr. Kilpin, “I do mean God and I ought not to have used a word which you could not understand.” “I thank you, Sir,” said the sailor, and looked as if he would devour the rest of the sermon in the interest which he felt in it even to the close.

Now that one unvarnished fact is but an index of that which prevails in every land. There must be simple preaching. A doctrine of Atonement that is not simple, a doctrine which comes from Germany, which needs a man to be a great scholar before he can comprehend it, himself, and to be a still greater orator before he can tell it to others—such a doctrine is manifestly not of God, because it is not suited to God’s creatures. It is fascinating to one in a thousand of them, but it is not suited to those poor of this

world who are rich in faith. Not suited to those babes to whom God has revealed the things of the kingdom while He has hidden from the wise and prudent.

Oh, you may always judge of a doctrine in this way. If it is not a simple doctrine, it does not come from God. If it puzzles you, if it is one which you cannot see through at once because of the mysterious language in which it is couched, you may begin to suspect that it is man's doctrine and not the Word of God.

Nor is this doctrine of the Atonement to be commended merely for its simplicity, but because while suiting the understanding it also *suits the conscience*. How it satisfies the conscience, no tongue can tell! When a man is awakened and his conscience stings him, when the Spirit of God has shown him his sin and his guilt, there is nothing but the blood of Christ that can ever give him peace. Peter might have stood up at the prow of the boat and have said to the winds, and to the waves, "Peace, be still," but they would have gone on roaring with unabated fury.

The Pope of Rome, who pretends to be Peter's successor, may stand up with his ceremonies and say to the troubled conscience, "Peace, be still," but it will not cease its terrible agitations. The unclean spirit that sets conscience in so much turmoil cries out, "Jesus I know, and His Cross I know, but who are you?" Yes and it will not be cast out. There is no chance, whatever, of our finding a pillow for a head which the Holy Spirit has made to ache, save in the Atonement and the finished work of Christ. When Mr. Robert Hall first went to Cambridge to preach, the Cambridge folks were nearly Unitarians.

So he preached upon the doctrine of the finished work of Christ and some of them came to him in the vestry and said, "Mr. Hall, this will never do." "Why not?" said he, "Why, your sermon was only fit for old women." "And why only fit for old women?" said Mr. Hall. "Because," they said, "they are tottering on the borders of the grave and they want comfort, and, therefore, it will suit them, but it will not do for us." "Very well," said Mr. Hall, "you have unconsciously paid me all the compliment that I can ask for. If this is good for old women on the borders of the grave, it must be good for you if you are in your right senses, for the borders of the grave is where we all stand."

Here, indeed, is a choice feature of the Atonement—it is comforting to us in the thought of death. When conscience is awakened to a sense of guilt, death is sure to cast his pale shadow on all our prospects and encircle all our steps with dark omens of the grave. Conscience is accompanied generally in its alarms with the thoughts of the near-approaching judgment. But the peace which the blood gives is conscience-proof, sickness-proof, death-proof, devil-proof, judgment-proof, and it will be eternity-

proof. We may well be alarmed at all the uprisings of occupation and all the remembrance of past defilement, but only let our eyes rest on Your dear Cross, O Jesus and our conscience has peace with God and we rest and are still.

Now we ask whether any of these modern systems of divinity can quiet a troubled conscience? We would like to give them some cases that we meet with sometimes—some despairing ones—and say, “Now, here, cast this devil out if you can try your hand at it,” and I think they would find that this kind goes not out except by the tears and groans and death of Jesus Christ the atoning Sacrifice.

A Gospel without an atonement may do very well for young ladies and gentlemen who do not know that they ever did anything wrong. It will just suit your lackadaisical people who have not got a heart for anybody to see—who have always been quite moral, upright and respectable—who would feel insulted if you told them they deserved to be sent to Hell. It would suit just fine all those who would not for a moment allow that they could be depraved or fallen creatures.

The Gospel, I say, of these moderns will suit these gentle folks very well. But let a man be really guilty and know it. Let him be really awake to his lost state, and I declare that none but Jesus—none but Jesus—nothing but the precious blood can give him peace and rest. These two things, then, commend us to the doctrine of the Atonement, because it suits the understanding of the most lowly, and will quiet the conscience of the most troubled.

It has, moreover, this peculiar excellency, that it *softens the heart*. There is a mysterious softening and melting power in the story of the sacrifice of Christ. I know a dear Christian woman who loved her little ones and sought their salvation. When she prayed for them, she thought it right to use the best means she could to arrest their attention and awaken their minds. I hope you all do likewise. The means, however, which she thought best calculated for her object was the terrors of the Lord. She used to read to her children chapter after chapter of *Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted*.

Oh, that book! How many dreams it gave her boy at night about the devouring flames and the everlasting burnings. But the boy's heart grew hardened, as if it were annealed rather than melted by the furnace of fear. The hammer welded the heart to sin but did not break it. But even then, when the lad's heart was hard, when he heard of Jesus' love to His people, though he feared he was not one of them, still it used to make him weep to think Jesus should love anybody after such a sort. Even now that he has come to manhood, Law and terrors make him dead and stolid—but Your blood, Jesus, Your agonies in Gethsemane and on the tree—he can-

not bear. They melt him—his soul flows through his eyes in tears. He weeps himself away from grateful love to You for what You have done.

Alas for those that deny the Atonement! They take the very sting out of Christ's sufferings. And then, in taking out the sting, they take out the point with which the sufferings of Christ pierce and probe and penetrate the heart. It is because Christ suffered for my sin, because He was condemned that I might be acquitted and not be damned as the result of my guilt—it is this that makes His sufferings such a cordial to my heart—

**“See on the bloody tree,
The illustrious Sufferer hangs,
The torments due to you,
He bore the dreadful pangs;
And cancelled there, the mighty sum,
Sins present, past and sins to come.”**

At this present hour there are congregations meeting in the theatres of London, and there are persons addressing them. I do not know what their subjects are, but I know what they ought to be. If they want to get at the intellects of those who live in the back slums, if they want to get at the consciences of those who have been thieves and drunkards, if they want to melt the hearts of those who have grown stubborn and callous through years of lust and iniquity, I know there is nothing will do it but the death on Calvary, the five wounds, the bleeding side, the vinegar, the nails and the spear. There is a melting power here which is not to be found in all the world besides.

I will detain you yet once more on this point. We commend the doctrine of the Atonement because, besides suiting the understanding, quieting the conscience, and melting the heart, we know there is a power in it to *affect the outward life*. No man can believe that Christ suffered for his sins and yet live in sin. No man can believe that his iniquities were the murderers of Christ and yet go and hug those murderers to his bosom. The sure and certain effect of a true faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ is the purging out of the old leaven, the dedication of the soul to Him who bought it with His blood and the vowing to have revenge against those sins which nailed Jesus to the tree.

The proof, after all, is in the trial. Go into any parish in England where there lives a philosophical Divine who has cut the Atonement out of his preaching and if you do not find more harlots and thieves and drunkards there than is usual, write me down mistaken. But go, on the other hand, into a parish where the Atonement is preached, and that with rigid integrity, and with loving earnestness—and if you do not find the ale-houses getting empty, and the shops shut on the Sunday, and the people walking in honesty and uprightness—then I have looked about the world in vain.

I knew a village once that was perhaps one of the worst villages in England for many things. Many an illicit still was yielding its noxious liquor to a manufacturer without payment of the duty to the Government and, in connection with that, all manner of riot and iniquity were rife. There went a lad into that village, and but a lad, and one who had no scholarship but was rough and sometimes vulgar. He began to preach there, and it pleased God to turn that village upside down, and in a short time the little thatched Chapel was crammed and the biggest vagabonds of the village were weeping floods of tears and those who had been the curse of the parish became its blessing.

And where there had been robberies and villainies of every kind all round the neighborhood, there were none, because the men who did the mischief were themselves in the House of God, rejoicing to hear of Jesus crucified. Mark me, I am not telling you an exaggerated story now, nor a thing that I do not know. Yet this one thing I remember to the praise of God's Grace, it pleased the Lord to work signs and wonders in our midst. He showed the power of Jesus' name and made us witnesses of that Gospel which can win some, draw reluctant hearts, and mold the life and conduct of men afresh.

Why, there are some Brethren here who go to the refuges and homes to talk to those poor fallen girls who have been reclaimed. I wonder what they would do if they had not the Gospel tale to carry with them to the abodes of wretchedness and shame. If they should take a leaf out of some divinity essays and should go and talk to them in high-flowing words and philosophies, what good would it be to them? Well, what is not good to them is not good to us. We want something we can grasp, something we can rely upon, something we can feel. Something that will mold our character and conversation and make us to be like Christ.

II. Secondly, one or two points BY WAY OF EXHORTATION. Christian man, Christian woman, you believe that your sins are forgiven and that Christ has made a full atonement for them. What shall we say to you? To you first we say, what a joyful Christian *you ought to be!* How you should live above the common trials and troubles of the world! Since sin is forgiven, what matter what happens to you now? Luther said, "Smite, Lord, smite, for my sin is forgiven. If You have but forgiven me, smite as hard as You will." As if he felt like a child who had done wrong and cared not how his father might whip him if he would but forgive him. So I think you can say, "Send sickness, poverty, losses, crosses, slander, what You will, You have forgiven me and my soul is glad and my spirit is rejoiced."

And then, Christian, if you are thus saved, and Christ really did take your sin, while you are glad, *be grateful and be loving.* Cling to that Cross which took your sin away. Serve Him who served you. "I beseech you

therefore, Brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Let not your zeal bubble over with some little bubble of a song. You may say—

***"I love my God with zeal so great,
That I could give Him all,"***

but sing it not in words unless you mean it. Oh, mean it! Is there nothing in your life that you do because you belong to Christ? Are you never anxious to show your love in some expressive tokens? Love the Brethren of Him who loved you. If there is a Mephibosheth anywhere who is lame or halt, help him for Jonathan's sake. If there is a poor tried Believer, try and weep with him, and bear his cross for the sake of Him who wept for you, and carried your sins.

And yet, again, Christian, if this is true that there is an atonement made for sin, *tell it, tell it, tell it*. "We cannot all preach," you say? No, but tell it, tell it. "I could not prepare a sermon." Tell it—tell the story—tell of the mystery and wonder of Christ's love. "But I should never get a congregation." Tell it in your house—tell it by the fireside. "But I have none but little children." Tell it to your children and let them know the sweet mystery of the Cross, and the blessed history of Him who lived and died for sinners. Tell it, for you know not into what ears you may speak. Tell it often, for thus you will have the better hope that you may turn sinners to Christ.

Lacking talent, lacking the graces of oratory, be glad that you lack these and glory in your infirmity that the power of Christ may rest upon you—but do tell it. Sometimes there are some of our young men who get to preaching who had better hold their tongues. But there are many others who have gifts and abilities which they might use for Christ, but who seem tongue-tied. I have often said that if you get a young man to join a rifle corps, he has got something to do and he puts his heart in it. But if you get the same young man to join a Church—well, his name is in the book and he has been baptized, and so on—but he thinks he has nothing more to do with it.

Why, Brethren, I do not like to have members of the Church who feel they can throw the responsibility on a few of us while they themselves sit still. That is not the way to win battles. If at Waterloo some nine out of ten of our soldiers had said, "Well, we need not fight. We will leave the fighting to the few. There they are. Let them go and do it all." Why, if they had said that, they would very soon have all been cut in pieces. They must every one of them take their turns, horse and foot and artillery—men who were light-armed and men of all kinds. They must each march to the fray. Yes,

and even the guards, if they are held back as a reserve to the last, yet they must be called for, "Up guards and at 'em."

And if there are any of you here that are old men and women and think you are like the guards and ought to be spared the heavy conflict, yet up and at them! For now the world needs you all, and since Christ has bought you with His blood, I beseech you be not content till you have fought for Him and have been victorious through His name. TELL IT! TELL IT! TELL IT—with voices of thunder tell it. Yes, with many voices mingling together as the sound of many waters—TELL IT! TELL IT till the dwellers in the remotest wilderness shall hear the sound!

Tell it till there shall be never a cot upon the mountain where it is not known, never a ship upon the sea where the story has not been told. Tell it till there is never a dark alley that has not been illuminated by its light, nor a loathsome den which has not been cleansed by its power. Tell out the story that Christ died for the ungodly!

With a few words of application to unbelievers I draw to a close. Unbeliever, if God cannot and will not forgive the sins of penitent men without Christ taking their punishment, rest assured He will surely bring you to judgment. If, when Christ, God's Son, had imputed sin laid on Him, God smote Him—how will He smite you who are His enemy and who have your own sins upon your head? God seemed at Calvary, as it were, to take an oath—Sinner, hear it!—He seemed, as it were, to take an oath and say, "By the blood of My Son I swear that sin must be punished," and if it is not punished in Christ for you, it will be punished in you for yourselves."

Is Christ yours, Sinner? Did He die for you? Do you trust Him? If you do, He died for you. Do you say, "No, I do not"? Then remember that if you live and die without faith in Christ, for every idle word and for every ill act that you have done, stroke for stroke, and blow for blow, vengeance must chastise you.

Again, to another class of you, this word. If God has in Christ made an atonement and opened a way of salvation, what must be your guilt who try to open another way—who say, "I will be good and virtuous. I will attend to ceremonies. I will save myself"? Fool! You have insulted God in His most tender point, for you have insulted His Son. You have said, "I can do it without that blood." You have, in fact, trampled on the blood of Christ and said, "I need it not." Oh, if the sinner who repents not is damned, with what accumulated terrors shall he be damned, who, in addition to his impenitence, heaps affronts upon the Person of Christ by going about to establish his own righteousness. Leave it—leave your rags, you will never make a garment of them! Leave that pilfered treasure of yours. It is a counterfeit. Forsake it. I counsel you to buy of Christ fine raiment, that you may be clothed, and fine gold that you may be rich.

And consider this, one and all of you, oh my Hearers! If Christ has made atonement for the ungodly, then let the question go around, let it go around the aisles and around the gallery and let it echo in every heart and let it be repeated by every lip—"Why not for ME?" and "Why not for ME?" Hope, Sinner, hope! He died for the ungodly. If it had said He died for the godly, there were no hope for you. If it had been written that He died to save the good, the excellent, and the perfect, then you have no chance. He died for the *ungodly*. You are such an one. What reason have you to conclude that He did not die for YOU?

Listen, People. This is what Christ says to you—"Believe and you shall be saved." That is, trust and you shall be saved. Trust your soul in the hands of Him who carried your load upon the Cross. Trust Him NOW. He died for you. Your faith is to us the evidence, and to you the proof, that Christ bought you with His blood. Delay not. You need not even stay to go home to offer a prayer. Trust Christ with your soul NOW. You have nothing else to trust to—hang on Him. You are going down. You are going down. The waves are gathering about you, and soon shall they swallow you up and we shall hear your gurgling as you sink. See, He stretches out His hand. "Sinner," He says, "I will bear you up. Though Hell's fiery waves should dash against you, I will bear you through them all, only trust Me."

What do you say, Sinner? Will you trust Him! Oh, my Soul, remember the moment when first I trusted in Him? There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repents, but I hardly think that is greater joy than the joy of the repenting sinner when he first finds Christ! So simple and so easy it seemed to me when I came to know it. I had only to look and live, only to trust and be saved. Year after year I had been running about here and there to try and *do* what was done beforehand, to try and get ready for that which did not want any readiness.

Oh, happy was that day when I ventured to step in by the open door of His mercy, to sit at the table of Divine Grace already spread and to eat and drink, asking no questions! Oh, Soul, do the same! Take courage. Trust Christ and if He casts you away when you have trusted Him—my soul for yours—as we meet at the bar of God, I will be pawn and pledge for you at the Last Great Day if such you need. But He cannot and He will not cast out any that come to Him by faith. May God now accept and bless us all, for Jesus' sake! Amen. Amen!

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LOVE'S COMMENDATION

NO. 104

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 23, 1856
 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

*“But God commended His love toward us, in that
 while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
 Romans 5:8*

I shall have nothing new to tell you. It will be as old as the everlasting hills and so simple that a child may understand it. Love's commendation. “God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” God's commendation of Himself and of His love is not in words, but in deeds. When the Almighty God would commend His love to poor man, it is not written, “God commended His love towards us in an eloquent oration.” It is not written that He commended His love by winning professions—but He commended His love toward us by an act, by a deed—a surprising deed, the unutterable Grace of which eternity, itself, shall scarcely discover. He “commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Let us learn, then, upon the threshold of our text, that if *we* would commend ourselves, it must be by *deeds* and not by words! Men may talk fairly and think that thus they shall win esteem. They may order their words aright and think that they shall command respect. But let them remember, it is not the wordy oratory of the tongue, but the more powerful eloquence of the hand which wins the affection of “the world's great heart.” If you would commend yourself to your fellows, go and *do*—not go and *say*. If you would win honor from the excellent, talk not, but *act*. And if before God you would show that your faith is sincere and your love to Him real—remember, it is no fawning words, uttered either in prayer or praise—but it is the pious *deed*, the holy *act*, which is the justification of your faith and the *proof* that it is the faith of God's Elect! Doing, not saying—acting, not talking—these are the things which commend a man—

***“No big words of ready talkers,
 No fine boastings will suffice!
 Broken hearts and humble walkers,
 These are dear in Jesus' eyes.”***

Let us imitate God, then, in this. If we would commend our religion to mankind, we cannot do it by mere formalities, but by gracious *acts* of integrity, charity and forgiveness—which are the proper discoveries of Divine Grace within. “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” “Let your

conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ." And so shall you honor Him and "adorn the Doctrine" which you profess.

But now for this mighty deed whereby God commended His love. We think that it is two-fold. We believe the Apostle has given us a double commendation of love. The first is, "*God commended His love toward us, in that Christ died for us.*" The second commendation arises from our condition, "*In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*"

I. The first commendation of love then, is this—that "CHRIST DIED FOR US" and as the whole text is double, so this sentence, also, contains a two-fold commendation. There is a commendation of love in the Person who died—Christ—and then in the act which He performed—"Christ *died* for us."

1. First, then, it is the highest commendation of love, *that it was CHRIST who died for us.* When sinful man erred from his Maker, it was necessary that God should punish his sin. He had sworn by Himself, "The soul that sins, it shall die." And God—with reverence to His all-holy name, be it spoken—could not swerve from what He had said. He had declared on Sinai that He would by no means clear the guilty but, inasmuch as He desired to pardon the offending, it was necessary that Someone else should bear the sufferings which the guilty ought to have endured, that so by the vicarious substitution of Another, God might be "just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly." Now, the question might have arisen, "Who is he that shall be the scapegoat for man's offense? Who is he that shall bear his transgressions and take away his sins?" If I might be allowed to picture in my imagination (and mark, it is nothing more than imagination), I could almost conceive a parliament in Heaven! The angels are assembled—the question is proposed to them—"Cherubim and Seraphim, cohorts of the Glorified, you spirits that like flames of fire, swift at My bidding, fly. You happy beings, whom I have created for My honor! Here is a question which I condescend to offer for your consideration—man has sinned—there is no way for his pardon but by someone suffering and paying blood for blood. Who shall it be?" I can conceive that there was silence throughout the august assembly. Gabriel spoke not—he would have stretched his wings and flapped the ether in a moment, if the deed had been possible—but he felt that he could never bear the guilt of a world upon his shoulders and, therefore, he sat still. And there the mightiest of the mighty, those who could shake a world if God should will it, sat still. They all felt powerless to accomplish Redemption. I do not conceive that one of them would have ventured to hope that God, Himself, would assume flesh and die! I do not think it could have entered even into angelic *thought* to conceive that the mighty Maker of the skies should bow His awful head and sink into a grave! I cannot imagine that the brightest and most seraphic of these glorified ones would, for an in-

stant, have suffered such a thought to abide with them! And when the Son of God, starting up from His Throne, spoke to them and said, "Principalities and powers! *I will become flesh! I will veil this Godhead of Mine in robes of mortal clay, I will die!*"—I think I see the angels, for once, astonished!

They had seen worlds created. They had beheld the earth, like a spark from the incandescent mass of unformed matter hammered from the anvil of Omnipotence and smitten off into space—and yet they had not wondered. But on this occasion, I conceive that they ceased not to marvel, "What? Will You die, O Word! Creator! Master! Infinite! Almighty! Will You become a Man and die?" "Yes," said the Savior, "I will." And are *you* not astonished, mortal men? Do you not wonder? What? Will *you* not marvel? The hosts of Heaven still are wondering! Though it is many an age since they heard it, they have not yet ceased to admire—and do not you *begin* to marvel yet? Shall the theme which stirs the marvel of the Seraph not move your hearts—that God, Himself, should become Man and then should die for you! "God commended His love toward us, in that *Christ* should die." Had it been an archangel who had died for us, it would have been a theme for gratitude. Had it been merely a good and holy man who had shed his blood, we might have kissed his feet and loved him forever. But seeing that He who groaned upon the Cross was none other than the Almighty God and that He who sweat in the Garden, while He was Man, was still none other than one Person of the all-glorious Trinity, it is, indeed, love's highest commendation that *Christ* should die! Roll that thought over in your mind. Ponder it in your meditations. Weigh it in your hearts. If you have right ideas of the Godhead, if you know what Christ is, if you can conceive Him who is the Everlasting God and yet the Man—if you can picture Him, the pure, holy, perfect Creature and yet the Everlasting Creator—if you can conceive of Him as the Man who was wounded and yet the God who was exalted forever—if you can picture Him as the Maker of all worlds, as the Lord of Providence by whom all things exist and consist—if you can conceive of Him now, as robed in splendor, surrounded with the choral symphonies of myriads of angels—then, perhaps, you may guess how deep was that stride of condescension when He stepped from Heaven to earth, from earth into the grave, from the grave, down, it is said, into the lowest "*sheol*," that He might make His condescension perfect and complete! "He has commended His love" to you, my Brothers and Sisters, in that it was Christ, the Son of God, who died for us!

2. The second part of the first commendation lies here, that Christ *died for us*. It was much love when Christ became Man for us, when He stripped Himself of the glories of His Godhead for awhile, to become an Infant of a span long, slumbering in the manger of Bethlehem. It was no

little condescension when He divested Himself of all His glories, hung His mantle on the sky, gave up His diadem and the pleasures of His Throne and stooped to become flesh! It was, moreover, no small love when He lived a holy and a suffering life for us. It was amazing love, when God, with feet of flesh, did tread the earth and teach His own creatures how to live, all the while bearing their scoffs and jests with cool unangered endurance. It was no little favor of Him that He should condescend to give us a perfect example by His spotless life. But the commendation of love lies here—not that Christ *lived* for us, but that Christ *died* for us! Come, dear Hearers, for a moment, weigh those words, “Christ *DIED* for us!” Oh, how we love those brave defenders of our nation who but lately died for us in a far-off land! Some of us showed our sympathy to their sons and daughters, their wives and children, by contributing to support them, when the fathers were laid low. We feel that the wounded soldier is a friend to us and that we are his debtors, forever! We may not love war—we may not, some of us—think it a Christian act to wield the sword, but, nevertheless, I am sure we love the man who sought to defend our country with their lives and who died in our cause. We would drop a tear over the silent graves of Balaclava, if we were there, now. And Beloved, if any of our friends should dare danger for our sakes and more especially, if it should ever come to pass that any one of them should be called to *die* for us, should we not, henceforth, love them? Do any of us know what is contained in that great word, “*die*”? Can we measure it? Can we tell its depths of suffering or its heights of agony? “Died for us!” Some of you have seen death. You know how great and dread is its power—you have seen the strong man bowing down, his knees quivering. You have beheld the eye strings break and seen the eyeballs glazed in death. You have marked the torture and the agonies which appall men in their dying hours. And you have said, “Ah, it is a solemn and an awful thing to die.” But, my Hearers, “Christ *died* for us.” All that death could mean, Christ endured! He yielded up the ghost, He resigned His breath, He became a lifeless corpse and His body was interred, even like the bodies of the rest that died. “Christ died for us.” Consider the circumstances which attended His death. It was no common death He died—it was a death of ignominy—for He was put to death by a legal slaughter! It was a death of unutterable pain, for He was *crucified*—and what more painful fate than to die nailed to a cross? It was a long protracted death, for He hung for hours, with only His hands and His feet pierced—parts which are far away from the seat of life, but in which are situated the most tender nerves, full of sensibility. He suffered a death which, for its circumstances, still remains unparalleled! It was no speedy blow which crushed the life out of the body and ended it—but it was a lingering, long and

doleful death, attended with no comforts and no sympathy but surrounded with scorn and contempt!

Picture Him! They have hurled Him on His back, they have driven nails through His hands and His feet—they have lifted Him up. Look! They have dashed the Cross into its place. It is fixed. And now behold Him! Mark His eyes, all full of tears. Behold His head, hanging on His breast. Ah, mark Him, while Suffering, with her black wings, fans His cheeks with flame! Behold Him, while He seems all silently to say, "I am poured out like water. All My bones are out of joint. I am brought into the dust of death." Hear Him, when He groans, "I thirst." Above all, listen to Him, while He cries, "Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabacthani?" My words cannot picture Him! My thoughts fail to express it! No painter ever accomplished it, nor shall any speaker be able to perform it! Yet I beseech you—regard the Royal Sufferer. See Him with the eyes of your faith, hanging on the bloody tree. Hear Him cry, before He dies, "It is finished!"—

***"See from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did ever such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"***

Oh, How I wish I could stir you up! If I would tell you some silly story of a love sick maid, you would weep. If I would turn novelist and give you some sad account of a fabled hero who had died in pain—if it were a fiction, I would have your hearts—but this is a dread and solemn REALITY and one with which you are intimately connected—for all this was done for as many of you as sincerely repent of your sins—

***"All you that pass by, to Jesus draw nigh—
To you is it nothing that Jesus should die?"***

Remember, if you are saved, He did it for you—for the blood which trickles from His hands, distils for *you!* That frame which writhes in torture, writhes for *you!* Those knees, so weak with pain, are weak for *you!* Those eyes, dripping with showers of tears, drop for *you!* Ah, think of Him, then, you who have faith in Him—look to Him! And as many of you who have not yet believed, I will pray for you, that you may now behold Him as the Expiation of your guilt—as the key which opens Heaven to all Believers!

II. Our second point is this—"God commended His love towards us," not only because Christ died for us, but that CHRIST DIED FOR US WHEN WE WERE YET SINNERS.

Let us, for a moment, consider what sort of sinners many of us have been, and then we shall see it was marvelous Grace that Christ should die for men—not as penitents—but as sinners! Consider how many of us have been *continual* sinners. We have not sinned once, nor twice, but ten thousand times! Our life, however upright and moral it has been, is stained by a succession of sins. If we have not revolted against God in

the outward acts which proclaim the profligate to be a great sinner, yet the thoughts of our heart and the words of our lips are swift witnesses against us that we have continually transgressed! And oh, my Brothers and Sisters, who is there among us who will not likewise confess to sins of act? Who among us has not broken the Sabbath? Who among us has not taken God's name in vain? Who of us shall dare to say that we have loved the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength? Have we ever, by any act whatever, showed that we have coveted our neighbor's goods? Verily, I know we have! We have broken His commands and it is well for us to join in that general confession—"We have done those things which we ought not to have done. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done and there is no health in us." Now, the sweet thought is that Christ died for us while He *knew* that we would be continual transgressors. Brothers and Sisters, He did not die for you as those who have committed but one fault, but as those who were emphatically "sinners"—sinners of years' standing—some of you sinners with gray heads—sinners who have persevered in a constant course of iniquity. As sinners, we are redeemed and by it, we become saints. Does not this commend Christ's love to us, that He should die for *sinners* who have dyed themselves with sin as with crimson and with scarlet, great and continual sinners?

Note again, He has died for us, although our sins were *aggravated*. Oh, there are some of us here who are great sinners—not so much in the acts we have performed—as in the aggravation of our guilt! I reckon that when I sin, I sin worse than many of you because I sin against better training than many of my hearers received in their youth. Many of you, when you sin, sin against faithful ministers and against the most earnest warnings. It has been your desire to sit under truthful pastors—you have often been told of your sins. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, when you sin, you do not sin so cheaply as others. When you sin against the convictions of your consciences, against the warnings of your friends, against the enlightenment of the times and against the solemn admonitions of your pastors, you sin more grossly than others do! The Hottentot sins not as the Briton does. He who has been brought up in this land may be openly more righteous, but he may be inwardly more wicked, for he sins against more knowledge! But even for such, Christ died—for men who have sinned against the wooings of His love, against the strivings of their conscience, against the invitations of His Word, against the warnings of His Providence—even for such, Christ died and, therein, He commended His love towards us, that He died for sinners! My Hearer, if you have so sinned, do not, therefore, despair—it may be He will yet make you rejoice in His Redemption!

Reflect again. When we were sinners, *we were sinners against the very Person who died for us*. " 'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis amazing," that the very Christ against whom we have sinned, died for us! If a man should be injured in the street—if a punishment should be demanded of the person who attacked him—it would be passing strange if the injured man should, for love's sake, bear the penalty that the other might go free! But 'twas even so with Christ. He had been injured, yet He suffers for the very injury that others did to Him! He dies for His enemies—dies for the men that hate and scorn Him! There is an old tradition that the very man who pierced Christ's side was converted—and I sometimes think that, perhaps in Heaven, we shall meet with those very men who drove the nails into His hands and pierced His side. Love is a mighty thing—it can forgive great transgressors. I know my Master said, "Begin at Jerusalem," and I think He said that because there lived the men who had crucified Him and He wanted them to be saved. My Hearer, have you ever blasphemed Christ? Have you ever mocked Him and scoffed at His people? Have you done all you could to emulate the example of those who spat in His holy face? Do you repent of it? Do you feel you need a Savior? Then I tell you, in Christ's name, He is your Savior! Yes, your Savior, though you have insulted Him—your Savior, though you have trampled on Him—your Savior, though you have spoken evil of His people, His Day, His Word and His Gospel!

Once more—let us remember that many of us, as sinners, have been persons who for a long time have heard this good news and yet *have despised it*. Perhaps there is nothing more terrible in the depravity of man than that he is able to forget the love of Christ. If we were not so sinful as we are, there is not one of us here, this morning, who would not weep at the thought of the Savior's love! And I believe there is not a solitary man, woman, or child here who would not say, "I love You, O my God! Because You have done so much for me." It is the highest proof of our depravity that we do not, at once, love the Christ who died for us! There is a story told of the Covenanters—of one named Patrick Welwood—whose house was surrounded at a time when a minister had, for security, been hidden there. Claverhouse's dragoons were at the door and the minister had fled. The master of the house was summoned and it was demanded of him, "Where is the minister?" "He is gone. I cannot tell where, for I know not." But they were not satisfied with that. They tortured him and since he could not tell them where he was (for in reality he did not know), they left him, after inflicting upon him the torture of the thumbscrew. And they took his sister, a young girl who was living in the house. I believe she did know where the minister was concealed, but on taking her, they asked her and she said, "No, I can die, myself, but I can never betray God's servant and never will, as He may help me." They

dragged her to the water's edge and making her kneel down, they determined to put her to death. But the captain said, "Not yet. We will try to frighten her." And sending a soldier to her, he knelt down and, applying a pistol to her ear, she was bid to betray the minister or die. The click of the pistol was heard in her ear, but the pistol was not loaded. She slightly shivered and the question was again asked of her. "Tell us now," they said, "where he is, or we will have your life." "Never, never," she said. A second time the endeavor was made. This time a couple of carbines were discharged, but into the air, in order to terrify her. At last they resolved upon really putting her to death, when Trail, the minister, who was hidden somewhere near, being aroused by the discharge of guns and seeing the poor girl about to die for him, sprang forward and cried, "Spare that maiden's blood and take mine. This poor innocent girl, what has she done?" The poor girl had truly died of fright, but the minister had come prepared to die, himself, to save her life. Oh, my Friends, I have sometimes thought that her heroic martyrdom was somewhat like the blessed Jesus! He comes to us and says, "Poor Sinner, will you be My friend?" We answer, "No." "Ah, I will make you so," He says, "I will die for you." And He goes to die on the Cross. Oh, I think I could spring forward and say, "No, Lord Jesus, no! You must not die for such a worm!" Surely such a Sacrifice is a price too large to pay for poor sinful worms! And yet, my Hearers, to return, again, to what I have uttered before—you will hear all this and nine out of ten will retire from this place and say—"It was an old, old story." And while you can drop a tear for anything else, you will not weep one tear for Jesus, nor sigh one sigh for Him! Nor will you afford Him even a faint emotion of love! I wish it were different! Would to God He would change your hearts, that so you might be brought to love Him!

Further, to illustrate my text, let me remark, again, that inasmuch as Christ died for sinners, it is a special commendation of His love for the following reasons—it is quite certain that God did not consider *man's merit* when Christ died. In fact, no merit could have deserved the death of Jesus! Though we had been holy as Adam, we could never have deserved a Sacrifice like that of Jesus for us. But inasmuch as it says, "He died for sinners," we are thereby taught that God considered our *sin* and *not* our righteousness! When Christ died, He died for men as vile, as wicked, as abominable—not as good and excellent—Christ did not shed His blood for us as saints—but as sinners! He considered us in our loathsomeness, in our low estate and misery—not in that high estate to which Divine Grace afterwards elevates us, but in all the decay into which we had fallen by our sins! There could have been no merit in us and, therefore, God commended His love by our ill-desert.

Again—it is quite certain, because Christ died for us as sinners, that God had *no interest* to serve by sending His Son to die. How could sinners serve Him? Oh, if God had pleased, He might have crushed this nest of rebels and have made another world—all holy! If God had chosen, the moment that man sinned, He might have said unto the world, “You shall be burned,” and like as a few years ago astronomers told us that they saw the light of a far-off world burning myriads of miles away, this world might have been consumed with burning heat and sin scorched out of its clay! But no—while God could have made another race of beings and could have either annihilated us or consigned us to eternal torment, He was pleased to veil Himself in flesh and die for us! Surely, then, it could not have been from any motive of Self-interest. God had nothing to get by man’s salvation. What are the attractions of human voices in Paradise? What are the feeble symphonies which mortal lips can sing on earth compared with the death of our Lord? He had angels enough! Do they not, day without night, circle His Throne rejoicing? Are not their golden harps sufficient? Is not the orchestra of Heaven large enough? Must our glorious Lord give up His blood to buy poor worms, that they may join their little notes with the great swell of a choral universe? Yes, He must, and inasmuch as we are sinners and could by no possibility repay Him for His kindness, “God commended His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

But there is another commendation of love. Christ died for us *un-asked*. Christ did not consider me as an awakened heir of Heaven but as a dead, corrupt, lost and ruined heir of Hell! If He had died for me as an awakened heir of Heaven, then I could have prayed for Him to die, for then I have power to pray and will to pray. But Christ died for me when I had no power nor will to lift my voice in prayer to Him! It was entirely unasked. Where did you ever hear that man was first in mercy? Did man ask God to redeem? No, rather, it is almost the other way—it is as if God did entreat man to be redeemed! Man never asked that he might be pardoned, but God pardons him and then turns round and cries, “Return unto Me, backsliding children of men, and I will have mercy upon you.” Sinners! If you should go down on your knees and were, for months, to cry for mercy, it would be great mercy if Mercy should look upon you! But without asking, when we are hardened and rebellious, when we will not turn to Christ—He still comes to die for us! Tell it in Heaven, tell it in the lower world—God’s amazing work surpasses thought—for Love, itself, did die for hatred—Holiness did crucify itself to save poor sinful men! Unasked for and unsought, like a fountain in the desert sparkling spontaneously with its native waters, Jesus Christ came to die for man—who would not seek His Grace. “God commended His love towards us.”

And now, my dear Hearers, I want to close up, if the Spirit of God will help me, by endeavoring to commend God's love to you, as much as ever I can and inviting as many of you as feel your need of a Savior to lay hold of Him and embrace Him, now, as your all-sufficient Sacrifice. Sinner! I can commend Christ to you for this reason—*I know that you need Him*. You may be ignorant of it, yourself, but you do need Him. You have a leprosy within your heart—you need a physician. You say, "I am rich." But Sinner, you are not—you are naked and poor and miserable. You say, "I shall stand before God, accepted at last"—but Sinner, without Christ you will not—for whoever believes not on Christ, "has not life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Hear that, my dear Hearers—"The wrath of God abides on him." Oh, that wrath of God! Sinner, you need Christ, even though you do not think so! Oh, that the Lord would impress this upon you! Again, a day is coming when *you will feel your need* of Christ if you do not, now. Within a few short years, perhaps months or days, you will lie upon the last bed that shall ever bear your weight. Soon you shall be stayed up by soft pillows. Your frame will be weak and your soul full of sorrow. You may live without Christ, now, but it will be hard work to *die* without Him! You may do without this bridge, here, but when you get to the river, you will think yourself a fool to have laughed at the only bridge which can carry you safely over! You may despise Christ, now, but what will you do in the swellings of Jordan? Can you face death and not be afraid? No, Man, you are frightened, now, if the cholera is in the city! Or if some little sickness is about you, you shake for fear! What will you do when you are in the jaws of Death—when his bony hand is squeezing you and when his dart is in your vitals? What will you do, then, without a Savior? Ah, you will want Him, then! And what will you do when you have passed that black stream, when you find yourself in the realm of spirits—in that Day of Judgment when the thunders shall be loosed and the wings of the lightning shall be unbound—when tempests shall herald with trumpet voice the arrival of the Great Assize? What will you do when you shall stand before His bar before Whom, in astonishment, the stars shall flee, the mountains quake and the sea be licked up with tongues of forked flame? What will you do, when from His Throne, He shall exclaim, "Come here, Sinner," and you shall stand there, alone, to be judged for every deed done in the body? You will turn your head and say, "Oh, for an advocate!" And He shall look on you and say, "I called and you refused, I stretched out My hands and no man regarded. I also will now laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear comes." Ah, what will you do, then, Sinner, when the Judgment Seat is set? Oh, there will be weeping—there will be weeping at the Judgment Seat of Christ! And what will you do in that day when He shall say, "Depart, you cursed"—and when the black angel, with a countenance more fierce than lightning and

with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders shall cry, "Depart!" and smite you down where those accursed spirits lie forever bound in fetters of iron, who, long ago, were cast into perdition? Don't tell me that I tell you terrible things. If it is terrible to speak of, how terrible it must be to bear! If you believe not what I say, I shall not wonder if you laugh at me. But as the most of you believe this, I claim your most solemn attention to this subject.

Sirs! Do you believe there is a Hell *and that you are going there?* And yet do you still march heedlessly on? Do you believe that beyond you, when the stream of life is ended, there is a black gulf of misery? And do you still sail downwards to it, still quaffing your glass of happiness, still merry all the live-long day? O stop, poor Sinner, stop! Stop! It may be the last moment you will ever have the opportunity to stop! Therefore stop, now, I beseech you! And if you know yourself to be lost and ruined—if the Holy Spirit has humbled you and made you feel your sin—let me tell you how you shall be saved. "He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is baptized, shall be saved. He that believes not," says the Scripture "shall be damned." Do you not like that message? Ought I to have said another word instead of that? Even if you wish it, I shall not—what God says, I will say—far be it from me to alter the messages from the Most High! I will, if He helps me, declare His Truth without altering. He says, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned." What is it to believe? To tell you as simply as possible—to believe is to give up trusting in yourself and to trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior. The slave said, "Massa, dis here is how I believe—when I see a promise, I do not stand on de promise, but I say, dat promise firm and strong, I fall flat on it, if de promise will not bear me, den it is de promise fault, but I fall flat on it." Now, that is faith! Christ says, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Faith is to say, "Well, then, sink or swim, that is my only hope! Lost or saved, that is my only refuge! I am resolved for this, my last defense—

***'If I perish there and die
At His Cross I still will lie!'***

"What?" asks one, "No good works?" Good works will come *afterwards*, but they do not go with it. You must come to Christ, not with your good works, but with your sins—and coming with your sins, He will take them away and give you good works afterwards! After you believe, there will be good works as the effect of your faith. But if you think faith will be the effect of good works, you are mistaken! It is, "believe and live." Cowper calls them the soul-quickenings words, "*believe and live.*" This is the sum and substance of the Gospel!

Now, do any of you say this is not the Gospel? I shall ask you, one day, what it is. Is not this the Doctrine Whitefield preached? Pray what

else did Luther thunder, when he shook the Vatican? What else was proclaimed by Augustine and Chrysostom but this one Doctrine of salvation in Christ, by faith alone? And what did Paul write? Turn to his Epistles. And what did our Savior, Himself, say when He left these words on record—"Go you and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"? And what did He command His disciples to teach them? To teach them this—the very words I have now repeated to you were his last commission—"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned."

But again, you say, "How can I believe that Christ died for me?" Why, thus—He *says* He died for *sinner*s—can you say you are a sinner? I do not mean with that fine complimentary phrase which many of you use, when you say, "Yes, *I am a sinner*," and if I sit down to ask you, "Did you break that Commandment?" "Oh no," you will say. "Did you commit that offense?" "Oh, no." You never did anything wrong—and yet you are sinners? Now that is the sort of sinners I do not think I shall preach to! The sort of sinners I would call to repentance are those whom Christ invited—those who mean what they say when they confess that they are sinners—those who know that they have been guilty, vile and lost. If you know your sinnership, then truly, Christ died for you! Remember that striking saying of Luther. Luther says Satan once came to him and said, "Martin Luther, you are lost, for you are a sinner." Said I to him, 'Satan, I thank you for saying I am a sinner, for inasmuch as you say I am a sinner, I answer you thus—Christ died for sinners. And if Martin Luther is a sinner, Christ died for him.'" Now, can you lay hold on that, my Hearer? It is not on *my* authority, but on *God's* authority. Go away and rejoice—for if you are the chief of sinners, you shall be saved, if you believe—

***"Jesus, Your blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed
With joy shall I lift up my head.
Bold shall I stand in that great day
For who to my charge shall lay,
While, thro' Your blood, absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame?"***

Sing that, poor Soul, and you have begun to sing the Song of Paradise! May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, apply these simple statements of Truth to the salvation of your souls. Amen. Amen.

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
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**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1898.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1883.**

***“Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”
Romans 5:10.***

THE first great message of mercy to a sinner is put into four short words in the eighth verse of this chapter—“Christ died for us.” A preacher can never be wrong in lifting up Christ Crucified! It is the glory of a congregation if it can be truly said, “Before your eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you.” Well did the Apostle make this his boast—“We preach Christ Crucified.” Still, we must always remember that there is a great deal about Christ besides His Crucifixion and, however glorious His death may be—and we are not disposed to rank it second to anything else—yet there is another glory, another form of His excellency which is seen, not in His death, but in His life! It is of this that the Apostle speaks here—“Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Before we come to the consideration of that subject, dear Friends, let us think of what the death of Christ has done for some of us. The former part of the verse from which our text is taken says, “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” What was that reconciliation? Of what did it consist? We will not talk so much doctrinally, as practically and experimentally. We were once enemies of God, but we are not enemies of God any longer. God was once angry with us, but God is not angry with us any more. If we have believed in Jesus Christ, a complete reconciliation has been effected between the offended God and the offending sinner. In this reconciliation, I see, first, that God, who is always Love, and has always loved His people, being just, was unable to deal with the guilty sinner except upon the footing of justice—and justice demanded that the sinning soul should die! But Christ has come that God, as the great moral Ruler, might be able, without violation of His holiness, to deal mercy with sinful men.

Let there be no mistake about the objective and purpose of Christ’s Sacrifice! John Kent’s hymn rightly says—

“’Twas not to make Jehovah’s love

***Towards the sinner flame,
That Jesus, from His Throne above,
A suffering Man became.
'Twas not the death which He endured,
Nor all the pangs He bore,
That God's eternal love procured,
For God was Love before."***

He was always Love to His people, but, until Christ came to earth and died, the Just for the unjust, that love could not freely flow. There was a dam that blocked up the stream. There was a great rock in the channel and the rivers of love could not flow. But by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, that impediment has been removed. God can now be “just and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus.” I have already said that in His heart of hearts, there was always love towards His people, but as the Judge upon the Judgment Seat, He could not display that love—He could only manifest His indignation against every soul of man that did evil.

Now, this most righteous wrath of God was removed by the death of Jesus Christ and could not have been removed by any other manner. The sword must find its victim and Christ bared His breast to let infinite Justice spend its full force on Him. The debt had to be paid and Jesus paid it to the last penny with His own life which He poured out upon the Cross. The cup of wrath must be drained—there was no putting it aside—so Jesus took it and, after saying, “O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Your will be done.” He put it to His lips and never took it away till He had drained it to its last drop. There was a necessity for Christ's death, “it behooved Christ to suffer,” and by His suffering He appeased the wrath of the great Judge of All, so that He could justly look upon guilty men with complacency. That wondrous change was worked by Christ's death and now the very justice of God demands our salvation. It is indeed marvelous that the righteousness of God, which was against us, should be made to be for us and that the Justice of God, which pronounced the sentence of death upon us, should be so transformed that Justice, itself, now decrees our eternal life! This is a wonderful part of the reconciliation.

But the Apostle speaks of our being reconciled—our being reconciled. Well, that comes about in this way. We felt in our conscience that we had sinned against God. I am not speaking of all here present, but I am speaking of all those upon whom the Spirit of God has worked salvation—our conscience felt a secret sting, as though a burning poison had entered into the veins of our spirit. I remember when the thought that I had offended God seemed to drink up my very life. Of course I did not love Him and I could not, for it is according to the nature of our sinful heart that if we do anyone an injury, we are sure to hate him. We do not always hate the man who injures us, but if we injure him, our hatred is almost certain to follow. And inasmuch as we had broken all God's Laws

and did not wish to admit it, we hated the Law itself. We kicked against it and tried to persuade ourselves that it was the root of the offense instead of our own willful hearts being the source of the evil. We knew God to be holy, but we did not love holiness—in fact, having no holiness of our own, we could not endure even to hear or read about it! We set up a counterfeit righteousness of our own and pretended that we were good, and all the while we were despising the true holiness and the perfect righteousness of God.

But, Beloved, when we saw Christ dying in our place, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God," then conscience said, "God is satisfied and so am I." When we saw that God's anger was removed because Christ had died, then our pettish, proud anger was removed, too, and we said, "Now are we reconciled to God by the death of His dear Son." Oh, with what swift feet we fled to the Mercy Seat! With what confidence, though with a holy trembling, we pleaded the merits of the dear Redeemer! And what joy and peace filled our mind! Then we no longer hated God, or hated holiness, or hated the Law of God, but we submitted ourselves unconditionally. We said, "The Law is holy and God is gracious—blessed be His glorious name." Thus, the death of Christ worked reconciliation, the anger of God was removed and so was the trouble of our conscience. Then were our hearts won! Shall I speak for all God's people here? I think I shall if I speak for myself and say—

***"Law and terrors do but harden
All the while they work alone,
But a sense of blood-bought pardon
Soon dissolves a heart of stone."***

Oh, how our hearts were dissolved when we found that Christ loved us and that He had given Himself for us! When we saw God to be reconciled, how we longed for Him! Our heart and our flesh cried out for God, for the living God, and we said, "When shall we come and appear before God?" And that longing is still upon us—we delight in fellowship with Him. We are longing to be like He and we are expecting to be with Him where He is! And this is all the Heaven that we desire. Oh, blessed be God, it is a bleeding Christ who has reconciled us even on earth! It is a bleeding Christ who has put out the fires of enmity! It is a bleeding Christ who has slain forever the warfare in our spirit against God. Now are we reconciled unto God by the death of His Son.

Do not let me go a step further, dear Friends, until you can all get as far as this. If there is any man here who is not reconciled to God, let him remember what a terrible state he is in. He is God's enemy! How would any one of you like to have that title branded on your brow tonight, "God's enemy"? Remember that you will never be reconciled to God except through the bleeding Savior, so seek Him now! Before even a word is said about the ever-living Christ, come and put your finger into the print of the nails of the dead Christ! Come and wash in the fountain which He

has filled from His own veins! Come and accept the great atoning Sacrifice now! God help you, by His Divine Spirit, to do so, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake!

This brings us to the special subject mentioned in our text. "Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." The Apostle Paul here bids us remember that Christ is still alive and that although we are reconciled to God, we still need to be kept and preserved, or, as he calls it, "saved." And he tells us that as Christ's death has been effectual to reconcile us, we may be quite sure that His life will be effectual to save us. No, he says, "Much more." If the death of Christ has reconciled us, "much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

I want you, dear Friends, to do three things as you think of our text. First, consider *what the life of Christ is to us*. Secondly, consider *why the words, "much more," may be applied to it*. And, thirdly, consider *how we can use this life*.

I. First, then, briefly consider WHAT THE LIFE OF CHRIST IS TO US. If a man were to show me a picture of Christ on the Cross, I would say to him, "What is that?" If he were to answer, "A picture of my Lord," I would reply, "It is not a picture of *my* Savior as He now is. It may be a representation of Him as He once *was*, but not as He is now, enthroned in Glory." If a person were to carry about in his pocket the likeness of his mother taken after death, and were to draw it out, and say, "That is my mother," I would say, "I would prefer to remember her as she was at her best, not as she was in the agonies of death, or after death." So, I pray you, do not look upon any representation of Christ upon the Cross as the main representation of our Lord Jesus! He was dead but for a very little while. He was on the Cross only for a few hours. Our Savior lives, never more to die! The Christ of the Church of Rome, as I have often told you, is a dead Christ on the Cross, or else a baby Christ in Mary's arms—but the Christ of the Church of God is a living Christ! We say of the grave, as the angel said to the women, "He is not here: for He is risen, as He said." We say of the Cross, "He is not here. He has put an end to death in making an end of sin by His own death." The main thought concerning Christ, to those of us who really know Him, should be that He is the *living* Christ—

**"He lives, the great Redeemer lives,
What joy the blest assurance gives!"**

What has Christ's risen life to do with us? Well, first, *Christ's resurrection from the dead is to us who believe in Him the pledge that He has saved us*. When our Lord Jesus Christ died, He was, as it were, put in prison as a hostage for His people. And He was kept there till Divine Omniscience had searched His Sacrifice and searched His obedience to see whether they were complete. And when it was certified that Christ had finished all the work which His Father had given Him to do, then the sheriff's officer of Heaven, "the angel of the Lord," was sent down to roll away the stone and bid the Captive come out. And when Jesus Christ

came out of the grave, all His people came out of prison with their great Representative! In His own release from the tomb there was a token given to Him from God that their sins were forgiven and that His righteousness was accepted on their behalf. “He died for our sins,” says the Apostle, but He also “rose again for our justification.” Therefore, wrap not your hearts in the grave clothes which He left behind, but clothe them in the golden apparel *wherewith the rising Christ girded Himself*, for you are justified because He has risen!

Believing in the resurrection of Christ, we view Him as living and continuing to live—“Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him.” What has that to do with us? Why, just what our Lord said to His disciples—“Because I live, you shall live also.” Beloved, *because Christ has risen from the dead, so all His people shall rise*. And because, having once risen, Christ dies no more, so His rising saints shall be perfectly safe through all the future—*they shall live forever because they are partakers of His eternal life*. Is not that a subject for great rejoicing? I live because He died, for that death redeemed me from death. But yet more, I live because He lives. “For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in Glory.”

Now follow with me this living Christ. We have seen that He is risen and living, what comes next? A few days after this living Christ rose from the grave, a little throng gathered about Him on “the mount called Olivet” and, to their surprise, He began to ascend. Scattering benedictions with both His hands, He confirmed to ascend till, at last, “a cloud received Him out of their sight.” What has that ascension to do with us? Why, just this. He said to His disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you.” *He has gone up into Glory, as our Representative*, to take possession of eternal joy for us. He has gone within the veil that He may represent us before His Father’s face, that, by-and-by, we may join Him and be with Him where He is, to go no more out forever! Therefore, Beloved, let us rejoice. As the Lord our Savior has ascended into Heaven, so shall we, in His own good time. I always admire that line of Dr. Watts, where he says that our Lord, in His ascension to Heaven, has “taught our feet the way”—

**“Up to our God our feet shall fly,
On the great rising day.”**

Earth cannot permanently hold us down now Christ has gone up into His Glory! The living Christ is a greater attraction than any other force. We who believe are one with Him and, as He has ascended, we also shall rise to Him and be forever with Him!

After He had ascended, He took His seat at the right hand of God, even the Father, clothed with honor, majesty, power, dominion and might. Listen, Brothers and Sisters! What has this fact to do with us? Why, just this—*you who believe cannot perish, for Christ lives! You must conquer, for Jesus reigns!* All power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth and,

“He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He *always* lives to make intercession for them.” A reigning Christ, an enthroned Christ—this is the Christ to depend upon! I can risk my whole soul upon His blood and know that there is no risk in the matter—I feel a deep and growing confidence in the life that He now lives upon the Throne of God.

But what else? Well, our glorified Redeemer spends much of His time in intercession. Up there at the right hand of God, He continues to plead for His people. He can truly say in the fullest meaning of the words, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof goes forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burns.” Continually does He present the rich incense of His merit before the eternal Throne of God. And here is something more for us, for *if Jesus pleads for us, we are forever safe*. If He is pleading before the Throne, we may come to it with holy confidence. If Christ is there, the way is clear for you and for me to approach! We have only to get behind Him and to look through His wounds at God, as God will look through the wounds of Christ at us—and all will be well! Oh, what do we not owe to the living Christ! My theme expands as I try to handle it. How my heart rejoices in it! Do you not know, Beloved, how every part of that risen life of Jesus—His Second Coming, His final conquest of Satan and of the world, His eternal Glory—all has to do with *us*, for we are sharers in all that Christ has! We are joint-heirs with Him of all His glories and His triumphs!

This, then, is just a brief summary of what the life of Christ has to do with us.

II. Now, secondly, WHY DOES THE APOSTLE PUT A, “MUCH MORE,” IN HERE? “Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

I think it is *because we are so apt to put a, “much less,” to it*. It is not often that we preach and talk as we ought about this living Savior of ours. Brothers and Sisters, the great Testator is dead. That makes His last will and testament valid. Listen once more—He who made the will is alive, again, so He is His own Executor to carry out His own will! Is not that a blessing for you and for me? He made the will valid by His death, but, by rising again, He has come to see that every jot and tittle of it shall be carried out! We have not to depend upon somebody else executing our dying Savior’s will. He has risen from the dead, clothed with all power and might, to accomplish that upon which He has set His heart!

Paul says, “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.” How can it be much more? I answer, first, *because when our Savior reconciled us by His death, it was the time of His weakness*. Look, He is nailed to the Cross, the fever burns Him up, He cries, “I thirst.” He says, “I am a worm, and no man.” Weakness has come upon Him to the

uttermost. He closes His eyes in the last dread sleep of death. They take down His poor body and wrap it in white linen, with sweet spices, and put it away in Joseph's tomb. There could not be greater weakness, could there, than in the Crucified Christ? Yet, even then, He reconciled us! But now He is clothed with power! He is Head over all things, Lord of angels, King of kings! All Heaven resounds with His praises. Do you not see the drift of my argument? If, when He was in His uttermost weakness, He redeemed us by His death, "much more," now that He is in all His power and Glory, He must be able to save His people by His life!

Look at this expression again. *When our Lord died, He was in the servant's place.* He had, for our sake, laid aside His Glory. "He made Himself of no reputation." He emptied Himself. He had become like ourselves, feeble and weak. But, beside that, He was bound to do the Father's will and to suffer it even to the last extremity! As the Mediator between God and man, He had made Himself inferior to God. He had taken a subordinate place so that He could truly say, "My Father is greater than I." But remember, Brothers and Sisters—

***"The head that once was crowed with thorns,
Is crowned with glory now!
A royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor's brow!
The highest place that Heaven affords
Is His, is His by right,
The King of kings and Lord of lords,
And Heaven's eternal light."***

Now He wears again the Glory which He had with His Father before the earth was. Do you not see, then, that it is, "much more," that He can do for His people under such circumstances? If, when He took an inferior place and condescended for our sake to be a servant, so that—

***"With cries and tears He offered up
His humble suit below"—***

if then He reconciled us—"much more" can He now save us when He has taken to Himself His great power and with authority pleads before His Father's face, "I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold my Glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me before the foundation of the world." If I can trust a dying Savior with my soul and feel perfectly safe in doing so, how easy it is to trust a living Savior and to roll myself upon His almighty love and feel eternally secure!

Furthermore, dear Brothers and Sisters, when our Lord took upon Himself the work of saving us, *He did, in a certain sense, come under the displeasure of God.* Not that He ever could be really displeasing to God, for in Him was no sin, and the Father never had a greater delight in Christ than when He hid His face from Him. Still, according to the Word of God, Jehovah bruised Him—Jehovah hid His face from Him till Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He came under the

curse, for, "cursed is every one that hangs on a tree." For your sakes and mine, He bore the scourging of Infinite Justice and the frown of the offended Majesty of Heaven! This was diving very low and if, even then, He was able to reconcile us to God, how, "much more," must He be able to save us now that the Father's well-beloved Son has come Home, again, and lives in the eternal sunlight of His dear Father's smile? "Much more" now that God delights in Him, all Heaven is lit up with the gleaming of the Father's joy, every angel bows before Him and, night and day, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" rises in perpetual waves of praise up to the Throne of Glory where He is adored and worshipped!

Yet once again, *when the Savior died, there was a certain aspect of defeat about His death.* He stood alone, that dreadful day, in deadly conflict with the powers of darkness. All the battalions of Hell were mustered and they made one tremendous attack upon the Prince of Life and Glory. Single-handed He fought them all and His own right hand and His holy arm gained Him the victory! But, for a while, it looked like defeat. He closed His eyes in death, saying, "It is finished," and He gave up the ghost. Those nail-prints, that gory side and that pallid Countenance looked as if Death had won the victory, though it was not really so. Yet, Beloved, He reconciled us even then! Oh, could we see Him now! I suppose we could not—our eyes are not yet formed for that Beatific Vision. But what a sight it would be if we could see Him with His eyes like a flame of fire and His feet like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace! One said, "You cannot see Christ's face and live," and another answered, "Well, be it so. Then let me see His face and die." And I have often felt that I could say the same and I have sung, with good Dr. Watts—

***"Oh, for a sight, a pleasing sight,
Of our Almighty Father's Throne!
There sits our Savior crowned with light,
Clothed in a body like our own.
Adoring saints around Him stand,
And thrones and powers before Him fall!
The God shines gracious through the Man,
And sheds sweet glories on them all.
Oh, what amazing joys they feel
While with their golden harps they sing,
And sit on every heavenly hill,
And spread the triumphs of their King!
When shall the day, dear Lord, appear,
That I shall mount to dwell above,
And stand and bow among them there,
And view Your face, and sing, and love?"***

Well now, if, when He lay there, all blood-bespattered and dead, defeated as it seemed, He reconciled us to God, my Brothers and Sisters, what can He *not* do, now that He is in all the splendor of His majesty, the delight of Heaven and of all holy beings? He must be able to save us! Well may we entrust our souls to Him and say, with the Apostle, "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."

III. So now I close by asking you to CONSIDER HOW WE CAN USE THIS LIFE OF CHRIST.

If Christ is still alive and if there is, in a certain sense, "much more" power to save in His life than there was of power to reconcile in His death, then, first, *all fear of our being overcome ought to vanish*. He is victorious! Therefore we shall be victorious! Christ was assaulted by all the powers of death and Hell, and yet He conquered and He lives. We, too, shall conquer, for He is in us, He is with us, He is over us—and we shall live though we die—and we shall win though we are apparently overcome!

How shall we use this life of Christ? Why, next, *let us use it in prayer*. When you feel that you cannot pray—and there are such times with all of us—then say, "He can pray, for He lives to make intercession for us."—

***"Give Him, my Soul, your cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's Grace."***

When it goes hard with you on your knees and you seem as if you could not prevail, then remember that Jesus is pleading, and He must prevail! Put your case into His hands and He will present His mighty pleas on your behalf—and then you cannot be baffled. Is not that a sweet thought?

Another use to make of Christ's life is this. *Are you lonely?* In this modern Babylon of London, there are many persons who are quite alone, and there is no solitude so terrible as that which can be found in a great city. Perhaps you live in a street where there are hundreds of Christians, but you do not know one of them. I will tell you what to do—*Jesus lives, get away to Him, for there is no company like His*. If He comes into that little room of yours, it will be like a temple! Solomon's Temple, in all its glory, was never so bright as that upper room of yours will be when Christ comes there! I know how you have to stitch away all day long to earn a scanty living. I know, too, how sometimes you cannot sleep at night because of the severe pain you have to suffer. But if your Lord is there, it shall be sweet work, and sweet suffering, too, with that best of workers and sufferers to sit at your side! Jesus lives! Jesus lives! You have not to go to Calvary to think about His Cross. You have not to go to the tomb and weep because He is dead. He lives and He is with His people always, even unto the end of the world. Therefore, in your prayers, and in your solitude, comfort yourselves.

I suppose, too, that many of you are *sorely tempted*. Is there a Christian man or woman among us who is not tempted by the devil? Well, Jesus lives, and He was tempted in all points like as we are, though without sin! He is able to sympathize with you, for He, Himself, was compassed with infirmity. Get to your living High Priest! Tell Him what the devil is trying to do to you. It is a good thing to never dispute with the

devil. I have heard that if a man brings a lawsuit against you, you had better never say anything to him, but transfer the whole affair to your lawyer. And if the man writes to you, say, "I have nothing to do with the matter. You must apply to my legal adviser, he will attend to it for me." "He who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client," says one of our proverbs. So, whenever the devil comes to you, remember that he knows a great deal more than you do, and if you try to answer him, he will soon trip you up. You had better say to him, "I will have nothing to do with you, Satan. I refer you to my Solicitor, my Advocate." Then the devil will ask His name, and when you give him the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he will drop that suit, for he has suffered severe defeat many a time from that same Jesus Christ, ages and ages ago! He remembers the wilderness and how the Master soon sent him about his business. So, refer him to Christ. Do not be your own champion—let Christ be Champion for you and all will be well!

In other words, dear Brothers and Sisters, since Christ lives, let us live with Him, let us make the Lord Jesus Christ our daily Companion. I know that there are some Christians who cannot understand this advice, or cannot believe that they may put it into practice. But you will never know the very juice and marrow of the Gospel until you do understand it and get to feel that Christ is not a mere historical Person who was upon the earth hundreds of years ago, but a living, personal Christ who is, even now, accessible, who can be spoken to and who can speak to us in reply—and with whom we may live even now! Oh, if you can get into personal contact with Jesus Christ, then you have learned how to live! Then is the dying Savior inexpressibly dear to you and then, also, the living Christ is, if possible, even more dear as you live through Him—with Him—for Him—and He lives in you!

So may God make it to be, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 5.

Verse 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 forever, 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—it makes the black, white, and the dark, bright.

3. *Knowing that tribulation works 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 works patience."

4, 5. *And patience, experience, and experience, hope: and hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit 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 everyday 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, perhaps 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, "perhaps," even about that.

8. *But God commends 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 full 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. Therefore, 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 who was to come. But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one, many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has 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 offenses unto justification. For if by one man’s offense 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 offense 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 offense might abound. But where sin abounded Grace did much more abound: that as sin has reigned unto death, even so might Grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—317, 337, 329.

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

JOY IN A RECONCILED GOD

NO. 1045

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 7, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
by whom we have now received the atonement.”
Romans 5:11.***

OUR text begins with these words, “And not only so.” It is the second time in which they occur in the chapter—I might almost have said the third—for a similar expression is used in another verse. The Apostle had been mentioning very great and amazing privileges. He had gone from great benefits to yet greater—he had advanced, I might say, from silver to gold, and from gold to the priceless crystal—and when he had reached the highest point that we could have thought to be conceivable, he adds, “And not only so.” There is always in Christian privilege a beyond. The ancient mariners spoke of the pillars of Hercules and the Ultima Thule, and they supposed that when once their sails had whitened the sea in that direction they had come to the end of the universe and could go no further. But, more venturous ships forced their way to a new world and proved that the former boundaries were imaginary.

Even so we may have concluded in the early days of our Christian experience that we never could be happier, that we never could enjoy greater privileges, that there could not be greater treasures than we had discovered! But even at the present time we have pushed far beyond our young attainments and are preparing for yet more far-reaching endeavors. We have not yet attained. Far be it from us to imagine that we are, or have all that the Lord intends. Let us not sit down contented with the notion that the Gospel contains no more, for rest assured, to him who is able to follow after it there are whole worlds of privileges yet to be discovered! We are only at the foot of the mountain as of yet. We may take for our motto the words, “Higher, higher, higher,” and may soar aloft again and again on eagles’ wings, for Heaven is higher than our loftiest flight.

At the end of all we have known and experienced there may be written, “And not only so.” A nobler future allures us—a higher line of spiritual things invites us! Let us, by faith and patience, press forward to it. The borders of Immanuel’s land have yielded us choice fruit, but the inner valleys are rich with Eshcol clusters and the brooks in the heart of the country overflow with milk and honey. The present passage indicates a high attainment in *spiritual* life, when the soul learns not only to rejoice in salvation—which is an early experience, or to rejoice in tribulation—which is a far riper fruit, but advances even beyond that and learns to make her joy, her glory, and her boast in God, in God alone. “And not only so, but

we also joy in God.” There is the point of elevated experience of which the Apostle speaks with such confident familiarity.

It certainly touches the confines of Heaven, if it is not altogether Heaven! This is the joy of angels and of spirits purified from all stain—they joy in God! Yet this is an attainment possible to us *here*. I might confine my thoughts to that subject, but it might be for profit if I use the text in another way—embracing that thought and making it the main topic of discourse—but taking a somewhat wider range. My text seems to me to describe the progress of a soul towards God. There is the first step visible in it, though somewhat in shadows and rather implied than expressed. The second step is very clear—it is “receiving the atonement,” or more correctly “the reconciliation.” The third step shines in a yet brighter light—having received the reconciliation, “we joy in God.” And so we complete our fellowship with Him and ascend to an elevation which, if it is not in Heaven, lies on the confines of it.

I. Our text shadows out, by implication at any rate, THE FIRST STEP OF A SOUL IN COMING TO GOD. It lies *here*. We begin to be conscious that God is angry with us. The text declares that we have received the reconciliation. There was, therefore, a time when we had *not* received it, and before we could receive it we were made sensible that we *needed* it. And before we could be conscious of that need we were led to see that from necessity of His Nature, God must be angry with such sinful creatures as we were. It is the dawn of Divine Grace in the soul when the heart perceives that there is a holy God and that such a God cannot be on terms of amity with an unholy thing like itself.

God is not angry with men arbitrarily because He chooses to take a dislike to them. Oh, no! God is *necessarily* angry with evil because He is holy, and pure, and good. A being who has no anger against evil has no love towards goodness. This is one mark of righteousness—that it of necessity takes fire and burns with indignation against unrighteousness. Now, I may preach this Truth of God to this present congregation and many, when they hear my words, will carelessly enquire, “Well, and what concern is that of ours? What does it matter?” But, if God’s Grace has begun a work in any heart, *that* soul will say, “Alas, alas, how true it is! How could the great Lawgiver in the heavens suffer me to break His Laws with impunity? How could He be God and yet smile on sin? How could He be worthy of the seraphic song, ‘Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth,’ and yet look with complacency upon one so unholy, so depraved, so unrighteous as I am by nature?”

The awakened soul perceives that unless God could cease to be God, He could not look with complacency upon sin, nor upon the sinner, either, so long as sin lies upon him. This is a discovery which is very painful but very simple. One would think that every man ought to see this fact—but no man does see it till the Spirit of God convinces him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment—and even *then* the natural heart endeavors to shut its eyes to it. That God is angry with us for sin is so unpleasant a thought that the convinced sinner would, if he could, escape

from it. He would willingly take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea that he might escape from his dread of Divine wrath for sin—but there is no land of peace for such a soul.

A guilty conscience will follow a man like his shadow. It will dog his footsteps, it will embitter his food. It will disturb his sleep, it will molest his waking hours. Neither will he be content till by some better method than forgetting it, he shall have escaped from its force. The avenger of blood never ceases to pursue the manslayer till he has gained the city of refuge. That God is justly and of necessity angry with him as a sinner is a thought which haunts every convinced person. If I believed that God were angry with me simply out of arbitrary whim, and that He might not be angry with me if He chose, my heart would harden itself like steel in enmity against Him! But, when it comes home to me that He is rightly angry with me—that if I were God I should be angry with such a one as I am, that if I could be perfectly holy as God is I should be equally indignant as God is with sin—then my soul feels the sting of wrath! Its justice cuts my conscience to the quick and makes my heart bleed. It is a blessed thing when the heart is thus aroused from its fatal slumber—for then there is hope that it will seek out the divinely appointed way of escape from sin!

A second degree of this same step is a consciousness that we also are, ourselves, at enmity with God. We will not believe that our heart is opposed to God though the preacher often warns us that it is so, and though the Word of God teaches the same. We will not be brought to admit that our heart is at war with the Lord. “Why,” says one, “I pay respect to God and go to a place of worship. Therefore I am not at enmity with Him.” Only when the Spirit of God comes do we discover that there is in our heart, latent to a great extent, but also very readily developed, an enmity against the living God. Then a man starts, and is astonished at himself. He asks, “Why is it that thoughts of God are unpleasant to me? Why is His Day so long, His worship so wearisome, and His Book so dull to me? It must be because I do not love the Lord.”

In very deed, if a proclamation were made that God had ceased to be, or was no longer holy and just, there are many who would count it the best of news. Alas, man would gladly make an end of his Maker! The awakened heart enquires, “Is it really so that I am a deicide, and would, if I could, blot God out of existence and have no God because then I should be at peace? Is it, indeed, so?” When the Spirit of God makes the man confess that it is so, then he is amazed, indeed, for he did not know, before, how far he had fallen. Now I am certain that if I could assure you upon solid grounds that there was no God, and consequently no need of repentance and no fear of punishment—and consequently no need of pardon through the blood of Christ—it would make many of my hearers feel much relief and give them great ease of mind!

Even very respectable and moral people would say, “Now we have got out of that difficulty about the new birth, Atonement, Heaven and Hell in a very short and easy manner, and upon the whole we are glad about it.”

But, to some of us, such information would be the most awful tidings possible, for the very fact that there is a God who is a righteous Governor and that there is a way of righteous pardon through the precious blood is our joy and our gladness now that we are reconciled to God! While you are not reconciled there is an enmity within you which the deceitfulness of your heart will not let you see—but when you are brought to see it and to sorrow for it—it will be one of the steps by which God will lead you to Himself.

We need you, dear unconverted Hearers, to see clearly that there is a quarrel between God and you! On God's side there is a righteous disagreement with you because He could not agree with you and be holy. And, on your side an unrighteous and wicked opposition to Him because His thoughts and ways—God's Laws—are too pure, too just, and too good for you. A further portion of this same step, (and I pray every hearer who is seeking God to see whether he knows anything about it), is the perception that, in order to perfect reconciliation with God there must be something done God-ward and there must be something done man-ward. That is to say, something offered to God by which the insult and injury done to His most holy and righteous Law shall be recompensed. And, next, a thorough change in us before we can walk with God in perfect communion.

If God were to forgive sins outright and make no more ado—and if He were to receive us into Heaven, itself—yet, as long as our nature is what it is, we should carry a Hell within our own souls, and Heaven would be to us misery emphasized. While we are unrenewed and our nature remains contrary to God—the nearer we could get to God, if that were possible—and the more of God's love we could perceive, if that were possible, the more intensely wretched we should become. In order to reconciliation it is not enough that one party should be forgiving—the other must yield, too. If the aggrieved party on his part should go all the way towards reconciliation, it may only encourage the other to further evil unless he desires reconciliation, too. So you perceive that in order to reconciliation between a sinner and God, the sinner must be brought into a different state of heart—he must in fact repent, or, more fully—he must be born-again.

One other part of this first step I must mention—a soul upon whom the Spirit of God is thus operating begins to desire to be reconciled to God. “O God,” he says, “You are angry with me. Can Your anger be turned away? Is there a Sacrifice? Is there an Atonement? If there is, I beseech You, turn Your face of kindness towards me and have pity upon me. And, O Lord, I know that in my bosom there is an evil heart which departs from You. I beseech You, renew me. It is true the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, or the leopard his spots—but surely You who made me at the first can make me anew. O my great Creator, could You not make me anew? Would You not quench in me the fire of enmity against Yourself and make me yet to be Your friend? And, whereas these two things stand in the way, Your anger and my enmity, can You not make a clean sweep of both? At one

stroke can You not both justify me and regenerate me so that I may walk with You and be agreed with You?”

This is the dawn of Grace, and a blessed dawn it is! How thankful am I if these words are reaching the ears of men who are undergoing this sacred process! Of old, when the world was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and it is written, “There was light.” We find the next effect was order, and the next was life and then a fair wind arose beneath the brooding wings of the ever-blessed Dove. Oh, may He come forth now in like manner! May He bring light into your souls, though this should cause you to painfully perceive the disorder of your nature. And may He then turn your chaos into order, your death into life, and your deformity into the beauty of holiness to the praise of the glory of His Grace! This is but the first step, but it is one for which to be devoutly grateful if the Holy Spirit has led us to take it.

II. Secondly, the text sets forth before us in the far clearer light of actual statement A SECOND STEP. “We have now received the “*at-one-ment*.” The word “atonement” is a very improper translation here. It is the only case in which our translators have used the word at all in the New Testament. And it is very unfortunate that they should have used it in the wrongs place, because the word is as plainly as possible *reconciliation*, and does not so much refer to the Atonement by which the reconciliation is made as to the reconciliation itself.

I believe that here our excellent translators used the word in the sense of “at-one-ment,” or bringing two together. We have “received” an “at-one-ment.” We are made to come into oneness with God through Jesus Christ. Now, the second step God-ward, and the truly vital one, is receiving the reconciliation. Observe how we are reconciled. It is not by working out a reconciliation. Please observe that. The first instinct of a man who finds himself with an angry God gazing upon him, and with enmity in his own heart towards God, is to set to work to try and better this state of things. “What shall I *do*? How shall I avert the Divine anger?”

The heart suggests a multitude of expedients. Sometimes it runs into the enchantment and fascination of ceremonialism, but more commonly among us it falls back upon its own natural self-righteousness and dreams of reconciliation by amendment, and by future carefulness, and by a diligent obedience in the future which it hopes to be able to render. Now, observe, the text does not say that *we* have made any atonement for sin, neither does any Scripture ever tell us that we can do so, or that by any good deeds of our own we are to be reconciled to God! I tell you, awakened Souls, that all your struggles to be reconciled to God apart from Christ are only another form of the rebellion of your hearts against God! You are evidently opposed to Him because you reject *His* plan of reconciliation, and in defiance of His will you make a pretense of offering to be reconciled on other terms than those which He ordains.

While talking of peace you insult the Lord, again, by rejecting the blood of His Son, which is the *only* Atonement. From the top of Sinai, amidst the

smoke and burning of His awful Presence, He forbids you to draw near and He sets bounds about the mount. But your daring reply is, "By this mount I will approach to God. I will break the barriers and climb Sinai's rocky sides." Your attempt is vain! The fire of His Law will devour you, for this is not the way, neither is this the road by which God can permit a sinful soul to approach Him—since if He did accept a sinner in his own righteousness it would be an insult to the righteousness of Christ!

If He should admit a sinner into His favor by any door but faith in His dear bleeding Son, it would be to make a liar of Himself! It would make void all His promises and do despite to the Cross of Jesus! No, we *receive* the reconciliation—there is the meat of the matter. We do not make it, we *receive* it. I would like to dwell on that blessed word a little while—"We have now received the atonement." We do not buy it. We receive it without money and without price. We do not complete it, we receive it. "It is finished," was the verdict pronounced upon it long before we were born. We did not assist in commencing it, nor can we add anything to it—neither is there any need that we should wish to do so. We *receive* reconciliation. It is a free gift. We have only to put out our hand and take it. We have only to be empty vessels to be filled with it. We receive it perfect.

Oh, that precious word, "receive!" How well it suits all cases. A person may be very poor, but I never yet met a person who was too poor to *receive*—in fact, it is the poor man who is the most willing and ready to receive! When the pitcher is empty it is in the fittest state to receive, for when it is full it cannot receive! And the lower, the more humble, the more broken, the more ruined, the more condemned—I was almost about to say the more near being damned—the more fit you are to receive Divine Grace. I put it as strongly as I can in order that any here who are despairing may lay hold of it. If you are emptied to the last drop and cannot find a trace of a footstep of anything good in you—why then you are ready to *receive*! Surely, if you have nothing you are the very man who can receive what Christ has provided!

Let me explain the process of receiving reconciliation. It begins thus—The man, being already on the first step—knowing that he needs reconciliation, believes the Truth about the Gospel. Now the Gospel is that reconciliation! It is made for every soul that believes in Jesus. It is a great mercy when a man becomes clear about that and accedes to it as God's Truth. God is not reconciled to anybody who will not believe in Christ—but He is reconciled to every soul that trusts in Jesus. No wrath remains against a Believer in Jesus—to such, God is all love and tenderness.

All sinners who receive Christ by faith, He is a true and effectual Substitute. He suffered in their place and bore, that they might never bear, the Divine wrath that was due to sin. Now be very clear about this, for though we preach it every Sunday we still have need to repeat it. Many teach that Christ has made an equal atonement for *all* men. But, since a great number of men are lost, it is evident that their guilt was not effectually removed, neither were they actually reconciled. If those men

were all reconciled to God and yet were cast into Hell, there is little to be desired in so useless a reconciliation. An Atonement for *all* which does not *save all* is not, in itself, an effectual Atonement! It is clear that if it of itself saved one for whom it was offered, it would save all—the same cause, if complete within itself, would always produce the same effect. An atonement said to be universal is also admitted to be ineffectual unless all are reconciled to God by it. The fact is, there is no redemption worth having but the *Particular Redemption* by which the Lord Jesus redeemed His own people only, that is to say, made for all who believe in Him an effectual sacrifice. Now, if you can receive that Truth of God cordially it will mightily help you—God is reconciled to every *Believer*.

Then, the next step to receiving is to become a Believer, because then the man is reconciled. How can I become a Believer? Why, of course only by believing! And what is to believe? The other word for it is, “trust.” Jesus Christ made a full, satisfactory, substitutionary Atonement for every soul that trusts in Him. I trust Him, therefore I know that He has made a full satisfaction for me. I received the reconciliation the moment I trusted Him. I have believed God’s record concerning His Son that He is able to save me, and I know for that reason—and I do not need any other reason—that I am reconciled to God and God to me. There is the long and the short of the actual process of reconciliation by faith.

The soul becomes consciously reconciled to God, yet further, when peace flows into the soul as the result of the conviction that God is reconciled through Jesus Christ. My heart feels, this morning, perfect reconciliation with God, because I know that whatever my sins may have been, and I know they are far more than I think them to be—they were all laid upon Christ’s head upon Calvary—and whatever punishment was due to me for my sins Christ has borne on my behalf. How do I know that He bore *my* sins in particular? Is it because I think He bore the sins of all men? By no means! That would give me no comfort, because some men are lost, and I might be among them—and if Jesus bore the sins of *all* men it is clear that His bearing sin in that sense is not in every case effectual.

But, when I know that He so bore the sins of *Believers*—that they are clear, and I am also certain that I am a Believer—I feel the most profound peace of mind. Search my soul through and through, and there is not a more honest thought in my nature than this—that I rest on Christ alone! Very well, then, my sins are forgiven me since they were laid on Jesus, and they cannot be in two places. If Christ took them they are not on me. Jesus was punished for them and God cannot punish two individuals for one and the same sin. If He laid my sin upon my Substitute, He cannot lay it upon me. God is not unrighteous to forget Christ’s labor of love for me. He cannot demand payment twice—first at the bleeding Savior’s hands—and then again at mine. O you heavens, was there ever heard of such a monstrous injustice as for Christ to be a Substitute for a sinner, and then that sinner to be punished after Christ was punished in His place?

It cannot, must not, shall not be even thought of! It were an atrocious blasphemy! I have God's Word for it, that Jesus died for Believers—then am I sure He died for me—and I cannot be condemned! The peace which that belief sheds over the mind is wondrous. There is no peace like it! Out of this there arises a reconciliation to God more and more deep and happy, for the Spirit of God, from time to time, more and more opens up to the Believer the work of Christ. He shows him that this work was no novelty, that it was no mere expedient invented late in the day—but that eternal love had laid out this plan before the clouds were weighed, or the mountains were created. Then the Holy Spirit reveals the all-sufficiency of the true sacrifice of God. What merit there must be in the death of One who is Divine! What a boundless extent of overflowing mercy there must be in the pangs and groans of One who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but yet made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant for our sakes! Every Believer here will bear me witness that the more fully he understands the work of the Lord Jesus the deeper is his peace, and, consequently, the more full is his sense of reconciliation to God.

Then, Brothers and Sisters, being persuaded of all this, our heart drops her former enmity to God. "What?" says the man. "Has the Lord really forgiven me all, and has He forgiven me by giving up His only-begotten Son for my sake? Did He take Him from His bosom whom all Heaven adored, and give Him up for *me*? How can I oppose Him any longer? I yield, and gladly call Him Lord." Then our love is enraptured with His blessed Character and we magnify Him with our whole heart. We adore as much His justice as His mercy! We love His holiness as well as His Grace, for we see all blended in the Person of the Only-Begotten. We learn to bless God that He is angry with sin! We would not have Him otherwise. We bless Him that He did require satisfaction, for there ought to be a penalty exacted lest sin, through being condoned without punishment, should be lightly thought of both by men and other races of intelligent beings.

We thank God that He is just what He is and we would not have Him changed in any degree or manner! Ever since by faith we met the Lord on Calvary's bloody tree and crossed hands over the great Sacrifice for sin, all our enmity is slain. If the old lusts within us dare rebel, we proscribe them as traitors and call in the aid of heavenly power to subdue them. Our inmost heart is now at one with God—in its very deeps we feel a delight in Him!

Thus I have shown you the second step, or *receiving* the reconciliation.

III. By THE THIRD STEP we get into the brightest light—"we joy in God." He becomes our highest and loftiest joy. I must take you back a step for a minute. No man ever rejoices in God except the man who receives the Atonement by Jesus Christ. Suppose a man should say, "I do not need an atonement. I am a good man and always have been. I have not broken the Law." Well, Friend, I will tell you what is according to nature and what I am certain is the fact—*you* will rejoice in *yourself*. I

know if I were half as good as you say you are I would rejoice in myself, indeed! If I had kept the Law from my youth up, and had never broken one of the Commandments of God, I assure you I would boldly say, "God, I thank You that I am not as other men are! I have kept Your Law! I have done no sin in thought, word, or deed!" I should rejoice in myself.

Dear Friends, you will never know anything of what it is to rejoice in God while you are self-righteous! Neither does any man rejoice in God who feels that he has obtained reconciliation with God by his own self-reforms. Reforms are admirable and I would not say a word against them. But, suppose a man who was once far from God were able to boast that he refined himself into fellowship with God—in whom, do you think, would *he* rejoice? Why, in *himself*, certainly! Did I hear a man say, "I have had moral courage and resolution enough to make myself all I ought to be. I have brought myself up from the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and this is no small thing"? My dear Man, you are a fine fellow! Let me pat you on the back! What? Do you say that you don't need to be patted on the back? Don't be angry, I quite agree with you!

You do that quite sufficiently for yourself, and I should do the same if I had so much to say for myself as you have! Why should I care to rejoice in God? Samson crying, "heaps upon heaps" is nothing to a man fighting in his own strength, and conquering all his spiritual foes. Why, my valiant Friend, when you get to Heaven you will throw your cap up and say, "Glory be to myself!" No doubt you will if ever you get there. No, joy in God never could result from a man's saving himself. The only way a man comes to joy in God is by receiving reconciliation by Divine Grace, and I think that is clear to any thoughtful mind. If there is anything of our own of merit, or endeavor which can bring us into a state of reconciliation with God, then we shall rejoice in it. But if there is nothing of our own, and we have simply to stand still and *receive* salvation and take it all as a matter of the free Grace of God through Jesus Christ—then we joy in *God*.

Let me dwell on this for a moment. The moment a man is reconciled to God his view of God alters entirely. Have you not noticed how your opinions of persons will vary? A neighbor has done you a displeasure and, therefore, you do not esteem him. Very likely that person is a very excellent man, but you read everything he does in the evil limit of suspicion. If he meets you with frank courtesy you think him a fawning hypocrite. And if he passes you by you, set it down to haughty contempt. If he should offer to serve you, you would suspect that he wished to place you under a humbling obligation. And if he stands aloof, you feel sure that he gloats over your necessities. His name is no sweet sound to your ear, you have no joy in him. If, however, by a discovery of his kindness you escape from prejudice, his whole conduct wears another aspect.

When a soul becomes reconciled to God by the way of the Cross, as I have described, then its whole mind with regard to God alters. And from that moment it reads Him aright, and understands Him, and delights in Him! I will show you wherein a soul which is reconciled to God delights in Him. First, in His very existence and Person. That there is a God is to the

Christian supreme bliss! “Oh,” he says, “what should I do without my God? The infidel may say there is no God, but if that were true I should have lost my Father, my Friend, my All.” The Christian feels that his hope of prevailing over injustice and wrong lies in the fact that there is a reigning God who will set all things right at last. His hopes for preservation and sustenance spring from God’s being the Source of all life, and the Giver of all good gifts to His people.

If there were a place in the world where God never came, no Christian would ever go there! But, if there is a spot where God peculiarly reveals Himself, beloved Brothers and Sisters, is not that where you delight to meet? And since we believe there is to be a fuller revelation of Himself in Heaven, is not that our main reason for longing to be there? Not because the angels are there, or because the harps of gold ring out superior melodies, but because we shall be *with God*, and shall be like He! Oh, yes, I do but speak your inmost hearts when I say you joy in the very existence of God! As loyal subjects rejoice that they have a king. As affectionate children rejoice that they have a father. As a loving spouse rejoices that she has a husband, so do we, but infinitely beyond all this, rejoice that we have a God!

Next, we rejoice in His Character. All the attributes of God are themes of joy and rejoicing to a Christian. “Why,” he says, “He is a merciful God. Blessed be His name for that, else I had never been saved! He is a gracious God. Glory be to Him for that, for He can save the souls of my children by His Grace. He is a powerful God, and I would not have Him otherwise. This, indeed, is a well of joy.”—

***“The God that rules on high,
And thunders when He pleases.
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas.
This amazing God is ours,
Our Father and our love.
He shall send down
His heavenly powers
To carry us above.”***

We are glad that we have a God who can do all things on our behalf!

The Lord is also Immutable, and oh, what a sun of consolation *that is*—without variableness or shadow of a turning! I shift and change like the winds and the waves, but He is always the same. Many a fainting Believer has drunk from this fountain when all others have failed him. Moreover, the Lord is faithful to His promises. What a joy is this! And He is holy, and just, and good—here, too, is joy, for if He is holy He cannot do an unrighteous action, and it were unrighteous of Him not to save His people for the sake of His Anointed. Every attribute of God darts thunder and lightning upon an unreconciled man. And, on the other hand, every part of the Divine Character smiles with eternal sunlight upon a spirit which has received the Atonement.

Beloved, when we come to joy in God’s Person and attributes, we further learn to glory in His Sovereignty. Before our reconciliation we

quibble at the Divine will. If there is one doctrine in the world which reveals the enmity of the human heart more than another it is the doctrine of God's Sovereignty. Men will bear with you unto that word, but when they hear the Lord's voice saying, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," they gnash their teeth and call the preacher an Antinomian, a High Calvinist, or some other hard name!

They do not love God except they can make Him a *little* God! They cannot bear for Him to be Supreme! They would gladly take His will away from Him and set up their own will as the first cause, and say, "These are your gods, O Israel." But the moment we are reconciled to God we consent that Jehovah should do as He wills! What better rule could be than the absolute empire of love? What can be better as a government for all mankind than the absolute authority of One so good, so true, so holy, and so just? Set up a limited monarchy in the universe? Yes, it were proper enough if the devil were the ruler—but with God for the King we need no check upon His superlative justice and immaculate holiness! He cannot do unrighteously or unmercifully. He must act according to His Nature, and His Nature and His name are Love.

Let Love reign without limit! Let Love be sovereign! Let Love bear the keys of government upon her shoulder and let her name be called the Mighty God. Much of men's hatred to the doctrine of Sovereignty is rooted in their enmity to the Sovereign Himself—but when the heart is reconciled to God we can read the sternest passages of the ninth of Romans, or any other Scripture, and say, "Amen, so let it be! What God ordains must be right." When the soul becomes reconciled to God, again, it joys in God under all His dispensations. Of course we joy in God under comfortable dispensations. There is no question whether we do not, then, very much divide our joy between the comforts and God.

But in dark times, when the comforts all go, we can joy in God if we can act as David did at Ziklag—when they spoke of stoning him, when his goods and his wives were gone and all his followers' wives, too—David "encouraged himself in his God." "Oh," he said to the soldiers round about him, "do not fret. It is true we are beggars, but we have not lost our God! Let us sing a Psalm to His praise." Then might they have sung, "The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice," while they sharpened their swords to strike the foe.

Beloved, I will only add these two or three thoughts. Joy in God is the happiest of all joys. There are other sweets, but this is the virgin honey dropping fresh from the comb. Joy in God is also a most elevating joy. Those who joy in wealth grow greedy. Those who joy in their friends too often lose nobility of spirit. But he who boasts in God grows like God! It is a solid joy, and he who joys in God has good reasons for rejoicing. He has arguments which will justify his joy at any time. He who rejoices in God shall never be confused or ashamed, world without end. It is an abiding joy. If I rejoice in the sun, it sets. If in the earth, it shall be burnt up. If in myself, I shall die. But to triumph in One who never fails and never

changes but lasts forever—this is lasting joy! In a word, it is celestial joy. It flows like the river of God which rises at the foot of His Throne and waters the celestial streets, while trees on either side bear all manner of fruits. Blessed is the man whose nature strikes its roots deep into the banks of this river—he shall bring forth his fruit in his season—his leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper.

The only sad reflection is, and with that I close, that there are so many who know nothing about joy in God. They could never gaze upon yon stars and say, “My God, You have made all these, and I love You. I love You not as I fancy You are, but as You have said You are in the Scripture. I would not alter Your Nature if I could. I would not tempt You by saying, ‘Do not this or that.’ Whatever You do I admire, for I am reconciled to You, and I joy in You.” When Mungo Park looked at that little piece of moss growing in the desert where he was lost, he thought, “God is here taking care of that little moss,” and his heart was full of gladness. I know a Christian woman who was in great family trouble and was near despairing, but she saw a little feather on the floor which the draft of air from under the door blew to and fro, and the thought came into her mind, “God knows the motion of every filament of that feather, and He is moving it. God is here.” And all her sorrow disappeared and she rejoiced in God!

Did you ever feel like that? You know how your child feels when you put it to bed. As long as its mother is there it does not cry, but when she goes, it is sad. Did you ever feel towards God as the child does to its parent? At this moment my soul is lying on God’s bosom, and I am happy. God is mine and I love Him. Oh, how I love Him! You unconverted ones cannot say that. I wish you could, for if you are unreconciled to God your state is a very perilous one and at the same time a very mean one. I would not like to be at enmity with a good man who had always shown me kindness. I should not like to feel that I did not love good men.

I must be a wretch if I do not respect and love the only perfect Being! If good for anything, myself, I shall be pleased to call the good my friends. Look at yourselves in that light and see, Sinners, what mean creatures you are. I pray you may say, “We will not be so mean any longer. We will be at peace with God.” There is only *one* way of reconciliation and that is you must receive the Atonement Christ Jesus worked out by His death. That way is most suitable to you, and I hope you will agree with it at once. Oh, may the Spirit of God make you put out your receiving hand. Is it palsied? Does it quiver and shake? Never mind! A palsied hand is sufficient to receive with! I have seen many a shivering beggar beg in the streets, but he could always receive! I have never found his hand too feeble for *that*.

Put forth that trembling hand and take the Savior by trusting in Him! The moment you trust Him you are saved! God is reconciled to every soul that trusts Christ. May God grant that you may feel the power of the reconciliation by His Holy Spirit. Amen.

JOY IN GOD NO. 2550

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 2, 1898.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 2, 1884.

*“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
by whom we have now received the atonement”
(or, as it should be, “the reconciliation”).
Romans 5:11.*

You notice, dear Friends, in reading this verse, the “*not only so,*” and the, “*also.*” And, if you look back to the earlier verses of the chapter, you will see that there is a continual rising, as of one ascending a golden staircase. You get an, “*also,*” and a, “*not only so,*” and then a long succession of Christian attainments rising, one out of the other—“*Tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope makes not ashamed,*” and so forth—from all which it clearly appears that the Christian life is one of continuous progress. It would be so without a break if we were more careful and lived nearer to God. We would go steadily on from our spiritual childhood and youth and manhood till we became fathers in Christ and, by-and-by, perfect men in Christ Jesus, having reached the fullness of the stature of men in Christ Jesus. I am afraid that we, sometimes, sadly hinder that progress by our lack of prayer and our neglect of communion with God. Still, this is what true Christian life should be—a continuous going from strength to strength till we, every one of us, appear before God in the Zion above.

Let each Believer ask himself how far it is so with him. It is to be feared that there are some who, after many years of Christian profession, are not holier, or stronger in faith, or fuller of wisdom than they were 20 years ago! Some Believers seem to be like the children of Israel in the wilderness—they go forward and backward—their path is very intricate and they make but slow progress towards the heavenly Canaan. Let us, Beloved, labor to grow in Grace! Let us cry to God to enable us to grow. Let us not be satisfied with what we have already attained, but let us always feel an insatiable craving to acquire more and more of the good gifts of the Covenant of Grace, that we may have all things and abound, seeing that all things are provided for us in Christ Jesus our Lord!

But I want, just now, to bring this thought especially under the notice of young beginners in Grace, for I am about to speak of an experience which belongs, rather, to the full-grown Christian than to the newly-born Believer, and it may be that I shall cause trouble of heart to some of the little ones of the Lord's family while I speak of what is more commonly

enjoyed by the greater ones and the stronger ones. I do not mean to do so, but quite the reverse. You, dear Friend, who have been lately brought to Christ, must not judge and condemn yourself if you do not, as yet, possess all the Graces which belong to the more matured saint. No one would think of condemning a child three years old because he was not six feet high! No one would blame him because his little feet would not carry him upon a long journey. No one would expect from him the wisdom which we look for in his father. "You cannot put old heads on young *shoulders*," says our proverb, and it is very true, and it would be a pity that we should try to do so, for the old heads would be out of place upon young shoulders—let the whole man be of the same age. If, therefore, I talk at this time about a high and noble joy which you have not yet tasted, long for it—and go the right way to gain it—but do not begin to say, "I do not know that joy and, therefore, I am no child of God. I have not partaken of that delight and, therefore, I cannot be a sincere Believer in Jesus." If you do so, you will be acting very unwisely—you will be acting toward yourself in a way in which a father would not think of acting toward his own child! Christian life is a life of *progress*—it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we are going forward, and onward, and upward—and we hope to continue doing so until we behold the face of Him we love! And then "we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is."

A second observation I want to make is that the Christian life has its own peculiar joys. If you look through the chapter from which our text is taken, you will see that it begins with a joy—"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." That is a smoothly flowing current, fathomless and full of infinite sweetness! I do not know, if I had my choice of the state of heart in which I would wish to be between here and Heaven, whether I would not prefer continual peace to any other condition of mind. It is a blessed thing, sometimes, to soar aloft, as on the wings of eagles, and to seem to play with the young lightning that is at home with the sun! It is a grand thing to live even *here* in the very Presence of God and feel that Earth has grown into a little Heaven! But I find that such an ecstatic state as that is frequently followed by deep depression. Elijah runs before Ahab's chariot, but the next morning he runs away from a woman and asks that he may die. Our great "ups" are not far off equally great "downs." We climb the mountains and then we slip down the cliffs. We descend into the Valley of Humiliation soon after we have been on the tops of the Hills of Communion. If one could always be just quiet and peaceful, it would be best.

Then, in the second verse, the Apostle says, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." That is no small joy, to be always looking for His coming in whose Sovereignty we shall be made kings and, as the result of whose passion we shall be made priests, expecting to behold Him here, and then looking for the revelation of the Glory when we shall be "forever with the Lord." Oh, we have great joy whenever we think of Heaven! Sit down and turn over the passages of Scripture which relate to it. Think of the communion of saints that you shall enjoy and especially of the Beatific Vision of the face of Him "whom having not seen, you love—in whom,

though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." What must it be to be there? We cannot, at present, tell, but the Apostle says, "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And so we do!

Then, in the third verse, he tells us of another joy of which worldlings certainly never taste. "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations, also." There is a secret sweetness in the gall and wormwood of our daily trials—a sort of ineffable, unutterable, indescribable—but plainly experienced joy in sorrow and bliss in woe! O Friends, I think that the happiest moments I have ever known have been just after the sharpest pains I have ever felt. As the blue gentian flower grows just upon the edge of the Alpine glacier, so, too, extraordinary joys, azure-tinted with the light of Heaven, grow hard by the severest of our troubles, the very sweetest and best of our delights. Then the Apostle tells us, in our text, that we have another joy, of which I am now going to speak, "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Let no man's heart fail him when he hears the experience of the tried people of God! It is true that we have troubles peculiar to the Christian state—there are some sorrows which are not known outside the family of God. They are very blessed, health-giving, purifying sorrows and we would not wish to be without them!

But still, sometimes they are very keen and cut the heart even to its very center. Though that is the case—and we admit that it is—we also have some peculiar joys which no others realize. There are fruits in God's storehouse which no mouth has ever tasted till it has been washed clean by the Word and by the Spirit of God. There are secret things which are not seen by the human eyes, however much enlightened by knowledge, until those eyes have been touched with Heaven's own eye-salve that it may look and still may live—look into the Glory and not be blinded by the wondrous sight! Come, then, you who are tempted by the world's joys, and see where true joy is to be found! Turn away from that painted Jezebel—she will but mock and deceive you—

***"Solid joys and lasting treasure,
None but Zion's children know."***

If you, young people, give your hearts to Christ, you must not dream that you have come to the end of your delights—you have but begun them. Notwithstanding the trials of a believing life, the ways of wisdom "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Now, coming more closely to the text, I am going to answer three questions. First, *what is joy in God?* Secondly, *how is this the evidence of reconciliation?* "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." And, thirdly, *why is it that this joy is said to be through our Lord Jesus Christ?*

I. First, then, WHAT IS JOY IN GOD?

Now, my dear Friends, I have before me a topic which far exceeds my ability. I get out of my depth when I have such a question as this to answer, "What is joy in God?" I shall be like the swallow that but touches the brook with its wing and then is up and away again. I can do no more than skim the surface of the subject, but I know that there is, to the Believer, a joy, first, *in the very fact that there is a God.* To the ungodly man,

it would be a great delight if it could be proved that there is no God. When he is at all serious and thinks upon the great problems which concern his own state, he is troubled with the thought of God, for, if there is a God, then sin must be punished. If there is a God, then a life spent in neglect of Him must entail, somehow or other, chastisement and sorrow. The worldling would be glad if he could be thoroughly well assured that the idea of God is “a mere bugbear of priests to keep men in terror,” as some say. There is a something within a man that makes him feel and know that the world must have had a Maker. If it is so full of intelligence, a Someone, by His intelligence, superior to all the intelligence of mankind, must have made it—and the man gets troubled as he remembers that he has lived so many years—and yet has forgotten his Maker and broken His Laws.

But the child of God, the regenerate man who feels within him the Nature of God and kinship to the Most High, could not bear the idea of there being no God. Atheism is a black Egyptian night to a soul that once has known God. If we ever come to have joy in Him, anything which robs Him of His Glory makes us grieve. But to prove that there is no God would be to prove that we are orphans! It would prove to us our everlasting poverty and wretchedness! It would be to us an infinite catastrophe if we could ever be convinced that there is no God! Happily, we have no fear of any such a calamity. We delight to know that there is a God and that God is everywhere. Our highest joys are experienced when we are in His most immediate Presence! And if we ever do anything which we should not do, if we are conscious of His Presence, we know that it is wrong—and we have to grieve for doing it. But when we live as in His sight. When we truly walk with God, then we live like Enoch, who “had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Then do we realize the truest form of happiness and joy. So, first, we have joy even in the fact that there is a God.

But we have joy, most of all, in the knowledge that *this everlasting God has become our Father*. We take no delight in the universal fatherhood which comes of creation—that is a poor thing and belongs as much to dogs and cats as it does to us, for they are as truly created by God as we are! And that sort of fatherhood, of which I hear men talk, is the portion of those who blaspheme God and live in utter rebellion against Him. It is *not* that of which the Apostle wrote, “If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” Sirs, until God renews your nature, you are children of the Wicked One—not children of the Most High! Neither have you any right to talk about the fatherhood of God towards you. “You must be born again” and only when you are born again and have believed in Christ, are you God’s children, for “as many as received Him, to them gave He power”—the right, or privilege—“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.” But that fatherhood which comes of the spirit of adoption within you—because you have been born into the family of God—in this you may, indeed, rejoice!

Now, can you not, and must you not, if you have believed in Christ, joy in God as you feel that He is, through His abounding Grace, your Father? Whatever He does, He is your Father. When He smiles upon you, He is your Father. If He frowned upon you, He would still be your Father. I have told you before what the old Welsh preacher answered when his friend said to him, "While you are preaching, this morning, may you have the smile of God resting upon you!" "Yes," he replied, "my dear Brother, I hope that I shall have it. But if I do not have the light of God's Countenance, I will speak well of Him behind His back." So we should—when we do not have the Lord smiling upon us—we should speak well of Him behind His back. Let us be resolved to say with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." If He should take away every comfort which I have, I am so persuaded that it will be a Father's love that will dictate the action, that I will still praise Him and magnify Him, do what He may. It is joy, indeed, when you can say that if the Lord is strong, He is strong for you. If He is wise, He is wise for you. If He is unchangeable, He is unchangeable to you and whatever He is and whatever He possesses, He has made Himself over to you to be your possession, saying, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people." This, then, is joying in God—first rejoicing that there is a God and then delighting in Him as our Father!

When we once reach this point, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we rejoice in every attribute of God—*we delight in Him as He is revealed*. I fear that in these days many men are very busy trying to construct a god for themselves such as they think God ought to be—and it generally turns out that they fashion a god like themselves, for that saying of the Psalmist concerning idols and idol-makers is still true—"They that make them are like unto them, so is everyone that trusts in them." These modern manufacturers of gods make them blind because they are, themselves, blind, and deaf because they are deaf, and dead because they are spiritually dead. No, Beloved, there is no God but the God revealed in Holy Scripture, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! And the excogitation of another godhead, which has been the business of the sages of the present day, is all a mistake and a delusion! God can only be seen in His own light. He must be His own Revealer and no man can know God except God shall reveal Himself unto him.

I trust that many of us can say that we do rejoice in God as we find Him in the Scriptures. Some quarrel with God as a Sovereign and no doctrine makes them grind their teeth like the glorious Truth of Divine Sovereignty. They profess to want a god, but he must not be on a throne! He must not be King, he must not be absolute and universal Monarch! He must do as his creatures tell him, not as he, himself, wills. I adore that God who says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Such a God as He is needs no limitation! Let Him do as He wills, for it is not possible that He should will to do anything that is unjust or unholy! Let us joy and rejoice in Him as an unlimited Sovereign!

Then let us rejoice in Him as perfectly holy. The holiness of God is an attribute that may well fill us with awe. To the eyes of ungodly men, it shines like “the terrible crystal” of which Ezekiel speaks, but, in the Word of God, whenever the song rises higher than usual, you will generally find that it is a hymn in praise of the holy God. Yes, this is the song of Heaven—“They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” The wholeness of the Divine Nature is seen in His holiness. There is in Him no defect, no excess—He is altogether just such as a holy soul must delight in.

I trust also, dear Friends, that you and I can joy in God as to His justice. The justice of God makes men dread Him till they become His children. There are some, today, who pretend to preach the Gospel, but who really are preaching “another Gospel which is not another.” And they try to set forth the littleness of sin and, as for the justice of God, it seems to be ignored by them! Their effeminate deity is not worthy to be known by the name of God! But our God is terrible in His justice and He will, by no means, clear the guilty—and conscience tells every man this. But the Believer in Jesus, when he sees what God did that justice might be satisfied—and that love might freely flow to the unworthy when he beholds Christ crucified, the great Father piercing His Son with sharpest smart that He might justly put away the sin of His people—then he comes to delight in God’s justice! Instead of threatening him, God’s justice becomes the guardian of his salvation with a drawn sword protecting him from condemnation! Happy is the man who can say of every attribute of God that he adores it—the man who would not have turned back at the Red Sea and not refused to sing unto the Lord who had triumphed gloriously in His righteous vengeance upon the ungodly! Bow your heads before God as He is, as He declares Himself to be in His own Word, for if you do not, you are not reconciled to Him! But if you are truly reconciled to Him, you will accept Him without question in all those points that seem dark and mysterious. You will believe those doctrines which sometimes grate upon the ears as you hear of them, and you will say, “Though I cannot understand, I adore. And when I tremble before the Lord so that the joints of my bones are loosed and I fall prostrate at His feet, yet even in those dread mysteries I feel that I love and I joy in God.”

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, what a blessed and transcendent joy this joy in the Lord is! Sometimes you joy in your children, yet they die and then you sorrow. At other times you rejoice in those who are grown up and are prospering, but perhaps they treat you with ingratitude and then, again, your joy is gone. You joy in your health and that is a great blessing—but you sicken and your joy departs. Some rejoice in their riches, but wealth takes to itself wings and flies away. You may joy in a choice friend, but after a while you may be forsaken and forgotten. You may joy, perhaps, in past achievements and there may come to you a joy in your prospects for the future—but there is no joy equal to joy in God! Suppose I have nothing in the house but God? Suppose there is nothing for me to rely upon but God, nothing that I can call my own but God? Well, is that a little thing? Are not all creatures but the visions of an

hour? But the Creator is the substantial All in All, so that he who has God has all that he can possibly need! God, to His people, is the fullness out of which all their needs shall be supplied. What a mercy it is that when we can joy in nothing else, we can joy in God! We can joy in His power, for He can help us. We can joy in His faithfulness, for He cannot fail us. We can joy in His Immutability, for He changes not and, therefore, we are not consumed. We can joy in every thought that we have of Him, for altogether and observed from every point of view, He is the delight of His people!

Well now, dear Friends, if we have come as far as that, we can also say that we joy in God *in all His dealings with us*. "That is hard work," says one. But when you perfectly joy in God, you joy in everything that He does! Suppose you had a dear friend who came to your house and suppose you should say to him, "anything that there is, you may enjoy, or you may take. I will give you anything you can ask for or desire. I owe my life and all my prosperity to you." Well, if you did miss this and that of your treasures which you might like to have retained, when you heard that your friend had them, you would be quite content. According to that good old parable, when the master went into the garden and took a very choice rose, the gardener did not trouble himself at the loss of it when he knew who had plucked it. He was so glad that the master admired it, that he could even rejoice that it had gone! Now, dear Friends, can you not get to this point, that if the Lord brings you comforts, you will not rejoice in them so much as in Him who brings them? You say that you can get as far as that, but if the Lord takes away your comforts, can you come to this point, that you will not sorrow over them, but that you will joy in Him who took them away? The drops are gone, yes, but there is the fountain always flowing. Though the sunbeam is hidden from your eyes, the sun is always shining. Therefore always rejoice in God, your All in All, and say, "Yes, I will rejoice in all His dealings with me." Looking back on the whole of my own life, I desire to bless God for everything that He has ever done for me. I desire to praise Him for every cut of the rod, for every blow of the hammer, for every melting in the furnace, for the crucible and the burning heat. Everything has commenced and continued and concluded as it ought to do, according to His infinite love and wisdom and I, therefore, joy in all that God does to me and bless His holy name!

Then I think that we also learn to joy *in all God's requirements of us and in all His teachings*. In all that He tells us and in all that He reveals to us of the world to come, we learn to joy in God. Thus, as I told you, I have only touched the surface of this great subject. I pray the Holy Spirit will reveal to you all that there is in the blessed Trinity in which we can rejoice. This God is our God and He has said, "Delight yourself, also, in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." There is no fear of your delighting too much in Him, so let your hearts be filled with joy! Take down your harps from the willows and touch every string with sacred delight as you joy in God!

II. I was, next, to have answered the question, HOW IS THIS JOY THE EVIDENCE OF OUR RECONCILIATION TO GOD? I have occupied so much time over the first part of my theme that I must not dwell upon this portion of the subject. But it must be clear to you that any man who can truly joy in God is reconciled to God. That God is reconciled to him is certain, or else the man would not be reconciled to God, for no sinner was ever beforehand with God. And if I love God, I may be sure that He long ago loved me. But one of the most glorious evidences of a man being reconciled to God is when he rejoices in God!

Suppose he becomes obedient to certain outward precepts that he may be and yet be very sorry that he has to be obedient to them? Suppose he begins to repent and mourn to think that he has sinned—he may do that and yet there may be in his heart the wish that he could have his full of sin without fear of punishment. But when a man feels, “There is no one in the world that I love as I love God. There is none that I adore as I adore the Lord. For Him I would live, for Him I would die. He is everything to me. He is the source of my delight and the spring of all my joys”—why, that man is perfectly reconciled to God! You can see that the enmity in his heart is slain. You can see that now God’s purposes are his purposes and God’s desires are his desires. That which God hates, this man hates. That which God loves, this man loves. You can see that he is perfectly reconciled to God because he rejoices in God!

As for that part of the reconciliation which has to do with God, Himself—about that no question can possibly arise! The difficulty never was as to how to reconcile God to a sinner, but to reconcile the sinner to God. The Lord Jesus Christ has done perfectly that which enables God, with justice, to manifest mercy to the guilty. That is done—you may take that for granted. And you can be sure that it is done in your case when this lesser matter of reconciling you to God is most assuredly accomplished, as it is when you, “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

III. My last question is, WHY IS THIS JOY SAID TO BE THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST?

Why, first, *because it is through Him we have received this reconciliation.* No man can rejoice in an unreconciled God. As long as you look up to God and see Him bound by the justice of His Nature to punish you for your sin, you cannot delight in Him—you are filled with dread and dismay. But when you see Christ making a full Atonement for sin. When you know that because you have believed in Him, you have the sure evidence that He made Atonement for your sins in particular, and put them away, then you feel that you are reconciled to God. God, apart from Christ, must be the object of dread to the guilty, but God, in Christ Jesus, upon the Throne with the Covenant rainbow round about Him—that God becomes our joy and delight!

I believe that in the world in general men talk a great deal more about God than they do about Jesus Christ. At least, they speak about, “Providence,” and about “the Almighty” and so forth. And there are some who say, “Yes, God is good. He has been very good to me.” And in common parlance you hear much about God. But, ah, my dear Hearer, well as

that may be, it is all ignorant misunderstanding until you see God in Christ Jesus! For you unconverted people there can be nothing about God that can be comforting to you until you see Him revealing Himself by His own Son, the great Sacrifice for sin. "Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." No man comes unto the Father but by Christ. He that has seen Christ has seen the Father, but he who knows not God, knows not Christ, however frequently he may speak about Him. So that it is God seen through Jesus Christ to whom we are reconciled and in Him we joy, in the reconciled God who has at His side—

"The Man of love, the Crucified"

—of whom we sang just now.

Furthermore, we only joy in God being reconciled to us *when we have been, ourselves, viewing the Lord Jesus Christ*. Is there anything that makes a man love God like a sight of Christ? You may, when you are well trained, love God for all His goodness in Creation and Providence, but the heart is never truly tuned to love until it comes to Calvary. And I believe that afterwards, the waves of love never rise to Atlantic billows except when the wind blows from Calvary. When I behold Him who is the Best-Beloved of the Father, an Infant in His mother's arms, a sorrowing Man toiling over the rough roads of Palestine. When I behold Him as a bound Victim led to the slaughter and willingly yielding up His life in a cruel and shameful death that He may redeem us from the curse of the Law of God, then my heart clings to the heart of God as a child clings to its mother! Blessed be God the Father, since we have beheld God the Son and our hearts have been renewed by God the Holy Spirit!

We can joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no joy in God except as you see Jesus Christ intimately knit with Him and with yourself. Do not try to go to God by any other way than through this golden gate of the great Sacrifice of your redeeming Lord! But just now sit here and joy in God—and then go home and still joy in God. Perhaps when you reach your door there will be some bad news for you. If so, still joy in God. Possibly when you get home there will be an ungodly husband, there, and no peace or comfort in the house—still joy in God! Perhaps when you sit down to your evening meal the question may arise, "Where will the next one be found?" Yet still joy in God. Say, with the Prophet, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

If you have, between here and Heaven, no source of joy but your God, it shall be with you as when the rock was smitten in the wilderness and the stream followed Israel through all their journeys! But if you have all that heart could wish for and yet do not joy in God, you have not tasted what true joy is—you have only the pretense and the mockery of an adulterated delight. But if you get just a sip of true joy in God, though it is but as a drop by the way until you get to the wellhead in the home country, you shall be cheered and comforted in a manner that worldlings cannot understand! I would that some of you would come and trust the

Lord. You cannot joy in Him till you have trusted Him. But if you trust in Jesus as your Savior, you shall go onward, step by step, till even God Himself shall be an infinite delight to your every thought! God bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 8:19-39.**

Verse 19. *For the earnest expectation of the creation waits 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 creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who has 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.* 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. "The creation 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 groans and travails 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 is born again, the body is not. "The body is dead," says the Apostle, in the 10th 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 sees, why does 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 helps 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 helps 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, makes intercession for us with groans 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 best 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 we become more fit for the glory which shall be revealed in us.

27. *And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit because He makes 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 us. Hence the success of prayer is no difficulty to the man who believes in predestination. 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 first-born 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 First-Born 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 *lie*—a plain Truth of God puffed into a lie! There is such a thing as free agency and we would make a great mistake if we forgot it. But there is also such a thing as Free Grace and we would make a still greater mistake if we limited 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 is 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 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? God that justifies? 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 condemns? 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. *Yes, and furthermore, is risen again who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Will He blow hot and cold—first intercede for them and then condemn them? It cannot be!*

35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? “Quis separabit?” That should 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 Your 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. *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Blessed, forever blessed, be His holy name! Amen.*

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

HONEY FROM A LION

NO. 1591

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 3, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“But the free gift is not like the offense For if through the offense of one, many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many.”
Romans 5:15.***

THIS text affords many openings for controversy. It can be made to bristle with difficulties. For instance—there might be a long discussion as to the manner in which the fall of Adam can justly be made to affect the condition of his posterity. When this is settled, there might arise a question as to the exact way in which Adam's fault is connected with ourselves—whether by imputation of its sin, or in some other form. And then there might be further dispute as to the limit of the evil resulting from our first parents' offense and the full meaning of the Fall, original sin, natural depravity and so forth. There would be another splendid opportunity for a great battle over the question of the extent of the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ—whether it covers, as to persons, the whole area of the rain of the Fall or whether, in fact, full atonement has been made for all mankind or only for the elect.

It would be easy in this way to set up a thorn-hedge and keep the sheep out of the pasture, or, to use another metaphor, to take up so much time in pelting each other with the stones as to leave the fruit untasted! I have, at this time, neither the inclination nor the mental strength either to suggest or to remove the difficulties which are so often the amusement of unpractical minds. I feel more inclined to chime in with that ancient father of the Church who declined controversy in a wise and explicit manner. He had been speaking concerning the things of God and found himself, at length, confounded by a certain clamorous disputant who shouted again and again, “Hear me! Hear me!” “No,” said the father, “I will not hear you, nor shall you hear me, but we will both be quiet and hear what our Lord Jesus Christ has to say.”

And so we will not go, at this time, to listen to this side nor to that, but we will bow our ears to hear what the Scripture, itself, has to say apart from all the noise of sect and party. My objective shall be to find out in the text that which is practically of use to us; that which may save the unconverted; that which may comfort and build up those of us who are brought into a state of reconciliation with God, for I have of late been so often shut up in my sick chamber that when I *do* come forth, I must be more than ever eager for fruit to the Glory of God!

We shall not, therefore, dive into the deeps with the hope of finding pearls, for these could not feed hungry men, but we will navigate the surface of the sea and hope that some favoring wind will bear us to the desired haven with a freight of corn which to supply the famishing. May the Holy Spirit bless the teaching of this hour to the creation and nourishment of saving faith.

I. The first observation from the text is this—THE APPOINTED WAY OF OUR SALVATION IS BY THE FREE GIFT OF GOD. We were ruined by the Fall, but we are saved by a free gift. The text tells us that “the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many.” “Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.” “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Although this doctrine is well known and is taught in our synagogues every Sabbath, yet this grand essential Truth of God is often enough forgotten or ignored so that it is necessary to repeat it again and again.

I could wish that every time the clock struck it said, “By Grace are you saved.” I could wish that there were a trumpet voice ringing out at day-break both on sea and land—over the whole round globe—the words, “By Grace are you saved.” As Martin Luther said of a certain other Truth of God, so say I of this, “You so constantly forget it that I feel inclined to take the Bible and beat it over your heads that you may feel it and keep it in remembrance.” Men do not naturally love the Doctrines of Grace and, therefore, they cast them out of their minds as much as possible. The larger portion of mankind do not believe that salvation is of Grace—another part of them profess to believe it but do not understand its meaning—and many who *do* understand it have never yielded to it or embraced it. Happy are they who belong to the remnant according to the election of Grace, for they know right well the joyful sound and they walk in the light of the glory of the Grace of God which is in Christ Jesus!

Observe that salvation is a free gift, that is to say, it is bestowed upon men by God without regard to any merit, supposed or real. Grace has to do with the guilty. Mercy, in the very nature of things, is not a fit gift for the righteous and deserving, but for the undeserving and sinful! When God deals out to men His gracious salvation, they are regarded by Him as lost and condemned and He treats them as persons who have no claim upon Him whatever, to whom nothing but His free favor can bring deliverance. He saves them, not because He perceives that they have done anything that is good, or have hopeful traits of character, or form resolutions to aspire to something better—but simply because He is merciful and delights to exercise His Grace and manifest His free favor and infinite love.

It is according to the Nature of God to pity the miserable and forgive the guilty, “for He is good and His mercy endures forever.” God has a reason for saving men, but that reason does not lie in man’s merit in any degree whatever. This is clear from the fact that He often begins His work of Grace upon those who can least of all be credited with goodness. It was said of our Lord, “This man receives sinners,” and the saying was most emphatically true! Sovereign Grace selects such as Rahab the harlot, Manasseh the persecutor and Saul of Tarsus, the mad zealot against Christ—such as these have been seized upon by Grace and arrested in infinite love, that in them the Lord might manifest the power and plenitude of His mercy! Salvation is a work which is begun by the pure, unpurchased, free favor of God and in the same spirit it is carried on and perfected.

Pure Grace, which lays the foundation, also brings forth the top stone. Salvation is also brought to men irrespective of any merit which God foresees will be in them. Foresight of the *existence* of Grace cannot be the *cause* of Grace! God Himself does not foresee that there will be any good

thing in any man except what He foresees that He will put there! What is the reason, then, why He determines that He will put it there? That reason, so far as we are informed, is this, "He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy." The Lord determines to display His love and set on active work His attribute of Grace and, therefore, does He save men according to the good pleasure of His will. If there is salvation given to men upon the foresight of what they are yet to be, it is clear it is a matter of works and debt—not of Grace.

But the Scripture is most decided that it is not of works, but of unmingled Grace, for, says the Apostle, "If by Grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it is of works, then is it no more Grace: otherwise work is no more work." Our text clearly expresses that salvation is "the free gift" and that it comes to us by "the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ." I go a little further in trying to explain how salvation is a free gift, by saying that it is given without reference to conditions which imply any reward. But I hear one murmur, "God will not give Grace to men who do not repent." I answer, God gives men Grace *to* repent and no man *ever* repents till first Grace is *given* him by which he is led to repentance.

"God will not give His Grace to those who do not believe," says one. I reply, God gives Grace to men by which they are *moved* to believe and it is through the Grace of God that they are brought into the faith of Jesus Christ. You may say, if you please, that repentance and faith are conditions of salvation and I will not quarrel with you. But please remember that they are not conditions in the sense of *deserving* anything from God! They may be conditions of *receiving*, but they are not conditions of *purchasing*, for salvation is without money and without price! We are expressly told that salvation "is of faith, that it might be by Grace"—for faith is *not* to be numbered with works of the Law, to which the idea of *merit* may be attached.

Faith is as far as the poles asunder from claiming anything of God by way of debt. Faith comes as a poor, undeserving thing and simply trusts the free mercy of God. It never attempts to wear the crown, or grasp a particle of praise. The Believer never can be a boaster, for boasting is excluded by the law of faith. If a Christian should begin to boast, it would be because his believing is failing and his evil nature is coming to the front, for faith is, of all the Divine Graces, most self-denying! Her song is always, Non nobis Domine, "Not unto us, but unto Your name give praise." While, therefore, the Word of God assures us that unless we repent, we shall all likewise perish and that if we believe not in Jesus Christ we shall die in our sins, it would have us, at the same time, know that there is no *merit* in repenting or believing, but Grace reigns in God's acceptance of these Graces!

We are not to regard the requirement of faith, repentance and confession of sin as at all militating against the fullness and freeness of Divine Grace, since, in the first place, both repentance, faith and true confession of sin are all *gifts* of Grace and, in the next place, they have no merit in themselves, being only such things as honest men should render when they know that they have erred and are promised forgiveness. To be sorry for my sin is no recompense for having sinned! And to believe God to be true is no work for which I may demand a reward! If, then, I am saved

through faith, it is of the pure mercy of God and for that reason, alone, that pardon comes to me. Beloved, so far is God from giving salvation to men as a matter of reward and debt and, therefore, bestowing it only upon the good and excellent, that He is pleased to bestow that salvation over the head of sin and in the teeth of rebellion! As I said before, mercy and Grace are for the sinful, for none others need them, and God's Grace comes to us when we are far off by wicked works. "God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Free Grace breaks forth like a mighty flood and sweeps in torrents over the hills of our transgressions, rising above the high alps of our presumptuous sins. Twenty cubits upward does this sea of Grace prevail till the tops of the mountains of iniquity are covered. The Lord passes by transgression, iniquity, sin and remembers not the iniquity of His people because He delights in mercy. Almsgiving needs a pauper and Grace needs a sinner! There is no opportunity for forgiveness where there is no offense. If men are meritorious, how can God be gracious to them? In such a case it will be enough for Him to be just. When good works can put in a valid claim, peace and Heaven can be obtained by the rules of debt. But since it is clear that eternal life is the gift of pure favor, you need not marvel when I say that Grace comes to men leaping over the mountains of their iniquities.

Abounding mercy delights to blot out abounding sin and it will never lack for opportunity to do its pleasure. There is no lack of occasions for Grace in this poor fallen world—and of all the places where there is most room I know of one spot not far from here where there is a grand opportunity for infinite mercy and super abounding Grace to exercise their power. Here is the spot—it is this treacherous, guilty heart of mine! I think, my Brothers, you know of another spot that is very like it! And you, my Sisters, you, too, can say, "Wondrous mercy! Surely there is room for all its heights and depths to be shown in this sinful soul of mine." Yes, and it will be shown, too, if you can but look for it through Christ Jesus—for it is the delight of God's Grace to flow into unlikely places!

Mercy is the Glory of God and He loves to bestow it on those who least deserve it. We are saved by Grace, free Grace, pure Grace! Oh, what a revelation of Grace and mercy will be seen when all the blood-washed race shall gather safely around the eternal Throne of God and sing their hallelujahs to Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood!

Note one thing more concerning this plan of salvation—that all this Grace comes to us through the one Man, Jesus Christ. I sometimes hear people talking about a "one man ministry." I know what they mean, but I know, also, that I am saved by a one Man ministry, even by One who trod the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Him. I was lost by a one man ministry, when father Adam fell in Eden, but I was saved by a one Man ministry when the blessed Lord Jesus Christ bore my sins in His own body on the Cross. O matchless ministry of love, when the Lord from Heaven came into the world and took upon Himself our nature and became in all respects human! And being found in fashion as a Man, was obedient to death, even the death of the Cross! It is through the one Man, Christ Jesus, that all the Grace of God comes streaming down to all the chosen.

Mercy flows to no man except through the one appointed channel, Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. Get away from Christ and you leave the highway of God's everlasting love—pass this door and you shall find no entrance into life! You must drink from this conduit, or you must thirst forever and ask in vain for a drop of water to cool your parched tongue! "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." All the infinite mercy of God and love of God and God, Himself, is Love—is concentrated in the Person of the well-beloved Son of the Highest and unto Him be Glory forever. Sing unto Him, you angels! Chant His praises, you redeemed! For by the one Man, Christ Jesus, the whole company of the elect have been delivered from the wrath to come, to the praise of the Glory of the Grace of God!

Thus I have tried to set before you God's way of salvation.

II. Starting aside, as it may seem, from the current of our thoughts, but only with the view of coming back to it with a forcible argument, we next note that IT IS CERTAIN THAT GREAT EVILS HAVE COME TO US BY THE FALL. Paul speaks in this text of ours of the "*offense*," which word may be read, the "*Fall*," which was caused by the stumbling of our father Adam. Our fall in Adam is a type of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, but the type is not completely able to set forth all the work of Christ—hence the Apostle says, "But the free gift is not like the offense For if through the offense of one many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many."

It is certain, then, that we were heavy losers by the offense of the first father and head of our race. I am not going into details and particulars, but it is clear that we have lost the Garden of Eden and all its delights, privileges and immunities, its communion with God and its freedom from death. We have lost our first honor and health and we have become the subjects of pain and weakness, suffering and death—this is the effect of the Fall. A desert now howls where otherwise a garden would have smiled. Through the sin of Adam we have been born under conditions which are far from being desirable, heirs to a heritage of sorrow.

Our griefs have been alleviated by the bounty of God, but still we are not born under such conditions as might have been ours had Adam remained in his integrity and kept his first estate. We came into the world with a bias towards evil. Those of us who have any knowledge of our own nature must confess that there is, in us, a strong tendency towards sin which is mixed up with our very being. This is not derived solely from faults of education, or from the imitation of others, but there is a bent within us in the wrong direction and this has been there from our birth. Alas, that it should be so, but so it is! In addition to having this tendency to sin, we are made liable to death—no, not only liable, but we are sure, in due time, to bow our heads beneath the fatal stroke.

Only two of the human race have escaped death, but the rest have left their bodies here to mold back into mother earth and unless the Lord comes speedily, we expect that the same thing will happen to these bodies of ours. While we live, we know that the sweat of our brow must pay the price of our bread. We know that our children must be born with pangs and travail. We know that we, ourselves, must return to the dust from where we are taken, for dust we are and unto dust we must return. O

Adam, you did a sad day's work for us when you listened to the voice of your wife and eat of the forbidden tree! The world has no more a Paradise anywhere, but everywhere it has the place of wailing and the field of the dead.

Where can you go and not find traces of the first transgression in the sepulcher and its moldering bones? Every field is fattened with the dust of the departed—every wave of the sea is tainted with atoms of the dead. Scarcely blows a March wind down our streets but it sweeps aloft the dust either of Caesar or his slaves, of ancient Briton, or modern Saxon, for the globe is worm-eaten by death! Sin has scarred, marred and spoiled this creation by making it subject to vanity through its offense. Thus terrible evils have come to us by an act in which we had no hand—we were not in the Garden of Eden, we did not incite Adam to rebellion—and yet we have become sufferers through no deed of ours. Say what you will about it, the fact remains and cannot be escaped from.

This sad truth leads me on to the one which is the essence of the text and constitutes my third observation.

III. FROM THE FALL WE INFER THE MORE ABUNDANT CERTAINTY THAT SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH CHRIST JESUS SHALL COME TO BELIEVERS. If all this mischief has happened to us through the fall of Adam why should not immense blessings flow to us by the work of Christ? Through Adam's transgression we lost Paradise, that is certain. But if anything can be more certain, we may, with greater positiveness, declare that the Second Adam will restore the ruin of the first! If through the offense of one man many are dead, much more the Grace of God and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, shall abound and has abounded unto many.

Settle in your minds, then, that the fall of Adam has worked us great damage and then be as much assured that the life, death and Resurrection of Christ, in which we had no hand whatever, must do us great service! Believing in Christ Jesus, it becomes beyond all measure sure to us that we are blessed in Him, seeing that it is already certain that through the fall of Adam we have become subject to sorrow and death. For, first, this appears to be more delightful to the heart of God. It must be fully according to His gracious Nature that salvation should come to us through His Son. I can understand that God, having so arranged it that the human race should be regarded as one and should stand or fall before Him in one man, should carry out the arrangement to its righteous end and allow the consequences of sin to fall upon succeeding generations of men—but yet I know that He takes no pleasure in the death of any and finds no delight in afflicting mankind.

When the first Adam transgressed, it was inevitable that the consequences of his transgression should descend to his posterity and yet I can imagine a perfectly holy mind questioning whether the arrangement would be carried out. I can conceive of angels saying to one another, "Will all men die through this entrance of sin into the world? Can it be that the innumerable sons of Adam will all suffer from his disobedience?" But I cannot imagine any question being raised about the other point, namely, the result of the work of our Lord Jesus. If God has so arranged it that in the Second Adam men rise and live, it seems to me most gloriously consistent

with His gracious Nature and infinite Love that it should come to pass that all who believe in Jesus should be saved through Him.

I cannot imagine angels hesitating and saying, "Christ has been born; Christ has lived; Christ has died; these men have had nothing to do with that—will God save them for the sake of His Son?" "Oh, no," they must have felt, as they saw the Babe born at Bethlehem, as they saw Him living His perfect life and dying His atoning death, "God will bless those who are in Christ! God will save Christ's people for Christ's sake." As for ourselves, we are sure that if the Lord executes judgment, which is His strange work, He will certainly carry out *mercy*, which is His delight! If He kept to the representative principle when it involved consequences which gave Him no pleasure, we may be abundantly assured that He will keep to it now that it will involve nothing but good to those concerned in it.

Here, then, is the argument—"For if through the offense of one many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many." This assurance becomes stronger, still, when we think that it seems more inevitable that men should be saved by the death of Christ than that men should be lost by the sin of Adam. It might seem possible that, after Adam had sinned, God might have said, "Notwithstanding this Covenant of Works, I will not lay this burden upon the children of Adam." But it is not possible that after the eternal Son of God has become Man and has bowed His head to death, God should say, "Yet after all I will not save men for Christ's sake."

Stand and look at the Christ upon the Cross and mark those wounds of His and you will become absolutely certain that sin can be pardoned, no, *must* be pardoned to those who are in Christ Jesus! Those flowing drops of blood demand with a voice that cannot be denied that iniquity should be put away. If the voice of Abel crying from the ground was prevalent, how much more the blood of the Only-begotten Son of God, who, through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot! It cannot be, O God, that You should despise or forget the Sacrifice on Calvary! Grace must flow to sinners through the bleeding Savior, seeing that death came to men through their transgressing progenitor.

I do not know whether I shall get into the very soul of this argument as I desire, but to me it is very sweet to look at the difference as to the causes of the two effects. Look, now, at the occasion of our ruin—"the offense of one." The one man transgresses and you and I and all of us come under sin, sorrow and death. What are we told is the fountain of these streams of woe? The one action of our first parents. Far be it from me to say a word to depreciate the greatness of their crime, or to raise a question as to the justice of its consequences. I think no one can have a more decided opinion upon that point than I have, for the offense was very great and the principle which led to our participation in its results is a just one and, what is more, is fraught with the most blessed consequences to fallen men, since it has left them a door of hope of their rising by the same method which led to their fall.

Yet the sin which destroyed us was the transgression of a finite being and cannot be compared, in power, with the Grace of the Infinite God! It was the sin of a moment and, therefore, cannot be compared for force and energy with the everlasting purpose of Divine Love. If, then, the comparatively feeble fountain of Adam's sin sends forth a flood which drowns the

world in sorrow and death, what must be the boundless *blessing* poured forth from the Infinite source of Divine Grace? The Grace of God is like His Nature—Omnipotent and unlimited! God has not a measure of love, but He *is* Love—love to the uttermost dwells in Him! God is not only gracious to this degree or to that, but He is gracious beyond measure—we read of “the exceeding riches of His Grace.” He is “the God of all Grace” and His mercy is great above the heavens.

Our largest conceptions fall far short of the loving kindness and pity of God, for, “His merciful kindness is great towards us.” As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His thoughts above our thoughts in the direction of Grace! If, then, my Brothers and Sisters, the narrow fountain which yielded bitter and poisonous waters has sufficed to slay the myriads of the human race, how much more shall the river of God which is full of water, even the river of the Water of Life which proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb, supply life and bliss to every man that believes in Christ Jesus? Thus says Paul, “For if by one man’s offense 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.”

That is the argument of the text and to me it seems to be a very powerful one, sufficient to dash out the very life of unbelief and enable every penitent man to say, “I see what I have lost in Adam, but I also see how much I obtain through Christ Jesus, my Lord, when I humbly yield myself to Him.” Furthermore, I would have you note the difference of the channels by which the evil and the good were severally communicated to us. In each case it was, “by one,” but what a difference in the persons! We fell through Adam, a name not to be pronounced without reverence, seeing he is the chief Patriarch of the race and the children should honor the parent. Let us not think too little of the head of the human family!

Yet what is the first Adam as compared with the second Adam? He is but of the earth, earthy, but the second Man is the Lord from Heaven! Adam was, at best, a mere man, but our Redeemer counts it not robbery to be equal with God. Surely, then, if Adam, with that puny hand of his could pull down the house of our humanity and hurl this ruin on our first estate, that greater Man, who is also the Son of God, can fully restore us and bring back to our race the golden age! If one man could ruin, by his fault, surely an infinitely greater Man in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily can restore us by the abounding Grace of God! And look, my Brethren, what this man did. Adam commits one fault and spoils us—but Christ’s works and achievements are not one, but many as the stars of Heaven!

Look at that life of obedience—it is like a crown set with all manner of priceless jewels—all the virtues are in it and it is without flaw in any point. If one sinful action of our first Covenant head destroys, shall not a whole life of holiness, on the part of our second Covenant Representative be accepted for us? But what is more, Adam did but eat of the forbidden fruit, but our Lord Jesus *died*, pouring out His soul unto death, bearing the sin of His people upon Himself. Such a death must have more force in it than the sad deed of Adam! Shall it not save us? Is there any comparison between the one act of rebellion in the Garden and the matchless deed of superlative obedience upon the Cross of Calvary which crowned a life of service?

Am I sure that the act of disobedience has done me damage? Then I am much more certain that the glorious act of self-sacrifice must be able to save me and I cast myself upon it without question or misgiving! The passion of God's Only-Begotten must have in it Infallible virtue for the remission of sin! Upon the perfect work of Jesus my soul hangs at this moment, without a suspicion of possible failure and without the addition of the shadow of a confidence anywhere else. The good which may be supposed to be in man—his best words and holiest actions—are all to me as the small dust of the balance as to any title to the favor of God. My sole claim for salvation lies in that one Man, the gift of God, who by His life and death has made atonement for my sins. And that one Man, Christ Jesus, is a sure foundation and a nail upon which we may hang all the weight of our eternal interests.

I feel the more confidence in the certainty of salvation by Christ because of my firm persuasion of the dreadful efficacy of Adam's fall. Think awhile and it will seem strange, yet strangely true, that the hope of Paradise *regained* should be argued and justified by the fact of Paradise *lost*, that the absolute certainty that one man ruined us should give us an abounding guarantee that one glorious Man has in very deed effectually saved all those who, by faith, accept the efficacy of His work.

Now, if you have grasped my thought and have drunk into the Truth of the text, you may derive a great deal of comfort from it and it may suggest to you many painful things which will from now on yield you pleasure. A babe is born into the world amid great anxiety because of its mother's pains, but while these go to prove how the consequences of the Fall are still with us, according to the Word of the Lord to Eve, "in sorrow shall you bring forth children," they also assure us that the Second Adam can abundantly bring us bliss through a second birth by which we are begotten again unto a lively hope! You go into the field and mark the thistle and tear your garments with a thorn—these prove the curse, but also preach the Gospel. Did not the Lord God say, "Cursed is the ground for your sake; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you." Through no fault of ours, for we were not present when the first man offended, our fields reluctantly yield their harvests.

Well, inasmuch as we have seen the thorns and the thistles produced by the ground because of one Adam, we may expect to see a blessing on the earth because of the Second and greater Adam! Therefore with unbounded confidence do I believe the promise—"You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

Do you wipe the sweat from your brow as you toil for your livelihood? Did not the Lord say, "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread"? Ought not your labor to be an argument by which your faith shall prove that in Christ Jesus there remains a rest for the people of God? In toiling unto weariness, you feel that Adam's fall is at work upon you. He has turned you into a tiller of the ground, or a keeper of sheep, or a worker in metals—but in any case he has made you wear a yoke. Then say to the Lord Jesus, "Blessed Second Adam, as I see and feel what the first man

did, I am abundantly confident as to what You can accomplish. I will therefore rest in You with all my heart.”

When you observe a funeral passing slowly along the street, or enter the churchyard and notice hillock after hillock above the lowly beds of the departed, you see set forth before your eyes the result of the Fall. You ask, “Who slew all these? And at what gate did the Destroyer enter this world? Did the first Adam, through his disobedience, lift the latch for death?” It is surely so! Therefore I believe with even greater assurance that the Second Adam can give life to these dry bones, can awake all these sleepers and raise them in newness of life! If so weak a man as Adam, by one sin, has brought in Death to pile the carcasses of men, heaps upon heaps, and make the earth reek with corruption, much more shall the glorious Son of God, at His coming, call them again to life and immortality and renew them in the image of God!

How blessed are those words—“Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept, for since by man came death, by Man came, also, the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 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: and as is the heavenly, such are they, also, that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the Image of the heavenly.”

Is not this killing a lion and finding honey in its carcass? “Out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong comes forth sweetness,” when from the fact of the Fall we derive a strong assurance of our restoration by Christ Jesus! Time fails me, otherwise I meant to have dwelt somewhat at length upon the last head which can now only be cursorily noticed.

IV. It seems certain that if from the fall of Adam such great results flow, GREATER RESULTS MUST FLOW FROM THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE GIFT BY GRACE, WHICH IS BY ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST. Brothers and Sisters, suppose that Adam had never sinned and we were, at this moment, unfallen beings, yet our standing would have remained in jeopardy, seeing that at any moment Adam might transgress and so pull us down. Thousands of years of obedience might not have ended the probation, seeing there is no such stipulation in the original Covenant! You and I, therefore, would be holding our happiness by a very precarious tenure—we could never glory in absolute security and eternal life as we now do in Christ Jesus!

We have now lost everything in Adam and so the uncertain tenure has come to an end. Our lease of Eden and its joys has altogether expired, but we that have believed have obtained an inheritance which we hold by an indisputable and never-failing title which Satan, himself, cannot dispute—“All things are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” The Lord Jesus Christ has finished the work by which His people are saved and that work has been certified by His Resurrection from the dead! There are now no “ifs” in the Covenant! There is not a “perhaps” in it from beginning to end! There are no chances of failure caused by unfinished conditions in it. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Do you say, “I believe he shall be saved if he_____”?

Do you dare to add an, “if,” where God has placed none? Remember what will happen to you if you add anything to the book of God’s testimony! No, it is written, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that trust in Christ Jesus.” Thus we have obtained a surer standing than we could have had under the first Adam and our hymn is true to the letter when it sings—

***“He raised me from the deeps of sin,
The gates of gaping Hell,
And fixed my standing more secure
Than ‘twas before I fell.”***

Our Lord has not only undone the mischief of the Fall, but He has given us more than we have lost! Even as the Psalmist says, “Then I restored that which I took not away.” By the great transgression of Adam we lost our life in him, for so ran the threat—“In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die.” But in Christ Jesus we live, again, with a higher and nobler life, for the new life being the direct work of the Spirit and being sustained by feeding upon the Person of the Lord Jesus, is higher than the life of innocence in the Garden of Eden.

It is of a higher kind in many respects, of which we cannot now speak particularly, but this much we may say, “The first Adam was made a living soul, the Second Adam is a quickening Spirit.” The Lord Jesus has also brought us into a nearer relationship to God than we could have possessed by any other means. We were God’s creatures by creation, but now we are His sons by adoption! In a certain narrow sense we were the offspring of God, but now by the exaltation of the Man, Christ Jesus, the Representative of us all, we are brought into the nearest possible relationship to God. Jesus sits upon the Throne of God and manhood is thus lifted up next to Deity—the nearest akin to the Eternal is a Man, Christ Jesus, the Son of the Highest. We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones and, therefore, we share His honors and participate in His triumphs!

In Christ Jesus, man is made to have dominion over all the works of God’s hands and the redeemed are raised up together with Christ and made to sit in the heavenly places with Him, above all principalities and powers and all things that are, for these are the favorites of Heaven, the beloved of the great King! No creatures can equal perfected men—they rise superior, even, to the angels who have never sinned, for in perfected men the riches of the Glory of God’s Grace is more fully seen than in pure, un-fallen spirits! O Beloved, has not the Lord Jesus Christ done much for us and ought we not to expect that it should be so, for the Grace of God and the gift by Grace by the Man Christ Jesus are infinitely stronger forces than Adam’s sin?

There must be much more sap in the Man, the Branch, than in that poor plant, the one man who was made from the dust of the earth. Oh the bliss which opens up before us now! We have lost Paradise, but we shall possess that of which the earthly Garden was but a lowly type—we might have eaten of the luscious fruits of Eden, but now we eat of the Bread of Life which came down from Heaven! We might have heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, but now, like Enoch, we may walk with God after a nobler and closer fashion! We are

now capable of a joy which unfallen spirits could not have known—the bliss of pardoned sin, the Heaven of deep conscious obligation to eternal mercy! The bonds which bind redeemed ones to their God are the strongest which exist. What a joy it will be to love the Lord more than any other of His creatures and assuredly we shall do so!

Do not think that this is an unwarrantable assertion, for I feel sure that it is the Truth of God. Do you not read in the Gospels of a woman who washed the Savior's feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head and anointed them with ointment? Did not the Savior say that she loved much because she had been much forgiven? I take it that the same general principle will apply to all places—to eternity as well as to time—and, therefore, I believe that forgiven sinners will have a love to God and to His Christ such as cherubim and seraphim never felt! Gabriel cannot love Jesus as a forgiven man will do! Those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb will be nearer and dearer to Him and He will be nearer and dearer to them than all the ministering spirits before the Throne of God, for He took upon Him our Nature and not theirs!

Glory be unto You, O Christ! As I look into the awful deeps of Adam's fall, I tremble, but when I lift up my eyes, again, to the eternal heights where You have raised me by Your passion and Your Resurrection, I feel strengthened by the former vision! I magnify the infinite Grace of God and believe in it unstaggeringly! Oh, that I had power to magnify it with fit words and proper speech, but these are not with me. Accept the feeling of the heart when the language of the lips confesses its failure. Accept it, Lord, through the Well-Beloved! Amen.

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THE ONE AND THE MANY

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*"The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift
is of many offenses unto justification."
Romans 5:16.*

I am not going to speak at length about the Doctrine of the Federal Headship of the first Adam and of the second Adam, which is, to my mind, indisputably taught in this chapter. I have heard a great many objections to that Truth of God which appear to me to be plainly revealed in Scripture, namely, that we were all represented by Adam in the Garden of Eden and that when he sinned, he so sinned as to sin *representatively*—and *we fell* by virtue of his disobedience. Certain it is that we all come into a world that is adapted to sinners—where the babe is no sooner born than it begins to suffer pain—where winter's frosts, summer's heats and changes of all kinds constantly try us—a world not at all adapted for perfect beings. God regards us from our very birth as sinful and He treats us as such. Now, whatever quibbles there may be about that Doctrine of Representation and Federal Headship, it is a fact, and I would remind objectors that it is, under many aspects, a very blessed fact! When the angels fell, keeping not their first estate, there was never any proposal to ransom them, for each of those spiritual beings fell in his own individual capacity and fell hopelessly. But the human race was a *unit* represented by the one head, Adam.

And though to us it is a most unhappy thing that we should all have fallen by virtue of our being represented by Adam, yet here is the mercy of it—it left a way open by which we might be restored, for, if we fell by one Adam, there remained a possibility of our rising by another Adam! If the disobedience of one representative was the first cause of our being regarded as sinners, then it became possible that the obedience of another and still greater Representative might enable God to regard us as righteous and treat us as such! I shall not quibble at what is so greatly to my own personal advantage—I rather bow before what I cannot understand and accept it because I see how it is now possible for me to be saved forever and ever! "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." I dare not question the perfect justice of my fall in Adam. I should be most unwise if I did, for by so doing I might cast some doubt upon the justice of my rising in the second Adam—and what other way of rising is there possible for me, or possible for any of us?

Entering not, however, into any of the disputes that have arisen around this Truth of God, I simply allude to the fact, most dreadful and terrible, that in Adam we died, because in Adam's sin we were regarded as sinners. And I rejoice in that second fact which covers and meets the first, that in Christ we live, inasmuch as Christ's righteousness is the property of all who are truly in Him. He was righteous on their behalf and they find in Him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption!

Our text alludes to certain differences between the consequences of Adam's representation and that of Christ—"The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification." I shall speak about four things as the Holy Spirit shall graciously guide me.

I. the first is, THE VENON OF SIN—"The judgment was by one to condemnation." By one man, by one sin, by one act of transgression, "The judgment was to condemnation."

Notice, dear Friends, that *Adam's offense was one*. True, there were a great many sins wrapped up in that one—it would be almost impossible to mention any sin which did not lie asleep, or which was not found in embryo, within that one act of tasting the forbidden fruit. Yet it was but *one* offense. It is looked at by those who have no spiritual understanding as a very small matter, just as at this day men still make light of sin and regard disobedience to the will of God as being a mere trifle. Yet that one offense has ruined us all. When he, who committed it, fell—

"Then I, and you, and all of us fell down."

Inasmuch as he was the parent of us all, he communicated to all his offspring a tendency to sin. And all his descendants became subject to the weary woes of life and to the sure penalty of death. Think of the mischief that one sin can do—Adam's disobedience was but one offense, yet some of its consequences will remain forever!

Note, next, *that one offense brought with it condemnation*. Such is the Law of God—that it does not need to be broken many times to bring condemnation—one breakage of it and the dread sentence is passed. Had you and I committed only one solitary sin—I scarcely like to utter the supposition, for it is so far remote from the truth—but if it were so, he who breaks the Law in any one point has broken it all. It is like a chain and if you file through a single link, you have broken the whole chain. It is like a vase of purest alabaster, of matchless workmanship—if you break it anywhere, you have spoiled it and it can never be offered unto God. One offense brings condemnation! The verdict of, "Guilty," upon one solitary count of the indictment brings upon the convicted criminal the death sentence from the Throne of God. Let no man object to this. If he does, his objecting will not alter the fact. It still stands as a necessary consequence of the righteous Law of God that He will, by no means, spare the guilty, and even one offense brings judgment unto condemnation!

But what I want you to especially think of is that this one sin has such venom in it that it *has brought condemnation and suffering and death upon the whole race of mankind*. Oh, what myriads of men there are in the world! When I traverse this city of five million souls, it appalls

me! It can scarcely be called a city—it is a province, it is a nation! There are two or three nations which, if put together, would not make up as many inhabitants as the population of this wonderful city! Yet, over all this vast population the taint of sin has spread. But what is London compared with all the nations of the globe, the almost innumerable hosts that people this round world? Yet there is not one who bears the countenance of a man upon whom the shadow of the curse has not fallen. Each man must toil for his bread with the sweat upon his brow and, in due time, it must be said to each one of us, “dust you are, and unto dust shall you return.” What has caused all this? It is the *one offense* which has brought judgment unto condemnation upon all!

Just think, for a moment, that this has been the case, not merely with the populations of today, but with *all who have ever lived upon this earth*. Can you count them? As well might you try to number the drops of the morning dew! The world is one vast cemetery—in many places, an Acedama—a field of blood where men have slaughtered one another even by the thousands! But in peaceful times the people have still died! As surely as the leaves fall from the trees in autumn when no rough wind or frost drives them from the bough, so do men die in due season. “Man goes to his long home and the mourners go about the streets.” My imagination would aid my understanding, but, together, they fail to comprehend the hosts on hosts of men and women and children who have died and whose bodies lie buried in the earth, or cover the bottom of the sea. “Who slew all these?” the answer is, “Sin, which brought death into the world.”

It was but a woman’s finger that lifted the latch, but in came that which cannot be expelled till the greater Man shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel and with the voice of God! Death, with all his train of sickness, disease and woe, came in among us by the sin of our first parents. Oh, the venom that there must be in sin! Oh, think not little of it! Children of God, by the blood of the Atonement, I beseech you, think not lightly of sin and, by the terror of that curse which came by one act of rebellion, I entreat you, never trifle with sin! There is a ship lying outside a certain harbor. It has come front Marseilles, but it must not enter the port. There is a panic on the land, the whole town is up in arms, the people will not let the cargo be unloaded, nor allow the mariners to tread our English shore. Why? Because there is cholera on board!

And what is that? Can it be seen with a microscope? I do not know. Perhaps one day the germ of it may be discovered and it may be sufficiently large to reach the human understanding. It may be but a puff of putrid air—a something unseen which lingers in a bale of dirty rags. But will you bring it on shore? No, unless you hate your fellow men and wish to murder them! And every sin contains within it a pest, a plague, an evil a thousand times more terrible than the black death of olden times—and more awful than the cholera of today! Oh, flee from sin as from a cobra, lest a single look at it should fascinate you and its sting should have envenomed your veins before you are aware of it! O young men and fathers, you who have children, I beseech you, especially, to remember how your sins will be transmitted from generation to generation!

Before I leave this point, I must also remind you that *the sin of a single moment is the sin of eternity*. Mark that well. A man drops a stone into the ocean and, by wondrous perceptive organs, the effect might be discovered on every shore and in every sea. Such is the power of mechanical motion, that the least movement in one place must affect the entire world. But sin has an all but boundless influence. There may be some erroneous teaching that may be spoken to but half-a-dozen people, but you can never recall it. It has gone forth forever and, by that one sin you may have impregnated one person with evil and that one may pass on the error to another—and that one to a thousand—and so mischief is done which only a miracle of Grace can undo! Oh, the horrible nature of sin! I pray you, let your horror of sin make you love that Redeemer who bore its curse in His own body on the tree and who has saved from it you who are Believers in Him! It is no trifle from which Christ has saved you! Sin is a worse disease than leprosy, it is something more than death, for it brings the death that never dies. O Sirs, with tears of penitence, turn your backs on sin! And turn those eyes, yet filled with tears, upon your Savior's bleeding body, and adore and magnify Him that He has delivered you from sin!

II. the second Truth of God in our text which I want to bring before you is concerning the freeness of salvation—"The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification."

I like that expression, "the free gift." Somebody asked, the other day, why we talk about "Free Grace." Of course, that is a redundant expression, for Grace must be free, but there are so many people about, nowadays, who will not understand us if they can help it, so we like to speak, not only so that they can understand us, but so that they cannot misunderstand us if they try! It is for this reason that we say, "Free Grace," that they may have it twice over and hear it with both ears. If we only speak to one of their ears, it may, as men say, go in that one and out the other—but if we speak to both their ears at once, perhaps the Truth of God may meet somewhere in the center of their brain and remain there. We delight to speak of salvation as Paul puts it here, "the free gift." Nothing can be freer than a gift, but, lest there should be any mistake about the freeness, it is spoken of as "the free gift."

What is this free gift? It is, first, the *original gift of Jesus*, God's unspeakable Gift. Surely, nobody can ever be so foolish as to dream that men *deserve* to have Jesus Christ as their Savior! That is a notion which, I should think, would be repudiated by every man who gave it half a thought—that ever fallen men could deserve that God should give up His only-begotten Son to bleed and die for them. No, Jesus must be a Gift, and He must be a free Gift.

And when our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world and gave *Himself for us*, this, also, was a free and undeserved gift of Grace. Does any man think that he has any merit by which he could claim that Christ should assume human form and should live and suffer and, at last, die for him? You must be mad, man, if you harbor such a thought for a single instant! Your pride must have made you insane if you can think that you *deserve* yon Cross and all that it meant to the glorious Victim who was nailed to it! What? Can you see His hands and feet pierced with the cruel

iron and His heart divided by the soldier's spear—and then talk of *your own merit*? It cannot be thought of! You could not *merit* Christ—that would be quite impossible! His death must be a free gift, for none could ever deserve it. So that, on the part of the Father, and of the Son, salvation is a free gift.

It is also as a free gift that *the Holy Spirit applies this salvation to the hearts of men*. You dream, perhaps, that you are to pay to God so much prayer, so much repentance, so much faith, so much promise and resolve, so much reformation and so much future holiness. I tell you, Sirs, you know not God, nor His ways, while you entertain such a foolish notion! Until such talk as that is driven far from you, you do not stand upon ground where God can meet you. He comes not to sell the priceless blessing of His love for your paltry pence of supposed merit and obedience! It must be a free gift if it is to be yours at all.

Salvation is a free gift bestowed upon men without anything on their part to deserve it. When God saves a sinner, it is simply as a sinner that he is saved—not as one who has any point about him that can commend him to God's love. He is just a lost, ruined, undone, condemned soul, apart from the mercy of God! When the Lord comes to deal with a sinner, it is not upon conditions and terms. If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, God saves you—and saves you wholly, completely and unconditionally. I have read that Queen Elizabeth was once asked to pardon a person who had made an attempt upon her life, but who had done it out of loyalty to the Queen of Scots. She felt that she could forgive the man, but she said to him, "Now, if I pardon you, must it not be upon certain conditions?" He answered, quoting from a good, sound Divine, "Grace upon conditions, your Majesty, is no grace at all." He spoke well, and the Queen recognized that it was so, for she said to him, "I pardon you at once without any condition," and she, thereby, made a loyal subject of him for the rest of his life. So the Lord forgives you, poor trembling but trusting soul, without exacting anything of you of any sort whatever!

Further, if you do come just as you are, empty-handed and foul, and receive what He is prepared to give, He does not ask you to give anything of your own in return for His free gift. "But I must be holy," says one. You *shall* be holy and that very holiness will be God's gift to you! "But I must repent." Yes, and you *will* repent, but that penitence will be God's gift to you! "But I must leave my sin." Yes, and you *will* leave your sin, and be glad to leave it, yet that, also, will be God's gift to you—not *your gift to God*. You are simply to be a receiver all the way along. You are a prisoner at the bar, you have not any plea to urge why the judge should not put on the black cap and condemn you to death. If you should search through Heaven, earth and Hell, you could not find one valid reason why God should save you except this one—that He wills to do it by a free gift of His pure, unmerited Grace. He can justly do it through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, for He is both "just and the Justifier of him that believes."

If any of you desire to know how you are to be saved, I tell you again that there is nothing for you to do in order to merit salvation—you have rather to leave off your own doing and to rest in what Christ has done! Have I put the matter plainly enough? No, I have not, for who can make

it so plain that a blind man can see it? God must open the blind man's eyes and *then* he will see it! Yet there it stands, clear and plain—salvation is the free gift of God! It is all of Grace from first to last!

III. now, in the third place, I must speak upon THE LARGENESS OF GOD'S PARDON—"The free gift is of many offenses."

I would like to stand here and preach, not merely for seven days, or seven weeks, but for seven *years*, upon those words which I have just repeated—"The free gift is of many offenses." You would be worn out, I daresay, with listening, but I would let you go home and invite another congregation to fill the house to hear this wondrous story, which can never be fully told!

Think of the *many persons* that Free Grace has saved—the many who are still upon the earth. But, if you are heavy of heart, I ask you to look up beyond that gate of pearl and gaze by faith into Glory. Oh, the myriads, the innumerable myriads, that my spirit eyes behold clustering around the eternal Throne of God! They are as bees that throng about the hive and hang in clusters around the queen bee—or stars that stud the firmament of Heaven, or as the drops of spray that leap from the unnumbered waves in the hour of a great Atlantic storm! Of things impossible to count, I speak no longer! Who shall tell the thousandth part of the stars of Heaven that once were darkness, or of the children of God who once were heirs of wrath?

Think, next, of the *many offenses* which all of these saved sinners must have committed, yet the free Gift has blotted them all out. Turn your mind to contemplate the many kinds of sin that there are in the world and then remember the text—"The free gift is of many offenses." I will not try to go through the black list. I will not begin with the least and mount up to the highest, but this I will say, if you have been a blasphemer, if you have prostituted your body, if you have defiled your soul, if you are covered with scarlet sin from head to foot till not a spot is left clean upon you, still is my text true—"The free gift is of many offenses unto justification." "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," for, "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin." That is a wonderfully sweet, "all!" It includes many kinds of sin—yes, every sort of offense against God.

Think, dear Friends, of the number of times that you have committed any of these sins. I will not ask you to count them, for they are greater in number than the hairs of your head, or the sands on the seashore. You have sinned once, twice, three times—begin with *millions*—and you will be nearer the mark! There are men who seem to make every breath a sin. They breathe out iniquity and every pulse beats in rebellion against the Most High. They are always sinning and yet they are never satisfied—their appetite grows with that it feeds upon. Yet in this text there is hope, even, for such sinners as they are! "The free gift is of many offenses." Poor blackamoor sinner, where are you? This message is meant for you—for you who drip with filth as you go along—you whose speech would make the cheek of modesty to blush! The free gift is for you whose hearts must be a very morgue—a reeking sepulcher of iniquity! Yet even to such as you is my text sent to declare that "the free gift is of many offenses unto justification."

IV. there is sufficient sea room there for us to sail on as long as we please, but I must come to my last point which is—THE PERFECTION OF GOD’S GRACE—“The free gift is of many offenses unto justification.” I have time only to say a very little upon that wonderful theme. May the Holy Spirit, Himself, teach you what it means!

What is justification? You have, perhaps, heard of, “justification by faith,” till you scarcely attach any meaning to that familiar phrase. Well, first, justification is *the reverse of condemnation*. Do you know what condemnation is? I suppose that you never were condemned in a court of law, but were you ever condemned in the court of conscience? Did all your thoughts sit, like a jury, to try your whole life? And did they, with one consent, by the mouth of the foreman, say, “Guilty”? I tell you, Sirs, you do not know how to spell, “justification,” till every letter of the word, “condemnation,” has burnt itself into your soul. These two things must go together—the condemnation, like a harrow, tearing up the earth, or, like a great sub-soil plow, cutting up everything as it runs along. And then comes justification, like a sweet, gentle shower, softening the clods and preparing for the precious grain that shall produce a harvest of glory. Condemnation on account of sin is a very real thing—those who have felt it know that it is. Many a man has been ready to lay violent hands upon himself when he has been under sentence of condemnation! And justification is quite as real.

Justification further means *actual acquittal*. I want you to get that Truth of God into your mind, dear child of God. If you ever were as I was for five long years, as a child, condemnation was very real to you. It was no dream, it was an awful reality. You knew that you were condemned, and your own conscience said that it was so. Well, now, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you may just as certainly and as truly know that you are acquitted and justified—and conscience, taught by the Spirit of God, will confirm the verdict! You are no longer guilty—God regards you, in Christ, as righteous. He pronounces you just and if God says you are just, let not the devil be listened to when he declares that you are unjust! The great work of salvation is fully accomplished! Your chastisement has been borne by Another and your sin is put away forever. “It is finished,” is Christ’s own declaration! The righteousness that God required of you is perfected by Another, even by your great Substitute, and He has wrapped that robe around you and you may wear it. If you are a believer in Jesus, what we sang just now is true concerning you—

**“In Your Surety you are free,
His dear hands were pierced for thee!
With His spotless vesture on,
Holy as the Holy One.”**

“The free gift is of many offenses unto justification.” If you were as guilty as the greatest sinner out of Hell, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, that guilt is all gone! The righteousness of Christ is yours, you are justified before God and, therefore, you are in perfect security and safety now and forever! And you shall forever adore the Divine Grace that has saved such a sinner as you feel yourself to be! God bless you all, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
Jonah 3, 4:1, 2; Romans 5.**

Jonah 3:1, 2. *And the Word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid you.* There is no preaching like that which Gods bids us. The preaching that comes out of our own heads will never go into other men's hearts. If we will keep to the preaching that the Lord bids us, we shall not fail in our ministry.

3. *So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the Word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city of three days' journey.* For those times, Nineveh was "an exceedingly great city," but it is far exceeded in size by this modern Nineveh of London!

4. *And Jonah began to enter into the city on the first day's walk, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!* His message was short and sharp, there was not a word of mercy in it. There was nothing to distract the attention of the hearers from the one point and the one subject—and there is a great deal in that. We may sometimes say too much in a single sermon and give our hearers a field of wheat instead of a loaf of bread. But Jonah said what he was bid to say, no more and no less—"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

5-9. *So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed, nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yes, let them turn, every one, from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?* Note that the only message they had heard was a prophecy of impending judgment! God had sent His servant to warn them of the coming destruction and, since He had warned them that He meant to destroy them, they could infer that He might possibly intend pity towards them should they repent, but there was as yet no verbal declaration of mercy or hope. These people went to God with nothing better to sustain them than this, "Who can tell?"

How much more guilty than these Ninevites are they who refuse to humble themselves before God, even when they have distinct injunctions from God and explicit promises that whoever shall confess and forsake his sins shall find mercy! These men of Nineveh will rise up in judgment against the men of London and the men of this generation, and condemn them, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now men do not repent even at the testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! To despise the Prophet Jonah would have involved these people in certain destruction—of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy who despise the Christ of God and do despite unto the Spirit of Grace!

10. *And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented of the disaster that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not.* There is no change in God, absolutely considered, but there is often an *apparent* change. That which He threatens, while men remain in sin, is not executed upon them when they repent and turn to Him. He is always the same God. From the beginning He has been “the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” If He did not pardon sin when men turn from it with sincere repentance, He would have changed His method of dealing with the penitent. But when He does forgive, it is according to His way from the beginning, for He has always been a tender, compassionate and gracious God.

Jonah 4:1. *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.* A nice Prophet this! Jonah was a man of a somewhat ugly disposition, yet I think he has been misunderstood. He was the true child of Elijah, the Prophet of fire. Elijah was a rough, stern servant of the Lord, who felt that the indignities which had been done to Jehovah deserved instant and terrible punishment. And he seemed almost to wish to see that punishment inflicted, as he accused the people unto God, saying, “the children of Israel have forsaken Your Covenant, thrown down Your altars, and slain Your Prophets with the sword. And I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” He was bravely stern for God and Jonah was cast in a similar mold. He seemed to feel, “I have been sent of God to tell these people that they will be destroyed for their sin. Now, if they are *not* destroyed, it will be thought that I have not preached the truth and, what is far more serious, it will be thought that God does not keep His word.”

His whole thought was taken up with the honor of God, and his own honor as involved in that of the Lord. There are many people, nowadays, who seem to think everything of man and very little of God and, consequently, they fall into grievous errors. Jonah, on the contrary, thought everything of God and very little of men. He fell into an error by so doing and there was a lack of balance of judgment. Yet is Jonah’s error so very seldom committed that I am half inclined to admire it in contrast with the error on the other side! He felt that it would be better for Nineveh to be destroyed than for God’s truthfulness to be jeopardized even for a single moment. God would not have us push even concern for His honor too far, but we are such poor creatures that, very often, when we are within an inch of the right course, we fall into a snare of the enemy. It was so with Jonah—when he was exceedingly displeased and very angry at what God had done in sparing the repentant people of Nineveh.

2. *And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray You, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that You are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and relents of doing evil.* This was as much as if he had said to the Lord, “I went and did Your bidding, and told the Ninevites that they would be destroyed. But I knew in my heart that if they repented, You would not carry out Your threat and now You are too gracious, too kind to these wicked people.” It is a strange thing, is it not,

that Jonah was angry because his message was blessed to his hearers? As a good commentator says, “When Christ sees of the travail of His soul, He is satisfied. But when Jonah saw of the travail of his soul, he was dissatisfied.” There are some men who leave off preaching because they do not succeed—but here was one who was ready to give up because he *did* succeed!

It is strange that such a good man as Jonah was should fall into such a foolish state of mind. But God still has a great many unwise children. You can, any of you, find one if you look in the right place—I mean, in a mirror. We are all foolish at times and it should be remembered that although Jonah was foolish, and wrong in certain respects, there is this redeeming trait in his character—we might never have known the story of his folly if he had not written it himself! It shows what a true-hearted man the Prophet was, that he unveiled his real character in this Book. Biographies of men are seldom truthful because the writers cannot read the hearts of those whom they describe. But if they could read them, they would not like to print what they would see there. But here is a man, inspired of God to write his own biography, and he tells us of this sad piece of folly—and does not attempt in the least degree to mitigate the evil of it. Now turn to a very different portion of Scripture, Romans 5.

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 works 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, “*buts,*” and “*perhapses*”—they believe and are sure! “Knowing that tribulation works 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 works 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 makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.* If you have the Holy Spirit 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 Savior’s Sacrifice, and we feel the love of God poured out among us, what a delightful perfume there is! “Your name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love You.” The way to make us love God is for the love of God to be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit!

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 perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die.* He is “a good man”—benevolent, kind, and tender.

8. *But God commended 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 Brothers 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. Therefore, 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 offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has 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 offenses unto justification. For if by one man’s offense 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 offense 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 offense might abound. But where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound: that as sin has 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 fails me, but I shall dwell upon it somewhat in the sermon.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—563, 406.

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LOST THROUGH ONE—SAVED THROUGH ONE NO. 2744

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1901.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 24, 1879.**

***“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 which came from many offenses resulted in justification.”
Romans 5:16.***

MY one and only desire, at this time, is to help those who are sincerely seeking salvation, that they may find it and find it speedily. Ignorance often hinders sinners from coming to Christ. I know that it did so in my own case. I have often thought that if I had understood the plan of salvation more clearly, I would have accepted Christ sooner than I did. And I feel very little doubt that there are many other anxious enquirers who are a long time looking for what is close to them all the while. They are like Hagar in the wilderness, dying of thirst while a well of water is near their feet. They are asking the way to Zion because they are ignorant of the road.

Even the reading of the Scriptures will sometimes not suffice for the enlightenment of such troubled souls, for they are in the condition of the Ethiopian eunuch, who, in reply to Philip's question, "Do you understand what you read?" said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" It needs, sometimes, only just a few words to cast light upon the passage which is not understood, and then the eyes see it, the understanding perceives it, the heart accepts it and the captive soul is set at liberty! Pray, you who love the Lord, and are rejoicing in free justification through Christ Jesus—pray that the Lord may direct the sin-smitten where to look. Here is Christ lifted up, as the bronze serpent was set upon a pole in the wilderness—but they look to the right or to the left, above or below—anywhere except to the point where we direct them. Divine Spirit, give them sight and direct that sight to the Savior—even while we are speaking about Him!

I am not going to enter into any theological subtleties concerning the imputation of the sin of Adam, or even into any questions about the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. I shall try to speak very simply upon the two points to which the Apostle here refers and to show you that, as we are lost through one, so we are saved through One.

It pleased God, of old, to commence the human race with a single pair of individuals. One man, Adam, was the representative of the entire race

of mankind, for God determined to deal with men in the mass through one chosen representative. In that one man they stood in perfection for a while. How long or how short Adam's obedience was, we cannot tell. There are some who think that he stood scarcely for a day. The Psalmist says, "Man being in honor abides not." But regardless, after a time he was tempted and he fell. He broke the one commandment which was given him as a test—by no means a hard one—by no means savoring of severity or austerity. But he broke it willfully and, straightway, our representative was found to be faulty. He was expelled from Paradise and upon all his seed, seeing that they were all represented in him, there came judgment unto condemnation. The result was that as men grew up and advanced in years, they died—and from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to this present day—it has been the rule that men should die, so that the sin of Adam has prevailed over the race and left to it a life of toil and sorrow to, by-and-by, end in death. This might cause us the deepest gloom if it were all that we had to tell, but, thank God, there is another and a brighter side to the story!

There are some who quibble at the justice of this representative arrangement, but there are many others who believe in it and rejoice over it. I always contend that it is a happy circumstance for us that we did fall and were condemned in the bulk in our representative because, had we, each one of us, been individually put upon the same probation, we would have, to a certainty, all of us fallen! We are, none of us, better than our first parent was. And if the experiment had been repeated in the case of each one of us, it would have ended in the same sorrowful way. But then it must have ended finally and fatally—at least, so we believe, for when the angels fell sinning individually, there was no hope of restoration for them. Whether Infinite Wisdom might not have devised a plan, consistent with justice, by which the angels who had apostatized might have been restored, is more than we can tell. We know that the Lord did not devise any such plan. They individually sinned and, sinning, fell past all hope of recovery. And now they are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day." No Gospel was ever preached to them—no Atonement was ever made for them—they were left to abide in their sinful condition, willingly to persevere in perpetual rebellion against the Most High.

But we, happily, had fallen through a representative and, therefore, we could be restored by another Representative! So, in the infinite wisdom and mercy of God, there came into the world the Second Adam—Man, really Man, though much more than man, for He was also God and He offered an Atonement for the offense committed against the Law of God—such an Atonement that whoever believes in Him has his sins forever put away. Thus we rise in the same manner as we fell, only in a very different Person. We fell in the first Adam—we rise in the Second Adam. We fell in the first Adam, through no fault of our own—we, rise, in the Second Adam, through no merit of our own! It is of the Free Grace of God that we are received back into His favor.

There is much that might be said upon this matter, but I only intend, as I have already said, to touch the points mentioned here. So, first, *let*

us contemplate the contrast which the Apostle here sets before us, and when we have done so, let us adore the manner of the Divine Mercy.

I. First, LET US CONTEMPLATE THE CONTRAST DEPICTED IN THE TEXT.

Paul tells us that, “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” But it is not so with the free gift—one transgression ruined us, but the free gift takes away many transgressions. *It was one offense of one man which brought ruin upon our race.* Adam offended once and by that one offense he brought us all into disfavor with God. And the race became a judged and condemned race, toiling and ultimately dying. Now, if one offense had such power that the whole race was ruined by it, will you not, with all your hearts, adore the wondrous atoning work of Christ, by which many offenses are removed by the free gift of pardon which He has come into the world to bring? When, through Jesus Christ, we obtain the remission of our sins, all the mischief of Adam’s fall is undone. As to any guilt which has fallen upon the race, all the members of that race are set free from guilt as soon as they believe in Jesus Christ.

Adam brought a great mortgage upon our estate which it would not have been possible for any of us to discharge. But, to every Believer, that first and heaviest mortgage is entirely removed and the estate is free. In addition to this, however, we have, each one of us, sinned. The estate was encumbered at first, but we have encumbered it much more, like an heir who comes into an encumbered estate, yet straightway begins to burden it with more and more debts, multiplying them until the mortgage is a crushing load too grievous to be borne! But whoever believes in Jesus Christ may have this for his consolation—“the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.” Do not try to count your sins—your arithmetic will fail you if you attempt such a task as that! But if it will benefit you to go over the transgressions of your life from your youth up even until now, do so with repentant heart. And when you have added them up as best you can, and tried to conceive the total sum of your iniquities, then write at the bottom, “But the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification”—“from *many* offenses”—however many they may be—though they should outnumber the sands on the seashore, or the drops that make up the ocean, yet the free gift of Divine pardon sweeps them all away!

Think a little of the many forms that sin has taken in this world—from that crimson sin which startles even the ungodly man, himself, such as murder, adultery, fornication, theft, drunkenness, blasphemy and the like—to the lighter shades of sin, as we are apt to think them, though it may be that in God’s sight there is as much evil in these faults as in those more glaring crimes. I will not attempt to catalog our transgressions. I would have to use a roll like that of the Prophet which was written on the inside and outside and it would have to be so long that I know not where space could be found to hold it! Our sins and iniquities are innumerable. They have gone over our heads like the waves of the sea. Personally and individually, there is not one person who looks at his own character and heart aright, who will not see that his life has teemed and

swarmed with sin! Yet the free gift of Divine Love puts all those sins away the moment we believe in Jesus!

The Roman Catholic Church divides sins into two sorts—mortal sins and venial sins. But to me it is of no consequence how the sins of a Believer are described, seeing that Christ has taken them as a whole and cast them into the depths of the sea. You may, if you will, classify sins under various heads—sins of thought, sins of word, sins of deed—sins against the First Table, which concerns God, or sins against the Second Table, which concerns man—sins of ignorance, and sins of willfulness, the sins of youth, the sins of middle age and the sins of old age—but though you pile them together, mountain upon mountain, as in the old fable—Pelion upon Ossa—yet, still, Christ takes them all away from all who believe on Him. “The free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.”

This thought grows to startling dimensions when you remember that all the sins of each man must be multiplied by the number of men who, being Believers in Christ, find justification from their many offenses in Jesus! Oh, what a seething mass of sin would lie upon this poor world, in the sight of the living God, if there were none but His own people upon it, had not Christ swept it away by His Infinite Atonement! One cannot think, without horror, of his own sins alone—but when we think of the sin of all the saints who have ever lived upon the earth and the sin of all the blood-bought sinners who are yet to be born, and who shall, many of them, perhaps, live to old age—what a heap and mass of sin it is! “But the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification,” and covers the whole vast mass!

As I want practically to use each separate thought, let me say—Soul, if you are willing to be saved in Christ—if you are willing to be saved in this way in the Second Adam as you are assuredly lost in the first Adam—let not the number of your sins confound you, so as to prevent you from having hope of eternal salvation in Christ Jesus. Let your sins so confound you as to drive you to despair if you have any hope in *yourself* or in your own merits, in your own feelings, or works, or weeping, or in anything that is yours! But if salvation is to be had through the blood of Another, through the merits of Another and you are willing to have it so, then, though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow! though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool! And though they are more in number than the hairs of your head, they shall, in one single instant, be taken from you never to return!

Yes, in a moment shall they disappear and shall never be mentioned against you any more. Is not this good news? You do not need me to embellish it with fine words—you only need to believe it, and to say to yourself, “Yes, there is a possibility of the blotting out of all my transgressions.” Say that, you who have gone in for sin like a very leviathan who needs the great deep to swim in! If you have oceans of iniquity, it matters not, in the sight of God, though you had more oceans, for “the free gift” of pardon and eternal life “which came from many offenses resulted in justification.” One sin has slain us, but Christ’s mercy brings us the death of all our multitudes of sins!

The second point in our text is that *the one transgression of Adam led to judgment*—“for the judgment was by one.” That first sin of our first parent did not go long unjudged. Sometimes among the sons of men there is a long period between the commission of a crime and the assizes at which the prisoner is tried. But, in Adam’s day, God had short sessions. Ere the sun had gone down, the Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day and He called to Adam, and said unto him, “Where are you?” Then Adam stood before his Maker in a different relationship from that which he had ever occupied before—as an offender to be judged! And though there was no Great White Throne for him to see, yet there was a pure throne of Justice there, and his transgression received the condemnation with which God had threatened him. And he went forth from the Garden of Eden to toil and, by-and-by, to return to the dust from which he was taken—reprieved, but still *condemned—condemned* to drag his chain about and, at last, to die. One transgression, then, brought judgment upon Adam and will bring judgment upon all who are not protected and preserved by the Second Adam, the Lord from Heaven!

When the time arrives for the sitting of the Judge of All upon the Great White Throne, men and angels will be present to watch the distribution of His impartial justice. Then will come the sentence of *condemnation* against all sin, but the *mercy* for all who are trusting in Christ is that “the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.” That free gift has anticipated the Judgment, for it says to the Believer, “You are already condemned in the Person of your Substitute. The verdict in your case has been given—your judgment is already past.”

Let me repeat what I have often said, for I find that it is still needed. I frequently read in books, or hear ministers say that we are in a state of *probation*—but nothing can be more false. We are not in any sense in a state of probation—we are already condemned! The time of probation was over in Adam’s day and, now, we are criminals under sentence of condemnation, or else we have been absolved! God’s free gift of pardon implies that we admit our condemnation, that the sentence has already rung in our ears and that then God has said to each one of us who has trusted to the blood and merit of His Son, “I absolve you. Your transgressions are all put away for His sake.”

Have you, dear Friend, ever gone through that experience? Did you ever stand before the judgment seat of your own spirit? Did you ever judge yourself, that you might not be condemned with the world? Did you ever feel that you were condemned and then did you, with trembling faith, accept that free pardon which puts you past the Judgment? For, when a man has committed an offense against the law of the land, and the Queen gives him a free pardon for it, he is not afraid that the police will break into his house and take him off to further trial. No, it is tantamount to this—that he has had his trial and passed it, for he has received a free pardon from the highest authority in the country. And, Beloved, no child of God needs to stand in fear of the Judgment, he has already been judged! He has already been condemned! What is more, he has already been *punished*, for, in the Person of his glorious Representative, the guilt of his transgression has been laid upon his Substitute and

expiation has been made for it so that it is forever put away, according to that wondrous word of the Prophet, “In those days, and in that time, says the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.” How can he be accountable to justice, who has already acknowledged his transgression and has received pardon? Does not the Divine forgiveness clear him? Yes, that it does! Such is the pardon, stamped and sealed with the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, which the Judge of all the earth has given to us who have believed on His Son!

The one offense, then, brought man to judgment, but the glorious free gift of Grace takes away from us even the fear of that tremendous day when Christ shall come in His Glory, for, in that day, who shall lay anything to our charge? That man need not fear to go to the last great assize who feels that he can walk into the court and say, “Who is he that can even bring a charge against me?” And who feels, in addition, that if the devils in Hell were base enough to fabricate a charge, yet, “it is God that justifies: who is he that condemns?” Since Christ has died, and risen again, and now sits at the right hand of God and makes intercession for us, what judgment have we to fear? Glory be to God for that free gift!

Note, also—I have already partly anticipated this point—that *the one transgression not only led to judgment, but it led to condemnation*. Adam must have felt that when he picked up the first dead bird, and when he saw the deer lie bleeding beneath the paw of the lion. He must have realized it still more painfully when he gazed upon the pale face of Abel, struck to death by his own brother. Yes, and when Adam had to pause in his work because he felt weary, or that he might wipe the sweat from his brow—he felt more and more that he was under condemnation. When he could no longer walk through Eden’s Garden and converse with God—when he saw the fiery sword uplifted at the gate of what had once been his own *pleasaunce* and place of delight, and when he knew that he could never again enter there, he understood what it was to be under condemnation.

That condemnation, dear Friends, is a thing to tremble at, but our text tells us that “the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.” What a glorious word that word, “justification,” is! It means the opposite of “condemnation.” When God comes, in Infinite Mercy, and gives a free pardon to a guilty soul, through Christ, He makes that man to be the same as if he were perfectly just! Instead of standing there condemned, he is absolved—no, more than that—he is justified, made just and to be treated, now, as though he never had sinned at all but had always been a just and righteous man! Oh, wondrous change of condemnation into justification! Just as you have trembled when God has condemned you, so do you with as much force rejoice when God justifies you, for, if He says you are just, then just you are—so just that, as I have already said, none shall ever dare to lay anything to your charge!

This, too, is a matter of present possession. As soon as we believe in Jesus, we are justified—made righteous—“made the righteousness of God in Him.” It is a very wonderful thing. It is, perhaps, the grandest

Doctrine that could possibly be proclaimed, but it is true! Listen, Friend—do you understand that, just as in Adam, you were condemned, and so came under the sentence of death, so, if you believe in Jesus Christ, you shall be cleansed altogether from your many offenses and God will look upon you as perfectly just in Christ Jesus? You shall, by faith, have peace with God, and there shall be a reason for that peace, for everything which made God angry with you shall have been put away! And you shall sing—

***“I will praise You every day!
Now Your anger’s turned away.
Comfortable thoughts arise
From the bleeding Sacrifice”—***

and that may be done now, at this very moment! It need not take you a day, a month, a year, but, in an instant God can speak the pardoning word, strike His pen through the long list of your sins, and write you in His book as, “Righteous,” and righteous you shall be, then and there! Oh, wondrous Grace! Shall we ever be able to say enough to express our gratitude for it?

Now I want you to notice that *this one offense involved death*, as well as judgment and condemnation, for we find, in the next and succeeding verses, that, “death reigned.” The Apostle puts it very strongly. “By one man’s offense death reigned by one.” God sat upon His Throne swaying His grim scepter over the entire race of mankind and He even claimed as His victims, babies “that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” and their little bodies were laid in the grave! Oh, the awful power which sin had thus to turn the world into one vast cemetery and to slay the whole human race! But, Beloved, when Jesus Christ comes to your soul and mine, He takes away the punishment—not merely of that one offense of Adam, but, of “many offenses.” Sin brought death into the world, with all its woe, but Christ comes and takes death away, removing all punishment for sin, so that whoever believes in Him will, for His sake, never be punished and cannot be for this best of reasons—that it is not consistent with Divine Justice that there should be two punishments for the same offense. And as God accepted Christ as the Substitute for all of us who believe in Him, He cannot afterwards punish us for the sin that was laid upon Him! There can never be such injustice as that which would be perpetrated by the Judge of all the earth if He took Christ to stand vicariously to suffer in the Believer’s place, and then caused the Believer to suffer, too.

“But,” someone asks, “will not the Believer be afflicted and chastened?” Yes, but that is quite another thing from being *punished* for his guilt! Not penally, as with the severity of a judge, but lovingly may he be chastened by his Father who takes him into His family. There is a great difference between punishing for an offense and chastening for it. Punishment looks at the guilt of it, but chastening comes from a Father who has already forgiven it and who chastens with a view to the profit of the child, that he may not offend again. There is and always must be a grave distinction between the rectorial Character of God as a judge, and the paternal Character of God towards His own people. And you and I, who have received Christ, are dealt with as children—no more to be punished

in the penal sense—but as dear children who must be scourged that we may no more offend Him.

Do you understand this, poor seeking Sinner—that you need not dread the punishment of your sin if you will but trust in Jesus? You then need have no dread of Hell, for, if you believe in Jesus, and so prove that you are one of those who are in Jesus, and that He stood as the Substitute for you, and made Atonement for you, there is for you no sword of vengeance! For you there are no flames of Hell. For you there is no wrath of God. You are free from condemnation and, as a natural result, you must be free from punishment.

I will only just mention two or three things on which I meant to have spoken at greater length, and then leave this point. The first is this, that *the one offense brought condemnation immediately*. As soon as Adam committed the offense, he underwent the sentence of spiritual death which God had threatened as the result of disobedience. In like manner, the free gift, the instant it is bestowed, brings justification immediately—

**“The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God”—**

he is as much justified as he ever will be even in Heaven. He is clean in God’s sight! He is cleared of all guilt by that one act of God’s Free Grace as soon as he believes in Jesus.

Next, *the offense of one was manifested very speedily*. Adam felt ashamed of his nakedness. Very soon he realized what toil meant and he saw the signs of death’s dominion, for the graves began to multiply. Now, in the same fashion, the free gift soon manifests itself. It does not give us a something merely to dream about, but it gives us a justification which our spiritual senses are able to perceive, for “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” When God puts away our sins, He gives us a manifest joy—not a thing that is hidden or wrapped up, but a joy that can be seen by all whose eyes are open!

Further, *the one offense operated universally*. All who were represented by Adam have had to feel the consequence of his transgression and, in like manner, the free gift operates universally upon all who receive it. There was never a sinner yet who trusted in Christ, who did not receive strength, life, absolution and justification—neither shall anyone ever trust in Christ and yet be left to perish!

And *the one offense acted completely and fatally*. It slew the whole race. Look how they have died! Ask every hill or valley whether it does not hold the relics of the slain. And, in similar but more blessed fashion, the free gift operates effectually and finally. In the first case, God overrides its effects, but, in the second case, He never will do so. He whom God justifies is justified forever and so shall he stand—as long as he lives and throughout eternity—a just man in the sight of God! This just man shall live by his faith. He shall hold on his way and wax stronger and stronger. What a glorious piece of news is this that I have to tell to every soul that feels its need of such a great salvation! Would God that you would all believe it and trust the Savior whom I thus proclaim to you!

II. My time has fled, so I can only tell you very briefly what I meant to have said at greater length upon my second head, which is, LET US ADORE THE MANNER OF DIVINE MERCY.

Let us, first, *thank God that He treats us representatively*. I was pleased with a passage which I met with in the writings of Dr. Chalmers, where he rejoices that he fell in Adam, so that it became possible for God to raise him up again in the same way that he fell, that is, representatively. Because, my dear Brothers and Sisters, if you and I were now standing in perfect innocence, we would always have to feel that there was a possibility that we might fall. No, more than that, by this time we *would* have all fallen, whatever our age or position may be. Even these dear girls and boys would have fallen into some sin or other. It would always be an insecure standing if we had to stand by ourselves upon our own merits. But, now, although we have fallen in Adam, and have been broken to shivers, we who have believed in Jesus have been lifted up again in Him who never can or will fall!

Do you see Him up yonder in Heaven? Never did the so-called everlasting hills stand upon their solid basis as firmly as He stands at the right hand of God! What power can ever remove Him? And He stands there for me—for you, my Brother or Sister—for every soul that believes on Him and, until He falls, you will never fall! You will never perish until He perishes, for you form a part of His mystical body, as the Apostle Paul puts it, “we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.” There are some people who think that Christ may lose certain of His members. In fact, according to their representations of the theory of falling from Grace, you would think that He was like a lobster, or some other creature that sheds its limbs and grows new ones! But our Lord Jesus represents Himself as a Man, and a man will not willingly lose so much as his little finger. If he did, he would be imperfect—and Christ will not lose the humblest, meanest member of His mystical body, for, as the Apostle says, that body is His fullness, “the fullness of Him that fills all in all,” Oh, what a standing it is to be made to stand in Christ! He raised me from the gates of gaping Hell and made my standing more secure than it ever was even before Adam fell, and I fell in Him, blessed be His holy name!

The next thing for which we ought to adore the method of God’s mercy is that *it is all a free gift*. “The free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.” “The free gift.” I like Paul’s way of putting those two words together—“free” and, “gift.” A gift, of course, is free, so this expression is tautological, but it is blessedly tautological! Someone asked me once, “Why do you say, ‘Free Grace’? Of course, if it is Grace, it’s free.” “Oh, well!” I replied, “I do so to make assurance doubly sure!” We will always call it, not only Grace, but Free Grace, to make it clear that God gives His Grace freely to sinners—the undeserving and ungodly. He gives it without any condition. If, in one place, He says that He requires repentance, in another place He promises it. If He demands faith at one moment, He bestows it at another. So Grace is always God’s free gift and that suits a man who has not a penny in his pocket.

I have walked—as I dare say some of you have—by the goldsmiths' and jewelers' shops in the Palais Royal at Paris, and seen the vast amount of wealth that is exhibited there. And many of you have gone along the great streets of our city and seen perfect mines of wealth displayed, and you have said to yourself, "Ah, I cannot purchase any of these things because there is a little ticket hanging down below with certain pounds marked on it, and I cannot afford to buy them. It is all I can do to get bread and cheese for those who are at home, so I must leave these luxuries to others." But if I should ever pass by a goldsmith's shop and see a ticket bearing the words, "Free gift!" I would be willing to take a few things at that price! I am glad that you smile at that expression, because those are my Master's terms. He has treasures worth more than the most glorious jeweler's shop ever contained—and they are all free gifts to all who trust Him. I dare not laugh at you, but I shall have to blame and condemn you if eternal life is God's free gift and yet you will not say, "I will take it, and have it forever." You would like to take jewelry for nothing, but you will not accept everlasting life and pardon for nothing by simply trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Lastly, we ought especially to adore the love and mercy of God in that *His plan is to save us by Christ Jesus*. To my mind it makes every blessing all the sweeter because it comes through Him! The very glory of our salvation is that we are saved in Him, "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." I have sometimes thought, when I have seen a ship beautifully fitted up—a fast-sailing clipper—that I would like to go to sea in her, not simply for the sake of the place to which I would be going, but because I would like to be in such a ship, with such company and under such-and-such a captain. Well here is Jesus, the Great Captain of the glorious ship of salvation! And who does not feel that while it would be well to go to Heaven, it is best of all to go with Him and in Him? Oh, to be linked with Him—with God's darling Son—with the delight of the angels—with the Father of all the ages—The Wonderful—The Counselor—The Mighty God—The Altogether Lovely—The Best-Beloved of our soul! It makes the sweetness of salvation all the sweeter because it comes to us by Christ Jesus.

The Lord bless you, Beloved, and give you to know all this in your own souls, for His dear Son's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 5:6-21.

Verse 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 quibble at it. Indeed, many do quibble 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 perhaps for a good man. For a benevolent man—*

7, 8. *Some would even dare to die. But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* 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 of God? 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—are 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 always 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 gifts! 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 of God came, and even upon those who had no personal transgression—unconscious infants, I mean—causing them to die.

15-17. *But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has 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 which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by one.* 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 offense 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 believes not in Jesus has no part in “the free gift

unto justification of life.” But He who believes 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 offense might abound.*” It was the practical result of the giving of the Law of God 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 mirror 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 such-and-such,” than at once we want to do it! Our nature is very much like quicklime. Throw cold water upon it and straightway it generates heat, acting, as it were, against the nature of that which is cast upon it. So, the more God says to a man, “You shall,” the more the man says, “I will not!” And the more God says to him, “You shall not,” the more does the man resolve that he will. “The law entered, that the offense 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 has 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.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—397, 547, 738.

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DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, MARCH 4, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Moreover the Law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”
Romans 5:20.*

THE first sentence will serve as a preface. The second sentence will be the actual text. “Moreover the Law entered, that the offense might abound.” Man was a sinner before the Law of Ten Commandments had been given. He was a sinner through the offense of his first father, Adam. And he was, also, practically a sinner by his own personal offenses. For he rebelled against the light of nature and the inner light of conscience. Men, from Adam downward, transgressed against that memory of better days which had been handed down from father to son and had never been quite forgotten.

Man everywhere, whether he knew anything about the Law of Moses or not, was alienated from his God. The Word of God contains this truthful estimate of our race—“They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable. There is none that does good, no, not one.” The Law was given, however, according to the text, “that the offense might abound.” Such was the effect of the Law. It did not hinder sin, nor provide a remedy for it. But its actual effect was that the offense abounded. How so?

It was so, first, because it revealed the offense. Men did not in every instance clearly discern what was sin. But when the Law came, it pointed out to man that this evil, which he thought little of, was an abomination in the sight of God. Man's nature and character was like a dark dungeon which knew no ray of light. Yonder prisoner does not perceive the horrible filthiness and corruption of the place wherein he is immured, so long as he is in darkness. When a lamp is brought, or a window is opened and the light of day comes in, he finds out to his dismay the hideous condition of his den.

He spies loathsome creatures upon the walls and marks how others burrow out of sight because the light annoys them. He may, perhaps, have guessed that all was not as it should be but he had not imagined the abundance of the evils. The light has entered and the offense abounds. Law does not make us sinful but it *displays our sinfulness*. In the presence of the perfect standard we see our shortcomings. The Law of God is the mirror in which a man sees the spots upon his face. It does not wash you—you cannot wash in a mirror. But it prompts you to seek the cleansing water. The design of the Law is the revealing of our many offenses,

that thereby, we may be driven out of self-righteousness unto the Lord Jesus, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

The Law causes the offense to abound by making an offender to stand without excuse. Before he knew the Law perfectly, his sin was not so willful. While he did but faintly know the commands, he could, as it were, but faintly break them. But as soon as he distinctly knows what is right and what is wrong, then every cloak is taken away from him. Sin becomes exceedingly sinful when it is committed against light and knowledge. Is it not so with some of you? Are you not forced to admit that you commit many sins, now that you have been made to know the Law and yet willfully offend against it, by omission or commission? He who knows his Master's will and does it not, will be beaten with many stripes—because he is guilty of abounding offenses. The Law enters to strip us of every cloak of justification and so to drive us to seek the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Next, I think the Law makes the offense to abound by causing sin to be more evidently a presumptuous rebellion against the great Lawgiver. To sin in the front of Sinai, with its wonderful display of Divine majesty, is to sin, indeed. To rebel against a Law promulgated with sound of trumpet and thunders and pomp of God is to sin with a high hand and a defiant heart. When you have heard the Ten Commands, when you know the Law of the kingdom, when your Maker's will is plainly set before you, then to transgress is to transgress with an insolence of pride which will admit of no excuse.

Once more—the entrance of the Law makes the offense to abound in this sense, that the rebellious will of man rises up in opposition to it. Because God commands, man refuses. And because He forbids, man desires. There are some men who might not have sinned in a particular direction if the commandment had not forbidden it. The light of the Law, instead of being a warning to them to avoid evil, seems to point out to them the way in which they can most offend. Oh, how deep is the depravity of human nature! The Law itself provokes it to rebel. Men long to enter because trespassers are warned to keep away. Their minds are so at enmity against God that they delight in that which is forbidden—not so much because they find any particular pleasure in the thing itself but because it shows their independence and their freedom from the restraints of God.

This vicious self-will is in all of us by nature. For the carnal mind is enmity against God—and therefore the Law, though in itself holy and just and good, provokes us to do evil. We are like lime and the Law is as cold water, which is in itself of a cooling nature. Yet, no sooner does the water of the Law get at the lime of our nature than a heat of sin is generated—thus, “the Law entered, that the offense might abound.”

Why, then, did God send the Law? Is it not an evil thing that the offense should abound? In itself it may seem to be so. But God deals with us as physicians sometimes deal with their patients. A disease which will be fatal if it spends itself within the patient must be brought to the sur-

face—the physician, therefore, prescribes a medicine which displays the evil. The evil was all within but it did not abound as to its visible effects. It is needful that it should do so, that it may be cured. The Law is the medicine which throws out the depravity of man, makes him see it in his actions and even provokes him to display it. The evil is in man, like rabbits in yonder brushwood—the Law sets a light to the cover and the hidden creatures are seen.

The Law stirs the mud at the bottom of the pool and proves how foul the waters are. The Law compels the man to see that sin dwells in him and that it is a powerful tyrant over his nature. All this is with a view to his cure. God be thanked when the Law so works as to take off the sinner from all confidence in himself! To make the leper confess that he is incurable is going a great way towards compelling him to go to that Divine Savior who alone is able to heal him. This is the object and end of the Law towards men whom God will save.

Consider for a moment—you may take it as an axiom, a thing self-evident, that there can be no Divine Grace where there is no guilt—there can be no mercy where there is no sin. There can be justice, there can be benevolence—but there cannot be *mercy* unless there is criminality. If you are not a sinner, God cannot have mercy upon you. If you have never sinned, God cannot display pardoning Grace towards you for there is nothing to pardon. It were a misuse of words to talk of forgiving a man who has done no wrong, or to speak of bestowing undeserved favor upon a person who deserves reward. It would be an insult to innocence to offer it mercy. You must, therefore, have sin or you cannot have Divine Grace—that is clear.

Next, consider that there will be no seeking after Divine Grace where there is no sense of sin. We may preach till we are hoarse, but you good people who have never broken the Law and are not guilty of anything wrong, will never care for our message of mercy. You are such kind people that, out of compliment to religion, you say, “Yes, we are sinners. We are all sinners.” But you know in your heart of hearts you do not mean it. You will never ask for Divine Grace. For you have no sense of shame or guilt. None of you will seek mercy till first you have pleaded guilty to the indictment which the Law of God presents against you. Oh, that you felt your sins! Oh, that you knew your need of forgiveness! Then you would see yourselves to be in such a condition that only the free, rich, Sovereign Grace of God can save you.

Furthermore, I am sure that there will be no reception and acceptance of Divine Grace by any man till there is a full confession of sin and a burdensome sense of its weight. Why should you receive Divine Grace when you do not want it? What is the use of it to you? Why should you bow your knee to God and receive, as the free gift of His charity, that which you feel you do not need? Have you not already earned eternal life? Are you not as good as other people? Have you not some considerable claim upon God? Do I startle you with these plain questions? Have I not heard you say much the same? The other day when we preached the electing

love of God you grumbled and muttered that God was unjust to choose one rather than another.

What did this mean? Did it not mean that you felt you had some claim upon God? O Sir, if this is your spirit I must deal plainly with you! If you have any claim upon your Maker, plead it and be sure that He will not deny you your just rights. But I would advise you to change your method of dealing with your Judge—you will never prevail in this fashion. In Truth, you have no claim upon Him. You must appeal to His pure mercy. You are not in a position for Him to display free Divine Grace to you till your mouth is shut and you sit down in dust and ashes, silently owning that you deserve nothing at His hands but infinite displeasure. Confess that whatever He gives you that is good and gracious must be given freely to one who deserves nothing.

Hell gapes at your feet—cease from pride and humbly sue out a pardon. You see, then, the use of the Law—it is to bring you where Divine Grace can be fitly shown you. It shuts you up that you may cry to Jesus to set you free. It is a storm which wrecks your hopes of self-salvation and washes you upon the Rock of Ages. The condemning sentence of the Law is meant to prepare you for the absolution of the Gospel. If you condemn yourself and plead guilty before God, the royal pardon can then be extended towards you. The self-condemned shall be forgiven through the precious blood of Jesus and the Sovereign Grace of God.

Oh, my Hearer, you must sit down there in the dust, or else God will not look at you! You must yield yourself to Him, owning His justice, honoring His Law—this is the first condition of His mercy. And to this, His Grace brings all who feel its power. The Lord will have you bow before Him in self-abhorrence and confess His right to punish you. Remember, “He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.” And He will have you know this and agree to it. His Grace must reign triumphantly and you must kiss its silver scepter. Thus has the first sentence served us for a preface—God bless it to us!

I. The doctrine of the text itself is this, that “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” And I shall try to bring out that Truth of God, first, by saying that **THIS IS SEEN IN THE WHOLE WORK OF GRACE**, from beginning to end.

I would direct your attention to the context. The safest way to preach upon a text is to follow out the idea which the inspired writer was endeavoring to convey. Paul has, in this place, been speaking of the abounding result for evil of one sin in the case of Adam, the federal head of the race. That one sin of Adam’s abounded terribly. Look at the multitudinous generations of our race which have gone down to death. Who slew all these? Sin is the wolf which has devoured the flocks of men. Sin has poisoned the streams of manhood at their fountainhead and everywhere they run with poisoned waters. Concerning this, Paul says, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

First, then, sin abounded in its effect upon the whole human race—one sin overthrew all humanity—one fatal fault, the breach of a plain and easy Law, made sinners of us all. “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.” Simple as was the command which Adam broke, it involved obedience or disobedience to the sovereignty of God. All the trees of the garden were generously given to happy Adam in Paradise—“Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat.” There was but one tree reserved for God by the prohibition, “You shall not eat of it—for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.”

Adam had no need to touch that fruit—there were all the other trees for him. Nothing was denied him which was really for his good. He was only forbidden that which would ruin him. We all look back to that Paradisiacal state and wish we could have been put in some such a position as he—yet he dared to trespass on God’s reserves and thus to set himself up above his Maker. He judged it wise to do what God forbade—he ran the risk of death in the foolish hope of rising into a still higher state.

See the consequences of that sin on all sides, the world is full of them. Yet, says Paul, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,” and he gives us this as a proof of it—“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 offenses unto justification” (Rom. 5:16). The Lord Jesus came into the world, not to put away only Adam’s sin but all the sins which have followed upon it. The second Adam has repaired the desperate ruin of the first and much more. By His death upon the Cross, our Divine Substitute has put away those myriads of sins which have been committed by men since the first offense in Eden.

Think of this! Take the whole aggregate of Believers and let each one disburden his conscience of its load of sin. What a mountain! Pile it up! Pile it up! It rises huge as high Olympus! Age after age Believers come and lay their enormous loads in this place. “The Lord has made to meet on Him the iniquities of us all.” What Alps! What Himalayas of sin! If there were only mine and yours, my Brothers and Sisters, what mountains of division would our sins make! But the great Christ, the free gift of God to us, when He bare our sins in His own body on the tree, took all those countless sins away.

“Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world”! Here is infinite grace to pardon immeasurable sin! Truly the “one man’s offense” abounded horribly. But the “one man’s obedience,” the obedience of the Son of God, has superabounded. As the arch of Heaven far exceeds in its span the whole round globe of the earth, so does Divine Grace much more abound over human sin.

Follow me further, when I notice, secondly, that sin abounded in its ruinous effects. It utterly destroyed humanity. In the third chapter of Romans you see how, in every part of his nature, man is depraved by sin. Think of the havoc which the tyrant, sin, has made of our natural estate and heritage. Eden is withered—its very site is forgotten. Our restfulness among the trees of the field freely yielding their fruit, is gone and God has

said, "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread." The field we till has lost its spontaneous yield of corn—"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you." Our life has lost its glory and immortality—"Dust you are and unto dust shall you return." Every woman in her pangs of travail, every man in his weariness of labor and all of us together in the griefs of death—see what sin has done for us as to our mortal bodies.

Alas, it has gone deeper—it has ruined our souls. Sin has unmanned man. The crown and glory of his manhood, it has thrown to the ground. All our faculties are out of gear. All our tendencies are perverted. Beloved, let us rejoice that the Lord Jesus Christ has come to redeem us from the curse of sin and He will undo the evil of evil. Even this poor world He will deliver from the bondage of corruption. And He will create new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. The groans and painful travail of the whole creation shall result in a full deliverance, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As for ourselves, we are lifted up to a position far higher than that which we should have occupied had the race continued in its innocence. The Lord Jesus Christ found us in a horrible pit and in the miry clay and He not only lifted us up out of it but He set our feet upon a rock and established our goings. Raised from Hell, we are lifted not to the bowers of Eden but to the Throne of God. Redeemed human nature has greater capacities than unfallen human nature. To Adam the Lord did not say, "You are a son of God, joint-heir with the only Begotten." But He has said that to each Believer redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus. Beloved, such a thing as fellowship with Christ in His sufferings could not have been known to Adam in Paradise.

He could not have known what it is to be dead and to have his life hid with Christ in God. Blessed be His name, our Lord Jesus Christ can say, "I restored that which I took not away"! He restored more than ever was taken away from us. For He has made us to be partakers of the Divine nature and in His own Person He has placed us at God's right hand in the heavenly places. Inasmuch as the dominion of the Lord Jesus is more glorious than that of unfallen Adam, manhood is now more great and glorious than before the Fall. Grace has so much more abounded, that in Jesus we have gained more than in Adam we lost. Our Paradise Regained is far more glorious than our Paradise Lost.

Again—sin abounded to the dishonor of God. I was trying the other day to put myself into the position of Satan at the gates of Eden, that I might understand his diabolical policy. He had become the archenemy of God and when he saw this newly-made world and perceived two perfectly pure and happy creatures placed in it. He looked on with envy and plotted mischief. He heard the Creator say, "In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die," and he hoped here to find an opportunity for an assault upon God. If he could induce those new-made creatures to eat of the forbidden fruit, he would place their Maker upon the horns of a dilemma—either He must destroy the creatures which He had made, or else He must be untrue.

The Lord had said, “You shall surely die,” and He must thus undo His own work and destroy a creature which He had made in His own image, after His own likeness. Satan probably perceived that man was an extraordinary being with a wonderful mystery of glory hanging about his destiny. And if he could make him sin, he would cause God to destroy him and so far defeat the eternal purpose. On the other hand, if the Lord did not execute the sentence, then He would not be truthful and throughout all His great universe it would be reported that the Lord’s Word had been broken—either He had changed His mind, or He had spoken in jest, or He had been proven to have threatened too severe a penalty—in either case, the Evil Spirit hoped to triumph. It was a deep, far-reaching scheme to dim the splendor of the King of kings.

Beloved, did it not seem as if sin had abounded beyond measure when first the woman, and then the man, had been deceived and had done despite to God? Behold how Divine Grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ, did much more abound! God is more honored in the redemption of man than if there had never been a Fall. The Lord has displayed the majesty of His justice and the glory of His grace in the great sacrifice of His dear Son in such a manner that angels and principalities and powers will wonder throughout all ages. More of God is to be seen in the great work of redeeming love than could have been reflected in the creation of myriads of worlds—had each one of them been replete with marvels of Divine skill and goodness and power. In Jesus crucified, Jehovah is glorified as never before. Where sin abounded to the apparent dishonor of God, grace does much more abound to the infinite glory of His ever-blessed name.

Again—sin abounded by degrading human character. What a wretched being man is as a sinner against God! Unchecked by Law and allowed to do as he pleases, what will not man become? See how Paul describes men in these progressive times—in these enlightened centuries—“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, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.”

Human nature was not at all slandered by Whitefield when he said that, “left to himself, man is half beast and half devil.” I do not mean merely men in savage countries. I am thinking of men in London. Only the other day a certain newspaper gave us plenty of proof of the sin of this city—I will say no more—could brutes or demons be worse? Read human history—Assyrian, Roman, Greek, Spanish, English. And if you are a lover of holiness, you will be sick of man. Has any other creature, except the fallen angels, ever become so cruel, so mean, so false? Behold what villains, what tyrants, what monsters sin has made!

But now look on the other side and see what the Divine Grace of God has done. Under the molding hand of the Holy Spirit a gracious man becomes the noblest work of God. Man, born again and rescued from the

Fall is now capable of virtues to which he never could have reached before he sinned. An unfallen being could not hate sin with the intensity of abhorrence which is found in the renewed heart. We now know by personal experience the horror of sin and there is now within us an instinctive shuddering at it. An unfallen being could not exhibit patience, for it could not suffer, and patience has its perfect work to do.

When I have read the stories of the martyrs in the first ages of the Christian Church and during the Marian persecution in England, I have adored the Lord who could enable poor feeble men and women thus to prove their love to their God and Savior. What great things they suffered out of love to God! And how grandly did they thus honor Him! O God, what a noble being Your grace has made man to be! I have felt great reverence for sanctified humanity when I have seen how men could sing God's praises in the fires. What noble deeds men have been capable of when the love of God has been shed abroad in their hearts! I do not think angels, or archangels have ever been able to exhibit so admirable an all-round character as the Divine Grace of God has worked in once-fallen men whom He has, by His grace, inspired with the Divine life.

In human character, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." I believe God looks out of Heaven today and sees in many of His poor, hidden people such beauties of virtue, such charms of holiness that He Himself is delighted with them. "The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him." These are such true jewels that the Lord has a high estimate of them and sets them apart for Himself—"They shall be Mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels."

Again—dear Friends, sin abounded to the causing of great sorrow. It brought with it a long train of woes. The children of sin are many and each one causes lamentation. We cannot attempt to fathom the dark abysses of sorrow which have opened in this world since the advent of sin. Is it not a place of tears—yes, a field of blood? Yet by a wonderful alchemy, through the existence of sin, Divine Grace has produced a new joy, yes, more than one new joy. The calm deep joy of repentance must have been unknown to perfect innocence. This right orient pearl is not found in the rivers of Eden.

Yes, and that joy which is in Heaven in the presence of the angels of God over sinners that repent is a new thing, whose birth is since the Fall. God Himself knows a joy which He could not have known had there been no sin. Behold, with tearful wonder the great Father as He receives His returning prodigal and cries to all about Him, "Let us eat and be merry—for this My son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found." O Brethren, how could almighty love have been victorious in Divine Grace had there been no sin to battle with? Heaven is the more Heaven for us since there we shall sing of robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb. God has greater joy in man and man has greater joy in God because Divine Grace abounded over sin. We are getting into deep waters now! How true our text is!

Once more, sin abounded to hinder the reign of Christ. I believe that Satan's design in leading men into sin at first was to prevent the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ as man and God in one Person. I do not lay it down as a doctrine, specifically taught in Scripture, but still it seems to me a probable Truth of God that Satan foresaw that the gap which was made in Heaven by the fall of the angels was to be filled up by human beings, whom God would place near His Throne. Satan thought that he saw before him the beings who would take the places of the fallen spirits and he envied them. He knew that they were made in the image of the Only-Begotten, the Christ of God and he hated Him because he saw united in His Person God whom he abhorred and man whom he envied.

Satan shot at the second Adam through the breast of the first Adam. He meant to overthrow the Coming One. But, fool that Satan is, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, is now exalted higher than ever we could conceive Him to have been had there been no sin to bear, no redemption to work out. Jesus, wounded and slain, has about Him higher splendor than before. O King of kings and Lord of lords, Man of Sorrows, we sing hallelujahs unto You! All our hearts beat true to You! We love You beyond all else! You are He whom we will praise forever and ever! Jesus sits on no precarious throne in the empire of love. We would each one maintain His right with the last pulse of our hearts. King of kings and Lord of lords! Hallelujah, Where sin abounded, Divine Grace has much more abounded to the glory of the Only-Begotten Son of God.

II. I find time always flies fastest when our subject is most precious. I have a second head, which deserves a lengthy consideration. But we must be content with mere hints. This great fact—that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound—crops up everywhere. THIS IS TO BE SEEN IN SPECIAL CASES.

The first special case is the introduction of the Law. When the Law of Ten Commands was given, through man's sin, it ministered to the abounding of the offense. But it also ministered to the abounding of Divine Grace. It is true there were ten commands. But there was more than tenfold Grace. With the Law there came forward a High Priest. The world had never seen a High Priest before, arrayed in jeweled breastplate and garments of glory and beauty. There was the Law. But at the same time there was the holy place of the Tabernacle of the Most High with its altar, its laver, its candlestick and its table of show-bread. There was, also, the secret shrine where the majesty of God dwelt. God had, by those symbols and types, come to dwell among men.

It is true, sin abounded through the Law. But, then, sacrifices for sin also abounded. Up to then there had been no morning and evening lambs. There had been no day of atonement; no sprinkling of blood; no benediction from the Lord's High Priest. For every sin that the Law revealed, a sacrifice was provided. Sins of ignorance, sins of their holy things, sins of all sorts were met by special sacrifices—so that the sins uncovered to the conscience were also covered by the sacrifice.

The story of Israel is another case in point. How often the nation rebelled. But how often did mercy rejoice over judgment! Truly, the history of the chosen people shows how sin abounded and grace did much more abound. Run your eye down history and pause at the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. This is the highest peak of the mountains of sin. They crucified the Lord of Glory. Here sin abounded. But do I need to tell you that Divine Grace did here much more abound? You can look at the death of Christ till Pilate vanishes and Caiaphas fades away and all the clamor of the priests and Jews is hushed and you see nothing and hear nothing but free grace and dying love.

There followed upon the crucifixion of our Lord, the casting away of the Jewish people for a while. Sin abounded when the Lord thus came to His own and His own received Him not. Yes. But the casting away of them was the saving of the nations. "We turn to the Gentiles," said the Apostle. And that was a blessed turning for you and for me, was it not? They that were bid to the feast were not worthy and the Master of the house, being angry, invited other guests. Mark, "being angry"! What did He do when He was angry? Why, He did the most gracious thing of all. He said, "Go you out into the highways and hedges and as many as you shall find bid to the supper." Sin abounded, for Israel would not enter the feast of love. But Divine Grace did much more abound, for the heathen entered the kingdom.

The heathen world at that time was sunk in the blackest darkness and sin abounded. You have only to study ancient history and you will fetch a heavy sigh to think that men could be so vile. A poor and unlettered people were chosen of God to receive the Gospel of Jesus and they went about telling of an atoning Savior in their own simple way, until the Roman empire was entirely changed. Light and peace and the Truth of God came into the world and drove away slavery and tyranny and bestial lust. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. What wonderful characters were produced in the terrible reign of Diocletian! What consecration to God was seen in the confessors! What fearlessness in common Christians! What invincible loyalty to Christ in the martyrs! Out of barbarians the Lord made saints and the degraded rose to holiness sublime.

If I were to ask you, now, to give the best illustrations of grace abounding in individuals, I think your impulse would be to choose men in whom *sin* once abounded. What characters do we preach of most when we would magnify the grace of God? We talk of David and Manasseh and swearing Peter and the dying thief and Saul of Tarsus and the woman that was a sinner. If we want to show where grace abounded we naturally turn our eyes to the place where sin abounded. Is it not so? Therefore, I need not give you any more cases—it is proven that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

III. Lastly. And this is what I want to hold you to, dear Friends, at this time—THIS HOLDS TRUE TO EACH ONE OF US.

Let me take the case of the open sinner. What have you been? Have you grossly sinned? Have you defiled your body with unhallowed passions?

Have you been dishonest to your fellow men? Does some scarlet sin stain your conscience even as you sit in the pew? Have you grown hardened in sin by long perseverance in it? Are you conscious that you have frequently, willfully and resolutely sinned? Are you getting old and have you been soaking these seventy years in the crimson dye of sin till you are saturated through and through with its color? Have you even been an implacable opponent of the Gospel? Have you persecuted the saints of God? Have you tried by argument to batter down the Gospel or by ridicule to put it to reproach?

Then hear this text—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." And as it was in the beginning it is now and ever shall be till this world shall end. The Grace of God, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, will triumph over the greatness of your wickedness. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." Throw down your weapons of rebellion—surrender at discretion—kiss the pierced hand of Jesus which is now held out to you and this very moment you shall be forgiven and you shall go your way a pardoned man, to begin a new life and to bear witness that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

Perhaps this does not touch you, my Friend. Listen to my next word which is addressed to the instructed sinner. You are a person whose religious education has made you aware of the guilt of sin. You have read your Bible and you have heard truthful preaching. And although you have never been a gross open sinner, yet you know that your life teems with sins of omission and commission. You know that you have sinned against light and knowledge. You have done despite to a tender conscience very often—and therefore you rightly judge that you are even a greater sinner than the more openly profane.

Be it so. I take you at that. Do not run back from it. Let it be so. For "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Oh, that you may be as much instructed in the remedy as you are instructed in the disease! Oh, that you may have as clear a view of the righteousness of Christ as you have of your own unrighteousness! Christ's work is a Divine work, broad enough to cover all your iniquity and to conquer all your sin. Believe this! Give glory to God by believing it. And according to your faith, so be it unto you.

I address another, who does not answer either of these two descriptions exactly. But he has lately begun to seek mercy and the more he prays the more he is tempted. Horrible suggestions rush into his mind. Damnable thoughts beset and bewilder him. Ah, my Friend, I know what this means—the nearer you are to Divine mercy, the nearer you seem to get to Hell's gate! When you most solemnly mean to do good you feel another Law in your members bringing you into captivity. You grow worse where you hoped you would have grown better.

Very well, then—grip my text firmly as for your life—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." If a whole legion of devils should be let loose upon you, Christ will glorify Himself by mastering them all. If now you cannot repent, nor pray, nor do anything—remember

that text, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Look over the heads of all these doubts and devils and inabilities and see Jesus lifted on the Cross, like the brazen serpent upon the pole. And look to Him and the fiery serpents shall flee away from you and you shall live. Believe this text to be true, for true it is—“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

“Ah,” says another, “my case is still worse, Sir. I am of a despondent turn of mind. I always look upon the black side of everything and now if I read a promise I am sure it is not for me. If I see a threat in God’s Word I am sure *it* is for me. I have no hope. I do not seem as if I should ever have any. I am in a dungeon into which no light can enter—it is dark, dark, dark, and worse darkness is coming. While you are trying to comfort me, I put the comfort away.”

I know you. You are like the poor creature in the Psalm, of whom we read—“His soul abhors all manner of meat.” Even the Gospel itself he cannot relish. Yes. I know you. You are writing bitter things against yourself. And your writing is that of a poor bewildered creature. It is not to be taken notice of. I see you writing in text hand, great black words of condemnation. But there is nothing in them all. Verily, verily, I say unto you, your handwriting shall be blotted out and the curse, causeless, shall not come. Thus says the Lord, “Your covenant with death shall be disannulled and your agreement with Hell shall not stand, for the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed you and where sin abounded, grace shall much more abound.”

Broken in pieces, all asunder, ground between the millstones, reduced to nothing, yet believe this Revelation of God, “that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Notice that “much more”—“much more abound.” If you can grip it and know it to be of a certainty the great principle upon which God acts—that *grace* shall outstrip *sin*—then there is hope of you. No, more than hope—there is salvation for you on the spot. If you believe in Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin, you are forgiven.

Oh, my Hearers, do not despise this Divine Grace! Come and partake of it. Does anyone say, as Paul foresaw that some would say, “Let us sin, that grace may abound”? Ah, then, such an infamous inference is the mark of the reprobate and your damnation is just. He that turns God’s mercy into a reason for sin has within him something worse than a heart of stone—surely his conscience is seared with a hot iron.

Beloved, I hope better things of you—for I trust that, on the contrary, the sound of the silver bells of infinite love, free pardon, abounding grace—will make you hasten to the hospital of mercy that you may receive healing for your sinfulness, strength for your feebleness and joy for your sorrow. Lord, grant that in this house, in every case wherein sin has abounded, Your Grace may yet more abound, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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SIN AND GRACE

NO. 3115

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1908.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 1, 1874.**

***“Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.”
Romans 5:20.***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon this text are as follows: Sermons #37, Volume 1—LAW AND GRACE and #2012, Volume 34—GRACE ABOUNDING OVER ABOUNDING SIN—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

THERE are two very powerful forces in the world which have been here ever since the time when Eve partook of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Those two forces are sin and Divine Grace. A very great power is sin, a power dark, mysterious, baleful, but full of force. The sorrows of mankind—from where did they come but from sin? We would have known no war, nor pestilence, nor famine, nor would anything of sickness or sorrow ever have smitten the human race had not sin sown its evil seed in this earth! Sin is the Pandora's box from which all evil has come to mankind. See what ravages death has made—its hillocks are everywhere! Its mighty scythe mows men down as the mower cuts down the grass of the field—but death came by sin and after death comes judgment and, to the ungodly, the doom that never can be described, the eternal wrath whose blackness the wildest tempest cannot imitate! Who dug this pit? It was the Justice of God on account of sin and sin must, therefore, be charged with the authorship of sorrow, disease, death and Hell. This is no mean power with which we have come into conflict—it is a veritable Goliath—stalking along and defying the whole race of mankind!

The power that is to fight and overcome sin is never described in the Word of God as the natural goodness of human nature. Pshaw! That is but as wax before the fire, or as the fat of rams upon the altar—it is consumed in a moment in the fierce heat of sin. The force to combat sin is never described in the truthful pages of God's Word as the power of human endeavor to keep the Law. Indeed, this has been tried and it has utterly failed! The way to Heaven is not up the steep sides of Sinai—that granitic mountain is too rugged and too high for unaided human feet to climb. Not there can be found the weapons with which a man may slay his sins and fight his way to everlasting bliss.

The only counter force against sin is Divine Grace, so my text tells us, and we may learn the same Truth of God from a hundred texts besides. And what is Grace? Grace is the free favor of God, the undeserved bounty of the ever-gracious Creator against whom we have offended, the

generous pardon, the Infinite, spontaneous loving kindness of the God who has been provoked and angered by our sin, but who, delighting in mercy and grieving to smite the creatures whom He has made, is always ready to pass by transgression, iniquity and sin—and to save His people from all the evil consequences of their guilt. Here, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, is a force that is fully equal to the requirements of the duel with sin, for this Grace, of which I am going to speak, is Divine Grace, and hence it is Omnipotent, Immortal and Immutable. This favor of God never changes and when once it purposes to bless anyone, bless him it will and none can revoke the blessing! The gracious purpose of God's free favor to an undeserving man is more than a match for that man's sin, for it brings to bear upon his sin, the blood of the Incarnate Son of God—and the majestic and mysterious fire of the eternal Spirit who burns up evil and utterly consumes it! With God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit united against sin, the everlasting purposes of Grace are bound to be accomplished, sin must be overcome and my text proved to be true—"Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound."

I. To illustrate the great principle of my text, I ask you to notice, first, that the context refers us to THE ENTRANCE OF TRUE LAW. "The Law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound."

Instead of giving any historical statement concerning the introduction of the Law in the days of Moses, I am going to speak about the experimental matter of the introduction of the Law of God into our hearts. Those of you who have been converted remember the time when the Law of the Lord first entered your heart. The Law engraved on the two tablets of stone, the Law recorded in the Bible does but very little for us—but when the Law really enters our heart, it does much for us. What does it do?

The first thing the Law does to most men is *to develop the sin that is in them*. Paul writes, "I had not known sin, but by the Law: for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, You shall not covet." But as soon as he found that there was a Law against a certain sin, by some unhallowed instinct of his unrenewed nature, he wanted to do the very thing that he was forbidden to do! It was like that with us—the first effect of the entrance of the Law of God into our hearts was to develop the sin that was already within us. "That is a dreadful thing," says one. Yes, it is, but look at the matter from another aspect. Here is a man who has within him a dire disease which will be fatal if it is allowed to remain, so the physician gives him some medicine which throws the disease out. The man used to have a beautiful complexion, but after he has taken that medicine, his face is covered with blotches. Is that a bad thing? Yes, the blotches are bad, but the hidden disease was worse! While that disease was concealed within his system and was killing him, he probably did not even know that it was there. He knew that he was not well and, perhaps, thought that he was dying as the result of some other complaint. But now he sees what the disease is, and everybody sees it,

and now that which looked like an evil thing may turn out to be for real good to the man.

So does it often happen mentally, morally and spiritually. A man's wicked heart is full of enmity against God, yet he thinks—and perhaps he is right in thinking—that he is outwardly a strictly moral man. But, lo, the Law of God, with its requirements of perfect purity and absolute obedience, enters his heart and he rebels against it—and now the sin is apparent, even to himself! It is now likely that this man will repent of sin. It is highly probable that this development of his latent sin will lead him to form a different opinion of himself from any that he ever had before and, therefore, though the sin is evil and the development of it is evil, yet, where sin abounded, Grace shall much more abound and so good shall come out of the evil after all!

When the Law enters a man's heart, *it also brings his sin out in very strong relief*. He never saw his sin to be so black as he now sees it to be. A stick is crooked, but you do not notice how crooked it is until you place a straight rule by the side of it. You have a handkerchief and it seems to be quite white—you could hardly wish it to be whiter—but you lay it down on the newly-fallen snow and you wonder how you could ever have thought it to be white at all! So the pure and holy Law of God, when our eyes are opened to see its purity, shows up our sin in its true blackness and in that way it makes sin to abound! But this is for our good, for that sight of our sin awakens us to a sense of our true condition, leads us to repentance, drives us by faith to the precious blood of Jesus and no longer permits us to rest in our self-righteousness! And so it can be said of us that, though the entrance of the Law has made our sin to abound, "Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound."

The entrance of the Law of God into the heart *very generally causes great anguish*. Well do I remember that experience and so do some of you. When the Law entered our hearts, it came not merely with a straight rule and with a perfect pattern of whiteness to show us our deformity and our blackness, but it also came with a heavy whip—and it laid that whip about our shoulders and every time it fell it stung us to the quick. A little while ago, I met with a Brother who said to me, "You cannot too forcibly describe the anguish of a convicted conscience, for," he said, "I remember when I reckoned how long it would be before I must, in the ordinary course of nature, be in Hell. I said to myself, 'Suppose I live to be 80 years of age, yet how short a time it will be before I must be enduring the Infinite Wrath of God!'" Yes, that is the effect that the Law of the Lord often produces upon a man when it enters his heart. It brings a mirror before him and says to him "Look in there and see not only what you have done, but also what is the just consequence of your evil deeds." A man no longer quibbles at God's Justice when the Law once gets inside his heart—it shuts his mouth except for groans and sighs—and he has plenty of *them*.

It may be thought, by some people, to be a very sad thing that the Law should come into a man's heart to break it and to cause him such sorrow

and anguish as I am trying to describe. Ah, but it is not so—it is a very blessed thing! You cannot expect God to clothe you until He has stripped you, nor to heal you until He has cut the proud flesh out of your wounds. When a woman is sowing with a fine white silken thread, she must have a sharp needle to go first, to make a way for the thread to go through after it. And the anguish of spirit which the Law creates in the soul is the sharp needle which makes a way for the fine silken thread of the Gospel to enter our heart and so to bless us. Let us thank God if ever we have experienced the entrance of His Law into our hearts for, although it makes sin to abound, it makes Grace much more abound!

When the Law gets thoroughly into a man's heart, *it drives him to despair of himself*. "Oh," he says, "I cannot keep that Law!" Once he thought that he was as good as other people and a little better than most—and he did not know but that with a little polishing and a little help, he might be good enough to win the favor of God and go to Heaven! But when the Law entered his heart, it soon smashed his idol to atoms! The Dagon of self-righteousness speedily falls before the Ten Commandments of God and is so broken that it can never be mended. Men try to set the stump of it up on its pedestal again, but as long as the Law of the Lord is in the same temple with self-righteousness, self-righteousness can never be exalted again! To some people it seems to be a dreadful thing to give a man such a bad opinion of himself, but, indeed, it is the greatest blessing that could come to him, for when he despairs of himself, he will fly to Christ to save him! When the last crust is gone from his cupboard, he will cry to the great Giver of the Bread of Life, whereof if a man eats, he shall live forever! You must starve the sinner's self-righteousness to make him willing to feed on Christ—and thus the very depths of his despair, when he thinks that he must be lost forever—will only lead him, by God's abundant love, to a fuller appreciation of the heights of God's Grace!

Once more, when the Law of God enters a man's heart, *it pronounces a curse upon him*. That was a singular scene which was beheld over against Mount Ebal and over against Mount Gerizim, where one company read the curses, and another company read the blessings out of the Book of the Law. Now the Law can do nothing for a sinner but say to him, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them." But the Gospel comes in and it replies to the curse of the Law with such words as these, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Let the Law curse as it may, the Gospel's blessing is richer and stronger, for the Gospel says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

II. Now I change our line of thought and come closer home to Christians, by noticing that the great principle of our text is also illustrated in THE AFTER-EXPERIENCE OF THE BELIEVER.

Some young converts imagine that as soon as they believe in Christ and find peace with God, they will be perfect and have no more sin within them. Such an erroneous idea will only prepare them for a great disappointment, for conversion is not the end of the battle with sin—it is only the beginning of that battle. From the moment that a man believes in Jesus, and is thereby saved, *he begins his life-long struggle against his inbred sins*. I hear that there are some Brothers and Sisters who have become perfect—and I am pleased to hear it if it is true. But I am glad they are not members of *my* family! I do not think I could live with them very peaceably, as I have generally found that the so-called “perfect” people are usually not at all pleasant people to be associated with those of us who do not profess to be perfect. We wish we were perfect and we wish that other people were perfect, but up to now our investigations have led us to believe that the perfection which is claimed by certain persons is, in every case, a mistake—and in many cases is a delusion and a sham!

Our opinion is that men, after they are converted, and begin to examine themselves in the light of God’s Word, if they are at all like we are, *find sin everywhere within them*—sin in the affections, so that the hearts lusts after evil things—sin in the judgment, so that it often makes most serious mistakes and honestly puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter—sin in the desires, so that though we try to curb them, they wander here and there, where we would not—sin in the will, so that Lord Will-be-Will proves that he is still very proud and wants to have his own way—and is not willing to bow submissively to the will of God—sin in the memory, so that the most godly people can often recollect a snatch of a bad old song which they used to hear or to sing, far more readily than they can remember a text of Scripture which they wish to treasure up in their memories, for memory has become unhinged, like all the rest of our faculties, and is quick to retain evil and slow to retain that which is good! Brothers and Sisters in Christ, in what part of our body does sin not dwell? Is there any single faculty, or power, or propensity that we have which will not lead us astray if we will let it do so? Are we not obliged to be always upon our guard against ourselves and to watch ourselves as a garrison of soldiers would have to watch the natives of a country whom they had subdued, but who were anxious to throw off the yoke of the foreigners who had overcome them? In a similar fashion, Grace is a foreigner in possession of our nature and it holds by its own superior force what it has won—and only by its supernatural strength are we kept from falling back our former position!

Thus you see how sin abounds, even in the heart of a Believer. But, blessed be God, *Grace does much more abound there*, for although the will is still strong, there is a higher power that subdues and controls it so that our will is being gradually conformed to the will of God. Our affections, though they are apt to grovel here below, do soar towards Christ, for He has really won our hearts. Our desires do go astray, yet their main tendency is towards holiness. Blessed be the name of the

Lord, unless we are awfully deceived, we desire to do that which is well-pleasing in His sight! Our memory, too, though I have already confessed its faultiness, does often enable us to remember Jesus Christ and it will never forget Him, whoever else it may forget. Yes, and our whole nature, though I have truly spoken of its faults, is a new nature which God has worked within us—a nature that is akin to the Divine and in this nature Grace triumphs over sin so that where sin abounds, Grace does much more abound.

The same Truth of God may be learned in another way. Sin abounds in the Believer, not merely in the shape of the original sin in which he was born and in the tendency to sin which is always present with him, but *sin mars the best thing he ever does*. Did you ever examine one of your own prayers? Did you ever look at it critically after it was finished? Shall I tell you what it was like? It was like something that man had manufactured and which, when observed by the naked eye, looked very beautiful. Put a microscope over it and look at it. Take a needle if you like, for that seems to be one of the most polished pieces of metal conceivable—and as soon as you place it under the microscope, you say, “Why, I have got a rough bar of iron here! Surely it cannot be a needle.” Yes it is, but you are now looking at it with a power far beyond your ordinary sight. And, in like manner, when the Grace of God opens a man’s eyes to see his best actions as they appear in God’s sight, he sees that those actions are marred by sin. There is not anything that he has done which appears to him to be what it ought to be when he looks at it aright in the light of God’s Word. The most consecrated action of his life, the most devout communion with Christ, the most intense ardor after God falls far short of what it ought to be and has something in it which ought not to be there! When the Grace of God is strong within us, it makes sin appear to abound even to our own vision—we see it in every hymn we sing, in every prayer we pray, in every sermon we preach!

Not only do we see sin in our best things, but *we also discover sin in our omissions*. We were never troubled about that matter before, but now we recollect that what we do not do is often sinful—not merely the wrong that we commit, but the good that we omit—the good that we neglect or forget to do. There is much sin there. Then we begin to examine our thoughts and our trivial utterances. And we see them all crusted over with sin. Tested under the light of God’s Word, everything seems to be honeycombed through and through with sin, so that sin, indeed, abounds. Well, what then? Why, then, this blessed text comes sweetly home to our hearts. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” And now, how gloriously Grace abounds! Now we prove the power of that precious blood which can wash us whiter than snow, so that God Himself shall say to each one of us, “There is no spot in you.” Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I do firmly believe that a deep and clear sense of sin is necessary to a right estimation of the power of pardoning love. I am sure that it is a great blessing to us when we have a deep sense of our sinfulness. God forbid that we should ever pray as the Pharisee did, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are.” Far

better would it be for us to imitate the publican, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." None but those who are lost, prize the Savior who came to seek and to save that which was lost! None but those who feel that they are foul and vile rightly value His cleansing blood. O Beloved, when your sin abounds, then is the time to remember that Grace much more abounds! Sinner as you are, you are forgiven, you are "accepted in the Beloved," you are saved, you are a child of God, you shall be in Heaven before long, to praise forever the Grace that shall be crowned with Glory!

Once more on this point. I believe that many of you have had an experience similar to mine and that there have been times when you have been living especially near to God and walking in the light of His Countenance, when, all of a sudden, the sin that dwells in you has seemed to attack you just when you least expected it. I know that my fiercest temptations often come to me immediately after my highest enjoyment of communion with God. They seem to come like a sharp draught of cold air the moment you step out of a warm room, and you hardly know what to do—you are scarcely prepared for it. It will sometimes happen that a tempter which you thought you had quite overcome, will rush upon you like a lion out of a thicket, or a passion which you thought had been most eventually conquered, will come sweeping down upon you like a hurricane from the hills and your poor little skiff upon the lake seems well-near overwhelmed with its furious onslaught! Then, as you look at yourselves, and are surprised to find so much sin in yourselves, you know that sin abounds—what do you do then? Well, I believe that, at such times, Christians try to nestle closer than ever under the wings of God and they feel humbler—and they go to the precious blood of Jesus with a more intense desire to prove again its cleansing power! And they cry to the Strong for strength and they feel more than they ever did before, their need of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying power. Ralph Erskine said that he was more afraid of a sleeping devil than of a roaring devil—and there was good reason for his fear—for when the devil was roaring, the saints would be more on the watch than when he was quiet. The worst temptation in the world is not to be tempted at all. But when there is a strong temptation and your soul is fully aware of it, you are on your guard against it. The wave of temptation may even wash you higher up upon the Rock of Ages, so that you cling to it with a firmer grip than you have ever done before and so again where sin abounds, Grace will much more abound!

III. Now I must close with a few general observations upon another matter. The great Truth revealed in our text is not only illustrated by the entrance of the Law into the hearts of Believers and in the after-life of Christians, but also IN ALL THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION.

It is very wonderful, but it is certainly true, that *there are many persons in Heaven in whom sin once abounded*. In the judgment of their fellow men, some of them were worse sinners than others. There was Saul of Tarsus, there was the dying thief, there was the woman in the

city who was a sinner—a sinner in a very open and terrible sense. These and many more of whom we read in the Scriptures were all great sinners—and it was a great wonder of Grace, in every instance, that they should be forgiven! But did they make poor Christians when they were converted? Quite the reverse! They loved much because they had been forgiven much. Among the best servants of God are many of those who were once the best servants of the devil. Sin abounded in them, but Grace much more abounded when it took possession of their hearts and lives. They were long held captive by the devil at his will, but they were never such servants to Satan as they afterwards became to the living and true God! They threw all the fervor of their intense natures into the service of their Savior and so rose superior to some of their fellow disciples who did not so fully realize how much they owed to their Lord. I trust that any here present who have gone far in sin may be saved by the immeasurable Grace of God before they leave this building and that, throughout the whole of their future lives, they may love Jesus Christ better and serve Him more than others who have not sinned as deeply as they have!

The same Truth of God comes out *if we think of what sin has done for us*. O Brothers and Sisters, sin has infected the nature of man with a foul leprosy, a deadly disease, but Jesus has cured the disease, and given us a life of a holier kind than we ever knew before! Sin has robbed us, but Christ has restored to us more than sin ever took away from us! Sin has stripped us, but Christ has clothed us in a better robe than our natural righteousness could ever have been. Well do we sing of Jesus—

***“In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.”***

Sin has brought us very low, but Christ has lifted us higher than we stood before sin cast us down! Sin took away from man his love to God, but Christ has given us a more intense love to God than Adam ever had, for we love God because He has first loved us and given His Son to die for us and we have, in His greater Grace, a good reason for yielding to Him a greater love! Sin took away obedience from man, but now the saints obey to a yet higher degree than they could have done before, for I suppose it would not have been possible for unfallen man to suffer, but now we are capable of suffering for Christ and many martyrs have gone signing to death for the Truth of God because, while sin made them capable of suffering, Christ’s Grace has made them capable of obedience to Him in the suffering—and so of doing more to prove their allegiance to God than would have been possible if they had never fallen! Sin, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, has shut us out of Eden, yet let us not weep, for Christ has prepared a better Paradise for us in Heaven! Sin has deprived us of the river that rippled over sands of gold and of the green glades of that blessed Garden into which suffering could never have come unless sin had first entered, but God has provided for us “a pure river of Water of Life,” and a lovelier garden than Eden ever was! And there we shall forever dwell through the abounding Grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ which has abounded even over our abounding sin!

Sin has separated us from God, but Grace has brought us nearer to God than we ever were before sin divided us from Him. Until Christ became Man, there was no man on the earth and there would have been no man who was more to God than man could be to his Maker. But now there lives a Man who is more to God than any created being ever could be, for that Man is also God and He sits at the right hand of His Father and shares with Him the control of the universe! That Man has brought the human race nearer to the Deity than the mere act of creation could possibly have done. Glory be to God for Jesus Christ, the Man from Heaven, the Son of Mary and the Son of the Highest! Sin worked us untold mischief, but Grace has made even that mischief to be a gain to us, for now we are bought with blood as, otherwise, we never could have been. Now we know both sin and righteousness as we could not otherwise have done and now the whispering of the old serpent, which was a lie, has proved to have a Truth of God concealed in it, for we are indeed as gods, since we have become partakers of the Divine Nature by virtue of our union with the Christ of God! O wondrous Fall, which would have broken us hopelessly had it not been for still more marvelous Grace! O wondrous restoration which has lifted us up and made us more perfect than we were before we were broken—and elevated us to a Glory of which we could never have dreamed had we lived with Adam and Eve in Paradise and remained in innocence forever!

One practical remark I want to make before I close. It is this—*if you have received this Grace which has abounded over your sin, take care that you do more for Grace than you ever did for sin.* It is amazing how much people will do for sin—what they will give, what they will spend, and what they will endure to gratify their passions and serve their cruel taskmaster, Satan! I should not like to guess what some men waste on their lusts. I should not like to make a calculation as to what some people spend in a year on what they call their pleasures. Well, whatever the amount is, shall they give more, shall they do more for their god than we give and do for ours? Shall they be more intense in their adoration of Satan than we are in our obedience to God? That must never be, nor must we ever permit them to outdo us in the praises of their treasure! They make night hideous with their praises of their god, Bacchus—but we do not often annoy them with the songs of Zion! It would be as well, perhaps, if we did, but we are often cowards in not rendering due praises to our God. They are not ashamed to make the sky ring with their lascivious notes—then let us pluck up courage and solidly assert the glories of our God and the wonders of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Especially, let us never be ashamed to say, “He loved me and gave Himself for me—blessed be His holy name forever and ever. Amen.”

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 5.**

Verse 1. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* [See Sermon #1456, Volume 25—PEACE—A FACT AND A FEELING—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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, have access to Him, 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 works 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 works 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 makes us not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.* [See Sermon #829, Volume 14—THE PERFUMING OF THE HEART—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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.* [See Sermons #1191, Volume 20—FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE?; #13345, Volume 23—FOR WHOM IS THE GOSPEL MEANT? and #2341, Volume 39—THE UNDYING GOSPEL FOR THE DYING YEAR—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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.”

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 perhaps 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 commends* [See Sermon #104, Volume 2—LOVE'S COMMENDATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] *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—no, “much more [See Sermon #2587, Volume 44—“MUCH MORE”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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.”

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! [See Sermons #1045, Volume 18—JOY IN A RECONCILED GOD and #2550, Volume 44—JOY IN GOD—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

12. *Therefore, 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 Savior! 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, even 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 they saved by righteousness not their own. They die, for Adam sinned. They live, for Jesus died.

15-17. *But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, have 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 offenses unto justification. For if by one man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of Grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by One,* [See Sermons #2544, Volume 43—THE ONE AND THE MANY and #2744, Volume 47—LOST THROUGH ONE—SAVED THROUGH ONE—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] *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 prevails as to put their sins away forever!

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 besides, 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 offense 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 has 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 Savior.

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

GRACE ABOUNDING NO. 3304

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1912.

DELIVERED BY C H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 15, 1866,

“But where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.”
Romans 5:20.

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the whole verse are #37, Volume 1—LAW AND GRACE and #2012, Volume 34—GRACE ABOUNDING OVER ABOUNDING SIN—
read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

THERE has been a long battle in this world between man's sin and God's Grace. If it had been a fight between man's sin and God's Justice, it would soon have come to an end. Picture to yourself the flames of Hell and see there what God's Justice can do when it comes into conflict with human guilt. When God goes forth to war against the ungodly, His might is indeed terrible. Divine Justice makes short work of sin—it treads it under foot and stamps it out—even as men do with sparks of fire, for God hates sin with a perfect hatred. And when His anger is aroused against it, He tears it in pieces as the lion tears his prey in his fury. But, happily for us, the conflict with which we are just now concerned is not that between Justice and sin but that between Grace and sin! God's milder attribute of Mercy has entered the field and in our text Paul tells us the result of the battle. It looked for a time as if sin would gain the victory, for it abounded more and more, but at the last the banner of Grace waved triumphantly over the battlefield, for “where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.”

I. Without any further preface I am going to give you several illustrations of the Truth of our text, beginning with those we find in the Chapter itself. Paul has been writing concerning the principle of representation—THE FEDERAL HEADSHIP, FIRST OF ADAM AND THEN OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. He has been telling us about our fall in the first man and our salvation in the second Man, the Lord from Heaven. He has been describing our ruin under our first federal head and our Redemption by our second Covenant Head, the Lord Jesus Christ—and in both cases, our text is clearly illustrated. It does seem at first sight as if the setting up of Adam as the representative man had been the means of making sin to abound because as soon as sin overcame Adam, it overcame the whole race of mankind! It appears as if it would have been bet-

ter to have put every man on probation on his own account and to have let him stand or fall according to his own good or ill behavior. It seems as if it must have been a comparatively easy victory for sin to overthrow the whole race by a single blow. Certainly, sin did gain a great victory in the Garden of Eden and therein it abounded. But Paul shows that it was by this very principle of representation that “Grace did much more abound,” for it is through the death of One, even Jesus Christ, our Lord, that all Believers live! It is the righteousness of this One that a multitude whom no man can number shall attain unto everlasting life!

Now it appears to me that if the other system had been adopted, the plan of each one standing or falling by himself, there would have been no hope of salvation for any one of the whole race of mankind! We believe that the angels did so stand or fall, each on his own account. Satan was not the federal head of all the angels and consequently, when he fell, they did not all fall, but a considerable number of them did—and no hope of their restoration to the favor of God is given, but we are told that, “the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day.” I think it is more than probable that, had you and I been left to stand or fall on our own account, we would all have fallen—and then we would have fallen to rise no more. But now, as we fell in the person of one representative, it has become possible for us to rise through another Representative—and as many of us as have believed in Jesus, have risen from the fall of Adam—and are delivered from the death which was the consequence of Adam’s sin and are made alive in Christ Jesus by a new spiritual life in virtue of our union with our risen Lord! By the federal headship of Adam, sin did indeed abound—the floodgates were pulled up and torrents of iniquity inundated the whole human race! But by the federal headship of Christ, Divine Grace does much more abound, so that all who believe in Him shall be eternally saved! I think this was the meaning of the Apostle when he wrote the words of our text. And this is one illustration of the general Truth of God that “where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.”

II. A second illustration of this Truth of God can be found in the first part of the verse from which our text is taken. “The Law entered, that the offense might abound.” Through no fault in itself, but through our depravity, **THE LAW INCREASES THE GRAVITY OF OUR OFFENSES.**

You know that if you give your child no commands, he cannot disobey you. But the moment you give a command, the natural inclination of the child to disobedience turns the command into an occasion for sin. The more commands God gives, the more possible it is for man to sin. When water is cast upon lime there follows great heat and smoke. Yet the water was not hot. Put your lips to it and you will find that it is a sweet and cooling draught, but it produced heat when mixed with the lime because

of the inherent heat in the lime. So, when God's commandment is cast upon a man and he kicks against it, the fault is not in the *commandment*, but in the man's *wicked heart* which rebels against it. Paul says, "I had not known sin, but by the Law." He would have been just as truly a sinner in himself, but the sinfulness would not have come out if it had not been for the Law's prohibitions and restrictions against which he rebelled. The Law of God is something like the medicine which a doctor gives to a patient who has some internal disease, but the medicine throws it out upon the skin—yet it is far better that it should be thus thrown out than that it should lie hidden in the system and lead to the patient's death. The Law acts like this, especially upon those who are under conviction—it throws out the sin that is within them and lets them see it in its true character. The Law comes like a policeman with a search warrant, and says, "There is a criminal concealed here, and I have come to discover him." Perhaps you say, "There is no criminal here, I never harbor thieves or other bad characters." But the officer produces his warrant and searches you through and through and at last you have to admit that he is right even though you did not suspect the true state of affairs.

It seems a very dreadful thing that the effect of the Law should be to make the sinner worse than he was before—"the Law entered that the offense might abound." But that is just where our text comes in—"where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound." The more necessary the Law's exposure of sin is, the more glorious is the Grace that cleanses from the sin! The Law, like a candle, shows me my blackness, but that same Revelation, of which the Law is only a part, also shows me the precious blood of Jesus which takes all my blackness away and makes me whiter than snow! As I hear the thunders of Sinai and am full of terror as the lightning sets the sky ablaze, I turn to the dear, patient Lamb of God, and as I see Him suffering for me, I say to Him, "Oh, what wondrous Grace it must have been by which You did deliver me from all this terrible wrath! Blessed Lamb of God, how much I owe to You, for You have hushed the Law's loud thunder and given my soul a quiet and safe hiding place!" The work of the Law upon the enlightened conscience is a very healthy operation—it is like a sharp needle that goes through the soul, but it draws the golden thread of Mercy after it—or like the sharp plow which breaks up the ground and prepares it for the seed which in due time shall bring forth the harvest to God's praise and Glory! Whenever the entrance of the Law makes the offense to abound, may God grant us Grace to receive the Gospel so that Grace shall much more abound!

III. Now follow me in thought while I conduct you to a spot where we shall find a third illustration of the Truth of our text, that is, THIS PLACE CALLED CALVARY. Surely that is the spot where sin did most abound, yet where Grace abounded even more!

Look in at the council chamber of the Sanhedrim and hear them charge the Son at God with blasphemy, and say if sin did not abound there! See Him hurried away to Pilate's Hall and to Herod's judgment seat, "despised and rejected of men." Behold how they set Him at nothing and mocked Him—how they plucked out His hair, defiled His blessed visage with their accursed spit, crowned Him with thorns and assailed Him with insult upon insult and cruelty upon cruelty—and then say if sin did not, indeed, abound there! See Him toiling painfully through the crowded streets, scoffed at by the ribald multitude, but mourned by the daughters of Jerusalem. Watch Him as at last He ascends the hill of doom. See Him hanging on the Cross in indescribable agony while the heartless spectators jeer and scoff and make a jest even of His dying cries, and then say if sin did not abound there! What foaming billows of iniquity rolled up around that accursed tree, swelling and rising until they completely immersed the Lord of Life and Glory in their horrible depths! Yes, verily sin abounded there—surely it was the darkest day in human history! Wicked men had killed kings before, but that day they killed the King of kings! They had been regicides before, but now they became Deicides! They killed the Son of God and cast Him out of the vineyard, saying, "This is the Heir, and now that we have killed Him, the inheritance shall be ours." Sin abounded so much that it put out the light of the sun! So heavy was it that it cracked the solid earth and tore the rocks asunder and caused graves to open, while the great veil of the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom!

Yet "where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound." Oh, for an angel's tongue to tell out the wondrous mystery! My poor lips are quite unequal to this tremendous task—it is vain for me to attempt to describe the Grace that so gloriously abounded in our Lord upon the Cross—the Grace that flashed benignantly from those languid eyes! The Grace that fell in cleansing drops from those opened veins! The Grace that poured in torrents from that pierced side! The Grace that heaved, tossed and struggled convulsively in those tortured limbs! The Grace that fought and wrestled and, at last, conquered in that anguished spirit—the Grace that even then began interceding for the transgressors as Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"—the Grace that cried with a mighty voice, "It is finished," before the Savior bowed His head and gave up the ghost. The Grace that ascended up on high, leading captivity captive and giving gifts unto men. Of this Grace I will not dare to speak further than to say—may it be your happy lot to sail upon that sea of Grace, for fathom it you never can! May you drink from that fountain of Divine Grace, for you shall never be able to drink it dry! May God give you the bliss of knowing in your own experience how much Grace abounds through the atoning Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross!

Oh, that I had the tears of Baxter and that my soul were all aglow as the soul of Whitefield used to be, while I plead my Master's cause! O my Hearers, nothing so clearly shows the terrible depravity of human nature as this—that man has become so utterly wicked and debased as to believe that Christ is not still “mighty to save”! What a vile wretch man must be and what a base thing human nature must be when any can deliberately doubt the power of Christ to save the lost! The Inspired declaration is that “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Yet this wicked heart of ours finds it impossible to believe this until the Holy Spirit comes and with supernatural energy enlightens the understanding, sways the will, controls the judgment and brings the soul to rest in Jesus Christ! Oh, how guilty we must be that we will not believe that what God says it true, that we will not believe though millions of witnesses before the Throne of God attest the Truth of God that “where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.”

IV. Thus we have had three illustrations of the Truth of our text. And we may find a fourth IN MAN'S NATURE, for there, also, “where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.”

Look at Adam in the Garden of Eden, a noble being, supreme among all the creatures around him. The lion crouches at his feet, the leopard sports about him, the dove nestles in his bosom and all birds and beasts come at his call and yield obedience to his command. But do you see that serpent coiled around a tree? That is the brute embodiment of sin and it has come there to do incalculable mischief! Wait a little while and you may see Adam and Eve driven out of the Garden where they were once so happy—for the sin to which they so readily yielded has brought a heavy curse upon them and upon all their descendants. As you read the stern sentences pronounced upon each of them by the lips of Jehovah, Himself, you realize that in their case sin has indeed abounded! Then remembering what I have already said to you about the principle of representation, you will realize that Adam's fall involved the fall of everyone of us! What Mark Anthony is supposed to have said concerning the death of Julius Caesar might well be said with regard to the effect of Adam's fall upon us—

***“Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down.”***

If you want to see how sin has abounded, go down the street and look upon some of those who have been drinking what has been truly called “liquid damnation.” I need not describe the sight, for all of us are, alas, more or less familiar with it. Nor need I picture other fallen creatures in whom sin is to be seen in some of its most repulsive aspects. We will not think of them in the self-righteous spirit of the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men, but we will sorrowfully confess that

what they now are, any of us might have been had Providence and Grace not prevented it!

If you want to see further what ruin sin has worked, I would take you to the graveyard. We will not ask the sexton to open the graves—the sight and smell would be more than we could endure—but he could tell us some strange tales of the remains of the noble being whom God made to have dominion over all the works of His hands. This is what he has come to now—an empty skull and a few dry bones! This is what sin has brought him down to—to be food for worms!

But I will not linger over that dark part of the subject. Think how Grace has much more abounded even where sin did most abound. Grace comes in and finds man under sentence of death—hopeless and polluted and full of everything that is obnoxious in God’s sight! What does Grace do in such a case at that? I answer by pointing you to that wondrous vision that John had in Patmos when he saw, “One like unto the Son of Man. . . His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His Countenance was as the sun shines in his strength.” Who is this for whom all Heaven rings with hallelujahs, while Hell trembles at His word, and millions upon earth own allegiance to Him? Who is this? Why, ‘tis the Man, Christ Jesus, who once slept as a helpless Babe in His mother’s arms, who afterwards toiled at the carpenter’s bench at Nazareth and who breathed out His earthly life amid the untold agonies of Calvary—but who is now exalted at His Father’s right hand, “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.” “Ah,” you say, “that is all true concerning *Him*, but we are not up there with Him.” But faith says that we are if we are truly trusting in Jesus, for “God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by Grace you are saved) and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His Grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Now you see how gloriously true our text is! Sin did us untold damage, but Grace has given us more than sin ever took away! Sin robbed us of silver, but Grace has given us gold! Sin slew this body of flesh, but Grace has given us a spiritual body which shall live forever! Sin threw us down among the masses of this fallen race, but Grace has lifted us up and set us among the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus! Yes, Beloved, “now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when

He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.” Verily, “where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.”

V. There is a further illustration of the Truth of our text in some WHO ARE NOW PRESENT WITH US.

There are some now in this house in whom sin abounded in certain special ways at which I shall only just hint. They were drunks, swearers, unchaste. They dishonored their father and mother, they sinned against light and knowledge, they disregarded God’s Word, they stifled the rebukes of conscience. In brief, “sin abounded” in them. But now, through Grace, a great change has come over them and they have been made new creatures in Christ Jesus! And among us all there are none who love Christ more than they do—and none who serve Him more zealously than they do! You know that it is very often the case that those who have been the greatest sinners became the greatest saints. Those who were the devil’s corporals and sergeants, no—his captains and generals—when they are truly converted, become the boldest and bravest soldiers of the Cross! It is hardly necessary to remind you of John Bunyan, once a very notable sinner, who became a very prince in our Israel and who felt that, in his case, Grace had indeed abounded to the chief of sinners! Many of us ought, indeed, to love much, as I trust we do, because we have been forgiven much. Divine Mercy has covered and blotted out a vast mass of sin that we had committed and now, remembering with humility and shame all our past offenses, we pray that we may prove in all our future lives what holy and useful men and women God’s Grace can make of us. Surely, dear Friends, you will not serve God worse than you served the devil! When you had a bad master, you were a good servant to him—but now that you have a good Master, the best Master you can ever have—do not be a bad servant to Him! May the Lord grant that great Grace may abound in all who have been great sinners!

But as there are exceptional cases, I will come to something that will include us all. Kindly turn to the little book that records your life history written out upon the pages of memory. As you look over those pages, you who have known the Lord for some years, what do you think of yourselves? The men who think much of themselves must surely be those who do not think at all! But those who really do think must see very much in their past lives which causes them to blush. Looking back upon the years since we first came to Christ, what a multitude of sins we have committed! If our own children had treated us as badly as we have treated our heavenly Father, what would we have done with them? What a marvel of patience our heavenly Father has been in His dealings with us! I look at my pulpit work and I have to confess that sin has abounded there. I look at my private life and I have to acknowledge that sin has abounded there. As you look at your Sunday school class, my Brothers and Sisters, I think that you, too, must admit that sin has abounded there.

As a husband, as a wife, as a child, as a master, as a servant, as a tradesman, as a statesman—whatever may be your position in society, do you not have to say with sorrow that sin has abounded there? But, dear Friends, has not Grace also abounded? Yes, that it has, for “where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.” Do not ever get into such a state of heart as to groan over yourselves so that you cannot praise the Lord for His abounding Grace! Oh, do praise Him, do bless Him, for He well deserves to be praised! Sin abounds, so be humble. But Grace much more abounds, therefore be thankful! Sin abounds, so be watchful. But Grace does much more abound, therefore be confident that God will give you the victory through Him who has loved you!

VI. Now lastly, IN THIS WORLD SIN ABOUND ON A VERY LARGE SCALE.

Stand on your watchtower, Christian, and look over the world as far as you can. A great proportion of it is still shrouded in the dense darkness of heathenism and uncounted millions are bowing down before blocks of wood and stone. Think, too, of the vast multitudes who put their trust in the false Prophet, Mohammed, and are quite content with the parody of Christianity that they find in the Koran. Then remember with sorrow how large a proportion of those who are called Christians are simply worshippers of Mary instead of Believers in Jesus, or who bow down before images, icons, relics, crosses, and I know not what! If we turn to Protestant Christianity, what a vast mass of hypocrisy, formality, inconsistency and everything else that is evil is mixed with that which is genuine and true! All over the world sin abounds. See how many lands are still cursed by war. What infamies are perpetuated in all our great cities! Yes, and in many of our little country villages, too! God must have been amazingly patient to have borne so long with our wicked race. As the flood in Noah’s day was universal, so does sin cover the earth today—it prevails over the tops of the mountains, it abounds in all the valleys and plains.

This prospect is very alarming and for missionaries it would be very depressing if they did not believe that where sin abounds, Grace shall much more abound. But the day is coming oh, hasten, you wheels of time, and bring the happy hour!—when suddenly the pedestal upon which any false god is seated shall shake and totter to its fall! When the crescent of Mohammed shall wane forever! When the harlot of the seven hills shall cease to corrupt the earth with her fornication and when the beast, and the false prophet, and the devil and all his hosts shall be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone to be tormented day and night forever and ever. Yes, the day is coming—God speed it!—when the people on every island and of every continent shall hear the joyful sound of the Gospel of God’s Grace! The day is coming when Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God, when India’s many millions and the far-off China-

men and Japanese and other children of the East shall no longer sound the praises of any false god, but shall delight in confessing that Jesus Christ, the Son of David, is also the Son of God, King of kings, and Lord of lords, and their own and only Savior! The little spring that burst up like a rippling rivulet from the foot of Calvary's Cross has swollen into a mighty river even now—its tides are increasing, its floods are swelling, its depth is growing and the day is coming when, like a mighty ocean, it shall cover the whole earth as the waters cover the deep! And floating across that Sea of Glory shall be heard the millennial anthem, "The kingdoms of this world have become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

Then, at the last, so many of us as have believed in Jesus shall be gathered with Him in that great city, the New Jerusalem, whose twelve gates are twelve pearls, whose walls are jasper, and whose street is of "pure gold, as it were transparent glass"—that city of which John says, "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." Well may we sing—

***"Jerusalem! My happy home!
Name ever dear to me—
When shall my labors have an end,
In joy, and peace, and thee?
Oh when, you city of my God,
Shall I your courts ascend,
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end?"***

Ah, well, in due time we shall get there and then, when looking down from our serene abode, we shall be able to read the whole drama of human history, from the Creation to the Fall of Adam, from the Fall to the Cross of Christ, and then to the final consummation of all things—this will be the summary of it all, at least as far as we are concerned—"Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound!" If it should be my happy privilege up there, upon some sunny mount, to descant upon this theme in more flaming words than I can use tonight, and of you who are of a kindred spirit with me will help to tell the story to the principalities and power in heavenly places, and the harpers standing on the sea of glass will strike their harps afresh and sing again the Song of Moses the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb—their songs will be in harmony with our theme tonight—"Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound." So let us go forth to our various occupations on the morrow believing that, though sin abounds, Grace shall yet more abound! Let us live so that all may see how Grace abounds in us and let us help to spread the wondrous story of what this Grace has done for us, that oth-

ers may seek that Grace for themselves—that Grace which abounds to the chief of sinners, that Grace which is the portion of all who believe in Jesus, that Grace which shall in God’s good time be crowned with Glory, that “Grace wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved!” Oh, that all here might share in that Grace! God grant it for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 5:1-11.**

Verse 1. *Therefore being justified by faith*—But why, “therefore”? Because of the verse preceding it—“Who was delivered for our offenses, 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”—*We have peace with God through our lord Jesus Christ.* [See Sermon #1456, Volume 25—PEACE—A FACT AND A FEELING—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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 works 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. Sanding at the back of our experience, we look out the window and what God has done for us is a token of what God *will* do for us!

5. *And hope makes us 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 Spirit which is given unto us.* [See Sermons #829, Volume 14—THE PERFUMING OF THE HEART and #1904, Volume 32—THE PERSONAL PENTECOST AND THE GLORIOUS HOPE—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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.* [See Sermons #1191, Volume 20—FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE? and #1345, Volume 23—FOR WHOM IS THE GOSPEL MEANT?—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] When we had no power to do anything that was good, when we were weak and hopeless, then Christ died for us! This is a wonderful Gospel expression which ought to bring comfort to those here who have no pretense 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 perhaps 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 commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* [See Sermon #104, Volume 2—LOVE'S COMMENDATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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.* [See Sermon #2587, Volume —“MUCH MORE”—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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 verse 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 saved 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 labor 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.* [See Sermons #1045, Volume 18—JOY IN A RECONCILED GOD and #2550, Volume 44—JOY IN GOD—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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 forever put away. We have received the Atonement and we rejoice in the God of our salvation. Glory be to His holy name forever and ever!

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

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

LAW AND GRACE

NO. 37

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 26, 1855,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Moreover the Law entered that the offense might abound.
But where sin Abounded, Grace did much more abound.”
Romans 5:20.***

THERE is no point upon which men make greater mistakes than upon the relation which exists between the Law and the Gospel. Some men put the Law instead of the Gospel—others put the Gospel instead of the Law. Some modify the Law and the Gospel and preach neither Law nor Gospel—and others entirely abrogate the Law by bringing in the Gospel. Many there are who think that the Law is the Gospel and who teach that men, by good works of benevolence, honesty, righteousness and sobriety, may be saved. Such men do err. On the other hand, many teach that the Gospel is a Law—that it has certain commands in it by obedience to which men are meritoriously saved. Such men err from the Truth and understand it not. A certain class maintain that the Law and the Gospel are mixed and that partly by observance of the Law and partly by God’s Grace men are saved. These men understand not the Truth and are false teachers! This morning I shall attempt—God helping me—to show you what is the design of the Law and then what is the end of the Gospel. The coming of the Law is explained in regard to its objectives—“Moreover the Law entered that the offense might abound.” Then comes the mission of the Gospel—“But where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.”

I shall consider this text in two senses this morning. First, *as it respects the world at large and the entrance of the Law into it.* And then afterwards, *as respecting the heart of the convicted sinner and the entrance of the Law into the conscience.*

I. First, we shall speak of the text as CONCERNING THIS WORLD. The objective of God in sending the Law into the world was “that the offense might abound.” But then comes the Gospel—for “where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.” First, then, in reference to the entire world. *God sent the Law into the world “that the offense might abound.”* There was sin in the world long before God sent the Law. God gave His Law that the offense might be seen to be an offense—yes, and that the offense might abound exceedingly more than it could have done without its coming. There was sin long before Sinai smoked. Long before the mountain trembled beneath the weight of Deity and the dread trumpet sounded exceedingly loud and long, there had been transgression! And

where that Law has never been heard, in heathen countries where that Word of God has never gone forth, there is still sin—because though men cannot sin against the Law which they have never seen, yet they can all rebel against the Light of Nature, against the dictates of conscience and against that traditional remembrance of right and wrong which has followed mankind from the place where God created them. All men, in every land have consciences and, therefore, all men can sin. The ignorant Hottentot, who has never heard anything of a God, has just so much of the Light of Nature that in the things that are outwardly good or bad, he will discern the difference!

And though he foolishly bows down to sticks and stones he has a judgment which, if he used it, would teach him better. If he chose to use his talents, he might know there is a God. For the Apostle, when speaking of men who have only the Light of Nature, plainly declares that, “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” (Rom 1:20). Without a Divine Revelation, men can sin and sin exceedingly—conscience, nature, tradition and reason—being, each of them, sufficient to condemn them for their violated commandments.

The Law makes no one a sinner! All men are such in Adam and were so practically before its introduction. It entered that “the offense might abound.” Now this seems a very terrible thought at first sight and many ministers would have shirked this text altogether. But when I find a verse I do not understand, I usually think it is a text I *should study*. And I try to seek it out before my heavenly Father—and then, when He has opened it to my soul—I reckon it my duty to communicate it to you, with the aid of the Holy Spirit. “The Law entered that the offense might abound.” I will attempt to show you how the Law makes offenses “abound.”

1. First of all, the Law tells us that *many things are sins which we would never have thought to be so if it had not been for the additional Light of God.*

Even with the Light of Nature and the light of conscience and the light of tradition, there are some things we would never have believed to be sins had we not been taught so by the Law. Now, what man by the light of conscience would keep holy the Sabbath? Suppose he never read the Bible and never heard of it? If he lived in a South Sea island, he might know there was a God, but not by any possibility could he find out that the *seventh* part of his time should be set apart to that God! We find that there are certain festivals and feasts among heathens and that they set apart days in honor of their fancied gods. But I would like to know where they could discover that there was a certain seventh day to be set apart to God, to spend the time in His House of Prayer. How could they, unless indeed, tradition may have handed down the fact of the original consecration of that day by the creating Jehovah? I cannot conceive it possible

that either conscience or reason could have taught them such a command as this—“Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor; and do all your work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God, in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates.” Moreover, if in the term, “Law,” we comprehend the ceremonial ritual, we can plainly see that many things, in appearance quite indifferent, were by it constituted sins. The eating of animals that do not chew the cud and divide the hoof, the wearing of linsey-woolsey, the sitting on a bed polluted by a leper—with a thousand other things, all seem to have no sin in them. But the Law made them into sins and so made the offense to abound!

2. It is a fact which you can verify by looking at the workings of your own mind, *that Law has a tendency to make men rebel*. Human nature rises against restraint. I had not known lust except the Law had said, “you shall not covet.” The depravity of man is excited to rebellion by the promulgation of laws. So evil are we that we conceive at once the desire to commit an act simply because it is forbidden. Children, we all know, as a rule, will always desire what they may not have and if forbidden to touch anything, will either do so when an opportunity serves, or will long to be able to do so. The same tendency any student of human nature can discern in mankind at large. Is, then the Law chargeable with my sin? God forbid! “But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slew me” (Rom 7:8, 11). The Law is holy and just and good. *It is not faulty but sin uses it as an occasion of offense and rebels when it ought to obey*. Augustine placed the Truth of God in a clear light when he wrote—“The Law is not in fault, but our evil and wicked nature, even as a heap of lime is still and quiet until water is poured thereon, but then it begins to smoke and burn, not from the fault of the water, but from the nature and kind of the lime which will not endure it.” Thus, you see, this is a second sense in which the entrance of the Law causes the offense to abound.

3. Yet again—the Law *increases the sinfulness of sin by removing all excuse of ignorance*. Until men know the Law, their crimes have at least a palliation of partial ignorance. But when the code of rules is spread before them, their offenses become greater because they become committed against the Light of God and knowledge. He who sins against conscience shall be condemned—of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who despises the voice of Jehovah, defies His sacred Sovereignty and willfully tramples on His commands? The more Light, the greater guilt—the Law affords that Light and so causes us to become double offenders. Oh, you nations of the earth who have heard the Law of Jehovah, your sin is increased and your offense abounds!

I think I hear someone say, "How unwise it must have been that a Law should come to make these things abound!" Does it not, at first sight, seem very harsh that the great Author of the world should give us a Law which will not justify but indirectly cause our condemnation to be greater? Does it not seem to be a thing which a gracious God would not reveal, but would have withheld? But, know you "that the foolishness of God is wiser than men." And understand that there is a gracious purpose even here! Natural men dream that by a strict performance of duty they shall obtain favor, but God says thus—"I will show them their folly by proclaiming a Law so high that they will despair of attaining unto it. They think that works will be sufficient to save them. They think falsely and they will be ruined by their mistake. I will send them a Law so terrible in its censures, so unflinching in its demands, that they cannot possibly obey it. They will be driven even to desperation and come and accept My mercy through Jesus Christ. They cannot be saved by the Law—not by the Law of Nature as it is—they have sinned against it. But yet I know they have foolishly hoped to keep My Law and think by works of the Law they may be justified. I have said, 'By the works of the Law no flesh living can be Justified.' Therefore I will write a Law—it shall be a black and heavy one—a burden which they cannot carry. And then they will turn away and say, 'I will not attempt to perform it. I will ask my Savior to bear it for me.'"

Imagine a case—Some young men are about to go to sea where I foresee they will meet with a storm. Suppose you put me in a position where I may cause a tempest before the other shall arise. Well, by the time the natural storm comes on those young men, they will be a long way out at sea and they will be wrecked and ruined before they can put back and be safe. But what will I do? Why, when they are just at the mouth of the river, I send a storm putting them in the greatest danger and precipitating them ashore so that they are saved. Thus did God. He sends a Law which shows them the roughness of the journey. The tempest of Law compels them to put back to the harbor of Free Grace and saves them from a most terrible destruction which would otherwise overwhelm them! The Law never came to save men. That never was its intention at all. It came on purpose to make the evidence complete that salvation by works is impossible and thus to drive the elect of God to rely wholly on the finished salvation of the Gospel! Now, just to illustrate my meaning, let me describe it by one more figure. You all remember those high mountains called the Alps. Well, it would be a great mercy if those Alps were a little higher. It would have been, at all events, for Napoleon's soldiers when he led his large army over and caused thousands to perish in the crossing!

Now, if it could have been possible to pile another Alps on their summit and make them higher than the Himalayas, would not the increased difficulty have deterred him from his enterprise and so have averted the destruction of thousands? Napoleon demanded, "Is it possible?" "Barely

possible,” was the reply. “*Avancez*,” cried Bonaparte! And the host were soon toiling up the mountainside. Now, by the Light of Nature it *does seem possible* for us to go over this mountain of works. But all men would have perished in the attempt—the path even of this lower hill being too narrow for mortal footsteps! God, therefore, puts another Law, like a mountain, on the top. And now the sinner says, “I cannot climb over *that*. It is a task beyond Herculean might. I see before me a narrow pass, called the pass of Jesus Christ’s Mercy—the pass of the Cross. I think I will wend my way there.” But if it had not been that the mountain was too high for him, he would have gone climbing up and climbing up until he sank into some chasm, or was lost under some mighty avalanche, or in some other way eternally perished! But the Law comes that the whole world might see the impossibility of being saved by works!

Let us turn to the more pleasing part of the subject—the superabundance of Grace. Having bewailed the devastations and injurious deeds of sin, it delights our hearts to be assured that “Grace did much more abound.”

4. *Grace excels sin in the numbers it brings beneath its sway.* It is my firm belief that the number of the saved will be far greater than that of the damned. It is written that in all things Jesus shall have the pre-eminence. And why is this to be left out? Can we think that Satan will have more followers than Jesus? Oh, no! For while it is written that the redeemed are a number that no man can number, it *is not* recorded that the lost are beyond numeration! True, we know that the visible elect are always a *remnant*, but then there are others to be added. Think for a moment of the army of infant souls who are now in Heaven. These all fell in Adam, but being all elect, were all redeemed and all regenerated and were privileged to fly straight from the mother’s breasts to Glory! Happy lot, which we who are spared, might well envy! Nor let it be forgotten that the multitudes of converts in the millennial age will very much turn the scale. For then the world will be exceedingly populous and a thousand years of a reign of Grace might easily suffice to overcome the majority accumulated by sin during 6,000 years of its tyranny. In that peaceful period, when all shall know Him, from the least even unto the greatest, the sons of God shall fly as doves to their windows and the Redeemer’s family shall be exceedingly multiplied!

What though those who have been deluded by superstition and destroyed by lust must be counted by thousands—Grace has still the pre-eminence. Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands. We admit that the number of the damned will be immense, but we do think that the two states of infancy and millennial glory will furnish so great a reserve of saints that Christ shall win the day. The procession of the lost may be long—there must be thousands and thousands of thousands—of those who have perished. But the greater procession of the King of kings shall be composed of larger hosts than even these. “Where

sin abounded, Grace did much *more abound*.” The trophies of Free Grace will be far more than the trophies of sin!

Yet again—Grace does “*much more abound*”—because a time shall come when the world shall be all full of Grace, whereas there has never been a period in this world’s history when it was wholly given up to sin. When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, there was still a display of Grace in the world. For in the Garden, at the close of the day, God said, “I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her Seed; it shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel.” And since that first transgression, there has never been a moment when Grace has entirely lost its footing in the earth. God has always had His servants on earth—at times they have been hidden by fifties in the caves, but they have never been utterly cut off! Grace might be low. The stream might be very shallow, but it has never been wholly dry. There has always been a salt of Grace in the world to counteract the power of sin. The clouds have never been so universal as to hide the day. But the time is fast approaching when Grace shall extend all over our poor world and be universal. According to the Bible testimony, we look for the great day when the dark cloud which has swathed this world in darkness shall be removed and it shall shine once more like all its sister planets. It has been for many a long year clouded and veiled by sin and corruption—but the last fire shall consume its rags and sackcloth! After that fire, the world in righteousness shall shine. The huge molten mass now slumbering in the bowels of our common mother shall furnish the means of purity! Palaces and crowns and peoples and empires are all to be melted down. And after like a plague house, the present Creation has been burned up entirely, God will breathe upon the heated mass and it will cool down again. He will smile on it as He did when He first created it, and the rivers will run down the new-made hills, the oceans will float in new-made channels—and the world will again be the abode of the righteous forever and forever! his fallen world will be restored to its orbit. That gem which was lost from the scepter of God shall be set again. Yes, He shall wear it as a signet about His arm. Christ died for the world—and what He died for, He will have. He died for the whole world and the whole world He will have when He has purified and cleansed it and fitted it for Himself—“Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.” For Grace shall be universal, whereas sin never was.

One more thought. Has the world lost its possessions by sin? It has gained far more by Grace. True, we have been expelled from a garden of delights where peace, love and happiness found a glorious habitation. True, Eden is not ours—with its luscious fruits, its blissful bowers and its rivers flowing o’er sands of gold—but we have, through Jesus, a fairer habitation! He has made us sit together in heavenly places—the plains of Heaven exceed the fields of Paradise in the always-new delights which they afford. The Tree of Life and the river from the Throne render the in-

habitants of the celestial regions more than imaginable! Did we lose natural life and subject ourselves to painful death by sin? Has not Grace revealed an immortality for the sake of which we are too glad to die? Life lost in Adam is more than restored in Christ! We admit that our original robes were torn asunder by Adam, but Jesus has clothed us with a Divine Righteousness far exceeding in value even the spotless robes of created innocence! We mourn our low and miserable condition through sin, but we will rejoice at the thought that we are now more secure than before we fell. We are brought into closer alliance with Jesus than our standing could have procured us. O Jesus! You have won us an inheritance more wide than Adam ever lost by his folly! You have filled us a coffer with greater riches than our sin has ever lavished. Your Grace has overtopped our sins. “Grace does much more abound.”

II. Now we come to the second part of the subject and that is THE ENTRANCE OF THE LAW INTO THE HEART. We have to deal carefully when we come to deal with internal things—it is not easy to talk about this little thing, the heart. When we begin to meddle with the Law of their soul, many become indignant, but we do not fear their wrath. We are going to attack the hidden man this morning. The Law entered their hearts that sin might abound, “but where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.”

1. The Law causes the offense to abound by *discovering sin to the soul*. When once God, the Holy Spirit, applies the Law to the conscience, secret sins are dragged to light, little sins are magnified to their true size and things apparently harmless become exceedingly sinful. Before that dread searcher of the hearts and trier of the reins makes His entrance into the soul, it appears righteous, just, lovely and holy. But when He reveals the hidden evils, the scene is changed. Offenses which were once styled peccadilloes, trifles, freaks of youth, follies, indulgences, little slips, etc.—then appear in their true color—as breaches of the Law of God deserving punishment.

John Bunyan shall explain my meaning by an extract from his famous allegory—“Then the Interpreter took Christian by the hand and led him into a very large parlor that was full of dust, because never swept, in which after he had reviewed it a little while, the Interpreter called for a man to sweep. Now when he began to sweep the dust began so abundantly to fly about, that Christian had almost therewith been choked. Then said the Interpreter to a damsel that stood by, ‘Bring here water and sprinkle the room,’ the which when she had done, it was swept and cleansed with pleasure. Then said Christian, ‘What does this mean?’ The Interpreter answered, ‘This parlor is the heart of a man that was never sanctified by the sweet Grace of the Gospel. The dust is his original sin and inward corruptions that have defiled the whole man. He that began to sweep at first, is the Law. But she that brought the water and did sprinkle it, is the Gospel. Now, whereas you saw that as soon as the first

began to sweep, the dust did so fly about that the room could not by him be cleansed, but that you were almost choked therewith, this is to show you that the Law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from sin, does revive, (Rom 7:9), put strength into, (1 Cor 15:56) and increases it in the soul, (Rom 5:20). Even as it does discover and forbid it, for it does not give power to subdue. Again, as you saw the damsel sprinkle the room with water, upon which it was cleansed with pleasure, this is to show you that when the Gospel comes in, the sweet and precious influences thereof to the heart, then, I say, even as you saw the damsel lay the dust by sprinkling the floor with water, so is sin vanquished and subdued and the soul made clean through the faith of it and consequently fit for the King of Glory to inhabit.”

The heart is like a dark cellar full of lizards, cockroaches, beetles and all kinds of reptiles and insects which in the dark we see not. But the Law takes down the shutters and lets in the light and so we see the evil. Thus sin becoming apparent by the Law—it is written the Law makes the offense to abound.

2. Once again. *The Law, when it comes into the heart, shows us how very black with sin we are.* Some of us know that we are sinners. It is very easy to say it. The word, “sinner,” has only two syllables in it and many there are who frequently have it on their lips but who do not understand it. They see their sin, but it does not appear exceedingly sinful till the Law comes. We think there is something sinful in it—but when the Law comes we detect its abomination. Has God’s holy Light ever shone into your souls? Have you had the fountains of your great depravity and evil broken up and been wakened sufficiently to say, “O God I have sinned”? Now, if you have your hearts broken up by the Law, you will find the heart is more deceitful than the devil! I can say this of myself—I am very much afraid of mine—it is so bad. The Bible says, “The heart is deceitful above all things.” The devil is one of the things—therefore, it is worse than the devil—“and desperately wicked.” How many do we find who are saying, “Well, I trust I have a very good heart at the bottom. There may be a little amiss at the top, but I am very good-hearted at bottom.” If you saw some fruit on the top of a basket that was not quite good, would you buy the basket because they told you, “Yes, but they are good at the bottom?” “No, no,” you would say, “they are sure to be the best at the top and if they are bad there, they are sure to be rotten below.” There are many people who live strange lives and some friends say, “He is good-hearted at the bottom. He gets drunk, sometimes, but he is very good-hearted at the bottom.” Ah, never believe it. Men are seldom estimated better than they seem to be. If the outside of the cup or platter is clean, the inside may be dirty. But if the outside is impure, you may always be sure the inside is no better. Most of us put our goods in the window—we keep all our good things in the front and bad things behind. Let you and I, instead of making excuses about our-

selves—about the badness of our hearts—if the Law has entered into our soul, bow down and say, “O the sin—O the uncleanness—the blackness—the awful nature of our crimes!” “The Law entered that the offense may abound.”

3. The Law reveals the exceeding abundance of sin *by discovering to us the depravity of our nature*. We are all prepared to charge the serpent with our guilt or to insinuate that we go astray from the force of ill example—but the Holy Spirit dissipates these dreams by bringing the Law into the heart. Then the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the chambers of imagery are opened, the innate evil of the very essence of fallen man is discovered. The Law cuts into the core of the evil—it reveals the seat of the malady and informs us that the leprosy lies deep within. Oh, how the man abhors himself when he sees all his rivers of water turned into blood and loathsomeness creeping over all his being! He learns that sin is no flesh wound but a stab in the heart. He discovers that the poison has impregnated his veins, lies in his very marrow and has its fountain in his inmost heart. Now he loathes himself and desires to be healed. Actual sin seems not half as terrible as inbred sin—and at the thought of what he is—he turns pale and gives up salvation by works as an impossibility!

4. Having thus removed the mask and shown the desperate case of the sinner, the relentless Law causes the offense to abound yet more by *bringing home the sentence of condemnation*. It mounts the Judgment Seat, puts on the black cap and pronounces the sentence of death. With a harsh un pitying voice, it solemnly thunders forth the words, “Condemned already.” It bids the soul prepare its defense knowing well that all apology has been taken away by its former work of conviction. The sinner is, therefore, speechless—and the Law, with frowning looks—lifts up the veil of Hell and gives the man a glimpse of torment. The soul feels that the sentence is just, that the punishment is not too severe and that it has no right to expect mercy. It stands quivering, trembling, fainting and intoxicated with dismay until it falls prostrate in utter despair. The sinner puts the rope around his own neck, arrays himself in the attire of the condemned and throws himself at the foot of the King’s Throne, with but one thought, “I am vile”—and with one prayer, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

5. Nor does the Law cease its operations even here, for it renders the offense yet more apparent *by discovering the powerlessness occasioned by sin*. It not only condemns, but it actually kills. He who once thought that he could repent and believe at pleasure finds in himself no power to do either the one or the other!

When Moses smites the sinner, he bruises and mangles him with the first blow, but at a second or a third, he falls down as one dead. I have been in such a condition that if Heaven could have been purchased by a single prayer, I would have been damned, for I could no more pray than I

could fly! Moreover, when we are in the grave which the Law has dug for us, we feel as if we cannot feel and we grieve because we cannot grieve! The dread mountain lies upon us which renders it impossible to stir hand or foot. And when we would cry for help, our voice refuses to obey us. In vain the minister cries, "Repent!" Our hard heart will not melt. In vain he exhorts us to believe—that faith of which he speaks seems to be as much beyond our capacity as the creation of a universe! Ruin is now become ruin, indeed! The thundering sentence is in our ears, "CONDEMNED ALREADY." Another cry follows it, "DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS." And a third, more awful and terrible, mingles its horrible warning, "*The wrath to come—the wrath to come.*" In the opinion of the sinner, he is now cast out as a corrupt carcass. He expects each moment to be tormented by the worm that never dies and to lift up his eyes in Hell! Now is Mercy's moment—and, by the Grace of God, we turn the subject from condemning Law to abounding Grace!

Listen, O heavy laden, condemned Sinner, while in my Master's name I speak of super abounding Grace. *Grace excels sin in its measure and efficacy.* Though your sins are many, mercy has many pardons. Though they excel the stars, the sands, the drops of dew in their number—one act of remission can cancel all! Your iniquity, though a mountain, shall be cast into the midst of the sea. Your blackness shall be washed out by the cleansing blood of your Redeemer's gore. Mark, I said your *sins* and I meant to say so, for if you are now a Law-condemned sinner, I know you to be a vessel of mercy by that very sign! Oh, hellish Sinners, abandoned Profligates, Outcasts from the company of sinners, themselves—if you acknowledge your iniquity—here is mercy, broad, ample, free, immense, INFINITE! Remember this, O sinner—

***"If all the sins that men have done
In will, in word, in thought, in deed,
Since worlds were made, or time began,
Were laid on one poor sinner's head,
The stream of Jesus' precious blood
Applied, removes the dreadful load."***

Yet again, Divine Grace excels sin in another thing. *Sin shows us its parent and tells us our heart is the father of it. But Grace surpasses sin there and shows the Author of Grace—the King of kings!* The Law traces sin up to our heart—Grace traces its own origin to God and—

***"In His sacred breast I see
Eternal thoughts of love to me."***

O Christian, what a blessed thing Grace is, for its source is in the everlasting mountains! Sinner, if you are the vilest in the world, if God forgives you this morning, you will be able to trace your pedigree to Him, for you will become one of the sons of God and have Him always for your Father! I think I see you, a wretched criminal, at the bar and I hear Mercy cry, "Discharge him! He is pallid, sick, maimed—heal him. He is of a vile race—lo, I will adopt him into My family." Sinner! God takes you for His

son. What? Though you are poor, God says, "I will take you to be Mine forever. You shall be My heir. There is your fair Brother. In ties of blood He is one with you—Jesus is your actual Brother!" Yet how came this change? Oh, is not that an act of mercy? "Grace did much more abound"—

***"Grace has put me in the number
Of the Savior's family."***

Grace outdoes sin, for it lifts us higher than the place from which we fell!

And, again—"Where sin abounded, Grace did much more abound." *Because the sentence of the Law may be reversed, but that of Grace never can.* I stand here and feel condemned, yet, perhaps I have a hope that I may be acquitted. There is a dying hope of acquittal still left. But when we are justified there is no fear of condemnation. I cannot be condemned if I am once justified—I am *fully* absolved by Grace! I defy Satan to lay hands on me if I am a justified man. The state of justification is an invariable one and is indissolubly united to Glory. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, rather, that is risen again who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or sword? No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Oh, poor condemned Sinner, does not this charm you and make you in love with Free Grace? And all this is YOURS! Your crimes, if once blotted out, shall never be laid to your charge again! The justification of the Gospel is no Arminian sham which may be reversed if you should in future turn aside. No. The debt once paid cannot be demanded twice—the punishment, once endured, cannot again be inflicted. Saved, saved, saved, entirely saved by divine Grace, you may walk without fear the wide world over!

And yet, once more—Just as sin makes us sick and grievous and sad, so does Grace make us *far more joyful and free*. Sin causes one to go about with an aching heart till he seems as if the world would swallow him and mountains hang above ready to drop upon him. This is the effect of the Law. The Law makes us sad. The Law makes us miserable. But, poor Sinner, Grace removes the evil effects of sin upon your spirit. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you shall go out of this place with a sparkling eye and a light heart. Ah, well do I remember the morning when I stepped into a little place of worship, as miserable almost as Hell could make me—being ruined and lost. I had often been at Chapels where they spoke of the Law, but I heard not the Gospel. I sat down in

the pew a chained and imprisoned sinner! The Word of God came and I went out free! Though I went in miserable as Hell, I went out elated and joyful! I sat there black in sin. I went away whiter than driven snow! God had said, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be whiter than snow." Why not this be your lot, my Brothers and Sisters, if you now feel yourself a sinner? It is all He asks of you—to feel your need of Him. "The Law has entered that sin might abound." You are forgiven! Only believe it, Elect, only believe it—'tis the Truth that you are saved!

And now, lastly—poor Sinner, has sin made you unfit for Heaven? Grace shall render you a fit companion for seraphs and the just made perfect! You who are today lost and destroyed by sin, shall one day find yourself with a crown upon your head and a golden harp in your hand exalted to the Throne of the Most High! Think, O Drunkard, if you repent, there is a crown laid up for you in Heaven! You most guilty, most lost and depraved, are you condemned in your conscience by the Law? Then I invite you, in my Master's name, to accept pardon through His blood! He suffered in your place! He has atoned for your guilt and you are acquitted!

You are an object of His eternal affection. The Law is but a schoolmaster to bring you to Christ. Cast yourself on Him! Fall into the arms of saving Grace! No works are required, no fitness, no righteousness, no doings. You are complete in Him who said, "It is finished."

***"You debtors whom He gives to know,
That you ten thousand talents owe,
When humble at His feet you fall
Your gracious God forgives them all!
Slaves, that have borne the heavy chain
Of sin and Hell's tyrannical reign,
To liberty assert your claim
And urge the great Redeemer's name!
The rich inheritance of Heaven
Your joy, your boast, is freely given!
Fair Salem, your arrival waits
With golden streets and pearly gates.
Her blest inhabitants no more
Bondage and poverty deplore!
No debt, but love immensely great
Their joy still rises with the debt."***

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

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

REIGNING GRACE

NO. 330

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 26, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through
righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”
Romans 5:21.***

I shall not pretend to enter into the fullness of this text, but merely select that topic, “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Our Apostle represents man as being subject to two great kings. Sin is the grim tyrant, to whom, in the first place, man has bowed his willing neck. The reign of sin is a reign of terror and delusion. It promises pleasure but being full of all manner of deceivableness, of unrighteousness, it gives pain even in this world—and in the world to come—death eternal. An awful contemplation is that of the reign of sin. Permitted to come into this world as an usurper—having mounted its throne upon the heart of man by flattering blandishments and crafty pleasantries, it was not long before it fully developed itself.

Its first act was to smite Eden with blast and mildew by its breath. Its next act was to slay the second child of man and that by the hand of the eldest-born. Since then, its reign has been scarlet with blood, black with iniquity and fraught with everything that can make the heart of man sad and wretched. Oh sin, you tyrant monster, all the demons that ever sat upon the throne of Rome were never such as you are. And all the men, who, from the wild north, have come forth as the scourges of man, the destroying angels of our race, though they have waded up to their knees in the blood of mortals, have never been so terrible as you are. You have reigned unto death and that a death eternal—a death from which there shall be no resurrection—a death which casts souls into an eternal grave—a grave of fire.

Our Apostle now changes the subject and represents man under the gracious state, as rejoicing in another government, ruled by another king. Just as sin has reigned and with despotic and irresistible power has ground his subjects in the very dust and then cast them into the flames, so does grace with irresistible goodness, constrain the chosen multitude to yield obedience and thus prepares them for eternal bliss. Look, it lifts up the beggar from the dunghill and makes him to sit among princes.

Mark its shining course and behold it blessing the sons of man wherever it stretches out its silver scepter, chasing away the misery of night and giving the gladness of Gospel day—sending back the fiends of discord and of cruelty to the dens from which they once escaped. See its bidding the angels of mercy keep perpetual watch and ward over the sons of Adam who have given themselves up to its sway of the kingdom of grace.

My business this morning is not with sin, but with grace—a pleasing and a glowing theme. May God fill souls and touch our tongue, that we may speak of those things which we may have touching the King and may God greatly bless what shall be said to each of our hearts. I shall invite you, first of all, to see grace in its reigning acts and then I shall bid you come with joy and wonder and behold grace as it sits upon its Throne.

I. First, then, I shall need your attention to a series of pictures, in which you shall see grace manifesting its REIGNING POWER and reigning, too, in places the most unlikely ever to have yielded to its power. Come with me then, Brothers and Sisters and I will take you in spirit to the Valley of Vision. See, strewn there among the rugged rocks, the bleached and dried bones of the house of Israel—a skull there and the arm which once was allied to it, scattered so far apart that human wisdom could not bring them bone to bone, much less could human strength clothe the bones with flesh.

Death reigns there—that irresistible all-subduing power, before whom monarchs and all their armies, though they be numberless as the host of Xerxes, must bow themselves. O, Death! We come this day to see you defeated, to see you cast from your throne. But who shall do it? Come forth, you ministers of Christ and see what you can do. Here are souls spiritually dead—no, dry—as far away from hope as the bones of the morgue are from life. Come, you ministers, attune your eloquence and see what you can do.

Behold, Chrysostom speaks, the golden-mouthed John showers forth his marvelous sentences, but the bones stir not. And now Whitfield speaks with seraph voice as though he would move Heaven and earth, but there is not a motion among those crisp particles that once might have lived, but which live no more. Come, Isaiah and let us hear your thundering appeals, or you, Jeremy, cannot your tears bedew these bones with the circulating drops of life? Come, Ezekiel, with your eagle eye and with your soaring wing, or you Daniel, with your fiery words piercing through the thick clouds of the future and exposing, as with lightning fire, the glory that is to come.

I hear them speak and Seer follows Seer in noble emulation of earnest utterance, but the dry bones move not. They are locked in the fell embrace

of death and life comes not to them even by these living words. Alas, eloquence and human might and wisdom and rhetoric and logic—yes, and zeal and earnestness and God-given passion—cannot wake the soul of the spiritually dead. Though all the men whom God has chosen to be His representatives from the beginning of the reign of grace even to the end thereof—though all should strive and persuade and plead with eloquence that might move a rock, yet souls dead in trespasses and sin could not and would not live by power so weak as this.

Come, you Apostles and confessors, Paul and Peter and John and all the holy brotherhood of inspired ambassadors! Come, I say and spend your strength in vain, for apart from Divine Grace, you cannot charm the dull cold ear of death, or stir the torpor of a spirit dead in sins. And now Moses, you who did smite the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all her strength—come you forth and lift up the fiery tables of stone and bid these men live by the works of the Law. But no, he declines the futile task. He knows that he is of no power to deal with souls that are dead.

But hearken, the voice Divine exclaims with trumpet voice, “Almighty Grace, arise and quicken these dead souls,” and behold, grace stands before you, in angel form—no, better in the form of Man, or rather incarnate God, and I hear Him say, “Thus says the Lord, You dry bones live.” Hark to the rustling as every bone hastens to its fellow! See how the skeleton starts upright and how the flesh grows on the frame. “Come from the four winds, O breath and breathe upon these slain, that they may live!” It is done and in the place of a morgue you see an army and what once seemed to be the rubbish and sweepings of a tomb now stands before you a great host as the host of God, a host of men full of life and who shall soon be clothed with glory. “Grace reigns unto eternal life.”

Ah, do you understand this parable? Has this act ever been performed in you? Oh, there are some of you over whom a mother wept and for whom a father prayed. And many a time have these eyes wept for you, too. I have longed for your soul’s salvation and sought out goodly words which might move your heart. But you were like the deaf adder, you would not hear nor be charmed—charm we never so wisely.

Ah, but glory be to God, you heard at last. How was it? How was it, I say? Speak! Speak! You that have been brought out from spiritual death, how was it accomplished? By the might of the creature? By the power of the Law? By the energy of nature? “No,” unanimously you cry, “Grace has done it, God’s Grace has reigned in us unto eternal life.”

Rest awhile now, and come with me and behold another scene. The man is alive. He has been quickened—but no sooner is he quickened than he feels the terrible bondage of sin. See him yonder? I see him now in vision before my very eyes. He is a man who has been a drunkard, a

swearer and all else that is vile. All manner of sins has he committed, but now he feels that this mode of life will surely end in eternal death and he therefore longs to escape. But see how he is bound with a hundred chains and held in bondage by seven fierce and strong devils!

See him yonder? The hot sweat is on his brow while he strives to free his right arm of one huge bloated devil, called drunkenness, who seeks to hold him down and rivet the fetters about his wrist. See how he struggles with foot and hand, for he is a prisoner everywhere, like Laocoon of old, whom the serpents enfolded from head to foot, although he strove to rend away those awful folds and to escape the jaws which stained his holy fillets with their venom.

Shall that man ever be delivered? Can that slave of lust snap fetters so strong which have for years been about him till they have grown into his very flesh and become part of his nature? Shall that lip be freed from the propensity to swear? Can that heart be delivered from pride? Shall that foot be so turned from all its paths that it shall hate the road of wickedness? And shall that eye no longer be filled with lust and crime, but shall it flash with purity and joy?

Come here, Sirs, you that are wise. You who understand how to reform mankind—come and ply your arts upon him and see what you can do. The man sincerely longs to be delivered, but when he thinks he has pulled off one coil of the old serpent, lo—like a huge constrictor it has folded itself again. He goes back again, like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. There seems for him no deliverance. His nature still is vile and though he longs to be free, yet that nature has the mastery over him.

Oh, some of you know what this means. You know how you took the pledge, perhaps a dozen times, but you broke it as often. You know how you promised yourself you would never curse God again, but in a moment of passion you were overpowered and again the oath came trembling from your tongue. All these things—all your resolutions and your vows were powerless. They could not deliver you. They could not set you free. But, *Grace*—come here and see what *you* can do. Grace speaks the word and says, “Get you hence, Satan—Avaunt you Fiends—let the man be free.” And free he is, no more to be a slave.

Now he hates the things which once he loved. Now he abhors the vice in which he once indulged. Now to be holy is not hard for him. It would be harder far to make him live in sin as once he did. His *nature* is changed. Grace has so entirely created new the man that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus and he runs with delight and joy in all the paths of holiness. *Grace* has done it. *Grace* reigns unto eternal life.

But now come with me to another scene. There in the prison of conviction bound in affliction and iron—there sits a miserable wretch. The walls of his dungeon are of solid granite and the door thereof is of brass, with many bolts most fast and firm. The captive sits both day and night with tangled hair, weeping, weeping, weeping. Ask him why and his answer is, “I have sinned—I have sinned and I cannot look up. Beneath me there is the yawning gulf of death and deeper still a devouring Hell. Above me there is an angry God and a judgment-seat blazing with vengeance. Within me there is an accusing conscience, the foretaste of the wrath to come.”

“But is there not hope for you?” “No,” says he, “none. I am righteously bound and it is only longsuffering mercy which spares me yet a little while, for if I had my due deserts I should be taken out to execution and that at once.” Oh, come here, you sons of mirth and see what you can do for this poor prisoner. Can your music and your dancing open yonder gates, or shake those Adamantine walls? Come here, you that are masters of the art of consolation, see what you can do. But as one that sings songs to a sad heart and as vinegar upon niter, so are you.

In vain even the minister himself, knowing the blessings of the Gospel, sets before that man the grace of Christ and the riches of His love. All that the minister can say, though sent of God, seems but to plunge him deeper in the mire. “Ah,” groans the mourner, “Christ is merciful, but I have no part in Him. Yes, I know He is able to save the chief of sinners, but not such an one as I am. My heart is too hard, too vile.” He puts from him the way of salvation and goes back again to his cold stony state, weeping, weeping, weeping, both by night and day.

Grace, come and see if you can reign even here. I see him come and bearing in his hand the Cross, he speaks to the prisoner and cries, “Look here, look here,” and oh, let us wonder to tell it, when the prisoner lifts his eyes he sees a Savior bleeding on the tree and in a moment a smile takes the place of his sorrow. He receives the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. “Rise, rise,” says Grace, “you are free, you are free. Shake yourself from the dust, pluck off your sackcloth and put on your beautiful garments. Lo,” says he, “see what I have done.”

And he breaks the gates of brass and cuts the bars of iron in pieces. As the walls of Jericho fell down before the blast of the trumpet, so fall the walls of the dungeon and the man finds himself rejoicing and glad and free—an heir of Heaven, a child of God, his feet are set upon the Rock and his goings are established. Oh, Grace Divine, what have you done?—you are indeed triumphant, O reigning Grace, where despair itself had triumphed.

Thus have I painted you three pictures. O that I had the hand of those mighty masters who could depict these things until they stood out visibly before your eyes. I shall want your patience this morning—I know I shall have your attention as I take you from place to place and show you how God’s Grace reigns. And now, the sinner set free both from the chains of his old lusts and of his old despairing, says within himself—

***“I’ll to the gracious king approach,
Whose scepter mercy gives;
Perhaps he may command my touch,
And then the suppliant lives.”***

I see him journeying towards a palace exceeding fair and beautiful to look upon. As he enters the gate, he hears a whisper in his heart which is, “This is the Palace of Justice, you will be driven forth with shame from these walls for you are too vile to have an audience here.” Ah, but says he—

***“I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away I know
I must forever die.”***

He traverses the passages of the house with beating heart, until at last he comes to the audience chamber and there, enthroned on light, he beholds a glorious King. The sinner dares not so much as look up, for he knows not whether he shall feel devouring fire, or whether mercy shall speak to him with her silver voice.

He trembles. He all but faints. When lo, reigning Grace who sits smiling upon a throne of love, stretches out its scepter and says, “Live, live.” At that sound the sinner revives, he looks up and before he has fully seen the wondrous vision, he hears another voice—“Your sins which are many are all forgiven you. I have blotted out like a cloud yours iniquities and like a thick cloud your sins. I have chosen you and not cast you away,”

And now, the sinner, bowing low before the Throne of Mercy, begins to kiss its feet with rapture and delight and Mercy cries, “Rise, rise, my beloved one. I have put a fair jewel upon your neck. I have clothed you with ornaments—I have decked you with pearls and precious stones as a bridegroom decks out his bride. Go then and rejoice, for you are my son who was lost, but are found, who was dead, but is alive again.”

Never, perhaps, does Grace seem more glorious than when, with the silver scepter in her hand, she touches the despairing, fainting sinner and cries, “Live.” My soul remembers that glad hour. I speak from out of the fullness of my heart. Oh, you golden moment, you shall never be forgotten, when Mercy said, “Son, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you.”

But we must pass on. The man has now become a forgiven one—a saint—but Grace has not ceased to reign, nor has he ceased to need its reign. It is after sin is forgiven that the battle begins. If we had only grace enough to transform us from sinners into saints, it were not worth having, because saints would soon return to their sins—unless grace were constantly bestowed.

And now let me show you a saint after he has been renewed by grace. There he stands, Sir, and did you ever see a man in such a position as that! You have heard of battles and you have sometimes read the story of some valiant hero around whom the battle made fearful center. He had to fight, with horses slain beneath him, standing on heaps of bodies which he had slain. Behold his ardor, his courage, his burning valor, as he finds that he is the target for all arrows, that all the battle-axes and the spears are dashed and thrust against his person—that every son of wrath is thirsting for his blood.

See now, he hurls about him a hail of iron blows. Right, left and all around, his sword sweeps in awful circle. Now such is the true Christian—such and yet more solemn is his position. There has never such a fight been seen on earth as that man must wage who hopes to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, for no sooner are we converted than at once Hell is alive against us and earth is on fire with anger and we have both earth and Hell to dispute our salvation.

Young Christian do you tremble? Let me do with you as Elias did with his servant of old. Young man, you see horses and chariots that are innumerable—come with me and I will pray for you and touch yours eyes. What see you now? “Oh,” says he, “I see the mountain full of horses of fire and chariots of fire that are round about Elijah,” Blessed be his name, it is no vision—it is the very truth—“More are they that are for us than all they that be against us.”

And if the fray thickens, angels shall rush to the valley with their good swords to drive back the foe and the standard-bearer shall not fall, though fall full well he may. The soldier of Christ shall stand, for underneath him are the everlasting arms. He shall tread upon his enemies and shall destroy them, in the words of Deborah of old, “Oh my soul, you have trod down strength.” So then, Grace reigns in the thick battle of temptation and makes those who are the subjects of its kingdom more than conquerors through Him that has loved them.

To push further still. The man, being kept in temptation, has a work to do for his Lord. I have often felt that there is no case where grace reigns more powerfully than in the use which God makes of such poor, infirm, feeble, decrepit creatures as His servants are. Let me show you a picture of grace reigning. Do you see Peter there in the hall, afraid of a little maid?

He denies his Master and with oaths and curses he says, "I know not the Man."

Wait awhile. Some six or seven weeks have passed and there is a great crowd in the streets. There is a multitude gathered from all countries—Parthians, Medes, Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia. Who is to preach to them—who shall be the minister? Grace—to your honor let it be told—you did not select John who stood at the foot of the Cross. Nor he who was surnamed Zelotes, because of his zealousness—no, Peter, who denied his Master—must come forth to own him afresh.

And here he comes. I think I see him. Perhaps as he ascends the place where he is to speak his heart whispers to him, "Simon, son of Jonas, what are you doing here?" The cock crows, Simon, and it reminds you that you did deny your Lord, what are you doing here? And then conscience seemed to say, "Are you the man to be a preacher—you? Give place. Can you hope to do any good, or to save immortal souls, such a feeble head-strong, presumptuous worm as you are?"

But Grace is with him. Grace has touched his lip and the cloven tongue is like a sword of fire within his mouth. He comes forward—and he begins to speak. Soon the heavenly fire descends from him upon the multitude and that day, three thousand Baptisms tell what God can do and how grace can reign in the feeblest instrumentality. I am the living witness that God can make use of the weakest means to accomplish the mightiest results.

In that day when you shall review the sling of David and the ox-goad of Shamgar, when you shall have to look back upon Jael's nail and these little things which have done great exploits, then shall I beg you to write down my name as that of one by whom many souls have been saved, but who, himself has wondered more than you all, whenever God has blessed him and whenever a soul has been saved by such an unworthy one. Grace, grace, you can prevail. You have done it, you can make use of the meanest instruments to produce the grandest effects and to increase your glory among men!

I must still trespass upon you while I take you to another spot, to show you how Grace can reign where you little think it would ever live at all. The sea is agitated with a great storm and a man has just been thrown into the sea, it is Jonah. A fish has swallowed him. That fish dives into unfathomable depths, till the ocean has covered up both fish and Prophet. The earth with her bars is about him forever. The weeds are wrapped about his head. As the creature sucks in mouthful after mouthful of its food, there lies this man and yet he lives.

Grace is there preserving his life. Grace was there, even when the fish was led to swallow him. But can that man ever find deliverance? Is he not

in trouble too great and cast out from the very presence of God? Listen! he groans out of the darkness of that living prison. He begins to cry, towards the temple of God. Grace, Grace, come forth—she divides the sea—she speaks to Leviathan—he comes up upon the dry land, he vomits forth the Prophet and he lives.

Have you ever seen the like of that in your own case? Have you ever been in a strait and a trouble so difficult that you imagined there was no deliverance? If you ever have, I turn you to your own history as an illustration of how grace can reign in redeeming you out of the most terrible trials. I tell you Brethren, if all the troubles that ever came from Heaven, all the persecutions that ever came from earth and all the afflictions that ever arose from Hell could meet on your poor devoted head, the reigning Grace of God would make you master of them all.

You have never need to fear. Storms are the triumph of His art and Grace can steer the ship the better for tempestuous waves. Trust in the Lord and do good. Rest on His Grace and hope in His mercy. When the water is very deep He will put His hand beneath your chin, so that you shall not lose your breath. Or if you shall sink, He will sink with you. And if you should go to the very bottom, He will be at the very bottom with you. Wherever you go, He will be your companion, saying to you, “Fear not, I will help you. I will be with you. When you go through the waters you shall not be drowned and when you go through the fire you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you.”

I have thus shown you Grace reigning in the midst of spiritual death, spiritual bondage, spiritual despair—grace reigning in the effort of judgment, grace in the battle of temptation, grace in the quagmires of infirmity and grace triumphant also in the midst of our direst afflictions. I shall need to give you but one other picture—grace reigning in the hour of death—and triumphing in the moment of our entrance into Heaven.

Last Friday evening, as I lay upon my bed having been much tossed about and tempted and tried, it pleased God to visit his servant and cheer him somewhat. And among many sweet thoughts which gladdened my mind, I fell into a half-sleeping and half-waking state and I thought I saw an angel who came from the upper skies and who had in his hand a crown. He said to me, “You have fought the good fight, behold your reward.” And I waved my hand and said, “No, no, I cannot receive it. I am not worthy of it. I cannot take it.”

He said, “Heaven lies before you—enter.” And I said “No, I cannot. I deserve it not. I have no claim to any reward, no right to any rest, though it will be given to the children of God.” And he looked at me and he said, “It is of *grace* and not of merit.” Then I thought I would take the crown, but lo! I awoke and the dream was over. Yes, and I mused on that a long,

long while and I thought, if Heaven were by merit, it would never be Heaven to me, for if I were even in it I should say, "I am sure I am here by mistake. I am sure this not my place. It is not my Heaven. I have no claim to it."

I should walk among the redeemed with their golden harps and say, "No, no, *you* have what you have fought for and have won, but I am an intruder here." I should be afraid of losing an inheritance to which I had no title and of being cast out at last from a portion which I had no right to have obtained. But if it is of God's Grace and not of works—why, then, we may walk into Heaven with boldness. We may receive the crown with gladness and sit down with the redeemed with joy and confidence. I protest I never could enter Heaven, even if I might, if it were not of grace.

I dare not in common honesty enter. Neither you nor I could claim a reward, or could ever dare to take it as a merited recompense. It must be given simply of God's free love and covenant faithfulness, or else indeed when given we should seem like robbers who had taken to ourselves what was not ours and should always feel that the possession was not safe, because the title was not sound. It is of grace, then.

And so, Beloved, when you come to die, grace shall bear you up in the midst of Jordan and you shall say, "I feel the bottom and it is good." When the cold waters shall chill your blood, grace shall warm your heart. When the eye gathers the death-glaze and the light of earth is being shut out from you forever, grace shall lift the curtains of Heaven and give you visions of eternity. And when at last the spirit leaps from time into eternal space, then grace shall be with you to conduct you to your Father's house.

And when the Judgment Throne is set, grace shall put you on the right hand. Grace shall robe you about with Jesus' righteousness. Grace shall make you bold to stand where sinners tremble and Grace shall say to you, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."—

***"It lays in Heaven the topmost stone.
And well deserves the praise."***

And now I have conducted you into the many scenes, or rather into a few of them, where grace reigns. I want you now, if you can, before we close, to take by faith a view of GRACE SITTING ON ITS THRONE.

Be gone vain thoughts, far removed be every worldly imagination now. We are about to come into an awful presence and well may we cry, "Put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground."

I think I see the Throne of Grace. It is but through a glass darkly, but these eyes behold it. The Throne is placed upon the eternal hills of God's immutable purpose and decree. Deep settled in unfailing wisdom and

unswerving love these mountains never move. There they stand. While nature changes they move not and though the sun may rise and set, they abide forever and forevermore the same. The Throne itself, standing upon those lofty hills has for its pedestal Divine Fidelity, Divine Faithfulness and the Eternal Will of God. Did ever see such a Throne as that? The thrones of monarchs rock and reel, but this is settled and abides forever in God's faithfulness and truth.

It is true that the throne of many a dynasty has been cemented by blood and so is this, indeed, but not with the blood of murdered men, or of soldiers slain in battle. To make this Throne secure it is cemented with the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. No, as if this did not suffice, this Throne is settled by the eternal oath. God swears by Himself because He can swear by no greater, that by two immutable things wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to Christ Jesus our Lord.

Oh, Grace—I see your Throne, I mark its solid base! A faithful and unchanging God lays the foundation of this throne in oaths and promises and blood. And now look upward. Do you see the shining steps? The throne is of pure white alabaster and every step is of solid light. The steps are the Divine openings of Providence as He gradually develops His mighty scheme. And see on either side—as on the Throne of Solomon there were lions that did lie upon the steps—so on either side of the steps of the Throne of Grace I see two lions ready to guard and protect it. And who are these? Their names are Justice and Holiness. Let any attempt to assail that Throne and Justice will devour them and Holiness with its fiery eyes will utterly consume them.

Oh, glorious thought, Christian! That very Justice which once seemed to stand in the way of Grace is one of the lions which guard the Throne. And that very Holiness which seemed once to put a barrier between your soul and bliss, now stands there as a mighty one to guard the seat and Throne of Sovereign Grace.

Now look upward, if your eyes can bear the light. You cannot see the full form and visage of the Lord of Grace—the King. But if you can dimly discern it—I see upon that Throne, One who—

***“Looks like a Lamb that has been slain,
And wears His priesthood still.”***

Yes, though you cannot see Him, yet He sees us and that Divine image is scattering mercies upon us even now. The eyes of Grace are the suns of the spiritual universe. The hands of Grace scatter lavish bounties throughout all the Church of the first-born and those lips of Grace are

uttering continually those once unspoken decrees which speak when they are fulfilled and carried out in gracious providences.

But come here and look upward. Bow yourself in that Presence before which the angels cry, “Holy, holy, holy,” and veil their faces with their wings. See above the Throne and above the image and likeness of Him that sits thereon—above that Throne of Grace, behold, behold, THE CROWN. Was ever such a crown? No, it is not one, it is many—there are many crowns and many jewels in each of the many crowns. And from where came these crowns of grace? Oh, they are crowns that have been won in fields of fight. They are crowns, too, that have been given by grateful hearts.

And there, as I gaze, methinks I see many a soul that was once black with sin, made bright and sparkling and there it is in the crown of grace, glittering like a diamond and, my soul, shall you be there? Shall you be one of those ever-glittering, undimmed jewels? Shall you be in that crown? Oh, glorious day, when shall you come, when I shall be a real jewel in the crown of Jesus? But are you not there now, Brothers and Sisters? Have you not crowned Jesus Christ already, some of you? Have not you in your songs and in your fires, felt that you must crown Him? And often, as we have sung that hymn, could you not sing it again?—

**“All hail the power of Jesus’ name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.”**

Jesus, we crown You, we crown You. All hail! All hail! You King of kings—You God of love. Behold Your Church bows herself before You—

**“With vials full of odor sweet,
And harps of sweeter sound.”**

The elders chant before Your presence and we, even we, adore You. Though silver of angelic praise and gold of perfect melody we cannot boast—yet such as we have we give You. Unto Him that sits upon the Throne—unto Him that lives and was dead—unto Grace, in the Person of the Lord Jesus, be glory and honor and majesty and power and dominion and might, forever and ever. Amen.

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BAPTISM—A BURIAL

NO. 1627

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 30, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Know you 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.”
Romans 6:3, 4.

I SHALL not enter into controversy over this text, although over it some have raised the question of infant Baptism or Believers' Baptism, immersion or sprinkling. If any persons can give a consistent and instructive interpretation of the text, other than by assuming Believers' immersion to be Christian Baptism, I should like to see them do it. I myself am quite incapable of performing such a feat, or even of imagining how it can be done! I am content to take the view that Baptism signifies the burial of Believers in water in the name of the Lord and I shall so interpret the text. If any disagree, it may at least interest them to know what *we* understand to be the meaning of the baptismal rite—and I trust that they may think none the less of the *spiritual* sense because they differ as to the external sign. After all, the visible emblem is not the most prominent matter in the text. May God the Holy Spirit help us to reach its inner teaching.

I do *not* understand Paul to say that if improper persons, such as unbelievers, hypocrites and deceivers are baptized, they are baptized into our Lord's death. He says, “so many of *us*,” putting himself with the rest of the children of God. He intends such as are *entitled* to Baptism and come to it with their hearts in a right state. Of them he says, “Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?” He does not even *intend* to say that those who were rightly baptized have, all of them, entered into the fullness of its spiritual meaning, for if they had, there would have been no need of the question, “Know you not?”

It would seem that some had been baptized who did not clearly know the meaning of their own baptism. They had faith and a glimmer of knowledge sufficient to make them right recipients of Baptism, but they were not well instructed in the teaching of Baptism. Perhaps they saw in it only a *washing* and had never discerned the *burial*. I will go further and say that I question if any of us yet know the fullness of the meaning of either of the ordinances which Christ has instituted. As yet we are, with regard to spiritual things, like children playing on the beach while the ocean rolls before us. At best we wade up to our ankles like our little ones on the seashore. A few among us are learning to swim, but we only swim where the bottom is almost within reach.

Who among us has yet come to lose sight of shore and to swim in the Atlantic of Divine Love where fathomless Truths of God rolls underneath and the infinite is all around? Oh, may God daily teach us more and more of what we already know in part—and may the Truth which we have as yet but dimly perceived, come to us in a brighter and clearer manner till we see all things in clear sunlight! This can only be as our own character becomes more clear and pure, for we see according to what we are and as is the eye, such is that which it sees. Only the pure in heart can see a pure and holy God! We shall be like Jesus when we shall see Him as He is—and certainly we shall never see Him as He is till we are like He is!

In heavenly things we see as much as we have within ourselves. He who has eaten Christ's flesh and blood *spiritually* is the man who can see this in the sacred Supper. And he who has been baptized into Christ sees Christ in Baptism. To him that has shall be given and he shall have abundantly! Baptism sets forth the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and our participation therein. Its teaching is two-fold. First, think of our representative union with Christ, so that when He died and was buried it was on our behalf and we were thus buried with Him. This will give you the teaching of Baptism so far as it sets forth a creed. We declare in Baptism that we believe in the death of Jesus and desire to partake in all the merit of it.

But there is a second equally important matter and that is our realized union with Christ which is set forth in Baptism, not so much as a doctrine of our creed as a matter of our *experience*. There is a manner of dying, or being buried, of rising and of living in Christ which must be displayed in each one of us if we are, indeed, members of the body of Christ.

I. First, then, I want you to think of OUR REPRESENTATIVE UNION WITH CHRIST as it is set forth in Baptism as a Truth of God to be believed. Our Lord Jesus is the Substitute for His people and when He died, it was on their behalf and in their place. The great doctrine of our justification lies in this—that Christ took our sins, stood in our place and, as our Surety, suffered, bled and died—thus presenting on our behalf a sacrifice for sin. We are to regard Him, not as a private person, but as our Representative. We are buried with Him in Baptism unto death to show that we accept Him as being dead and buried for us.

Baptism as a burial with Christ signifies, first, acceptance of the death and burial of Christ as being for us. Let us do that, at this very moment, with all our hearts. What other hope have we? When our Divine Lord came down from the heights of Glory and took upon Himself our manhood, He became one with you and with me! And being found in fashion as a Man, it pleased the Father to lay sin upon Him, even *your* sins and *mine*. Do you not accept that Truth of God and agree that the Lord Jesus should be the bearer of your guilt and stand for you in the sight of God? "Amen! Amen!" say all of you! He went up to the Cross loaded with all this guilt and there He suffered in our place as we ought to have suffered!

It pleased the Father, instead of bruising *us*, to bruise Him. He put Him to grief, making His soul an offering for sin! Do we not gladly accept Jesus as our Substitute? O Beloved, whether you have been baptized in water or

not, I put this question to you, “Do you accept the Lord Jesus as your Surety and Substitute?” For if you do *not*, you shall bear your own guilt and carry your own sorrow—and stand in your own place beneath the glance of the angry justice of God! Many of us at this moment are saying in our inmost hearts—

**“My soul looks back to see
The burdens You did bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.”**

Now, by being buried with Christ in Baptism, we set our seal to the fact that the death of Christ was on our behalf and that we were in Him, died in Him and, in token of our belief, we consent to the watery grave and yield ourselves to be buried according to His command. This is a matter of fundamental faith—Christ dead and buried for us—in other words, Substitution, Suretyship, vicarious Sacrifice. His death is the hinge of our confidence—we are not baptized into His *example*, or His life, but into His *death*. We hereby confess that all our salvation lies in the death of Jesus, which death we accept as having been incurred on our account. But this is not all. If I am to be buried, it should not be so much because I accept the substitutionary death of another for me as because I am dead, myself!

Baptism is an acknowledgment of our own death in Christ. Why should a living man be buried? Why should he even be buried because another died on his behalf? My burial with Christ means not only that He died for me, but that I died *in* Him, so that my *death* with Him needs a *burial* with Him. Jesus died for us because He is one with us. The Lord Jesus Christ did not take His people’s sins by an arbitrary choice of God! But it was most natural and fit and proper that He should take His people’s sins, since they are His people and He is their federal Head. It behooved Christ to suffer for this reason—that He was the Covenant Representative of His people. He is the Head of the body, the Church, and if the members sinned, it was meet that the Head, though the Head had not sinned, should bear the consequence of the acts of the body.

As there is a natural relationship between Adam and those that are in Adam, so is there between the second Adam and those that are in Him. I accept what the first Adam did as my sin. Some of you may quarrel with it and with the whole Covenant dispensation, if you please, but as God has pleased to set it up and I feel the effect of it, I see no use in *my* opposing it! As I accept the sin of father Adam and feel that I accept the death and sinned in him, even so, with intense delight, I accept the atoning Sacrifice of my second Adam and rejoice that in Him I have died and risen again! I lived, I died, I kept the Law, I satisfied justice in my Covenant Head! Let me be buried in Baptism that I may show to all around that I believe I was one with my Lord in His death and burial for sin! Look at this, O child of God, and do not be afraid of it!

These are grand Truths of God and they are sure and comforting. You are getting among Atlantic billows, now, but be not afraid. Realize the sanctifying effect of this Truth. Suppose that a man had been condemned to die on account of a great crime. Suppose, further, that he has actually died for that crime and now, by some wonderful work of God, after having

died, he has been made to live again! He comes among men, again, as alive from the dead! And what ought to be the state of his mind with regard to his offense? Will he commit that crime again? A crime for which he has died? I say emphatically, God forbid! Rather would he say, "I have tasted the bitterness of this sin and I am miraculously lifted up out of the death which it brought upon me and made to live again. Now I will hate the thing that slew me and abhor it with all my soul." He who has received the wages of sin would learn to avoid it for the future.

But you reply, "We never died, so we were never made to suffer the due reward of our sins." Granted. But that which Christ did for you comes to the same thing—and the Lord looks upon it as the same thing! You are so one with Jesus that you must regard His death as your death, His sufferings as the chastisement of your peace! You have died in the death of Jesus and now, by strange, mysterious Grace, you are brought up, again, from the pit of corruption unto newness of life! Can you, *will* you, go into sin again? You have seen what God thinks of sin—you perceive that He utterly loathes it—for when it was laid on His dear Son, He did not spare Him, but put Him to grief and smote Him to death! Can you, after *that*, turn back to the accursed thing which God hates? Surely the effect of the great grief of the Savior upon your spirit must be sanctifying! How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? How shall we, who have passed under its curse and endured its awful penalty, tolerate its power? Shall we go back to this murderous, villainous, virulent, abominable evil? It cannot be! Grace forbids!

This doctrine is not the conclusion of the whole matter. The text describes us as buried with a view to *rising*. "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death"—for what objective?—"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." Be buried in Christ! What for? That you may be dead *forever*? No, but that now, getting where Christ is, you may go where Christ goes! Behold Him, then—He goes, first, into the sepulcher. But next, *out* of the sepulcher—for when the third morning came He rose! If you are one with Christ at all, you must be one with Him all through—you must be one with Him in His death and one with Him in His burial—then you shall come to be one with Him in His Resurrection!

Am I a dead man now? No, blessed be His name, it is written, "Because I live you shall live also." True, I am dead in one sense, "For you are dead"—but yet not dead in another, "For your life is hid with Christ in God." And is he, now, absolutely dead who has a hidden life? No, since I am one with Christ, I am what Christ is! As He is a living Christ, I am a living spirit! What a glorious thing it is to have arisen from the dead because Christ has given us life! Our old legal life has been taken from us by the sentence of the Law and the Law views us as dead—but now we have received a new life, a life out of death, resurrection—life in Christ Jesus! The life of the Christian is the life of Christ! Ours is not the life of the first creation, but of the new creation from among the dead. Now we live in newness of life, quickened unto holiness, righteousness and joy by the

Spirit of God. The life of the flesh is a hindrance to us. Our energy is in His Spirit. In the highest and best sense, our life is spiritual and heavenly.

This is also a doctrine which is to be held most firmly. I want you to see the force of this, for I am aiming at practical results this morning. If God has given to you and to me an entirely new life in Christ, how can that new life spend itself after the fashion of the old life? Shall the spiritual live as the carnal? How can you, that were the servants of sin, but have been made free by precious blood, go back to your old slavery? When you were in the old Adam life, you lived in sin and loved it. But now you have been dead and buried and have come forth into newness of life—can it be that you can go back to the beggarly elements from which the Lord has brought you?

If you live in sin, you will be false to your profession, for you profess to be alive unto God! If you walk in lust, you will tread under foot the blessed doctrines of the Word of God, for these lead to holiness and purity! You would make Christianity to be a byword and a proverb, if, after all, you, who were quickened from your spiritual death, should exhibit a conduct no better than the life of ordinary men and little superior to what your former life used to be! As many of you as have been baptized have said to the world—“We are dead to the world and we have come forth into a new life. Our fleshly desires are, from now on, to be viewed as dead, for we now live after a fresh order of things. The Holy Spirit has worked in us a new nature and though we are *in* the world, we are not *of* it, but are new-made men, created anew in Christ Jesus.”

This is the doctrine which we avow to all mankind, that Christ died and rose again, and that His people died and rose again in Him. Out of this doctrine grows death unto sin and life unto God—and we wish, by every action and every movement of our lives, to teach it to all who see us. So far the doctrine—is it not a precious one, indeed?

Oh, if you are, indeed, one with Christ, shall the world find you polluting yourselves? Shall the members of a generous, gracious Head be covetous and grasping? Shall the members of a glorious, pure and perfect Head be defiled with the lusts of the flesh and the follies of a vain life? If Believers are, indeed, so identified with Christ that they are His fullness, should they not be holiness, itself? If we live by virtue of our union with His body, how can we live as other Gentiles do? How is it that so many professors exhibit a mere worldly life, living for business and for pleasure, but not *for* God, *in* God, or *with* God? They sprinkle a little religion on a worldly life and so hope to Christianize it. But it will not do!

I am bound to live as Christ would have lived under my circumstances. In my private chamber or in my public pulpit I am bound to be what Christ would have been in the same case. I am bound to prove to men that union to Christ is no fiction, or fanatical sentiment, but that we are swayed by the same principles and actuated by the same motives! Baptism is thus an embodied creed and you may read it in these words—“Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised Him from the dead.”

II. But, secondly, A REALIZED UNION WITH CHRIST is also set forth in Baptism and this is rather a matter of experience than of doctrine.

1. First, there is, as a matter of actual experience in the true Believer, death. “Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?” It must be contrary to all law to bury those who are yet alive. Until they are dead, men can have no right to be buried. Very well, then, the Christian is dead—dead, first, to the dominion of sin. Whenever sin called him before, he answered, “Here I am, for you did call me.” Sin ruled his members and if sin said, “Do this,” he did it, like the soldiers obedient to their centurion, for sin ruled over all the parts of his nature and exercised, over him, a supreme tyranny.

Grace has changed all this. When we are converted, we become dead to the dominion of sin! If sin calls us, now, we refuse to come, for we are dead. If sin commands us, we will not obey, for we are dead to its authority. Sin comes to us now—oh, that it did not—and it finds in us the old corruption which is crucified, but not yet dead. But it has no dominion over our true life. Blessed be God, sin cannot reign over us, though it may assail us and work us harm! “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under Law, but under Grace.” We sin, but not with allowance. With what grief we look back upon our transgressions! How earnestly do we endeavor to avoid them!

Sin tries to maintain its usurped power over us, but we do not acknowledge it as our sovereign. Evil enters us, now, as an interloper and a stranger—and works sad havoc—but it does not abide in us upon the throne. It is an alien and despised. It is no more honored and delighted in. We are dead to the reigning power of sin. The Believer, if spiritually buried with Christ, is dead to the desire of any such power. “What?” you ask, “do not godly men have sinful desires?” Alas, they do. The old nature that is in them lusts towards sin, but the true man, the real ego, desires to be purged of every speck or trace of evil! The law in the members would gladly urge us to sin, but the life in the heart constrains us to holiness.

I can honestly say, for myself, that the deepest desire of my soul is to live a perfect life. If I could have my own best desire, I would never sin again. And though, alas, I do consent to sin so that I become responsible when I transgress, yet my innermost self loathes iniquity. Sin is my bondage, not my pleasure. It is my misery, not my delight—at the *thought* of it, I cry out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?” In our heart of hearts our spirit cleaves steadfastly to that which is good, true and heavenly, so that the real man delights in the Law of God and follows hard after goodness. The main current and true bent of our soul’s wish and will is not towards sin. The Apostle taught us no mere fancy when he said, “For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

Moreover, in the next place we are dead as to the pursuits and aims of the sinning and ungodly life. Brothers and Sisters, are any of you that profess to be God’s servants living for yourselves? Then you are not God’s servants, for he that is really born again lives unto God—the objective of his life is the Glory of God and the good of his fellow men. This is the prize that is set before the quickened man and towards this he runs. “I do not

run that way,” says one. Very well, then you will not come to the desired end. If you are running after the pleasures of the world or the riches of it, you may win the prize you run for, but you cannot win “the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.”

I hope that many of us can honestly say that we are now dead to every objective in life but the Glory of God in Christ Jesus. We are in the world and have to live as other men do, carrying on our ordinary business—but all this is subordinate and held in as with bit and bridle—our aims are above yon changeful moon. The flight of our soul, like that of an eagle, is above these clouds! Though that bird of the sun alights upon the rock, or even descends to the plain, yet its joy is to dwell above, outsoaring the lightning, rising over the black head of the tempest and looking down upon all earthly things! Henceforth our Grace-given life speeds onward and upward—we are not of the world and the world’s engagements are not those upon which we spend our noblest powers!

Again, we are dead in this sense, that we are dead to the *guidance* of sin. The lust of the flesh drives a man this way and that way. He steers his course by the question, “What is most pleasant? What will give me most present gratification?” The way of the ungodly is mapped out by the hand of selfish desire, but you that are true Christians have another guide—you are led by the Spirit in a right way. You ask, “What is good and what is acceptable in the sight of the Most High?” Your daily prayer is, “Lord, show me what You would have me do.” You are alive to the teachings of the Spirit, who will lead you into all the Truths of God—and you are dead, yes, dead to the dogmas of carnal wisdom, the oppositions of philosophy, the errors of proud human wisdom! Blind guides who fall with their victims into the ditch are shunned by you, for you have chosen the way of the Lord. What a blessed state of heart this is!

I trust, my Brethren, that we have fully realized it! We know the Shepherd’s voice and we will not follow a stranger. Only One is our teacher and we submit our understandings to His infallible instruction! Our text must have had a very forcible meaning among the Romans in Paul’s time, for they were sunk in all manner of odious vices. Take an average Roman of that period and you would have found in him a man accustomed to spend a large part of his time in the amphitheatre, hardened by the brutal sight of bloody shows in which gladiators slew each other to amuse a holiday crowd. Taught in such a school, the Roman was cruel to the last degree—and, therefore, ferocious in the indulgence of his passions.

A depraved man was not regarded as being at all degraded! Not only nobles and emperors were monsters of vice, but the public teachers were impure. When those who were regarded as moral, were corrupt, you may imagine what the immoral were! “Enjoy yourself; follow after the pleasures of the flesh,” was the rule of the age! Christianity was the introduction of a new element. See here a Roman converted by the Grace of God! What a change is in him! His neighbors say, “You were not at the amphitheatre this morning. How could you miss the sight of the hundred Germans who tore out each other’s bowels?” “No,” he says, “I was not there. I could not

bear to be there. I am totally dead to it. If you were to force me to be there, I must shut my eyes, for I could not look on murder committed in sport!"

The Christian did not resort to places of licentiousness. He was as good as dead to such filthiness. The fashions and customs of the age were such that Christians could not consent to them and so they became dead to society. It was not merely that Christians did not go into open sin, but they spoke of it with horror and their lives rebuked it. Things which the multitude counted a joy, and talked of exultingly, gave no comfort to the follower of Jesus, for he was dead to such evils. This is our solemn avowal when we come forward to be baptized. We say, by acts which are louder than words, that we are dead to those things in which sinners take delight and we wish to be so accounted.

2. The next thought in Baptism is *burial*. Death comes first and burial follows. Now, what is burial, Brothers and Sisters? Burial is, first of all, the seal of death. It is the certificate of decease. "Is such a man dead?" you ask. Another answers, "Why, dear Sir, he was buried a year ago." You ask no more whether he is dead when you know that he is *buried*. There have been instances of persons being buried alive and I am afraid that the thing happens with sad frequency in Baptism, but it is unnatural and by no means the rule. I fear that many have been buried alive in Baptism, and have therefore risen and walked out of the grave just as they were. If burial is true, it is a certificate of *death*. If I am able to say in very truth, "I was buried with Christ 30 years ago," I must surely be dead.

Certainly the world thought so, for not long after my burial with Jesus, I began to preach His name and by that time the world thought me very far gone, and said, "He stinks!" They began to say all manner of evil against the preacher, but the more I stank in their nostrils, the better I liked it, for the surer I was that I was really dead to the world! It is good for a Christian to be offensive to wicked men. See how our Master stank in the esteem of the godless when they cried, "Away with Him, away with Him!" Though no corruption could come near His blessed body, yet His perfect Character was not savored by that perverse generation! There must, then, be in us *death to the world*, and some of the effects of death, or our Baptism is null and void.

As burial is the certificate of death, so is burial with Christ the seal of our mortification to the world. But burial is, next, the displaying of death. While the man is indoors, the passers-by do not know that he is dead, but when the funeral takes place and he is carried through the streets, everybody knows that he is dead. This is what Baptism ought to be. The Believer's death to sin is, at first, a secret, but by an open confession he bids all men know that he is dead with Christ. Baptism is the funeral rite by which death to sin is openly set forth before all men! Next, burial is the separateness of death. The dead man no longer remains in the house, but is placed *apart* as one who ceases to be numbered with the living. A corpse is not welcome company. Even the most beloved object, after a while, cannot be tolerated when Death has done his work upon it.

Even Abraham, who had been so long united with his beloved Sarah, is heard to say, "Bury my dead out of my sight." Such is the Believer when

his death to the world is fully known—he is poor company for worldlings and they shun him as a damper upon their revelry. The true saint is put into the separated class with Christ according to His Word, “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” The saint is put away in the same grave as his Lord, for as He was, so are we, also, in this world. He is shut up by the world in the one cemetery of the faithful, if I may call it so, where all that are in Christ are, together, dead to the world, with this epitaph for them all, “And you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

And the grave is the place—I do not know where to get a word—of the *settledness* of death, for when a man is dead and buried you never expect to see him come home again. So far as this world is concerned, death and burial are irrevocable. They tell me that spirits walk the earth and we have all read in the newspaper, “The Truth about Ghosts,” but I have my doubts on the subject. In spiritual things, however, I am afraid that some are not so buried with Christ but what they walk a great deal among the tombs! I am grieved at heart that it should be so. The man in Christ cannot walk as a ghost, because he is alive somewhere else—he has received a new being and, therefore, he cannot mutter and peep among the dead hypocrites around him!

See what our chapter says about our Lord—“Christ being raised from the dead dies no more: death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God.” If we have been once raised from dead works, we shall never go back to them! I may sin, but sin can never have dominion over me! I may be a transgressor and wander much from my God, but never can I go back to the old death! When my Lord’s Grace got hold of me and buried me, He worked in my soul the conviction that from now on and forever I was to the world a dead man! I am right glad that I made no compromise but came right out. I have drawn the sword and thrown away the scabbard! Tell the world they need not try to fetch us back, for we are spoiled for them as much as if we were dead!

All they could have would be our carcasses. Tell the world not to tempt us any longer, for our hearts are changed. Sin may charm the old man who hangs there upon the Cross and he may turn his leering eye that way, but he cannot follow up his glance, for he cannot get down from the Cross—the Lord has taken care to use the mallet well and He has fastened his hands and feet right firmly—so that the crucified flesh must remain in the place of doom and death! Yet the true, the genuine life within us cannot die, for it is born of God—and neither can it abide in the tombs, for its call is to purity and joy and liberty—and to that call it yields itself.

3. We have come as far as death and burial. But Baptism, according to the text, represents, also, resurrection—“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.” Now, notice that the man who is dead in Christ, and buried in Christ, is also *raised* in Christ—and this is a special work upon him. All the dead are not raised, but our Lord, Himself, is “the first fruits of them that slept.” He is the First-Begotten from among the dead! Resur-

rection was a special work upon the body of Christ by which He was raised up. And that work, begun upon the Head, will continue till all the members partake of it, for—

***“Though our inbred sins require
Our flesh to see the dust;
Yet as the Lord our Savior rose,
So all His followers must.”***

As to our soul and spirit, the resurrection has begun upon us. It has not come to our bodies yet, but it will be given to them at the appointed day. For the present, a special work has been worked upon us by which we have been raised up from among the dead. Brothers and Sisters, if you had been dead and buried and had been lying one night, say, in Woking Cemetery, and if a Divine voice had called you right up from the grave when the silent stars were shining on the open heath—if, I say, you had risen right out from the green mound of turf—what a lonely being you would have been in the vast cemetery amid the still night! How you would sit down on the grave and wait for morning!

That is very much your condition with regard to the present evil world. You were once like the rest of the sinners around you—dead in sin and sleeping in the grave of evil custom. The Lord, by His power, has called you out of your grave and now you are alive in the midst of death! There can be no fellowship here for you, for what communion have the living with the dead? The man just quickened out there in the cemetery would find none among all the dead around him with whom he could talk—and you can find no companions in this world. There lies a skull, but it sees not from the eye sockets—neither is there speech in its grim mouth. I see a mass of bones lying in yon corner—the living one looks at them but they cannot hear or speak! Imagine yourself there. All that you would say to the bones would be to ask, “Can these dry bones live?” You would be a foreigner in that home of corruption and you would hasten to get away.

That is your condition in the world—God has raised you up from among the dead, from out of the company among whom you had your former conversation. Now, I pray you, do not go and scratch into the earth to tear up the graves to find a friend there. Who would tear open a coffin and cry, “Come, you must drink with me! You must go to the theater with me”? No, we dread the idea of association with the dead and I tremble when I see a professor trying to have communion with worldly men. “Come you out from among them; be you separate; touch not the unclean thing.” You know what would happen to you if you were thus raised and were forced to sit close to a dead body newly taken from the grave. You would cry, “I cannot bear it! I cannot endure it!” You would get to the wind side of the horrid corpse.

So with a man that is really alive unto God! Deeds of injustice, oppression, or unchastity he cannot endure, for life loathes corruption. Notice that, as we are raised up by a special work from among the dead, that rising is by Divine power. Christ is brought, again, “from the dead by the glory of the Father.” What does that mean? Why did it not say, “By the power of the Father”? Ah, Beloved, *glory* is a grander word, for all the at-

tributes of God are displayed in all their solemn pomp in the raising of Christ from the dead!

There was the Lord's *faithfulness*, for had He not declared that His soul should not rest in Hell, neither should His Holy One see corruption? Was not the *love* of the Father seen there? I am sure it was a delight to the heart of God to bring back life to the body of His dear Son! And so, when you and I are raised out of our death in sin, it is not merely God's power, it is not merely God's wisdom that is seen, it is "the *glory* of the Father." Oh, to think that every child of God that has been quickened has been quickened by "the glory of the Father!" It has taken not only the Holy Spirit, and the work of Jesus, and the work of the Father, but the very "glory of the Father." If the tiniest spark of spiritual life has to be created by "the glory of the Father," what will be the glory of that life when it comes into its full perfection and we shall be like Christ, and see Him as He is! O Beloved, value highly the new life which God has given you! Think of it as making you richer than if you had a sea of pearls! Greater than if you were descended from the loftiest of princes! There is in you that which required all the attributes of God to create! He could make a world by power, alone, but *you* must be raised from the dead by "the glory of the Father."

Notice, next, that this life is entirely new. We are to "walk in newness of life." The life of a Christian is an entirely different thing from the life of other men, entirely different from his own life before his conversion. And when people try to counterfeit it, they cannot accomplish the task. A person writes you a letter and wants to make you think he is a Believer, but within about half-a-dozen sentences there occurs a line which betrays the lie. The hypocrite has very nearly copied our expressions, but not quite! There is a Freemason among us and the outside world watches us a bit and, by-and-by, they pick up certain of our signs. But there is a private sign which they can never imitate and, therefore, at a certain point, they break down.

A godless man may pray as much as a Christian, read as much of the Bible as a Christian and even go beyond us in externals—but there is a secret which he knows not and cannot counterfeit! The life Divine is so totally new that the unconverted have no copy to work by! In every Christian it is as new as if he were the very first Christian. Even though in every one it is the image and superscription of Christ, yet there is a milled edge or a something about the real silver that these counterfeits cannot get a hold of! It is a new, a novel, a fresh, a Divine thing!

And lastly, this life is an active thing. I have often wished that Paul had not been so fast when I have been reading him. His style travels in seven-leagued boots! He does not write like an ordinary man. I beg to tell him that if he had written this text according to proper order, it should run, "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead" by the Glory of the Father, "even so, we, also, should be raised from the dead." But see, Paul has got over ever so much ground while we are talking—he has reached to "*walking*." The walking includes the living, of which it is the sign, and Paul

thinks so fast when the Spirit of God is upon him that he has passed beyond the cause to the effect!

No sooner do we get the new life than we become *active*—we do not sit down and say, “I have received a new life: how grateful I ought to be. I will quietly enjoy myself.” Oh dear, no! We have something to do as soon as we are alive and we begin walking—and so the Lord keeps us all our lives in His work! He does not allow us to sit down contented with the mere fact that we live, nor does He allow us to spend all our time in examining whether we are alive or not. But He gives us one battle to fight, and then another! He gives us His house to build, His farm to till, His children to nurse and His sheep to feed!

At times we have fierce struggles with our own spirit and fears, lest sin and Satan should prevail, till our life is scarcely discerned by itself. But it is always discerned by its *acts*. The life that is given to those who were dead with Christ is an energetic, forceful life that is all busy for Christ, and would, if it could, move Heaven and earth and subdue all things unto Him who is its Head! This life, Paul tells us, is an unending one. Once get it and it will never go from you. “Christ being raised from the dead dies no more.”

Next, it is a life which is not under the Law or under sin. Christ came under the Law when He was here and He had our sin laid on Him and, therefore, died. But after He rose again, there was no sin laid on Him. In His Resurrection, both the sinner and the Surety are free. What had Christ to do after His rising? To bear more sin? No, but just to live unto God! That is where you and I are. We have no sin to carry, now—it was all laid on Christ. What have we to do? Every time we have a headache, or feel ill, are we to cry out, “This is a punishment for my sin”? Nothing of the kind! Our punishment is all done with, for we have borne the capital sentence and are dead—our new life must be unto God—

***“All that remains for me
Is but to love and sing
And wait until the angels come
To bear me to my King.”***

I have now to serve Him and delight myself in Him and use the power which He gives me of calling others from the dead, saying, “Awake, you that sleep! Arise from the dead and Christ shall give you life.” I am not going back to the grave of spiritual death nor to my grave clothes of sin, but by Divine Grace I will still believe in Jesus and go from strength to strength, not under Law—not fearing Hell, nor hoping to merit Heaven—but as a new creature, loving because loved, living for Christ because Christ lives in me, rejoicing in glorious hope of that which is yet to be revealed by virtue of my oneness in Christ!

Poor Sinner, you do not know anything about this death and burial and you never will till you have power to become sons of God! And that He gives to as many as believe on His name. Believe on His name and it is all yours! Amen and Amen!

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CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND OUR NEWNESS OF LIFE NO. 2197

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 29, 1891,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Therefore we are buried with Him through baptism into death: that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
Romans 6:4.

I have preached before upon the whole verse, so that this morning I shall take the liberty to dwell chiefly upon the latter part of it—“Just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

The idea that the Grace of God should lead us to licentiousness is utterly loathsome to every Christian. We cannot endure it. The notion that the Doctrines of Grace give license to sin comes from the devil—and we deny it with a detestation more deep than words can express! “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

On our first entrance upon a Christian profession, we are met by the ordinance of Baptism which teaches the necessity of purification. Baptism is, in its very form, a washing, and its teaching requires cleansing of the most thorough kind. It is a burial, in which the man is viewed as dead with Christ to sin, and is regarded as rising again as a new man. Baptism sets forth, as in a picture, the union of the Believer with the Lord Jesus in His baptism of suffering and in His death, burial and Resurrection. By submitting to that sacred ordinance, we declare that we believe ourselves to be dead with Him because of His endurance of the death penalty—and dead to the world and to the dominion of sin by His Spirit. At the same time, we also profess our faith in our Lord's Resurrection and that we, ourselves, are raised up in union with Him and have come forth through faith into newness of life. It is a very impressive and vivid symbol, but it is without meaning unless we rise to purity of life.

The basis of this confession lies in the union of every Believer with Christ Jesus. We are dead with Him because we are one with Him. We are risen with Him because we are one with Him. Every Believer is, in the purpose of Divine Grace, identified with Jesus. He was given to the Lord Jesus from before the foundation of the world and placed under His Covenant Headship. The Lord Jesus suffered for the Believer as his Substitute

and virtually each saved one died in Christ, who represented Him. The Believer rose in Christ by virtue of the eternal union which exists between the saint and his Savior. Therefore the Believer continues to live, for the Lord has said, "Because I live, you shall live also." Our destiny is identified with that of our Covenant Head. His life is the model of our experience—He makes us to be conformed to His image, now, and we shall be like He when we shall see Him as He is. O my Hearer, if you are not in Christ, you have *nothing!* Out of Christ you are in the wilderness—with Him you are in a paradise! In Christ, Believers possess all the treasures of wisdom, knowledge, Grace, power and love. All things are yours, if you are Christ's. From our union to Christ follows our sanctification—we cannot follow after sin, for Christ does not follow after it. He died unto sin, once, and we are henceforth dead to it. He is risen by the Glory of the Father and we are risen with Him into righteousness, acceptance and joy!

I. Follow me in the text, taking as your first thought the fact that THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD WAS ATTENDED WITH GLORY—He was "raised up from the dead by the Glory of the Father." Christ's Resurrection is linked with the fullness of eternal Glory.

In itself it was a great marvel. Our Lord was assuredly dead—the Roman guards at the Cross took care that no condemned person escaped the death penalty. In our Lord's case, His heart was pierced with a spear to make sure that no life remained in Him. Joseph begged for His body and, by the loving hands of those who were sure that He was dead, He was wrapped in spices and fine linen—and laid in the rocky tomb. There lay our Lord, in the grave, with a stone rolled at the cave's mouth and a seal set upon it by those in authority, whose envy made them take double precautions. As when a prince lies slumbering in his pavilion he is watched by a guard, so was our Lord's sepulcher watched by a guard of Roman soldiers, so that no man might steal His body. There He lay in the heart of the earth for a portion of three days and nights. He was really dead and in the grave. He wore all the marks of decease—a napkin was bound about His head, and the linen clothes rapped His limbs. On the morning of the third day it was truly said, "The Lord has risen, indeed," for He actually, literally and in very fact awoke to life, unbound the napkin and laid it by itself, leisurely folded His grave clothes and, when the angel had rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulcher, the First-Begotten from the dead came forth in a material body to live among His disciples for forty days!

During the time of His sojourn, His Resurrection was established by many Infallible proofs—He was seen, heard, touched and handled. One of His disciples put his finger into the print of the nails and thrust his hand into His side. He possessed a real body, for He ate a piece of a broiled fish and of a honeycomb before them all. It was Jesus of Nazareth and, none other than He, who met His disciples at Galilee! On this firm basis of fact we build our holy faith, but, certain as it is, it is none the less a marvel.

All Glory be to Him “that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.”

The Resurrection of our Lord is glorious in contrast with His humiliation. It has in it sufficient Glory to redeem His passion from the shame which gathered about it. We read in Matthew 20:18, 19, how He was to be betrayed, condemned to death, delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, scourged and crucified. But we note that all the gloom of that dread tragedy is removed by the few words with which our Lord ended the story—“And the third day He shall rise again.” The blaze of Resurrection lights up the whole length of the Valley of the Shadow of Death! His death wears no dishonor on its brow, for His rising again has set a diadem thereon! We celebrate Gethsemane and Calvary—and find no bitterness in all their grief—because death is swallowed up in the victory of Resurrection! The whole earthly life of Jesus, with its poverty, its slander, its sorrow, its scourging, its spitting, its crucifixion, is raised above all trace of dishonor by His glorious Resurrection!

His resurrection is glorious in its effects. He was “delivered for our offenses,” but, “He was raised again for our justification.” In death He discharged our debt. In Resurrection He exhibited the receipt of all our liabilities! He was Surety for us and, therefore, He smarted and went down to the prison of the grave. But by death He discharged His Suretyship and was set free! Our Lord has risen and, therefore, *we* shall rise in the day of His appearing. The Breaker leads the way and behind the mighty champion the whole company of His redeemed pass through the portals of the tomb in the power of His Resurrection. The stone is rolled away for them as well as for Him. They cannot be held by the bonds of death, for He could not be detained a captive. What a glory there is in our Lord's Resurrection, when we further remember that He always lives to make intercession for us and, therefore, He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him! The fullness of salvation comes to us because He has risen from the dead and is now making intercession for the transgressors! O Brothers and Sisters, the Resurrection of Jesus is bright as the sun with glory! Faith in it thrills our hearts. Well might each line of our hymn end with a Hallelujah! When we say, one to another, “The Lord is risen, indeed,” we feel like singing all the time, for now our faith is not vain, we are not in our sins and those who have fallen asleep have not perished!

Our Lord's Resurrection was glorious as to its cause, for it was a display of the Glory of the Father. For “glory” you may read, “power,” if you please, for it was a great work of power to raise Jesus from the dead. But it was more than a miracle of power, for all the attributes of God united their Glory in the Resurrection of Christ. God's Love came there and opened those closed eyes. His delight bejeweled those deadly wounds. His Wisdom set in motion that pierced heart. Divine Justice claimed His loosing from

the grave and Mercy smiled as she lit up His face with an immortal smile! Then and there did Jehovah make all His Glory to pass before us and He proclaimed the name of the Lord. If you ask where God's Glory is most seen, I will not point to creation, nor to Providence, but to the raising of Jesus from the dead! It is true that in the silence of the tomb there were no spectators, but God Himself was there. After the deed was done, there were many who beheld His Glory and when at the close of His sojourn, below, He ascended beyond the clouds, all Heaven came forth to meet Him and to behold the conqueror of Death and Hell! In His Resurrection the Glory of God was laid bare. The veil which concealed the sacred Presence was torn from top to bottom and the Glory of the Lord was seen in the Resurrection of Christ from the dead!

That Resurrection is glorious because of its sequel in reference to our Lord. Of this I have already spoken in measure. Only let me remind you that He rose to die no more. Once has He suffered, but it is once and for all! His victory is final. Like Samson, the fierce lion of Death roared upon Him in the vineyard. The monster had, up to then, overcome everyone whom he assailed, but this time he met his match! Our greater Samson rent him as though he were a kid and though our Deliverer fell in the act of victory, He rose from the death struggle with fullness of life! Behold, He comes to us, today, bearing handfuls of honey on which He bids us feed. He has taken it from the carcass of the lion which He slew. Now is death a store of sweets rather than a cup of gall! To the child of God death furnishes a couch of rest and is no longer a dark and noisome prison cell. Death is the refining pot for this poor flesh and blood—the body is sown in corruption, but it is raised in incorruption and immortality!

We shall with these eyes behold our Lord when He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth! O glorious Resurrection, which has turned our poison into medicine! O miracle of Love, which has made death to be the gate of life! When you were singing the Easter hymn just now, it seemed to me as if we filled the whole earth with silver bells. And when you came to the last verse, you were so fully getting into the music of the Truth of God, that I had half a mind to cry, "Let us begin again!" In the rising of Jesus, death itself is shut up in prison, and ten thousand Hallelujahs come flying down from Heaven to teach us how to sing—

***"Vain the watch, the stone, the seal!
Christ has burst the gates of Hell.
Death in vain forbids Him rise,
Christ has opened Paradise."***

II. Let me introduce you to our second point, which is this—THE PARALLEL IN OUR EXPERIENCE IS ALSO FULL OF GLORY. When the time of love had fully come, we also rose as to our spirits, 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." Partakers of His death, we are also partakers of His Resurrection! This body of ours will have its share in that blessing of adoption in due time. As yet, it remains subject to pain, weakness and

death, for it is as the Apostle puts it, "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness." The spirit has its resurrection even now, but we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." At the Second Coming of the Lord, the dead shall be raised incorruptible and the living shall be changed. We have the first-fruits of the Spirit, inasmuch as we are spiritually risen from the dead—and the rest will follow in due course.

It is a blessed thing that we should be made alive in Christ. As many of you as have believed in the Lord Jesus have been raised from among the dead. You were once without faith and without feeling. You had no sense of sin. You had no desire after holiness. You had no confidence in Christ. You had no love for the Father, but, "you has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." You live now even as Jesus lived when He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the Resurrection from the dead." Why should the Lord of Life have raised you from your death? Multitudes around you are still dead! You could not have made yourselves alive, for it is clear that the dead cannot rise by their own power. You were like the dry bones of Ezekiel's valley, without even the form or the moisture of life! You were more difficult to quicken than your Savior's body, for, "He saw no corruption," but you were corrupt of heart. Ah, how much you saw of corruption! In you has Jehovah repeated the miracle which He performed on His beloved Son!

Remember that *quickenings is a necessary part of the process of sanctification.* Sanctification, in its operation upon our character, consists of three things. First, we die to sin. A wondrous death! By this Jesus strikes at the heart of evil. The death of Christ makes us die to sin. After this comes burial. We are buried with Christ and of this burial, Baptism is the type and token. Covered up to be forgotten, we are to sin as a dead shepherd to his flock. As the sheep pass over the dead shepherd's grave, or even feed thereon, yet he regards them not—so our old sins and habits come about us, but we, as dead men, know them no more. We are buried to them! To complete our actual sanctification we receive heavenly quickening. "If we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." Yes, we do live *in* Him and *by* Him, for, "He that believes in Him has everlasting life." I trust you know what this means. Have you been thus dead, thus buried with Christ? Are you now thus quickened in the likeness of His Resurrection? This is your joyful privilege if you are, indeed, Believers in Christ and joined unto the Lord in one spirit.

Being thus quickened *you are partakers of a new life.* You are not like Lazarus, who, when he was raised from the dead, had the same life restored to him. True, you have that same life about you. Alas, that you should have it! For it will be your burden and plague. But your true life has come to you by your being born again from above. "This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that

has the Son has life." The Holy Spirit has worked in us a higher life than Nature possessed. "We know that whoever is born of God sins not, but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that Wicked One touches him not." We have received "a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever." In this there is a striking display of the Glory of God. As in the Resurrection of Christ we see all the glorious attributes of God, so is there in every Believer's spiritual quickening a manifestation of the Divine Presence. I know not how much there is of God in the regeneration of each new-born soul, but I do know this, that God likens it to a new creation and to the Resurrection and, therefore, we may be sure that it is one of the highest displays of Divine Power.

We talk of conversion, but how lightly do we estimate the full meaning of it! Know you not that regeneration is one of the greatest miracles that God Himself can perform? To be begotten again unto a lively hope is a mass of wonders! We who before lay under spiritual death, have become possessors of a heavenly life—who can fully comprehend this? This is a miracle, indeed, and we ourselves are the subjects of it! Surely we do not think highly enough of the notable deed which has been worked upon our impotent selves. Lazarus raised from the dead was the object of wonder to everybody. The Jews came to Bethany, not to see only Jesus, but to see *Lazarus*, who was raised from the dead. What must Lazarus have thought of being thus brought back from the land of darkness to visit, again, the haunts of men? Lazarus must have felt himself a strange and singular man—even his sisters, Mary and Martha, could not understand his experience. Christian, you have felt what you can never tell—you have received what you can never explain—you possess a secret something which can never be set forth in words! God help you to show it by your life!

In this parallel of our history with the story of Christ, in our being spiritually raised from the dead, *we have a pre-eminent security for future perfection*. "He that has worked us for the same thing is God, who also has given us the earnest of the Spirit." If He raised us up when we were dead in sin, will He not keep us alive, now, that we live unto Him? If He called us out of our graves when we were under the bondage of death, will He not preserve us, now, by the life of Him that dies no more? If the life of God has really been infused into us, who shall destroy it? Has not our Master said, "I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand"? He would not have given us this life unless He had intended to bring it to perfection! As surely as you live by the Father, you live as Jesus does, beyond the range of further death! "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under Grace."

Do you tremblingly ask me, "May I not go back unto sin?" Listen to this! It is written in the Covenant, "I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me." The life which is in you springs up unto eternal life. You shall surely behold His face whose life is already within

your breast. What a blessed thing is this! I cannot declare to you the measureless Glory of God which I perceive in this quickening of souls unto God and yet, that which I perceive is the bare fringe of the Glory. He might have left us to our corruptions and then, at last, He would have said, "Bury My dead out of My sight. Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." But instead thereof, in His free love, He has come in the Person of His dear Son and died for us that we might die in Him and He has quickened His Son that we should live in Him! Soon He will say, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Wondrous Grace! "He that sits on the Throne says, Behold, I make all things new." And never is He to our hearts more truly on the Throne of God than in this new creation of which we are this day the happy subjects—

***"Raised from the dead, we live anew;
And, justified by Grace,
We shall appear in Glory, too,
And see our Father's face.***

If I gave you only those two things to dwell upon, you might, by God's blessing, find a good Sabbath's meal in them. God sanctify this teaching to all our hearts!

III. But now I want your special attention while I notice, in the third place, that THE LIFE THEN GIVEN IS EMPHATICALLY NEW. Read our text—"Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the Glory of the Father"—I expected that we should then read, "even so we also should be raised by the Glory of the Father." But it is not so. Paul sometimes takes great leaps of thought. It is in his mind that we are raised together with Christ, but his thought has gone further, even to the activity which comes of life—and we read, "that we also should walk in newness of life." As much as to say, "I need not tell you that you have been quickened as Christ was, but since you have been made alive, you must *show it* by your walk and conduct." But he reminds us that this life has much newness about it.

"Newness of life"—what does it mean? It means this. When we are born again and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—which things take place at the same time—we receive *a life which we never before possessed*. We begin to feel, to think and to act as we never did before. The new life is something foreign to our fallen nature—an exotic, a plant of another clime. The carnal mind knows nothing of spiritual things! The man who is not born again cannot understand what the new birth means! Spiritual things are spiritually discerned and the carnal man is all confused in reference to them. In your quickening you received a light which had never before shone in your bosom—a life that came not from men, neither by men. It is not a development of something which was hidden in our constitution. It is not the evolution of a principle which really exists, only it is hampered and hindered. No! It is *not* written, "You has He fostered, who had the germs of dormant life," but, "You has He *quickened*, who were *dead* in

trespasses and sins.” You had no life, you had nothing out of which life could come! Fostered you might have been, but all the fostering possible would only have developed your corrupt nature and caused the evil within to grow at a greater rate! No seeds of eternal life lie buried in the dunghill of fallen nature! *Eternal life is the gift of God!*

This novel life is *new in its principles*. The old life, at its very best, only said, “I must do right that I may win a reward.” Wage-earning is the principle of the old legal life when it tries to be obedient. Now you are moved by gratitude and not by a mercenary motive. I hear you sing—

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

You now serve, not as a hired servant, but as a loving child. Grace reigns! The love of Christ constrains you. It is your joy to obey out of love and not from slavish fear.

This life is *swayed by new motives*. You now live to please God—before you lived to please yourself, or to please your neighbors. Once you lived for what you could get for yourself—you lived for the passing pleasures of a fleeting life, but now you have launched upon eternal seas. Eternity holds your treasures! Eternity excites your efforts and elevates your desires. You live as seeing Him who is invisible and your conduct is controlled, not by the judgment of fallible men, but by the rule of the heart-searching God!

Your new life has *new objectives*. You aim higher, yes, you aim at the highest of all, for you live for the Glory of God and seek that your light may so shine “that men may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” The will of God has now become your law. You count yourself only happy as you may fulfill His purposes, honor His name and extend His Kingdom.

Your inner life has made you conscious of *new emotions*. You feel now as you were not known to feel. Your fears are new, your hopes are new, your sorrows are new and your joys are new. If you were to meet your old self you would not wish to strike up an acquaintance with him, but would rather walk on the other side of the street! When I meet my former self I always quarrel with him, and he with me. I grieve to confess that I find another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and seeking to bring me back into captivity. Behold, all things are new to us! One said to me, when I asked her what kind of change she had undergone—“Either the world is quite altered, or else I am.” Yes, Friends, the light is changed because our eyes are opened to it! We feel the very opposite of what we felt by nature.

Now are we cheered by *new hopes*—we have a hope of *immortality*—a hope so glorious that it causes us to purify ourselves in preparation for its realization! We wait for the glorious appearing of our Lord! We look for new heavens and a new earth. We have a lively hope which defies death.

Now have we *new possessions*. We used to wonder what the Christian meant when he spoke of “possessing all things.” We now know! God has made us “rich in faith” and He has given us greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. When the Lord lifts up His Countenance upon us, we no longer cry for corn and wine and oil. Though flocks die, crops fail, our estate is entailed—our bread shall be given us and our waters shall be sure. Instead of groaning that life is not worth having, we bless God for our being, because of our well-being in Christ. Behold the desert now rejoices and blossoms as the rose! Where we heard only the hooting of the owl and the cry of the dragon, we hear music as of a song which has just begun, which is every moment swelling and increasing—and shall soon burst into a thunder of hallelujahs which shall never end! We are now happy creatures. Once we were doleful enough, save when we were in our cups and inflamed with a delirious mirth, but now we have peace like a river and a secret joy which no man takes from us. We drink of a well which none can dry up—we have bread to eat that the world knows not of. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and this, even to ourselves, is so vast a joy that it overwhelms us! When we are nearest to God and are absorbed in Him, we cannot comprehend our own delight.

We have come into a new world altogether—a world far more grand than that which Nature reveals. I often compare myself to a chick which before was imprisoned in the dark, narrow and uncomfortable prison of its natural shell. In that condition I neither knew myself, nor anything that was about me, but was in chaos, as one unborn. Do I not remember when the shell was broken and I came out into the open? Then, like a young bird, I was weak and strange, and full of wonderment at the life into which I had come. How strange was it to my soul to have the Godhead consciously perceived and Christ and His redemption blessedly enjoyed! That young life begins to feel its wings and try them a little. It also moves with trembling footsteps, essaying a new walk. It sees things it never dreamed of when shut up in the darkness. The new-born soul beholds “new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.” That text has come true to some of us—“You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” It is a wonderful thing, this new life! I beg to press home the inquiry, *Do you know it? Do you enjoy it?* Do not boast that you are being educated. Educate the old life as you will, it will remain natural and cannot become *spiritual*. You have been, you say, religious from your childhood. Be it so, but even to you I must say, “You must be born again.” There must be a passing from death unto life.

Does all I am talking about seem to be a confused maze? So far it will do you good to know that you do not understand the things of God. To know that you are a stranger to the inward life may be a blessing to you. It may be that a prayer will spring up in your heart, “Lord, implant in me this life.” The Lord and Giver of Life is willing to bestow it. It is to be had

through Jesus, for, to “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” May you be born this very day into this newness of life!

IV. I must close, though the subject is sweetly absorbing, and one would like to go further into it. Our fourth point is this—THE WALK WHICH COMES OUT OF THIS LIFE IS NEW. You were dead, but you have been raised from among the dead and now you walk in “newness of life.”

The new life that God gives us is exceedingly active. I have never read that we are to lie down and sleep in the newness of life. It is true I have met with persons who professed to have been saved and, therefore, they took matters easily and made themselves religiously comfortable in idleness. I greatly question whether you have new life if you do not walk! God's children are not of a sluggish race. There is vigor and fervency about them. They cannot sleep, as do others. The new life is akin to the life of angels—and angels do not spend the day in slumber or sloth. I never heard of sluggish angels! They are as flames of fire. The new life in a Christian is quick, energetic, forceful. The new life produces a holy walk as soon as it is created. If you have been born unto God, you have cast off your lethargy and are ready to run the race set before you. You may happen to occasionally be dull and sleepy through disease, but you will not choose this. When in spiritual health, you will glow with Divine ardor and burn with holy fervency, delighting yourself in serving the Lord.

This activity of life induces progress. If we are really quickened, we are to walk in newness of life—that is to say, we shall move on. We are not to take the goose-step in newness of life, but to march on, going from strength to strength. We are not at the end yet—we must advance. All that we have already attained is to lead on to the beyond. It is true we have the new life in us, but we have not yet obtained everything—we must climb higher and go further. The new life grows.

This walk is to be in newness of life. We are not to act or grow in the energy of the old life, but in newness of life. The conduct of a Christian is in newness of life and, therefore, others cannot understand him because he acts so differently from themselves. But, alas, all professors are not of this sort! I see a Christian man coming back one evening from a place of questionable amusement. Did he go there in newness of life? The old man used to go in that direction. When a man is doubtfully honest and has made a bargain which will not bear the light—is that done in newness of life? When an employer grinds down the workman to the last farthing—is that done in the newness of life? Surely, you will see what I am aiming at. Brethren, have done with the things of the flesh! Put off the old man. If Christ has quickened you, walk in newness of life. Say to the old man, “Down with you, Sir! I have done with walking in your way.”

Let the new man come to the front and follow his guidance. Say in your soul, “O life of God within me, be supreme. Take the upper hand and let

every thought be captive to your power.” Let us not live in oldness of spiritual death, but in newness of spiritual life! What a change is worked by the perception and possession of better things! Dr. Chalmers, in his *Exposition of Romans*, pictures a man engaged with full and earnest ambition on some humble walk of retail merchandise. He cares about petty things and makes great account of his little stock-taking. His hopes and fears range within his circumscribed trading—he aspires to nothing more than to reach a few shillings a week to retire upon. But a splendid property is willed to him, or he is introduced into a sublime walk of high and honorable adventure. From then on, everything is made new! The man’s cares, hopes, habits, tastes and desires are all new. His expenditure alters. His valuation of money alters. His fear about the state of the stock disappears! His joy in the prospect of a small competency is no more before his eyes. He has risen to a different level altogether. New conditions have silently changed all things. The whole man is built on a bigger scale—his house, his table, his garments, his company and his speech are all of another sort!

In the same way, the Lord, by all that He has done for us, and in us, has changed everything! No point is unaffected. Newness of life affects our manhood from head to foot. The Lord has made us rich in Himself, by the gift of Jesus, and by the work of His Spirit—and He would not have us grieving and fretting about the little matters which once were so exceedingly great to us. “After all these things do the Gentiles seek.” Let us have higher cares and more Divine aspirations! Let us seek to live the life of Heaven on earth! We are called unto righteousness—let us not follow after mammon! We are new creatures—may the Lord renew us day by day! Let us quit the old, for the time we have spent in it may well suffice. Our soul now aspires to a nobler destiny.

The Christian life should be one of *joyful vivacity*. We cannot always be what we would like to be, especially if we have a sluggish liver or an aching head, but I would now speak of our normal condition. The Christian man or woman, living in newness of life, should find life fresh about him. Our inner man is renewed day by day. A healthy Christian is one of the liveliest creatures on earth. When he is at work, you may hear him sing. He cannot help it! Do not blame him for a little noise. Let him sing and laugh till he cries. Sometimes he cannot help it—he will burst if his soul may not have vent. When he begins to talk about his Lord, his eyes flash fire. Some people hint that he is out of his mind—but those who know best assure us that he was never before so sane as now. Of course, the world thinks religion is such poor stuff that nobody could grow excited about it. To my mind, cold religion is the nastiest dish ever brought to the table! True godliness is served up hot. Newness of life means a soul aglow with love to God and, therefore, earnest, zealous, happy. Let the believing man have space for his larger life, space for his grander joy. No, do not gag him—let him sing his new song! If any man out of Heaven has a right

to be happy, it is the man who lives in newness of life! Come, Beloved, I want you to go home today with the resolve that the newness of life shall be more apparent in your walk. Do not live the old life over again. Why should you? What good would come of it?

Come, my Soul, if Christ has raised you from the dead, do not live after the fashion of the dark grave which you have left. I am not so enamored of the sepulcher as to return to it! Walk after the fashion of the new life and it will conduct you to God from where it came. Live a God-like life—let the Divine in you sit on the throne and tread the animal beneath its feet. “It is easier said than done,” cries one. That depends upon the life within. Life is full of power. I have seen an iron bar bent by the growth of a tree. Have you never heard of great paving-stones being lifted by fungi which had pushed up beneath them? Life is a mighty thing, especially the Divine Life! If you choose to contract your souls by a sort of spiritual tight-lacing, or if you choose to bend yourselves down in a sorrow which never looks up, you may hinder your life and its walk—but give your life full scope and what a walk you may have! Yield yourselves fully to God and you shall see what you shall see! There is a happiness to be enjoyed by truly whole-hearted Believers which some, even of God’s own children, would think to be impossible!

Let me finish with a picture which will show you what I mean by whole-heartedness. I have seen boys bathing in a river in the morning. One of them has just dipped his toes in the water and he cries out, as he shivers, “Oh, it’s so cold!” Another has gone in up to his ankles and he also declares that it is fearfully chilly. But look! Another runs to the bank and dives in! He rises all in a glow. All his blood is circulating and he cries, “Delicious! What a beautiful morning! I am all in a glow. The water is splendid!” That is the boy for enjoying a bath! You Christian people who are paddling about in the shallows of religion and just dipping your toes in it—you stand shivering in the cold air of the world which you are afraid to leave! Oh, that you would plunge into the River of Life! How it would brace you! What tone it would give you! Dive in, young man! Dive in! Be a Christian, out and out! Serve the Lord with your whole being! Give yourself wholly to Him who bought you with His blood. Plunge into the sacred Flood, by Grace, and you will exclaim—

***“Oh, this is life! Oh, this is joy!
My God, to find You so!
Your face to see, Your voice to hear,
And all Your love to know.”***

May we thus walk in newness of life! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Matthew 28; Romans 6:1-14.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK—307, 309, 318.**

THE OLD MAN CRUCIFIED

NO. 882

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, APRIL 11, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him.”
Romans 6:6.***

EVERY new man is two men—every Believer in Christ is what he was and not what he was—the old nature and the new nature exist at the same time in each regenerate individual. That old nature the Apostle calls a man, because it is a complete manhood after the image of fallen Adam. It has the desires, the judgment, the mind, the thoughts, the language and the action of man as he is in his rebellious estate. He calls it the “old man,” because it is as old as Eden’s first transgression. It is as old as we are. It is the nature born with us, the natural depravity, the fleshly mind which we inherited from our parents. It is tainted by the old serpent and bears within it a dread propensity to his old sin.

When Adam first plucked the forbidden fruit, sin polluted our race and the original stain abides in all mankind—it is manifest in the most ancient history and continues to reveal itself all along the pages of the story of this blighted world. The old *nature*, then, is what the Apostle means. The lusts of the flesh, the carnal desires, the affections of our estranged hearts—these he calls the old man. I am much mistaken if every Christian does not find this old man still troubling him.

He has a new nature which was implanted in him, as through the Spirit’s sacred working he was led to hate sin and believe in Jesus to his soul’s salvation. It is the heavenly offspring of the new birth, the pure and holy result of regeneration. That new nature cannot sin—it is as pure as the God from whom it came and like the spark which seeks the sun, it aspires always after the holy God from whom it came. Its longings and its tendencies are always towards holiness and God and it utterly hates and loathes that which is evil, so that, finding itself brought into contact with the old nature, it sighs and cries as the Apostle tells us, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Hence a warfare is set up within the Believer’s bosom—the new life struggles against the old death—as the house of David against the house of Saul, or as Israel against the accursed Canaanites. The enmity is irreconcilable and lifelong. As the Lord has sworn to have war with Amalek throughout all generations, so does the holy seed within the saint wage

war with inbred sin so long as it remains. Neither nature can make peace with the other. Either the earthy water must quench the heavenly fire, or the Divine fire, like that which Elijah saw, must lick up and utterly remove all the water in the trenches of the heart. It is war to the knife—exterminating war.

In the text the Apostle says that the old nature is in every Believer crucified with Christ. I take the liberty also to refer you to two or three words which occur in the verse before the text, where he speaks of baptized Believers as having taken upon themselves the likeness of Christ's death. And then he speaks of the old man being *crucified*, which was Christ's death and therefore without straining the text we may gather from it that the old man in us dies in the same way as Christ died—that the death of Christ on the Cross is the picture of the way in which our old corruptions are to be put to death.

That shall make our first point, *the old nature crucified*. The second point shall be that if ever the old nature is put to death at all, it must be *with* Christ—we are crucified with Him. The old man is crucified with Him. And then, in the third place, we shall have *some practical and solemn applications to make*.

I. Now, first, THE OLD MAN IS TO DIE, BUT IT IS TO DIE IN THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST'S DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION.

1. What kind of death was that? First, our Lord died *a true and real death*. There were certain heretics who disturbed the early Christian Church who said that our Lord did not really and actually die. But we know that He died, for His heart was pierced by the spear and the flowing of the blood and water proved that He was, in very deed, most truly dead. Moreover, the Roman officer would not have sanctioned that the body be given up if he had not made sure that He were dead already and even made doubly sure by piercing our Lord's most blessed side. Christ really and truly died. There was no sham or make-believe. It was no phantom which bled and the atoning death was no fainting spell or long swoon.

Even thus it must be with our old propensities—they must not *pretend* to die, but actually die. They must not be restrained by holy customs. They must not be mowed up by temporary austerities, or laid in a trance by fleeting reveries, or ostentatiously buried alive by religious resolves and professions. They must actually die and die a real and true death before the Lord and within our souls. Sometimes persons who are really alive appear as dead, because death reigns over a part of their bodies. The heart beats exceedingly indistinctly. The pulse is but faintly felt, the lungs are languidly heaving—they lie in a state of coma, their hands are powerless as those of a corpse and their eyes are closed and every member pal-

sied—yet they are not dead. They are, in some measure and really and truly, as to their vital organs, still in the land of the living.

So have I known some that have given up a part of their sins. They have been persuaded to renounce the most gross vices, or the more abominable lusts—but yet they have never made a clean renunciation of all their sins. They have never, within their hearts, in all integrity of purpose, given up every false way. They still indulge some one or other sin secretly, or, if they have not carried their desires into practice, they have, at least, a secret goodwill towards evil—a love towards some sweet sin in the core of their heart of hearts.

O my Brothers and Sisters, this must, with those who are renewed in the spirit of their minds—the old nature must—so far as our will is concerned, endure a *real* crucifixion! No man shall enter Heaven while one propensity to sin lies in him, for Heaven admits *nothing* that pollutes. And, further, no man should expect to enter the abode of bliss while he cherishes and desires to keep alive a solitary sin within him. I do not say that no one is a saved soul who is not perfect here! God forbid I should thus interpret the hopes of the faithful and the Word of God! But I do say that you must *desire* perfection. You must *will* it. You must *seek* it, or Divine Grace is not in you. I do not say that any man lives perfectly and absolutely free from sin in this life—but I do say that no man is a Christian who does not *wish* it to be so with him.

There must be in our soul a wish—deep, hearty, thorough and real—for the death of every sin of every sort, or we are not in union with Christ. Our prayer must be—

***“Return, O holy Dove! return,
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made You mourn,
And drove You from my breast.
The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’er that idol is,
Help me to tear it from Your throne,
And worship only You.”***

I beseech you be careful on this point, for let mere creed lovers prate as they will, “without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” sin must be slain! You must utterly hate evil. Sin must be to you as a condemned, detestable thing, to be hunted down and put to death, or else the life of God is not in you. No mere professions or shams will suffice! Sin must *really* and *truly* be crucified!

2. The death of our Lord, in the next place, was a voluntary death. He said, “I lay down My life for the sheep...no man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.” Jesus need not have died. He could have come down from the Cross and saved Himself, but He willingly gave Himself up as a

Sacrifice for our sins. Brethren, such must essentially be the death of sin within *us*—it must be on our parts, as we put it to death, perfectly voluntary. Oh, what a sieve is this in which to sift the chaff from the wheat!

Some men part with their sins with the intention of returning again to them if they can, as the dog returns to its vomit and the sow to her wallowing in the mire. Or they part with them as of old the oxen parted with their calves at Bethshemesh, lowing as they went because of the calves they had left behind. Like Lot's wife they set out to leave Sodom, but their eyes show where their hearts are. How many a drunkard has given up his cups because he would otherwise have lost his situation or been laid by with illness? How many a foul one has renounced a vice because he felt that it was too great a strain upon his constitution, or brought too much shame upon him?

They drop their sins as the dog does the meat when it is too hot to hold—but they love it none the less—they will be back when it cools. Such sinners leave sin as Orpah did Moab, but they soon find opportunity to return. They fight sin as stage actors fight on the stage—it is mimic conflict—in reality they do not hate sin. Ah, but Friends, we must have our whole hearts burning with an intensity of desire to get rid of our sins! And such intensity we shall be sure to feel if there is a work of Divine Grace in our soul worked by the Holy Spirit. To will is present with us. No, we are not merely willing—that is a poor cold term—we are vehemently desirous, insomuch that we would be content to give up our eyes and live in lifelong blindness if we could but be wholly delivered from our sins!

There is no martyrdom to which any saint would be reluctant to subject himself if he could thereby escape from the tenfold plague of his daily corruptions and temptations. I would make any bargain with God if He would leave me free from sin. It should be left to Him whether I should shiver amid northern ice, or stagnate in a poorhouse, or lie in prison till the moss grew on my eyelids, or quiver in perpetual fever—if I might henceforth never again in this world fall into a single sin! The execution of sin, then, must be undertaken by us with a willing mind and a vehement determination.

3. At the same time, mark you, in the third place, our Lord's death was *a violent death*. He was no suicide. He willed to die in obedience to the highest law of His being, which was not self-preservation (which makes it necessary for us to do all we can to live), but consecration to the will of God and to human welfare, which highest law rendered it necessary for Him to die. He died, I have said, voluntarily, but yet by wicked men He was taken, by violent hands and by force put to death. So the crucifixion of sin is voluntary as to the person who crucifies sin—but it is both violent and involuntary as to the sin itself.

Believe me, my dear Brothers and Sisters, sin struggles awfully in the best of men—especially besetting sins and constitutional sins. Outward iniquities are, in most cases, soon conquered, but *inward* constitutional sins are hard to overcome. One man is proud and oh, what prayers and tears it costs him to bring the neck of old pride to the block! Another man is naturally grasping, his tendency is to *covetousness* and how he has to humble himself before God and to cry out and lament because his gold will stick to his fingers and will rust and corrode within his soul! Some are of a murmuring spirit and so rebel against God, and to conquer a spirit of contention and murmuring is no easy task.

And envy, too, that horrible monster, so obnoxious in a Christian. Why, I think I have known God's ministers indulge in it and it has not always been easy to kill it. To let another star eclipse you in the firmament, or suffer another servant of God to do more for Him and to have greater success than yourself is, too often, a bitter trial when it should be a theme for joy! Yet, Brethren, cost us what it may, these sins must die! Violent may be the death and stern the struggle, but we must nail that right hand, yes, and drive home the nail!

We must pierce the left hand, too, and fasten the foot, yes and nail that other foot and hammer fast the nail. And while the struggling victim seeks to live, we must take care that no nail stops, but run to the Master, if it must be so and pray *Him* to drive the nails yet closer home that the monster of the old man may not in any one of its members regain its liberty. It will be a violent death, indeed, if *my* inward experience is really a sample of what we are to expect.

4. In the fourth place, crucifixion was *a painful death*. The suffering of crucifixion was extreme. All men have put that into their general belief—their *language* creed—for we say of great pain it is excruciating, that is to say, it is like crucifixion. So the death of sin is painful in all and in some terribly so. Oh, it has cost some men nights, days, weeks and months of misery and anguish to overcome their deep-seated sins!

Read John Bunyan's, "Grace Abounding," and see how year after year that wonderful mind of his had red hot harrows dragged across all its fields. The inmost vitals of his spirit were pierced as with barbed shafts. His soul was as a great battlefield, covered with armies who trampled it down, tore it up in all directions and made it tremble with their furious shocks of combat. The new man was struggling against the old death that was within him. Believe me, none of us would wish to go over the same ground again, for the scars remain upon us to this hour.

There was a plucking out of right eyes and a tearing off of right arms—and this hacking and maiming could not be done without poignant suffering. And meanwhile, in the case of some of us, there was such a horror of

darkness cast over us concerning our guilt, that our soul chose strangling rather than life and it was of the Lord's mercies that our griefs did not utterly consume us. Some, I grant you, are brought unto salvation much more easily, but even *they* find that the death of sin is painful, at least to this degree—they have a humbling sense of the guilt of sin—they feel bitter regret that ever they should have fallen into it and they are depressed with great fear and horror lest they should fall into it again.

Along the valley of death shade, most, if not all pilgrims to Heaven occasionally wend their way. Sin dies hard. Such a hundred-headed Hydra has many lives. it will not die without much pain and the violence of the pain proves the natural vitality of that which is put to death.

5. Brethren, let us remind you of yet another point. The death of our Lord Jesus Christ was *an ignominious death*. It was the death which the Roman Law accorded only to felons, serfs and Jews—few were condemned to it but slaves. It was not a freeman's death—a nobler execution was allotted to citizens. So our sins must be put to death with every circumstance of shame and self-humiliation. I must confess I am shocked with some people whom I know who glibly rehearse their past lives up to the time of their supposed conversion and talk of their sins—which they hope have been forgiven them—with a sort of smack of the lips, as if there was something fine in having been so atrocious an offender.

I hate to hear a man speak of his experience in sin as a Greenwich pensioner might talk of Trafalgar and the Nile. The best thing to do with our past sin, if it is, indeed, forgiven, is to bury it! Yes, and let us bury it as they used to bury suicides—let us drive a stake through it in horror and contempt and never set up a monument to its memory. If you ever do tell anybody about your youthful wrongdoing, let it be with blushes and tears, with shame and confusion of face. And always speak of it to the honor of the infinite mercy which forgave you. Never let the devil stand behind you and pat you on the back and say, "You did me a good turn in those days."

Oh, it is a shameful thing to have sinned! A degrading thing to have lived in sin! And it is not to be wrapped up into a telling story and told out as an exploit as some do. "The old man is crucified with him." Who boasts of being related to the crucified felon? If any member of your family had been hanged, you would tremble to hear anyone mention the gallows. You would not run about crying, "Do you know a brother of mine was hanged at Newgate?" Your old man of sin is hanged—do not talk about him, but thank God it is so—and as He blots out the remembrance of it, do you the same, except so far as it may make you humble and grateful.

6. Crucifixion was *a lingering death*. Our old nature has not been put to the death by the sword, or stoning, or burning. It has been *crucified*. This will bring on a sure death in due time, but it is slow. A man crucified often

lived for hours and days and I have read even for a week. *Our* old man will linger on his cross as long as *we are alive on earth*. Each one of our sins has a horrible vitality about it. “As many lives as a cat,” John Bunyan said unbelief had. And the like may be said of every sin within us! It is crucified, but it is not wholly dead. Expect to have to fight with sin till you sheathe your sword and put on your crown.

I speak with great respect to my dear friends who wear the honorable insignia of old age, but they may let one who is a child compared to them remind them that old age does not bring with it such a weakening in the man to sin as to permit them to cease from watchfulness. When passions cannot be indulged, they often rage the more furiously. And if one sin is driven out by change of life, another will often labor to possess the soul in its place. Alas, alas, alas, that men should ever begin to trust to their experience or their acquired prudence—for then they are the most likely persons to fall into sin! Your lusts are crucified, but they live and there is vitality enough in them to make you rue the day if the nails of Divine Grace do not hold them fast and keep the demons to their tree of doom.

The last remark is that our Lord *died a visible death*. It could be discovered that He was dead. So we must put our sins to a visible death. Do not tell me, you men-servants and maid-servants who profess godliness, that you have crucified your sins when you are such lazy and dishonest servants that your masters and mistresses would be right glad to do without you! Do not tell me, you masters and mistresses, that you have crucified your sins when you fall into such ugly tempers and tyrannize your servants and treat them like dogs! Do not tell me, you men of business, that your sins are banished when you help to set up bubble companies, falsify your weights and measures, defraud your creditors by villainous bankruptcies, or grind the faces of the poor. Do not sneak into this Tabernacle—or rather, if you come at all, *do* sneak in, for you ought to wear a hang-dog look if you answer to any of these descriptions!

Do not come into Prayer Meeting and pray with the saints if you are behaving as unregenerate sinners do. If there is no visible difference between you and the world, depend upon it, there is no invisible difference. I have generally found that a man is not much better than he looks and if a man’s outward life is not right, I shall not feel bound to believe that his inward life is acceptable to God. “Ah, Sir,” said one in Rowland Hill’s time, “he is not exactly what I should like, but he has a good heart at the bottom.” The shrewd old preacher replied, “When you go to market and buy fruit and there are none but rotten apples on the top of the basket, you say to the market woman, ‘These are a very bad lot.’ Now, if the woman replied, ‘Yes, they are rather gone at top, Sir, but they are better as you go down,’ you would not be so silly as to believe her, but would say, ‘No, no,

the lower we go, the worse they will be, for the best are always put on the top.”

And so it is with men’s characters. If they cannot be decent, sober and truthful in their daily life, their inner parts are more abominable still! The deeper you pry into their secrets the worse will be the report. O dear Hearers, do be sincere in renouncing outward sin! You sinful men, put away your drunkenness, your swearing, your lying, your fornication and uncleanness. These must be nailed up before God’s sun in open day. Let all men know by your outward conduct that you are dead to sin and cannot live any longer in it.

II. There was much room in this first point to have enlarged, but I must not, for time flies so swiftly. This crucifixion of the old nature is, let us remember, WITH CHRIST. The old man was crucified with Christ *representatively*. Christ represented the Church. When He died He died for the Church and the Church died in Him—all His people died *representatively* when He died. Christ’s dead body represents to us, in its death, the death of our old man, and virtually and before God, the body of this death died for each of us when Jesus died. We have not the time, however, to go into that doctrine, but the experience is what I would say a word upon.

Depend upon it, my dear Brothers and Sisters, if ever our sins are to die, it must be with Christ. You will find you cannot kill the smallest viper in the nest of your heart if you get away from the Cross. There is no death for sin except in the death of Christ. Stand and look up to His dear wounds. Trust in the merit of His blood. Love Him, love Him with a perfect heart and sin-killing will not be difficult. You will hear the Savior say, “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines,” and you will note His words, take *us*, not take *them*, but take *us*. Come with me, says the spouse, we will go together and we will do it. Your killing of your sin is *not* in your power, but if Jesus goes with you, it will be done.

I have known some people struggle against a horrible temper and they never quite overcame it until they grew into closer communion with Christ. Some dispute the doctrine before us and assert that contemplations of death are the most effectual helps in overcoming sin—very likely. Others have thought that the study of the beauties of holiness might do it—it may be so. But in my experience the mightiest gun to blow down the cesspool of sin within me is to flee to the Cross of Christ! I am persuaded that nothing but the blood of Jesus will kill sin. If you go to the Commandments of God, or to the fear and dread of Hell, you will find such motives, as they suggest, to be as powerless in you for real action as they have proven themselves to be to the general world.

But if you remember gratefully that the first death of sin in you was by the blood of Jesus, you will firmly believe that all the way through you will have to overcome by the same weapon—

***“Tears, though flowing like a river,
Never can one sin erase.
Jesus’ tears would not avail you—
Blood alone can meet your case.
Fly to Jesus!
Life is found in His embrace.”***

Do you see yonder blood-washed host? Without spot or wrinkle they stand before the Throne of God. Ask them whether they had to fight with sin and they will tell you that they were men of like passions with us. Ask them how they overcame sin—you glorious ones, out of what armory did you take your weapons and who girded you for the sacred conflict?—

***“I ask them from where their victory came.
They, with united breath
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.
They marked the footsteps that He trod,
His zeal inspired their breast,
And, following their Incarnate God,
Possess the promised rest.”***

You must get to Christ, nearer to Christ and you will overcome sin.

III. I must now conclude with these two observations. First, Christian, here is your practical lesson tonight—*Fight with your sins*. Hack them in pieces as Samuel did Agag! Let not one of them escape. Take them as Elijah took the prophets of Baal—hew them in pieces before the Lord! Revenge the death of Christ upon your sins, but keep to Christ’s Cross for power to do it. Think more of Jesus’ Cross! Spend more time in contemplation of His blessed Person, of His death and of His rising again. Drink in more of His life and live more upon Him. I pray you do this.

The words may sound in your ears as very common and such as you have heard 10,000 times before, but the sense is weighty and all-important. If I had but one sentence that I might utter to Believers, I think I should make it this—*live nearer to Christ*. All virtues flourish in the atmosphere of the Cross. All vices die beneath the shade of the Cross—but get away from your Master and you will be undone.

The other word is to the unconverted. You say you do not care much about death unto sin. Well, then, you shall have but one choice—if you will not have *death unto sin*—you shall have *sin unto death*! There is no alternative. If you do not die to sin, you shall die *for* sin—and if you do not slay sin, sin will slay you! As surely as you live, my unsaved Hearers, you cannot harbor any sin and go to Heaven! Let no man deceive you. I try to preach a very free and open Gospel and these lips have spoken 10,000 in-

vitations to the very chief of sinners. In fact, I never seem to have a more suitable theme for myself than when I am opening Mercy's gate wide, so as to admit the vilest of the vile.

Still I am bound to tell you—wide as God's mercy is to those who are willing to give up their sins—there is not a grain of mercy in the heart of God towards that man who goes on in his iniquities. "God is angry with the wicked every day." Bunyan tells us he was one day playing the game of "cat" on Sunday, when a voice seemed to sound in his ears, "Will you have your sins and go to Hell, or leave your sins and go to Heaven?" You have dropped into this Tabernacle and this is the question I have to put to you—"Will you leave your sins and go to Heaven, or will you have your sins and go to Hell!"

I know what you would prefer. You would like to have your sins and Heaven, too, but it is utterly impossible! Not only because God forbids it, but because nature forbids it. You are sitting in a room with a fire tonight and the windows are closed and you say, "I would like to be cool." Put out the fire, then. "No, but I would like to be cool and yet keep the fire." It cannot be done—nature forbids it. And so a lover of sin cannot be a saved soul—not because of any enmity on God's part—but because it is contrary to nature. Sin is a poison, you cannot drink it and yet live the life of Divine Grace. If a man loves sin, sin is its own punishment. To be an enemy of God is Hell.

Even if the flames of Gehenna could be quenched and the pit of Tophet could be closed, yet as long as a man was out of accord with God, there must be a Hell, for sin is misery and only let it develop itself and evil is sorrow, be it in what breast it may. You have heard of the Spartan youth who concealed a stolen fox under his garment, and although it was eating into his stomach, he would not show it and therefore died through the creature's bites. You are of that sort, Sinner! You are carrying sin in your bosom and it is eating out your heart!

God knows what it is and you know what it is. You cannot keep it there and be unbiten, undestroyed. Why keep it there? O cry to God with a vehement cry, "God save me from my sin! O bring me, even me, to the foot of Your Son's Cross, and forgive me and then crucify my sin, for I see clearly, now, that sin must perish or I must."

God give you Grace, dear Hearer, not to go to bed tonight till you have had your sins nailed up to Christ's Cross! The Lord grant it for His mercies' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 6.

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DEATH AND LIFE IN CHRIST

NO. 503

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 5, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
Romans 6:8-11.***

THE Apostles never traveled far from the simple facts of Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension, exaltation and second advent. These things, of which they were the witnesses, constituted the staple of all their discourses. Newton has very properly said that the two pillars of our religion are the work of Christ *for* us, and His work in us by the Holy Spirit. If you want to find the Apostles, you will surely discover them standing between these two pillars. They are either discoursing upon the effect of the passion in our justification, or its equally delightful consequence in our death to the world and our newness of life.

What a rebuke this should be to those in modern times who are ever straining after novelties. There may be much of the Athenian spirit among congregations, but that should be no excuse for its being tolerated among ministers. We, of all men, should be the last to spend our time in seeking something new. Our business, my Brothers and Sisters, is the old labor of Apostolic tongues—to declare Jesus—who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We are mirrors reflecting the transactions of Calvary, telescopes manifesting the distant glories of an exalted Redeemer. The nearer we keep to the Cross, the nearer, I think, we keep to our true vocation.

When the Lord shall be pleased to restore to His Church once more a fervent love to Christ, and, when once again we shall have a ministry that is not only flavored with Christ, but of which Jesus constitutes the sum and substance, then shall the Churches revive—then shall the set time to favor Zion come. The goodly cedar which was planted by the rivers of old and stretched out her branches far and wide has become, in these modern days, like a tree dwarfed by Chinese art. It is planted by the rivers as before, but it does not flourish.

Only let God the Holy Spirit give to us, once again, the bold and clear preaching of Christ crucified in all simplicity and earnestness, and the dwarf shall swell into a forest giant! Each expanding bud shall burst into foliage, and the cedar shall tower aloft again, until the birds of the air shall lodge in its branches. I need offer you no apology, then, for preach-

ing on those matters which engrossed all the time of the Apostles, and which shall shower unnumbered blessings on generations yet to come.

I. THE FACTS REFERRED TO IN THESE FOUR VERSES CONSTITUTE THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL WHICH WE PREACH.

1. The first fact here very clearly indicated is *that Jesus died*. He who was Divine, and therefore, Immortal, bowed His head to death! He whose human Nature was allied to the omnipotence of His Divine Nature, was pleased voluntarily to submit himself to the sword of death. He who was pure and perfect, and therefore deserved not death, which is the wages of sin, nevertheless condescended for our sake to yield Himself up to die. This is the second note in the Gospel scale.

The first note is incarnation—Jesus Christ became a Man—angels thought this worthy of their songs, and made the heavens ring with midnight melodies. The second note is this, I say, that, being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. He died as *a sacrifice*. Methinks, after many lambs from the flocks of men had poured out their blood at the foot of the altar, it was a strange spectacle—to see God's Lamb brought to that same altar to be sacrificed. He is without spot or blemish, or any such thing. He is the firstling of the flock. He is the only one of the Great Master—a right royal, heavenly Lamb.

Such a Lamb had never been seen before. He is the Lamb who is worshipped in Heaven, and who is to be adored world without end. Will that sacred head condescend to feel the axe? Will that glorious Victim really be slain? Is it possible that God's Lamb will actually submit to die? He does so without a struggle. He is dumb in the shambles before the slaughterers. He gives up the warm blood of His heart to the hand of the executioner, that He might expiate the wrath of God.

Tell it! Let Heaven ring with music and let Hell be filled with confusion! Jesus, the Eternal Son of God, the Lamb of Jehovah's Passover, died! His hands were pierced. His heart was broken. To prove how surely the spear had struck the mark, the vital fluid flowed in a double flood, even to the ground—Jesus died. If there is any doubt about this, there is doubt about your salvation and mine. If there were any reason to question this fact, then we might question the possibility of salvation. But Jesus died, and sin is put away. The sacrifice smokes to Heaven—Jehovah smells a sweet savor, and is pleased—through Christ, the Victim—to accept the prayers, the offerings, and the persons of His people.

Nor did He die as the Victim only. He died as *the Substitute*. We were drawn as soldiers for the great warfare, but we could not go. We were feeble, and should have fallen in the battle and have left our bones to be devoured by the dogs of Hell. But He, the mighty Son of God, became the Substitute for us. HE entered the battlefield. HE sustained the first charge of the adversary in the wilderness—three times He repulsed the grim Fiend and all his host. He smote His assailants with the sword of the Spirit until the enemy fled and angels waited upon the weary Victor. The

conflict was not over, the enemy had but retired to forge fresh artillery and recruit his scattered forces for a yet more terrible affray.

For three years the great Substitute kept the field against continual onslaughts from the advance guard of the enemy, remaining conqueror in every skirmish. No adversary dared to show his face, or if he shot an arrow at Him from a distance, our Substitute caught the arrow on His shield and laughed His foes to scorn. Devils were cast out of many that were possessed. Whole legions of them were compelled to find refuge in a herd of swine. And Lucifer himself fell like lightning from the Heaven of His power. At last the time came when Hell had gathered up all its forces—and now was also come the hour when Christ, as our Substitute—must carry His obedience to the utmost length. He must be obedient unto death.

He has been a Substitute up till then. Will he now throw down His vicarious Character? Will He now renounce our responsibilities, and declare that we may stand for ourselves? Not He. He undertook, and must go through. Sweating great drops of blood, He flinches not from the dread assault. Wounded in hands, and in feet, He still maintained His ground. And though, for the sake of *obedience*, He bowed His head to die, yet in that dying He slew Death. He put His foot upon the dragons' neck, crushed the head of the old serpent, and beat our adversaries as small as the dust of the threshing floor.

Yes, the blessed Substitute has died. I say if there were a question about this, then *we* might have to die—but inasmuch as He died for us—the Believer shall not die. The debt is discharged to the utmost farthing. The account is cleared. The balance is struck. The scales of justice turn in our favor—God's sword is sheathed forever—and the blood of Christ has sealed it in its scabbard. We are free, for Christ was bound. We live, for Jesus died. Dying, thus, as a Sacrifice, and as a Substitute, it is a comfort to us to know that He also died as *Mediator between God and man*.

There was a great gulf fixed, so that if we would pass to God, we could not, neither could He pass to us if He would condescend to do so. There was no way of filling up this gulf, unless there should be found one who, like the old Roman, Curtius, would leap into it. Jesus comes, arrayed in His pontifical garments. Wearing the breastplate, bearing the ephod—a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. His kingly character is not forgotten, for His head is adorned with a glittering crown, and over His shoulders He bears the Prophet's mantle.

How shall I describe the matchless glories of the Prophet-King, the royal Priest? Will He throw Himself into the chasm? He will. Into the grave He plunges, the abyss is closed! The gulf is bridged, and God can have communion with man! I see before me the heavy veil which shields from mortal eyes the place where God's Glory shines. No man may touch that veil or he must die. Is there any man found who can rend it?—that man may approach the Mercy Seat. O, that the veil which parts our souls from Him that dwells between the Cherubim could be torn throughout its utmost length! Strong archangel, would you dare to rend it?

Should you attempt the work, your immortality would be forfeited, and you must expire. But Jesus comes, the King Immortal, Invisible. With His strong hands He rends the veil from top to bottom—and now men draw near with confidence—for when Jesus died, a living way was opened. Sing, O heavens, and rejoice O earth! There is now no wall of partition, for Christ has dashed it down! Christ has taken away the gates of death, posts and bars, and all—and like another Samson—carried them upon His shoulders far away.

This, then, is one of the great notes of the Gospel—the fact that Jesus died. Oh, you who would be saved, believe that Jesus died! Believe that the Son of God expired! Trust that death to save you, and you are saved! It is no great mystery. It needs no learned words, no polished phrases—Jesus died—the Sacrifice smokes. The Substitute bleeds. The Mediator fills up the gap—Jesus dies—believe and live!

2. But *Jesus rises*—this is no mean part of the Gospel. He dies. They lay Him in a new sepulcher. They embalm His body in spices—His adversaries are careful that His body shall not be stolen away. The stone, the seal, the watch, all prove their vigilance. Aha! Aha! What do you do, men? Can you imprison Immortality in the tomb! The fiends of Hell, too, I doubt not, watched the sepulcher, wondering what it all could mean. But the third day comes, and with it the messenger from Heaven!

He touches the stone—it rolls away. He sits upon it, as if he would defy the whole universe to roll that stone back again. Jesus awakes, as a mighty man from his slumber—unwraps the napkin from His head and lays it by itself—unwinds the cerements in which love had wrapped Him. He puts them by themselves—for He had abundant leisure. He was in no haste. He was not about to escape like a felon who bursts out of prison, but like one whose time of deliverance from jail has come. He lawfully and leisurely leaves His cell.

He steps to the upper air, bright, shining, glorious and fair. He lives! He died once, *but He rose again from the dead*. There is no need for us to enlarge here. We only pause to remark that this is one of the most jubilant notes in the whole Gospel scale. For you see, Brothers and Sisters, the rich mysteries, which, like the many seeds of the pomegranate, are all enclosed in the golden apple of resurrection! Death is overcome! Here is found a Man, who by His own power, was able to struggle with Death and hurl him down. The grave is opened. There is found a Man able to dash back its bolts, and to rifle its treasures.

And thus, Brothers and Sisters, having delivered Himself, He is able, also, to deliver others. Sin, too, was manifestly forgiven. Christ was in prison as a hostage, kept there as a Surety. Now that He is allowed to go free, it is a declaration on God's behalf that He has nothing against us. Our Substitute is discharged. *We* are discharged. He who undertook to pay our debt is allowed to go free. We go free in Him. "He rose again for our justification." No—more—inasmuch as He rises from the dead, He gives us a pledge that Hell is conquered. This was the great aim of Hell—to keep Christ beneath its heel. "You shall bruise His heel." They had gotten

the heel of Christ, His mortal flesh, beneath their power, but that bruised heel came forth unwounded!

Christ sustained no injury by His dying. He was as glorious, even in His human Nature, as He was before He expired. "You will not leave My soul in Hell, neither will You suffer Your holy One to see corruption." Beloved, in this will we triumph—that Hell is worsted—Satan is put to confusion, and all his hosts are fallen before Immanuel. Sinner, believe this! It is the Gospel of your salvation. Believe that Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the dead. Trust Him, trust Him to save your soul. Because He burst the gates of the grave, trust Him to bear your sins, to justify your person, to quicken your spirit, and to raise your dead body—and verily, verily, I say unto you—you shall be saved!

3. We now strike a third note, without which the Gospel were not complete. Inasmuch as Jesus died, *He is now living*. He does not, after forty days, return to the grave. He departs from earth, but it is by another way. From the top of Olivet He ascends until a cloud receives Him out of their sight. And now, at this very day, He lives. There at His Father's right hand He sits—bright like a sun—clothed in majesty. The joy of all the glorified spirits, He is His Father's intense delight. There He sits, Lord of Providence—at His girdle swing the keys of Heaven and earth and Hell. There He sits, expecting the hour when His enemies shall be made His footstool.

Methinks I see Him, too, as He lives to intercede. He stretches His wounded hands, points to His breastplate bearing the names of His people, and for Zion's sake He does not hold His peace. And for Jerusalem's sake He does not rest day nor night, but ever pleads—"Oh God! Bless Your heritage. Gather together Your scattered ones. I will that they whom You have given Me be with Me where I am." Believer, this is a cluster of camphire to you, a bundle of myrrh—be comforted exceedingly—

***"He lives! The great Redeemer lives!
What joy the blessed assurance gives!"***

Trembling Penitent, let a living Savior cheer you. Exercise faith in Him, only, who has immortality. He lives to hear your prayer—cry to Him—He lives to present that prayer before His Father's face. Put yourself in His hands. He lives to gather together those whom He bought with His blood, to make those the people of His flock who were once the people of His purchase. Sinner, do you believe this as a matter of fact? If so, rest your soul on it, and make it shine as a matter of confidence—and then you are saved!

4. One more note and our Gospel song need not rise higher. Jesus died. He rose. He lives. And *He lives forever*. He lives forever. He shall not die again. "Death has no more dominion over Him." Ages shall follow ages, but His raven locks shall never be blanched with years. "You have the dew of Your youth." Disease may visit the world, and fill graves, but no disease or plague can touch the immortal Savior. The shock of the last catastrophe shall shake both Heaven and earth, until the stars shall fall like withered fig leaves from the tree. But nothing shall move the unchanging Sav-

ior. He lives forever. There is no possibility that He should be overcome by a new death—

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

Would it not be a strange doctrine, indeed, if any man should dream that the Son of God would again offer His life a sacrifice? He dies no more. This, too, reveals another part of our precious Gospel—for now it is certain, since He lives forever—that no foes can overcome Him. He has so routed His Enemies, and driven His foes off the battlefield, that they will never venture to attack Him again. This proves, too, that His people’s eternal life is sure. Let Jesus die, and His people die. Let Christ leave Heaven, and, O you glorified ones! You must all vacate your thrones and leave your crowns without heads to wear them—and your harps untouched by fingers that shall wake them to harmony. He lives forever.

Oh, seed of Abraham, you are saved with an everlasting salvation by the sure mercies of David! Your standing in earth and Heaven has been confirmed eternally. God is honored, saints are comforted, and sinners are cheered, for, “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”

Now, I would to God, that on one of these four anchors your faith might be able to get rest. *Jesus died*, poor Trembler. If He died and took your griefs, will not His atonement save you? Rest here. Millions of souls have rested on nothing but Jesus’ death—and this is a granite foundation. No storms of Hell can shake it. Get a good handhold on His Cross—hold it and it will hold you. You cannot depend on His death and be deceived. Try it—taste and see, and you shall find that the Lord is good—and that none can trust a dying Savior without being with Him in Paradise.

But if this suffices you not, *He rose again*. Fasten upon this. He is proved to be Victor over your sins, and over your adversary. Can you not, therefore, depend upon Him? Doubtless there have been thousands of saints who have found the richest consolation from the fact that Jesus rose again from the dead. He rose again for our justification. Sinner, hang on that. Having risen *He lives*. He is not a dead Savior, a dead Sacrifice. He must be able to hear our plea, and to present His own. Depend on a living Savior—depend on Him NOW.

He *lives forever*, and therefore it is not too late for Him to save you. If you cry to Him, He will hear your prayer, even though it is in life’s last moment, for He lives forever. Though the ends of the earth were come, and you were the last man, yet He ever lives to intercede before His Father’s face. Oh, gad not about to find any other hope! Here are four great stones for you—build your hope on these. You cannot want surer foundations—He dies, He rises, He lives, He lives forever. I tell you, Soul, this is my only hope, and though I lean there with all my weight, it bends not.

This is the hope of all God’s people, and they abide contented in it. Do, I pray, come now and rest on it. May the Spirit of God bring many of you

to Christ. We have no other Gospel. You thought it a hard thing, a scholarly thing, a matter that a college must teach you, that the university must give you. It is no such matter for learning and scholarship. Your little child knows it, and your child may be saved by it. You without education—you that can scarcely read the Bible, you can comprehend this—He dies. There is the Cross. He rises. There is the open tomb. He lives. There is the pleading Savior. He lives forever. There is the perpetual merit. Depend on Him! Put your soul in His hands, and you are saved!

If I have brought you under the first head of my discourse to a sufficient height, you can now take another step and mount to something higher. I do not mean higher as to real *value*, but higher as a matter of knowledge, because it follows upon the fact as a matter of experience.

II. The great facts mentioned in our text represent THE GLORIOUS WORK WHICH EVERY BELIEVER FEELS WITHIN HIMSELF.

In the text we see death, resurrection, life, and life eternal. You observe that the Apostle only mentions these to show our share in them. I will read the text again—“Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God. Likewise reckon you, yourselves, also to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Well, then, it seems that as Christ was, so we also are *dead*. We are dead to sin because sin can *no more condemn* us. All the sins which God's people have ever committed dare not accuse—much less can they condemn those for whom Jesus died. Sin can curse an unbeliever, but it has no power so much as to mutter half a curse against a man in Christ. I cannot claim a debt of a dead debtor, and although I am a debtor to the Law, yet since I am dead, the Law cannot claim anything of me. Nor can sin inflict any punishment upon me. He that is dead, as says the preceding verse, is freed from sin. Being dead to sin, we are free from all its jurisdiction. We fear not its curse. We defy *its power*.

The true Believer, in the day when He first came to Christ, died to sin as to its power. Sin had been sitting on a high throne in his heart, but faith pulled the tyrant down, and rolled him in the dust. And though it still survives to vex us, yet its *reigning power* is destroyed. From the day of our new birth, if we are, indeed, true Christians, we have been dead to all sin's pleasures. Madame Bubble can no longer bewitch us. The varnish and guilt have been worn off from the palaces of sin. We defy sin's most skillful enchantments. It might warble sweet music, but the dead ear is not to be moved by melodies.

Keep your bitter sweets, O earth, for those who know no better delicacies. Our mouths find no flavor in your dainties. We are dead to sin's bribes. We curse the gold that would have bought us to be untruthful, and abhor the comforts which might have been the reward of iniquity. We are dead to its threats, too. When sin curses us, we are as little moved by

its curses as by its promises. A Believer is mortified and dead to the world. He can sing with Cowper—

***“I thirst, but not as once I did
The vain delights of earth to share.
Your wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there.
It was the sight of Your dear Cross
First weaned my soul from earthly things,
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.”***

I am compelled, however, to say that this mortification is *not* complete. We are not so dead to the world as we should be. Instead of saying, here, what the Christian *is*, I think I may rather say what he *should be*, for where am I to look for men that are dead to the world nowadays? I see professing Christians quite as fond of riches. I see them almost as fond of gaiety and vanity. Do I not see those who wear the name of Jesus, whose dress is as full of vanity as that of the worldling? Whose conversation has no more savor of Christ in it than that of the open sinner? I find many who are conformed to this world, and who show but little renewing of their minds.

Oh, how slight is the difference nowadays between the Church and the world! We ought to be, in a spiritual sense, evermore Dissenters—dissenting from the world—standing out and protesting against it. We must be to the world’s final day Nonconformists, not conforming to its ways and vanities, but walking without the camp, bearing Christ’s reproach. Do some of you recollect the day when you died to the world? Your friends thought you were mad! They said you knew nothing of life, so your ungodly friends put you in the sepulcher, and others of them rolled a great stone against you. They, from that day, put a ban upon you.

You are not asked out now where you once were. The seal is put upon you—they call you by some opprobrious epithet, and so far as the world is concerned, you are like the dead Christ. You are put into your grave, and shut out from the world’s life. They do not want you any more at their merry-makings—you would spoil the party. You have now become such a Methodist—such a mean hypocrite, as they put it—that they have buried you out of sight. They have rolled the stone, and sealed it, and set watchers at the door to keep you there. Well—and what a blessed thing that is—for if you are dead with Christ—you shall also live with Him!

If we are thus dead with Christ, let us see that we *live with Him*. It is a poor thing to be dead to the world unless we are alive unto God. Death is a negative, and a negative in the world is of no great use by itself. A Protestant is less than a nobody if he only protests against a wrong. We want a *proclaimer*, one who proclaims the Truth of God as well as protests against error. And so, if we are dead to sin, we must have, also, the life of Christ. And I trust, Beloved, we know, and it is not a matter of theory to us—I trust we know that in us there is a new life to which we were strangers once.

To our body and our soul there has been superadded a spirit, a spark of spiritual life. Just as Jesus had a new life after death, so have we a new life after death, by which, I trust, we rise from the grave. But we must prove it. Jesus proved His resurrection by infallible signs. You and I, too, must prove to all men that we have risen out of the grave of sin. Perhaps our friends did not know us when we first rose from the dead. Like Mary, they mistook us for somebody else. They said, "What? Is this William who used to be such a hectoring, proud, ill-humored, domineering fellow? Can he put up with our jokes and jeers so patiently?"

They supposed us to be somebody else, and they were not far from the mark, for we were new creatures in Christ Jesus. We talked with some of our friends, and they found our conversation so different from what it used to be, that it made their hearts burn within them—just as Jesus Christ's disciples when they went to Emmaus. But they did not know our secret. They were strangers to our new life. Do you remember, Christians, how you first revealed yourselves unto your Brothers and Sisters, the Church? In the breaking of bread they first knew you. That night when the right hand of fellowship was given to you, the new life was openly recognized and they said—"Come in, you blessed of the Lord, why stand you without?"

I trust, in resurrection-life you desire to prove to all men that this is not the common life you lived before—a life which made you serve the flesh and the lusts thereof—but that you are living now with higher aims and purer intentions, by a more heavenly rule and with the prospect of a more Divine result. As we have been dead with Christ, dear Brothers and Sisters, I hope we have also, in our measure, learned to live with Him.

But now, remember, *Christ lives forever and so do we*. Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him. The fourteenth verse is wonderfully similar—"Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace." Sin made us die once in Adam, but we are not to be slain by it again. If Christ could die now, we could die. But since Christ can never die again, so the Believer can never again go back to his old sin. He dies to sin no more—he lives and sin has no more dominion over him. Oh, this is a delightful theme! I know not how to express the joy my own heart feels at the sense of security arising from the fact that Christ dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him.

And sin has no more dominion over me, if I am in Christ. Suppose, my Brothers and Sisters, suppose for a moment, that Christ could die again. Bring out your funeral music! Let the muffled drums beat the march of the dead! Let the heavens be clothed in sackcloth, and let the verdant earth be robed in blackness, for the Atonement, earth's great hope, is incomplete! Christ must die again. The adversaries we thought were routed have gathered their strength again. Death is not dead. The grave is not open. There will be no resurrection! The saints tremble. Even in Heaven they fear and quake. The crowns upon glorified heads are trembling. The

hearts that have been overflowing with eternal bliss are filled with anxiety, for the throne of Christ is empty!

Angels suspend their songs. The howling of Hell has silenced the shouts of Heaven—the Fiends are holding high holiday and they scream for very joy—“Jesus dies again! Jesus dies again! Prepare your arrows! Empty your quivers! Come up, you legions of Hell! The famous Conqueror must fight, and bleed, and DIE again! We shall overcome Him yet!” God is dishonored, the foundations of Heaven are removed, and the Eternal Throne quivers with the shock of Christ subjected to a second death! Is it blasphemy to suppose this? Of course it is!

Yet, my Brothers and Sisters, it were equal blasphemy to suppose a true Believer going back again to his old lusts, and dying again by sin. For that were to suppose that the Atonement were incomplete. I can prove that it involves the very same things. It supposes an unfinished sacrifice, for if the sacrifice is finished, then those for whom it was offered must be saved. It supposes Hell triumphant—Christ had bought the soul, and the Spirit had renewed it—but the devil wipes away the blood of Christ, expels the Spirit of the living God and gets to himself the victory. A *saint* perish? Then God’s promise is not true, and Christ’s word is false—“I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish.”

If *one* saint perishes the foundations are removed, eternal justice is just a name, the Divine honesty is suspect, the purposes of God are frustrated, and the crown of Sovereignty rolls in the mire. Weep, angels! Be astonished, O heavens! Rock, O you hills with earthquake! And Hell, come up and hold riot—for God Himself has ceased to be God—since His people perish! “Because I live, you shall live also,” is a Divine necessity. And if dominion can ever be had by sin over a Believer again, then, mark you, death can again have dominion over Christ. But that is impossible. Therefore rejoice and be glad, you servants of God!

You will notice, that as they live, so, like Jesus Christ, *they live unto God*. This completes the parallel. “In that He lives He lives unto God.” So do we. The forty days which Christ spent on earth, He lived unto God, comforting His saints, manifesting His Person, giving forth Gospel precepts. For the few days we have to live here on earth, we must live to comfort the saints, to set forth Christ, and to preach the Gospel to every creature. And now that Christ has ascended, He lives unto God. What does that mean? He lives, my Brothers and Sisters, to manifest the Divine Character. Christ is the permanent revelation of an invisible God.

We look at Christ and we see justice, truth, power, love. We see the whole of the Divine attributes in Him. Christian, you are to live unto God—God is to be seen in you. You are to show forth the Divine heart of compassion, long-suffering, tenderness, kindness, patience. You are to manifest God—living unto God. Christ lives unto God, for He completes the Divine purpose by pleading for His people, by carrying on His people’s work above. You are to live for the same, by preaching that sinners may hear, and that the elect may live—by teaching that the chosen may be

saved. Teaching by your life, by your actions, that God's Glory may be known, and that His decrees may be fulfilled.

Jesus lives unto God, delighting Himself in God. The immeasurable joy of Christ in His Father no tongue can tell. Live in the same way, Christian. Delight yourself in the Lord! Be blessed. Be happy! Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice! Our Redeemer lives unto God, that is, He lives in constant fellowship with God. Cannot you do so, too, by the Holy Spirit? You are dead to sin—see to it that you live forever in fellowship with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Now I have been talking riddles to some of you. How many of you understand these things? If any are troubled because they understood the first part, and they do trust in Christ's death, but they do not understand the second part—ah, Beloved, you shall understand one of these days. If you are resting on Christ's death, that death shall yet be made mighty in you. But you that have known something of this, I pray you struggle after more. Ask the Lord to mortify you altogether, to fill you with the Divine life, and to help you to persevere unto the end. Pray that you may live unto God and unto God alone.

III. Having brought you this far, there is only one other step to take, and then we have done. Let us notice that the facts of which we have spoken are PLEDGES OF THE GLORY WHICH IS TO BE REVEALED IN US.

Christ died. Possibly we shall die. Perhaps we shall not. We may be alive, and remain at the coming of the Son of Man. But it may be, we shall die. I do not think we should be so certain of death as some Christians are, because the Lord's coming is much more certain than our dying. Our dying is not certain, for He may come before we die. However, suppose we shall die—Christ rose and so shall we—

***“What though our inbred sins require
Our flesh to see the dust,
Yet as the Lord our Savior rose,
So all His followers must.”***

Do not, my Brothers and Sisters, think of the cemetery with tears, nor meditate upon the coffin and the shroud with gloomy thoughts. You only sojourn there for a little season, and to you it will not appear a moment. Your body will sleep, and if men sleep all through a long night it only seems an hour to them, a very short moment. The sleeping time is forgotten and to your sleeping body it will seem no time at all—while to your glorified soul it will not seem long because you will be so full of joy that a whole eternity of that joy would not be too long.

But you shall rise again. I do not think we get enough joy out of our resurrection. It will probably be our happiest moment, or rather the beginning of the happiest life that we shall ever know. Heaven is not the happiest place. Heaven at present is happy, but it is not the *perfection* of happiness, because there is only the *soul* there, though the soul is full of pleasure. But the Heaven *that is to be*—when *body and soul* will both be there—surpasses all thought. Resurrection will be our marriage day. Body and soul have been separated and they shall meet again to be remarried

with a golden ring, no more to be divorced, but as one indissolubly united body to go up to the great altar of immortality and there to be espoused unto Christ forever and ever.

I shall come again to this flesh, no longer flesh that can decay, no longer bones that ache—I shall come back to these eyes and these ears, all made channels of new delight. Say not this is a materialistic view of the matter. We are at least one-half material, and so long as there is material about us we must always expect joy that shall not only give spiritual, but even material delight to us. This body shall rise again. “Can these dry bones live?” is the question of the unbeliever. “They must live,” is the answer of faith. Oh, let us expect our end with joy, and our resurrection with transport.

Jesus was not detained a prisoner, and therefore no worm can keep us back. No grave, no tomb can destroy our hope. Risen He lives, and we shall rise to live forever. Anticipate, my Brothers and Sisters, that happy day. No sin, no sorrow, no care, no decay, no approaching dissolution! He lives forever in God—so shall you and I—close to the Eternal. Swallowed up in His brightness, glorified in His Glory, overflowing with His love! I think at the very prospect we may well say—

***“Oh, long-expected day begin,
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin.”***

We may well cry to Him to bid His chariots hasten and bring the joyous season! He comes,! He comes, Believer! Rejoice with joy unspeakable! You have but a little time to wait, and when you have fallen asleep you shall leap—

***“From beds of dust and silent clay,
To realms of everlasting day.”***

And you—

***“Far from a world of grief and sin
With God eternally shut in,
Shall be forever blessed!”***

May the Lord add His blessing, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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DEAD, YET ALIVE

NO. 2933

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 1905.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 6, 1876.**

***“Likewise reckon you 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 you should obey it in the lusts thereof.”
Romans 6:11, 12.***

How remarkably interwoven and intertwined are the duties of Believers and their privileges! Indeed, it is often very difficult to say which is a privilege and which is a duty, for that which is a duty under one aspect is a privilege under another aspect—and that which is evidently a privilege may involve sin if it is not enjoyed and, therefore, it has something of duty about it. I think there should be no dividing asunder the duties and privileges which God has manifestly joined together—and that we should count it our highest privilege to do His will in every duty which He has enjoined upon us.

Equally remarkable is it how closely the privileges and duties of the Christian life are connected with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because we are one with Him, therefore are we beloved of the Father, therefore are we redeemed from death and Hell, therefore are we separated from the world, therefore are we dead to sin, therefore do we live unto the Lord and therefore do we confidently expect a final triumph over all our adversaries until the last enemy of all shall be put under our feet! You get nothing, dear Brother or Sister in Christ, except as you get it through Christ! Apart from Him you would be miserable, poor, blind and naked—as you were until you came to Him. But in union with Him you are rich to all the intents of bliss. All things are yours because you are Christ's and while the Father views you as one with Christ, He will bless you—and while you view yourself as one with Christ, you will be conscious of the blessing and, at the same time, will be led to devote yourself more completely to the pursuit of holiness and the fear of God.

I have been specially praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in handling a subject which belongs not so much to the worshippers in the outer court, where we preach the Gospel to all, as to those in the inner court where we speak only to those who are, we trust, already saved. If I have the gracious guidance of the Spirit of God, my words will drop as dew upon the hearts of those who are living unto God—and they will be refreshed and encouraged. But I could not bear the thought that my sermon should have no bearing whatever upon those who are, at present, outside the visible fold of Christ. Therefore, at the very outset of

my discourse, I let you all know that I am preaching now especially to the Lord's own people. Judge you yourselves, therefore, as to whether you belong to that privileged company or not! And if you have not believed in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, know that you have no share in the privileges of the Covenant of Grace. And while I am preaching to Believers, sit down and sigh from your inmost heart over the sad fact that you are an alien from the commonwealth of Israel! If the Lord, by His gracious Spirit, will lead you to do so, He will hear that sorrowful sigh of yours and I trust that you will be led, sighing and crying, to the Savior's feet to believe in Him to the salvation of your never-dying soul! Then will you enter at once into all the privileges which belong to the children of God—those privileges about which I am now to speak.

The two verses which form my text seem to me to set before us, first, a *great Truth of God*—a great fact which is to be the subject of our reckoning—“Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” And, secondly, a *great lesson to be put into practice*. “Let not sin *therefore*”—for the argument is carried on from the former verse—“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

I. What is the meaning of the first verse? What is THE GREAT TRUTH which is taught to us by the Holy Spirit? It is this—“Reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

It is quite certain that God never asks Believers to reckon anything to be true which is not true, for to reckon a thing to be what it is not would be to build upon a false basis and, in fact, to argue upon that which is false. This would not be consistent with the Character of God, Himself, nor with the nature of the Gospel, which is, essentially, a proclamation of the Truths of God. There are no suppositions and imaginations in the Gospel—it tells of positive sin, positive punishment, positive substitution and positive forgiveness—for God would not have His people reckon upon anything which is not absolutely true. Therefore the text does not mean that you are to reckon that there is no sin in you, but that you are “dead indeed unto sin.” You are not to reckon that which is lie—that which God the Holy Spirit intends you to reckon is a matter of positive, undoubted fact. If you read the context, you will see what that matter of fact is.

It is, first, *that every Believer is truly dead to sin because Christ has died to sin*. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Covenant Head. And what He did, He did in the place of His people—He did it all *representatively* on their behalf so that what He did, they virtually did through Him as their Representative. Always remember that the federal principle has been adopted by God in His dealings with the human race from the very beginning. We were all, representatively, in Adam and, therefore, Adam's sin brought us all into transgression and condemnation so that we have all become partakers in the result of Adam's one sin. It was not actually ours, but it became ours by imputation and it brought upon us all its terrible consequences because Adam was our federal head. In the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Federal Head and Representative of His

people—and what He has done, He has done on their behalf and it is reckoned as though they had done it themselves. Beloved, it was due from us that, having broken God's Law, we should endure the punishment resulting from our disobedience. That punishment was death, for, "the soul that sins, it shall die." There must, therefore, be passed upon us, if we are ever to be clear at God's Judgment Bar, a sentence that shall be an adequate punishment for sin. That sentence is so overwhelming and so dreadful that nothing can describe it but the term, *death*. Can that ever happen to us? It *has* happened to us! We who believe in Jesus Christ have been confronted with our sins, accused of them, condemned for them and punished for them! The full penalty, or that which was tantamount thereunto, has them exacted from us. We have died the death that was sin's due reward!

"But," someone asks, "how is that?" I answer that the Apostle tells us in this Chapter that we have done it, representatively, in the Person of Jesus Christ, our great Federal Head, Surety and Substitute. Can you grasp the great Truth of God that whatever was due from us to God's Justice has been fully paid by Christ? Whatever of suffering was necessary as the result of sin from the penal side of the question has been already endured by Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior! Therefore Christ took our sin upon Him, though in Him was no sin of His own, and He died unto sin, bearing the penalty of it. As the inevitable consequence of His Sacrifice upon the Cross, He is clear from the sin that was laid upon Him and so are all His people in whose place He suffered! Toplady truly sang—

***"Complete Atonement You have made,
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whatever Your people owed—
Nor can His wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Your righteousness
And sprinkled with Your blood!
If You have my discharge procured
And freely in my place endured
The whole of wrath Divine—
Payment God cannot twice demand—
First at my bleeding Surety's hand
And then again at mine."***

I may make this Truth of God plainer by a comparison which is impossible in the case of men, but which may illustrate the point we are now considering. Suppose that a man has been found guilty of a crime which is a capital offense according to the law of his country? The only way of dealing with him, in justice, is that he should endure the penalty for his offense. Suppose the sentence to have been carried out, the man has been put to death and has been buried? But after that, he has risen again—can the law touch him now? Can any charge be laid against him? Can he be brought, a second time, before the tribunal? Assuredly not! The same justice which brought him to the bar, before, and punished him, now stands up and declares that he cannot be touched again, for how shall he be twice charged, twice tried and twice put to death for the

same offense? This cannot happen, as I have said, among *men*—but it has happened in the case of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! For all His people, He has borne the death penalty and He has risen from the dead—and *they have borne the death penalty in Him and risen from the dead in Him*. Therefore let them rejoice who, in the Person of their Redeemer, they are dead *by* sin and dead *for* sin—for such is the meaning of this passage. I wish that all of you who believe in Jesus could get a firm hold of this blessed Truth of God, for, if you do, it will make your heart dance for joy! We are emancipated because our ransom price has been fully paid! We are set free from the Law, not by the Law waiving the penalty due to our sin, for the penalty has been endured in the Person of One who had the right to endure it, for He was His people's Representative! And what He endured on their behalf is reckoned as though they had personally endured it, so that each one of them can say, with Toplady—

***“Turn then, my soul, unto your rest!
The merits of your great High Priest
Have bought your liberty!
Trust in His efficacious blood,
Nor fear your banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for thee.”***

Further, the Apostle says that we are to reckon ourselves “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” This is the other side of the great Truth which is implied in our union to Christ—that every Believer is truly alive unto God because Christ is alive unto God! We know that Christ is alive unto God—“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more”—and we also know that the new life of which the Apostle is here writing is a life that we share with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ because of our union to Him. Christ died and was laid in the grave because He was our Surety and Substitute. Our great debt of sin was laid to His account, but His death discharged all our liabilities. What then? The receipt for our debt—the token that our sin had been forever put away—was that Christ should come out of the prison of the grave. As one of our rhymesters says—

***“If Jesus had not paid the debt,
He never had been at freedom set.”***

He “died for our sins,” but He also “rose again for our justification.” When the bright angel flew from Heaven and rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulcher and Jesus unwrapped the cerements of His tomb and came forth in the glory of His Resurrection-Life, all for whom He died and rose again were acknowledged as justified before God through His righteousness and cleansed from all sin by His blood! And now, Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, this is our joy—that we are alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

A little while ago we were dead unto God, for the sentence which He had pronounced upon us made us virtually dead unto Him. We were under condemnation, “the children of wrath, even as others,” but now that Jesus Christ has risen from the grave we are no longer dead unto God, but we are alive unto Him—and He looks upon us as those who

have been delivered from the sentence of spiritual death and who cannot again come under that penalty, since Christ, who stood and suffered in our place, has forever put away from us, not only our guilt, but also all its dread consequences—

***“We were lost, but we are found,
Dead, but now alive are we!
We were sore in bondage bound,
But our Jesus sets us free!
Therefore will we sing His praise
Who His lost ones has restored,
Hearts and voices both shall raise
Hallelujahs to the Lord!”***

Further than that, as the text says, “Likewise,” the very word here used bids us run the parallel as the Apostle has done. He says, “Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him.” See, then, what this means in reference to us who have believed in Him. Jesus Christ will not die twice. The sin of His people that was laid upon Him, brought Him down to the grave. But there He buried it and He rose again, no longer bearing the sin for which He had paid the penalty. And that sin cannot be laid upon Him a second time and, therefore, He shall never again need to be crucified. Beloved, do you not see that if your sin was really laid upon Christ and you died unto sin in Christ, you can never have that sin laid to your charge again under any circumstances whatever, unless Christ can die again? By one sufficient punishment our offense has been put away even from the sight of God—can that offense, then, be brought against us and laid to our charge a second time? No, verily, for if it could, it would be necessary that our Great Substitute should bleed and die a second time! But, as that cannot be, the sin of the Believer can never again be imputed to him and can never again rise in judgment against him! While Christ, the ever-blessed Savior, continues to live, His people must also continue to live! What a glorious Truth this is! I, then, if I am a Believer in Christ, have, through my union to Him, borne the penalty of sin! I have died in Christ and the life that I now live before the living God is a life that is uncondemned and uncondemnable and which can never expire because sin can never be laid to its charge again!

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, how I wish that you could get a firm grip of this blessed Truth of God, so that you could enjoy it to the fullest in your own soul! It is not always easy to realize your union with Christ—to see how He takes your place and you take His—to mark how He is bruised for your iniquities and how the chastisement of your peace is laid upon Him—and that, in consequence—you take His place as accepted and beloved by the Father, that you are raised from the dead and honored even to share His Glory in the highest Heavens, for He has gone up there as the Representative of all His people and you are also raised up together with Him and made to sit with Him in the Heavenly places! And as He is to come again, in all the Glory of the Father, to subdue all things unto Himself, so are you to reign with Him, for He has said, “Where I am, there shall also My servant be.” And, “to him that

overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His Throne.” What a glorious Truth this is, that all Believers are dead, raised, living, exalted and glorified in Christ Jesus!

Now, Beloved, having given you that meaning of the passage—and I am persuaded that it is its true meaning and that no other will bear examination—I want to warn you against the interpretation that some have tried to put upon the Apostle’s words. They say that they are dead to sin and alive unto God. And they tell us, perhaps, not in so many words—that now *they do not sin*—they live in a state of perpetual sanctity and are no more affected by sin than a dead man would be affected by that which goes on in the house wherein his corpse is lying. These people say that their life now is one, if not of absolute holiness, yet, in a certain sense, of perfect holiness! I conceive this to be one of the most dangerous delusions of the present age—apparently specious and supportable by Scripture, but, in reality, without any solid foundation and full of a thousand dangers! There are two ways by which a man can persuade himself that he does not sin. The first is the Antinomian method by which he says that he is *not under the Law* and that, therefore, whatever he does is not sinful. If another man were to do a certain thing, he would be very wrong—but if he does it, he, being a specially chosen one, is in a condition in which it is not reckoned to be sin or is not laid to his charge. Well, Beloved, I can only say that when I have read certain caricatures of this doctrine—and it is most natural that ungodly men should make fun of it—I have thought that the caricature was richly deserved and that any contempt that could be poured upon such atrocious lies was well merited! Sin in a Christian is quite as much sin as it is in anybody else! Indeed, it is a great deal more sinful, for never does a black stain seem so black as when it falls on spotlessly white linen—and never is sin as sinful as when it is committed by one who is greatly loved by the Lord and is the subject of peculiar favor. May Antinomianism never mislead either you or me, Beloved!

The other way of perverting this Truth of God is to say that you do not sin at all—to stand up straight, like the Pharisee in the temple, and say that you have attained such a condition that you do not now sin. If any of you, my dear Friends, are in that condition, the sooner you get out of it and humble yourselves before God for ever having dared to get into it, the better will it be for you! Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostle never meant that we were to reckon ourselves to be dead to sin in such a sense that we never sinned at all, or that sin did not affect us as it affected other people, because that is not the truth! I appeal to every man who has a conscience and I trust that even the Believers in this super-fine holiness have some trace of conscience left, so I appeal to them whether they are or not conscious of sin! My dear Brother or Sister, if you are not guilty of a single sin of commission—if you never utter an unkind or angry word—if you never speak unadvisedly with your lips—if you never break one of the Ten Commandments in the letter by an overt act of sin—if there is never about you any trace of pride, or covetousness, or

wrath, or anything else that is wrong—can you say that you are free from *sins of omission*? Have you done all you should have done in as high and noble a spirit as you ought to have displayed in it?

O my Brother, if this is your belief, you must be strangely different from what I have ever been able to be, for when I have done my very best before God, I have always felt that my best was imperfect and marred by sin! I have had to mourn over many omissions even when I have diligently labored to obey my Lord and Master perfectly. And in reviewing any one day of my life, I have never dared to congratulate myself upon it, but, with tears of repentance, I have had to confess that if I have not erred by overt sin, yet I have somewhere or other come short of the Glory of God. My dear Brother, do you really believe that your motives and the spirit in which you have acted have been perfect in God's sight? It is quite unaccountable to me. If you look into your own heart and try to trace all your sacred motives, desires, imagination and all the tendencies of your nature—can you say that you do not sin against the Lord? Have you the same standard of holiness that we have? Surely you cannot have if you think you have attained it! If you have the same standard that we have, I am certain that you have not attained it. The holiness that a Christian ought to aim at is to be absolutely as just, righteous and pure as God Himself is. This is the mark that He sets before us—"Be you holy, for I am holy." "Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." If you say that you have reached that perfection, I believe that if you let your conscience speak the truth, it will tell you that you are under a great delusion and that you are utterly self-deceived upon that matter!

As to the notion that reckoning yourself to be perfect will help you to be so, I tell you flatly that it will most effectually *prevent you from becoming perfect*. Reckon that you are sinful! Admit that sin far too often prevails over you and then go humbly to God and confess that it is so—and seek from Him Grace to keep you, day by day, from the power of reigning sin and you will, in that way, make a real advance in sanctification and true holiness! But if you reckon that you have reached this blessed condition, you will never reach it. If you sit down in carnal security, you will rest in contentment with yourself, but you will never be what I trust you really desire to be. Your experience will be like that of the artist who at last painted a picture with which he was perfectly satisfied and he then said to his wife, "I may as well break my pallet and throw away my brushes. I shall never be a great painter, now, for I have realized my ideal—I am perfectly satisfied with this picture that I have produced." Far better is it for you to have a sacred dissatisfaction and hallowed discontent with all that you are! That forgetting of the things which are behind and reaching forth unto those that are before. That pressing forward toward the mark for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus to which the Apostle urges you—that seeking to fight from day to day with the temptations that surround you, not reckoning that you have won the victory yet, but believing that you will win it though the

blood of the Lamb—this is what we long to see in you—not to behold you sitting down in calm content and saying, “It is all done. I am perfect.” For, believe me, my Brothers and Sisters—or, if you do not believe me, you will find it to be true sooner or later—you are *not* perfect by a very long way, as the devil knows and as God knows, and as many people beside yourself know who see what your daily life is and mark your conversation!

II. Now, having thus spoken concerning this great Truth of God and having shown you in what way we are dead unto sin and alive unto God through our union to Christ, I want to point out to you THE GREAT PRACTICAL LESSON WHICH THE TEXT SETS BEFORE US. “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.”

This is the great fact that you are always to remember—you are now an altogether new man. In Christ Jesus you have died, been buried and have risen again. Surely you will not now have anything to do with sin, will you? You must hate it, for it has done you such serious mischief. It was sin that slew you in the Person of your Substitute and Savior, but now you have been born-again and you are a new man in Christ Jesus. You are not going back to sin, are you? Oh, no, your whole soul abhors it and you now endeavor, from this time forward, to be entirely free from its dominion. You mourn that sin is still within you and that it still has great power over you. That power it will try to use and it aims at getting complete dominion over you. It seeks to make you again what you formerly were—its subject and its slaves.

You are told, in the text, not to let sin reign in your mortal body and *this injunction implies that sin is already there and that sin will seek to get dominion over you.* Be not surprised, young converts, if you find sin to be terribly fierce within you and if, sometimes, it seems even to be stronger than Divine Grace! It is not really so, but it may sometimes *appear* to you to be so. And rest assured of this—that sin in you is so strong that unless God the Holy Spirit shall help you, it will get the victory over you. It will fail to get the victory over you because God will help you, but if He did not, the smallest soldier in the army of sin would be too strong for you, however powerful you may think yourself to be! Sin in a Believer can never reign over him because he is dead to the reigning power of sin. O King Sin, I am no subject of yours! I was once, but I died and now I have risen again in Christ and I am no subject of yours. What, then, does sin do, if it cannot reign over the Believer? It lurks inside the soul like an outlaw whose banishment has not yet taken place. John Bunyan’s description of the Holy War is a matter of true experience. After the Diabolonians were overthrown in Mansoul, many of them remained hidden away in dens and corners of the city. And although diligent search was made to find them, there were always some of them hiding away in the back lanes and side streets where they could not easily be discovered. It is just so with sin. As a reigning king, sin is dead to you, and you to it, but, as a sneaking outlaw, sin is still lurking within your soul! It is plotting and planning to get back its former dominion over you

and not merely plotting and planning, but it is also warring and fighting to that end.

Oh, with what terrible force does sin sometimes assail a Believer! Just when he least expected it to come, some old lust reappears. "Oh!" he cries, "I thought that evil passion would never again assail me." Perhaps when he is on his knees in prayer, a blasphemous thought is suddenly injected into his mind—and when he is engaged in his business, endeavoring to provide things honest in the sight of all men—he finds a temptation to do something which is unjust, put in his way, and though, at first, it seems as if he would consent to it, yet, by the Grace of God, he is enabled to get the victory over it. The very best man in the world, if he were left by Divine Grace only for five minutes, might become and probably would become the worst man in the world! Left to himself, impetuous Peter begins cursing and swearing and thrice denies his Master. This vile outlaw, sin, that is always fighting within us, will be king if it can. It will rally all the forces of the world against us! It will call the devil himself to its assistance and so seek to get the reigning power again—but it never can, for we are not its subjects, we are not under its dominion and we never will be! The almighty God who has redeemed us from going down into the Pit will never suffer us to again be the slave of sin, yet we are to constantly be on the watch against its attacks.

The text also implies that *the point of assault of sin upon you will be your body*—"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." It is generally through our body that sin tries to bring our soul into captivity. There are natural needs of the body which must be attended to, but every one of these needs may become a sinful craving and we may so excessively minister to the need that, by-and-by, it becomes sinful lusting! That a man should eat to appease his hunger is right, but, alas, gluttony often follows. That a man should drink to quench his thirst is right, but there are divers drinks which lead to drunkenness and so, even through two such perfectly justifiable natural needs as eating and drinking, sin may come in. There are a great many other needs, emotions and passions of the body which are, in themselves, properly considered not sinful—but every one of them may readily be made into a door through which sin can enter! No, it is not only the needs of the body, but also the pleasures of the body which may lead to sin. There are bodily enjoyments which are perfectly innocent—but it is very easy to pass beyond that line and to indulge the flesh with that which is evil. Even the pains of the body may become the means of attack upon the soul, for great pain will often bring depression of spirit and despondency—and through despondency comes doubt. Yes, and pain sometimes causes murmuring, and murmuring is really rebellion against God! This poor flesh seems to be the battlefield in which the fight with sin is continually to be carried on. Sin makes frequent incursions into the region of mind and spirit, but it generally begins with the body. How strenuously, therefore, must we see to it that we obey the Apostolic injunction, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the

lusts thereof,” but rather let us yield these, our members, to be the instruments of righteousness and purity! Watch and pray, Beloved. Do not imagine that the stern battle is over, it is only just begun. As long as you are in this mortal state, you are to put on the whole armor of God and to strive, agonize and wrestle against sin in the power of the blood of Jesus Christ who will help you by His ever-blessed Spirit. But to suppose that the battle for purity is over is to suppose a lie which will seriously endanger the sanctity of your lives.

The Apostle uses one word which is very comforting to my mind—“Let not sin therefore reign in your *mortal* body.” I am very glad to read that word, “mortal.” If this body were immortal with its present tendencies, then might it continue to be a field of battle for the Believer forever! But it is mortal and when it dies, then shall its tendencies, which now incline us to sin, also die. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,” for flesh and blood always will have a tendency towards that which is evil. But, Brothers and Sisters, we are going to have this flesh and blood behind us when we die. We shall be re-united to our body after it has been refined, for the grave is the refining pot for it, but, until we die, this body will be the nest of sin—and within our flesh, as Paul truly says—“there dwells no good thing.” Through being cumbered with this flesh, many a true child of God will, perhaps, have to cry even upon his dying bed, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Thank God, then, that it is a mortal body in which this warfare is waged, so that when it dies, the fight is over and the emancipated spirit shall then rejoice in the fullness of the Glory of God, but not till then. Neither need you expect it for if you do you will be grievously disappointed when you find that you have been buoyed up with a false hope based upon self-conceit—and not upon the work of the Spirit of God at all.

The pith of the matter lies here, Brethren. Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin because, in Christ Jesus, you died unto sin and *let that Truth of God strengthen you to fight sin*. As long as you have any question about whether God counts you among the guilty, you will never have courage to contend with sin. Evangelical Doctrine is the battle-axe and the other weapons of war with which the Believer is to fight against sin. That I am saved—that I am fully absolved from guilt—that I am accounted just in the sight of God—that I am saved to all eternity—this is a firm foundation for me to stand upon! And now, relying upon the power of God’s Grace, I may confidently say, “Sin shall not have dominion over me because of this amazing mercy which I have received. Because of this high calling to which God’s Infinite Love has called me, I will cast down every sin that dares to lift itself up. I will take by the throat everything that is hostile to God and I will labor to perfect holiness in the fear of God.” Tell the sinner that he must do this and that and he is conscious of his lack of power and, therefore, he does nothing. But go to him, God-sent in the power of the Holy Spirit and say to him, “Your sin was laid on Jesus, so you are free from it, for Jesus bore its penalty. You are saved, for in Him you have virtually died and the Law cannot

now touch you—you are a dead man as far as it is concerned. Sin cannot accuse you, for you are dead to it”—and what does the man say? Why, with great surprise in his soul, he is yet enabled to believe it and he sees, as it were, the mountains cast down, the valleys filled up, a pathway made in the desert for God to come to his soul and for him to come to his God! And in the joy of pardon freely given through his Savior’s precious blood, in the bliss of salvation graciously bestowed without money and without price, he shakes himself from the dust, arises from his former love of sin and says, “Now, Sin, I am dead to you and I will never permit you to be king over me! I am no longer under your dominion and I will drive you out of my being altogether. You will not reign over me. I will, by the power and Grace of Him who has bought me with His blood, live to the praise and glory of God alone.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, most earnestly do I desire that you may so live that you will never doubt your eternal union with Christ and your consequent perfect acceptance with God. I pray that you may exercise an unstaggering faith in the finished work of Christ culminated on Calvary’s Cross and then I say to you, “Think what manner of persons you ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness.” Never tolerate any sin in yourselves! Never wink at it, or imagine that it is less in you than it would be in others. Grieve over every shortcoming, every failure, everything that is not according to the perfect rule of righteousness and watch every day, and every hour of the day, calling on the aid of Divine strength that you may be enabled to watch and believe, at the same time, that that strength will be given to you, for the promise to you is, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under Grace.” This will make sure work for holiness! You will not be puffed up, but you will be built up. You will not go bragging about how holy you are, your own mouth condemning you all the while, but, in silence before the Lord, you will sit down to admire the Grace which has looked in love upon such a poor unworthy worm as you are.

While you will seek to do that which is right and will hate every false way, you will, at the same time, take your place with the publican in the Temple and cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Seek to be as holy as the angels, yet be, all the while, as humble as the publican! Remember that it is Divine Grace which has made you what you are and that it is Grace which must keep you faithful to the end. If Grace did not keep you, you would be a castaway! But you shall not be a castaway, for, “Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.” I pray that every member of this Church and of Christ’s Church at large, may be very careful in his living, very watchful, very devout, very earnest. O professing Christians, you are not what you should be! A great many of you seem to forget altogether the sacred obligations of the love which has been from eternity fixed upon you. Confess this sin, mourn over it and seek the power of Christ to help you against it—and henceforth may your course be as “the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day.”

I fancy that I hear somebody in the congregation say, “These godly people seem to have a hard fight of it.” They do. It is not easy work to get to Heaven, even by Grace, for, though we are saved, yet it is a pilgrimage to Heaven and a stern fight all the way.

What we have to say to unconverted people is this, “If the righteous scarcely”—or, with difficulty—“are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” If he who zealously desires to follow after holiness has such a stern fight for it, what must be the end of the man or woman who never denies himself but indulges his sinful passions and casts the reins upon the neck of his lusts? O Christian, yours is the lot of a soldier and you have to “endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ”—but you are comforted because, by faith, you can see the crown of life which fades not away, and which is reserved in Heaven for you and, therefore, you keep on contending! But as for you who never fight against sin and who feel no agony within, it is very evident why you have no inward struggle—it is because your whole nature goes one way! Dead fish float with the stream—it is the live fish that swim against it—and if you never feel any inward contention and striving—if you never have to cry, “To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not”—if you never groan under a sense of sin, I close my sermon by saying that I pray God that you may do so, soon, and that your groans may be uttered at the foot of His Cross, who will look down upon you as you lie there in utter weakness and misery, and who will say to you, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions and, as a cloud, your sins: return unto Me, for I have redeemed them.”

May we all learn that Christ is everything and that we are nothing! That He is holiness and that we are unholiness! And may the Lord give us the Grace to be found in Him, not having our own righteousness, which is of the Law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith! Amen.

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

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

BELIEVERS FREE FROM THE DOMINION OF SIN NO. 1410

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 21, 1878,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are
not under the Law, but under Grace.”
Romans 6:14.*

OUR constant hearers will remember that a Sabbath or so ago we spoke upon, “Submit yourselves unto God.” [#1408, *The Reason Why Many Cannot Find Peace.*] It is both the way to peace and the way of peace to submit one's whole self unto God. Nor is it an irksome task to a true Believer, but the desire of his heart, the pleasure of his life. He shudders at the idea of yielding his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but according to the language of the verse which precedes our text, he yields himself unto God as one who has been made alive from the dead and his members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Complete consecration of every faculty of mind and body unto the Lord is our soul's deepest wish. We can sing most sincerely that sweet consecration hymn—

*“Take my hands and let them move,
At the impulse of Your love.
Take my feet and let them be,
Swift and beautiful for Thee.
Take my voice and let me sing,
Always, only for my King!
Take my lips and let them be,
Filled with messages from Thee.
Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as You shall choose.
So that all my powers combine,
To adore Your Grace Divine,
Heart and soul a living flame,
Glorifying Your great name.”*

But, Beloved, we find another law in our members warring against the law of our mind. To the full yielding up of all our members we find a hindrance in the sin which dwells in us—that sin which finds its haunt and hiding place in our mortal body—in the desires, passions and appetites of our animal nature. These within proper limits are right enough—it is right that we eat and drink, and so forth, but our natural instincts are apt to demand indulgence and so to become lusts. Our mortal body, in its natural desires, affords dens for the foxes of sin. The carnal mind, also, readily leans to the indulgence of the body and thus there is presented a powerful opposition to the work of Divine Grace. Every true child of God must be

conscious of the presence of the rebellious power and principle of sin within him.

We strive to keep it under, to subdue and conquer it, and we hope to see it utterly exterminated at the last, for our case is like that of Israel with the Canaanites and we long for the day when, "There shall no more be the Canaanite in the house of the land." Sin is a domineering force. A man cannot sin up to a fixed point and then say to sin, "Up to here shall you come, but no farther." It is an imperious power and where it dwells it is hungry for the mastery. Just as our Lord, when He enters the soul, will never be content with a divided dominion, so is it with sin—it labors to bring our entire manhood under subjection.

Therefore we are compelled to strive daily against this ambitious principle—according to the working of the Spirit of God in us we wrestle against sin that it may not have dominion over us. It has unquestioned dominion over multitudes of human hearts and in some it has set up its horrid throne on high and keeps its seat with force of arms so that its empire is undisturbed. In others the throne is disputed, for conscience mutinies, but yet the tyrant is not dethroned. Over the whole world sin exercises a dreadful tyranny. It would hold us in the same bondage were it not for One who is stronger than sin, who has undertaken to deliver us out of its hand and will certainly perform the redeeming work! Here is the charter of our liberty, the security of our safety—"Sin shall not have dominion over you." It reigns over those who abide in *unbelief*, but it shall not have dominion over you, "because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

The whole world lies in the Wicked One, but, "you are not of the world" and, therefore, "sin shall not have dominion over you." If we are distressed by the fear that sin will ultimately get the mastery over us, let us be comforted by our text. Holy jealousy leads us to fear that though we have for many years been enabled to maintain a spotless character before men, we may in some unguarded hour make shipwreck of faith and end our life voyage as castaways upon the rocks of shame. The flesh is frail and our strength is perfect weakness and, therefore, we dread lest we should make some terrible fall and bring dishonor upon the holy name by which we are called. Under such feelings we may fly for comfort to the rich assurance of the text, "Sin shall not have dominion over you."

Three things will demand our consideration and afford us consolation this morning. The first is the peculiar position of Believers—"You are not under the Law, but under Grace." Secondly, the special assurance made to them, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." And thirdly, the remarkable reason given for this statement, "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under Grace."

I. First, then, here is A PECULIAR POSITION—"You are not under the Law." All men are under the Law by nature and, consequently, they are condemned by it because they have broken its commandments and apart from our Lord Jesus men are only reprieved criminals, respited from day to day, but still under sentence and waiting for the appointed hour when the warrant shall be solemnly executed upon them. But Believers are regarded as having died in Christ and, by that death, they have escaped

from under the Law—they are clean delivered from the Law by the fact that their Redeemer endured the penalty of the Law on their behalf and, at the same time, He honored the Law by rendering perfect obedience to it. Thus in a two-fold manner, He met all the Law's requirements so that it has no more demands upon His people.

“Not under the Law,” being interpreted, means that we are not trying to be saved by obedience to the Law. We do not pretend to earn eternal life by merit, nor hope to claim anything of the Lord as due to us for good works. The principle which rules our life is not mercenary. We do not expect to earn a reward, neither are we flogged to duty by dread of punishment. We are under Grace—that is to say, we are treated on the principle of mercy and love, and not on that of justice and desert. Freely, of His own undeserved favor, God has forgiven us for Christ's sake! He has regarded us with favor, not because we deserved it, but simply because He willed to do so, according to that ancient declaration, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

The Lord did not choose us because of any goodness in us, but He has saved us and called us according to the purpose of His own will. Moreover, our continuance in a state of salvation depends upon the same Divine Grace which first placed us there. We do not stand or fall according to our personal merit, but because Jesus lives, we live. Because Jesus is accepted, we are accepted. Because Jesus is beloved, we are beloved. In a word, our standing is not based upon merit, but upon mercy—not upon our changeable character, but upon the immutable mercy of God. Grace is the tenure upon which we hold our position before the Lord. “For by Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

“But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith. And the Law is not of faith: but, the man that does them shall live in them.” Let us endeavor to recount the privileges of this position by mentioning the evils from which it releases us. First, we no longer dread the curse of the Law. Those who are under the Law may well be horribly afraid because of the penalties which are due through their many failures and transgressions. They have broken the Law and are, therefore, in constant danger of judgment and condemnation. The careless try to shake off the thought as much as possible by putting off the evil day, by forgetting death and by pretending to disbelieve in judgment and eternal wrath. But still, more or less, this thought disturbs them—a dreadful sound is in their ears.

When men are once awakened, the dread of punishment for sin haunts them day and night and fills them with terror! And well it may, for they are under the Law and the Law will soon cast them into its prison from which they will never escape. Every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompense of reward. Now, *Believers* have no fear as to the punishment of their sin, for our sin was by the Lord, Himself, laid upon Jesus and the penalty was borne by Him—“The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.” “Christ has redeemed

us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.”

Substitution clears the Christian from all debt to justice and he dares to challenge the Law itself with the question—Who is he that condemns, since Christ has died? Yes, He goes further and challenges an accusation—Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect, since God has justified? No penalty do *we* dread, for we are forgiven and God will not pardon and then punish! “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” Will God punish those from whom He has removed transgression, or cast those into Hell whose sins He has cast behind His back? Impossible!

Therefore, when we see the stern array of the Judgment Seat and hear the threats of vengeance, we who are Believers rejoice to feel that these terrors have nothing to do with us. The Great Surety has secured His people from all risk of wrath. The undying worm is not for them! The unquenchable fire is not for them! Neither shall the Pit shut her mouth upon them, for they are not under the Law! Then the Believer no longer drudges in unwilling obedience, seeking to reach a certain point of merit. The man under the Law who is awakened and awakened very frequently, tries to keep the commands in order to attain, at any rate, a fair measure of goodness. For this He labors very hard, as men who tug at the oar to escape from a tempest.

If he could but reach a certain degree of virtue he would feel safe. If he were equal to such an one he would be at rest. Alas, he has no power to attain even to his own ideal! He finds his resolutions written in water and his goodness vanishes like the morning mist. His servile works are ill done and fail to yield him peace of mind. The Believer is under no such drudgery—Christ has fulfilled the Law for him and he rests in that finished work. He does not aim at high attainments in order to win the favor of God—he *has* that favor—it has come to him freely and undeserved and he rejoices in it! A high ambition moves him, but it is not that of saving himself by his own works.

He obeys out of *love*. He delights in the Law after the inner man and confesses with Paul, “the Law is holy, and just, and good.” He wishes that he could live without sin, but he never dreams that even then he could make an atonement for the past, nor does he fancy that by his own merit he is to obtain salvation for the future. The work through which he is saved is complete—it is not his own work, but the work of Jesus—and, therefore, when he sees his own shortcomings and iniquities, he does not doubt his salvation, but continues to rest in Jesus. He is no longer a slave, flogged with the whip of fear and made to labor for his very life and gather nothing for his pains. He is free from the principle of the Law and works from a principle of love—not to secure Divine favor—but because that favor has been freely manifested towards him.

The Christian man is now no longer uncertain as to the continuance of Divine Love. Under the Law, no man’s standing can be secure, since by a single sin he may forfeit his position. If a legalist should be able to persuade himself that he has reached a sufficient point of merit and is safe, yet he cannot be sure of continuing in his exalted position, for like the

flower of the grass all human comeliness withers away. However meritorious a man may conceive himself to be, yet he may fall short of the standard even now. And if not, in the future he may spoil it all! The learned Bellarmine, one of the great antagonists of Martin Luther, once gave utterance to language which I cannot verbally remember, but which was to the following effect.

Of course, being a Papist, he believed in justification by works, but yet he observed that, “nevertheless, seeing that even in the best of men good works are usually marred by sin, and seeing that no man can know when he has performed quite enough good works to save him, it is upon the whole, safest to trust only in the merits of Jesus Christ.” We agree with the cardinal and accept the safest way as good enough for us! Safest, indeed, it is to us, for it is the *only* way which we can tread, since all the good works we have ever done are defiled and polluted either in motive beforehand, or in the spirit in which they were done, or by proud reflections afterwards! We dare not trust even in our *prayers* and devotions and almsgivings, or repentances—but must rest only upon the merits of Christ.

The merits of Christ are always a constant and abiding quantity. If, therefore, we rest thereon, our foundation is as secure at one time as at another. The merits of Jesus will be throughout eternity sweet before God on our behalf. Is He not “the same yesterday, today, and forever”? Therefore the confidence of the Believer rests upon a foundation which will no more be shaken in the future than it is today. Glory be to God, He does not cast away His people whom He did foreknow! He does not love today and hate tomorrow—nor favor with His Grace the child whom He has adopted and afterwards disown him. “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.”

We are free from the bondage of the Law since we are no longer under the Covenant of Works, but have come under the Covenant of Grace which is founded upon promises which nothing can disannul. In consequence of this, the Believer is no longer afraid of the Last Great Day. Shall all our sins be read and published before an assembled universe? “If so,” says the man who is under the Law, “it will go hard with me.” Judgment is a terrible word to those who are hoping to save themselves, for if their doings are to be put into the balances, they will surely be found wanting. But judgment has no terror in it to a Believer! He can sing with our poet—

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

Will the sins of Believers be published at the last day? If it is to the glory of forgiving love, let them be! Who among us need be afraid since at the end of the whole list there shall be written, “and all these were blotted out for Jesus Christ’s sake.” And if not published at all because all our sins were cast behind Jehovah’s back—and if, instead thereof, the Judge shall only proclaim the good works of His people and say, “I was hungry and you gave Me meat, I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; and inas-

much as you have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, you have done it unto Me,” then we may well welcome the last assize and cry, “Welcome, welcome, Son of God.”

When the Book of Record shall be opened which might justly condemn us, yet it is written, “And another book was opened, which was the Book of Life.” If our names are *there* we have nothing to fear! One word may be added here, namely, that the Believer, being no longer under the Law, has no slavish dread of God. As long as I am at enmity with God, guilty of breaking His Law and liable to His righteous wrath, I dread His name and shrink from His Presence. The soul under the Law stands as the Israelites did—far off from the mountain—with a barrier set between themselves and the Glory of God. Distance and separation are the natural condition of all who are under the Law.

“Run,” cries the heart of man when it beholds God touching the hills so that they smoke! And when it hears the voice of God like a trumpet, waxing exceedingly loud and long, it pleads that it may not hear such words any more. Not so the Believer, for his heart and his flesh cry out for the Lord and he pants to come and appear before God! We have access with boldness to the Throne of the heavenly Grace and we delight to avail ourselves of it. Through the Mediator we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ! The Holy Spirit has made us long to be brought nearer and nearer to our Divine Father. Our God is a consuming fire, but that consuming fire has no terror for us since it will only melt the alloy from the gold and remove the dross from the silver.

The Law could only say to us, “Depart, you cursed,” but Grace says, “Come, you blessed.” The Law said, “Draw not near here: put off your shoes from off your feet,” but Grace cries with a voice of pity, “Whoever is thirsty, come and whoever will, let him come.” We have accepted the call of Grace and now we know the Lord and love Him. Perfect love has cast out fear, for fear has torment. We are not under the Law, but we have “known and believed the love that God has to us.”

Now I speak to you Christian people, even to you who believe in Christ, and I beg you to understand this freedom from the Law and then to hold it fast. There are some of you who return, in a measure, to the legal yoke, whereas the Apostle says, “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Do you feel helpless, cold and heavy? Do you, therefore, conclude that you are not saved? Are you not coming under the Law and measuring the power of the Grace of God by your own merits or excellencies? If you judge your standing before God by anything except your faith in His promise, you will bring yourself into bondage!

You can walk by faith, but you will stumble if you try any other way. There is but one deliverance for me when I question my own state—and that is to fly to simple faith in Jesus. When Satan says, “You are no saint,” do not argue with him, for he is too subtle for a poor soul like you. Yield the point and say, “It may be I am no saint, nor are you either.” “No,” he says, “you are deceived, you are a hypocrite.” Reply to him, “If I am not a saint, I am a sinner. And being a sinner, I find it written that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. I put myself in that list, O Satan,

and even you cannot deny that I am such! I believe in Jesus and, believing in Him I am justified before God by the righteousness of my Lord—and I have peace with God through Jesus Christ.”

Beloved, this is safe standing. If we are, indeed, saved by the righteousness of Another, why do we question the power of that righteousness to save us because of our own conscious feebleness? We are not saved by our own strength or feebleness, but by the power of the Lord Jesus! If we are standing with one foot on the rock of Christ’s finished work and the other upon the sand of our own doings, then we may well stand or totter according to which foot we are trusting at the moment! But if we set both feet upon the Rock, then we may stand fast though the sea roars and the floods sweep the sand away!

Mind you, do not try the double foundation, for it will never hold! Partly Christ and partly self will soon come to a failure. No, our great Redeemer cried, “It is finished,” and it *is* finished! And those who rest on Him have a finished salvation, for they are not under the Law, but under Grace.

II. Now, secondly, we come to THE SPECIAL ASSURANCE of the text—“Sin shall not have dominion over you.” This is a very necessary assurance, especially at times. Sin is a great working power and all around us we see its hideous operations—it is an evil as incessant in its activity as it is deadly in its results. As we look at its forcible work, we cry in alarm, “It will surely drag me down one of these days!” But the dread fear is removed by the cheering voice of the Holy Spirit who assures us, “Sin shall not have dominion over you.”

Alas, we not only see the evil working in others, but it assails ourselves—our eyes are drawn aside to look on vanity, our ears hearken to evil talk and our heart, itself, at times grows cold or wanders. Then we are apt to be cast down and to doubt. Here the sweet assurance cheers us—though you are tempted you shall not be led astray, for “sin shall not have dominion over you.” “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Stand in the strength of faith and in the power of the precious blood and though you are beset with evil suggestions a thousand times a day, and every sense is assailed by the witcheries of evil, yet, “sin shall not have dominion over you.”

Cheered by such a word as this we remain on our watchtower and are not overcome with evil. Sometimes sin forces its way into our souls and rouses our inward evil to an awful degree so that the imagination sets fire to our lusts and the smoke of the conflagration blows in the eyes of the affections, almost choking the understanding. Yes, sin may invade your soul and, for a while, find a lodgment there, so as to be your plague and torment. It may even crush you down, rob you of your comfort, injure your Graces and create war to the detriment of your peace, but it shall not have *dominion* over you!

Those of you who are acquainted with John Bunyan’s, “Holy War,” will remember how wonderfully the glorious dreamer describes Diabolus besieging the town of Mansoul after it had been occupied by the Prince Immanuel. After many battles and cunning plots, the enemy entered into the city, filled all the streets with the yells of his followers and polluted the whole place with the presence of his hosts. But yet he could not take the

castle in the center of the town, which held out for Immanuel. That castle was the *heart* and he could, by no means, secure a footing in it. He beat his big Hell drum almost day and night around the walls, so that those who had fled to the castle had a very terrible time of it. And he set all his huge machinery to work to batter down the walls, but he could not enter.

No, sin may, for a while, seem to prevail in the Believer till he has no rest and is sorely beset, hearing nothing but the devil's tattoo sounding in his ears—"Sin, sin, sin"—but nevertheless sin shall not have dominion over him! Sin may haunt your bed and board and follow you down the streets in your walks. It may enter the very room into which you withdraw to pray—but your inmost self shall still cry out against it, for, "sin shall not have dominion over you." Sin may vex you and thrust itself upon you, but it cannot become your lord! The devil has great wrath and rages horribly for a while, knowing that his time is short, but he shall be subdued and expelled, for the Lord our God gives us the victory through Jesus Christ.

Sometimes, alas, sin not only enters us, but prevails over us and we are forced, in deep anguish, to confess that we have fallen beneath its power. It is terrible that it should be so, even for a moment, and yet it would be idle to deny the mournful fact. Who among us can say, "I am clean, I have not sinned"? Still, a temporary defeat is not sufficient to effect a total subjugation. Sin shall not have *dominion* over the Believer, for though he falls he shall rise again. The child of God, when he falls into the mire, is like the sheep which gets up and escapes from the ditch as quickly as possible. It is not his nature to lie there. The *ungodly* man is like the hog which rolls in the filth and wallows in it with delight. The mire has dominion over the swine, but it has none over the sheep! With many bleatings and outcries the sheep seeks the shepherd again, but not so the swine.

Every child of God weeps, mourns and bemoans his sin and he hates it even when, for a while, he has been overtaken by it—and this is proof that sin has not dominion over him. It has an awful power, but it has not dominion—it casts us down, but it cannot make us take delight in its evil. There are times when the Believer greatly feels his danger. His feet have almost gone, his steps have well near slipped! Then how sweetly does this assurance come to the soul, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." The Lord is able to keep you from falling and you shall be preserved even to the end! This assurance secures us from a very great danger—from the danger of being under the absolute sway of sin.

What is meant by sin having dominion? Look and see. There are men who *live* in sin and yet they do not appear to know it. Sin has dominion over them by spreading a veil over their hearts, so that their conscience is deadened. They are so enslaved as to be content in bondage. You shall not be so—you shall be enlightened and instructed so that when you sin you shall be well aware of it. Self-excuse shall be impossible for you. Many men live in gross sin and are not ashamed. They are at ease in it and all is quiet. But it shall not be so with you, in whom the life of God has been implanted. If you do wrong, you shall smart for it and your nest shall be stuffed with thorns.

God has so changed your nature by His Grace that when you sin you shall be like a fish on dry land. You shall be out of your element and long to get into a right state again. You cannot sin, for you love God! The sinner may drink sin down as the ox drinks down water, but to you it shall be as the brine of the sea. You may become so foolish as to try the pleasures of the world, but they shall be no pleasures to you—you shall cry out with Solomon, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” That marvelous man tried the world at its best and was disappointed! And you may be quite sure that where he failed, you will not succeed.

If the Lord loves you, sin will never yield you satisfaction. In worldly company you shall be all the while like a man who sits upon thorns, or walks amid vipers and cobras. And in worldly amusement you shall feel as if the house would fall upon you. An ungodly man under the dominion of sin loves sin, but *that* you shall never do. He wishes he could sin *more*, for he has upon him the thirst of intoxication! But as for *you*, you shall never be made happy by evil, but shall groan under it if you ever yield to its power. You shall hate yourself to think you ever consented to its solicitations! You shall be wretched and unhappy and shall find no rest till you return to your Lord. Your nature has been so changed that you cannot give a moment’s entertainment to sin without feeling like one who carries burning coals in his bosom, or thrusts thorns into his flesh.

No, Beloved, if you are, indeed, a Believer in Christ, you must fight with sin till you die! And, what is more, you must conquer it in the name of the Lord. You are sometimes afraid that it will vanquish you, but if you are of the true seed it cannot prevail. Like Samson, you shall break all its bands. You shall rise superior to habits which now enthrall you! You shall even forget those strong impulses which now sweep you before them. Your inward Graces shall gather force, while the Holy Spirit shall help your infirmities and you shall be changed from glory to glory as by the Presence of the Lord. This assurance is confirmed by the context—“Sin shall not have dominion over you,” because you are dead to it by virtue of your union to Christ.

You died with Christ and you have been buried with Christ—how, then, shall sin have dominion over you? Besides, you live in Christ in newness of life by reason of His living in you! How can the new nature live in sin? How can that which is born of God live like that which is born of the devil? No, no, it cannot be! Christ has undertaken to save you from your sins and He will do it—*He* will keep you watchful, prayerful, vigilant—*He* will instruct you in His Word. *He* will help you by His Spirit. *He* will perfect you in Himself. You are bound for victory and you shall have it! Thanks be unto God who gives it to you through Jesus Christ our Lord. “Sin shall not have dominion over you.”

III. Now I come to my last head, which is THE REMARKABLE REASON that is given for sin’s never having dominion: “For you are not under the Law, but under Grace.” “There, there,” says many an unconverted man, “did you ever hear such doctrine as he has been preaching to us this morning? Not under the Law?! Well, then, we may sin as we like.” That is *your* logic. That is the way in which an evil heart sours the sweet milk of the Word of God. But it is not the argument of a child of God.

Mark how Paul puts it—"What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? God forbid!" He flings away the inference with horror and detestation, crying, "God forbid!" Let me just show you why being under the Law is not helpful to holiness, while being under Grace is the great *means* of it. Those who are under the Law will always be under the dominion of sin and it cannot be otherwise. First, because the Law puts a man under the dominion of sin by pronouncing sentence of condemnation upon him as soon as he has transgressed.

What does the Law say to him? "From this point on you are guilty and I condemn you. He that offends in one point is guilty of all." Thus the Law shuts a man up to being a sinner and offers him no space for *repentance*. It accuses, condemns and sentences—but affords no hope and offers no encouragement. It is not so with those who are under Grace! To them Grace says, "You are sinners, but you are freely forgiven. Your iniquity is pardoned, your transgression is put away! Go, and sin no more." Thus relieved, the penitent lifts up his head and cries, "Enable me to praise You and grant that I may be upheld by Grace in the way of uprightness." The amazing love of God, when shed abroad in the heart, creates a desire for better things and what the Law could not do, Grace accomplishes.

A man under the Law is, by the Law, driven to despair. "What?" he asks, "Am I to keep this Law in order to be saved? Alas, I have already broken it and if I had not, it is too high and holy for me to rise to its full height." Therefore he resolves that he will not attempt the task and he sinks into indifference or, in some cases, he thinks of the old proverb that you may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb and he resolves that he will take his fill of sin. Because there is no hope, he will plunge into iniquity. He vows that if Hell must be his portion forever, he might as well enjoy the sweetness there is in sin while he may. So the Law, because of the evil heart it has to deal with, excites such a condition of heart that sin is confirmed in its dominion. Being threatened, the rebellious heart hardens itself and defies the Lord. And then, concluding that peace is impossible, it continues more and more to fight against the Lord.

Not so the child of God! He says, "God, for Christ's sake, has cast my sins behind His back and I am saved. Now, for the love I bear His name, I will serve Him with all my might, because of all that He has done for me." Thus the Grace of our Lord Jesus, by its freeness and richness, breaks the dominion of sin which the Law only served to establish and confirm. Not that the Law is evil—God forbid! But because *we* are evil and rebel against the holy Law! A man under the Law does not escape from the dominion of sin because the Law wakes the opposition of the human heart. There are a great many things which people never wish to do, nor think of doing till they are forbidden.

Lock up a closet in your house and say to your wife and children, "You must never enter that closet, nor even look into the keyhole." Perhaps they have never wanted to look into the dingy old corner before, but now they pine to inspect it! A number of bylaws have lately been posted up as to the use of Clapham-Common and I am half afraid to read them for fear I should want to break them. I dare say that many things which I never desired to do are now strictly prohibited and I shall feel vexed with the

commissioners for lessening my liberty! I should not wonder but what numbers of persons who never visited the Common, will now become sinners against the new laws.

Law, by reason of our unruly nature, excites opposition and creates sin, for what a man may not do he immediately wants to do. He who is under the Law will never escape from the dominion of sin, for sin comes by the Law by reason of the iniquity of our hearts. But when we are not under the Law, but under Grace, we love God for His love to us and labor to please Him in all things. The Law, moreover, affords a man no actual help. All it does is to say, "You shall," and, "You shall not." It can do no more. But Grace gives us what the Law requires of us. The Law says, "make a new heart." Grace replies, "A new heart, also, will I *give* you, and a right spirit will I put within you." The Law says, "Keep My Commandments." And Grace answers, "You shall keep My Commandments and do them."

Grace brings the Holy Spirit into the soul to work in us holy affections and a hatred of sin and, therefore, what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, Grace accomplishes for us by its own almighty power! Further, the Law inspires no sentiment of love and love, after all, is the fulfilling of the Law. If you are told you shall and you shall not, there is nothing in this to inspire love to the Lawgiver—Law is hard and cold, like the two tables of Moses. Law does not change the heart or remove enmity—it tends, rather, the other way. Law never excites enthusiasm for that which is right—it is too stern and chill to touch the heart.

Mere Law does not even raise in a man's heart a high ideal of what he ought to be! Look at the legalist, the man who hopes for salvation by the Law—he looks upon religion as a task in which he has no delight. He is a bond slave and nothing more. He does as much or as little as he is forced to do, but his heart is not in it. The men who think they have kept the Law of God are evidently very far from understanding its meaning—they have a very poor idea of the mind of God or they would not have thought that they had fulfilled the will of God with such a poor, miserable, hypocritical righteousness as theirs!

The Pharisee thought he had kept the Law, for he fasted twice a week and paid tithes of all he possessed. And yet the same man could go and swallow a widow's house behind the door and do all sorts of abominable things! It is clear that he had formed a shockingly low notion of true holiness. In fact, he had degraded the Law into a mere external ordinance which took note of the outside of the cup and platter and left the inside full of filthiness. But see what Grace does—it fires a man with enthusiasm and sets before him a lofty idea of excellence. It causes him to love the Lord and then it gives him a high idea of purity and holiness.

Though he rises many grades beyond the Pharisee, yet the Believer cries, "I am not what I should be!" And if he becomes the most zealous, consecrated man that ever lived, the Law is still beyond him and he still asks that he may be able to rise to greater heights of holiness and virtue. This Divine Grace does, but this the Law can never do. The most pleasing service in the world is that which is done from motives of affection and not for wages. The servant who only does his work for his pay is not valued like the old attached domestic who nursed you when you were a boy and

waited on your father before you. No money can purchase such service as *he* renders—it is so thoroughly hearty and prompt. If you could not afford to pay his wages, he would still stay with you. And if anything goes awry, he puts up with it because he loves you. You prize such a man above rubies!

So it is with the child of God. The mere legalist does what he *ought*, or at least *thinks* he ought to do—but as for heartiness and zeal, he knows nothing of such things. The child of God, with all his feebleness and his blunders, is far more accepted, for he does all he can out of pure love and then cries, “I am an unprofitable servant! I have done no more than was my duty to have done! Lord, help me to do more.” God accepts heart service, but heart service the Law never did produce and never will. The only true heart service in the world comes from those who are not under the Law, but under Grace and, therefore, sin shall not have dominion over those who are not under the Law.

The spirit of the world is legal and its wise men tell us that we must preach to people that they must be virtuous or they will go to Hell. They tell us that we must hold out Heaven as the *reward* of morality. They believe in the principle of chain and whip. But what comes of such doctrine? The more you preach it, the less virtue, the less obedience there is in the world! But when you preach love, the effect is very different—“Come,” says God, “I forgive you freely. Trust My Son and I will save you outright, though in you there is nothing to merit My esteem. Accept My free favor and I will receive you graciously and love you freely.”

This looks, at first sight, as if it gave a license to sin, but how does it turn out? Why, this wondrous Grace taking possession of the human heart breeds *love* in return, which love becomes the fountain of purity and holiness—and such as receive it endeavor to perfect holiness in the fear of God! Beloved, do not get under the Law! Do not yield to legal threats or legal hopes, but live under the Free Grace Gospel. Let the note that peals on your ears be no longer the thunder of Sinai, “Do and live,” but let it be the sweet song of free Grace and dying love!

Ah, ring those charming bells from morn till eve! Let us hear their liquid music again and again! Live and do! Not do and live—not work for salvation, but *being saved*, work! Being already delivered, go forth and prove, by your grateful affections and zealous actions, what the Grace of God has done for you! “Whoever believes in Jesus Christ has everlasting life.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.” Amen.

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

THE UPPER HAND

NO. 901

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under Law, but under Grace.”

Romans 6:14.

WHAT a golden sentence! But does it not begin with a hard word? A sad and sorrowful note is sounded in that word “sin.” ‘Twas Sin that blighted Eden and drove our first parents forth to toil in weariness outside its peaceful bowers. ‘Twas Sin that polluted all our blood and left the leprosy still in our veins, as a legacy of ill to the latest generation. ‘Tis Sin that has been the parent of all our earthly sorrow. ‘Tis Sin that will be the cause of our everlasting misery unless we are delivered from it. Never has the world seen another tyrant comparable to this. Beneath its dragon-wings the light has been eclipsed, life has dwindled, joy has expired. Remember—you that fear the Lord and are the servants of Jesus Christ—remember how many there are that are still the slaves of sin!

There is no monarch who rules over so many souls as this tyrant Iniquity. Millions that have departed now mourn forever the thralldom from which they never shall escape—they have perished without Christ and under the tyranny of Sin they must live forever. And millions more that are still upon the earth bow down to Sin and suffer it to rule over them and this fell monster lords it over the myriads of the human race! Sad contemplation! But, perhaps, Christian, it will be to you, personally, even sadder, still, when you reflect that whatever you are now, you, too, were once the servant of Sin. You now have the will to shake off that fetter but you once hugged the chain. You now abhor the leprosy, but you once accounted the symptoms of your disease to be indications of *health* and you were enamored of yourself notwithstanding your revolting loathsomeness.

There was a time when every affection of your nature went after evil, when you loved not the things of God nor served Him. Yet now you are renewed in the spirit of your mind. Oh, what unspeakable joy! Though you were the servant of Sin, you have now received the faith once delivered to the saints and you have obeyed, from the heart, that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you. But remember the hole of the pit from where you were dug! Be not exalted as though there were any goodness in your nature more than in that of other men, for had you been left to yourself, you had still been the bond-slave of evil and so you would have continued evermore!

The prediction is encouraging. Although we have to encounter this horrible curse and deadly plague of Sin, there is an immunity for Believers.

Sin shall not have dominion over them! It sounds to me like the note of a celestial harper cheering on an earthly pilgrim. It rings out like a trumpet that proclaims a coming victory! Should not every soldier fight with dauntless valor? Should not his spirit, faint and cowed, wax brave in contest with Sin, when he hears as the argument of a holy Apostle, as the oracle of the inspired Truth of God such a sure word of prophecy—"Sin shall not have dominion over *you*"? You have been delivered from it once and shall never come back to its slavery again! It shall never "have dominion over *you*, for you are not under the Law but under Grace."

I intend to use the text in three ways. First, as a *test*. Secondly, in its proper acceptation, as a *promise*. And thirdly as an *encouragement*.

I. In these words we have an important TEST of our profession. Sin shall not have dominion over true Believers. Has sin dominion over you? If so, then you are not a Believer. I did not say—"Do you sin?"—"for if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the Truth is not in us"—but I did say, "Has sin *dominion* over you?" Would you answer the question? Would you try yourselves? Let me remind you of *its deceitfulness*. You may be under the dominion of sin, while yet there may be some forms of vice which you have successfully resisted. But it matters not what kind of transgression enslaves you, if you are, after all, in bondage.

Whatever sin it may be that is the lieutenant in your heart, it does not matter—you are possessed of the devil. If there is but one sin that usurps authority, then sin has dominion over you. Satan does not send to all men the same temptations nor does evil reign in every heart to gratify the same lusts or to satisfy the same propensities. The sin is adapted to the constitution—but if there is a single cherished sin in any one of you professors which is obvious you cannot conquer and, perhaps, too apparent that you do not try—if you sit down quietly under the yoke of it and cherish it as a friend rather than withstand it as a foe, then that sin has got *dominion* over you and you are not in Christ, you are not a child of God!

Does this appear unreasonably severe? I must speak the Truth of God. There are some professors who are under the dominion of sin in the form of *anger*. All constitutions are not alike. Happy for those who are not troubled with the passionate temper that chafes, irritates, vexes and annoys everybody they are associated with, as servants or companions. What shall I say of those who have such a quick, hot temper? They are like the small pot that quickly boils over and scalds terribly. There are others whose temper is rather slower in coming up, but when it has once risen it is horrible and will last long and make them sulky, so that perhaps they will never forgive. I know not how long malice will be burning in their hearts.

Now, mark you, a man may have a very bad temper and yet be a true Christian, but if any man says, "My temper is so bad that I cannot curb it. I do not try to restrain it, for it is impossible to keep it under control," that

temper has got dominion over him and, according to my text, he is not a Christian! Do you ask, "How can a man master his temper?" In reply, my Brothers and Sisters, I must ask, how can a man go to Heaven if he does not? If the Divine Grace of God does not change us and help us to bridle that lion that is within us, what has it done for us? If a man says, "I cannot help it," I cannot help telling him that if there is no help, nothing can remain for him but despair. Only in salvation from sin is there salvation from wrath. In the name of God, you *must* help it! You must overcome it and get it down, by God's Grace, or else it will cast you down, down, down, where hope and light will never come!

Do you imagine that Christ's Gospel comes into the world and says "You may let that one sin alone"? My Lord Jesus Christ is no lover of sin and makes no excuse for it. He will forgive your anger, if you repent of it and renounce it, but if you allow it and tolerate it within your spirit, then you are strangers to His Grace. O Sirs, I speak the Truth of God and lie not in this respect! I have seen the Grace of God change lions into lambs. Men of hot and fierce temper have become calm and quiet and gentle. Although the old man has sometimes appeared with his old propensities and they have had to blush for him and bite their lips to keep back the hard word, or even to walk away, perhaps, for fear they should say something which they know they would be sorry for afterwards, yet they have resisted the vile propensity and prevailed!

They have mastered their temper and so must you. You must not be content until you have done so, for if you sit down and say, "There, I shall yield myself up to it and let it alone," it is clear as daylight that it has dominion over you and you cannot be a child of God, for over the children of God it shall not have dominion! It may break out, sometimes, and hurl you down, but you will never allow it to *keep* you down. You will *never* say of it, "I cannot overcome it," but you will fight against it till you die and when it does break loose it will make you wet your pillow with tears and repair to God with a broken heart saying, "O God, forgive me and deliver me from this horrible sin which my soul loathes!"

In some men the sin that does most easily beset, takes another shape. Their propensity is to *murmur*, of which the Apostle speaks when he says "Neither murmur you as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the Destroyer." I know people—they are very uncomfortable people to live with—who are always grumbling at everything they meet with in this world. Trade is bad. According to the account of certain persons who were never successful—if they ever were industrious or enterprising—trade was *always* bad. It never has been good since they were born, or had anything to do with it. As for their meals—instead of being thankful to God that they have an abundance while so many are hungry, they are perpetually finding fault. No! Everything must be done to a turn. If there is a little too

much salt here, or a little too much pepper there, what a noise they make about such trifles!

Their very garments are never to their minds. The weather never suits them—it is “awfully hot,” or it is “dreadfully cold.” They go through the world murmuring at everything. There are men who think that this is not sin. But if it is a *virtue* to be thankful and contented with, it is certainly a *vice* to be forever rebellious and discontented with our lot, and at daggers drawn with every little thing that crosses our pathway! Why did the Apostle put it so, “Neither murmur you as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the Destroyer”? Now if any man among you murmurs, he may be a Christian needing to be purged of this defilement. But if you say, “I cannot help murmuring,” then murmuring has got *dominion* over you and you cannot be a child of God! You must wage war against it, for if you are a child of God, neither this sin nor any other shall have dominion over you.

Here, Brethren, I can speak from my own heart. I do not suppose there is any person in this assembly who ever has stronger fits of depression of spirits than I have myself, personally. I feel at times, when I come into this pulpit, that instead of addressing you cheerfully, I could be a very Jeremiah, with tears and sorrows. I scarcely know why, but so it is, these constitutional mischiefs will happen to us. But shall I say I cannot help it? Do you think I will give way to it? No, but in the name of God I dare not say it! I must contend against it, lest if I should speak murmuringly I should set an ill example unto others and thus open their mouths to offend against God. This sin is hard to overcome, but conquered it must be, for it must never have dominion over us.

With some other persons the peculiar reigning sin is *covetousness*. Oh, how tight those fingers are when they are once closed! How pleased they are when money accumulates! I do not say that they should be indifferent to business when it behooves them to buy and sell and get gain. But why so penurious? How unhappy they are if there is a little demand made upon them for the poor, for the needy, for the Church of God! How stingily they count out their three-piece! How seldom it comes to four pence they contribute! What maneuvers they practice in limiting themselves to the minimum of charity! How they grudge all they part with and how much it seems to cost them when they give anything! It is, indeed, a bleeding which reduces their vital force when anything is given to further the interests of their Lord!

Now, this covetousness is smiled at—perhaps you say, “’Tis a gentlemanly vice”—but I myself think it a grievous wrong, base as any fraud! For what have you that you have not received? And what have you received for which you are not accountable? And what have you earned for which you should not pay tribute? Moreover, my God has said of it, “Covetousness is idolatry.” I do not doubt but you may fall into fits of covet-

ousness and yet be Christians. If, however, you are *habitually* covetous and say, "Well, I cannot help it," then your covetousness has got dominion over you and according to the text you cannot be a child of God, for in the children of God sin shall not have dominion! O Sirs, turn that covetousness out of doors!

Do as the good man did who had resolved to give a pound to some good cause and the devil tempted him not to do it. Said he, "I will give two, now." The devil said, "No, you will be ruining yourself with your contributions." Said he, "I will give four." Another temptation came and he said, "I will give eight, and if the devil does not leave off tempting me I do not know to what lengths I shall go, but I will be master of him somehow." Do anything, my Brothers and Sisters, rather than let the golden calf run over you. Who can be a baser slave than he who bows his neck to the mammon god? He is not a manly god. Do you live as if the world were made for you and none beside? To get, to hoard? But not to enjoy—he who loves not others is himself unblest.

It might so happen that some of my hearers never fell into that sin, it never reigned over them. Yet possibly another vice may be in the picture. Perhaps it is the sin of *pride*. As I have already told you, it does not matter what sin it is—if it has dominion over you—the text cuts you off from hope. Pride and arrogance are an abomination to the Lord! Know you not that the lofty looks of man shall be humbled and the haughtiness, that is to say the arrogant bearing of men, shall be bowed down in that day when the Lord, alone, is exalted? Ah, I know some who are proud in this very manner. They treat all those they meet with, as though they felt that they were altogether of a superior order. They do not deign to notice the common herd, the vulgar. Or, if not tossing their head and consequential in their *manners*—they are not quite so foolish as that, perhaps—yet are they proud in everything else.

Nobody can pray as they do. Nobody can manage anything as they can. All other Christian people are very imperfect and poor things, but they, themselves, are quite of a superior class, casting their neighbors into the shade. Now, my dear Friend, I do not say that you are no Christian because you occasionally forget the lowliness of heart and the modesty of demeanor that become you, but I do say that if pride reigns over you and you tell me that you cannot help being proud, then you cannot be an heir of Heaven—for if pride is your master, then Christ is not—and if pride reigns in your spirit and fashions your character, depend upon it—Jesus Christ will despise your image!

The dominant sin of many who profess and call themselves Christians is *sloth—downright idleness*. They have said to themselves, "Soul, take your ease." Therefore their faculties have become dormant. As asleep they pass their lives in protracted insensibility. They never do anything for Christ. Their hands are folded, their heart is sluggish, their talents are

hid. They have no zeal, no love for souls. Pleasures, profits and private gratifications take the place of duty and service. They like comfort remarkably much, but as to their ever enlisting in Christ's army, it is not to be expected of them. They are an inglorious neuter to the Church. Now, I will not say that the man who is sometimes slothful is not a Christian, for alas, we all have to contend with this disease! But the man in whom sloth *rules* cannot be a child of God, because no sin can have *dominion* over the man whom God has brought into the kingdom of Grace!

But enough of this! I have given you sufficient tests to try yourselves. Will you, Brothers and Sisters, be honest enough to subject yourselves to self-examination? As I desire to do with myself, so would I have you do with yourselves. Is there a reigning sin in your hearts? Never mind what it is—is there *any* sin that reigns and rules there? Then Jesus Christ cannot be in your soul, for—

“When He comes, He comes to reign,”

nor can the Spirit of God dwell in you, for He is the Spirit of *holiness*!

II. But now, let us take a more pleasant view of the text, regarding it as A PROMISE. To every true Believer the promise is—“Sin shall not have dominion over *you*.” It does not say that sin shall not *dwell* in you. We know that it will dwell in you while you dwell in these corruptible bodies. In the holiest man there is enough sin to destroy him if it were not for the Grace of God which restrains its deadly operation. You cannot turn the old enemy completely out. He lurks, like aliens in a city ever ready to do mischief.

Nor are you told that you shall never fall into sin. Alas, alas! Some of those who have walked very near to God have yet fallen very foully. Need I mention such as David? O may we never repeat in our lives the lapses that tarnished the reputation of such godly men! The word, however, is passed and the security is given that “sin shall not have *dominion* over you.” The fair and lovely dove may fall into the mire, but the mire has not any dominion over it, for she rises up as quickly as she can and away she flies and seeks to cleanse herself at some crystal fountain. As for the duck, put them into the mire and the mire has dominion over its nature. So the Believer may fall into sin that he hates and defile his garments with uncleanness that he loathes.

Let a sheep tumble into a ditch and it scrambles out again, but let the swine go there and it rolls in it, for the mire has dominion over its *nature*. There is nothing here to excuse you from watchfulness, no reason shown nor any pledge that sin may not sometimes terribly overcome you. It may carry the war right into the province of your spirit and ravage it and the whole of your nature may, for awhile, seem to be subdued, except the heart. Happily a limit is prescribed. Though the enemy may seem to conquer the territory of your manhood, yet it cannot establish a kingdom there, for it shall be driven out again, in due time, and that before long.

When the enemy comes in as a flood, the Spirit of God will lift up the standard against him and the enemy shall yet be worsted in the combat.

Notice the reason that is assigned for the assertion of the text. “Sin shall not have dominion over you, *for*”—we will look at that reason for a minute—when we have looked at a few others. Sin cannot get confirmed dominion over the child of God because God has promised that it shall not. “Sin shall not have dominion over you.” Oh, how I love these “shalls!” There seems something grand in them. “Sin *shall* not.” Ah, Satan may come with temptation, but when God says, “Sin shall not have dominion,” it is as when the sea comes up in the fullness of its strength and the Almighty says, “To here shall you come, but no farther. Here shall your proud waves be stopped.” If there were no other promise in the Bible but this one and I knew no more theology than that promise teaches me, I would be most happy. “Sin shall not have dominion.” O my God, if you say it shall not, then I *know* it shall not. Has He said and shall He not do it? Has He promised it and shall it not stand good? If you trust in Jesus Christ, before sin can ever fully rule over you, God’s promise must be broken and, Beloved, that shall never be!

Another reason sin shall not have dominion over you is *because you belong to Christ* and He bought you at such a price that I am sure He will never lose you. He paid for you in the drops of His own heart’s blood! As a Believer you are Christ’s purchased possession. Do you think that He will permit evil to come and run away with the heritage that He bought at such a price? Ah, never! He that bought you will fight for you against every enemy and preserve His blood-bought heritage unto Himself. Sin shall not have dominion over you *because the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in you*. If you are a Believer the Holy Spirit *dwells* in you as a king within his palace and do you think that He will be expelled by Satan and all his host of temptations?—

**“Sin is strong, but Grace is stronger,
Christ than Satan more supreme.”**

It is a hard struggle between you and Satan, but between the Holy Spirit and Satan it is an easy war. He can hold His own and He will do it.

Moreover, *the Holy Spirit has begun a good work in you and it is His rule never to leave His work unfinished*. The work which His wisdom begins, the arm of His strength will complete. It shall not be said of the Holy Spirit as we say of foolish builders, that they began to build but were not able to finish. The first stone of Divine Grace laid in a sinner’s heart secures the top stone of the sacred edifice, let Hell and sin say what they will! Is not this a safeguard to prevent you from falling under the dominion of sin? Further still, my Brothers and Sisters, *there is in every Christian a new nature, a new nature which cannot die and which cannot sin*. Christ calls it, “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” The Apostle calls it, “a living incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever.”

Now, if this seed within you is incorruptible, then sin cannot corrupt it! If it abides forever, then sin cannot expel it! If the inner life is there and it is, indeed, the very life of God within your spirit, sin shall not have dominion over you! There is another reason also, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that specially applies to you as a Christian—*your will is not the slave of sin and never has been since your conversion*. You sin, but if you could, you would never sin. To will is present with you. The bent and bias of your mind are towards righteousness if you are a Christian. Now, if such is the case, sin can never get dominion over your whole nature, for the sovereignty of all your manhood lies with Him who possesses the mastery of your will and your affections.

As long as the blood-red flag of Christ's Cross floats over the castle of your heart, Satan may get possession of eye-gate and ear-gate, and mouth-gate awhile, but Christ is still King! Your will is still good towards righteousness—sin has not dominion over you! You remember how John Bunyan represents poor Feeble-Mind in the cave of Giant Slay-Good? The giant had picked him up on the road and taken him home to devour him at his leisure. But poor Feeble-Mind said he had one comfort, for he had heard that the giant could never pick the bones of any man who was brought there against his will. Ah, and so it is! If there is a man who has fallen into sin, but still his heart cries out against the sin. If he is saying, "Lord, I am in captivity to it. I am under bondage to it. O that I could be free from it!" then sin has not dominion over him, nor shall it destroy him, but he shall be set free before long.

We now come to the reason given in the text. I want you to observe it narrowly, for it is not, at first sight, easy of apprehension—"Sin *shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law but under Grace*." Look at this a minute. There are two principles in the world that are supposed to promote holiness. The one is the principle of law and duty, the other the principle of Divine Grace and faith. It is a popular notion that if you tell men what they *ought* to do, prove to them the authority of the law-giver, and show them the penalty of their wrong doing—this will enlighten their judgment, give a just bias to their inclination and materially help to keep their conduct right.

All the history of mankind goes to show that this pretext is without proof. Those who are under the Law are always under sin. I will show you how it is so. The moment our mother Eve came under Law, she was under Law only on one point. She was not to pluck the fruit of *one* tree. She might eat as she liked of all the other fruits of the garden and I do not know that she wanted to pluck any of them, or cared particularly to do so, but the prohibition to pluck that one prompted her desire and excited an ardent craving for the forbidden fruit. On this very morning I talked with a person in great distress, who said to me, "I read in the Word of God such-and-such a text about a sin that was unto death and no sooner did I be-

gin to know what that sin was than I felt a fascination which made me want to do it.”

Did you never notice the same in your children? You have a little garden you wish to keep private and you, accordingly, forbid any of the children to go into it. Well, you had better give them leave to go in and then perhaps they will be indifferent about it, but if you say, “Now, you may go anywhere else, but just inside that particular part of the garden you must not go,” why, they one and all want to go there at once! There is a kind of curiosity about us, that if there is a Blue-beard cupboard anywhere, we must go and try to find it out. The moment we are commanded not to do a thing, such is our perverse disposition—we try to do it!

Men who are under Law through the haughtiness of human nature, always get to be under sin, too. There is a new crime lately come up. There is to be a communication in railway carriages between the passengers and the guard and nobody must pull the rope unless there is sufficient reason for stopping the train. Now, I will be bound to say that somebody will be sure to do it. If you must not do it you want to do it. Such is our nature—the Law, instead of promoting holiness, does not promote it—but the flesh takes occasion to gratify its desires, lusts and cravings by infringing its precepts. Even the terrible penalties of Hell have failed to inspire fear or promote holiness. When was there ever so much sheep-stealing and theft, and highway robbery and forgery, as when men were hanged for these things? Then such sins were always being committed. When Draco wrote his laws in blood and every sin was punished with death, crime was far more rife than it is even now. Law has proved its utter powerlessness to protect men from the dominion of sin!

There is another principle and it is steadfastly believed by some of us to be fruitful in every good word and work, a main instigator to righteousness and true holiness. Let me explain it. It is the principle of Divine Grace on the part of God and operates by faith in the heart of man. It is on this wise. Grace does not say to a man, “You must do this or you shall be punished,” but it says this, “God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you all your sins. You are saved. Heaven is yours and you shall enter into the bliss of the angels before long. Now, for the love you bear to God, who has done this for you, what will you do for Him?”

This does not appear to furnish, at first sight, a very powerful motive, but it has been proved in the history of Christ’s Church to be the most potent creator of virtue that was ever heard of. God’s great love wherewith He loved us has been indelibly impressed on the heart. The wondrous sacrifice of Christ has been verily depicted before the eyes. A constraining power, strong as death, has availed to consecrate the lives of those who have felt the sacred rapturous spell. Dissolved by mercy unmerited and Grace unexpected, they have surrendered themselves in terms like these—

***“Now, for the love I bear His name,
What was my gain I count my loss.
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to His Cross.”***

Look at the lives of the Apostles and the martyrs and those earnest confessors of Christ who did resist to blood striving against sin. Why, my Brothers and Sisters, Christ has had such servants as Moses never had! He has had such self-devotion, such consecration, such zeal, purely and simply the result of gratitude as mere Law and duty never could create!

Now, because you are not under the Law, you Christian people, God does not say to you, “Do this and I will save you. Do not do that and I will damn you.” But He says to you, “I have saved you beyond the fear of damnation—you are Mine, My children, My favorites—now, what will you do for Me?” Such is the motive power, such the irresistible instinct of love and gratitude that sin shall never get dominion over you. I will give you an illustration. I rather think that I am indebted for it to a passage in Cowper’s works which I cannot at this moment recall. You have a servant who engages to do his allotted work for the wages that you give him—with no other motive than his stipend and no further interest in his employment than to get over it as quickly as possible—he is under law.

Notice how he watches your eyes, that he may do, while you are looking at him, that which he *must* do. He renders you a service of a certain sort, but it is generally very poor and not much to be accounted of. But you have another servant, one who is old and tried, and honest to the backbone. He remembers you when a boy and used to live with your father, then. Now, if you could not pay him his wages it would not destroy his attachment to you, or his zeal for your interest. If you were to discharge him, I dare say he would tell you that if you did not know when you had a good servant he knew when he had a good master and he meant to stick by you!

Notice him how he watches your interests. He will not have anything wasted through neglect. He will not have you defrauded in anything for lack of oversight. And if you were ill in the middle of the night, he would somehow or other discover it and be off for a doctor before you could call him. If he traveled with you, what care and attention he would pay you! He would be ready to risk his life for you. You could not buy such service as his for gold—you could never get it as a mere matter of duty. Love makes him do for you what mere duty never could. So, even if the Law did make good servants, as it never does, yet it never could make so good a servant as Divine Grace and love.

Indeed, the motive of love is always the stronger and if it came to the pinch and your man who serves you for your pay could make more out of betraying you than he could by being faithful to you, you know what he would do! But your other servant who serves you out of love would no more think of going beyond or imposing upon you than of sacrificing him-

self! He would, perhaps, be like the Roman slave who was tortured to death sooner than he would run and point out where his master was concealed because his master was sought in order to be slain. Love! Love is the mighty principle!

You Christian people are not under the Law. It is true, the *moral* law is your rule of life, but it has no tyrannous government over you. Christ fulfilled the Law for you! It has been kept! You owe it no obedience as a matter of mere justice. You have been delivered from that and being now under the law of love and not under the law of force and duty, sin never shall have dominion over you.

III. But I cannot tarry longer, as our time is gone. The last point is to view the text as AN ENCOURAGEMENT. In this assembly I fear there are *not a few who are strangers to the holy jealousy which keeps a watch over the heart and a guard upon the lips lest they should sin*. I wish we were all so on the alert—that we all kept our garments scrupulously white. Dear Brothers and Sisters, cultivate a holy jealousy! Be very watchful and let this text animate you—“Sin shall not have dominion over you.”

In this assembly, too, there are some who are consciously *very weak*. You feel your depraved nature to be vigorous and you are afraid that the Divine Grace within you is insufficient for the trials that beset you. My dear Brethren, let this encourage you. Though you may be very weak, if you are a child of God, sin shall no more get dominion over the weak than over the strong! Though the life within you may be but a spark, it shall not be quenched! Though it is but as a bruised reed, it shall not be broken. The text is for the weak as well as the strong—“Sin shall not have dominion over you.”

In this company there may be those who are just now *fighting with some great sin*. We noticed last Monday night the prayer of a dear Brother evidently coming out of the bitterness of his soul, when he said, “O God, help me, or I shall fall! Help me, or I shall fall!” Ah, Brethren, we all know what it is to get to the pinch, when it is hand-to-hand work with some inbred corruption! You that do not have strong passions may be very thankful, for they that have a lusty manhood are often drifted by terrible winds and have a hard fight to keep clear of the rocks of sin. But oh, you warring Christians, you Believers who are fighting—here is consolation for you! Put this bottle of cool water to your lips and be refreshed! “Sin shall not have dominion over you.” You shall conquer yet! Fight on!

Possibly there may be some here *lately converted*—some man who was a drunkard. Your chains are broken, but there are some links that are left hanging and sometimes they will catch hold of a nail and you will think you are tied up again. Oh, but, my Brethren, if you have given your heart to Christ, sin shall not have dominion over you! You shall yet be helped. Probably there is a man here whose life was very bad before his conversion and he says to himself, “I have to go and mix up with some of the

people I used to sin with and they laugh at me and lay all sorts of traps for me. I am afraid I shall yet go back.” O cling to the Cross! Lay hold of the garments of your dear Lord and Master, for if you trust Him, though you are but a child lately born into the family, “Sin shall not have dominion over you.”

Perhaps I address a *backslider* tonight. O my Brother, my Sister—you have gone into sin—you have defiled your garments. Perhaps the Church of God has had to cast you out. But do you now hate your sin? Have you now, again, began to cry unto God for mercy? Does the Lord help you to look to the Cross and rest in the work of Jesus? If so, be of good courage, still, for if you are His child sin may get a temporary advantage, but it shall never have permanent dominion! You have sinned very terribly—it is an awful thing—God have mercy upon you for it. You will have to go with broken bones all your life, but you shall still be saved, for sin shall not have dominion over you!

And now, the last sentence is this—if there is anyone here desirous to be saved from the reigning power of sin within his body, however much sin may now domineer over him—if he will come to Christ, my Lord and Master—and put his trust in Him, He will take care to deliver him altogether from sin, beginning the good work in him this very night and carrying it on till He at last brings him to Heaven, without a spot or a sin, to see the face of God! And this is for every one of you who will trust Christ!

O that you may trust in Him now and God shall have the glory while you will have the great salvation! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 6.

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THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE DO NOT LEAD TO SIN NO. 1735

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, AUGUST 19, 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL.**

***“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under Grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace? God forbid.”
Romans 6:14, 15.***

LAST Sabbath morning I tried to show that the substance and essence of the true Gospel is the Doctrine of God's Grace [*A Gospel Worth Dying For*—No. 1734, Volume 29]—that, in fact, if you take away the Grace of God from the Gospel you have extracted from it its very life-blood and there is nothing left worth *preaching*, worth *believing*, or worth *contending* for. Grace is the soul of the Gospel—without it the Gospel is dead. Grace is the music of the Gospel—without it the Gospel is silent as to all comfort. I also endeavored to set forth the Doctrine of Grace in brief terms, teaching that God deals with sinful men upon the footing of pure mercy—finding them guilty and condemned, He gives free pardons, altogether irrespective of past character, or of any good works which may be foreseen. Moved only by pity, He devises a plan for their rescue from sin and its consequences—a plan in which Grace is the leading feature.

Out of free favor He has provided, in the death of His dear Son, an atonement by means of which His mercy can be justly bestowed. He accepts all those who place their trust in this Atonement, selecting faith as the way of salvation, that it may be all of Grace. In this He acts, from a motive found within Himself, and not because of any reason found in the sinner's conduct—past, present, or future. I tried to show that this Grace of God flows towards the sinner from of old and begins its operations upon him when there is nothing good in him—it works in him that which is good and acceptable—and continues so to work in him till the deed of Grace is complete and the Believer is received up into the glory for which he is made meet.

Grace commences to save and it perseveres till all is done. From first to last, from the “A” to the “Z” of the heavenly alphabet, everything in salvation is of Grace and Grace alone! All is of free favor, nothing of merit. “By Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” “So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” No sooner is this doctrine set forth in a clear light than men begin to quibble with it. It is the target for all carnal logic to shoot at. Unrenewed minds never liked it and they never will—it is too humbling to human pride, making light of the nobility of human nature. That men are to be saved by Divine charity; that they must, as condemned criminals, receive pardon by the exercise of the royal prerogative or else perish in their sins is a teaching which they cannot endure!

God alone is exalted in the sovereignty of His mercy—the sinner can do no better than meekly touch the silver scepter and accept undeserved favor just because God wills to give it! This is not pleasant to the great minds of our philosophers and the broad phylacteries of our moralists and, therefore, they turn aside and fight against the empire of Grace. Straightway the unrenewed man seeks out artillery with which to fight against the Gospel of the Grace of God! And one of the biggest guns he has ever brought to the front is the declaration that the Doctrines of the Grace of God must lead to licentiousness! If great sinners are freely saved, then men will more readily become great sinners—and if, when God's Grace regenerates a man, it abides with him, then men will infer that they may live as they like and yet be saved.

This is the constantly repeated objection which I have heard till it wearies me with its vain and false noise. I am almost ashamed to have to refute so rotten an argument! They dare to assert that men will take license to be guilty because God is gracious! And they do not hesitate to say that if men are not to be saved by their works, they will come to the conclusion that their conduct is a matter of indifference and that they may as well sin that Grace may abound! This morning I want to talk a little about this notion, for in part it is a great mistake and in part it is a great lie. In part it is a mistake because it arises from misconception. And in part it is a lie because men know better, or might know better if they pleased.

I begin by admitting that the charge does appear somewhat probable. It does seem very likely that if we are to go up and down the country and say, "The very chief of sinners may be forgiven through believing in Jesus Christ, for God is displaying mercy to the very vilest of the vile," then sin will seem to be a cheap thing. If we are everywhere to cry, "Come, you sinners, come and welcome, and receive free and immediate pardon through the Sovereign Grace of God," it does seem probable that some may basely reply, "Let us sin without ceasing, for we can easily obtain forgiveness." But that which looks to be probable is not, therefore, certain! On the contrary, the improbable and the unexpected full often come to pass. In questions of moral influence, nothing is more deceptive than theory. The ways of the human mind are not to be laid down with a pencil and compasses—man is a singular being.

Even that which is logical is not always inevitable, for men's minds are not governed by the rules of the schools. I believe that the inference which would lead men to sin because Grace reigns is not logical, but the very reverse—and I venture to assert that, as a matter of fact, ungodly men do not, as a rule, plead the Grace of God as an excuse for their sin! As a rule they are too *indifferent* to care about reasons at all! And if they *do* offer an excuse, it is usually more flimsy and superficial. There may be a few men of perverse minds who have used this argument, but there is no accounting for the freaks of the fallen understanding. I shrewdly suspect that in any cases in which such reasoning has been put forward, it was a mere pretense and by no means a plea which satisfied the sinner's own conscience.

If men do excuse themselves, it is generally in some veiled manner, for the most of them would be utterly ashamed to state the argument in plain

terms. I question whether the devil himself would be found reasoning thus—"God is merciful, therefore let us be more sinful." It is so diabolical an inference that I do not like to charge my fellow men with it, though our moralist opposers do not hesitate thus to degrade themselves! Surely, no intelligent being can *really* persuade itself that the goodness of God is a reason for offending Him more than ever! Moral insanity produces strange reasoning, but it is my solemn conviction that very rarely do men practically consider the Grace of God to be a motive for sin. That which seems so probable at the first blush is not so when we come to consider it.

I have admitted that a few human beings have turned the Grace of God into lasciviousness, but I trust no one will ever argue against any doctrine on account of the perverse use made of it by the baser sort. Cannot every Truth of God be perverted? Is there a single doctrine of Scripture which graceless hands have not twisted into mischief? Is there not an almost infinite ingenuity in wicked men for making evil out of good? If we are to condemn a Truth because of the misbehavior of individuals who profess to believe it, we would be found condemning our Lord, Himself, for what Judas did—and our holy faith would die at the hands of apostates and hypocrites!

Let us act like rational men. We do not find fault with ropes because poor insane creatures have hanged themselves with them! Nor do we ask that the wares of Sheffield may be destroyed because edged tools are the murderer's instruments. It may appear probable that the Doctrine of Free Grace will be made into a license for sin, but a better acquaintance with the curious working of the human mind corrects the notion. Fallen as human nature is, it is still human and, therefore, does not take kindly to certain forms of evil—such, for instance, as inhuman ingratitude. It is hardly human to multiply injuries upon those who return us continued benefits.

The case reminds me of the story of half-a-dozen boys who had severe fathers, accustomed to flogging them within an inch of their lives. Another boy was with them who was tenderly beloved by his parents and known to be so. These young gentlemen met together to hold a council of war about robbing an orchard. They were, all of them, anxious to get about it except the favored youth who did not agree with the proposal. One of them cried out, "*You* need not be afraid! If our fathers catch us at this work, we shall be half-killed, but your father won't lay a hand upon *you*." The little boy answered, "And do you think because my father is kind to me, that therefore I will do wrong and grieve him? I will do nothing of the sort to my dear father! He is so good to me that I cannot vex him."

It would appear that the argument of the many boys was not overpoweringly convincing to their companion—the opposite conclusion was quite as logical and evidently carried weight with it. If God is good to the undeserving, some men will go into sin, but there are others of a nobler order whom the goodness of God leads to *repentance*. They scorn the beast-like argument that the more loving God is, the more rebellious we may be—and they feel that against the God of Goodness it is an evil thing to rebel. By the way, I cannot help observing that I have known persons object to the evil influence of the Doctrines of Grace who were by no means quali-

fied, by their own morality, to be judges of the subject! Morals must be in a poor way when immoral persons become their guardians!

The doctrine of Justification by Faith is frequently objected to as injurious to morals. A newspaper, some time ago, quoted a verse from one of our popular hymns—

***“Weary, working, plodding one,
Why toil you so?
Cease your doing; all was done
Long, long ago!
'Till to Jesus' work you cling
By a simple faith,
Doing' is a deadly thing,
Doing' ends in death.”***

This is styled mischievous teaching! When I read the article, I felt a deep interest in this corrector of Luther and Paul, and I wondered how much he had drunk in order to elevate his mind to such a pitch of theological knowledge! I have found men pleading against the Doctrines of Grace on the ground that they did not promote morality, to whom I could have justly replied, “What has morality to do with *you*, or you with it?” These sticklers for good works are not often the doers of them! Let legalists look to their own hands and tongues—and leave the Gospel of Grace and its advocates to answer for themselves!

Looking back in history, I see upon its pages a refutation of the oft-repeated calumny. Who dares to suggest that the men who believed in the Grace of God have been sinners above other sinners? With all their faults, those who throw stones at them will be few if they first prove themselves to be their superiors in character, when have they been the patrons of vice, or the defenders of injustice? Pitch upon the point in English history when this doctrine was very strong in the land—who were the men that held these doctrines most firmly? Men like Owen, Charnock, Manton, Howe! And I hesitate not to add Oliver Cromwell! What kind of men were these? Did they pander to the licentiousness of a court? Did they invent a Book of Sports for Sabbath Diversion? Did they haunt ale-houses and places of revelry?

Every historian will tell you the greatest fault of these men, in the eyes of their enemies, was that they were too precise for the generation in which they lived—so they called them Puritans and condemned them as holding a gloomy theology! Sirs, if there was iniquity in the land in that day, it was to be found with the theological party which preached up salvation by works! The gentlemen with their womanish locks and perfumed hair, whose speech savored of profanity, were the advocates of salvation by works and, all bedabbled with lust, they pleaded for human merit!

But the men who believed in Grace alone were of another style. They were not in the chambers of rioting and wantonness! Where were they? They might be found on their knees crying to God for help in temptation and in persecuting times they might be found in prison, cheerfully suffering the loss of all things for the Truth of God's sake! The Puritans were the godliest men on the face of the earth! Are men so inconsistent as to nickname them for their purity and yet say that their doctrines lead to *sin*? Nor is this a solitary instance—this instance of Puritanism—all history confirms the rule and when it is said that these doctrines will create sin, I

appeal to *facts*, and leave the oracle to answer as it may. If we are ever to see a pure and godly England, we must have a gospelized England! If we are to put down drunkenness and the social evil, it must be by the proclamation of the Grace of God!

Men must be forgiven by the Grace of God, renewed by the Grace of God, transformed by the Grace of God, sanctified by the Grace of God and preserved by the Grace of God! And when that comes to pass, the golden age will dawn! But while they are merely taught their duty and left to do it of themselves in their own strength, it is labor in vain! You may flog a dead horse a long while before it will stir—you need to put life into it, or else all your flogging will fail. To teach men to walk who have no feet is poor work—and so is instruction in morals before Grace gives a heart to love holiness! The Gospel, alone, supplies men with motive and strength and, therefore, it is to the Gospel that we must look as the real reformer of men!

I shall fight, this morning, with the objection before us as I shall find strength. The Doctrines of Grace, the whole plan of salvation by Grace, is most promotive of holiness. Wherever it comes, it helps us to say, “God forbid,” to the question, “Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under Grace?” This I would set out in the clear sunlight. I wish to call your attention to some six or seven points.

I. First, you will see that the Gospel of the Grace of God promotes real holiness in men by remembering that THE SALVATION WHICH IT BRINGS IS SALVATION FROM THE POWER OF SIN. When we preach salvation to the vilest of men, some suppose we mean by that a mere deliverance from Hell and an entrance into Heaven. It includes all that and *results* in that, but that is not what we mean! What we mean by salvation is this—deliverance from the love of sin, rescue from the habit of sin, setting free from the desire to sin. Now listen. If it is so, that that gift of deliverance from sin is the gift of Divine Grace, in what way will that gift, or the free distribution of it, produce sin? I fail to see any such danger. On the contrary, I say to the man who proclaims a gracious promise of victory over sin, “Make all speed—go up and down throughout the world and tell the vilest of mankind that God is willing, by His Grace, to set them free from the love of sin and to make new creatures of them.”

Suppose the salvation we preach is this—“You that have lived ungodly and wicked lives may enjoy your sins and yet escape the penalty”? That would be mischievous, indeed! But if it is this—“You that live the most ungodly and wicked lives may yet, by believing in the Lord Jesus, be enabled to change those lives so that you shall live unto God instead of serving sin and Satan”?—what harm can come to the most prudish morals? Why, I say spread such a Gospel and let it circulate through every part of our vast empire! Let all men hear it, whether they rule in the House of Lords or suffer in the house of bondage! Tell them everywhere that God freely and of infinite Grace is willing to renew men and women and make them new creatures in Christ Jesus! Can any evil consequences come of the freest proclamation of this news? The worse men are, the more gladly would we see them embracing this Truth of God, for these are they who most need it!

I say to every one of you, whoever you may be, whatever your past condition—God can renew you according to the power of His Grace so that you who are to Him like dead, dry bones, can be made to live by His Spirit! That renewal will be seen in holy thoughts, pure words and righteous acts to the glory of God. In great love He is prepared to work all these things in all who believe. Why should any man be angry at such a statement? What possible harm can come of it? I defy the most cunning adversary to object, upon the ground of morals, to God's giving men new hearts and right spirits even as He pleases!

II. Secondly, let it not be forgotten as a matter of fact that THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE HAS BEEN FOUND TO POSSESS VERY GREAT POWER OVER MEN. In the infancy of history, nations dream that crime can be put down by severity and they rely upon fierce punishments—but experience corrects the error. Our forefathers dreaded forgery, which is a troublesome fraud that interferes with the confidence which should exist between man and man. To put it down, they made forgery a capital offense. Alas for the murders committed by that law! Yet the constant use of the gallows was never sufficient to stamp out the crime. Many offenses have been created and multiplied by the penalty which was meant to suppress them.

Some offenses have almost ceased when the penalty against them has been lightened. It is a notable fact as to men that if they are forbidden to do a thing, they straightway pine to do it, though they had never thought of doing it before! Law commands obedience, but does not promote it—it often creates disobedience—and an over-weighted penalty has been known to provoke an offense. Law fails, but love wins! *Love in any case makes sin infamous.* If one should rob another, it would be sufficiently bad. But suppose a man robbed his friend who had helped him often when he was in need? Everyone would say that his crime was most disgraceful. Love brands sin on the forehead with a red-hot iron. If a man should kill an enemy, the offense would be grievous, but if he slew his father, to whom he owes his life, or his mother, on whose breasts he was nursed in infancy, then all would cry out against the monster! In the light of love, sin is seen to be exceedingly sinful.

Nor is this all. *Love has a great constraining power towards the highest form of virtue.* Deeds to which a man could not be compelled on the ground of law, men have cheerfully done because of love. Would our brave seamen man the lifeboat to obey an Act of Parliament? No, they would indignantly revolt against being forced to risk their lives! But they will do it freely to save their fellow men. Remember that text of the Apostle, "Scarcely for a righteous (or merely just) man will one die: yet perhaps," says he, "for a good (benevolent) man some would even dare to die." Goodness wins the heart and one is ready to die for the kind and generous! Look how men have thrown away their lives for great leaders. That was an immortal saying of the wounded French soldier. When searching for the bullet the surgeon cut deeply and the patient cried out, "A little lower and you will touch the Emperor," meaning that the Emperor's name was written on his heart!

In several notable instances, men have thrown themselves into the jaws of death to save a leader whom they loved. Duty holds the fort, but love casts its body in the way of the deadly bullet! Who would think of sacrificing his life on the ground of law? Love alone counts not life so dear as the service of the Beloved! Love to Jesus creates a heroism of which law knows nothing. All the history of the Church of Christ, when it has been true to its Lord, is a proof of this. *Kindness, also, working by the law of love, has often changed the most unworthy* and therein proved that it is *not* a factor of evil. We have often heard the story of the soldier who had been reduced to the lowest rank, flogged and imprisoned—and yet for all that he would get drunk and misbehave himself.

The commanding officer said, one day, “I have tried almost everything with this man and can do nothing with him. I will try one more thing.” When he was brought in, the officer addressed him and said, “You seem incorrigible—we have tried everything with you—there seems to be no hope of a change in your wicked conduct. I am determined to see if another plan will have any effect. Though you deserve flogging and long imprisonment, I shall freely forgive you.” The man was greatly moved by the unexpected and undeserved pardon—and became a good soldier. The story wears truth on its brow—we all see that it would probably end so! That anecdote is such a good argument that I will give you another.

A drunkard woke up one morning from his drunken sleep with his clothes on him just as he had rolled down the night before. He saw his only child, his daughter, Millie, getting his breakfast. Coming to his senses, he said to her, “Millie, why do you stay with me?” She answered, “Because you are my father, and because I love you.” He looked at himself and saw what a sottish, ragged, good-for-nothing creature he was, and he answered her, “Millie, do you really love me?” The child cried, “Yes, father, I do, and I will never leave you because when mother died she said, ‘Millie, stick to your father and always pray for him, and one of these days he will give up drinking and be a good father to you’—so I will never leave you.”

Is it wonderful when I add that, as the story has it, Millie’s father cast away his drink and became a Christian man? It would have been more remarkable if he had not! Millie was trying Free Grace, was she not? According to our moralists she should have said, “Father, you are a horrible wretch! I have stuck to you long enough! I must now leave you, or else I shall be encouraging other fathers to get drunk.” Under such proper dealing I fear Millie’s father would have continued a drunkard till he drank himself into Hell. But the power of love made a better man of him. Do not these instances prove that undeserved love has a great influence for good?

Hear another story—In the old persecuting times, there lived in Cheap-side one who feared God and attended the secret meetings of the saints. And near him there dwelt a poor cobbler whose needs were often relieved by the merchant. But the poor man was a cross-grained being and, most ungratefully, from hope of reward, laid an information against his kind friend on the score of religion. This accusation would have brought the merchant to death by burning if he had not found a means of escape. Returning to his house, the injured man did not change his generous behavior to the malignant cobbler, but, on the contrary, was more liberal than

ever! The cobbler was, however, in an ill mood and avoided the good man with all his might, running away at his approach.

One day he was obliged to meet him face to face and the Christian man asked him, gently, "Why do you shun me? I am not your enemy. I know all that you did to injure me, but I never had an angry thought against you. I have helped you and I am willing to do so as long as I live, only let us be friends." Do you marvel that they clasped hands? Would you wonder if, before long, the poor man was found at the Lollards' meeting? All such anecdotes rest upon the assured fact that Grace has a strange subduing power and leads men to goodness—drawing them with cords of love and bands of man! The Lord knows that bad as men are, the key of their hearts hangs on the nail of love. He knows that His almighty goodness, though often baffled, will triumph in the end!

I believe my point is proved. To myself it is so. However, we must pass on.

III. There is no fear that the Doctrines of Grace will lead men to sin, because THEIR OPERATIONS ARE CONNECTED WITH A SPECIAL REVELATION OF THE EVIL OF SIN. Iniquity is made to be exceedingly bitter before it is forgiven or when it is forgiven. When God begins to deal with a man with a view of blotting out his sins and making him His child, He usually causes him to see his evil ways in all their heinousness. He makes him look on sin with fixed eyes, till he cries with David, "My sin is ever before me!" In my own case, when under conviction of sin, no cheering object met my mental eye—my soul saw only darkness and a horrible tempest. It seemed as though a horrible spot were painted on my eyeballs!

Guilt, like a grim chamberlain, drew the curtains of my bed, so that I rested not, but in my slumbers anticipated the wrath to come. I felt that I had offended God and that this was the most awful thing a human being could do. I was out of order with my Creator, out of order with the universe—I had damned myself forever—and I wondered that I did not immediately feel the gnawing of the undying worm. Even to this hour a sight of sin causes the most dreadful emotions in my heart. Any man or woman here who has passed through that experience, or anything like it, will always feel a deep horror of sin. A burnt child dreads the fire. "No," says the sinner to his tempter, "you once deceived me and I so smarted in consequence, but I will not again be deluded. I have been delivered, like a brand from the burning, and I cannot go back to the fire."

By the operations of Grace we are made weary of sin; we loathe both it and its imaginary pleasures. We would utterly exterminate it from the soil of our nature. It is a thing accursed, even as Amalek was to Israel. If you, my Friend, do not detest every sinful thing, I fear you are still in the gall of bitterness, for one of the sure fruits of the Spirit is a love of holiness and a loathing of every false way. A deep inward experience forbids the child of God to sin—he has known within himself its judgment and its condemnation and, therefore, it is a thing abhorrent to him. An enmity both fierce and endless exists between the chosen seed and the serpent brood of evil—therefore the fear that Grace will be abused is abundantly safeguarded.

IV. Remember, also, that not only is the forgiven man thus set against sin by the process of conviction, but EVERY MAN WHO TASTES OF THE SAVING GRACE OF GOD IS MADE A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST JESUS. Now if the Doctrines of Grace in the hands of an ordinary man might be dangerous, yet they would cease to be so in the hands of one who is quickened by the Spirit and created anew in the image of God. The Holy Spirit comes upon the chosen one and transforms him—his ignorance is removed, his affections are changed, his understanding is enlightened, his will is subdued, his desires are refined, his life is changed—in fact, he is as one new-born, to whom all things have become new. This change is compared in Scripture to the resurrection from the dead, to a creation and to a new birth.

This takes place in every man who becomes a partaker of the Free Grace of God. “You must be born again,” said Christ to Nicodemus, and gracious men *are* born again! One said the other day, “If I believed that I was eternally saved, I should live in sin.” Perhaps *you* would—but if you were renewed in heart you would not! “But,” says one, “if I believed God loved me from before the foundation of the world and that, therefore, I would be saved, I would take a full swing in sin.” Perhaps *you* and the devil would, but God’s *regenerate children* are not of so base a nature! To them, the abounding Grace of the Father is a bond to righteousness which they never think of breaking—they feel the sweet constraints of sacred gratitude and desire to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

All beings live according to their nature and the regenerated man works out the holy instincts of his renewed mind! Crying after holiness, warring against sin, laboring to be pure in all things, the regenerate man puts forth all his strength towards that which is pure and perfect. A new heart makes all the difference! Given a new nature, all the propensities run in a different way, and the blessings of almighty love no longer involve peril, but suggest the loftiest aspirations!

V. One of the chief securities for the holiness of the pardoned is found in the way of CLEANSING THROUGH ATONEMENT. The blood of Jesus sanctifies as well as pardons. The sinner learns that his free pardon cost the life of his best Friend and, in order to his salvation the Son of God, Himself, agonized even to a bloody sweat and died forsaken of His God. This causes a sacred mourning for sin as he looks upon the Lord whom he pierced. Love to Jesus burns within the pardoned sinner’s breast, for the Lord is his Redeemer and, therefore, he feels a burning indignation against the murderous evil of sin. To him all manner of evil is detestable since it is stained with the Savior’s blood.

As the penitent sinner hears the cry of, “Eloi, Sabachthani!” he is horrified to think that One so pure and good should be forsaken of Heaven because of the sin which He bore in His people’s place. From the death of Jesus the mind draws the conclusion that sin is exceedingly sinful in the sight of the Lord—for if eternal justice would not spare even the well-beloved Jesus when imputed sin was upon Him, how much less will it spare guilty men? It must be an unutterably thing full of poison which could make even the Immaculate Jesus suffer so terribly!

Nothing can be imagined which can have greater power over gracious minds than the vision of a crucified Savior denouncing sin by all His wounds—and by every falling drop of blood. What? Live in the sin which slew Jesus? Find pleasure in that which worked His death? Trifle with that which laid His Glory in the dust? Impossible! Thus you see that the gifts of Free Grace, when handed down by a pierced hand, are never likely to suggest self-indulgence in sin, but the very reverse.

VI. Sixthly, a man who becomes a partaker of Divine Grace and receives the new nature is ever afterwards A PARTAKER OF DAILY HELPS FROM GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT. God the Holy Spirit deigns to dwell in the bosom of every man whom God has saved by His Grace. Is not that a wonderful means of sanctifying? By what process can men be better kept from sin than by having the Holy Spirit, Himself, dwell as Vice-Regent within their hearts? The Ever-Blessed Spirit leads Believers to be much in prayer—and what a power for holiness is found in the child of Grace speaking to the heavenly Father! The tempted man flies to his chamber, unloads his grief on God, looks to the flowing wounds of his Redeemer and comes down strong to resist temptation.

The Divine Word, also, with its precepts and promises, is a never-failing source of sanctification. Were it not that we, every day, bathe in the sacred fountain of eternal strength, we might soon be weak and irresolute—but fellowship with God renews us in our vigorous warfare with sin. How is it possible that the Doctrines of Grace could suggest sin to men who constantly draw near to God? The renewed man is also, by God's Spirit, frequently quickened in conscience, so that things which, before, did not strike him as sinful, are seen in a clearer light and are, consequently, condemned. I know that certain matters are sinful to me, today, which did not appear so 10 years ago—my judgment has, I trust, been more and more cleared of the blindness of sin.

The natural conscience is callous and hard, but the gracious conscience grows more and more tender till, at last, it becomes as sensitive as a raw wound. He who has most Grace is most conscious of his need of more Grace. The gracious are often afraid to put one foot before another for fear of doing wrong. Have you not felt this holy fear, this sacred caution? It is by this means that the Holy Spirit prevents your ever turning your Christian liberty into licentiousness, or daring to make the Grace of God an argument for folly! Then, in addition to this, the good Spirit leads us into high and hallowed communion with God—and I defy any man to live upon the mount with God and then come down to transgress like men of the world! If you have walked the palace floor of Glory and seen the King in His beauty, till the light of His Countenance has been your Heaven, you *cannot* be content with the gloom and murkiness of the tents of wickedness!

To lie, to deceive, to feign, as the men of the world do, will no longer become you. You are of another race and your conversation is above them—“Your speech betrays you.” If you do, indeed, dwell with God, the perfume of the ivory palaces will be about you and men will know that you have been in other haunts than theirs. If the child of God goes wrong in any degree, he loses, to some extent, the sweetness of his communion and

only as he walks carefully with God does he enjoy full fellowship so that this rising or falling in communion becomes a sort of parental discipline in the house of the Lord. We have no court with a judge, but we have home with its fatherhood, its smile and its rod! We lack not for order in the family of love, for our Father deals with us as with sons. Thus, in a thousand ways, all danger of our presuming upon the Grace of God is effectually removed.

VII. THE ENTIRE ELEVATION OF THE MAN WHO IS MADE A PARTAKER OF THE GRACE OF GOD is also a special preservative against sin. I venture to say, though it may be controverted, that the man who believes the glorious Doctrines of Grace is usually a much higher style of man than the person who has no opinion upon the matter. What do most men think about? Bread and butter, house rent and clothes. But the men who consider the Doctrines of the Gospel muse upon the Everlasting Covenant, predestination, immutable love, effectual calling, God in Christ Jesus, the work of the Spirit, justification, sanctification, adoption and such noble themes! Why, it is a refreshment merely to look over the catalog of these grand Truths of God!

Others are as children playing with little sand heaps on the seashore. But the Believer in Free Grace walks among hills and mountains! The themes of thought around him tower upward, Alps on Alps! The man's mental stature rises with his surroundings and he becomes a thoughtful being, communing with sublimities. This is no small matter, for a thing so apt to grovel as the average human intellect! So far as deliverance from mean vices and degrading lusts must in this way be promoted, I say it is no small thing! Thoughtlessness is the prolific mother of sin! It is a hopeful sign when minds begin to roam among lofty Truths of God.

The man who has been taught of God to think, will not so readily sin as the being whose mind is buried beneath his flesh. The man has now obtained a different view of himself from that which led him to trifle away his time with the idea that there was nothing better for him than to be merry while he could. He says, "I am one of God's chosen, ordained to be His son, His heir, joint-heir with Jesus Christ! I am set apart to be a king and priest unto God and as such I cannot be godless, nor live for the common objectives of life." He rises in the objective of his pursuit—he cannot live unto himself, for he is not his own—he is bought with a price. Now he dwells in the Presence of God and life to him is real, earnest and sublime! He cares not to scrape together gold with the muck-rake of the covetous, for he is immortal and must seek eternal gains.

He feels that he is born for Divine purposes and enquires, "Lord, what would You have me to do?" He feels that God has loved him so that his love may flow forth to others. God's choice of any one man has a bearing upon all the rest—He elects a Joseph that a whole family, a whole nation, no, the whole *world*, may be preserved alive when famine had broken the staff of bread. We are, each one, as a lamp kindled that we may shine in the dark and light up other lamps. New hopes come crowding on the man who is saved by Grace. His immortal spirit enjoys glimpses of the endless. As God has loved him in time, he believes that the same love will bless

him in eternity. He knows that his Redeemer lives and that in the latter days he shall behold Him and, therefore, he has no fear of the future.

Even while here below he begins to sing the songs of the angels, for his spirit spies from afar the dawn of the Glory which is yet to be revealed! Thus with joyous heart and light footsteps he goes forward to the unknown future as merrily as to a wedding feast! Is there a sinner here, a guilty sinner, one who has no merit, no claim to mercy whatever? Is there one willing to be saved by God's Free Grace through believing in Jesus Christ? Then let me tell you, Sinner, there is not a word in God's Book against you, not a line or syllable, but everything is in your favor! "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even the chief! Jesus came into the world to save *you*! Only trust Him and rest in Him!

I will tell you what ought to fetch you to Christ at once—it is the thought of His amazing love! A profligate son had been a great grief to his father. He had robbed him and disgraced him and, at last, he ended by bringing his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. He was a horrible wretch of a son—no one could have been more graceless! However, he attended his father's funeral and he stayed to hear the will read. Perhaps it was the chief reason why he was there. He had fully made up his mind that his father would cut him off with a shilling—and he meant to make it very unpleasant for the rest of the family. To his great astonishment, as the will was read, it ran something like this—"As for my son, Richard, though he has fearfully wasted my substance; and though he has often grieved my heart, I would have him know that I consider him to still be my own dear child and, therefore, in token of my undying love, I leave him the same share as the rest of his brothers."

He left the room. He could not stand it. The surprising love of his father had mastered him! He came down to the executor the next morning and said, "You surely did not read correctly?" "Yes I did. there it stands." "Then," he said, "I feel ready to curse myself that I ever grieved my dear old father. Oh, that I could fetch him back again!" Love was born in that base heart by an unexpected display of love. May not your case be similar? Our Lord Jesus Christ is dead, but He has left in His will that the chief of sinners are objects of His choicest mercy! Dying, He prayed, "Father, forgive them." Risen, He pleads for transgressors. Sinners are always on His mind—their salvation is His great objective. His blood is for them, His heart for them, His righteousness for them, His Heaven for them!

Come, O you guilty ones, and receive your legacy! Put out the hand of faith and grasp your portion! Trust Jesus with your souls and He will save you! God bless you. Amen.

Portion Of Scripture Read Before Sermon—Romans 6.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—136, 980, 645.

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OUR CHANGE OF MASTERS

NO. 1482

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 6, 1879,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.”
Romans 6:18.

MAN was made to rule. In the Divine original he was intended for a king who should have dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea. He was designed to be the lord-lieutenant of this part of creation and the form of his body and the dignity of his countenance indicated it. He walks erect among the animals, while they move upon all fours. He subjugates and tames them to perform his will and the fear and dread of him is upon all creatures, for they know their sovereign.

Yet is it equally true that man was made to *serve*. At his beginning he was placed in the garden to keep it, to dress it and so to serve his Maker. His natural feebleness, his dependence upon rain, sun and dew—his instinctive awe of an unseen and Omnipotent Spirit indicate that he is not the *chief* of the universe, but a *subordinate* being whose lot it is to serve. We find within man various powers and propensities seeking to get dominion over him so that his mind is also capable of servitude. The appetites which are essential for the sustenance of his bodily frame, even such as eating and drinking, endeavor to master him—and if they can, they will do so—and reduce him below the level of the swine. Man is in part spirit, but he is also in part animal—and the animal strives to get dominion over the spiritual—and in many, many men it does so till they are utterly degraded.

Nothing can be worse than a soul enslaved by such a body as that of man! The brute nature of man is the worst sort of brute. There is no beast in wolf, or lion, or serpent that is so brutish as the beast in man. Did I not tell you last Sunday that whereas, according to the Levitical Law, he that touched a dead animal was unclean till the evening, he who touched a dead *man* was unclean seven days? For man, when his animal nature rules him, is seven times more a polluting creature than any of the beasts of the field! If evil aims at ruling man, the good Spirit also strives with him. When God, in His infinite mercy, visits man by His Spirit, that Spirit does not come as a neutral power to dwell quietly within man and to share His heart with the Prince of Darkness—He enters with full intent to reign!

Therefore there is a conflict which cannot be ended by an armistice, but must be carried on to the end. And that end will be found either in the driving out of the evil or in the thrusting out of the good—for one or the other, either the Prince of Darkness or the King of Light—will have dominion over man. Man *must* have a master! He cannot serve two

masters, but he *must* serve one. Of all sorts of men this has been true and it has, perhaps, been most clearly seen in those who were evidently made to lead their fellow men. It is specially seen in such a man, for instance, as Alexander, a true king of men, so heroic and great-hearted that one does not wonder that armies were fired with enthusiasm by his presence and drove everything before them.

Alexander conquered the world and yet on occasions he became the captive of drunkenness and the slave of his passionate temper. At such times the king of men, the vanquisher of armies was little better than a raving maniac! Look for further illustration at the busts of the emperors of Rome, the masters of the world. Study their faces and mark what groveling creatures they must have been! Rome had many slaves, but he who wore her purple was the most in bonds. No slave that ground at the mill, or died in the amphitheatre, was more in bondage than such men as Tiberius and Nero who were the bond-slaves of their passions!

High rank does not save a man from being under a master—neither does learning nor philosophy deliver men from this bondage, for the teachers of liberty have not, themselves, been free, but it has happened as the Apostle says, “while they promise them liberty they themselves are the servants of corruption.” Solomon himself, with all his wisdom, played the fool and though he was the most sagacious ruler of his age, he became, for a while, completely subject to his fleshly desires. Man is born to be a servant and a servant he must be!

Who shall be his master? That is the question! Our text proves the point with which I have started, for it speaks of “being made free from sin” and in the same breath adds, “You became the servants of righteousness.” There is no in-between—there does not appear to be a moment left for an independent state, but out of one servitude we pass into another. Do not think I made a mistake in the use of the word, *servitude*! I might have translated the Greek word by that of slave and have been correct. “Being made free from sin, you were enslaved to righteousness.” The Apostle makes an excuse for using the figure and says, “I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh.”

He did not know how else to describe it, for when we go *from* under the absolute power of *sin*, we come at once into a like subjection to righteousness! As we were governed and swayed by the love of sin, so we become, in a similar manner, subject to the forces of Grace and the Truth of God! As sin took possession of us and controlled our acts, so Grace claims us as its own, takes possession of us and rules us with an absolute sway. Man passes from one master to another, but he is always in subjection! I have often heard of free will, but I have never seen it! I have met with will and plenty of it, but it has either been led captive by sin or held in blessed bonds of Grace.

The passions drive it here and there like a rolling thing before a whirlwind. Or the understanding sways it and then, according as the understanding is darkened or enlightened, the will acts for good or evil. In any case, the bit is in its mouth and it is guided by a power beyond itself. However, I leave that question and call attention, this morning, first of all

to *our change of masters*—"Being made free from sin, we become the servants of righteousness." Secondly, to *the reasons for that change*. And thirdly, to *the consequences of that change*.

I. We begin with our CHANGE or MASTERS. We must have a master, but some of us, by Divine Grace, have made a change of masters infinitely to our advantage! In describing this inward revolution we will begin with a word or two upon our *old* master. The Apostle says in the verse preceding our text, "We were the servants of sin." How true that is! Those of us who now believe and are free from sin were all, without exception, the servants of sin! We were not all alike enslaved, but we were all under bondage. Sin has its uniformed servants. Did you ever see a man dressed in the full uniform of sin? A fine suit, I guarantee you!

Sin clothes its slave with rags, with shame and often with disease. When fully dressed in Satan's uniform the sinner is abominable, even to his fellow sinners. If you want to see sin's uniformed servants dressed out in their best or their worst, go to the prisons and you will find them there. Or go to the dens of infamy in this great city, or to the liquor bars, or to the places of vicious amusement and you will find them there. Many of them wear the badge of the devil's drudgery upon their backs in poverty and rags. Their faces bear the blotches born of drunkenness and their very bones reveal the consequences of their vice. Satan has regimentals for his soldiers and they are worthy of the service!

But great folks have many servants who are out of uniform and so has sin. We were not all open transgressors before our new birth, though we were all the servants of sin. There are many slaves of evil whom you would not know to be such if you only saw the surface of their characters! They do not swear, or steal, or commit adultery, or even break the Sabbath outwardly. On the contrary, they are most moral in their conduct. They are the servants of sin, but they are secretly so, for fear of rebuke. They are non-professing sinners and yet sincerely in love with sin. They just now stood up and sung the hymn! They bowed their heads in prayer and they are now listening to this sermon!

No one can tell the difference between them and the servants of Christ by their exterior. But at heart they reject the Son of God and refuse to believe in Him, for they love the pleasures of sin and the wages of unrighteousness. A kind of selfish caution restrains them from overt acts of transgression, but their heart loves not God and their desires are not towards His ways. O, my dear Hearer, if you are setting up your own righteousness in your soul as an anti-Christ against God's Christ. If you are kicking against the sway of the Divine Spirit. If you are secretly living in sin. If you are following out some sweet sin in secret, even though you dare to appear in the uniform of Christ, you are still the slave of sin!

Hypocrites are worse slaves than any others because they are laid under the restraints of religious men without enjoying their consolations—they practice the sins of the ungodly without their pleasures! Every hypocrite is a fool and a coward! He has not the will to serve the Lord and yet he has not the courage to serve the devil out and out. These go-betweens are, of all sorts of people, the most to be pitied and the most to

be blamed. As long as we are unbelievers we are the servants of sin, but we are not all outdoor servants of sin. Sin has its domestic servants who keep quiet, as well as its soldiers who beat the drum!

Many keep their sin to themselves—nobody hears of them in the street, they raise no public scandal—and yet at heart they are the faithful followers of wickedness and rebellion. Their idols are set up in secret chambers, but they are heartily loved. Their desires and aspirations are all selfish, but they try to conceal this fact even from themselves. They will not serve God, they will not bow before His Son and yet they would shrink from declaring their rebellion! They are amiable, admirable and excellent in their outward deportment, but they are the indoor servants of Satan, for all that, and their heart is full of enmity against God.

Some of us confess that it was so with us. When none found fault with us we were, nevertheless, rotten in heart. We used to pray, but it was a mockery of God. We went up to God's house, but we regarded not His Word and yet, in all this, we prided ourselves that we were righteous! There are, however, many Believers who were once outdoor servants of Satan, sinning openly and in defiance of all law. I thank God that there are some here who are now the servants of Christ, upon whom I can look with great delight, although they were once the open, overt, zealous, diligent servants of Satan! Now they are washed, renewed and sanctified. Glory be to God for it!

Oh that the Lord would take some more great sinners inside this house and turn them into great saints, for bold offenders make zealous lovers of Jesus when He puts away their sins! They love much because they have had much forgiven and, inasmuch as they desperately sinned, so do they devoutly love. And their surrender to Christ is as entire and unreserved as their former surrender to the service of evil. In this let God be praised! Still, let us *all* humbly bow before the Truth of God we are now speaking of and admit with great humiliation of spirit that we were the servants of sin!

In passing on we notice, next, the expression of the Apostle, "*Being then made free from sin.*" Through Divine Grace we have been led to trust the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal salvation and, having done so, we are at this moment free from sin. Come, you who trust the Savior's name, and rejoice in the words before us, for they describe *you*! You are made free from sin—not, you *shall be*, but you *are*! In what sense is this true? First, in the sense of *condemnation*. The Believer is no more condemned for sin! Your sin was laid on Christ of old and He, as your Scapegoat, took it all away. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

You are acquitted and justified through the Lord, your Righteousness. Clap your hands for joy! It is a mercy worth 10,000 worlds! You are made free from the damning power of sin now and forever. Next, you are made free from the *guilt* of sin. As you cannot be condemned, so does the Truth go further—you cannot even be *accused*! Your transgression is forgiven you! Your sin is covered—"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." "Who shall lay anything to the

charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."

You are delivered from sin's guilt at this moment—"made free from sin." You are in consequence free from the punishment of sin. You shall never be cast into Hell, for Jesus has suffered in your place and the justice of God is satisfied. As a believer in Christ, there is no bottomless pit for you—for you no undying worm, for you no unquenchable fire! And, guilty as you are by *nature*, Christ has made you so completely clean that for you is reserved the, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world."

Nor is this all. You are made free from sin as to its reigning power and this is a point in which you greatly delight. Sin once said to you, "Go," and you went. It says, "Go," now, but you do not go! Sometimes sin stands in your way when Grace says, "Go," and then you would gladly *run*. Sin opposes and hinders, but you will not yield to its demands, for Grace holds dominion. You push, you struggle, you resolve that sin shall not be lord of your life, for you are not under the Law but under Grace. Sin hides itself in holes and corners of your nature, sulks in the dark about the streets of Mansoul, plots and plans, if it can, to get the mastery over you, but it never shall—it is cast out of the throne and the Holy Spirit sits there ruling your nature—and there He will sit until you shall be perfected in holiness and shall be caught up to dwell with Christ forever and ever!

"Made free from sin." I wish I could now leave off preaching and get into a quiet pew and sit down with you and meditate upon that thought—chewing the cud as you farmers say—and getting the juice out of this rich pasturage. "Made free from sin." Why, as I pronounce those blessed words I feel like an escaped American slave in the old slave days when he leaped upon British soil in Canada! After all his running through the woods and crossing of hills and rivers, he was free! How he leaped for joy! How he cried with delight! Even so did we exult in our liberty when, at the first, our Lord Jesus set us free! You who were never slaves and never felt the taskmaster's lash—you do not know the value of liberty! And so, in spiritual things, if you have never felt the slavery of sin and have never escaped from it into the good land of Grace where Christ has made you free, indeed, you do not know the joy of the redeemed.

I am free! I am free! I am free! I that was once a slave to every evil desire! I am made free by Omnipotent Love! I have escaped from the taskmaster's fetters and I am the Lord's free man! Let all the angels praise my redeeming Lord! Let all the spirits before the Throne of God praise the Lord who has led His people out of bondage, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever! Now, how came we to be free? We have become free in three ways. First, by *purchase*, for our Savior has paid the full redemption money for us and there is not a halfpenny due for us. Blessed be His name, there is no mortgage on His inheritance! The price is all paid and we are Christ's unencumbered property forever. Here we stand, at this moment, free because we are ransomed and we know that our Redeemer

lives! Our body, soul and spirit are all bought with a price and in our complete manhood we are Christ's.

Next, we are free by *power* as well as by purchase. Just as the Israelites were the Lord's own people, but He had to bring them out of Egypt with a high hand and an outstretched arm, so has the Lord, by power, broken the neck of sin and brought us up from the dominion of the old Pharaoh of evil and set us free. The Spirit's power—the same power which raised Christ from the dead—yes, the same power which made the heavens and the earth, has delivered us and we are the ransomed of the Lord! And then we are free by *privilege*. "Unto as many as believed Him, to them gave He the privilege to become the sons of God." God has declared us free. His own royal, majestic and Divine decree has bid the prisoners go forth! The Lord Himself looses the prisoners and declares that they shall no more be held in captivity. Price and power and privilege meet together in our liberty!

How came we to be free? I will tell you another story. We are free in a strange way. According to the chapter in which we find our text, we are free because we have died. If a slave dies, his master's possession of him is ended. The tyrant can rule no longer—death has relaxed his hold. "He that is dead is free from sin." Sin comes to me and asks me why I do not obey its desires. I have a ready reply. "Ah, Master Sin, I am dead! I died some 30 years ago and I do not belong to you any more. What have you to do with me?" Whenever the Lord brings a man to die in Christ—the blessed, heavenly death unto sin—how has sin any more dominion over him? He is clear from his old master because he is dead! Our old master lives to us, but we do not live to him. He may make what suit he pleases—we will not acknowledge his rights.

Some of us have made a public claim of our freedom by death, for *we have been buried* and the Apostle says, "Know you 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." We do not trust in the burial of baptism, for we know that there would have been no truth in it if we had not been dead *first*. But it is still a blessed sign to us that inasmuch as we died, we have also been buried. Whenever the devil comes to us we can, each one, say to him, "I am no servant of yours. I died and was buried—did you not see me laid in the liquid tomb?" Oh, it is a blessed thing when the Lord enables us to feel a clear assurance that our baptism was not a mere form, but the instructive token of a work within the soul worked by the Divine Spirit which set us free from the thralldom of sin!

A third thing has happened to us—*we have risen again*. According to Paul's teaching we have risen in the Resurrection of Christ—a new life has been given to us—we are new creatures in Christ Jesus. We are not the same people that we once were. Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new. If some of you were to meet your old selves you would not know yourselves, would you? My old self does not know me and cannot make me out. I am dead to him, as to his reigning power, and

buried, too, so that I can never be his subject, nor he ever be the king of my heart. Yet he struggles to dwell within me and seems to have as many lives as a cat! Every now and then my old self sneeringly cries to my true self, "What a fool you are." My true self answers, "No, I was a fool when you had sway, but now I have come to my right mind."

Sometimes that old self whispers, "There is no reality in faith" and the new self replies, "There is no reality in the things which are *seen*. This world is a shadow but Heaven is eternal." "Ah," says the old self, "you are a hypocrite!" "No," says the new self, "I was false when I was under *your* power, but now I am honest and true." Yes, Brothers and Sisters, we are risen with Christ! With Him we died and were buried and with Him we are risen and, therefore, we are free! What slave would remain under the dominion of a master if he could say, "I died, Sir. You cannot own me now, for your ownership only extended over one life. I was buried—did you own me when I was buried? I have risen again and my new life is not yours. I am not the same man that I was and you have no rights over me." We have undergone this wondrous death and resurrection and so we can say, this morning, with heartfelt joy, "We are made free from sin!"

We are also free from sin in our hearts—we no longer love sin—in fact, we loathe the thought of it! We are free from sin as to our new nature—it cannot sin because it is born of God. We are free from sin as to God's purpose about us, for He will present us, before long, blameless and faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy! We do not belong to sin. We refuse to serve sin. By the Grace of God we are made free from it.

Now, the third part of this change of masters is this—"you became the servants of righteousness." So we have, by God's Grace, and we are now in the possession of righteousness and under its rule. A righteous God has made us die to sin! A righteous God has redeemed us! A new and righteous life has been infused into us and *righteousness* now rules and reigns in us! We do not belong to ourselves, but we yield ourselves up entirely to the Redeemer's sway through His Spirit and, the more completely He rules us, the better. The text says we are *enslaved* to righteousness and so we wish to be. We wish we were so enslaved that we could not even *will* a wrong thing nor wish an evil thing! We desire to give ourselves up wholly and absolutely to the Divine sway so that the right, the true and the good may hold us in perpetual bonds.

We abandon ourselves to the supremacy of God and we find our liberty in being entirely subjected to the will of the Most High. This is a change of masters with which I know that some of you are well acquainted. I am afraid, however, that others of you know nothing about it. May the Lord grant that you may be made to know it before you go to sleep tonight. May you be delivered from the black tyrant and brought into the service of the Prince of Peace straightway!

II. Secondly, let us survey the REASONS FOR OUR CHANGE. How do we justify this change of masters? A man who makes frequent shifts is not good for much. But we changed our old master because he never had any right to us and we were illegally detained by him. Why should sin have

dominion over us? Sin did not *make* us! Sin does not *feed* us! Sin has no right to us whatever—we never owed it a moment's homage! We are not debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh. Our old master cannot summon us for desertion, for he *stole* our services.

Besides, our old master was as bad as bad could be. You never saw his portrait, but he that would paint a picture of sin would have to put upon the canvas all the monstrosities that ever existed and all the horrors that were ever imagined! And these would have to be exaggerated and condensed into one before they could fairly depict the deformity of sin. Sin is worse than the devil, for sin made the devil a devil—he would have been an angel if it had not been for sin. Oh, who would serve the destroying tyrant who of old cast down, even, the stars of light and turned angels into fiends?

We ran away from our old master because we had never any profit at his hands. The Apostle says, "What fruit had he then?" Ask the drunkard, "What did you get by the drink?" Who has woe? Who has redness of the eyes? Ask the spendthrift what he gained by his debauchery. He would hardly like to tell you and I certainly should not like to repeat his tale. Ask any man that lives in sin what he has gained by it and you will find it is all loss. Sin is evil and only evil and that continually! We have found that out and, therefore, we have quit the old master and taken up with the new. Beside that, our old master, Sin, brought us shame. There was no honor in serving him. His work is called by Paul, "those things whereof you are now ashamed."

We are, in the sight of God, yes, and in our own sight, ready to blush scarlet at the very thought of the evil in which we once took delight! Sin is a groveling, mean, despicable thing and we are ashamed of having been connected with it. Moreover, its wages are death and this is dreadful to think upon. Sin at one time was pleasant to us, but when we found out that sin led its servants down to Hell and plunged them into unquenchable fire, we renounced its rule and found another lord. But why did we take up with our new Master? We could not help it for it was He that set us free! It was He that bought us! It was He that fought for us! It was He that brought us into liberty! Ah, if you could only see Him, you would not ask us why we became His servants!

In the first place, we owe ourselves wholly to Him. And in the next place, if we did not, He is so altogether lovely, so matchless and so charming, that if we had a free choice of masters we would choose Him a thousand times over, for He is the crown and glory of mankind! Among the sons there is none to be compared to Him. If you want us to justify our service of Him, we tell you that service is perfect freedom and supreme delight. We have had to suffer a little, sometimes, when His enemy and ours has barked at us and the ungodly have called us ill names—but we count it honor to suffer for Jesus' sake, for He is so sweet and so good, that if we had a thousand lives and could give each one away by a martyr's death, we count Him worthy of those lives, so sweet is He to our hearts' love!

Why have we taken our new Master? Why, because He gives us, even now, a present payment in His service! If there were no hereafter we would be satisfied with the present delight He gives us, but in addition to that He has promised us, as a future reward, eternal life at His right hand! We think, therefore, that we have more than sufficient reason for becoming the servants of Jesus Christ who is made of God, unto us, righteousness. Dear Hearers, how I wish that you would all enter my Lord's service by faith in His name!

III. In the third place and very practically, I want to talk to those who are servants of God, about THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CHANGE. You have become the servants of Righteousness and the first consequence is that you belong wholly to your Lord. Have you recognized this? I know numbers of Christian people—I hope they are Christian people, for in *some* points they seem as if they were—but if I were asked to look at their lives and give an opinion as to whom they belong, I should be compelled to say, “They seem mostly to belong to themselves.” To whom does their property belong? “To themselves.” To whom does their time belong? “To themselves.” To whom does their talent belong? “To themselves.”

As far as I can see, they lay all out upon themselves and live for themselves. And what do they give to God? If they are rather generous they give Him the candle ends, the parings of the cheese and little odds and ends—three penny-bits and things they do not want and can give without missing them. There are hundreds of professors who never gave God anything that cost them a self-denial—no, not so much as going without a dish on the table, or a picture on the wall, or a ring on the finger! There are numbers of professing Christians who spend a deal more on the soles of their boots than on Christ and many women who spend more on the feathers and the flowers which deck their bonnets than on their Savior!

Yes, and I have heard of men who said they were perfect and yet they were worth half a million of money and were hoarding up more! Sinners dying and being damned and missionaries without support—and yet these absolutely *perfect* men are piling up gold and letting the cause of Christ suffer for lack of means! It is not my theory of perfection, no, it does not seem to me to come up to the idea of a common Christian who says he is not his own! If you are really saved, Brothers and Sisters, not a hair of your heads belongs to yourselves! Christ's blood has either bought you or it has not! And if it has, then you are altogether Christ's, every bit of you—you are neither to eat nor drink, nor sleep but for Christ—“Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Have you ever got a hold of that? Just as a Negro used to belong to the man that bought him, every inch of him, so you are the slave of Christ! You bear in your body the brand of Lord Jesus and your glory and your freedom are therein. That is the first consequence of being set free from sin—you became the servants of righteousness.

What next? Why, because you are Christ's, His very name is dear to you! You are not so His slave that you would escape from His service if you could—no—you would plunge deeper and deeper into it! You want to be more and more the Lord's. His very name is sweet to you. If you meet

with the poorest person who belongs to Christ, you love him and though, perhaps, some who are like Christ in other respects may have awkward tempers, you put up with their infirmities for His sake. Where there is anything of Christ—there your love goes forth. I remember when I left the village where I first preached. I felt that if I had met a dog that came from Waterbeach I should have petted him—and such is the love we have for Christ—that the lowest and weakest thing that belongs to Him we love for His sake! The very sound of His name is music to us and those who do not love Him, we cannot endure.

Haydn, the great musician, one day walked down a London street. Turning into a music-seller's shop, he asked the salesman if he had any select and beautiful music. "Well, Sir," he said, "I have some sublime music by Mr. Haydn." "Oh," said Haydn, "I'll have nothing to do with that." "Why, Sir, you come to buy music and will have nothing to do with Mr. Haydn's composition! What fault can you find with it?" "I can find a great deal of fault with it, but I will not argue with you: I do not want any of his music." "Then," said the shopkeeper, "I have other music, but it is not for such as you," and he turned his back on him!

A thorough enthusiast grows impatient with those who do not appreciate what he so much admires. If we love Jesus we shall sometimes feel an impatient desire to get away from those who know Him not. You do not love Christ? What kind of man can you be to be so blind, so dead? You can be no friend of mine if you are not a friend of Christ's. I would do anything for your good, but you cannot yield me delight or be my bosom friend unless you love my Lord, for He has engrossed my heart and taken entire possession of my spirit. If you have thus become a servant of righteousness, you will weary of that which does not help you in His service and the name of your Master will be as the choicest music to you.

And now, dear Friends, let me mention another result. All your members are henceforth reserved for Christ. What does the Apostle say? "When you were the servants of sin you were free from righteousness." When Satan was your master you did not care about Christ, did you? You had no respect for Him and if anybody before you said, "Take them away—I do not want to hear them." You wholly were in agreement for evil. Now, in the same way, yield yourself up wholly to Christ, and say, "Now, Satan, when I was yours I did not yield obedience to Jesus. But now that I am Christ's, I can yield no obedience to you."

If Satan brings sin before you, say, "I cannot see it—my eyes are Christ's." And if he would charm you with the sweet sound of temptation say, "I cannot hear it—my ears are Christ's." "Oh," says Satan, "seize on this delight." You answer, "I cannot reach it—my hands are Christ's." "But taste this sweet draught," says he. You say, "I cannot take it—my lips are Christ's, my mouth is Christ's, ALL my members are Christ's." "Well, but you can form a judgment, can't you, about this error?" "My understanding is Christ's." "Oh, but listen to this new thing!" "No, I do not want to hear. I have found Christ, who is new enough for me. I do not want your novel discoveries. I am dead to them. I do not want to be worried with arguments which dishonor my Lord—take them away. When I was a

servant of sin, I would not meddle with the Truth of God, and now that I am a servant of Christ I will not trifle in the opposite direction. I have done with all but Jesus.”

Think my Brothers and Sisters! When we were servants of sin, in what way did we serve it? Just as we used to serve sin, so ought we to work for Jesus! I do not speak to all here present, but I speak to many who were sinners of an open kind. How did you serve sin? I will answer for them. They did not require to be egged on to it. They did not need any messenger of the devil to plead with them and urge them to unholy pleasures and unclean delights. Far from it! Some of their own companions thought them too imprudent. Now, dear Friends, you ought not to need your ministers or Christian friends to stir you up to good works. You ought to be just as eager after holiness as you were after sin! Evil was very sweet to you once. You used to watch for the day when you could indulge in a sweet sin, did you not? When the time was coming round when you could take a deep draught of iniquity, you took the almanac and looked for it as a child for his holidays.

Brother, Sister, serve Christ in the same way! May His Holy Spirit help you to do so. Watch for opportunities of doing good! Do not need whipping to do your duty. Instead of requiring to be urged forward in *evil*, we needed homing back, didn't we? Our parents had to put the rein upon us! Sometimes Mother would say, “John, stop that.” And Father would cry, “My boy, do not do this evil thing!” We needed a great deal of restraint. I wish I had a band of Christians round me who needed holding back in the service of Christ! I have not met with that sort yet. I am prepared with many kinds of curbs when and if I meet with a high-mettled Christian who goes at too great a rate in His Lord's service!

For the most part, my Master's horses are fonder of getting into the stables than out into the hunting field. I have not met with one who has done too much for the Lord! I shall never be guilty of too much work, myself! I wish I could go like the wind in serving Jesus. Brothers and Sisters, be just as hot to honor Christ as you once were to dishonor Him! As you have given the devil first-rate service, let Christ have the same. You remember, in the days of your sin, some of you, how thoroughly you went in for it, that you never stopped at any expense—did you? Oh no, if you needed pleasure in sin, away went the five pounds and the hundreds!

How often do I meet with men, particularly those given to drink, who get pounds in their pockets and never know where they go—but they will never leave off till all is spent—be it little or much! Poor fools, poor fools! Yet I wish we could serve Jesus Christ thus unstintedly. No expense should be reckoned so long as we can honor Him and bless His name! Bring forth the alabaster box! Break it—never mind the chips and pieces—pour out the oil and let Jesus have it all! It was thus I served Satan and thus would I serve Christ! Yes, and the poor slaves of sin not only do not stop at expense, but they are not frightened by any kind of loss. Look at how many lose their characters for the sake of one short hour of sin!

How many are wringing their hands, now, because none will trust them and they are cut off from decent society because of one short-lived sin!

They ruin their peace and think nothing of it. A quiet conscience is the brightest of jewels but they fling it away to enjoy their sin! They will lose their health, too, for the sake of indulging their passions. The devil says, "Drink, drink! Drink yourselves blind!" And they do it as eagerly as if it were for their good! They are martyrs for Satan. Never did a Zulu fling himself upon death for his king so recklessly as these servants of Satan yield themselves for his service. They will do anything! They will destroy their health and, what is worst of all, destroy their *souls*, forever, for the sake of sin's brief delights.

They know that there is a Hell. They know that the wrath of God abides forever on guilty men, but they risk all and lose all for sin. In that same way should we serve our Lord! Be willing to lose our character for Him. Be willing to lose our health for Him. Be willing to lose our life for Him. Be willing to lose all, if by any means we may glorify Him whose servant we have become! Oh, who will be my Master's servant? Here He comes! Do you not see Him? He wears upon His head no diadem but a crown of thorns! Running down His cheeks you see the spit flowing! His feet are still rubied with their wounds and His hands are still bejeweled with the marks of the nails!

This is your Master and these are the signs of His love for you! What service will you render Him? That of a mere professor who names His name but loves Him not? That of a cold religionist who renders unwilling service out of fear? I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, do not so dishonor Him! I lift the standard this morning to enlist beneath the banner of Christ those who will be Christ's men and women from head to foot! And happy shall the Church be! And happy the entire Israel of God if a chosen number shall enlist and remain true to their colors! We need no more nominal Christians—lukewarm Christians whom my Master spues out of His mouth!

We need men and women on fire with love—consecrated all over, intensely devoted—who, by the slavery from which they have escaped and by the liberty into which they have entered, are under oath to spend and be spent for the name of Jesus till they have filled the earth with His Glory and made all Heaven ring with His praise! The Lord bless you, Beloved, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 6.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—116 (SONG II), 658, 119 (SONG III).**

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DEATH AND LIFE— THE WAGE AND THE GIFT

NO. 1868

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 1, 1885,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
Romans 6:23.***

IN the fifth chapter of this Epistle, Paul had shown, at considerable length, our justification from sin through the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Savior. Our Apostle goes on to speak of our sanctification in Christ, that as by the righteousness of Christ we have been delivered from the guilt and penalty of sin, so by the power and life of Christ in us we are delivered from the dominion of sin, so as not to live any longer therein. His objective is to show that true servants of God *cannot live in sin*—that by reason of our newness of life in Christ, it is not *possible* that we should continue to yield our members, instruments unto iniquity. We have passed out of the realm of death. We have come into the domain of life and, therefore, we must act according to that life and that life—being in its essence, pure, holy and heavenly—we must proceed from righteousness unto holiness.

While he is driving at this argument, our Apostle incidentally lets fall the text which may be regarded as a Christian proverb, a golden sentence, a Divine statement of Truth worthy to be written across the sky! As Jesus said of the woman who anointed Him to His burial, “Wherever this Gospel shall be preached, in the whole world, there shall also, this, what this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her.” And so I may say, “Wherever the Gospel is preached, there shall this golden sentence which the Apostle has let fall, be repeated as a proof of his clearness in the faith.” Here you have both the *essence* of the Gospel and a statement of that misery from which the Gospel delivers all who believe! “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

First, it will be my painful duty to dwell, for a while, upon *death as the wages of sin*. And then, more joyfully, we shall close our morning's meditation by considering *eternal life as the gift of God*.

I. First, DEATH IS THE WAGES OF SIN. The Apostle has, in his mind's eye, the figure of a soldier receiving his pay. Sin, the captain, pays his hired soldiers a dreadful wage. The original word signifies, “rations,” or some translate it “stipend.” It means the payment which soldiers receive, put in the plural as wages, because pay can be given in different forms—soldiers might be paid in meat, or in meal, or in money, or in part by their clothing, or by lands promised when the time of service came to an end.

Now that which *sin*, the grim captain, pays to those who are under him, is comprehended in this terrible term, “death.” It is a word as full as it is short. A legion of terrors are found around this “king of terrors.” Death is the rations which sin pays to those who enlist beneath its banner!

Now “sin is any want of conformity to, or transgression of the Law of God.” Sin is that evil power which is in the world in rebellion against the good and gracious power of righteousness which sits upon the Throne of God. This evil power of unholiness, untruth, sin, contrariety to the mind of God, holds the great mass of our fellow men beneath its sway at this hour. The rations with which it rewards the most desperate valor of its champions is death.

To set forth this terrible fact, I shall make a few observations. First, *death is the natural result of all sin*. When man acts according to God’s order, he lives, but when he breaks his Maker’s laws, he wrecks himself and does that which causes death. The Lord warned Adam thus—“In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.” Dying does not mean ceasing to *exist*, for Adam did not cease to exist, nor do those who die. The term, “death,” conveys to me no such idea as that of ceasing to exist, or how could I understand that word in 1 John 3:14—“He that loves not his brother abides in death”? How could a man abide in annihilation? A grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, but it does not cease to be! No, rather, it brings forth much fruit. That Adam did die in the day when he ate of that fruit is certain, or else the Lord spoke not the truth. His nature was wrecked and ruined by separation from God and by a fall from that condition which constitutes the true life of man. When any man commits sin, he dies to holiness and purity. No transgression is venial, but every sin is mortal and genders death.

The further a man goes in lust and iniquity, the more dead he becomes to purity and holiness—he loses the power to appreciate the beauties of virtue, or to be disgusted with the abominations of vice. Our nature, at the very outset, has lost that delicacy of perception which comes of healthy life and, as men proceed in unchastity, or injustice, or unbelief, or sin of any kind, they enter deeper and deeper into that awful moral death which is the sure wage of sin. You can sin yourself into an utter deadness of conscience and that is the first wage of your service of sin.

All desire after God and all delight in Him die out where sin reigns. Death is the separation of the soul from God. Alas, this death has passed upon all men! Can two walk together except they are agreed? Man may continue to believe in the existence of God, but for all practical purposes God, to him, is really non-existent. The fool has said in his heart, “No God”—he does not desire God—indeed, he wishes there were no God. As for seeking after God and delighting himself in the Almighty, the sinner knows nothing thereof—his sin has killed him towards all desire for God, or love to Him, or delight in Him. He is to God dead while he lives. “To be carnally minded is death.”

As there is, through sin, a death to God, so is there a death to all spiritual things. “The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” The man does not perceive and discern

spiritual things, for he is dead to them. Talk to him of the sorrows of the spiritual life—he has never felt them and he despises them as mean cant! Speak to him of the joys of the spiritual life and you will soon discover that you are casting your pearls before swine—he has never sought such joys—he does not believe in them and he thinks you a fanatic for talking such nonsense! He is as dead to spiritual realities as a mole is blind to astronomy, or a stone is dead to music! To him it is as though there were neither angel, nor spirit, nor God, nor Mercy Seat, nor Christ, nor holiness, nor Heaven, nor Hell. Giving himself up to the dominion of sin, the sinner receives, more and more, the result of his sin, even as the Apostle says, “Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.” “He that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.”

Inasmuch as in holy and spiritual things dwells the highest happiness of our manhood, this man becomes an unhappy being. At first by deprivation of the joy which spiritual life brings with it and, afterwards, by suffering the inevitable misery of spiritual death. God has justly appointed that if a man will not be conformed to God, he shall not taste of happiness. And if a man will follow after that which is evil, that evil shall, of necessity, bring with it sorrow and unrest—Romans 2:9. Since sin as naturally brings spiritual death upon men as fire brings burning, death is spoken of as the wages of sin.

I would observe next, that *the killing power of some sins is manifest to all observers*, for it operates upon the body and the mind as well as upon the spirit. This spiritual death of which I speak may not strike some of you with fear—you may think it a small matter, though to me, I confess that Hell, however painted, is never so terrible a thing as the death which fills it! Some sins are murderous to a degree which is clear to all. For instance, if a man takes to drunkenness, or if he indulges in lasciviousness, it is manifest even to the unspiritual that the wages of sin is death. See how by many diseases and deliriums the drunk destroys himself—he has only to drink hard enough and his grave will be dug. The horrors which attend upon the filthy lusts of the flesh I will not dare to mention, but many a body rotting above ground shall be my silent witness. All know, or ought to know, the mischief which is occasioned to men and women by the violation of that Law which commands us to be pure!

I spoke, the other day, to an aged Brother who feels the result of natural decay, but is, in all other respects, sound and healthy. I congratulated him upon retaining so much vigor at such an age. “Yes,” he replied, “I owe it to the Grace of God that I never abused myself in my younger days and, therefore, I have a store of strength in my old age.” How many, on the contrary, feel the sins of their youth in their bones and in their flesh! We have all known that sins of the flesh kill the flesh and, therefore, we may infer that sins of the mind kill the mind. Death in any part of our manhood breeds death to the whole. Death drags man down from the power, beauty and joy of life to the wretched existence, the feebleness, the abominableness of death! The man is no more a man, but the wreck of a man—and his body is not the house of his soul, but a ruin in which his poor spirit seeks in vain for comfort. A withered heart, a blinded mind, a blasted being—such is the death which comes of sin. The wage of sin is openly

death when it assumes certain forms and it is always really so, take what form it may.

Now *this tendency is in every case the same*. “The wages of sin is death” everywhere to everyone! It is so not only where you can see it operating upon the body, but where you cannot see it. I may, perhaps, startle you when I say that the wages of sin is death even in the man who has eternal life. Sin has the same deadly character to one as to the other, only an antidote is found. You, my Christian Brothers and Sisters, you cannot fall into sin without its being poison to you, as well as to anybody else! In fact, to you it is more evidently poison than to those hardened to it! If you sin, it destroys your joy, your power in prayer, your confidence towards God. If you have spent evenings in frivolity with worldlings, you have felt the deadening influence of their society. What about your prayers at night? You cannot draw near unto God. The operation of sin upon your spirit is most injurious to your communion with God. You are like a man who has taken a noxious drug, whose fumes are stupefying the brain and sending the heart into slumber! If you, being a child of God, fall into any of the sins which so easily beset you, I am sure you will never find that those sins quicken your Grace or increase your faith—on the contrary, they will work you evil, only evil and that continually.

Sin is deadly to any man and every man, whoever he may be! And were it not for the mighty curative operation which the indwelling Spirit of God is always carrying on upon the Believer’s nature, not one of us would survive the deadly effects of even those sins of infirmity and ignorance into which we fall. I wonder not that Paul cried aloud, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” If a man takes poison, if it does not absolutely kill him, it injures him and thus proves its killing tendency. In certain places the air is pestilential and though a very healthy man may pass through them and seem none the worse, yet this does not disprove the general deadly tendency of the malarious district, nor does it even prove that the healthy person is not secretly but really injured by having been there. Evils caused by sin may be too deep to be at once visible, just as the most serious of diseases have their periods of incubation during which the person affected has no idea of the ill which is hatching within him. Sin is, in itself, an unmitigated evil root which bears wormwood. Sin is death! Wonder not, therefore, that the Apostle says, “the wages of sin is death.” As the sparks fly upward and as the rain fall to the ground, so sin leads to death. As the river takes its leap in the thundering cataract, so must the stream of sin create the fall of death!

Moreover, when we read of anything being a wage, what does it mean? It means that it is a reward for labor. *Death is sin’s due reward and it must be paid*. An employer employs a man and it is due to that man that he should receive his wages. If his employer did not pay him his wages, it would be an act of gross injustice. Now, if sin did not bring upon man death and misery, it would be an injustice! It is necessary for the very standing of the universe that sin should be punished. It must be so! They that sow, must reap. The sin which hires you must pay you. Wrong cannot produce right. Iniquity, transgression and sin must, in the nature of things, become darkness, sorrow, misery, death. Every transgression and

disobedience must receive its just recompense of reward. There is no use in attempting to alter it so long as God and justice reign—those who do sin's work must receive sin's wages—and “the wages of sin is death.”

Now, observe, that this death, *this wage of sin, is in part received by men, now, as soldiers receive their rations, day by day.* It is a terrible thing that they so receive it. The Scripture says, “If you live after the flesh, you shall die”—such a life is a continued dying. Again, it is written, “She that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.” The wrath of God abides on him that believes not on the Son of God—it is there already. I would that men here who are not converted would remember where they now are—they are “dead in trespasses and sins!” O Sirs, you are not merely sick, but you are “dead in your sins!” You are already dead to the highest spiritual enjoyments and can never know them except by passing from death unto life! You cannot rejoice in God, you cannot know spiritual Truth, you cannot taste of spiritual bliss, for your sin deadens you to these things every day that you live in it. To all that which is worthy of a man, to all that which is the true life of manhood, you are dead through sin!

But then a Roman soldier did not enlist merely for his rations. His chief pay often lay in the share of the booty which he received at the end of a war. He expected to share in his captain's triumph and to be a partaker in the spoil. *Death is the ultimate wage of sin.* The death which is here intended is the eternal loss and wreckage of the soul, the destruction of all about it that is worth having, the drifting of the guilty being forever upon the full tide of those evil tendencies which caused his sin and were further increased by sin. When all comes to all, this is where sin will drive you—it will perpetuate itself and so, forever kill the soul to God, goodness, joy and hope. You will enter upon a world in which the highest enjoyments which even God, Himself, can provide for men will be revealed, but they will be hidden from your eyes because you will be utterly incapable of knowing, appreciating and enjoying them!

Being under the ever-growing power of sin, it will become more and more a hopeless thing that you should escape from the death which thus settles down upon you. All the agencies which could have recovered you from the clutches of death have failed to bless you in the life which has come to an end—and now, in eternity, neither the death of Christ, nor the Holy Spirit, nor the ministry of the Word of God, will ever again operate upon you. Till your last moments, you chose sin, and through *eternity* you will still choose it—for this death is the *reward* of your sin! Our Lord Himself said, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Then you shall come to know to the fullest what that awful word, “death,” really means as God intends it. Meanwhile, if you would escape this dreadful doom, read your Bible and see how the result of sin is expounded. As our Savior taught, that future death includes within itself the fire which never shall be quenched, the worm that never dies, the outer darkness, the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and the departure into everlasting fire which begins with a curse from the lips of Love!

Alienation from God is death and can never be otherwise. The Holy Spirit, speaking of the ungodly, says, “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.” This will be the ultimatum of sin! As surely as rivers run into the sea, so surely must sin run into death—there is no help for it! The hard and impenitent heart heaps up for itself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God. Sin inevitably pays to all who are its servants the death by which bondage to its power is sealed forever! O my God, grant us Grace to see what a wretched service this is which pays such terrible rations, now, and gives such a terrible dividing of the spoil in the end!

I shall not longer dwell upon it, the subject is so distressing to me, except that I must add a few solemn words. *The misery of the misery of sin is that it is earned.* Every pang that shall fall upon the ungodly, either in this life or in the life to come, will have this for its sting—that it was duly earned! The sinner may well say, “I worked for this; I laid myself out to earn this; I now feel the misery of what I willfully did.” Death is the result of being out of gear with God. But the sinner puts himself into that condition. If men, in the world to come could say, “this misery of ours has come upon us by an arbitrary arrangement on the part of God, quite apart from its just results,” then they would derive from *that* fact some kind of comfort to their conscience, some easement of their biting remorse. But when they will be obliged to acknowledge that all their woe was their own choice in choosing sin—and is still their own choice in abiding in sin—this will scourge them, indeed!

Their sin is their Hell! The worm which gnaws at the heart of the lost soul is its own willful hate of God and love of evil. O lover of sin, you are under the power of this death—this worse than death! You are dead to God, dead to holiness, dead to love and dead to true happiness—and you have brought this death upon yourself, every part and particle of it! You have chosen that which has made you a wreck and a ruin—and that in the teeth of many warnings and admonitions! It must be so that “the wages of sin is death,” and the terror of that death is that it comes as a wage! Why will you die? Why will you earn death? Why will you choose your own delusions? Have you wickedly determined to prove what outer darkness means? Have you turned your back on God just to see how a man must fare who wars with his Maker? Have not enough dashed themselves to pieces on the rock of sin? Why will you do the same? If you will do so, this shall be the misery of your misery—that you brought it on yourselves and that you rejected the one remedy provided by the Lord in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ!

Note, next—and I speak with the truest compassion—that *it will be the folly of follies to go on working for such wage.* Up to now, they that have worked for sin have found no profit in it. What fruit have you had, any of you, in the things in which you have cause to be ashamed? Has sin ever brought you any real benefit? Come, now, and let us reason together—up till now has doing wrong ever worked for your health, or your happiness? Are you the better for hate, or greed, or lust, or drink? Has sin ever developed your inner self into anything worth calling *life*? You know it has not! It has rather destroyed you than improved you—and you know it. Why, then, will you go further in sin? Have you not learned enough, already, of

the deadly nature of evil? Why will you press further into this barren region which will become more and more a howling wilderness to you as you advance into it? Why will you go where it will be more and more difficult to return? Oh, may God's infinite mercy prevent our being such madmen as to labor in the very fire to earn nothing else but death! God forbid that we should plunge from sin to sin by an inventiveness of rebellion—only to discover more and more what it is to be dead forever to God, Heaven, hope and everything that is to be desired!

Let me add, *it ought to be the grief of griefs to each of us that we have sinned*. Oh, misery, to have worked so long in a service which brings such terrible wages! Though I have known the Lord, now, these 36 years, I still regret most deeply every sin that I have ever committed against the perfect Law of the Lord. I take it that repentance is not the temporary act of a certain period of time, but it is the spirit of the whole life after conversion. When we know we are forgiven, we repent all the more that we ever loved that sin which is so abominable unto God and so evil in every way. Evil seems most evil when we have the clearest sense of Divine Goodness. Its constant wage is death and only death—and our lamentation is that we harbored this assassin, yes, even became its slave! Let us humble ourselves before God because we have played the fool exceedingly by sinning against Him. We have wounded, injured and destroyed ourselves—and all for nothing—our only wage being a still deeper destruction!

Oh you that have never repented, but are still abiding in this spiritual death, how I long that the voice of Jesus may echo in that sepulcher of sin in which you now lie asleep! May it awaken you and make you dread the death that never dies! Oh that you may turn over, as it were, in your grave and begin to moan, "O God, deliver me!" If there is such a thought as that in your soul, I shall hope that the Spirit of God has begun to bring life into your spirit. But what an awful thing it is to have spent all these days—and some of you are getting gray—in only doing that which is your undoing, in giving life to that which is your death! The sole wage that some of you have yet earned is death. Is not this a poor reward for all the risk, labor and perseverance with which you have served sin? God help you to see your folly and repent of it!

One thought more before I leave this point, and that is *it must certainly be a miracle of miracles if any sinner here does not remain forever beneath the power of sin*. Sin has this mischief about it, that it strikes a man with spiritual paralysis—and how can such a palsied one ward off a further blow? It makes the man dead—and to what purpose do we appeal to him that is dead? I have tried to describe what a dreadful thing it is to be dead to God, purity and happiness—but the dead man does not know or care for these things. Our preaching may well be called foolishness, since it is addressed to ears that cannot, or, rather, *will not*, hear. What a miracle of miracles it is when the Divine Life comes streaming down into the heart that sin has chilled into death! What a blessedness it is when God interposes and finds a way by which the wage most justly due shall not be paid!

It is a necessity that every transgression should have its recompense, but in the Person of the Lord Jesus, such an expiation is made that sin

pays its wage of death to Him who did not earn it, while those who did earn it go free! O Sinner, none can save you but the God who made you! You, as dead in sin, are in such a state that you will rot into corruption and go on forever rotting into a yet fouler and filthier corruption throughout the ages—and none can prevent it but Almighty God, Himself! Only one power is capable of affording you the help you need! And that power works through the Lord Jesus, who is, at this moment, mighty to save. Oh, that the miracle of miracles might be worked upon you! But if not, there it stands, “The wages of sin is death.” Alas, I fear that sin will pervert even the ministry of the Word of God and make it a savor of death unto death! This is the first teaching of the text and I pray the Holy Spirit to impress it on every conscience!

II. And now I am glad to pass into liberty and joy while I speak on the second subject—ETERNAL LIFE IS THE GIFT OF GOD.

Note well the change—*death* is a *wage*, but *life* is a *gift*. Sin brings its natural consequences with it, but eternal life is not the purchase of human merit, but the *free gift* of the love of God. The abounding goodness of the Most High, alone, grants life to those who are dead by sin. It is with clear intent to teach us the Doctrine of the Grace of God that the Apostle altered the word here, from wages, to gift. Naturally he would have said, “The wages of sin is death, but the wages of righteousness is eternal life.” But he wished to show us that life comes upon quite a different principle from that upon which death comes. In salvation all is of free gift—in damnation everything is of justice and desert. When a man is lost, he has earned it—when a man is saved, it is *given* him!

Let us notice, first, that *eternal life is imparted by Grace through faith*. When it first enters the soul, it comes as God’s free gift. The dead cannot earn life—the very supposition is absurd! Eternal life enjoyed on earth comes to us as a gift. “What!” says one, “do you mean to say that eternal life comes into the soul *here*?” I say yes, here, or else never! Eternal life must be our possession *now*, for if we die without it, it will never be our possession in the world to come, which is not the state of probation, but of fixed and settled reward! When the flame of eternal life first drops into a man’s heart, it is not as the result of any good works of his which preceded it, for there were none. Nor was it the result of any feelings of his, for good feelings were not there till the life came. Both good works and good feelings are the *fruit* of the heavenly life which enters the heart and makes us conscious of its entrance by working in us repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. “Eternal life is the gift of God in Jesus Christ.” By faith we come consciously into Christ. We trust Him, we rest upon Him, we become one with Him and thus eternal life manifests itself.

Has He not said, “I give unto My sheep eternal life”? And again, “He that believes in Him has everlasting life”? O Beloved, you that have been quickened by the Spirit of God, I am sure you trace that first quickening to the Grace of God! Whatever your doctrinal views may be, you are all agreed in the experimental acknowledgment that by the Grace of God you are what you are. How could you, being dead, give yourself life? How could you, being the slave of sin, set yourself free? But the Lord, in mercy, visited you as surely as the Lord Jesus Christ visited the tomb of Lazarus.

And He spoke with His almighty voice and bade you come to life—and you arose and came to life at His bidding! You remember well the change that came upon you. If any man here could have been literally dead and then could have been made to live, what a wonderful experience his would have been! We should go a long way to hear the story of a man who had been dead and then was made alive again!

But I tell you, his experience, if he could tell it, would not be any more wonderful than our experience as quickened from death in sin, for we have suffered the pains that come through the entrance of life into the soul and we know the joys which afterwards come of it! We have seen the light that life brings to the spiritual eyes! We have felt the emotions that life brings to the quickened heart! We have known the joys which life and, only life, can bring to the entire man! We can tell you something about these things, but if you want to know them to the fullest, you must feel them for yourselves. “You must be born again.” We bear our witness that eternal life within our spirit is not of our earning, but the gift of God!

Beloved, since we received eternal life, we have gone on to grow and we have made great advances in the Divine Life—our little trembling faith has now grown to be full assurance! That zeal of ours which burned so low that we hardly dared to attempt anything for Jesus has now flamed up into full consecration so that we live to His praise! From where has this growth come? Is it not *still* a free gift? Have you received an increase of life by the Law, or has it come to you as the free gift of God? I know what you will say! And if any of you have so grown in Grace that you have become ripe Christians. If any of you have been taught of God so that you can teach others. If any of you have been led by the Holy Spirit so that your sanctification is known unto all men and you have become saintly men and women—I am still sure that your holiness and maturity are *gifts received*—not wages earned! I will put the question to you again—Did this abundant life come to you by the works of the Law, or by Grace through faith which is in Christ Jesus? Your instantaneous answer is, “It is all of Grace, in the latter as well as in the earlier stages.” Yes, in every degree, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus!

Yes, and when we get to Heaven and the eternal life shall there be developed as a bud opens into a full-blown rose—when our life shall embrace God’s life and God’s life shall encompass ours; when we shall be abundantly alive to everything that is holy, Divine, heavenly, blessed and eternally glorious—oh, then we shall confess that our life was all of the Grace of God, the free gift of God in Jesus Christ our Lord! I am sure that our heavenly education will only make us know more and more fully that while death is the well-earned wages of sin, eternal life is, from beginning to end, the gift of infinite Grace.

Beloved, observe gratefully what a wonderful gift this is—“*the gift of God*”—the gift which Jesus bestows upon every Believer, for, “to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” How express is our Lord’s statement—“He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God

abides in him"! What a life this is! It must be of a wonderful sort because it is called, "life," *par excellence*, emphatically, "life," true life, real life, essential life! This does not mean mere existence, as some vainly talk. There never was a greater blunder than to confuse life with existence, or death with non-existence! These are two totally different and distinct ideas. The life of man means the existence of man as he ought to exist—in union with God and, consequently, in holiness, purity, health and happiness!

Man, as God intended him to be, is man enjoying life—man, as sin makes men—is man abiding in death. All that man can receive of joy and honor, the Lord gives to man to constitute eternal life in the world to come. What a life is this! The life that is imparted to us in regeneration is God's own life, brought into us by "the living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever." We are akin to God by the new birth and by loving union with His Son, Jesus Christ. What must life mean in God's sense of it?

Moreover, we have life *eternal*, too, never ending. Whatever else may end, this never can. It can neither be killed by temptation, nor destroyed by trial, nor quenched by death, nor worn out by the ages. The gift of the eternal God is eternal life! Those who talk about a man having everlasting life and losing it, do not know the force of language. If a man has eternal life, it is eternal and cannot, therefore, end or be lost! If it is everlasting, it is "everlasting!" To lose it would prove that it was *not* everlasting. No, if you have eternal life, you can never perish! If God has bestowed it upon you, it will not be recalled, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." This eternal life is evidently a free gift, for how could any man obtain it in any other way? It is too precious to be bought, too Divine to be made by man! If it had to be earned, how could you have earned it? You, I mean, who have already earned death! The wage due to you, already, was death—and by that wage you were effectually shut out all possibility of ever earning life. Indeed, the *earning* of life seems to me to be, from the beginning, out of the question. It has come to us as a free gift—it could not come in any other way.

Furthermore, remember that it is life *in Jesus*. The, "through," of our version is, "in," in the original. We are in everlasting union with the blessed Person of the Son of God and, therefore, we live! To be in Christ is a mystery of bliss. The Apostle felt, again, that this was an occasion for rehearsing our blessed Master's names and titles of honor—"in Jesus Christ our Lord." I noted to you on a former occasion how, at certain seasons, the various honors and titles of great men are proclaimed by heralds with becoming state and so here, to the praise of the Lord Jesus, Paul writes His full degree—"Eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord." He writes at large the august name before which every knee shall bow and he links our life with Him. Here we read the cheering and precious name of Jesus! By that name He is nearest to man—when He was born into our nature, He was named Jesus, "for He shall save His people from their sins." The life which comes in connection with Him is salvation from sin! In this Savior is life.

The next name is, "Christ," or, Anointed, by which name He is nearest to God being sent forth and anointed of God to treat with us on God's be-

half. He is the Lord's Christ and our Jesus. Next, He is called, "Our Lord." Herein lies the Glory of our anointed Savior—we, through Grace, becoming servants, participate in the life and Glory of our Lord. He reigns as our Lord and by His reigning power He shows Himself to be the Lord and Giver of life. "All live unto Him." Our Lord has life in Himself and breathes it into us! What a life this is—a life saved from sin, a life anointed of the Holy Spirit, a life in union with Him who is Lord of All! This is the life which is peculiarly the gift of God.

Thus I have set forth this doctrine and I desire to apply it by adding a little more of practical importance. First, *let us come at this time, one and all, and receive this Divine Life as a gift in Christ Jesus.* If any of you have been working for it by going about to establish your own righteousness, I beseech you to end the foolish labor by submitting yourselves to the righteousness of God! If you have been trying to *feel* so much, or to *pray* so much, or to *mourn* so much, forbear from thus offering a price and come and receive life as a *free gift* from your God! Pull down the idol of your pride and humbly sue for pardoning Grace on the plea of mercy! Believe and live! You are not called upon to *earn* life, but to *receive* it—receive it as freely as your lungs take in the air you breathe! If you are dead in sin at this moment, yet the Gospel of Life has come near to you. With that Gospel, there comes the life-giving wind of the Eternal Spirit. He can call you out of your ruin, wreckage and death—and make you live. This is His word, "Awake, you that sleep, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give you life."

Will you have it as a gift? If there is any true life in you, your answer will be quick and hearty. You will be lost if you do not receive this gift! Your earnings will be paid into your bosom and dread will be the death which will settle down upon you. The acceptance of a free gift would not be difficult if we were not proud. Accept it—God help you to accept it at once! Even that *acceptance* will be God's gift, for the will to live is life—and all true life, from beginning to end, is entirely of the Lord!

Beloved, have we accepted that free gift of eternal life? *Let us abide in it.* Let us never be tempted to try the Law of Merit. Let us never attempt to live by our earnings. No doubt eternal life is a reward in one sense, but it is always a reward of *Grace*, not a reward of *debt*. The Lord shall give us a crown of life at last as a reward, but even then we shall confess that He first gave us the work by which the crown was won! The Lord first *gives* us good works and *then* rewards us for them (Eph. 2:10)! The labor of love is, in itself, a *gift* of love! Grace reigns all along—not only in removing sin, but in working virtue.

Finally, are we now abiding in eternal life, trusting in the Son of God and clinging to His garment? Then *let us live to His Glory.* Do we know that because He lives, we shall also live? If so, let us show, by our gratitude, how greatly we prize this gift! We dwell in a world where death is manifesting itself in various forms of corruption everywhere—therefore let us remember from what the Lord has delivered us! Let no man boast in his heart that he is not subject to the vile influences which hold the world in its corruption. Let no pride, because of our new life, ever cross our spirit. Chase every such thought as that away with detestation! If our life

is of Grace, there is no room for boasting, but much space for soul-humbling. When you walk the streets and hear the groans of the dead in the form of oaths and blasphemies, thank the Lord that you have been taught a more living language! Think of drunkenness and lust as the worms that are bred of the putridity of the death which comes of sin! You are disgusted and horrified, my Brothers and Sisters, but these things would have been in *you*, also, but for the Grace of God! We are like living men shut up in a morgue—wherever we turn we see the dreary works of death—but all this should make us grateful to the sacred Power which has brought us out of death into spiritual life.

As for others, let us anxiously ask the question—“Can these dry bones live?” Then let us be obedient to the heavenly vision when the Divine Word says to us, “Son of man, prophesy upon these bones.” We must cherish the faith which will enable us to do this! Moreover, a sight of the universal death of unrenewed nature should drive us to prayer, so that we cry, “Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” This prayer being offered, we should live in hopeful expectancy that the Lord will open the graves of His people and cause them to come forth and live by His Spirit. Oh for Grace to prophesy believingly upon these bones and say, “O you dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live.” Beloved, we shall yet see them stand up an exceedingly great army, quickened of the Lord our God! He delights to burst the bonds of death! Resurrection is one of His chief glories. He heralds resurrection work with trumpets, angels and a glorious high throne because He delights in it!

The living Jehovah rejoices to give life and especially to give it to the dead. Corruption flies before Him! Grave clothes are cut and sepulchers are broken open. “I am the resurrection and the life,” says Jesus, and so He is, even at this hour! O God, save this congregation to the praise of the Glory of Your Grace, wherein You have made us to live and to be accepted in Your well-beloved Son! Amen and Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 6.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—100 (VER. I), 238, 474.**

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THE SOUL'S GREAT CRISIS

NO. 3475

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1915.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 24, 1870.**

***“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.”
Romans 7:8, 9.***

I REMEMBER once reading a chapter of a book which commenced with this heading, “The Inside of the World.” The book, of course, was occupied very much with geology and to speculations about the interior of the globe. Tonight I want you to consider not the inside of the world, but the little world within us, that microcosm, the human heart, and some strange things that happen therein—and especially one singular and mysterious work which goes on in the minds of those who become the children of God. They are brought from one state into another by a very remarkable process. A process which, while they are undergoing it, they do not understand. And for need of knowing what it is and what God is driving at, some of them are often driven to very great despondency—some even to despair. Whereas if they would see in the text what I shall try to hold up and expound—a kind of mirror in which they might see a reflection of their hearts and their own experience—they might, perhaps, come into light and liberty all the sooner. May it be so, even now!

We shall first speak of the words of the Apostle in this way. Here is *life without the Law of God*. Here is, secondly, *sin coming to the Light of God*. And here is, thirdly, *the man himself—death brought by the Law to him*. And, first, let me speak of—

I. LIFE WITHOUT THE LAW OF GOD.

The Apostle says that sin was at one time dead in him and he was alive without the Law of God. Now, when he says, “without the law,” he does not mean that he never heard the Law of God read, for it was read in the synagogue every Sabbath. He does not mean that he did not know it, for he was probably acquainted with every letter of it. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel and he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees according to his own profession—and they were a sect much addicted to the study not only of the Law of God, but of the jots and tittles of it—they held, in fact, constant discussions and disputes with one another about the minute particulars of that Law.

He knew the Law in the letter of it, and understood it so far as it could be understood from his point of view, but yet he says he was alive without the Law, by which he means this—*the Law had never come home to his heart and to his conscience*. It was because of this, therefore, that he was living in a state of false security. He thought he had kept it. He believed that if anyone in the world had kept the Commandments from his youth up, he, Saul of Tarsus, was that man! He did not dread dying, or standing before the Judgment Seat of God—he felt himself perfectly ready for that. Wrapped up in his own Law-keeping, he felt himself perfectly secure. He was at ease and peace. Nothing disturbed him. He did not lie sleepless on his bed at night, thinking of his iniquity—on the contrary, he lulled himself to sleep with some such a prayer as this—“God, I thank You I am not as other men are—an adulterer or extortioner, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week. I pay tithes of all I possess.” He thought he was perfectly safe! He thought that he was doing all he ought to do, leaving nothing undone that he ought to have done! He thought that he was, in fact, in excellent repute in Heaven, and he was certainly on the very best possible terms with himself! The consequence of this was that he was alive without the Law of God.

In another sense *his security brought him pride*—he looked down upon all others. If by chance a Publican met him in the street, he gave him all the room he could. If he ever passed by a woman that was a sinner, he took care to look quite another way, or to let her see how scornfully he thought of her. If, perchance, he mentioned a Gentile, he called him a dog—for this great one, Saul of Tarsus, had so kept the Law of God, and felt so quiet and peaceful within, that he could afford to stand on the very pinnacle of eminence and look down with derision on those poorer mortals who were not so good as he was!

The next step that Paul, who was a thorough-going one, took—*he indulged in persecution*—for as soon as you think yourself better than others, you become the judge of others! And the next step is to carry out your own sentence upon others. And inasmuch as this Saul of Tarsus heard that there were some who did not believe that they were as good as he, who did not profess to be saved, as he expected to be by his own works, but who talked of one Jesus, who was the Son of God, who had died for their sins and who had risen from the dead and given them pardon—when he heard that they were trusting to the merits of this Glorious One, whom, they said, had ascended to the right hand of God, he was exceedingly angry with them! Why, they were opposed to his theory of his own excellence! They were practically protesting against his very comfortable state of mind! They were, in fact, setting up altogether an opposition Doctrine which laid the axe to the root of the tree of his belief and might fell the goodly tree beneath which he found such shelter! So he began at once to haul them to prison, to compel them to blaspheme in

the name of Christ, if he could, and when he had harried them through Jerusalem, and punished them with all his might in his own country! Then he must seek letters from the high priest that he might go to Damascus to carry out the same measures there! Paul was indeed alive! He was not only as good as he ought to be, but he was rather better—and he now set out to make other people better. If he could not make men better by his talking to them, he would make them better by scourging and killing them! Great “I,” how lofty it stood! How it held up its head! “I was alive,” he said. But alas, Paul, you did not understand the Law of God that soon would have cut you down and killed you, and killed your, “I,” and brained you and left you dead on the spot!

Now in what respect was Paul alive without the Law? To answer this we will not speak so much of Paul as of many others who are in the same state. Some are alive without the Law of God because *they have never seen the spirituality of it*. Their notion was that, “you shall not commit adultery” meant simply an act of uncleanness. Therefore they felt perfectly innocent. But if they had known that it meant a great deal more—that the Law of God condemned them if there had been even an unclean *thought*, and that uncleanness of *heart* was as obnoxious to God as uncleanness of life, then their life would soon have come to an end—their life of pride and security—for they would have found that the Law would not give them the shelter, though they thought it did. “You shall not kill.” Why, there is no man here, I suppose, but what would say, “I am clear there. I have never killed anybody.” But, my dear Friend, I can understand your being alive without the Law of God, if you do not know as you ought to know that that Commandment means that even *anger is murder*—and he who is angry with his brother, has killed him in his heart! What if you have never struck him? Have you ever wanted to? What if it never came to actually knocking him to the ground? Yet if you have spoken bitter words—these show what you would have done and this is set down in God’s Book as being a sin—a sin for which He will require you to give an account at the Last Great Day!

Now Paul had never seen this, but once upon a time, and that was through the little window of that Commandment, “You shall not covet,” Paul saw the Light of God and he said to himself, “What? Does this Law condemn me for having a covetous *desire*?” “Ah, then,” he said, “I am not as secure as I thought I was! I cannot afford to be proud. I cannot afford to judge others. I must judge myself.” He lived in that proud, haughty life because he did not understand the Law of God.

There are many others who are living in the same self-righteous way—good self-righteous people, wrapping themselves up in the garment of their goodness because they have really been very careless about what the Law is. They have not looked into it. Whether there is a Law of God or not, has really never been thoroughly and deeply considered by them.

They know it as a matter of religious teaching, but nothing more. O Sir, how easily ought your conscience to convict you, for when a subject does not even care to know whether a king has a law or not, what a traitor he is! When he says, "It is no business of mine to know the king's will. I do not care what the king's will is"—why, if he has committed no overt offense, that of itself is an offense! He stands out as one convicted of being a traitor and guilty of sedition and treason against his king!

There are others who say in their heart, if they won't put it into words, for most fools, according to David, are not such fools as to speak out loud—"The fool has said *in his heart*," says David—they say *in their heart*, "How does God know, and is there knowledge with the Most High? What if we do break His Law—does He care about it?" And then they cap it all by saying, "Is He not very merciful? He won't be severe with us poor creatures. What if we have offended? We will whisper a prayer or two when we are dying—and all will be blotted out." You think that God is such an One as yourself! Because you can trifle with sin, you imagine Jehovah can do so! Oh, if you did but know His Law, did but understand how inflexible it is and how true is His declaration that He will by no means spare the guilty, which means He will by no means spare *you*, you would soon lay aside this easy-going life of yours and no longer could you live as you now live! You would be slain by the Word of the Lord!

In addition to these, I have no doubt that there are many professors of religion who are living without the Law of God. I mean that they are living reputable, respectable Christian lives and they, themselves, believe they are converted, but they are alive without the Law. That is, there is mingled with their faith in Christ some sort of trust in themselves. They have never seen that the Law puts an end to all human power, strength and merit as any assistance to Christ in the matter of salvation. I have sometimes wished that some of our younger Brothers and Sisters who do not seem to have felt very deeply in their hearts the work of Christ, might for once feel what it is for the Commandment to come into their souls and lay them prostrate, for if it ever did, then their new life which they would receive from Christ would be of a deeper and, I trust, of a more effective power on their hearts and lives, and upon their general walk towards Christ and His Church.

You see then, dear Friends, there is such a thing as being alive without the Law of God. A man may be in such a state as to think it is all right because he does not know the Law—and let me say there is no more foolish and dangerous condition in the world than this! A man who has never cared about the Law of God and does not know it and, therefore, concludes that he is righteous, is like a person who thinks he is rich, or tries to think he is—and keeps up a large house and his carriage with a large expenditure. Can he afford it? How about his books? Well, he has had some few difficulties but he met one debt by a loan, and

when that loan comes due he will meet that with another. He says he is all right—he believes he is all right—he thinks he is all right! Does he ever look at his books? Oh, no! He says they are very dry reading. He does not need any stock taking—he does not want anybody to look into his affairs. Now without any kind of guesswork, every business man knows how that will end! He knows that it means bankruptcy—ruin. So it does! With a man who says, “All right, I do not care to enquire about my *soul-affairs*. I dare say it is as I hope it is—I think it is, and I am not going to concern myself about it.” It will end in everlasting bankruptcy, my dear Hearer—sure to, sure to—it cannot be anything else! You are like a ship at sea that ought to have been long ago given up to the ship breaker. There she is out at sea. The captain does not care to enquire whether the timbers are sound, or whether they are well caulked, or whether the pumps will work well or not. She has seemed to go very well in fair weather and he does not care to know anything else. There is none of us who would like to go to sea in a vessel like that! We would want to know whether the vessel would stand the strain of a storm, whether she was seaworthy and, if she were not so, we would rather stay on shore! Many of you are in rotten vessels tonight—ships that are worm-eaten through and through, and you will find them go to pieces when once a storm comes up! God have mercy upon you and deliver you from these false hopes, and this living without His Law! And may the Law of God come on board your vessel even now, and begin to test the timbers, and if you should stand by and discover that the thing is only fit to be broken up, why, then I trust you will get on board a better vessel, a vessel that shall stand all storms, of whom Christ is the Captain—a vessel which, indeed, is Christ, Himself. Now we must pass on to the second point.

II. THE REVIVAL OF SIN.

Paul says, “The commandment came, and sin revived.” It seemed to him before as if it were quite dead. He did not believe he had any great sin in him. Other people might have, but Saul of Tarsus was so good there could not be much sin in him. “But when the commandment came, sin revived.” What does it mean by the commandment coming? It means this, that he understood its meaning. He never saw it before—that it had respect to his thoughts, his wishes and desires. Now that he saw this, sin revived in him! It means, next, that he saw that the Law was not a thing to be trifled with, that the Law of God was not meant to be written and there to lie like a dead letter, but that God had sworn by Himself that He would carry out that Law and would not spare those who dared to break it! That He would execute judgment upon all those who defy Him to His face and break His Commandments. When Saul saw that, the commandment had come, and sin revived. But best of all, this Saul of Tarsus felt, as I know many of you have, the power of the Law working on the soul. There is no sharper instrument with which to lance the soul than

the broken Law of God! There is no harrow that can tear the soul like that harrow of the Ten Commandments. There is no arrow that can go forth and slay the soul's self-satisfaction as God's Commandments do when we see that they are holy, just, good—and that we have broken every one of them—broken them a thousand times, and that every breach of the Law is calling out for vengeance against us! It is a dreadful thing, but a necessary thing, that we should all of us have the Commandments thus coming home to us. Paul thought they were buried. But as soon as the commandments came, sin revived. He means by that that he now saw that sins that had laid buried without monuments suddenly burst their cerements and rose up like the dead on the day of resurrection. "There they are," he seemed to say—"the Commandments have come, and my sins, like a great cloud, have revived—they live, and every one points at and accuses me as the Law of God condemns me."

Then sin revived in another sense, for Paul said to himself, "How could God have given me such a Law? How can He be so stern and strict? I do not love this Law—neither do I love God." He thought he did until then. When he understood the Law, he found that he did not either love God or the Law—and the rebellion which had always been in his spirit now began to show itself—and He began to feel in his heart a hatred against the Law of God that condemned him, and against the God whom he had offended. Sin revived! The very display of the Law produced it and yet though it was thus manifested, it had always been there! Saul did not know it, but sin had always been there—all that the Law did was to come with a candle and just show him what he never thought was there! A person goes down into a cellar that has been shut up for a long time and there are lots of foul creatures on the floor and spiders on the walls. He goes down without a candle, and he does not see them. But another time he takes the candle—and how soon he wishes to get out of the place! Now the candle shows him the spiders and the other loathsome things, but it does not *make* them, it only shows what existed before. The Law of God does that. Perhaps those loathsome creatures were all quiet while there was darkness, but when the candle came, there they scurried to and fro to escape its light! All the things which otherwise had slept. And when the Law comes, it just does that—it lets out all the loathsomeness of our sinful nature which had been dammed up before—it lets it go forth and we find out that it was there, already, and always there, and then, like the writer of this memorable Epistle, we say, "Sin revived and I died."

"A strange experience!" you will tell me, but I assure you it is only the usual experience of the children of God! It is the way in which we have been brought to Christ! The Law of God has come to us, and sin has revived in us, and we have died. Now the third point is to show what Paul means by saying he "died."

III. THE MEANING OF DEATH THROUGH THE LAW.

What died in Paul was that which ought never to have lived. It was that great, "I," in Paul—"sin revived, and I died"—that, "I," that used to say, "I thank You that I am not as other men"—that, "I," that folded its arms in satisfied security—that, "I" that bent its knee in prayer, but never bowed down the heart in penitence—that, "I," died! The Law of God killed it. It could not live in such light as that. It was a creature only fit for darkness—and when the Law came, this great, "I," died!

And I think it means this. First, he died in this respect—*he saw he was condemned to die*. He heard pronounced upon himself the sentence of condemnation! He had just thought so—he would have felt insulted if anybody had told him so, but now he seemed to see the great Judge of All summoning him before Him and accusing him of having broken His commands and saying, "Depart you cursed one, for you have broken My Law." He died, then, in the sense that he felt condemnation pronounced upon him. A dreadful feeling, that!

Then next, *all his hopes from his past life died*. He used to look back with great comfort upon his fasting, his alms-giving and temple attendance—but now he felt, "What an awful hypocrite I have been all along, for I have only been there with my body—my *heart* never went there—I was keeping God's Laws, I thought, but I never loved that Law at all. I find now I hated it. Or, if I had understood what it was, I would have hated it. I only loved the shell of it. I did not know its kernel. I merely loved its outward breath because I hoped to gain by it, but the Law, itself, I did not love, nor did I love God, either." So all the past withered up, and the Paul—the Saul—the, "I," that had been so great as to his past, died.

And then again, *all his hopes as to the future died*. Before, when he had fallen into any outward sin, he had always said to himself, "Never mind, we will do better next time. We shall mend this matter yet—we will keep the Law in future—we will make the phylacteries wider and the garments broader. But now he saw that—

***"Could his tears forever flow,
Could his zeal no respite know,
All for sin could not atone."***

He had broken the Law of God and all attempts to keep it in the future could not mend the past breaches and transgressions! And he knew that as he had broken it in the past, he would be sure to break it in the future—and in that respect he died.

And then again, all his powers seemed to die. Formerly he had said, "I can keep the Law," but now, when he saw the blaze of this mysterious holiness, when he perceived that every thought, word and wish would condemn him, he sat at the foot of Sinai and trembled and entreated that those words might not be spoken to him anymore. He felt the Law was too great, too terrible for him to ever hope to keep it! And he fell at the

feet of the Law as one that was dead. So died all his hopes. Now he felt that he was condemned forever. The last ray of hope was gone. And mark, there is no despair that is more deep than the despair of one who was once quite secure, and even boastful! Many have I seen who were once self-righteous—and I have pitied them from my heart. When God has turned His blazing light of Truth on all their life, righteousness has gone! Oh, they have not known what to do—they have wished they had never been born! Like John Bunyan, they have wished they had been frogs or toads sooner than be men! They had felt they could have cursed the day of their birth, now that all hope was gone once and for all. And when they have told me of this, all I could do was to smile in their faces and say, “Thank God! I am very glad of it,” and then they have thought me cruel, but I have said, “It must be so, for now you will be saved.” God must clear away all your rubbish before He can give you His Grace!

So with this I shall conclude. If there are any of you tonight passing through what I have described—if you are as one dead tonight because your former hopes have been killed by the Law of God, I am so glad of it! But let me tell you, do not think your case an unusual one. Do not go home and say, “I have been killed.” Thousands of God’s servants have been the same. Ah, when I had made the discovery that I had broken God’s Law so often, and that I must perish and be cast into Hell on account of my sins, I remember what sin worked in me and what loathing of myself I felt—and that by the space of months and years together—because I did not hear the Gospel fully preached, for, had I, I would have had peace much sooner! Now you, dear Friends, will be helped tonight when I tell you it is nothing unusual. It is a Valley of the Shadow of Death, but most pilgrims go through it, and all go through it more or less—and again, I say I am glad of it! When the Countess of Huntingdon said to Whitfield, “What makes you look so sad, Mr. Whitfield?” he replied, “Oh, I may well look sad, for I am lost.” “Oh,” she said, “Mr. Whitfield, I am so glad, for Jesus Christ came to seek and save that which was lost.” I could preach all night if I had a congregation that felt themselves quite lost—because then they would be sure to be saved! It would be no use preaching otherwise. When the Law once preaches, it makes you weep and feel you are lost. And then, when you are like the soil that is well plowed ready for the seed to be scattered in the furrows, the precious Seed of God will be scattered, and, perhaps, before long, up springs the harvest—you are blessed and God is glorified!

Let me say to any who have been killed by the Law, “It was necessary that you should be. You may now understand where salvation lies. You have no merits of your own—you do not need any. Christ has all the merits that you need to take you to Heaven.” But can you get Christ’s merit? Yes, get it tonight! If you will, with your heart, believe on the Lord Jesus, and with your mouth make confession of Him, you shall be saved. If you

will trust Him to save you, He will save you and His merit shall be yours! As long as you have any good in yourself, I know you will have nothing from Christ. But when all your hope from your own merit is laid at the foot of the Law, then what an opportunity there is for the Gospel to come in! It comes, and it says this, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It points you to Jesus crucified, who carried your sins, who was punished instead of you—shows you how God's Justice has been satisfied in Christ. Believe and live! Take the mercy God freely offers you. Take it without money and without price. Take it without fitness or preparation. Take it now! Simply take it as God presents it to you. Just as you are without having any plea but the one plea that Jesus died—*just as you are*—take Jesus, and put yourself on Him. What can you do otherwise, you dead one? What can you do otherwise, you filthy one? You are condemned, you are guilty—God has pronounced your sentence! Touch the silver scepter freely held out to you now. You cannot be saved by works. Let others try it if they will—you cannot, you know you cannot! Oh, then, be saved by Grace! God freely offers it by His dear Son in the preached Gospel. He will not deny it to any one of you, however filthy you may have been, or however vile you may feel yourself to be! You have but to come, but to trust, but to believe in Jesus, but to rely upon Him—to throw yourself upon Him, to lean on Him, to hang on Him, to depend on Him—and you will be saved!

Oh, that the Lord may grant you Grace to do so! And I know He will! If you have been slain by the Law, He will make you alive by the Gospel—for have you never read the words, "I kill and I make alive. I wound and I heal"? Oh, the mercy of that, "I heal"! He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds! He will have regard to the prayer of the destitute. He will not despise their prayers. "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks about me"—is not that you again? "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Ah, Soul, what good news for you, that if the Law has killed you, you did not need the Law—you have got Christ, who is better! You can still have salvation, though you forfeited it by your own works. You can have that from mercy which you cannot have from justice! You may have that from Jesus which you might never have from Moses. I want to preach but a short sermon. Sometimes they are all the better remembered. God bless you, and write His Truth on your hearts! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 110; ROMANS 2:25-29; 3.**

PSALM 110.

Verses 1, 2. *The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Your*

strength out of Zion: rule You in the midst of Your enemies. You do not need a comment upon this Psalm when you remember how our Lord applied it to Himself. It is David speaking concerning the Son of David, who is also David's Lord and our King, who at this hour is sitting at the right hand of Jehovah, the Lord of All, waiting until His monarchy shall be extended visibly over all creation!

3. *Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: You have the dew of Your youth.* Christ, like the rising sun, shall not come alone in His brightness, but, as with the sun we see an innumerable company of sparkling dewdrops, so shall the forces of Christ be as numerous as the drops of the morning dew which spring from the womb of the morning! God's Infinite Grace shall lead forth willing troops when Christ shall come!

4. *The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.* That is, a priestly King, a kingly Priest—Priest and King united in one Person!

5. *The Lord at Your right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.* No power shall stand against our coming Lord! When He once comes to the battle, the victory shall be sure!

6, 7. *He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head.* Like a stern warrior that seeks not luxury, like Gideon's men that lapped, He shall drink of the brook as He marches on to the conflict. And because He scorns self-indulgence and human luxury, therefore shall He be exalted King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

ROMANS 2:25-29.

Verse 25. *For circumcision verily profits, if you keep the Law: but if you are a breaker of the Law, your 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 keeps the righteousness of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfills the Law, judge you, who by the letter and circumcision 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 Holy 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 Divine Grace. It is not so. He is not a Christian who is one outwardly—he is a Christian who is one inwardly.

ROMANS 3.

Verses 1, 2. *What advantage then has 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 of God when other men had not. The voice of God spoke 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! Yes, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That You might be justified in Your sayings, and might overcome when You are judged. But if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who takes vengeance? (I speak as a man). God forbid! For then how shall God judge the world? For if the Truth of God has more abounded through my lie unto His glory: why am I yet also judged as a sinner?* Here is another objection—if it is so that, somehow or other, the sin of man is overruled 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 are 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 understands, there is none that seeks 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 does good, no not one.* What can be more expressive? What can be more plain than this? The whole human 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 pas-

sion! So we thought till lately—we thought we were all so civilized that we were to have no more war. 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 whatever things the Law says, it says 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 mirror that shows us our blots, but it does not wash them away. The Law of God 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 in 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! And 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 has 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 who believes in Jesus. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded." It is shut out. If men are saved not at all by works, but altogether by the Free Grace of God through the merits of Christ, then boasting has the gate shut in its face! But by what law is boasting shut out?*

27. *Where is boasting then?* "By works?" No, but by the law of faith.

27. *It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.* If we were to say God justified man on the ground of the Law of God without their perfectly keeping it, we would make void the Law of God! But when we teach that God justifies men by His Free Grace and mercy on account of Christ's having kept the Law and having fulfilled all its demands, we do not make void the Law—we establish it!

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

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

THE MONSTER DRAGGED TO LIGHT

NO. 1095

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 9, 1873,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good,
that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.”*
Romans 7:13.

*“Philosophers have measured mountains
Fathom'd the depths of seas, of states, and kings,
Walked with a staff to Heaven and traced fountains:
But there are two vast, spacious things,
The which to measure it does more behoove:
Yet few there are that sound them—
Sin and Love.”*

So sang George Herbert, that sweet and saintly poet, and of one of those “two vast spacious things” we are about to speak on this morning—namely, sin. May the Holy Spirit direct us in thought and speech while in-to the very center of our subject we plunge at once, keeping to the words of our text.

I. Our first point to consider this morning shall be that TO MANY MEN SIN DOES NOT APPEAR SIN. Yes, and in all men in their natural blindness there is an ignorance of what sin is. It needs the power of the Divine Omnipotence, the voice of that same Majesty, which said, “Let there be light,” and there was light to illuminate the human mind, or else it will remain in darkness as to much of its own actual sin and the deep and deadly evil which belongs to it. Man, with wretched perverseness of misconception, abides content in a wrong idea of it. His deeds are evil and he will not come to the light lest he should know more concerning that evil than he wishes to know.

Moreover, such is the power of self-esteem that though sin abounds in the sinner he will not readily be brought to feel or confess its existence. There are men in this world, steeped up to the throat in iniquity, who never dream that they have committed anything worse than little faults. There are those whose souls are saturated with it till they are like the wool that has been lying in the scarlet dye—and yet they conceive themselves as white as snow. This is due in part to that dullness of conscience which is the result of the Fall. Though I have heard 10,000 times that *conscience* is the deputy of God in the soul of man, I have never been able to subscribe to that dogma.

It is no such thing! In many persons conscience is perverted. In others only a fragment of it remains and in all it is fallible and subject to aberrations. Conscience is in all men a thing of degrees dependent upon education, example and previous character. It is an eye of the soul, but it is frequently partly blind and weak and always needs light from above or else it

does but mock the soul. Conscience is a faculty of the mind, which, like every other, has suffered serious damage through our natural depravity and it is by no means perfect. It is only the understanding acting upon moral subjects and upon such matters it often puts bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness. Therefore it is that men's sins do not appear to them to be sin.

In all probability there is not one, even among renewed men, who fully knows the evil of sin nor will there be until in Heaven we shall be perfect. And then, when we shall see the perfection of Divine holiness, we shall understand how black a thing was sin. Men who have lived underground all their lives do not know how dark the mine is, nor can they know it until they stand in the blaze of a summer's noon. In a great measure, our inability to see sin arises from the exceedingly deceitfulness both of sin and of the human heart. Sin assumes the brightest forms even as Satan attires himself as an angel of light. Such a thing as iniquity walking abroad in its own nakedness is seldom seen—like Jezebel it attires its head and paints its face. And, indeed, the heart loves to have it so and is eager to be deceived.

We will, if we can, extenuate our faults. We are all very quick-sighted to perceive something, which, if it does not quite excuse our fault, at all events prevents its being placed in the first-class of atrocities. Sometimes we will not understand the Commandment. We are *willing* not to know its force and stringency. It is too keen and sharp and we try to blunt its edge. If we can find a milder meaning for it we are glad to do so, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"—therefore it invents a thousand falsehoods. As the deceivableness of sin is very great, so that it adorns itself with the colors of righteousness and makes men believe that they are pleasing God when they are offending Him, so is man, himself, an eager self-deceiver and, like the fool in Solomon's Proverbs, he readily follows the flatterer.

In most men, their not seeing sin to be sin arises from their ignorance of the spirituality of the Law. Men read the Ten Commandments and they suppose them to mean nothing more than the superficial sense. If they read, for instance, "You shall do no murder," straightway they say, "I have never broken that Law." But they forget that he that hates his brother is a murderer and that unrighteous anger is a distinct violation of the command. If I willfully do anything which tends to destroy or shorten life, either my own or my neighbor's, I am breaking the Commandment.

A man finds it written, "You shall not commit adultery." "Well, well," he says, "I am clear there." Straightway he plumes himself upon the supposition that he is chastity itself. But if he is given to understand that the command touches the heart and that a licentious *look* is adultery, and that even a *desire* to do that which is evil condemns the soul, then straightway he sees things in a very different light and sees that to be sin which had never troubled him before. Commonly—yes, *universally*—until the Spirit of God comes into the soul there is a total ignorance as to what the Law means. Men say, with a light heart, "Lord, have mercy upon us,

and incline our hearts to keep this Law.” But, if they did but know it, they would say, “Lord, have mercy upon us, and cleanse us of our innumerable infractions of a Law which we cannot keep and which must forever condemn us as long as we abide under its power.”

Thus you see a few of the reasons why sin does not appear in its true light to the unconverted, but cheats impenitent and self-righteous minds. This is one of the most deplorable results of sin. It injures us most by taking from us the capacity to know how much we are injured. It undermines the man’s constitution and yet leads him to boast of unfailing health. It makes him a beggar and tells him he is rich. It strips him and makes him glory in his fancied robes. In this it resembles slavery, which, by degrees eats into the soul and makes a man content in his chains. Bondage at length degrades a man so that at last he forgets the misery of slavery and the dignity of freedom and is unable to strike the blow when a happy hour offers him the chance of liberty.

Sin, like the deadly frost of the northern regions, benumbs its victim before it slays him. Man is so diseased that he fancies his disease to be *health* and judges healthy men to be under wild delusions. He loves the enemy which destroys him! He warms at his bosom the viper whose fangs cause his death. The most unhappy thing that can happen to a man is for him to be sinful and to judge his sinfulness to be righteousness! The Papist advances to his altar and bows before a piece of bread—but he does not feel that he is committing idolatry—no, he believes that he is acting in a praiseworthy manner! The persecutor hounded his fellow creatures to prison and to death, but he thought he verily did God a service! You and I can see the idolatry of the Papist and the murder committed by the persecutor—but the guilty persons do not see it.

The passionate man imagines himself to be rightly indignant. The greedy man is proud of his own prudence. The unbeliever rejoices in his independence of mind. These are the aspects under which iniquity presents itself to the spiritually blind. *There* is the mischief of sin—that it throws out of gear the balances by which the soul discerns between good and evil! What horrible beings those must have been who could run down a vessel crowded with living souls and then, while hearing them shriek and cry for help, could go steaming away from them, leaving them all to perish in the overwhelming waters! To what a state of inhumanity must they have sunk to be able to do such a thing! The wreck of the vessel is hardly more dreadful than the wreck of the moral sense and common humanity in those who left the hundreds to die when they might have saved them.

To be able to stab a man would be horrible. But, to be so bad that after stabbing him you felt no sense of wrong doing would be far worse. Yet with every act of sin there goes a measure of heart-hardening, so that he who is capable of great crimes is usually incapable of knowing them to be such. With the ungodly this pestilential influence is very powerful, leading them to cry, “peace, peace,” where there is no peace and to rebel against the most Holy God without fear or compunction. And, alas, since even in the saints there remains the old nature, even *they* are not altogether free

from the darkening power of sin, for I do not hesitate to say that we all unwittingly allow ourselves into practices which clearer light would show to be sins.

Even the best of men have done this in the past. For instance, John Newton, in his trading for slaves in his early days, never seemed to have felt that there was any wrong in it. And Whitefield, in accepting slaves for his orphanage in Georgia, never raised or dreamed of raising the question as to whether slavery was in itself sinful. Perhaps advancing light will show that many of the habits and customs of our present civilization are essentially bad and our grandsons will wonder how we could have acted as we did. It may need centuries before the national conscience, or even the common Christian conscience, will be enlightened up to the true standard of right—and the individual man may need many a chastisement and rebuke from the Lord before he has fully discerned between good and evil.

O you demon, Sin! You are proved to be sin with a vengeance, by thus deluding us! You do not only poison us, but make us imagine our poison to be medicine—you defile us and make us think ourselves the more beautiful! You slay us and make us dream that we are enjoying life! My Brothers and Sisters, before we can be restored to the holy image of Christ, which is the ultimatum of every Christian, we must be taught to know sin to be sin! And we must have a restoration of the tenderness of conscience which would have been ours had we never fallen. A measure of this discernment and tenderness of judgment is given to us at conversion—for conversion, apart from it—would be impossible. How can a man repent of that which he does not know to be sin? How shall he humble himself before God concerning that which he does not recognize to be evil in God's sight? He must have enlightenment. Sin must be made to appear as sin to him.

Moreover, man will not renounce his self-righteousness till he sees his sinfulness. As long as he believes himself to be righteous, he will hug that righteousness and stand before God with the Pharisee's cry, "God, I thank You that I am not as other men are!" As long as it is possible for us to swim on the bladders of our own righteousness we will never take to the lifeboat of Christ's righteousness. We can only be driven to Free Grace by sheer stress of weather and as long as our leaky boat of self-will only keeps us above the flood, we will hold to it.

It is a miracle of Grace to make a man see himself so as to loathe himself and confess the impossibility of being saved by his own works. Yet, till this is done, faith in Jesus is impossible—for no man will look to the righteousness of another while he is satisfied with his own righteousness—and everyone believes he has a righteousness of his own till he sees sin in its native hideousness. Unless sin is revealed to you as a boundless evil, whoever you may be—where God and Christ are you can never come! You must be made to see that your heart reeks with evil—that your past life has been defiled with iniquity—and you must also be taught that this evil of yours is no trifle, but a monstrous and horrible thing!

You must be made to loathe yourselves as in the presence of God or else you never will fly to the atoning blood for cleansing. Unless sin is seen to be sin, Divine Grace will never be seen to be Divine Grace, nor Jesus to be a Savior. And without this, salvation is impossible! Here, then, we leave this important point—bearing witness, again, that to the natural man sin does not appear as sin—and, therefore, a work of Grace must be worked in him to open his blind eyes, or he cannot be saved.

These are no soft speeches and fair words, but hard Truths of God—may the Holy Spirit lead many hearts to feel how sorrowfully true they are.

II. This leads us to our second consideration—WHERE SIN IS MOST CLEARLY SEEN, IT APPEARS TO BE SIN. Its most terrible aspect is its own natural self. Sin at its worst appears to be sin. Do I seem to repeat myself? Does this utterance sound like a mere platitude? Then I cannot help it, for the text puts it so. And I know you will not despise the text. But, indeed, there is a depth of meaning in the expression, “Sin, that it might appear sin”—as if the Apostle could find no other word so terribly descriptive of sin as its own name. He does not say, “Sin, that it might appear like Satan.” No, for sin is worse than the devil since it *made* the devil what he is. Satan as an existence is God’s creature and this, sin never was. Its origin and nature are altogether apart from God.

Sin is even worse than Hell, for it is the sting of that dreadful punishment. Anselm used to say that if Hell were on one side and sin on the other, he would rather leap into Hell than willingly sin against God. Paul does not say, “Sin, that it might appear madness.” Truly it is moral insanity, but it is worse than that by far. It is so bad that there is no name for it but itself. One of our poets who wished to show how evil sin looks in the presence of redeeming love, could only say—

***“When the wounds of Christ exploring,
Sin does like itself appear.”***

If you need an illustration of what is meant, we might find one in Judas. If you wanted to describe him, you might say he was a traitor, a thief and a betrayer of innocent blood. But you would finish up by saying, “he was a Judas”—that gives you all in one—none could match *him* in villainy.

If you wished a man to feel a horror of murder, you would not wish murder to appear to him as manslaughter, or as destruction of life, or as mere cruelty, but you would want it to appear as *murder*—you could use no stronger expression. So here, when the Lord turns the strong light of His eternal Spirit upon sin and reveals it in all its hideousness and defilement, it appears to be not only moral discord, disorder, deformity, or corruption, but neither more nor less than SIN. “Sin,” says Thomas Brooks, “is the only thing that God abhors. It brought Christ to the Cross. It damns souls. It shuts Heaven and it laid the foundations of Hell.”

There are persons who see sin as a misfortune, but this is far short of the true view and, indeed, very wide of it. How commonly do we hear one sort of sinner called, “an unfortunate.” This indicates a very lax morality. Truly it is a calamity to be a sinner, but it is much more than a calamity—and he who only sees sin as his misfortune has not seen it so as to be

saved from it! Others have come to see sin as folly and so far they see aright, for it is essentially folly—and every sinner is a fool. A fool is God's own name for a sinner—commonly used throughout the book of Psalms. But for all that, sin is more than folly. It is not mere lack of wit or mistaken judgment—it is the knowing and willful choice of *evil*—and it has in it a certain maliciousness against God which is far worse than mere stupidity. To see sin as folly is a good thing, but it is not a gracious thing, nor a saving thing.

Some, too, have seen certain sins to be crimes and yet have not viewed them as sins. Our use of the word, "crime," is significant. When an action hurts our fellow men, we call it a crime. When it only offends God, we style it a sin. If I were to call you criminals, you would be disgusted with me. But if I call you sinners, you will not be at all angry because to offend *man* is a thing you would not like to do, but to offend *God* is to many persons a small matter, scarcely worth a moment's thought. Human nature has become so perverted that if men know that they have broken human laws they are ashamed—but the breach of a command which only affects the Lord Himself causes them very little concern.

If we were to steal, or lie, or knock another down, we would be ashamed of ourselves, and so we ought to be. But, for all that, such shame would be no work of Divine Grace. Sin must appear to be sin against God—that is the point. We must say with David, "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight." With the prodigal we must cry, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before You, and am no more worthy to be called Your son." That is the true view of it. May the Lord bring us to confess our transgressions after *that* sort.

And here lend me your ears a minute or two. Think how odious a thing sin is. Beloved, our offenses are committed against a Law which is based upon right. It is holy and just and good—it is the best Law which could be conceived. To break a bad Law we may be more than excusable, but there can be no excuse for transgression when the Commandment commends itself to every man's conscience. There is not one command in God's Word which is either harsh, arbitrary, or unnecessary. If we, ourselves, were perfect in holiness, infinitely wise and had to write a Law, we should have written just the Law which God has given us.

The Law is just to our fellow men and beneficial to ourselves. When it forbids anything, it does but set up danger signals where real danger to ourselves exists. The Law is a kind of spiritual police to keep us out of harm's way. Those who offend against it injure themselves. Sin is a false, mean, unrighteous thing. It does evil all round and brings good to nobody. It has not one redeeming feature. It is evil, only evil, and that continually. It is a wicked, wanton, purposeless, useless rejection of that which is good and right in favor of that which is disgraceful and injurious. We ought, also, to remember that the Divine Law is binding upon men because of the right and authority of the Lawgiver. God has made us, ought we not to serve Him?

Our existence is prolonged by His kindness, we could not live a moment without Him—should we not obey Him? God is superlatively good. He has never done us any harm. He has always designed our benefit and has treated us with unbounded kindness. Why should we willfully insult Him by breaking laws which He had a right to make and which He has made for our good? Is it not shameful to do that which He hates when there can be nothing to gain thereby and no reason for doing it? How I wish every heart here could hear that plaintive lamentation of the Lord—it is wonderful condescension that He should describe Himself as uttering it—“The ox knows his owner and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel does not know—My people do not consider.”

That other word of pleading is equally pathetic where the Lord expostulates and cries “O, do not this abominable thing that I hate!” After all His tenderness in which He has acted towards us—as a father to his child—we have turned against Him and harbored His enemy. We have found our pleasure in grieving Him and have called His commands burdens and His service weariness. Shall we not repent of this? Can we continue to act so basely? This day, my God, I hate sin not because it damns me, but because it has done You wrong! To have grieved my God is the worst of grief to me. The heart renewed by Grace feels a deep sympathy with God in the ungrateful treatment which He has received from us. It cries out, “How could I have offended Him? Why did I treat so gracious a God in so disgraceful a manner? He has done me good and no evil, why have I slighted Him?”

Had the Eternal been a tyrant and had His Laws been despotic, I could imagine some dignity in a revolt against Him. But seeing He is a Father full of gentleness and tenderness, whose loving kindnesses are beyond all count, sin against Him is exceedingly sinful! Sin is worse than bestial, for the beasts only return evil for evil. Sin is devilish—for it returns evil for good. Sin is lifting our heel against our Benefactor—it is base ingratitude, treason, causeless hate, spite against holiness and a preference for that which is low and groveling. But where am I going? Sin is sin and in that word we have said it all.

It would appear that Paul made the discovery of sin as sin through the light of one of the Commandments. He gives us a little bit of his own biography which is most interesting to notice. He says, “I had not known lust except the Law had said you shall not covet.” It strikes me that when Paul was struck down from his horse on his way to Damascus, the first thought that came to him was, “this Jesus whom I have been persecuting, is, after all, the Messiah and Lord of all! Oh, horror of horrors, I have ignorantly warred against Him. He is Jesus the Savior who saves from sins, but what are my sins? Where have I offended against the Law?”

In his lonely blindness his mind involuntarily ran over the Ten Commandments. And as he considered each one of them with his poor half-enlightened judgment, he cried to himself, “I have not broken that! I have not broken that!” till at last he came to that command, “You shall not covet,” and in a moment, as though a lightning flash had cut in two the sol-

id darkness of his spirit, he saw his sin and confessed that he had been guilty of inordinate desires. He had not known lust if the Law had not said, “you shall not covet.” That discovery unveiled all the rest of his sins—the proud Pharisee became a humble penitent and he who thought himself blameless cried out—“I am the chief of sinners.”

I pray God by some means to let the same light stream into every soul here, where as yet it has not penetrated. O my Hearers, I beseech the Lord to let you see sin as sin and so lead you to Jesus as the only Savior!

III. I shall need your best attention to the third point which is this—**THE SINFULNESS OF SIN IS MOST CLEARLY SEEN IN ITS PERVERTING THE BEST OF THINGS TO DEADLY PURPOSES.** So the text runs—“Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good.” It is evident that we are atrociously depraved since we make the worst conceivable use of the best things. Here is God’s Law, which was ordained to life, for, “He that does these things shall live in them,” is willfully disobeyed and so sin turns the light into an instrument of death!

It does worse! The sin that is in us, when it hears the Commandment, straightway resolves to break it. It is a strangely wicked propensity of our nature, that there are many things which we should not care for otherwise, which we lust after at once—as soon as they are forbidden. Have you ever noticed, even in regard to human law, that when a thing is prohibited, persons long after it? I do not remember, in all the years I have lived in London, any cravings of the populace to hold meetings in Hyde Park till an attempt was made to keep them out—and then, straightway, all the railings were pulled down and the ground was carried by storm. The park has been a field of battle ever since. Had liberty of speech in the park never been interfered with as it was, most unwisely, nobody would have cared to hold forth at the Reformer’s Tree or any other tree. They would have said, “What’s the use of dragging up there all through the mud for miles when we can meet more comfortably in a hall under cover,” but because they must *not* do it, they resolve *to* do it!

That is the way with our common nature—it kicks at restraint—if we must not do a thing, then we will do it! Even before she fell, our mother Eve felt drawn to the forbidden tree and the impulse in her fallen sons and daughters is far more forcible! As by one common impulse we wander from the road appointed and break hedges to leap into fields enclosed against us. Law to our depraved nature is but the signal for revolt! Sin is a monster, indeed, when it turns a preventive Law into an incentive to rebellion. It discovers evil by the Law and then turns to it and cries, “Evil, you are my good.” This is far from being the only case in which good is turned to evil through our sin. I might mention many others.

Very briefly then, how many there are who turn the abounding mercy of God, as proclaimed in the Gospel, into a reason for further sin! The preacher delights to tell you, in God’s name, that the Lord is a God ready to forgive and willing to have mercy upon sinners—and that whoever believes in Jesus shall receive immediate pardon! What do men say, “O, if it is so easy to be forgiven, let us go on in sin! If faith is so simple a matter,

let us put it off until some future time!” O, base and cruel argument! To infer greater sin from infinite love! What if I call it devilish reasoning—for so it is—to make of the very goodness of a gracious God a reason for continuing to offend! Is it so that the more God loves the more you will hate? The better He is the worse you will be? Shame! Shame!

Then, again, there are individuals who have indulged in very great sin and have very fortunately escaped from the natural consequences of that sin—and what do *they* gather from this forbearance on God’s part? God has been very long-suffering and compassionate to them and, therefore, they defy Him again and return presumptuously to their former habits! They dream that they have immunity to transgress and even boast that God will never punish them, let them act as they may! Sin appears sin, indeed, when the long-suffering which should lead to repentance is regarded as a license for further offending! What a marvel that the Eternal does not crush His foes at once when they count His gentleness to be weakness and make His mercy a ground for further disobedience!

Look again at thousands of prosperous sinners whose riches are their means of sinning. They have all that heart can wish and instead of being doubly grateful to God they are proud and thoughtless! They deny themselves none of the pleasures of sin. The blessings entrusted to them become their curses because they minister to their arrogance and worldliness. They war against God with weapons from His own armory! They are indulged by Providence and then they indulge their sins the more. Fullness of bread too often breeds contempt of God. Men are lifted up and then look down upon religion and speak loftily against the people of God and even against the Lord Himself! With His meal in their mouths they blaspheme their Benefactor and with the wealth which is the loan of His charity they purchase the vile pleasures of iniquity.

This is horrible, but it is so, that the more God gives to man the more man hates His God, and he to whom God multiplies His mercies returns it by multiplying his transgressions! I remember in our Baptist martyrologies the story of one of the Baptists of Holland escaping from his persecutors. A river was frozen over and the good man crossed it safely, but his enemy was of greater bulk and the ice gave way under him. The Baptist, like the child of God he was, turned round and rescued his persecutor just as he was sinking beneath the ice to certain death. And what did the wretch do? As soon as ever he was safely on the shore, he seized the man who had saved his life and dragged him off to prison, from which he was taken to be put to death!

We marvel at such inhumanity! We are indignant at such base returns—but the returns which the ungodly make to God are far more base! I marvel, myself, as I talk to you—I marvel that I speak so calmly on so terribly humbling a theme! And remembering our past lives and our long ingratitude to God, I marvel that we do not turn this place into one vast Bochim or place of weeping—and mingle our tears in a flood with expressions of deep shame and self abhorrence for our dealings towards God! The same evil is manifested when the Lord reveals His Justice and utters

threats. When a threatening sermon is delivered, you will hear men say, as they go out from hearing such a discourse, although the preacher has spoken most affectionately, “We will have no more of this Hell-fire preaching! We are wearied and worried with these threats of judgment.”—

***“Your judgments, too, unmoved they hear,
Amazing thought! Which devil’s fear
Godness and wrath in vain combine,
Their heart betrays no feeling sign.”***

Try the same man with God’s tenderness and speak of God’s love—and he will be hardened by it—for the Gospel hardens some men and becomes a savor of death unto death unto many.

O Sin, you are sin, indeed, to make the Gospel of salvation a reason for deeper damnation! When great judgments are abroad in the land, not a few of the ungodly become more insolent against God and even rail at Him as a tyrant. The fire which ought to melt them only makes them harder! The terrors of God they defy and like Pharaoh they demand, “Who is the Lord?” We have known persons in adversity—very poor and very sick—who ought to have been led to God by their sorrow. But instead, they have become careless of all religion and cast off all fear of God. They have acted like Ahaz of whom it is written, “In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz.”

The rod has not separated them from sin, but whipped them into a worse state. Their medicine has become their poison. The more the tree has been pruned, the less fruit it has yielded. Plowing has only made the field more barren. That which has often proved so great a blessing to Believers has been utterly lost upon them. Why should they be smitten any more? They will revolt more and more. One very singular instance of the heart’s perversity is the fact that familiarity with death and the grave often hardens the heart and none become more callous than grave-diggers and those who carry dead men to their graves.

Men sin openly when graves are open before them. It is possible to work among the dead and yet to be as wild as the man possessed of a devil in our Lord’s day who dwelt among the tombs. The Egyptians were accustomed to hold their riotous festivals in the presence of a corpse, not to sober their mirth, as some have said, but to make them the more wanton, gluttonous and drunk because they should so soon die. Coffins and shrouds should be good sermons, but they seldom are so to those who see them every day. In times when cholera has raged—and in seasons when the pest, in the olden times, carried off its thousands—many men have not been at all softened, but have grown callous in the presence of God’s grim Messenger. Hervey finds holy “meditations among the tombs,” but unholy men are as far off from God in a churchyard as in a theater.

Another strange thing I have often noticed—as a proof of sin’s power to gather poison from the most healthful flowers—I have observed that some transgress all the more because they have been placed under the happy restraints of godliness. Though trained to piety and virtue, they rush into the arms of vice as though it were their mother. As gnats fly at a candle as soon as ever they catch sight of it, so do these infatuated ones dash into

evil. Young people who are placed in the Providence of God where no temptations ever assail them—in the midst of holy and quiet homes where the very name of evil scarcely comes—will often fret and worry themselves to get out into what they call, “life,” and thrust their souls into the perils of bad company.

The sons and daughters of Adam long to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their very preservation from temptation grows irksome to them. They loathe the fold and long for the wolf! They think themselves hardly done by that they have not been born in the midst of licentiousness and tutored in crime. Strange infatuation and yet many a parent’s heart has been broken by this freak of depravity, this reckless lust for evil! The younger son had the best of fathers and yet he could never be quiet till he had gained his independence and had brought himself to beggary in a far country by spending his living with harlots.

Observe another case. Men who live in times when zealous and holy Christians abound are often the worse for it. What effect has the zeal of Christians upon such? It excites them to malice! All the while the Church is asleep the world says, “Ah, we do not believe your religion, for you do not act as if you believed it yourselves.” But the moment the Church bestirs herself, the world cries, “They are a set of fanatics! Who can put up with their ravings? We could have believed their religion had it been brought to us with respectful sobriety, but accompanied by enthusiasm it is detestable.” Nothing will please sinners but their sins! And if their sins could be made into virtues they would fly to their virtues at once, so as to remain in opposition. Contrary to God man will go—his very nature is enmity against his Creator.

The quaint poet with whose verse we commenced our sermon, has truly said—

***“If God had laid all common, certainly
Man would have been the encloser:
But since now God has impal’d us, on the contrary
Man breaks the fence, and every ground will plow.
O what were man, might he himself misplace!
Sure to be cross he would shift feet and face.”***

Sin is thus seen to be exceedingly sinful. That plant must possess great vitality which increases by being uprooted and cut down. That which lives by being killed is strangely full of force. That must be a very hard substance which is hardened by lying in the blast furnace, in the central heat of the fire where iron melts and runs like wax. That must be a very terrible power which gathers strength from that which should restrain it and rushes on the more violently in proportion as it is reined in.

Sin kills men by that which was ordained to life. It makes Heaven’s gifts the stepping stones to Hell. It uses the lamps of the temple to show the way to Perdition and makes the Ark of the Lord, as in Uzzah’s case, the messenger of death. Sin is that strange fire which burns the more fiercely for being dampened, finding fuel in the water which was intended to quench it. The Lord brings good out of evil, but sin brings evil out of good! It is a deadly evil—you judge how deadly! O that men knew its nature and

abhorred it with all their hearts! May the Eternal Spirit teach men to know aright this worst of ills, that they may flee from it to Him who alone can deliver.

Now, what is all this about, and what is the drift of this discourse? Well, the drift of it is this. There is in us by nature a propensity to sin which we cannot conquer and yet conquered it must be, or we can never enter Heaven. Your resolutions to overcome sin are as feeble as though you should try to bind Leviathan with a thread and lead him with a string. As well as hope to bind the tempest and rein in the storm as to govern yourself by your own reservations as to sin! Nor is sin to be overcome by philosophy. It laughs at such a spider's web. Nor can it be prevented. Nor will the soul be cleansed from it by any outward observances. Genuflections, penances, fasting, washing are all in vain.

What, then, must be done? We must be newly created! We are too far gone for mending. We must be made afresh! And for cleansing there is no water beneath the skies, nor any above them that can remove our stain. But there is a fountain, filled with the blood of God's own Son. He that is washed there shall be made white. And there is an all-creating Holy Spirit who can fashion us anew in Christ Jesus into holiness! I would to God you all despaired of being saved except by a miracle of Grace. I would to God you utterly despaired of being saved except by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit!

I would to God you were driven to look away from self, each one of you, to Him who on the bloody tree bore the wrath of God, for there is life in a *look* at Him and whoever looks at Him shall be saved—saved from the power of sin as well as its guilt! That which the bronze serpent took away was the burning poison in the veins of the men who had been bitten by the serpents. They were diseased with a deadly disease and they looked, and they were healed. It was not filth that was taken from them—it was disease that was healed by their simple look.

And so a look at Christ does not merely take away sin, but it heals the disease of sin—and, mark you—it is the *only* possible healing for the leprosy of iniquity! Faith in Jesus brings the Holy Spirit with His sacred weapons of invincible warfare into the field of the human heart—and *HE* overthrows the impregnable strongholds of sin, makes lust a captive and slays the enmity of the heart. Sin, being made to appear sin, Grace is made to appear Grace—God's Holy Spirit gets the victory and we are saved!

God grant that this may be the experience of us all. Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 7.

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SIN'S TRUE CHARACTER

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“Exceedingly sinful.”
Romans 7:13.

INTO the connection of these words our time, which is very short this evening, will not permit us to enter. It was something like this—Paul was showing that the Law could not make a man holy and he observes that he had, himself, found that when the Law came into his heart, it excited in him a desire to act contrary to its precepts. There were some actions which he would not have thought of performing until he found that they were forbidden—and then immediately he felt a desire to do them at once! To this a grave objection was raised. This were to make the Law aid and abet sin! Not so, replies the Apostle—it was not the Law that made him sin, for the Law is good—but it was the sinfulness of his heart that could thus turn that which was good into an occasion of evil. He further showed that this was the very design of the Law as given by Moses—to make clear how sinful sin was. The purpose for which it was sent was not to make men holy, but to make men see how unholy they were! It was not the cure of the disease, much less the creator of it, but it was the *revealer* of the disease that lurked in the constitution of man!

Now, what I want to call your attention to is that Paul here calls sin, “exceedingly sinful.” Why didn’t he say, “exceedingly black,” or, “exceedingly horrible,” or, “exceedingly deadly”? Why, because there is nothing in the world so bad as sin! When he wanted to use the very worst word he could find to call sin by, he called it by its own name and reiterated it—“sin,” “exceedingly sinful.” For if you call sin, black, there is no moral excellency or deformity in black or white. Black is as good as white and white is as good as black. And so you have expressed nothing. If you call sin, “*deadly*,” yet death in itself has no evil in it compared with sin. For plants to die is not a dreadful thing, rather it may be a part of the organization of Nature that successive generations of vegetables should spring up and, in due time, should form the root-soil for other generations to follow. If you call it, “*deadly*,” you have said but little. If you need a word, you must come home for it. Sin must be named after itself! If you need to describe it, you must call it, “*sinful*.” Sin is “exceedingly sinful”

The text may suggest a broad argument and a special application. Our endeavor shall be to show you, then, that sin is in itself, “exceedingly sinful” and yet there are some signs of which it may be said with peculiar emphasis that they are “exceedingly sinful.”

I. SIN IS IN ITSELF “EXCEEDINGLY SINFUL.”

It is rebellion against God and “exceedingly sinful” because it interferes with the just rights and prerogatives of God. That great invisible Spirit

whom we cannot see, whom even our own thoughts cannot encompass, made the heavens and the earth and all things that are—and it was His right that what He made should serve His purpose and give Him Glory. The stars do this. They jar not in their everlasting orbits. The world of matter does this. He speaks and it is done. The sun, the moon, the constellations of Heaven, yes, and the terrestrial forces, even the billows of the sea and the ravings of the wind—all these obey His behests. It is right they should. Shall not the potter make of the clay what he wills? Shall not he who uses the axe, fashion what he chooses for his own pleasure? You and I, favored in our creation—not inanimate clods, not worms having only sensations, without intellect—we who have been favored with thought, emotion, affection, with a high spiritual existence. Yes, with an immortal existence—we were especially bound to be obedient to Him that made us. Ask your conscience, do you not feel that God has rights towards you? Ask yourselves, if you make or preserve anything, call it your own and it is your own—do you not expect it to answer your end, or do your bidding? Why have you forgotten Him that made you? Why have you spent your powers and faculties for anything but His Glory? Ah, it is “exceedingly sinful” when the crown rights of Him upon whose will we exist are ignored, or impudently contravened! Yet according to the part we take in sin, we trample on His edicts and set at nothing His jurisdiction.

How exceedingly sinful is *this rebellion against such a God!* Muse on His attributes and consider His majesty, for He is not merely infinitely powerful, wise, all-sufficient and glorious, but He is supremely good! He is good to the fullest extent of goodness! He is a God whose Character is matchless! Not like Jupiter, to whom the heathens ascribed every vice, nor like Juggernaut, the bloody god of Hindustan! He is a pure and holy God whom we worship! Jehovah, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises. Now, it is conceivable that if God were some vast Being who had a natural right to our service, yet if His Character—(forgive, great God, the supposition!)—were severe without pity, rigorous without clemency, harsh without forbearance, there were some pretense why daring spirits should lead a rebellion against the oppressor. But our Father, God, the great Shepherd-King—who shall frame an excuse when we, for a single moment, revolt against Him, or lift a finger against His will? It were Heaven to serve Him! The angels will tell you this! It were bliss to do His will. The perfect spirits all proclaim this! Ah, sin is base, indeed, a rebellion against a monarch's gentlest sway, an insurrection against parent's most tender rights, a revolt against peerless benignity! Oh, shame on you, Sin! You are, indeed, “exceedingly sinful!”

What an aggravation of the sinfulness of sin is this—that *it rebels against laws of which all are just!* The table of the Ten Commandments contains not one commandment but what is founded upon the essential principles of right. If a law were proclaimed in England which violated the principles of equity, to break that law might be the highest duty! But when the laws of our country are just and right, it is not only an offense against the natural power of the State, but an offense against the understanding and the conscience of right when a man breaks such a statute! God's Laws have not only the Divine Authority, but they have also this recommendation, that they are all harmonious and adapted to the rela-

tions of our being. Was it not the State of Massachusetts that at first passed a resolution when they were about to make statutes, that they would be governed by the Laws of God until they found time to make better? Will they ever find opportunity to make better? Could any man strike out a clause and improve it? Could he add a sentence and mend it? No! The Law is holy, just and good! And, rightly understood, it naturally forbids evil and simply commends good—only good! Oh, Sin! You are sinful, indeed, that you should dare to revolt against that which in itself is right and just, virtuous and true!

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters—this may touch some of us to the quick—sin is “exceedingly sinful” *because it is antagonistic to our own interest, a mutiny against our own welfare*. Selfishness is a strong principle in us all. That which is good for us and personally advantageous should be regarded with tenacious attachment and were we wise, would be pursued with strong enthusiasm. Now, whenever God forbids a thing, we may rest assured it would be dangerous. God’s commands are just like those notices, more suggestive of kindly warning than of stern prohibition, which we see upon the park waters in the days of frost, “Dangerous.” God simply tells us that such-and-such a thing is fraught with peril, or it leads to destruction. What He permits or commends will be, if not immediately, yet in the long run, in the highest degree promotive of our best interests. God does but, as it were, consult our well-being and prosperity when He gives us Laws. Doesn’t it seem a vicious thing, indeed, that a man will recklessly dare to slight himself in order to sin against his Maker? God says to you, “Do not thrust your arm in the fire.” Nature says, “Do not do it.” And yet when God says, “Do not commit fornication or adultery, do not lie, do not steal”—when He says, “Draw near to Me in prayer, love Me,” these commands are in themselves as naturally wise as the injunction not to thrust your hand into the fire, or the counsel to eat and drink wholesome food when hunger and thirst require! Yet we spurn these commands. Like a child that is bidden not to drink of the poison cup, but will drink of it. Like a child that is refused the sharp tool lest he cut himself. And he will cut himself—not believing in his father’s wisdom, but credulous of his own judgment because the cup looks sweet, it must be harmless—because the edged tool glitters, it must be a proper plaything! Know it, man, you do, when you sin, cut and tear yourself! Who but a madman would do that? If you neglect to do the right, you neglect to feed yourself with that which nourishes, and to clothe yourself with that which is comely! Who but an idiot would lend himself to such folly? Yet sin has made us such idiots and such madmen and, therefore, it is “exceedingly sinful!”

Sin, if we rightly consider it, *is an upsetting of the entire order of the universe*. In your family you feel, as a father, that nothing can go smoothly unless there is a head whose discretion shall regulate all the members. If your child should say, “Father, I am determined in this family that, whatever your will is, I will resist it, and whatever *my* will is, I will abide by it and always carry it out if I can,” what a family that would be! How disorganized! What a household! Might we not say, what a Hell upon earth? There sails tomorrow a ship from the Thames under command of a captain, wise and good, who understands the seas. But he has

scarcely reached the Nore before a sailor tells him that he shall not obey, that he does not intend either to reef a sail, or to do anything aboard the vessel that he is bid to do. "Put the fellow in irons!" Everybody says it is right. Or a passenger coming up from the saloon informs the captain that he does not approve of his authority and, throughout the whole of the voyage he intends to thwart him all he can. If there is a boat within hail, put that fellow on shore and do not be concerned if he lands in a muddy place! Get rid of him somehow! Everybody feels it must be. You might as well scuttle the ship and cut holes in her sides, as tolerate for a moment that the rightful central authority should be unshipped, or that every man should determine to do what is right in his own eyes! The happiness of everybody on board that vessel will depend upon order being kept. If one man is to do this, and another to do that, you might almost as well be shut up in a cage with lions, as be in such a vessel! Now, look at this world—it is but a floating ship on a larger scale—and who ought to be Captain here but He who made it, for His mighty hand alone can grasp that awful tiller! Who can steer this gigantic vessel over the waves of Providence—who but He? And who am I, and, my Hearer, who are you that you should say, "I will ignore the Lord High Admiral! I will forget the Captain! I will rebel against Him"? Why, if all do as you do, what is to become of the whole vessel, what of the whole world? When disorder is introduced, confusion, sorrow, dismay and disaster will be sure to follow!

If you want proof that sin is exceedingly sinful, *see what it has done already in the world*. Lift up your eyes and survey that lovely garden where every beautiful creature, both of bird and beast, and every flower of unwithering loveliness, and everything that can delight the senses are to be discovered in the sunlight. There are two perfect beings, a man and a woman, the parents of our race— then enters sin. The flowers are forthwith withered, a new wildness has seized upon the beasts, the ground brings forth her thorns and thistles and the man is driven out in the sweat of his face to earn his daily bread! Who withered Eden? You did, accursed Sin! You did it all! See there—but can you bear the sight?—clouds of smoke, rolling pillars of dust, the sound of clarion, the yet more dreadful boom of cannon! Listen to the shrieks and cries! They flee—they are pursued—the battle is over! Walk over the field. There lies a mangled mass of human bodies cut and torn, riddled with shot, skulls splintered with rifle balls, pools of blood! Oh, there is such a scene as only a fiend could gaze on with complacency! Who did all this? From where come wars and rumors but from your own lusts and from your sins? Oh, Sin, you are a carnage-maker! Sin, you cry, "Havoc," and immediately let loose the dogs of war! There had been none of this had you not come. But the spectacle multiplies in our vision. All over the world you have but to wander and you see little hillocks more or less thickly scattered everywhere. And if you analyze the dust that blows along the street and interrogate every grain, it will probably tell you it was once a part of the body of some man who in generations past died painfully and rotted back to mother earth! Oh, the world is scarred with death! What is this earth today, but a great Aceldema—a field of blood, a vast cemetery? Death has worm-eaten the world through and through. All its surface bears relics of

the human race. Who slew all these? Who slew all these? Who, indeed, but Sin? Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death!

Should your venturous wings of imagination dare the flight to a land that is full of confusion and without any order, I scarcely dare ask you to follow me, nor if you *could* follow, would I venture to lead the way across the stream that parts the land of mortals from the regions of the immortals! Across that valley of the shadow of death, you might look on the gloomy region of wretched souls where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched—if you dared to peer into that dismal pit that has no bottom, that place wherein spirits condemned of God are put away forever and forever from all light of hope and restoration! But you shudder even as I shrink back in very horror from that place where God's wrath burns like a furnace—and the proud that do wickedness are as stubble—and the nations that forget God are forever consumed! Who lit that fire? Where is he that kindled it? It is Sin! Sin did it all. No man is there except for sin. No man that ever breathed was ever cast away except as punishment most just, for sin most grave! Sin is, indeed, “exceedingly sinful.” Not even now have I reached the climax, nor must I venture the description. The worst phase is neither death nor Hell. But on Calvary's tree the Lord, Himself, who loved us and came to earth to bless us, proved the sinfulness of sin when Sin nailed Him to the tree and pierced His side. And sinners, rejecting Him with many a jibe and sneer, exclaimed, “We will not have this Man to reign over us.” In the agonies of Jesus, in the shame and spitting, in the woes and anguish that He endured, we read the sinfulness of sin, written as in capital letters, that even the half-blind might see! Oh, Sin, murderer of Christ, you are “exceedingly sinful!” My time has failed me, or I had meant to have enlarged upon—

II. SOME PARTICULAR SINS THAT ARE EXCEEDINGLY SINFUL ABOVE ANY ORDINARY TRANSGRESSION.

I mean sins against the Gospel. I will just give the catalog, that everyone here who is honest with himself may search and see whether he is guilty. To reject loving messengers sent from God, godly parents, earnest pastors, affectionate teachers—to reject the kind message that they bring and the yearning anxiety that they feel for us is “exceedingly sinful!” To resist the loving Gospel which talks to us only of mercy, pardon, adoption and redemption from Hell and exaltation to Heaven—to reject that is “exceedingly sinful!” To resist the dying Savior whose only motive in coming to earth must have been love, whose wounds are mouths that preach His love, whose death is the solemn proof of love—to despise, to neglect, to ignore Him—this is “exceedingly sinful!” To sin against Him after having made a profession of loving Him. To come to His Table and then go and sin with the ungodly. To be baptized in His name and yet to be unjust, dishonest, unrighteous—this is “exceedingly sinful!” To be numbered with His Church and yet to be of the world. To profess to be His followers and yet to be His enemies—this is “exceedingly sinful!” To sin against light and knowledge. To sin knowing better. To sin against conscience. To push conscience to one side. To do violence to one's better self. To sin against the Holy Spirit, against His admonitions, warnings, promptings, invitations—this is “exceedingly sinful!” To go on sinning af-

ter you have smarted. To continue to sin when sin costs you many pains and difficulties. To push onward to Hell, as if riding a steeple-chase, over post, and bar, and gate, and hedge, and ditch—this is “exceedingly sinful!”

Some of you here, tonight, are in this, exceedingly sinful. Oh, How I have pleaded with some of you! I have cried to you to come to Jesus. I have warned some of you again and again. If I am called to make answer at the judgment bar, I must say, “Amen,” to the condemnation of many of you! I shall be obliged to confess that you knew better—that some of you drink when you know how wrong it is! That some of you can swear. That some of you are thieves. Some of you sin with a high hand and yet I scarcely know why you come to this Tabernacle again and again and again! You love to hear my voice and yet you cling to your sins—your sins that will surely damn you! Let me be clear of your blood! I will not mince matters with you or talk with you as if you are all saints when I know you are not—and as if you are all going to Heaven, when, alas, many of you are still swiftly spreading your wings to fly downward to Hell! Oh, may God arrest you, or otherwise the brightness and the light in which you sin will make your sin the darker and the plainer—and the warnings you hear will make your condemnation the more overwhelming when it comes!

But why must it come? Why will you die? Why are you set on sin? Why do you love mischief? I see often in the gas-light of my study poor gnats come flying in if the window is but ajar—and how they dash against the flame—and down they fall, but have scarcely recovered strength before up they fly again unto their destruction! Are you such? Are you mere insects, without wit, without knowledge? Oh, you are not, or else were you excusable! Come to my Savior, poor Souls! He is still willing to receive you! A prayer will do it. Breathe the prayer! A broken heart He will not despise. A look at Him will do it. A faint glance at Jesus pleading for you will do it! Holy Spirit, make them give that glance! Oh, by Your Irresistible Power, compel them to look and live! Oh, it shall be! God be thanked, it shall be! You shall look tonight and God shall have the Glory! And though you are “exceedingly sinful,” yet shall you, through the precious blood, be fully forgiven—and I hope exceedingly grateful for the great forgiveness which Jesus brings! The Lord bless you, for His name's sake. Amen.

[The original title of this sermon is “SIN'S TRUE QUALITY.”]

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 51; ROMANS 7:7-25.**

PSALM 51.

There are many sweet notes in Christian music, but to my own heart there is none so soft, tender, sweet as the note of repentance. Full assurance rings out her clarion trumpet strain and we ought to be able to send it forth, but sometimes we are unable. Conquest over sin gives us Miriam's timbrel to dance to and it is well, but everyday use commends me to the harp strings of penitence! We ought always to be able to play on

those strings. They always fit our guilty fingers. They are always sweet to the ear of the Most High. Mr. Rowland Hill used to say that there was one friend of his whom he could not take to Heaven and whom he thought he would regret to leave—and that was sweet repentance. I suppose when God wipes every tear from our eyes we shall not be able to weep for sin, but until then—

**“Lord, let me weep for nothing but sin,
And after none but Thee—
And then I would—(oh that I might!)—
A constant weeper be,”**

for these bitter sweets—these sweet bitters—are almost the choicest of our sorrow joys or joyful sorrows that we have this side of Heaven! Thus David sings.

Verse 1. *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness, according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies blot out my transgressions.* And really, Brothers and Sisters, if we cannot feel that we have need to say, “Have mercy upon me,” and if, indeed, this is not the habitual language of our soul, there must be something more wrong about us than even open sin! Not to be able to confess sin and not to be able to mourn it is one of the direst states of sin—in which even sin can be found—but to be able to say from the very soul, “Have mercy upon me—blot out my transgressions,” indicates that there is a soundness still in us by Divine Grace. Do you notice what a quick eye David has here for the softer attributes of God? Did ever any man put words together more pleasantly? “According to Your loving kindness”—“according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.” God never looks more beautiful than when He is seen through a tear! If, under a sense of sin, you see Him as the strangely forgiving God, oh, how pleasant a God He is, and how our hearts love Him!

2. *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* It is not the punishment. The child of God has got away from the legal fear that dreads the punishment. The sin—the *sin*—is that which he loathes and hates. “Lord, get rid of it. I seem to need double cleansing. Wash me! Wash me thoroughly! And when You have done that, cleanse me, for there are stains that washing will not get out. Try fire, Lord, if water will not do it, but somehow wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.”

3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.* It is thrown out on the surface. Health comes back when the disease manifests itself by an outward eruption. It is when you do not acknowledge it—it is when it is not before you—when you cannot perceive it—will not confess your sin—it is then that it is at the heart-strings killing you, murdering you! Confessed sin has the teeth taken out of it, but sin that is not felt and known, and still is there, breeds the canker of self-conceit and pride—and is deadly to the heart.

4. *Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight: that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear when You judge.* For in sin, this is the essence of it—that it is sin against God. You cannot get the worldly man to feel that. “I have done no hurt to my neighbor. I have not injured society.” But how different it is with the

child of God! It is against *God* that he has sinned. What if he has never left his chamber—if he has never done an action or said a word? Yet that proud heart of his that rebelled when he was full of pain—that murmuring spirit that would not accept the Lord's will—that is enough to lay him in the dust—and he mourns it and confesses it. "Against You, You only, have I sinned."

5. *Behold, I was shaped in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.* It is not merely that I sinned, but I am sin! I am a lump of sin—a heap of iniquity—by nature so. It is not merely in me, but it is me—my very self! It is in my blood, my bones, my marrow. O God, can You cleanse me from this?

6. *Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom.* And sin is a lie, and sin is folly. God desires truth and wisdom. Can He give us both of these? Yes, and He will—only let us acknowledge the untruthfulness and confess the stupidity, and put ourselves into His hands for His Infinite Grace to deal with us and He will yet do it. "In the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom."

7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* "With hyssop." Just as the priest took the bunch of herbs and put it into the basin full of blood, and stirred it round and round till he soaked the hyssop in the crimson and then sprinkled it upon the penitent, oh Lord, apply the blood of Christ to my soul! Purge with me hyssop"—

"And I shall be clean."

I shall not be clean any other way. This is the only cleansing and purification by the sacrificial Atonement. And You alone must do it. Lord, do it now!

8-9. *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.* I do not want to hear it unless You make me to hear it. I would not be comforted unless You comfort me. Dread above everything, dear Friends, false comfort—false judgments of yourselves—high motions about your own attainments—grand ideas of your own standing in yourselves.

10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.* For there must not merely be a creation, but a daily renewal, or else what You have once created will soon be blotted and marred as Your first natural creation was. Go on from day to day to make and keep my heart pure within.

11. *Cast me not away from Your Presence; and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.* Do not fling me away as a man pulls up a weed by the roots and throws it on a dunghill—

"Take not your Holy Spirit from me."

Oh, how often will the child of God have to pray this prayer? The Holy Spirit is in him and he knows it, but he grieves the Spirit—and when his heart is very tender this is his daily fear—lest the Spirit of God should depart from him. "Take not your Holy Spirit from me."

12. *Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation; and uphold me with Your free spirit.* I did know it once. What joy it is—the joy of Your salvation!

Give it back to me, O Lord. I cannot live on the old mercy! The recollection does not satisfy. It only makes me hunger. "Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation."

13. *Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners shall be converted unto You.* Nobody ever teaches the mercy of God so well as he that tastes it. Sinner, do you know what a good God my Lord Jesus is? He has forgiven my innumerable sins and, therefore, I love to speak of Him, and to speak of Him to such as you are, such as I am. "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him." Dear Friends, if you know the Savior, be sure you tell all you know! Or if you cannot tell it all, tell as much as you can, and as long as you have got breath! And it may not be long. You may not have many more opportunities, for sickness comes so suddenly and puts the strong man aside so soon. Do use for God what time you have and tell of His love while you are yet in the land where men can hear it, and where you can speak of it. Let this be your prayer—"Then will I teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted unto You."

14. *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.* He said that he would be a preacher? No, he said that he would be a singer. God's people feel that they cannot do too much when they get a sense of pardoned sin. They will be both preacher and presenter! They will preach! They will sing! They will have all the irons in the fire. They will not be afraid of turning their faculties to too many accounts.

15-17. *O Lord open You my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You desire not sacrifice; else would I give it: You delight not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.* What a sweet verse that is! Have you got a broken heart tonight, dear Friend, and do you feel almost ashamed to bring it, because it is in such a broken condition? It is in the best possible condition! I have read accounts of meetings of God's saints met by the ten days together and talking all about great things that have been done for them and from the first to the last no indication of a broken heart or of a contrite spirit! I confess I could not understand it and did not want to understand it. I would rather stand with the poor publican behind the door five minutes and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," than sit ten days with perfect brethren to magnify and glorify God about what I thought He had done for me, because I am persuaded that in the latter case I should be always in danger of magnifying *myself*, rather than God—whereas in the former case I should be near the truth, and near where I ought to be. Oh, keep to this—"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

18, 19. *Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion: build You the walls of Jerusalem. Then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.* Notice this. David felt that he had done something to pull down the walls of Zion. His bad example would do mischief to the cause of God and his prayer to be forgiven is not a selfish one, which deals only with his own particular blessing, or his own desire for mercy.

He wants the Church to prosper! He wants God's work to go on and so he cannot close the prayer, even of a penitent and broken heart, without crying, "Build You the walls of Jerusalem." In proportion as we think less of ourselves we shall think more of the Church of God, and more of the work of God in the land. To despise yourself is the way to honor God and His people. But when you honor yourself, you will first despise others, and it will go on by degrees to a dishonoring of God, Himself, from which may the Lord save us!

ROMANS 7.

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.

Verse 7. *What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? God forbid! No, I had not known sin, but by the Law: for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, You shall not covet.* There are some who hope to overcome their evil propensities by the Law of God. 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 had not known lust, except the Law had said, "You shall 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 of God.

8. *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, worked 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 of God.

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. Therefore 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 exceedingly 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 com-

mandment,” 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—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 I do.* 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 of God 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 the 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 dwells in me.* I would be earnest in prayer, and my thoughts are distracted. I would love God with all my heart, but 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,) dwells 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 dwells 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 He, 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 of God—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 nature.

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."

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

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

WHY AM I THUS?

NO. 1062

A SERMON DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 14, 1872,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“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.”
Romans 7:22, 23.

LAST Thursday evening, as many of you will remember, I addressed you upon the final perseverance of the saints. I have been greatly surprised and gratified during the week to learn how many persons found comfort and cheer from the simple explanation of that doctrine which I gave you. In fact, on the past two Thursday evenings [**PERSEVERANCE WITHOUT PRESUMPTION, #1056, and A PERSUASIVE TO STEADFASTNESS, #1042**] we have been handling a precept and a promise both relating to the same matter, though each putting it in a different light. The one *admonished* us to perseverance by holding fast—the other *assured* us of preservation because we are fast held.

The welcome you gave to these familiar expositions has led me to think it would be acceptable, especially to such of you as have been lately brought into the sacred household and may not even know the rudiments of religious experience, were I tonight to follow up those two elementary discourses with some little account of the great inward conflict to which the Believer's life is exposed.

The passage before us tells a portion of the experience of the Apostle Paul. We all of us concede that he was a most eminent saint. Indeed, we place him in the front rank. For this reason his experience is the more valuable to us. If your greatest saints have their inward struggles, how much more should we expect to have them who have not attained the same degree of Divine Grace the Apostle did? If he who was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles yet had to say, “When I would do good, evil is present with me,” then you and I, who can only take the position of babes in Grace, or of ordinary disciples of Jesus Christ, must not be surprised if we have to bear assaults that surprise us and enter into struggles that distress us. We must not be surprised if we are often, by emotional stress, forced to cry out, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

I shall ask you, therefore, for your personal consolation to notice, first of all, that the ruling power in the Christian's mind is a strong affection and, therefore, an intense pleasure in that which is pure and holy—“I delight in the Law of God after the inward man.” Secondly, there are passions and propensities within the breast of a man which come into direct conflict with this holy principle—“I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.” And, thirdly, that the discipline involved in this constant hostility, despite all the fretfulness and irritation it

causes, is not without true and satisfactory evidence of our spiritual welfare. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I. It may be said of every true Christian that the ruling power in him delights in the Law of God. The new nature which God has created in every Believer cannot sin because it is born of God. This is the work of the Holy Spirit and as such without guile, unblemished, incorruptible. We are made partakers of the *Divine Nature*. The Divine Nature, so far as it is communicable, is given to us when we are begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We are born not of the flesh, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God. We receive from God a new nature at the time of our regeneration. This new nature, though it is the younger, compels the older nature within us to submit to it. It has a struggle, but it gets the victory—that significant word, "The elder shall serve the younger," is abundantly fulfilled in the little kingdom within our souls! It has a long struggling trial before the full subjugation and there are many harassing rebellions to encounter, but at length, that which is born of the Spirit shall overcome that which is born of the flesh and the Divine Nature within us shall vanquish the sensual nature. The Christian man, because of this new nature implanted in him, delights in the Law of God. He has no desire to change that Law in any way whatever.

When we read the Ten Commandments, our conscience approves the ordinances of God while it reproves our own culpable shortcomings. Yes, we feel that only God could have drawn up so complete, so perfect a code. We would not wish to have one single iota, word, or syllable of that Law altered, though it condemns us! Though we know, apart from the precious blood of Christ, it would have cast us into Hell and most justly so, yet with holy instinct, pure taste and righteous judgment we consent unto the Law that is good. It expresses God's mind on the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, truth and falsehood, harmony and discord—and our mind agrees with God's mind.

We perceive it not as Truth established by investigation, but as Truth all radiant, shining in its own majesty. We would willingly take our place on Mount Ebal or Mount Gerizim to give our Amen to the curses pronounced on disobedience, or to hail with solemn joy the blessings avouched to those who observe and do His Commandments. Nor, Beloved, would the Christian man wish to have the spirituality of the Law in any degree compromised. He is not only pleased with the Law as he reads it, though, as I have said, it condemns him—he is pleased with the very *spirit* of the Law.

What if the Law condemns in him an unchaste *look* as well as an unchaste action? He condemns that unchaste look in himself. What if the Law reaches to the heart and says, "You should not even desire your neighbor's *goods*, much less should you steal them"? He feels in his soul that it is sin and that it is a bitter thing in him even to covet where he does not defraud. He never thinks that God is too exacting. He never, for a moment, says, "I knew that you were an austere man, gathering where you had not planted," but he consents to the Law though it is high and broad, exceedingly broad. Though the thunder, the lightning and the

voices which usher in that Law terrify him, yet the wisdom, the equity and the benevolence which ordained it resolves this awe into admiration!

Being born from above—in fellowship with Christ, at peace with God—his very constitution is in unison with the Law of the Lord. Is the Law spiritual? So is He. The pact is unbroken, the concord perfect. I trust full many of you, my Hearers, can endorse this, for, doubtless, as many of us as have been born-again can bear witness we delight in the Law of God after the inward man. Again, no Christian desires to have any dispensation to exempt him from complying with any one of the Lord's commands. His old nature may desire it, but the inner man says, "No, I do not wish to get or to give any concession to the flesh, to have an allowance or make an excuse for sin in any point whatever." The flesh craves for liberty and asks to have provision made for it. But, does any Believer need liberty to sin?

My Brothers and Sisters, if it were possible to conceive without blasphemy that the Lord should say to you, "My Child, if there is one sin that you love, you may continue in it," would you desire any sin? Would you not rather say, "Oh, that I may be purged from every sin, for sin to me is misery! It is but another term for sorrow! Moral evil is its own curse—a plague, a pest—I shudder at the thought of it"?

It is thought a blessing, in the Church of Rome, that a dispensation is given to men from certain religious duties. We ask no such favor! We value not their gifts! Liberty to sin would mean putting double fetters upon us. A license even for a moment to relax our obedience to Christ would be but a license to leave the paths of light and the way of peace to wander awhile in darkness and to exchange the glow of health for sore distemper and smarting pain. Brethren, I am sure you never did, and never will, if you are Believers, ask the Lord for permission to transgress His Statutes! You may have taken leave to do what you did not know was sinful at the time. There may have been a desire in your heart after something that was wrong. I grant you that. But the new-born nature, the moment it discovers its culpability, recoils at it and turns from it! It could not do otherwise. It *cannot* sin, for it is born of God!

The new nature that is in you shudders at sin! It is not its element. It cannot endure it, whereas before you could riot in it and take pleasure in it and drink iniquity like water. You ask no dispensation that you may escape from the Law of God. You delight in it after the inward man. The new-born nature of the Christian also laboriously desires to keep the holy Law according to the mind of God. If it were proposed to any one of us that we should have whatever we would ask for—if in a vision of the night the Lord should appear to us and say to us as He did to Solomon, "Ask what I shall give you," I do not think any of us would hesitate.

I cannot imagine myself asking for riches or honor, or even for wisdom unless it were wisdom of a far higher order than is commonly esteemed among the sons of men. But the gift which I feel I should crave beyond every other is *holiness*, pure and immaculate holiness! Possessing, now, an interest in Christ—knowing that my sins are forgiven me for His name's sake—the one thing I desire beyond everything else is to be perfectly free from sin and to lead an unblemished life without sin of omission or sin of commission.

Now, every Christian that has that desire within his soul will never be satisfied until that desire is fulfilled! And this shows that we delight in the Law of God after the inward man. Nor is it long before that desire *will* be fulfilled. Why, we shall be like He when we shall see Him as He is—and until we see Him as He is and are like He, we shall always have restlessness of spirit—and always be crying out for more Divine Grace and laboring against the evil that is in us, if by any means we may subdue it. O yes, Beloved, in the fact that this is what we hope for, this is what we pray for, this is what we fight for, this is what we would be willing to die for—that we might be entirely conformed to the mind and will of God—there is evidence that we see that the Law of God is good and delight in it after the inward man.

This, however, is proven in a more practical way to onlookers when the Christian shows that the life of God is enabling him to overcome many of the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Oftentimes, in striving to be holy, he has to put himself to much stern self-denial—but he does it cheerfully. For instance, should it happen in business that by using a very common trick in trade he might gain more profit, he will not do it if he is a Christian—he feels he cannot do this evil and sin against his God. Or should the young convert find that a little divergence from the right path would please the worldly people with whom he is obliged to associate, he may, perhaps, turn aside in his weakness, but the new life within him will never be easy if he does.

The inner life, when it is in its vigor, will make him say, “Though I should lose the goodwill of these people, let me serve my Lord and Master. I must forfeit my situation, if it comes to that, sooner than I can do wrong. I must be put even in peril of my daily bread sooner than I will be found willfully breaking a Commandment of Christ. I cannot do it.” Now, I know many of God’s children have often suffered very severely and have passed through a great many trials and troubles because they would not flinch from following their Lord. This is one of the proofs that they delight in the Law of God after the inner man. When a man is willing to bear reproach, to be scoffed at, to be ridiculed and taunted as mad for righteousness sake—when he is willing that men should sneer at him as a hypocrite and accept him as a Pharisee when he braves the cold shoulder from those whose company he would otherwise have enjoyed—and all because he must and will follow the mind and direction of God’s Spirit, I say, then, it is then the man gives proof that he delights in the Law of God!

I thank God there are, in this Church, those who have given that proof and I pray that you and I, all of us who have received the Divine Nature, may give constant evidence by using the good at all hazards and taking up the cross at all risks—that our soul, even if it cannot be perfect in action—at any rate would be perfect in aim and determined, by God’s help, to cherish a love and desire in all things to do Jehovah’s will. Is there anyone here who is obliged to say, “Well, I do not consent to the Law of God. I do not delight in it. When I hear it said, ‘You shall not covet,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,’ I wish it were not evil to do those things that are forbidden. It is a pity our pleasure and our profit, our duty and our delight should be so much at variance. I would rather there were less Law and more license. Those Command-

ments, especially those that touch our thoughts and trench on the freedom of our will, are harsh and unpalatable. I am not content to be bound by them. I would rather live as I like.”

Well, my dear Friend, I will say nothing more severe to you than this—you have no part or lot in this matter at all! If you had—if your heart had been renewed—you would talk after a very different matter. Whenever you hear persons commending a low standard of religion, a low standard of morality—whenever you find them vindicating lax views of right and wrong—you may rest assured that the spirit that is in them is not the Spirit of the holy God, but it is the spirit of their *sinful* nature! Yes, the spirit of Satan may have come in to make the human spirit even worse than it was before!

But, does your heart delight in God’s Law? Is there a charm in that which is right to your soul? Is there a beauty in that which is virtuous to your spirit’s eye? Do you especially admire the Character of Jesus because, “in His life the Law appears drawn out in living characters”? If so, then I trust, dear Friends, you give *evidence* that you have been made partakers of the Divine Nature, that you are regenerate and though there is still evil in you, yet there is the life of God in you which will resist the evil and subdue it till you are brought safely to His right hand.

II. Now, secondly, we come to the conflict. Where there is this delight in the Law of God, yet there is another law in the members, so Paul says and he seems to me to speak of it in three different stages. He could *see* it first and then he had to *encounter* it and at length, to some extent, he was *enslaved* by it, for he says, “bringing me into captivity.”

There is in each one of us a law of sin. It may always be seen, even when it is not in active operation, if our eyes are lightened. Whenever I hear a man say he has no propensity to sin, I infer at once that he does not live at home. I should think he must live a long way from home, or else he has never been anywhere except in the front parlor of his house where he keeps his profession. He cannot have gone through all the chambers and searched them thoroughly, or he would have discovered *somewhere* that there is an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. This is true of the Believer—he has to cry out against another nature and say, “Help my unbelief.”

It is always *in* the man. Sometimes it is dormant. I do not know whether the devil ever goes to sleep, but our sinful nature seems, for a time, to do so—not, indeed, that it is any the less sinful when asleep than when it is awake. It is just as bad as it can be. Gunpowder is not always exploding, but it is always explosive. Bring but the spark to it and soon it bursts out, as though it had been ready and waiting to exert its powers of explosion. The viper may be coiled up doing no damage, but it has a deadly virus beneath its fangs. It is still a viper even when it is not putting forth its poisonous teeth.

There is within our nature that which would send the best saint to Hell if Sovereign Grace did not prevent. There is a little Hell within the heart of every child and only the great God of Heaven can overmaster that mischievous indwelling sin. This sin will crop up when it is least expected. Generally it breaks forth suddenly, taking us by surprise. I have known it to my sorrow. I am not going to stand here and make many confessions

with regard to myself. Howbeit I did know a man once who, in attending a Prayer Meeting, felt his heart much lifted up in the ways of God. He drew very near to his heavenly Father, held sweet communion with Christ and enjoyed much of the fellowship of the Spirit. Little did he think that the moment the Prayer Meeting was over somebody in the congregation would insult and bitterly affront him!

Because he was taken unawares his anger was roused and he spoke unadvisedly with his tongue. He had better have held his peace. Now, I believe that man, if he had been met at any other time—for he was of a tolerably quiet temper—would have taken the insult without resenting it or making any reply whatever. But he had been unwarned, therefore he was unguarded. The very love shed abroad in his heart caused the animosity he encountered to shock his feelings the more. He had been so near Heaven that he expected everybody present had thoughts in harmony with his own! He had not reckoned upon being assailed then. When there is most money in the house, then is the likeliest time for thieves to break in—and when there is most Divine Grace in the soul, the devil will try, if he can, to assault it.

Pirates were not accustomed to attack vessels when they went out to fetch gold from the Indies—they always waylaid them when they were coming home—with a view of getting rich spoil worth the capture. If you have enjoyed a sermon. If you have gotten near to God in prayer. If the Scriptures have been very precious to you, you may expect, just then, that the dragon that sleeps within will wake up and disturb the peaceful calm of your soul—

***“We should expect some danger near,
When we receive too much delight.”***

Let us be the most watchful, then, in seasons of tranquility. This evil nature, you see, will sometimes be exercised as if by jealousy when we are being refreshed with good. It will certainly be developed when we are exposed to evil.

The man who congratulates himself because he feels no sinful proclivities, no unholy thoughts, no impure imaginations, no conceited ideas, no turbulent passions, had need be reminded of that saying of old Rutherford—“When the temptation sleeps the madman is wise, the harlot is chaste. But when the vessel is pierced, out comes that which is within, be it wine or water.” O my Soul, you have only been at rest awhile because there was not any exciting cause for a time. Put into the company of godly people and the mind occupied with good things continually, the bad instincts may sleep. But cast into other society it only needs a slight provocation, and oh, how soon the evil that always was within manifests itself abundantly!

There are weeds in almost every soil. If you throw up the soil from 10 or 20 feet deep there will be found the seeds from which they grow. Now those seeds cannot germinate until they are put in a convenient place. Then let the sun shine and the dew fall—and the weeds begin to show themselves. There may be many weeds in our nature, deep down, out of sight—but should they be thrown up by some change of circumstances we shall find in ourselves evils we never dreamt of. Oh, let no man boast! Let no man say, “I should never fall into that particular sin.” How do you

know, my Brother? You may never have been in that position in which such a sin would have allured you. Beware! Perhaps where you think you are iron, you are clay. And when you think that the gates are closed with bars of brass it may be but rotten wood.

With respect to none of us, even the holiest, is there reason to trust his best faculties, his best desires, his best resolutions! We are utter weakness through and through and prone to transgressions, notwithstanding all that God's Grace has done for us. The sin which is in us, as a taint in our constitution, might easily break out as a loathsome distemper, spreading over the entire man from head to foot and spoiling all the character. I pray God it never may! It is remarkable how sin will show itself in the Christian, even in the holiest of his duties. Suppose it is prayer. When you feel that you ought to pray and would draw near to God, do you not find, sometimes, an unwillingness as if the knees were stiff and the heart was hard?

In prayer, when your soul is led away with thoughts of Divine things, straight across your soul like some carrion crow flying across a landscape there comes a bad thought and you cannot get rid of it! Or perhaps you get through your devotion with much delight in God, but you have not got out of your little room before an alien pleasure steals over your mind—a self-satisfaction that you have prayed so well that you are growing in Grace—that you are rising to the fullness of the stature of a man in Christ. Is it so, that you come from the chamber of reverent worship musing on your own importance—meditating your fitness to occupy a place above the common rank and file of the soldiers of Christ—or that you might very well take a lieutenant's rank in the Church of God?

Perhaps, again, you did not feel any liberty in prayer and then with a peevish fretful temper you will inwardly murmur, if you do not actually say, you might as well give up praying such prayers as those, there can be no use in them. So do what you may, or leave undone what you may, yet still the evil that is within will rise—it will intrude upon you at some time or other to let you know of its existence. You may bolt the door and you may fancy that no thief can get in, and begin to take off your clothes and go to rest while yet the thief is under the bed! So many a man has thought, "I have barred the door against those temptations," and, lo, they have been hidden in his *soul* like the images which Rachel took that were concealed under the camel's furniture. Somewhere or other they were secreted where he had not discovered them.

Take it for granted, dear Friends, and do not doubt it. The Apostle Paul saw it, so may you if you choose to look. He said, "I see another law in my members." And this law in his members, he goes on to tell us, was "warring against the law of his mind." It strove to get the mastery, but the new nature, on the other hand, would not let it get the mastery. The old lusts fight and then the new life fights, too, for there must be two sides to a war. Such is the warfare going on within the renewed soul. We have known this warfare takes different shapes. At times it has been on this wise—a wrong desire has come into a Christian and he has loathed it—utterly loathed it—but that desire has followed him again and again.

He has cried to God against it. He has wept over it. He has not consented to it. He fears lest he may have found it sweet or palatable to him

for the moment, but when he has had time for reflection he shudders at the very thought of giving way to that temptation. And yet by the restiveness of his own flesh and by the reprisals of Satan that hateful desire will come up and up and up again! He will hear it baying behind him like a bloodhound following his prey and sometimes it will take a leap and grip him by the throat and cast him down. It will be as much as that poor man can do to keep down that ferocious temptation that has arisen in his spirit.

I can bear witness that such warfare is a very terrible ordeal, for it sometimes lasts for days, and weeks and months together. I have known thoughtful Christians who have been harassed with doubts which have been suggested about the Inspiration of Scripture; about the deity of our Lord; about the sureness of the Covenant of Grace or some other fundamental doctrine of our most holy faith. Or it may even be the temptation has been to blasphemies which the Believer has abhorred from his very soul. Yet the more bitterly he has detested it the more relentlessly it has pursued him. If he drives it away, it returns with redoubled force.

“Is it true?” “Is it so?” Maybe a hideous sentiment is wrapped up in a neat epigram and then it will haunt the memory, and he will strive in vain to dislodge it. He would gladly hurl the thought and the words that clothe the thought into the bottomless pit. Out, cursed specter, he will cry! Back like the ghost of one’s own crimes it comes. From where do these evils come? May they sometimes be traced to Satan? Yes, but most commonly temptation derives its strength, as well as its opportunity, from the moods or habits to which our own constitution is prone. In the discharge of public duties, when straining every nerve to serve the Lord, we may meet with men whose temper acts on our temper to stir up the bile and make us think evil of those to whom we are bent on doing good.

In the peaceful shades of retirement which wise men seek out as a relief from the distractions of society, what strange fancies and monstrous vagaries will often come into the heart and confuse the brain. Or, sad to tell, in the walks of study where thoughtful men set out reverently to enquire into the counsels of God, how frequently have they been lured from the open paths to trespass on dangerous ground—to lose themselves in labyrinths, to leave the footsteps of the flock—and so to become giddy and high-minded. Anywhere, *everywhere* we are challenged to fight—and we must give battle to the sin that besets us.

But, the war carried on by this evil nature is not always by the continual besieging of the soul. At times it tries to take us by assault. This is a favorite mode of warfare within our own corrupt heart. When we are off guard, up it will come and attack us! And as I have said before, we are apt to be off our guard when we have been brought up into the high mountain apart—when have been near the Lord. In that exalted sphere of communion we have not thought of the devil. His existence has not come across our mind—but when we go down, again, into the plain, we soon find that he is still living, still distressing our Brothers and Sisters—still lying in wait to ensnare us.

For this cause our experience should quicken our sympathy. Full many a Christian has been surprised into a sin for which he was to be greatly blamed, but for which he ought not to be condemned by his fellow Chris-

tians with so much severity. They ought to condemn the *sin*, but to remember, themselves, lest they also should be tempted. Many a man has been good because he had not a chance of being bad, and, I believe, many a professing Christian has stood because the road did not happen to be very rough and there was not much to be gained by idling down. We do not judge each other as God does. He knows the infirmities of His dear children. While He does not make excuses for their sin—He is too pure and holy for that—yet, having blotted out their sins through the Atonement of Christ Jesus, He does not cast them off and turn them out of fellowship, as sometimes His people do their poor Brethren who may, after all, be as true children as they are themselves and have as much real love to their Father.

This evil nature, when it is warring, laughs at our own resolutions and mocks our own attempts to put it down. It must be warred against by Divine Grace! No arm but the Almighty arm can overcome our natural corruption. Like the leviathan it laughs at the spear! It counts it but as rotten wood. You cannot come at a besetting sin as you would like. At times you fancy, "I'll wound it to its deadly hurt," and in the very act of wounding one sin you are calling another into play! Many a man has tried to overcome his propensity to faintheartedness and he has run into presumption. Some have tried to be less profuse in their expenditure and they have become penurious. Some have said, "I will no more be proud," and then they have become mean-spirited.

I have known some that were so stern for the Truth of God that they became bigoted. They have afterwards become latitudinarian and hold the Truth with so loose a hand that their constancy could hardly be relied on. Look straight on and "do the duty that next lies before you." It is no easy thing, believe me, to defend yourself from the surprises of sin. It is a thing impossible unless God who created the new nature shall come to its rescue—shall feed it with the Bread of Heaven, shall give it water out of the Rock of Ages—and lead it on its way to the goodly land where the Canaanite shall never be and where our soul shall feast on milk and honey.

I must not linger on this point, but pass on to notice the next. It is a sadder one. The Apostle said this warring brought him into captivity to the law of sin. What does he mean by this? I do not think he means he wandered into open flagrant immoralities. No observer may have noticed any fault in the Apostle's character. He could see it in himself and he saw flaws in his life where we are not able to detect them which probably was a habit with the Apostle. When I hear a good man lamenting his faults, I know what the world will say—they will take him at his word and think that he is as *they* are. Whereas with every godly man if you knew him and marked his life and conversation, you would be compelled, if you judged him candidly, to say that he was like Job—perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil.

Yet that very man would be the first to see spots in himself because he has more light than others—because he has a higher idea of what holiness is than others—and chiefly because he lives nearer to God than others. He knows that God is so infinitely holy that the heavens are not pure in His sight and He charged His angels with folly! Therefore, everyone who sees himself in the glass of the Law sees in himself a filthiness that he

never saw before. As Job said, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eyes see You. Therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

But I think the Apostle was not referring, here, to acts of gross misdemeanor having brought him into captivity so far as he himself was concerned, though many who are God's children get into sorry captivity because the law of sin and death in their members gets the mastery over them, sometimes. Oh, watch against this! Weep against this—I was about to say *wrestle* unto blood against this! Brethren, they that have committed great sins who have been God's children, though they have been saved, have been saved so as by fire.

And if they could tell you how their very bones were broken, how the Lord made them see that He hated sin in His own family even more than anywhere else—if you could hear them confess how they lost the light of His Countenance, lost enjoyments, lost the sweet savor of the promises—oh, it would make you say, "My God, be pleased not only to save me at the last but all the journey through! Hold up my footsteps in Your way that they slip not! Make me to run in the way of Your Commandments." It is a captivity like that of the Israelites in Babylon, itself, when a child of God suffers to fall into some great sin.

But, long before it comes to pass, and I hope in your case it may never go so far, I think this law of sin brings us into captivity in other respects. While you are fighting and contending against inbred sin, doubts will invade your heart. "Am I a child of God?" If it is so, why am I thus? I cannot pray as I would. Surely if I were a child of God I should not be hampered in devotion or go out to a place of worship and feel I have no enjoyment, while others feast and sing for joy of heart." Oh, what a captivity the soul is brought into when it allows inbred sin to cast any doubts upon its safety in Christ! Christ, having been all our Confidence, is always in us the hope of Glory. To as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name.

If I have believed on His name, whatever my inward experience may be—or may *not* be in my own estimation—if I have believed on the name of Jesus I have the privilege to be a child of God. But sometimes doubts will come over us and so we are brought into captivity. I have known those who were almost driven to despair. The child of God has written bitter things against himself and signed his own death warrant. Thank God, even if we sign our own death warrant it does not stand for anything! Nobody can sign that but the King and He will never sign it for any soul that believes in Him, however feeble his love may be!

We may be brought into captivity by a sense of sin, a temptation to sin, or a yielding to sin. If we ever come to that it will make us weak in serving, cold in prayers when alone, and joyless in the society of the saints. No, we shall feel almost lifeless. Oh, may God save us from it! Oh, may we wrestle hard! May we wrestle every day that we may keep sin down! May Divine Grace, even that Grace which is treasured up in Christ Jesus, secure to us the victory!

III. It is some comfort when we feel a war within the soul, to remember that it is an interesting phase of Christian experience. Such as are dead in sin have never made proof of any of these things. Time was, when we were

self-righteous, lost, ruined and without the Law, sin was dead in us, or so we thought. We were dead in trespasses and sins, though we boasted of our own righteousness! These inward conflicts show that we are alive. There is some life in the soul that hates sin—even though it cannot do as it would.

I have known what it is to bless God for the times when my soul has felt inward war and I would have been glad to feel the war renewed. Rest assured that the strong man of the soul, while he keeps the house will keep it in peace. It is when a stronger than he comes to eject him that there is a fight within your soul. I would suggest, therefore, to you that it is a cause for consolation and thankfulness. Do not be depressed about it. Say, “after all, there is some life here.” Where there is pain there is life. The best of God’s saints have suffered in this very same manner. Your way to Heaven is not a bad one.

Some, I know, are not so troubled to any great extent, but the majority of God’s saints have to endure fights outside and fears within. You read of Martin Luther. That great bold man became a master of theology by being taught in the school of temptation. Even his last hours were full of stern conflict. He was a man of war from his youth up. How constantly did he have to contend against himself! We get the same testimony from this chapter of the life of Paul. Be not, therefore, downcast as though some strange thing had happened to you! Look up yonder to those saints above in their white robes singing their unending song! Ask them from where their victory came! They will tell you that it did not come to them because they were sinless or perfect in themselves, but through the blood of Jesus—

***“Once they were wrestling here below,
And wet their couch with tears.
They wrestled hard as we do now,
With sins, with doubts and fears.”***

The richest consolation comes from the last verse of the chapter. Paul, having asked how he should be delivered, answers the question “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” “They shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins”—not only from the *guilt* of their sins but from the *power* of their sins! What a mercy it is that the Lord Jesus has struck a deadly blow at our sin! He has broken the head of it. It is a monster and has immense vitality—but its back is broken! Its legs are broken! It is a broken-headed monster! There it is—it lies hissing and spitting, and writhing, capable of doing us much mischief—but He that has wounded it will strike it again and again, until at last it shall utterly die!

Thank God it has not vitality enough to get across the river Jordan. No sinful desire shall ever swim on that stream! They are not molested there with tendencies and propensities to sin—and when they shall be restored to their bodies and their bodies shall rise again—they shall have bodies not of flesh! Bodies of flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of Heaven, neither shall their bodies see corruption! But bodies fit for celestial minds, they shall be eternally free from their former sin. Let us rejoice that Jesus Christ can do it all! He can save us from all sin. He who has bought us with His blood, He will not cheaply lose that which He has dearly bought! He will deliver us from all sin and He will bring us into His eternal kingdom and Glory without fail!

So we fall back upon this sweet consolation. Though the fight may be long and arduous, the result is not doubtful. Remember the text of last Thursday night. That shall settle the point. "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." "My Father who gave them to Me is greater than all, and none shall pluck them out of My Father's hand." You will have to get to Heaven fighting sin every inch of the way, but you will get there! Some on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship—they all came safe to land in Paul's shipwreck—so shall it be with the saints. When the sheep shall pass again under the hand of Him that counts them one by one, there shall not be one of them missing!

They were all so weak that the wolf could have torn them in pieces. They were all so foolish that if left to themselves they would have wandered on the mountains and in the woods and have been destroyed. But the eternal Shepherd makes this a point of honor—"Of all them that You have given Me, I have lost none. Here am I, and the children that You have given Me." It ought to make you quite well, now, to know that you are sure of victory! Oh, by the lilies of the love of Christ, and by the strong right arm that once smote Rahab and cut the dragons in two, let every Christian be of good courage! The Omnipotent is with us! The Invincible is for us!

Forward to the charge, onward to the conflict, though the fight waxes warmer and sterner! Onward forever! Onward without fear or a moment's hesitation! "He that has loved us bears us through and makes us more than conquerors, too." "The breaker is come up before them. They have broken up and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it, and their King shall pass before them and the LORD on the head of them." They have put to the route their foes! Thus shall it be spoken of all those that follow under the leadership of Christ! This is the heritage of the saints and their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord. God grant us to be victors in this holy war for Christ's sake. Amen.

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

THE DUAL NATURE AND THE DUEL WITHIN NO. 1459B

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

***“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.”
Romans 7:23.***

I QUESTION whether *any* man understands himself and I am quite certain that no *Christian* does. “Great is the mystery of godliness” in more senses than one! The Believer is a great riddle to those who observe him—“he is discerned of no man.” He is equally an enigma to himself. The frequency of books like Venning’s, “Orthodox Paradoxes,” and good Ralph Erskine’s, “Believer’s Riddle,” is not at all amazing, for a thousand riddles may be made about the Christian since he is a paradox from beginning to end. As Plato used to say of each man that he was two men, so may we with emphasis say of each Christian that he is two men in *one*.

Oftentimes to himself the evil man within him appears to be uppermost and yet, by the Grace of God, he never can be, for the ultimate victory belongs to the new and spiritual life. We see in every Christian what was seen in the Shulamite in the Song, “as it were the company of two armies.” This is not always known by the Believer when he commences the new life. He starts knowing that he is a sinner and that Jesus is his Savior, but as he proceeds, he finds that he is more a sinner than he thought he was. Many surprises await him and some things which, if he is not prepared for them, will stagger him as though some strange thing had happened to him.

Perhaps my discourse on this subject may prevent a new convert from being overwhelmed with unexpected storms and help him to solve the question which *will* arise in his mind, “If I were a child of God, could it be thus with me?” Our first head will be, THERE ARE IN ALL BELIEVERS TWO PRINCIPLES. The Apostle speaks of *the law of his mind* and then of *another law in his members* warring against the law of his mind. The converted man is a new man in Christ Jesus, but the old nature *remains* within him. The first life in a Christian, in order of time, is *the old Adam nature*. It is there from the first. It is born of and with the flesh and it remains in us after we are born of the Spirit, for the second birth does not destroy in us the products of the first birth.

Regeneration brings into us a new and higher principle which is ultimately to destroy the sinful nature, but the old principle still remains and labors to retain its power. Some fancy that the carnal mind is to be improved, gradually tamed and sanctified—but it is enmity against God and is not reconciled to God—neither, indeed, can be. The old nature is of the earth, earthy, and must be crucified with Christ and buried with Him, for

it is altogether too bad for mending! This old nature lives in our members, that is to say, its nest is the body and it works through the body.

There are certain appetites of ours which are perfectly allowable, no, even *necessary* to existence, but they can be very easily pushed to sinful extremes and then that which is lawful and right becomes a nest for that which is unlawful and wrong. It is a commendable thing that a man should seek to provide for his own household, yet how many crimes and how much covetousness come into the world from an inordinate indulgence of that desire? A man may eat and drink, yet it is through those appetites that a thousand sins are engendered. A man, when he is in his right condition, puts a bit into the mouth of his desires and holds them in as with bit and bridle. His higher nature governs his bodily appetites, but not without great effort, for ever since the fall of Adam, the machine works irregularly and is not properly controlled by that which should be the ruling force.

I have heard of some professors who dream that sin is utterly destroyed in them and that they have no more evil tendencies and desires. I shall not controvert their notion. If it is so, I congratulate them and greatly wish it were so with me. I have, however, had some little experience of perfect people and I have generally found them the most disagreeable, touchy and sensitive persons in the world! And some of them have turned out to be such detestable hypocrites that I am rather afraid of a person who has no imperfections. As soon as I learn that a Brother states that he has lived for months without sin, I wonder whether his secret vice is lewdness, or theft, or drink—and I feel sure that somewhere or other there is a leak in the ship!

The sin which lurks in the flesh will grow weaker in proportion as the holy principle, of which I have to speak, grows stronger. And it is at no time to be tolerated or excused—we are to fight against it, conquer it and ultimately it is to be destroyed in us, root and branch—yet there it is and let not the young Christian be staggered when he finds it there. When we are born again there is dropped into our soul *the living and incorruptible Seed* of the Word of God which lives and abides forever. It is akin to the Divine Nature and cannot sin because it is born of God—it has no tendency to sin, but all its appetites are heavenward and Christ-ward. It never stoops from its high position; it is always aspiring towards Heaven. It is at deadly enmity with the old nature which it will, in the end, destroy, but, as I have said before, it has its *work* to do and it is a work which, assisted even by Divine strength, will not be accomplished all at once. It is a warfare which, when it seems ended, has often to be renewed, since, after long and victorious campaigns, the routed enemy returns to the field.

Now, I would like each Christian to be assured that he has this second principle in him. It may be weak; it may be struggling for an existence; but it is there, my Brothers and Sisters! If you have believed in Jesus, you have the life which hates sin and makes you repent when you have fallen into it. That is the life which cries, “Abba, Father,” as often as it thinks of God. That is the life which aspires after holiness and delights in the Law of God. This is the new-born principle which will not permit you to be at peace if you should wander into sin. It finds no rest but in the bosom of

that God from whom it came and in likeness to that God from whom it sprang.

These are the two principles which make up the dual man—the flesh and the spirit—the law of the mind and the law of sin, the body of death and the spirit of life.

We notice, secondly, that THE EXISTENCE OF THESE TWO PRINCIPLES IN A CHRISTIAN NECESSITATES A CONFLICT, even as the text says, “Another law in my members *warring against the law of my mind.*” The lion will not lie down with the lamb in us! Fire will not be on good terms with water. Death will not parley with life, nor Christ with Belial. The dual life provokes a *daily* duel. I am not sure that the conflict between the new nature and the old is felt by all young Christians at first. Frequently Christian life may be divided into three stages—the first period is that of *comfort* in which the young Christian rejoices in the Lord and his principal business is to sing and tell what God has done for him. The more of this the better!

After that, very often comes the stage of *conflict*—instead of being children at home we have grown into men and therefore we must go to war. Under the old law, when a man was married, or had built a house, he was excused from fighting for a season, but when that was over, he must take his place in the ranks. And so is it with the child of God—he may rest awhile but he is destined for the war. The period of conflict is often succeeded, especially in old age, by a third stage which we may call *contemplation*, in which the Believer sits down to reflect upon the goodness of the Lord towards him and upon all the good things which are in store for him.

This is the land Beulah which John Bunyan describes as lying on the edge of the river and so near to the Celestial City that you can hear the heavenly music across the stream and, when the wind blows that way, you can smell the sweet perfumes from the gardens of the blessed! That is a stage which we must not expect to reach just now. My young Friend, inasmuch as you are at first weak and tender, the Lord may be pleased to screen you from a great many temptations and from the uprisings of your flesh. But the probabilities are that before long you will put down your harp and take up your sword—and your joy of spirit will give place to the agony of conflict.

Sin is in you, lurking in secret places, though it has not as yet leaped forth upon you as a young lion on its prey. You, perhaps, have thought, “I shall do better than those who have gone before me. I shall shine as a brilliant saint.” Let not him that puts on his harness boast as though he takes it off. There are fights before you and I warn you of them, so that when you remove from the state of content to the state of conflict you may confess, “Before it came to pass I was warned of this and, therefore, I am prepared for it.”

The reason of the fight is this—the new nature comes into our heart, to rule over it—but the carnal mind is not willing to surrender its power. A new throne is set up in the heart and the old monarch, dethroned, outlawed and made to lurk in holes and corners, says to himself, “I will not have this. Why should it be? Here am I, who was once this man’s king, snubbed and made to hide myself as though I were a stranger! I will get

the throne back again.” Master Bunyan, in his, “Holy War,” which is a very wonderful allegory, describes Diabolus, you know, as having his city taken from him.

But, after the city had been taken, there lurked in the holes and corners of that city certain subjects of Diabolus and these were always plotting and planning how they could get the city back. They opened the gates at night to let in their old king. They sowed discontent among the inhabitants. This is the reason for the perpetual strife within our souls. The old lusts that are under ban and curse and which we are hunting to crucify, put their heads together and labor to regain dominion! The flesh will wait till you are in a very quiet frame of mind and feel very secure—and then it will come down upon you with its evil fascinations!

At another time it may be you are in great trouble and you feel ready to sink—and then comes the devil upon you like a roaring lion, hoping to destroy your faith. He knows how to time the temptation and the flesh knows how to rise in insurrection when we are off our guard and when surrounding circumstances are all conducive to sin. We cannot be too watchful, for the flesh will rebel all of a sudden. We may get it down and think we have fettered it securely, but, ah, it finds its hands, it breaks its bonds and lets fly an arrow at our heart! You said, “I shall never be angry again,” and while you were congratulating yourself on the sweetness of your temper, you were, all of a sudden, provoked from quite a new quarter and your wrath boiled over again.

“No,” you said, “I never shall be impatient again,” and yet within a few moments you were as full of murmuring as ever you had been in your life! Till the flesh lies in the grave, sin will not be dead! And let me warn you that the flesh may be doing us more mischief when it seems to be doing no mischief at all than at any other time! During war the sappers and miners will work underneath a city and those inside say, “The enemy is very quiet; we hear no roaring of cannon, we see no capturing of Malakoiifs. Where can the enemy be?” They know their business well enough and are laying their mines for unexpected strokes.

Hence an old Divine used to say that he was never so much afraid of *any* devil as he was of *no* devil. That is to say, when Satan does *not* tempt, it is often our worst temptation! To be let alone tends to breed a dry rot in the soul. “He has not been emptied from vessel to vessel,” said the Prophet of old, “he is settled upon his lees”—this spoke he of one who was under Divine displeasure. Stagnation is one of the worst things that can happen to us and so it happens that we are never secure. Thus, dear Friends, I have showed you that there is a conflict within. And let me congratulate you if it *is* a conflict. The *ungodly* know no such inward warfare! They sin and they love it—but where there is spiritual conflict the Grace of God is present!

We do sin, but we hate sin! We fall into it, but we loathe it and fight against it. And every true child of God can say honestly that there is nothing in this world he dreads so much as to grieve his God. If you were dead in sin you would have no trouble about it, but those inward pangs, those deep emotions, those bitter sighs and cries, that exclamation of, “Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this

death?” all indicate spiritual life! While I sympathize with your sorrow I congratulate you that you feel it, for this is one of the marks of a child of God! Forget not that in renewed men there are two opposing forces and that these necessitate a life-long war.

Thirdly, we must now note that this warfare SOMETIMES LEADS US INTO CAPTIVITY. Observe, “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.*” “What does that mean?” asks one. It means that when you sin it will be captivity to you if you are a child of God. The sinner may find pleasure in sin, but you will not if you are God’s child. You will be like a slave in chains, locked up in a horrible dungeon when you fall into sin.

But does the old nature make Christians captives? Yes, in this way. First, many a Christian feels himself in captivity for the very *fact that the old nature has risen within him.* Let me explain myself. Suppose that the old nature suggests to you some sin—you hate the sin and loathe it and you despise yourself for lying open to be tempted in such a way. The very fact that such a thought has crossed your mind is bondage to your pure spirit. You do not fall into the sin—you shake off the serpent—but you feel its slime upon your soul.

Do you not know what it is to have a very violent tendency towards an evil, the very thought of which is detestable to you? Your renewed mind exclaims, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” But yet the flesh says, “Do it, do it, do it!” and pictures the sweetness and the pleasure of it. With your whole soul you set yourself against the temptation. The cold sweat stands upon your brow at the very thought of your falling into so foul a transgression and you cry to God in prayer! But yet the captivity of your soul is great while the trial lasts and even in the remembrance of it. You say to yourself, “I am afraid I dallied with the temptation. The bait would not have been so alluring to me if there had not been some consent of my soul to it.”

You also charge your heart with folly, saying, “Though I did not commit that sin, yet there was a hankering after it in me.” Though others could not condemn you, but must even honor your self-denial, yet you condemn yourself for any degree of inclination in the wrong direction and you feel that the *temptation* has brought you, at once, into captivity. What a difference there is between a spot on one thing and a spot on another! A man makes a spot with ink on my coat and nobody perceives it—but if he were to cast a drop upon this white handkerchief, how soon everybody would see it!

The old nature is like a black coat, too dark to show a blot—but one spot of temptation falling on the pure white linen of the *new* nature troubles us exceedingly—we see it and we loathe it and we cry out to God that we may get rid of it. The very passing of temptation across a renewed soul brings it into captivity. I stood one day in Rome looking at a very large and well executed photograph of a street and an ancient temple. I had never seen so fine a photograph, but I noticed that right across the middle of it was the trace of a mule and a cart. The artist had done his best to prevent it, but there was the ghost of that cart and mule all along the way, right

across the picture. I do not say it spoiled it, but it certainly did not improve it.

Even so, oftentimes, when our heart is most cleansed and bears best the image of God, right across the fair picture comes the trace of a temptation and we are grieved. An observer unskilled in art might not notice the mark on the photograph, but a careful artist, with a high ideal, is vexed to see his work thus marred. And so with moral stains—that which the common man thinks a trifle is a great sorrow to the pure-hearted child of God and he is brought into captivity by it.

Sometimes, too, a Christian's captivity consists in his *losing his joy through the uprising of the flesh*. I speak what I am sure many of the children of God here know. You are rejoicing in the Lord and triumphant in His name and, by-and-by, some corruption struggles for the mastery. "It shall not rise," you say. You put it down but it strives and you strive, too—and in the struggle, the joy of the Lord, which was your strength, seems to be taken away from you. A sense of the dreadful fact that the leprosy is in the house of clay in which you live terrifies you and you are so anxious to get the leprosy out of the walls that you would sooner see the old house decay into dust than live where evil so readily approaches you! This sight of inbred sin may cast a chill upon your joy. You want to sing the praises of God, but the temptation comes just at that very minute and you have to battle with it and the song gives place to a battle cry.

It is time for prayer and you are in the attitude of devotion, but somehow you cannot control your thoughts—they will roam here and there under the force of the flesh. My thoughts frequently seem like a lot of colts let loose, tearing over the fields of my soul without restraint. In holy contemplation you try to concentrate your thoughts upon the subject in hand and you cannot—very likely somebody knocks at the door at the same time, or a child begins to cry, or a man begins to grind an organ under your window—how can you meditate? All things seem to be against you. Little outside matters which are trifling to others will often prove terrible disturbers of your spirit and what others smile at, you are made to weep over, for the flesh will lay hold of the most paltry concerns to prevent your coming into communion with the Lord your God. Thus by taking away our joy, and marring our fellowship, the old corruption within us leads us into captivity.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, this is not all, for *we do not always escape from actual sin*. We do, in moments of forgetfulness, that which we would willingly undo and say that which we would willingly unsay. The spirit was willing to be perfect, but the flesh was weak—and then the consequence is, to a child of God—that he feels himself a captive. He has yielded to treacherous blandishments and now, like Samson, his locks are shorn. He goes out to shake himself as he did before, but the Philistines are upon him! His God is not with him and it will be a happy thing for him if he does not lose his eyes and come to grind at the mill like a slave. Oh, what need we have to be on our guard and to look to the Strong for strength, for this old nature within us will bring us into captivity if it can and will hold us there!

But I must close with this reflection, that THIS WARFARE AND THIS OCCASIONAL TRIUMPH OF THE FLESH MAKE US LOOK TO CHRIST FOR VICTORY. The Apostle asks, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And his reply is, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Brothers and Sisters, I am persuaded that there is no place so safe and none so proper and fitting for any of us as a sinner's place at the foot of the Cross. I have read a great deal about perfection in the flesh and I have tried to get it. I have also tried to pray after the fashion which I suppose a perfect man would pray—but the theory will not hold water as far as I am concerned.

When I went up to the temple in that way and tried to pray, I found a Pharisee at my elbow. A good way off I saw a poor sinner, striking his breast and saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," and I perceived that he went away justified, while I stood there and envied him. I could not stand it! I went back to my old place at the sinner's side and smote my breast, uttering the old cry, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." Then I, too, felt at ease and I went home justified and rejoicing in the Lord! Beloved, whenever there is a question between me and the devil as to whether I am a child of God, I have given up seeking evidence in my own favor, or turning to my experience to prove that I am in a state of Grace, for that cunning old lawyer knows more about my infirmities than I do and can very soon bring two to one against me!

My constant way is to tell the accuser," Well, if I am not a saint, I am a sinner, and Jesus came into the world to save sinners, therefore I will go to Christ and look to Him again." The devil cannot answer that! You that are oldest in the Divine Life—and I speak to some who have known the Lord these 50 years—I am sure that you find times in which no mark, evidence, or experience is worth a penny to you by way of comfort and you are led to adopt the simple expedient which I have recommended to all the tempted ones. It will be wise to always live upon Jesus! Begin, again, at the foot of the Cross where you began at first, with the old cry—

***"Nothing in my hand I bring!
Simply to Your Cross I cling."***

That is the way to conquer sin, as well as to overcome despair for, when faith in Jesus comes back to your soul, you will be strong to fight with your corruptions and you will win the victory, which you will never gain if you allow your struggles with your sins to drive you away from your Savior. Let us resort, then, to Christ who gives us the victory and let us, the longer we live, praise Christ the more!

You young Christians, you do not yet know what a dear Savior you have found! You know you have found Him, but He is a dearer Christ than you think He is! You were naked and He has clothed you—yes, He has put the armor upon you which will ward off the darts of the arch-enemy. You were hungry and He has fed you—yes, but He has fed you with immortal bread—He is nourishing a Divine Life within your soul! He has given you peace and you are grateful for it—yes, but He has given you a peace which passes all understanding—that shall keep your heart and mind! You say it is sweet to find Him with you. So it is, but oh, how sweet it will be to have Him with you when you pass through the fires and are not burned; when

you go through the floods and are not drowned; when you enter upon the final struggle and are not afraid!

Oh, Beloved, we may find out and *shall* find out, more of our own needs, but we shall also discover more of Christ's all-sufficient fullness! The storm will become more terrible, but the Pilot's power to rule that storm will only be the more displayed! The ship may rock to and fro till all her timbers are strained and her keel may threaten to snap in two, but—

***“He will preserve it, He does steer
Even when the boat seems most to reel,
Storms are the triumph of His art.”***

He will bring His people safely through the howling wilderness and the land of great drought. Be not afraid, you that have begun the Divine pilgrimage, for His fiery cloudy pillar will attend you! Dragons there are, but by the sword of the Spirit you shall wound the dragon as of old he was wounded at the Red Sea. There will be death to fight with, but Christ has died and you shall be victorious over the grave. Expect conflict! Be not astonished when it comes, but as confidently expect victory and shout in prospect of it!

As surely as the Lord has called you to this celestial warfare, He will bear you through it! You shall sing on the other side of Jordan unto Him that loved you and washed you from your sins in His blood! In the haven of the blessed, in the land of the hereafter, in the home of the holy where the weary are at rest, you shall sing the high praises of God and the Lamb! I would to God this sermon had a relation to all those who hear or read it, but I fear it has not. I can only hope that those who have no conflict within may begin to feel one. May God grant that you may not rest quiet in sin, for to be at peace with sin is to be sleeping yourself into Hell!

May God awaken you, that you may flee to Christ for mercy at this very hour and there shall be joy in His Presence. Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 7.
HYMNS FROM “OUR: OWN HYMN BOOK” –435, 644, 769.***

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THE FAINTING WARRIOR

NO. 235

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 23, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver
me from the body of this death?
I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
Romans 7:24, 25.***

IF I chose to occupy your time with controversial matter, I might demonstrate that the Apostle Paul is here describing his own experience as a Christian. Some have affirmed that he is merely declaring what he was before conversion and not what he was when he became the recipient of the Grace of God. But such persons are evidently mistaken and I believe willfully mistaken. For any ample-hearted, candid mind, reading through this chapter, could not fall into such an error. It is Paul the Apostle, who was not less than the very greatest of the Apostles—it is Paul, the mighty servant of God, a very prince in Israel, one of the King’s mighty men—it is Paul, the saint and the Apostle, who here exclaims, “O wretched man that I am!”

Now, humble Christians are often the dupes of a very foolish error. They look up to certain advanced saints and able ministers and they say, “Surely, such men as these do not suffer as I do. They do not contend with the same evil passions as those which vex and trouble me.” Ah, if they knew the heart of those men—if they could read their inward conflicts, they would soon discover that the nearer a man lives to God, the more intensely has he to mourn over his own evil heart. And the more his Master honors him in his service, the more also does the evil of the flesh vex and tease him day by day. Perhaps this error is more natural, as it is certainly more common, with regard to apostolic saints. We have been in the habit of saying, Saint Paul and Saint John, as if they were more saints than any other of the children of God. They are all saints whom God has called by His Grace and sanctified by His Spirit. But somehow we very foolishly put the Apostles and the early saints into another list and do not venture to look on them as common mortals. We look upon them as some extraordinary beings, who could not be men of like passions with ourselves.

We are told in Scripture that our Savior was “tempted in all points like as we are.” And yet we fall into the flagrant error of imagining that the Apostles, who were far inferior to the Lord Jesus, escaped these temptations and were ignorant of these conflicts. The fact is, if you had seen the

Apostle Paul, you would have thought he was remarkably like the rest of the chosen family. And if you had talked with him, you would have said, "Why, Paul, I find that your experience and mine exactly agree. You are more faithful, more holy and more deeply taught than I, but you have the self-same trials to endure. No, in some respects you are more sorely tried than I." Do not look upon the ancient saints as being exempt either from infirmities or sins and do not regard them with that mystic reverence which almost makes you an idolater. Their holiness is attainable even by you and their faults are to be censured as much as your own.

I believe it is a Christian's duty to force his way into the inner circle of saintship. And if these saints were superior to us in their attainments, as they certainly were, let us follow them. Let us press forward up to, yes, and beyond them, for I do not see that this is impossible. We have the same light that they had, the same grace is accessible to us and why should we rest satisfied until we have distanced them in the heavenly race? Let us bring them down to the sphere of common mortals. If Jesus was the Son of Man and very Man, "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh," so were the Apostles. And it is an flagrant error to suppose that they were not the subjects of the same emotions and the same inward trials as the very worst of the people of God. So far this may tend to our comfort and to our encouragement, when we find that we are engaged in a battle in which Apostles themselves have had to fight.

And now we shall notice this morning, first, the two natures. Secondly their constant battle. Thirdly, we shall step aside and look at the weary warrior and hear him cry, "O wretched man that I am." And then we shall turn our eyes in another direction and see that fainting warrior girding up his loins to the conflict and becoming an expectant victor, while he shouts, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

I. First, then, THE TWO NATURES. Carnal men, unrenewed men, have one nature—a nature which they inherited from their parents and which, through the ancient transgression of Adam, is evil, only evil and that continually. Mere human nature, such as is common to every man, has in it many excellent traits, judging of it between man and man. A merely natural man may be honest, upright, kind and generous. He may have noble and generous thoughts and may attain unto a true and manly speech. But when we come to matters of true religion, *spiritual* matters that concern God and eternity, the natural man can do nothing. The carnal mind, whosever's mind it may be, is fallen and is at enmity to God. It knows nothing of the things of God, nor can it ever know them.

Now, when a man becomes a Christian, he becomes so through the infusion of a new *nature*. He is naturally "dead in trespasses and sins," and "without God and without hope." The Holy Spirit enters into him and implants in him a new principle, a new nature, a new life. That life is a high, holy and supernatural principle, it is, in fact the Divine nature, a ray from

the great “Father of Lights.” It is the Spirit of God dwelling in man. Thus, you see, the Christian becomes a double man—two men in one. Some have imagined that the old nature is turned out of the Christian—not so—for the Word of God and experience teach the contrary. The old nature is in the Christian unchanged, unaltered, just the same, as bad as ever it was—while the new nature in him is holy, pure and heavenly. And hence, as we shall have to notice in the next place—hence there arises a conflict between the two.

Now I want you to notice what the Apostle says about these two natures that are in the Christian, for I am about to contrast them. First, in our text the Apostle calls the old nature “the body of this death.” Why does he call it “the body of this death”? Some suppose he means these dying bodies. But I do not think so. If it were not for sin, we should have no fault to find with our poor bodies. They are noble works of God and are not in themselves the cause of sin. Adam in the garden of perfection felt the body to be no encumbrance, nor if sin were absent should we have any fault to find with our flesh and blood? What, then, is it? I think the Apostle calls the *evil nature* within him a body, first, in opposition to those who talk of the relics of corruption in a Christian. I have heard people say that there are relics, remainders and remnants of sin in a Believer. Such men do not know much about themselves yet. Oh, it is not a bone, or a rag which is left. It is the *whole body of sin* that is there—the whole of it, “from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot.”

Grace does not maim this body and cut away its members. It leaves it entire, although blessed be God, it crucifies it, nailing it to the Cross of Christ. And again, I think he calls it a body because it is something tangible. We all know that we have a body. It is a thing we can feel, we know it is there. The new nature is a subtle spirit and not easy to detect—I sometimes have to question myself as to whether it is there at all. But as for my old nature, that is a body, I can never find it difficult to recognize its existence—it is as apparent as flesh and bones. As I never doubt that I am in flesh and blood, so I never doubt but what I have sin within me. It is a body—a thing which I can see and feel and which, to my pain, is ever present with me.

Understand, then, that the *old nature* of the Christian is a body. It has in it a substance or, as Calvin puts it, it is a mass of corruption. It is not simply a shred, a remnant—the cloth of the old garment, but the whole of it is there still. True, it is crushed beneath the foot of grace. It is cast out of its throne. But it is there—there in all its entirety and in all its sad tangibility—a body of death. But why does he call it a body of *death*? Simply to express what an awful thing this sin is that remains in the heart. It is a body of *death*. I must use a figure, which is always appended to this text and very properly so. It was the custom of ancient tyrants, when they wished to put men to the most fearful punishments, to tie a dead body to

them, placing the two back to back. And there was the living man, with a dead body closely strapped to him, rotting, putrid, corrupting and this he must drag with him wherever he went.

Now this is just what the Christian has to do. He has within him the new life. He has a living and undying principle, which the Holy Spirit has put within him, but he feels that every day he has to drag about with him this dead body, this body of death, a thing as loathsome, as hideous, as abominable to his new life, as a dead stinking carcass would be to a living man. Francis Quarles gives a picture at the beginning of one of his examples, of a great skeleton in which a living man is encased. However quaint the fancy, it is not more singular than true. There is the old skeleton man, filthy, corrupt and abominable. He is a cage for the new principle which God has put in the heart. Consider a moment the striking language of our text, "The body of this death"—it is death incarnate, death concentrated, death dwelling in the very temple of life.

Did you ever think what an awful thing death is? The thought is the most abhorrent to human nature. You say you do not fear death and very properly. But the reason why you do not fear death is because you look to a glorious immortality. Death in itself is a most frightful thing. Now, inbred sin has about it all the unknown terror, all the destructive force and all the stupendous gloom of death. A poet would be needed to depict the conflict of life with death—to describe a living soul condemned to walk through the black shades of confusion and to bear incarnate death in its very bowels. But such is the condition of the Christian. As a regenerate man he is a firing, bright, immortal spirit. But he has to tread the shades of death. He has to do daily battle with all the tremendous powers of sin, which are as awful, as sublimely terrific, as even the powers of death and Hell.

Upon referring to the preceding chapter, we find the evil principle styled "the old man." There is much meaning in that word "old." But let it suffice us to remark that in age the new nature is not upon an equal footing with the corrupt nature. There are some here who are sixty years old in their humanity, who can scarce number two years in the life of grace. Now pause and meditate upon the warfare in the heart. It is the contest of an infant with a full-grown man, the wrestling of a babe with a giant. Old Adam, like some ancient oak, has thrust his roots into the depths of Manhood—can the Divine infant uproot him and cast him from his place?

This is the work, this is the labor. From its birth the new nature begins the struggle and it cannot cease from it until the victory be perfectly achieved. Nevertheless, it is the moving of a mountain, the drying up of an ocean, the threshing of the hills, and who is sufficient for these things? The Heaven-born nature needs and will receive the abundant help of its Author, or it would yield in the struggle, subdued beneath the superior strength of its adversary and crushed beneath his enormous weight.

Again—observe that the old nature of man, which remains in the Christian, is evil and it cannot ever be anything else but evil, for we are told in this chapter that “in me”—that is, in my flesh—“there dwells no good thing.” The old Adam-nature cannot be improved. It cannot be made better. It is hopeless to attempt it. You may do what you please with it—you may educate it, you may instruct it and thus you may give it more instruments for rebellion—but you cannot make the rebel into the friend, you cannot turn the darkness into light. It is an enemy to God and an enemy to God it ever must be.

On the contrary, the new life which God has given us cannot sin. That is the meaning of a passage in John, where it is said, “The child of God sins not. He cannot sin, because he is born of God.” The old nature is evil, only evil—and that continually. The new nature is wholly good. It knows nothing of sin, except to hate it. Its contact with sin brings it pain and misery and it cries out, “Woe is me that I dwell in Meshech, that I tabernacle in the tents of Kedar.”

I have thus given you some little picture of the two natures. Let me again remind you that these two natures are essentially unchangeable. You cannot make the new nature which God has given you less Divine. The old nature you cannot make less impure and earthly. Old Adam is a condemned thing. You may sweep the house and the evil spirit may seem to go out of it, but he will come back again and bring with him seven other devils more wicked than himself. It is a leper’s house and the leprosy is in every stone from the foundation to the roof. There is no part sound. It is a garment spotted by the flesh. You may wash and wash and wash, but you shall never wash it clean. It were foolish to attempt it. While on the other hand the new nature can never be tainted—spotless, holy and pure, it dwells in our hearts. It rules and reigns there expecting the day when it shall cast out its enemy and without a rival it shall be monarch in the heart of man forever.

II. I have thus described the two combatants. We shall now come in the next place to THEIR BATTLE. There was never deadlier feud in all the world between nations than there is between the two principles, right and wrong. But right and wrong are often divided from one another by distance and therefore they have a less intense hatred. Suppose an instance—right holds for liberty, therefore right hates the evil of slavery. But we do not so intensely hate slavery as we should do if we saw it before our eyes—then would the blood boil—when we saw our black brother, smitten by the cow-hide whip. Imagine a slaveholder standing here and smiting his poor slave until the red blood gushed forth in a river—can you conceive your indignation?

Now it is *distance* which makes you feel this less acutely. The right forgets the wrong, because it is far away. But suppose now that right and wrong lived in the same house. Suppose two such desperate enemies,

cribbed, cabined and confined within this narrow house, man. Suppose the two compelled to dwell together—can you imagine to what a desperate pitch of fury these two would get with one another? The evil thing says, “I will turn you out, you intruder. I cannot be peaceful as I would, I cannot riot as I would, I cannot indulge just as I would—out with you! I will never be content until I slay you.”

“No,” says the new born nature, “I will kill you and drive you out. I will not suffer stick or stone of you to remain. I have sworn war to the knife with you. I have taken out the sword and cast away the scabbard and will never rest till I can sing complete victory over you and totally eject you from this house of mine.” They are always at enmity wherever they are. They were never friends and never can be. The evil must hate the good and the good must hate the evil.

And mark—although we might compare the enmity to the wolf and lamb, yet the newborn nature is not the lamb in all respects. It may be in its innocence and meekness, but it is not in its strength. For the newborn nature has all the omnipotence of God about it, while the old nature has all the strength of the Evil One in it, which is a strength not easily to be exaggerated, but which we very frequently underestimate. These two things are ever desperately at enmity with one another. And even when they are both quiet they hate each other none the less.

When my evil nature does not rise, still it hates the newborn nature and when the newborn nature is inactive, it has nevertheless a thorough abhorrence of all iniquity. The one cannot endure the other, it must endeavor to thrust it forth. Nor do these at any time allow an opportunity to pass from being revenged upon one another. There are times when the old nature is very active and then how will it ply all the weapons of its deadly armory against the Christian. You will find yourselves at one time suddenly attacked with anger and when you guard yourself against the hot temptation, on a sudden you will find pride rising and you will begin to say in yourself—“Am I not a good man to have kept my temper down?”

And the moment you thrust down your pride there will come another temptation and lust will look out of the window of your eyes and you desire a thing upon which you ought not to look and before you can shut your eyes upon the vanity, sloth in its deadly torpor surrounds you and you give yourself up to its influence and cease to labor for God. And then when you bestir yourselves once more, in the very attempt to rouse yourself you have once more awakened your pride. Evil haunts you, go where you may, or stand in what posture you choose.

On the other hand the new nature will never lose an opportunity of putting down the old. As for the means of grace, the newborn nature will never rest satisfied unless it enjoys them. As for prayer, it will seek by prayer to wrestle with the enemy. It will employ faith and hope and love, the threats, the promises, Providence, Grace and everything else to cast

out the evil. Well,” says one, “I don’t find it so.” Then I am afraid for you. If you do not hate sin so much that you do everything to drive it out, I am afraid you are not a living child of God. Antinomians like to hear you preach about the evil of the heart, but here is the fault with them, they do not like to be told that unless they *hate* that evil, unless they seek to *drive it out* and unless it is the constant disposition of their newborn nature to root it up, they are yet in their sins.

Men who only believe their depravity, but do not *hate* it, are no further than the devil on the road to Heaven. It is not my being corrupt that proves me a Christian, nor knowing I am corrupt, but that I *hate* my corruption. It is my agonizing death struggle with my corruptions that proves me to be a living child of God. These two natures will never cease to struggle so long as we are in this world. The old nature will never give up. It will never cry truce, it will never ask for a treaty to be made between the two. It will always strike as often as it can. When it lies still it will only be preparing for some future battle. The battle of Christian with Apollyon lasted three hours. But the battle of Christian with himself lasted all the way from the Wicket Gate to the River Jordan.

The enemy within can never be driven out while we are here. Satan may sometimes be absent from us and get such a defeat that he is glad to go howling back to his den, but old Adam abides with us from the first even to the last. He was with us when we first believed in Jesus and long before that and he will be with us till that moment when we shall leave our bones in the grave, our fears in the Jordan and our sins in oblivion.

Once more observe that neither of these two natures will be content in the fight without bringing in allies to assist. The evil nature has old relations and in its endeavor to drive out the Grace that is within, it sends off messengers to all its helpers. Like Cherdorlasmer, the King of Elam, it brings other kings with it, when it goes out to battle. “Ah,” says old Adam, “I have friends in the pit.” He sends a missive down to the depths and willing allies come from there—spirits from the vast deep of Hell—devils without number come up to the help of their brother. And then, not content with that, the flesh says—“Ah, I have friends in this world.” And then the world sends its fierce cohorts of temptation, such as the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. What a battle, when sin, Satan and the world, make an assault upon the Christian at once. “Oh,” says one, “it is a terrible thing to be a Christian.” I assure you it is. It is one of the hardest things in the world to be a child of God. In fact, it is impossible, unless the Lord makes us His children and keeps us so.

Well, what does the new nature do? When it sees all these enemies, it cries unto the Lord and then the Lord sends it friends. First comes in to its help, Jehovah, in the Everlasting Covenant and reveals to the heart its own interest in the secrets of eternity. Then comes Jesus with His blood. “You shall conquer,” He says. “I will make you more than a conqueror

through My death.” And then appears the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. With such assistance, this newborn nature is more than a match for its enemies. God will sometimes leave that new nature alone, to let it know its own weakness. But it shall not be for long, lest it should sink in despair.

Are you fighting with the enemy today, my dear Christian Brothers and Sisters? Are Satan, the flesh and the world—that hellish trinity—all against you? Remember, there is a Divine Trinity for you. Fight on, though like Valiant-for-Truth, your blood runs from your hand and glues your sword to your arm. Fight on! For with you are the legions of Heaven. God Himself is with you! Jehovah Nissi is your banner and Jehovah Rophi is the healer of your wounds. You shall overcome. For who can defeat Omnipotence, or trample Divinity beneath his foot?

I have thus endeavored to describe the conflict. But understand me, it cannot be described. We must say, as Hart does in his hymn, when after singing the emotions of his soul, he says—

**“But, Brethren, you can surely guess,
For you perhaps have felt the same.”**

If you could see a plain upon which a battle is fought, you would see how the ground is torn up by the wheels of the cannon, by the horses’ hoofs and by the trampling of men. What desolation is there where once the golden crops of the harvest grew. How is the ground soaked with the blood of the slain! How frightful the result of this terrible struggle. But if you could see the Believers’ heart after a spiritual battle, you would find it just as the battlefield—as much cut up as the ground of the battlefield after the direst conflict that men or fiends have ever waged. For, think—we are combating man with himself. No, more—man with the whole world. No, more! Man with Hell—God with man, against man, the world and Hell. What a fight is that! It were worth an angel’s while to come from the remotest fields of ether to behold such a conflict.

III. We come now to notice THE WEARY COMBATANT. He lifts up his voice and weeping he cries, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” It is the cry of a panting warrior. He has fought so long that he has lost his breath and he draws it in again. He takes breath by prayer. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” He will not give up the conflict. He knows he cannot and he dares not. That thought does not enter into his mind. But the conflict is so sore, the battle so furious, that he is almost defeated. He sits down to refresh himself and thus he sighs out his soul. Like the panting hart, longing for the water brook, he says, “O wretched man that I am.”

No, it is more than that. It is the cry of one who is fainting. He has fought till all his strength is spent and he falls back into the arms of his Redeemer with this fainting gasp, “O wretched man that I am!” His

strength has failed him. He is sorely beaten in the battle, he feels that without the help of God he is so totally defeated that he commences his own wail of defeat, "O wretched man that I am." And then he asks this question, "Who shall deliver me?" And there comes a voice from the Law, "I cannot and I will not." There comes a voice from Conscience, "I can make you see the battle, but I cannot help you in it." And then there comes a cry from old Human Nature and that says, "Ah, none can deliver you, I shall yet destroy you. You shall fall by the hand of your enemy. The house of David shall be destroyed and Saul shall live and reign forever."

And the poor fainting soldier cries again, "Who shall deliver me?" It seems a hopeless case and I believe that sometimes the true Christian may think himself hopelessly given over to the power of sin. The wretchedness of Paul, I think, lay in two things, which are enough to make any man wretched. Paul believed the doctrine of human responsibility and yet he felt the doctrine of human inability. I have heard people say sometimes—"You tell the sinner that he cannot believe and repent without the help of the Holy Spirit and yet you tell him that it is his duty to believe and repent. How are these two to be reconciled?" We reply that they do not need any reconciliation. They are two Truths of Holy Scripture and we leave them to reconcile themselves—they are friends and friends do not need any reconciliation.

But what seems a difficulty as a matter of doctrine is clear as daylight as a matter of experience. I know it is my duty to be perfect, but I am conscious I cannot be. I know that every time I commit sin I am guilty and yet I am quite certain that I must sin—that my nature is such that I cannot help it. I feel that I am unable to get rid of this body of sin and death and yet I know I ought to get rid of it. These two things are enough to make any man miserable—to know that he is responsible for his sinful nature and yet to know that he cannot get rid of it—to know that he ought to keep it down and yet to feel he cannot—to know that it is his business to keep God's Law perfectly and walk in the commandments of the Law blameless and yet to know by sad experience that he is as unable to do so as much as he is unable to reverse the motion of the globe, or dash the sun from the center of the spheres.

How will not these two things drive any man to desperation? The way in which some men avoid the dilemma is by a denial of one of these Truths. They say, "Well, it is true I am unable to cease from sin." And then they deny their obligation to do so—they do not cry, "O wretched man that I am." They live as they like and say they cannot help it. On the other hand, there are some men who know they are responsible. But then they say, "Yes, but I can cast off my sin," and these are tolerably happy. The Arminian and the hyper-Calvinist both of them get on very comfortably. But the man who believes these two doctrines, as taught in God's Word, that he is *responsible* for sin and yet that he is unable to get rid of it—I do

not wonder that when he looks into himself he finds enough to make him sigh and cry, to faint and despair, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

And now says one, "Ah, I would not be a Christian, if that is the way in which he faints—it seems he is always to be fighting with himself. And even until he despairs of victory." Stop a moment. Let us complete the picture. This man is fainting. But he will be restored by-and-by. Think not that he is hopelessly defeated—he falls to rise—he faints but to be revived afresh. I know a remedy which can awaken his sleeping hopes and shoot a thrill along the freezing current of his blood. Let us sound the promise in his ear, see how soon he revives. Let us put the cordial to his lips—see how he starts up and plays the man again. "I have been almost defeated" says he, "almost driven to despair. Rejoice not over me, O my enemy. Though I fall, yet shall I rise again." And he lets fly against him once more, shouting, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." So on he goes again, more than a conqueror, through Him that has loved him.

IV. This brings me to this last point, that THE CHRISTIAN IS TO BE A CONQUEROR AT LAST. Do you think that we are forever to be the drudges and the slaves of sin? Am I forever to be the galley-slave of my own nature, to tug for freedom and never to escape? Am I always to have this dead man chained to my back and sniff the pestiferous exhalations of his putrid body? No, no, no! That which is within my heart is like a caged eagle. And I know that soon the bars which confine me shall be broken. The door of my cage shall be opened and I shall mount with my eye upon the sun of glory, soaring upward, true to the line, moving neither to the right hand nor to the left, flying till I reach my Eyre in the everlasting rocks of God's eternal love. No, we that love the Lord are not forever to dwell in Meshech. The dust may besmear our robes and filth may be upon our brow and beggared may be our garment, but we shall not be so forever.

The day is coming when we shall rise and shake ourselves from the dust and put on our beautiful garments. It is true we are now like Israel in Canaan. Canaan is full of enemies. But the Canaanites shall and must be driven out. Amalek shall be slain, Agag shall be hewn in pieces. Our enemies shall, every one of them, be dispersed and the whole land from Dan to Beersheba shall be the Lord's. Christians, rejoice! You are soon to be perfect! You are soon to be free from sin, totally free from it, without one wrong inclination, one evil desire! You are soon to be as pure as the angels in light. No, more, with your Master's garments on you are to be "holy as the Holy One." Can you think of that? Is not that the very sum of Heaven, the rapture of bliss, the sonnet of the hilltops of glory—that you are to be perfect?

No temptation can reach you from eye, or ear, or hand. Nor if the temptation could reach you would you be hurt by it. For there will be nothing

in you that could in any way foster sin. It would be as when a spark falls upon an ocean, your holiness would quench it in a moment. Yes, washed in the blood of Jesus, afresh baptized with the Holy Spirit, you are soon to walk the golden streets, white-robed and white-hearted too. Perfect as your Maker, you are to stand before His Throne and sing His praises to eternity. Now, soldiers of Christ, to arms again! Once more rush into the fight—you cannot be defeated. You must overcome. Though you faint a little, yet take courage. You shall conquer through the blood of the Lamb.

And now, turning aside for a minute, I shall conclude by making an observation or two to many now present. There are some here who say, "I am never disturbed in that fashion." Then I am sorry for you. I will tell you the reason of your false peace. You have not the Grace of God in your heart. If you had, you would surely find this conflict within you. Do not despise the Christian because he is in the conflict—despise yourself because you are out of it. The reason why the devil lets you alone is that he knows you are his. He does not need to trouble you much now. He will have time enough to give you your wages at the last. He troubles the Christian because he is afraid of losing him. He thinks that if he does not tease him here, he shall never have the chance to do it in eternity, so he will bite him and bark at him while he may. That is why the Christian is vexed more than you are.

As for you, you may well be without any pain, for dead men feel no blows. You may well be without the pricking of conscience. Men that are corrupt are not likely to feel wounds, though you stab them from head to foot. I pity your condition, for the worm that dies not is preparing to feed upon you. The eternal vulture of remorse shall soon wet his horrid beak with the blood of your soul. Tremble. For the fires of Hell are hot and unquenchable and the place of perdition is hideous beyond a madman's dream.

Oh that you would think of your last end! The Christian may have an evil present, but he has a glorious future. But your future is the blackness of darkness forever. I adjure you by the living God, you that fear not Christ, consider your ways. You and I must give an account for this morning's service. You are warned, men and women! You are warned! Take heed to yourselves, that you think not this life to be everything. There is a world to come. There is "after death the judgment." If you fear not the Lord, there is after judgment eternal wrath and everlasting misery.

And now a word to those who are seeking Christ. "Ah," says one, "Sir, I have sought Christ, but I feel worse than I ever have in my life. Before I had any thoughts about Christ I felt myself to be good, but now I feel myself to be evil." It is all right, my Friend. I am glad to hear you say so. When surgeons heal a patient's wound, they always take care to cut away the proud flesh, because the cure can never be radical while the proud flesh remains. The Lord is getting rid of your self-confidence and self-

righteousness. He is just now revealing to your soul the deadly cancer which is festering within you. You are on the sure road to healing, if you are on the way to wounding. God wounds before He heals. He strikes a man dead in his own esteem before He makes him alive.

“Ah,” cries one, “but can I hope that I ever shall be delivered?” Yes, my Brother, if you now look to Christ. I care not of your sin nor of your despair of heart. If you will only turn your eyes to Him who bled upon the tree, there is not only hope for you, but there is a certainty of salvation. I myself, while thinking over this subject, felt a horror of great darkness rush over my spirit, as I thought what danger I was in lest I should be defeated and I could not get a glimpse of light into my burdened spirit, until I turned my eyes and saw my Master hanging on the tree. I saw the blood still flowing—faith laid hold upon the sacrifice and I said, “This Cross is the instrument of Jesus’ victory and shall be the means of mine.” I looked to His blood. I remembered that I was triumphant in that blood and I rose from my meditations, humbled, but yet rejoicing—cast down, but not in despair—looking for the victory. Do likewise.

“Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” Believe that. You are an awakened, conscious and penitent sinner. Therefore, He came to save you. Believe His Word. Trust Him. Do nothing for your own salvation of yourself, but trust Him to do it. Cast yourself simply and only on Him. And, as this Bible is true, you shall not find the promise fail you—“He that seeks finds. To him that knocks it shall be opened.”

May God help you, by giving you this new life within! May He help you to look to Jesus and though long and hard is the conflict, sweet shall be the victory, by His grace! Amen.

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IN CHRIST NO CONDEMNATION

NO. 1917

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 29, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,
who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”
Romans 8:1.***

You are well aware, dear Friends, that the division into chapters has only been made for convenience sake and is not a matter of Inspired arrangement. I may add that it has been clumsily made and not with careful thoughtfulness, but as roughly as if a woodman had taken an axe and chopped the book to pieces in a hurry! It was a very unfortunate thing that the axe dropped down just here, so as to divide a passage which ought to have been kept entire. We once heard a friend say, “I have got out of the seventh of Romans into the eighth.” Nonsense! There is no getting out of one into the other, for they are one. The field is not divided by hedge or ditch. I thank God with all my heart that since my conversion I have never known what it is to be out of the seventh of Romans, nor out of the eighth of Romans, either—the whole passage has been solid Truth of God to my experience. I have struggled against inward sin and rejoiced in complete justification at the same time.

Our Apostle, after having said, “So then, with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin,” goes on to say, without any break, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” The fact is, that Believers are in a state of conflict, but not in a state of condemnation and at the very time when the conflict is hottest, the Believer is still justified! When the Believer has to do his utmost even to hold his ground. When he feels that he cannot advance an inch without fighting for it. When he has to cry out in the agony of his spirit because of the vehemence of temptation, he may still lay his hand upon the Word of God and say, “And yet there is no condemnation to me, for I am in Christ Jesus!”

The man who never strives against the sin which dwells in him, who, indeed, is not conscious of any sin to strive against—that is the man who may begin to question whether he knows anything at all about the spiritual life. He who has no inward pain may well suspect that he is abiding in death—abiding, therefore, under constant condemnation. But that man who feels a daily striving after deliverance from evil, who is panting, pining, longing and agonizing to become holy even as God is holy, he is the justified man! The man to whom every sin is a misery, to whom even the *thought* of iniquity is intolerable, he is the man who may with confidence declare, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in

Christ Jesus.” Souls that sigh for holiness are not condemned to eternal death, for their sighing proves that they are in Christ Jesus!

Observe that the text is written in the present tense. You will lose much of its force and beauty if you leave out that word, “now,” or regard it as a mere term of argument. This, “now,” shows how distinctly the statement of non-condemnation is consistent with that mingled experience of the seventh chapter which certain good people do not appear to understand. The passage describes a conflict which the unregenerate cannot feel, for they neither delight in God after the inward man, nor do they agonize to be set free from the presence of sin. Every child of God must know this conflict if he knows himself. If it had not been for the fierce debates of former ages, this passage would have been accepted as an accurate picture of the inner life of the struggling Believer—and it would have been held up to admiration as a sure proof of the Divine Inspiration of the Epistle—that with such amazing accuracy it records the secret experiences of a soul struggling after purity—an experience which often puzzles the very people who are the subjects of it.

Reading my text in that connection, with an emphasis upon the, “now,” my heart sings for joy! With all my watching and warring—yes, with all my fears and trembling—yet will I rejoice in the Lord even now, for, “there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

I would have you carefully observe our Apostle’s change of expression. When he is speaking about the inward contention he writes in the first person and speaks of himself—“I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.” That which might seem humiliating and derogatory, he imputes to *himself* most distinctly, crying out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But when he comes to write upon the privileges of the children of God, he does not write in the first person, but he speaks of them in general terms—“There is therefore now no condemnation to *those* who are in Christ Jesus.” His deep humility thus displayed itself. His very self-remembrance is a self-annihilation—he uses himself as lead sinker with which to sink his nets, but his Brethren he puts into the place of honor and esteem. His is the confession and theirs is the confidence—he extols the glorious company of Believers, but he lowers himself!

This is the style of his language and the style often reveals the man. He might have said, “There is therefore now no condemnation to me, for I am in Christ Jesus,” and it would have been true. But it would not have been after the manner of the lowly Apostle. After these wanderings upon the shores of the text, let us now plunge into its depths and may the Holy Spirit, from whom it proceeded, bless it to our hearts!

I. I would say, first of all, that this verse contains A REFUTATION OF THE OLD SERPENT’S GOSPEL. “The serpent’s gospel,” you ask, “what is that?” It is another name for the gospel of modern thought—that gospel which casts a doubt upon the threats of the Law and even denies them altogether. Quote the first few words of the text and stop there, and this false gospel is before you—“There is therefore now no condemnation.” The serpent promulgated this gospel in the Garden of Eden when he said, “You shall not surely die.” With what greediness, our first parents received

that highly advanced teaching which contradicted the declaration of God—"You shall surely die!" The doctrine of no punishment for any man is popular at this day and threatens to have even greater sway in the future. Generally it comes in the serpent's favorite form of, "honest doubt"—"Yes, has God said?" Can it be so? Is He not far too merciful? Is it possible that a God of Love should condemn and punish His creatures?"

The denial of the penalty attached to sin comes out in different ways, but when put into a nutshell, it amounts to this—"There is therefore now no condemnation to any man, however he may live." Some teach that you may *live* in sin and *die* impenitent, but it will not matter, for at death that is the end of you—the soul is not immortal, men are only cooking animals. Others tell us that if you die unforgiven, it will be a pity, but you will come round, in due time, after a purgatorial period—you may take a little longer road, but you will come to the same end in the course of time. In other words, it does not matter how you live, or what you do, you will become perfectly happy in the long run—therefore trouble not yourselves with the exploded notion that there is a Heaven to be lost or a Hell to be feared! The wrath of God and the Judgment to come are mere bugbears according to the teaching of our new apostles. This is the gospel according to Satan—a Gospel which has already ruined thousands of souls and is now sealing up millions in a stony-hearted unbelief which enables them to sin without fear! Though these evil doctrines have done incalculable mischief in many places so as to almost paralyze the energies of the Church, yet some professed Christians, boastful of their "culture," would move Heaven and earth to spread these delusions!

Here is Paul's refutation of this doctrine of a general amnesty—"There is therefore *now* no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." They would be condemned, every one of them, if it had not been that they are in Christ Jesus! And there is now no condemnation to them solely because they are in Christ Jesus. Their being in Christ Jesus is the great method by which, alone, they have escaped condemnation. If Paul had only stopped when he had got as far as "there is now no condemnation," every drunk, swearer and whoremonger would have cried, "Bravo, Apostle! That is the gospel for us! Now you speak like a man of thought! You have broken loose from the horrible old doctrine of Jesus of Nazareth and have found for us a 'larger hope.' Hurrah for Paul! He is in advance of his age—he is the man for the times!" But Paul was too honest to court popularity by pandering to man's desire of immunity in sin. He believed the terrible Truth of God that the impenitent sinner is under condemnation and, believing that Truth, he spoke it plainly. He did not deal out comfort head over heels, catch it who can, but he put it thus—"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

It is a work of Almighty and Sovereign Grace to put men into Christ Jesus—by this method they escape condemnation, but by no other. I understand Paul tacitly to tell us that those who are *not* in Christ Jesus are under condemnation—and this is a terrible Truth of God. "He that believes not shall be damned" is as much the declaration of our Lord Jesus as that other Divine sentence, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." As many as believe not in Christ Jesus and repent not of sin have, before

them, at this moment, “a fearful looking for judgment and of fiery indignation.”

It is no pleasant task to us to have to speak of this matter, but who are we that we should ask for pleasant tasks? What God has witnessed in Scripture is the sum and substance of what the Lord’s servants are to testify to the people. If you are not in Christ Jesus and are walking after the flesh, you have not escaped from condemnation!

One alarming fact I must not fail to mention here—the word, “now,” is as applicable to these condemned ones as to those who are freed from condemnation. It would be true if I were to say, “There is therefore *now* condemnation to all them that are not in Christ Jesus.” Hear these words, they are the words of John the Tender, who leaned his head on the gentle bosom of his Master—“He that believes not is *condemned already*, because he has not believed upon the Son of God.” We are said, by common talk, to be in a state of *probation*, but that is not true—we are, all of us, in a state of present *condemnation* if we are *not in Christ Jesus*. If you felt the true force of words, some of you would fall off your seats at the sound of that sentence—“He that believes not is condemned already.” The sentence has gone out against you if you have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ! “Condemned already!” Think of it, I pray you. You have called God a liar because you have not believed His testimony concerning His Son and He, on the other hand, has already judged you and condemned you! This is the most conclusive of all evidence as to the blackness of your hearts—that you have not believed upon the Son of God! There is condemnation for unbelievers and that condemnation is *now*.

I must also add that to as many as believe not in the Lord Jesus Christ, who walk after the flesh and not after the Spirit, there is nothing but condemnation so long as they remain in that state. It is written, “He that believes not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” That is a terrible text! It is not as though wrath flashed upon you now and then, with the glare of momentary lightning—but a black cloud charged with destruction and tempest continues over your guilty heads till you fly away to Christ! O Sirs, I must tell you these things! It is as much as my soul is worth to be silent about them! If you think that I find any pleasure in them, you misjudge me. I appeal to those who know me—am I morose? Am I without tenderness? No, it is because I love you that I warn you! You shall not perish through any flattering words of mine. I will be clear of your blood!

It is idle for me to sew without a needle. There are many new sewing machines, but none that can dispense with the needle! You cannot take silk and sew with that, alone—you must have a sharp needle to pierce the fabric so that the soft silk may follow afterwards. These words of warning are meant to be my needle. May God the Holy Spirit use them as such—to go right through your hearts with the sharp prick of conviction—and so prepare you for the thread of the Gospel! “There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus!” But if sin is not forgiven, you *are under its condemnation*, and if you die in your sins, you will die forever that death which brings with it everlasting woe! If you are not reconciled to God by the death of His Son, you are His enemies! And to be at enmity

with God is to be miserable—it cannot be otherwise. How I wish you would feel this Truth of God and be led by it to escape from the wrath to come before yonder sun shall again go down! God grant you may! I entreat those of you who know the Lord to pray silently at this moment, in your hearts, that God will awaken the careless so that under a sense of well-deserved condemnation they may fly to Jesus and be reconciled to God!

So much for Paul's refutation of the serpent's Gospel.

II. And now, secondly, we have in the text A DESCRIPTION OF THE BELIEVER'S POSITION—he is “in Christ Jesus.” What does that mean?

I am not going into any deep theological discussions—I speak very simply and with a view to practical results. He that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is in Christ. *By an act of simple dependence* upon Jesus, he realizes his position as being in Christ. By nature I am in myself and in sin and I am, therefore, condemned. But when the Grace of God awakens me to know my ruined state, then I fly to Christ. I trust, alone, in His blood and righteousness, and He becomes to me the cleft of the rock wherein I hide myself from the storm of vengeance justly due to me for my many offenses. The Lord Jesus is typified by the City of Refuge. You and I are like the manslayer who was pursued by the avenger—and we are never safe till we pass through the gate of the City of Refuge—I mean, till we are completely enclosed by the Lord Jesus! Inside the walls of the city, the manslayer was secure—and within our Savior's wounds, we are safe. By a humble, simple, undivided dependence upon Him, we are placed where we are covered by His merits and so, saved!

Noah's dove out yonder, flying over the waste of waters, is outside the ark—she will never rest the soles of her feet till Noah puts out his hand and pulls her in to him. Then is she secure and restful, but not till then. Judge, then, my Hearer, whether you are in Christ. Do you stand before God on your own footing, or do you rest upon Christ and find your all in Him? This is not a baffling problem, but a plain question. Say, is your righteousness one which you have worked out yourself, or is the righteousness of Christ imputed to you? Do you look for salvation by self, or for salvation by Christ? If you can truly say, “I hide in Christ,” then this text plays sweeter music than ever fell from angel lips—“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” Inasmuch as you have believed in Him, you are *in Him*. “He that believes on Him has everlasting life and, “shall not come into condemnation”—these are our Lord's own dear words—treasure them up in your spirits and rejoice in them forevermore!

Let us go a little deeper. That which faith thus realizes by coming unto Christ for shelter was true before, in a blessed sense. I understand my text, when it says, “therefore,” to refer to all that the Apostle had argued *before* in the previous part of his Epistle. But even if I did not think so, I could understand his, “therefore,” for I believe that the text carries its own argument within itself. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” Why, “therefore”? Because they are in Christ Jesus! Therefore there is no condemnation to them because they are in Him who can never be condemned. Though it is quite correct to fetch your argument from the preceding part of the Epistle, yet it seems to me it is a

self-contained verse and carries its argument within itself. If you are in Christ, there is, for that very reason, no condemnation in you.

Still, there are other arguments near at hand. Will you, at home, kindly read the fifth chapter? There you will perceive that Believers are in Christ *as their federal Head*. By one transgression, Adam introduced death into the race, “and so death passed upon all men, for that all had sinned.” But Jesus came to bring life by His obedience. “As by the offense 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.” By Christ’s righteous life and substitutionary death, justification has come upon all who are in Him. As you were in Adam you sinned and, therefore, you fell and were condemned. And as you were in Christ through the Divine Covenant of Grace and Christ fulfilled the Law for you, you are justified in Him. His righteousness and Sacrifice have been of use for you—“There is therefore now no condemnation.” Because we are viewed by Divine Justice as under the Headship of the perfect Man, who, on our behalf, has magnified the Law and made it honorable, therefore we are well-pleasing unto God. We are accepted in the Beloved. It is written, “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous”—and we enjoy the fulfillment of that promise! Will the Lord condemn those whom He has made righteous? Will He do despite to the righteousness of His own Son with which we are covered?

But Paul goes on to show, in the sixth chapter, that the saints of God are united to Christ *by a living and vital union*. He says of us, “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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His Resurrection.” We are actually one with Christ by living experience! Beloved, if it is so, that we died in Christ, then we shall not be put to death, again, for the sin for which we have already died in Him! If we have received a new life in Christ’s Resurrection, then that promise is true, “Because I live, you shall live also.” And for that reason we cannot be condemned, for condemnation involves death. We, Beloved, who are in Christ, are justified because Christ is justified by His rising from the dead and by His taking the position of honor and Glory at the right hand of God! He is our Representative and we are one with Him—what He is, that are we. Our union is inseparable and, therefore, our condemnation is impossible!

In the seventh chapter the Apostle mentions our *mystical union* with Christ under the figure of a marriage union—“Therefore, my Brethren, you also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ; that you should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” Shall the spouse of Christ be condemned with the world? “Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it”—shall she be condemned despite His death? This union with Christ is often mentioned in Scripture under the form of a marriage, but it is also described under other symbols—we are one with Christ as a branch is one with the vine; as a stone is one with the foundation and especially as a member of the body is one with the head. Now it is not possible, if I am a

member of Christ, that I should be under condemnation until He is condemned. Is my Head acquitted? Then my hand is acquitted! So long as a man's head is above water you cannot drown his feet and as long as Christ, the Head of the mystical body, rises above the torrent of condemnation, there is no condemning even the least and feeblest member of His body!

It has been my joy to preach to you, for many years, the blessed *Doctrine of Substitution*. Now, if Jesus became our Surety and our Substitute and suffered in our place, it is an inevitable consequence that we cannot suffer punishment—and that the sin laid upon our Surety cannot now be laid upon us. If our debt was paid, it was paid—and that is the end of it—a second payment cannot be demanded.

You know the story, the very excellent story, which I think was first told by Mr. Moody, of the man, who in the French war, was drawn in the draft, for a soldier, but a friend stepped in and was accepted as his substitute. That substitute served in the war till he was slain in battle. The man for whom he served was drawn a second time, but he declined to serve. He appeared before the court and pleaded that he had been drawn once, had served in the war by his substitute and must now be regarded as dead because his representative had been killed. He pleaded that his substitute's service was, practically, *his* service—and it is said that the law allowed his plea. Assuredly it is according to Divine equity even if it is not according to human law! No criminal can be hanged a second time. One death is all the law requires! Believers died in Christ unto sin, once, and now they penally can die no more.

Our condemnation has spent itself upon our gracious Representative. The full vials of Divine Wrath against sin have been poured upon the head of the Great Shepherd, that His sheep might go free and in it is our joy, our comfort, our security. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Bow your heads in worship, you that are in Him. Render an ascription of blessing and praise and glory unto Him who took you unto Himself and then bore your sins in His own body on the tree, so that you might be delivered from condemnation through His sufferings and death!

Thus, by faith, we are in Christ Jesus and the assurance of our safety is enlarged by a consideration of His federal Headship, our vital oneness with Him, our mystical marriage to Him and His finished work on our behalf.

III. Now we come to the third point, upon which we shall speak briefly, because this part of my text is not a true portion of Holy Scripture. We have before us in this verse A DESCRIPTION OF THE BELIEVER'S WALK—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." You who have the Revised New Testament will kindly look at it. Do you see this sentence there? To your surprise it is omitted and very rightly so. The most learned men assure us that it is no part of the original text. I cannot, just now, go into the reasons for this conclusion, but they are very good and solid. The oldest copies are without it—the versions do not sustain it and the fathers who quoted abundance of Scripture do not quote this sentence! We must admit that it is an opinion inserted in later copies by some penman who

was wise enough, in his own conceit, to think that *he* could mend the Bible!

Do you ask me, "How did it get into the text?" Remember that there always have been many divines who have been afraid of the Doctrine of free Justification. They have been half afraid that sinners should get comfort by faith and should not see the necessity of a change of life. They have questioned the wisdom of ascribing salvation wholly to a man's being in Christ and so they have guarded the more open passages whenever they have seen a chance of so doing. In so doing they stated Truth, but they stated it out of season and from motives which were unsound. Probably the sentence now before us was put in and allowed to remain, by general consent, in order that the great Truth of the non-condemnation of those who are in Christ Jesus might be guarded from that Antinomian tendency which would separate faith from good works. But the fear was groundless and the tampering with Scripture was unjustifiable.

We are greatly obliged to our revisers for leaving out the sentence, since it should not be there and, without it, the Doctrine of Justification in Christ is made more clear than in the Authorized Version. In the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, service of the same kind is most properly rendered, for instead of, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life," the Revisers have given us a more accurate text—"Blessed are they that wash their robes." In these two cases we have proof that the more nearly the text of Scripture is restored to its original purity, the more clearly will the doctrines of Grace be set forth in it. The more we get back to true Scripture, the more shall we escape all interference with the complete and perfect salvation which comes of our being in Christ. We are not justified by the manner of our walk, but by our being in Christ Jesus!

Again, you ask me, "From where did the man who added this opinion get his words? The words are so good and true that they read like Inspiration." Just so. The words are borrowed from the fourth verse. The Holy Spirit meant to say this very thing a little further on, in its proper place, but the good men who felt it right to tamper a little with the document made Him say it sooner and, therefore, they copied the last sentence of the fourth verse and placed it here—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Truly, there was not much hurt done, for the words are true, but no man has a right to add to Holy Scripture or take from it, and I fear that many may have been brought into needless bondage by this sentence being inserted where the Holy Spirit did not place it. Beloved, when you desire to know your state, be content with this question—"Am I in Christ?" And if you can answer it from your heart, let it satisfy you—"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Others may better judge your walk than you can judge it yourself, but your union with Christ is best known to yourself!

Still, the interpolated sentence is true—the man who is in Christ Jesus does not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. I will now, for a little while, preach upon verse four.

We notice that such a man in Christ has received the Holy Spirit, for he walks according to His guidance. All honor and worship be unto the third

most blessed Person of the Divine Trinity, that He should deign to dwell in our poor hearts and sanctify our spirits to Himself! Every Believer has the Holy Spirit!

Secondly, every Believer has been quickened into the possession of a new nature called *the spirit*. He has a right spirit within him, a new spirit, a holy spirit—the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He is a new creature. He is no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit and so he has become a spiritual man.

Observe carefully that the flesh is there—he does not walk after it, but it is there. It is there striving and warring, vexing and grieving, and it will be there till he is taken up into Heaven! It is there as an alien and detested force, but not there so as to have dominion over him. He does not walk after it, nor practically obey it. He does not accept it as his guide, nor allow it to drive him into rebellion. The man who is in Christ Jesus commits himself to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

What a wonderful power is that which dwells in every Believer, checking him when he would do wrong, encouraging him to do right, leading him in the paths of righteousness for Christ's name's sake! Happy men to have such a Conductor!

Judge yourselves in which way you are walking. Are you walking according to the flesh? Do you do whatever you like to do? Do you believe whatever you like to believe? Do you say to yourself, "I am not going to be limited by Scripture, nor by rules of holiness—these are too old-fashioned and strait-laced for me"? Then, you walk after the flesh—you are your own guide, your own wisdom and righteousness—and vain desires conduct you where they will. You are blind and your guide is blind—and you will soon fall into the Pit. You may no think so, but time will prove my words.

Blessed is that man who no longer follows the devices and desires of his own heart and no longer trusts to his own understanding! Blessed is he who bows his mind to the mind of God! My own desire is not to believe what I may imagine, or invent, or think out, but I would believe what the Lord God has taught us in the Inspired Scriptures. I submit myself to the guidance of the Spirit of God in connection with the written Word of God. This is safe walking.

Combine the two descriptive clauses of my text. On the one hand look to Christ alone and abide in Him. And then, on the other hand, look for the guidance of the Holy Spirit who is to be in you. By faith we are in Christ and the Holy Spirit is in us. All who can go with me in this are delivered from condemnation, for how shall he be condemned that is in Christ? And how shall he be condemned that has the Holy Spirit within him? "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

IV. And so I come, in closing, to notice THE ABSOLUTION OF THE BELIEVER—"There is therefore now *no condemnation* to those who are in Christ Jesus." What a grand sentence! I call upon you to notice it. You may have seen a well-painted picture called, "Waiting for the Verdict." What interest is displayed on every face! What fear and trembling upon the countenance of the prisoner! In his wife and the friends around him, what anxiety is seen! "Waiting for the Verdict" is a sad picture, but what

another might be drawn of, "The Favorable Verdict Received." The prisoner is acquitted! Oh what joy! It is not possible to bring in a verdict of, "Not Guilty," for you and for me, for we are undoubtedly guilty, but yet it is possible, by the processes of *Substitution* and *Divine Grace* to bring in a just verdict by which it is witnessed that, "There is now no condemnation."

Notice, first, that this is *a bold speech*. "There is no condemnation." "But you said just now that the thing you would not, you did." Yes, but there is no condemnation! The same lips which made such a humble confession and revealed such a troublesome experience now assert positively and joyfully, "There is no condemnation!" Free Grace makes men speak bravely when their faith has a clear view of Jesus! Though it is a bold assertion, *it is proven*. Whenever a man has a, "therefore," at the back of what he has to say, he may say it without stammering. "There is *therefore* now no condemnation." Paul is always a reasoner and a great logician. Here he seems to declare his certainty. "What I say I can prove. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus and I can prove it to a demonstration." Brothers and Sisters, the demonstrations of mathematics are not more clear and certain than the inference that if we are in Christ and Christ died in our place, there can be no condemnation for us! Cool calculation may be used here. This is no raving of fanaticism, but the unquestionable deduction of fair argument—if Jesus was condemned in my place, there can be no condemnation for me!

What *a broad assertion* it is!—"There is *no* condemnation." No condemnation on account of original sin, though the Believer was an heir of wrath even as others. No condemnation for actual sin, though he greatly transgressed and came far short of the Glory of God. He is in Christ and there is no condemnation of any sort possible to him! No condemnation, no, though he humbles himself and weeps and groans before God because in thought and word and deed he still offends. No condemnation, though he feels that he has not yet attained to the excellence which he labors after.

The devil says there *is* condemnation and, therefore, he accuses us day and night. He was a liar from the beginning and the father of lies! Conscience sometimes censures us, for even conscience, itself, needs to be enlightened and to be purged from dead works. But when conscience understands the plan of Free Grace and sees things in the light of the Truth of God, it, also, bears witness and the Spirit of God bears witness with it, that we are the children of God! "No," says the Apostle, "there is no condemnation." What a broad sweep these words take! If you read to the end of the chapter you see how unreserved Paul was in his statement, for there he mounts the high horse and cries, "Who shall say anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again." Paul makes all Heaven and earth and Hell to ring with his daring challenge, "Who is he that condemns?" In the broadest imaginable terms he declares that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus! Where there is no condemnation there is no wrath, no guilt, no punishment! On the contrary, there is acceptance, favor, and bliss!

This, Beloved, *is an abiding statement*, a standing assertion. It was true of me, 30 years ago, as a Believer, and it is just as true of me now. It was true in Paul's day and though centuries have passed away, it is just as true at this moment. If you are in Christ Jesus, there is now no condemnation. That living "now" goes singing down the centuries—in life, in death, in time, in eternity—there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus!

What a *joyful statement* it is! It makes one laugh for joy of heart. If you have ever been burdened with a sense of sin, you will know the sweetness of the text. You that are *not* sinners—you good respectable people who are sailing to Heaven in your own ship—there is nothing in it for you! Gospel assurances are not for you—you would not prize them and, therefore, you have neither part nor lot in them. For Jesus Christ came not to call the righteous, but *sinners* to repentance.

But you that have been whipped of the devil and dragged at the heels of your sins—you that have been broken and crushed as in a mortar, with a pestle, till you are ground fine under the hand of conviction—you are the people that will leap for joy as you hear the silver trumpet ring out the note of "no condemnation!" Come, let us be glad! Let us rejoice together because there is now no condemnation to us! When Giant Despair's head was cut off, Mr. Bunyan says that the pilgrims danced—and well they might! Mr. Despondency and Miss Much-Afraid took a turn and even Ready-to-Halt, with his crutches, joined in! I guarantee you he footed it well! When he saw the monster's head upon the pole, he could not help being merry!

This text sticks the giant's head up on the pole for us. "There is therefore now no condemnation." Oh for the loud sounding cymbals! Now for the maidens and their timbrels! Let us have holy merriment over this! Poor prodigal sinners have fled to Jesus and hidden in Him and there is now no condemnation to them! Poverty? Yes, but no condemnation. Depression of spirit? Yes, sometimes, but no condemnation. Infirmities and weaknesses and things to grieve over? Yes, plenty of them, but no condemnation! "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation!"

"All very well," says one, "but we would like something practical." Practical? This is *the most practical thing that ever was* because the moment a man receives this assurance into his soul, his heart is won to his loving Lord and the neck of his sinfulness is broken with a blow! There never was, no, never can be, a man that has realized, by the witness of the Holy Spirit that he is free from condemnation, who will ever go to love sin and live in it. While I am condemned I say, "Well, if I am to be sent to Hell for my sins, I may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb and, therefore, I will continue in sins and get what pleasure I can out of them." Do you not know how the guilty man often feels, that since there is no hope for him, he may as well harden his heart and enjoy himself? A mouse was caught in a trap, the other day, by its tail, and the poor creature went on eating the cheese. Many men are doing the same—they know that they are guilty and they dread their punishment—but they go on nibbling at their beloved sins!

They remind me of the soldier in the old classic story. The army marched through a certain country and the commander-in-chief ordered that there should be no plundering. Not a man must touch a bunch of grapes in going through the vineyards, or he should die for his disobedience. One soldier, tempted by a bunch of grapes, plucked it and began to eat it. He was brought before the captain who declared that the law must be carried out and the thief must die. He was taken out to die and though he knew his head would be cut off, he went on eating the grapes as he walked along. A comrade wondered that he should do this, but the condemned man answered that no one ought to grudge him his grapes, for they cost him dearly.

Such are the bravados of sinners. The breasts of wicked men are steeled rather than softened by a sense of condemnation, but once let the Holy Spirit remove the burden of their guilt and they will be dissolved by love! Free pardon is a great conqueror. The love of Jesus soon makes men turn from sin with burning hatred. Forgiving love is a main instrument in transforming men from rebels into friends. You may preach the demands of the Law as long as you like and tell men that they must *merit* salvation—and you will only make them worse and worse. But go and proclaim the dying love of Jesus! Tell them that Free Grace reigns and that undeserved mercy saves the sinner through faith in Christ—and that the moment he *believes in Jesus* there is no condemnation to him—and you shall see miracles accomplished!

In the experience of Free Grace you have something to work upon. You have put a new affection into the man and it will drive out his base affections. A life force is communicated to him which will cause him to forsake his old ways and turn unto the Lord. “How do you know?” asks one. I know by experience and by observation. I could point you out many specimens of the power of Divine Grace in this assembly, but I will not do so. If I were to say, “Brothers and Sisters, you who once lived in sin but have escaped from it through Free Grace and dying love, stand up!”—What an exceedingly great army would start to their feet!

Yes, we know it is true, for the lips of many witnesses declare it! They say, “Jesus saved us from the worst of sins and made us His friends by His Free Grace, and now we rejoice to love and serve Him.” So shall it be with you, dear Hearer, if you, also, believe in Jesus. The text shall be true of you, also—“There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” God bless you! Amen.

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SIN CONDEMNED AND EXECUTED BY CHRIST JESUS NO. 699

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 8, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh,
God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,
on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.”
Romans 8:3.*

ONE of the sweetest and most attractive titles of our Lord Jesus Christ, is, “the Friend of sinners.” He was in His manners so gentle towards offenders, so graciously did He seek out the lost, and so tenderly did He invite the erring to pardon and reconciliation that it was slanderously said of Him that He was the Friend of *sin* as well as of sinners. This was the old heathen slander of the days of Celsus. Philosophy and Phariseeism sneeringly asserted that Jesus treated iniquity so lightly, and made it so easy a matter to escape from its consequences that He was rather the helper and abettor of sin than its destroyer. And they blasphemously declared that His Apostles had preached the doctrine of “let us do evil that good may come.”

My Brothers and Sisters, you know that this charge was utterly and entirely false and those who uttered the libel knew it to be so, too, if they were at all conversant with our Lord’s history. In His example evil meets with no encouragement, and in His teaching it finds no excuse. If they possessed the slightest acquaintance with the objects of His life, they must have known that though the Friend of sinners, He was emphatically beyond all other public teachers the Enemy of sin. His hatred towards sin was not a mere passion—it was a principle. It did not flash forth now and then—it was a constant flame. He hated sin, if I may say so, implacably—never making a moment’s truce with it. He pursued it by day in His ministry and by night in His prayers. He lived to smite it and he *died* to destroy it!

And now in His risen Glory it is upon sin as well as upon Satan that He sets His heel. He was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil and He has erected a battering engine which will not leave of Satan’s strongholds so much as one stone upon another. In the life of our Lord His tenderness for sinners was but the natural form in which His hatred for sin displayed itself just as a physician, from the very fact that he is the antagonist of disease, displays a deep interest in those afflicted by it.

Our Lord’s keeping company with sinners by no means proved that He was the friend of sin any more than the physician’s attendance at the hospital would at all lead to the suspicion that he was the friend of disease. The skillful physician is the friend of the *diseased*, but to the dis-

ease itself what enemy shall be found more determined and inveterate? Because the whole have no need of a physician, Jesus seeks them not. But since the sick need Him, He seeks them—not out of love to their sin, but out of love to *them*—that they may be delivered from the cruel bondage under which their sin has held them.

You will have noticed, too that even when the Savior is most tender towards a certain class of sinners, it is that He may display His wrath against sin itself—He will not execrate one sin and exonerate another—but all sin shall see in Him its deadly foe. It is true He said to the woman taken in adultery, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” By this He, by no means, excused her adultery—but He declined to assume the functions of an earthly judge—and more especially He refused to pronounce sentence upon one case alone when so many were before Him who were not accused but were known to Him to be equally guilty.

His leniency to one could do no mischief when His justice to all was so conspicuous. Those who brought the woman desired Him simply to show His hatred of *her*, and to manifest abhorrence of that one offense which had happened to be found out. But that flash of His eyes when He said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,” was a far more terrible deliverance against sin than if He had said, “Yes, take her away and bind her hand and foot, and let her die. But as for you, you hypocrites, you who are practicing, perhaps, the same sin in private, inasmuch as you have not been discovered by your fellow men, I suffer you to escape with impunity.”

If He judged one He must judge all, and therefore He dismissed them all to the appointed time for judgment, manifesting, it seems to me, quite as much His hatred of sin as His tenderness towards the sinner. So everywhere connected with the gentleness of the Savior, in which He does not “break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax,” there is a most determinate wrath—a lion-like fierceness against sin, especially in its hypocritical forms—for He who bids the open and acknowledged sinner come to Him cries in the same breath, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” and calls them whitewashed sepulchers filled with dead men’s bones.

There is not, then, the slightest foundation for the accusation that Jesus is in the least degree the Friend of *sin*, though He is the Friend of *sinners*. On the contrary, we can easily prove the assertion which is made in the text that Jesus Christ came into the world to *condemn* sin, and *has* condemned it and that sin never was condemned before as it was in the sacrifice of His Person, and that the Law of Moses itself could not, through the weakness of the flesh, condemn sin as Jesus Christ has done. For He has not only passed sentence upon it but has executed it, carrying the sentence into effect.

God had condemned sin before but never so efficiently as in the Person of His Son. God’s very Nature condemns sin. The existence of the thrice holy Jehovah is a constant protest against all unholiness. God condemned sin in that day when He drove Adam and Eve out of the garden. When He suffered the trail of the serpent to ruin Paradise and condemned our first

parents—all naked and ashamed—to till the ground from which they were taken, and in the sweat of their face to eat bread.

God condemned sin, constantly condemned it in the death which became common to the entire race. Every funeral is God's repetition of His anathema against sin. When our friends are carried to the silent sepulcher, the Lord of All does, in fact, say to us, "See what a bitter thing sin is! It takes the light from the eyes and the music from the ears. It silences the voice of song, and palsies the hands of skill. It quenches the fire of love upon the heart's altar and removes the light of understanding from the brain's judgment seat. It gives over the creature, once so lovely and beloved, to become a putrid mass—a horror and a loathing so that affection itself cries out—'Bury my dead out of my sight.'" Thus every gravestone and every green hillock in the cemetery may be regarded as the still small voice of God solemnly condemning sin.

The Lord of Old judged and condemned sin in that great and terrible calamity which swept the whole race away with a mighty deluge when "sea monsters whelped and stabled in the palaces of kings." When over the mountains' loftiest brow the raging billows prevailed, and not even the shriek of a "strong swimmer in his agony" could be heard, for Death rode triumphant on the crested billow over a sea without a shore. Then it was that God declared sin to be so dreadful that it saddened Him that He had made men upon the face of the earth, and He drew up the floodgates of His wrath until He had swept the earth clean of the rebellious race, except the elect eight who floated in the ark.

In after years the Lord opened all the batteries of Heaven against sin in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Terrible was that hail of fire and sleet of brimstone which descended upon the cities of the plain because the reeking foulness of their sin had come up into the nostrils of the Most High, and He could endure it no longer. But all these judgments which I have mentioned were comparatively inoperative upon the conscience of man. Man sinned though he was expelled from the garden. He did not fall down on his knees and hate the sin which had withered Eden. Man grew up to mourn, but his mourning did not heal him of sinning—the medicine was very bitter—but it did not cure.

Notwithstanding that the tradition of Eden and the expulsion must have been fresh in the memories of mankind, and they must have known that sin, and sin only, was the cause of every mother's pang and the cause of every man's toil, when in the sweat of his brow he ate his bread—yet man followed sin as though it were his chief good. Even the constant occurrence of death has not taught man the evil of the root which produced so dire a fruit. Man sins although he stands upon the brink of the grave. It is not enough that the halter is about the traitor's neck—he commits fresh treasons while standing beneath the gallows! He knows that his doom is recorded and that his life is only a reprieve, and yet he insults the judge.

Man knows that it is only a matter of time when his body should return to the dust from where it came, and yet dying man is sinful man. And though he knows that he shall soon appear before his Maker's bar, how slight the worry of this upon any man! In fact, where are a more thought-

less race of men than those who have most acquaintance with the grave, and where shall you find men who laugh at death more than those who are constantly engaged at the tomb? Moreover the great judgments of the deluge and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah made but a slight impression upon mankind, for man began to build his Babel tower in defiance of God almost as soon as the flood was assuaged and men began to multiply!

And as for Sodom and Gomorrah, there were doubtless men who looked on at that fearful blaze and saw the smoke blacken the heavens, who then returned to their lusts and were still as before given up to their idols. All the judgments were weak, because man's flesh is so stubbornly set on sin. It is never to be forgotten that the Lord judged sin and condemned it upon Sinai. The Law of God of the Ten Commands, with the penal sentence attached, was intended to be God's great conviction, trial, and judgment of sin. Truly, when we consider that Law so high, so broad, so all-encompassing, so reaching to the thoughts and intents of the heart—and when we recollect how it was given with sound of trumpet, and blaze of lightning with a boundary set around the mount—with fearful curses upon the man who should violate its commands and with wondrous blessings to those who should keep its precepts—it must appear to be a singularly glorious and commanding judgment of sin!

“The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them. He shined forth from mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery Law for them.” “His lightning enlightened the world: the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the Presence of the Lord, at the Presence of the Lord of the whole earth.” Sinai itself was altogether on a smoke, so that the man, the mediator Moses, said, “I exceedingly fear and quake.” That Law, given by angels in the hand of a mediator was steadfast and terrible, and was a most wondrous judging and condemning of sin! Yet you know what little effect it had upon those who had first received it.

Before the forty days were over—before Moses could get down from the mount—they were dancing around the golden calf and shouting, “These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of Egypt.” From that day till now what has God's Law been to the carnal mind? A form printed upon tables in their churches, but not written on the tablets of their *hearts*. A rule read in their hearing, but forgotten in their lives—admired in theory, but neglected in practice. The scene at Sinai was a solemn judgment of sin, just as were the other judgments which I have mentioned—but in effect it was inoperative, it was weak—not in itself, but through the flesh. Weak, because man is so strong in sin. Weak, because for unrenewed man to know God's will is for him to know how to fly in the teeth of it.

Human nature has learned how to rebel rather than how to obey by studying the Law—the Commandments which were ordained for life have been made our death. The Law has been made by our rebellious wills a negative rather than a positive rule. Man has learned by it how to live so as to insult his great Benefactor and Friend. Thus it is clear that though

the Lord oftentimes condemned sin, yet sin still reigned in man's heart. Therefore He sent His own Son into the world to do what His judgments and His Law had not done, namely, to condemn sin in the flesh, that once and for all we might know in our inmost souls that sin is a hateful thing—and knowing, might feel it and avoid it.

This brings me to the text itself. The text may be understood in two ways—these two senses shall constitute the two heads. Sin was condemned by our Lord's suffering for sin—notice the margin—"By a sacrifice for sin" He condemned sin in the flesh. The first head then, is, sin was condemned by Christ's sacrifice of Himself. And secondly, as some translators give to the word "condemned" the force of *destroyed*, we shall read it thus—sin was *executed* in the sufferings of the Savior. These two points, if God the Holy Spirit shall lead us into them, may afford us a good morning's meditation. And then the practical conclusions from them will, I hope, be not restricted to this morning, but accompany us all our days.

I. Our first point is this, that albeit all the former condemnations of sin which God gave to the world were weak through the flesh, yet THERE HAS NOW BEEN GIVEN A MOST EFFECTIVE AND POTENT CONDEMNATION OF SIN IN THE SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST. Of course, the potency must be judged by its effect upon those who received that sacrifice—and in such persons sin is most effectually condemned.

1. The Savior condemned sin by His sufferings, by allowing it to work itself out to its legitimate result. Sin is exceeding sinful but we could never have known how sinful sin was if it had not slain Christ. A certain preacher, who delighted in a very flowery style, once ventured in a very splendid passage of his oration to depict the loveliness of virtue. "O virtue, you fair angel," and so on, "if you should come down to earth in all your radiance," etc., etc., "all men would love you."

This wonderful flight of wordiness receives its fall in the history of Calvary. We could never have known how detestable sin was if this had not been put to the test. Virtue did come down among men, not in its severer aspect as a stoical moralist, but it descended in its gentlest form in the Person of the most loving and tender man that ever lived, even Jesus Christ. But sin so hates and loathes that which is good, that instead of receiving this Incarnate Virtue with honor, sin was never satisfied till after hunting the Man through life, it at last nailed Him to the gallows of a malefactor, and put Him to a death too cruel even for the most loathsome and detestable of beings.

It is with sin according to the parable of our Lord. Sin had entered the vineyard of the Lord and robbed Him of the fruit thereof. He sent His servants to His vineyard, and they cried unto it, "Thus and thus said the Lord." But Sin, being angry, took the servants, one by one, knowing them to be the servants of God, and it smote one, and threw another into prison, and slew another till the servants of God came only to be persecuted and to be slain. At last He said, "I will send My Son—they will surely reverence My Son."

It was surely impossible that if the Son of God should come armed with a commission from the Most High, Sin would venture to smite Him! But

behold the hardihood of Sin! It said, "This is the heir, let us kill Him that the inheritance may be ours." And it slew Him and cast Him out of the vineyard. Sin was then seen to be the cruel, horrible, detestable, traitorous thing which God had declared it to be. And now that man knows it to be such, he cannot deny it, for the murdered body of the Savior shows the deadly mischief that lurks in Sin.

It is as though there were a certain poisoned river and a parent had often said to his children, "Drink it not, my children, it is sweet at first, but soon it will bring on you pains most fearful, and death will shortly follow. Do not drink it." But these children were very willful and would not believe it. And, albeit that sometimes a dog or an ox would drink of it and be sore pained and die, they did not believe in all its injurious effects to them. But, by-and-by, One made like unto themselves drank of it, and when they saw Him die in anguish most terrible, then they understood how deadly must be the effects of this poisoned stream. When the Savior Himself was made sin for us and then died in griefs unutterable—*then* we saw what sin could do—and the exceeding sinfulness of sin was displayed.

To use another illustration—you have a tame leopard in your house and you are often warned that it is a dangerous creature to trifle with. But its coat is so sleek and beautiful, and its frolicking is so gentle that you let it play with the children as though it were a well-domesticated cat. You cannot have it in your heart to put it away. You tolerate it, no, you indulge it. Alas, one black and terrible day it tastes of blood and rends in pieces your favorite child! Then you know its nature and need no further warning. It has condemned itself by displaying the full ferocity of its nature.

So with sin—we thought it such a fair thing we could not be persuaded that anything so pleasant, so fair spoken, could really be so deadly an enemy as God said it was. But when sin leaped upon our altogether lovely Jesus, and like a ravening wolf delighted itself in His slaughter, then it condemned itself most effectually. Every Christian feels this—what he could not feel through contemplating the expulsion from Eden—what he might not feel through thinking of the curse of the Law, he does feel and *must* feel when he sees sin thus prostrating the Lord of Life and Glory and making Him suffer even to the death!

Christian, you know now what sin would do to you! You now know how it would scourge and crucify you, make you cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" and cast you into a bloody sweat, and destroy you utterly! You see now that sin has such a weight in it that only eternal God can bear it! And you will, from now on, hate and dread it—you will no longer favor it. God has condemned it by allowing it to show itself in its true colors! You hear the condemnation and you say amen to it, do you not? What the Law could not do, God has done.

2. But the text wears a fuller meaning when we recollect that Christ did not only condemn sin by allowing it to carry itself out to the full, but He condemned it by actually bearing its penalty as our Substitute. This is the great doctrine of Holy Scripture and it becomes us to speak very plainly about it. The punishment which was due to man for sin was suffered by our Lord. If not the exact punishment, yet that which was equivalent to it

was suffered by the Savior on the tree, and this constituted the most weighty and effectual condemnation of sin.

Observe carefully, dear Friends, that the condemnation of sin in the sacrifice of Christ derives much of its weight from the dignity of His Person. Sin was laid, this time, not on an *angel*—not on some chosen cherub or seraph—sin was laid upon One who is none other than God over all, blessed forever! The mighty God Himself wrapped His Glory in a veil of our inferior clay and then sin was laid on *Him*. Now, if sin is such a terrible thing. If it deserve the condemnation that is pronounced upon it, we shall see what it will do with Him. Will sin bring Him down? Will sin make Him smart? Will sin make Him cry?

He is God's only begotten Son! Sin must be a bitter thing, indeed, if it is necessary for God to smite His own Son! Will not the Great Ruler of the universe make an exception in this case? Sin may be very gross, but can He not, when it is laid upon One so heavenly, so pure, so Divine, may not He deal gently with it? He may use His rod, but surely He will not unsheathe His sword!

Listen! "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man that is My Companion, says the Lord." There is no sparing here! Do you see the Savior ground between the upper and nether millstone of Divine vengeance? Hear His cries and mark His falling tears! Perceive His heart surrounded with Divine wrath and filled with sorrow, till, like a boiling caldron, it flows over in groans and cries! Look at that spectacle of woe till you dare not look any longer, for the grief is too amazing for the eye to see or for the soul to think upon!

Now, Sin, you are condemned, indeed! Hunted out from place to place, at last you leap upon the palace of God—you touch that human Tabernacle wherein the Second Person of the Divine Trinity rested! And the Tabernacle must come down! Death must invade even the body of the Christ of God because sin was laid upon Him! This is all the more amazing and more remarkable a condemnation of sin because it was not His *own* sin—in Him was no sin—and yet the sins of His people, when laid upon the Savior, made Him exceedingly sorrowful even unto death.

Sin was condemned, again, by the excellence of the motive which led the Savior to take sin upon Himself. He took the sins of His enemies upon Himself—sins of those who could not reward Him for His pains—but who, on the contrary, had up to now despised Him and esteemed Him not. When He was found with sin laid upon Him, He was not taken as a thief nor seized as a malefactor by our God. Justice knew that Christ was in the sinner's place for no motive but one of disinterested love. He had nothing to gain, but everything to lose. Those for whom He came, as we have already said, but we need to remind you of it again—had no claims upon Him—they had no love for Him. And even after He had given Himself to die for them they lived in hardness of heart, rejecting Him till His own superior Grace overcame them.

Now one would think that a man having sin upon him from such a motive, so heavenly, so Divine, might have been spared. But Jesus was not spared—of the cup He drank every drop! Of the lash He felt every blow!

The penalty which Christ endured was not a mitigated penalty for sin, but the whole weight of Jehovah's wrath fell on Him. He was treated as a thing accursed, for He was made a curse for us—made *sin* for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. In what a manner was sin thus condemned!

I shall not, however, treat this as a matter of doctrine. I shall come to you, Christian, and ask you if it is not so in your inmost heart. Is not sin condemned in your heart when you see the Lord of Glory die for your iniquities? Do you not hate the sin which brought Him down to such a depth? And when you remember that He died—that though He was guiltless He died simply out of love for *you*—do you not vow a full revenge against your sin and feel that the thing which once might be pleasurable is now detestable? Do you not feel that that which you could toy with and think nothing of is now loathsome to the very last degree?

Once again—did the Savior not condemn sin most emphatically in the terror of the pains which He endured? The severity of God to sin was marked in the Savior's bitter griefs. No, I will not tell you over again that old story, that precious story of the passion in the garden—of the betrayal by His friend, of the accusations of treason and of blasphemy, of the scourging, the crown of thorns, the spit, the mocking, the bearing of the Cross, the piercing of His hands and feet, the stripping, the scorn, the thirst, the fever, the death—I will only just remind you of His desertion by His God, of the soul-griefs that He endured!

Oh that I had power to depict them and that your minds could view them aright! We are never duly impressed, I am afraid, with the griefs of the Son of God! We weep over some silly story. Or when we hear of the little griefs of our friends we mourn with them. But the griefs of our best Friend do not affect us, and the sorrows of our best Beloved do not move us as they ought! Yet at times, at favored intervals, when you and I are permitted to sit and view the flowing of His precious blood—when we gaze into His wounds, when we hear his death-cries and mark His pangs and sorrows—*then* we have felt that sin was condemned! We never hate sin so much as when we get a realizing thought of the griefs of Immanuel.

Human philosophy cannot make you hate sin. The study of the Law of God cannot make you hate it. But if you have ever, with tearful glance, beheld the Son of God expiring and groaning out His life for you in consequence of your sins—then God has done in you, despite the weakness of your flesh, what the Law could not do and what all other things beside could never accomplish. I must press this matter home with you, Christians, that you may give your own verdict whether it is not so. Have you not felt that you have not half a word to say for sin now? That you could not defend it, no, that you could not bear it? It is now as if a man should come to you and say, "I have slain a man, hide me from justice." You might possibly consider whether you should conceal him—but if you discovered that he had assassinated *your child* and that his hands were blood-red with its innocent blood, you would say, "Hide you? How can I hide you? It is my own child whom you have slain."

When sin comes to me I know its mischievous effect and I dare not, for that reason, tolerate it. But when I hear that it slew my dear Redeemer—slew Him who loved me eternally and without change—loved me without a motive for loving me, but only because He would love me! When I hear that sin slew Him, I cry, “Away with you! Sin, away with you! Away with you! It is not fit that you should live. Away with you! Down to the depths of Hell descend, and even there there is no darkness so dark as you are! No terror so terrible as you are! You Hell of hells, you blackness of darkness! You accursed thing! You have slain my Lord.”

This is what the text means when it tells us that the sacrifice of Jesus condemns sin.

II. JESUS EXECUTES AND DESTROYS SIN. When we have a great offender to deal with, it is something to get him condemned, but our customs in this country do not always necessitate that a person condemned to die should die, for there are some cases now fresh in your memory where the sentence of death has been pronounced, and probably very justly too, and yet mercy (God forbid that I should say a word against it!) has come in and the sentence has not been carried out.

Now our Lord Jesus not only came into the world to pronounce the sentence of death upon sin, but He crucified it. He fought with it and overthrew it then and there. He was not merely judge, but executioner—“He condemned sin in the flesh.” At the present moment sin is crucified in those souls where Christ reigns. We will show you in what way Christ has executed sin. In the first place our Lord has destroyed it as to its penal power. There is no power in sin to condemn the Believer now.

“What?” says one, “Does not sin condemn every man at whose door it lies?” Certainly it does—sin condemns every man with whom it is found. But in the case of the Believer sin is not imputed, not laid at his door, for David said, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” The sin of the Believer was laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ, “for the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” And from that day forward the penalty of sin has been discharged and removed by the Redeemer’s having endured it Himself.

The black cloud of my sin has no rain in it—it has emptied out its rain upon Christ. No, the black cloud itself has ceased to be! The Red Sea of my sin cannot drown me—it is dried up by Christ—I have a safe passage through it. My sin is, in itself, most deadly and destructive as I see it to have been in the Person of my Lord Jesus, but it shall neither destroy nor condemn me for it has destroyed and condemned Christ. And He has destroyed and condemned it. Good old Christmas Evans describes death as a dragon wearing a sting called sin, and being so determined to destroy the Savior that it darted its sting right through His body into the Cross.

“And then,” he says, “he could never draw it out again.” That old dragon Death is a dragon still, but it has lost its sting, for it left its sting in the Cross of the dead Redeemer. Sin is gone and gone forever. “He has finished transgression, and made an end of sin.” The jaw teeth of sin are broken! It may howl at me and worry me, but it cannot rend me or destroy

me. As for original sin, Christ has put that away. As for actual sin, however great or however numerous actual sins may be, Christ has destroyed the penal power of sin in the case of every Believer. "Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Once you get into Christ, O Believer, you may see your sin laid on the scapegoat's head of old and carried right away into the wilderness of oblivion where it shall never have an accusation to raise against you any more forever!

Sin, in the next place, was executed by Christ as to its depressing power upon the conscience. When an ungodly man is aroused to see sin, it weighs on his heart like a nightmare. "I cannot," he says, "I cannot be saved! My sin is so evil. No longer may I hope—it is in vain to pray, in vain to trust, in vain to do anything! My sin fills me with despair! It makes me drunk with wormwood and breaks my teeth with gravel stones." But sin has no such depressing power upon the Christian as to drive *him* to despair. He sees sin, but he beholds an Atonement made. He perceives how black a thing sin is, but he sees the fountain filled with blood.

He weeps over his sin, but he does not despair about it. He understands that sin by itself would put him into a helpless plight, but he comprehends that the eternal love of God, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, has made his case not only hopeful but one in which he is safe and sure of everlasting life because the penalty for sin has been discharged by the Redeemer on his behalf. Sin is dead to the Christian in those two senses. I look sin in the face and I say to it, "You foul, you loathsome, you detestable thing! You cannot drag me down to Hell—I know you cannot—and you cannot even make me fear! I am bold, I can sing, I can rejoice, sinner as I am! You cannot stop me of my glory, for I am in Christ, absolved in Christ and secure." In these two senses sin is put away forever by our Savior's death.

Moreover, sin is destroyed in the Christian as to its power over his heart. No soul that has come to trust in Jesus Christ loves sin. You do sin, my Brothers and Sisters, but if you could have your own way you would not. If your new nature could follow out its bent and desire what would you be? Would you not desire to be perfect even as God is perfect? To cease from every sin and run in every Christian duty? I can say honestly that if I might now have my choice, it should not be to possess wealth, or even health, nor fame, nor any of those things which dazzle human eyes—but to be perfectly holy.

Even if I must be in consequence very poor, and very despised, or even die—to be perfectly holy were the climax of one's wishes. This shows that sin is destroyed in our heart. As Master Bunyan tells us, Diabolus could not enter the citadel any more after the Prince Immanuel had driven him out of the town of Mansoul. He did enter the city through Ear-Gate and Eye-Gate and his troops swarmed in every street, but he could never recapture the castle. The heart is kept for God! The heart of the Christian is inviolate and chaste for the soul's true Husband, the Lord Jesus. Sin is slain in the heart by Jesus. We cannot love sin since Christ has died.

The Lord Jesus Christ, by His death has also crucified sin in its active energy over our lives. Alas, not over the lives of some *professors*, but they are not the true Israel. There are some professors of religion who, when the Lord comes, will certainly meet with a very fearful end! I mean such of you as profess to be the Lord's people and yet can secretly indulge in the sins of the flesh. Those of you who trade dishonestly, privately serve the devil, neglect prayer and act as sinners do, and yet all the while pretend to be among the living family of the living God. It were better for you that you had never been born! It were better for you that a millstone were tied round your neck and that you were cast into the depth of the sea than to unite yourself with a Christian Church and make a profession of being in Christ while you are the slave of your detestable lusts.

Oh, may God undeceive many of you who may be in such a plight! May He pull your masks from your faces, wash the paint from your cheeks and make you to be in your own sight what you are in His sight! If I must be lost I would rather be lost knowing my condition than be lost a self-deceived man, and go from the cup of the Lord to drink the cup of wrath forever and be chased away from the communion of saints down into the pandemonium of Hell!

However, in the genuine Christian sin has lost its power in his life—he cannot do as others do. If he is ever tempted to it, like Joseph he says, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” The Believer is in the body and therefore his flesh is weak, but his spirit lives. He therefore cannot let the body have dominion over him. Those lusts in which some indulge he abhors and he will not even mention them, as becomes saints. Those words which glide so glibly from other men's lips he hates, and will not utter them—they are foreign words to him. The swine rolls in the mire with delight, but the sheep abhors it.

When before his conversion the man was a raven, how he gloated over his carrion! But now he is a dove he frequents the rivers of pure water and loves clean feeding while his clipping wings often bear him above the clouds! Yes, and above the stars, too, into the serene atmosphere where the dove-like Spirit dwells. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus and sin is destroyed in its energetic influence over his life.

The day is coming—blessed be God, the day is coming—when sin in its very being will be utterly destroyed in every Believer. Sin within us lies like a condemned criminal with his neck under the guillotine. Oh that the axe would drop! Oh that the knife would take away the life of sin forever! Oh blessed hour! Oh sweet discharge to be rid of every temptation and propensity to sin! Sentence of death is recorded and the culprit is crucified—his hands are nailed fast—he cannot act as he would. His feet are nailed fast—he cannot run as he would and he will die before long. Oh blessed day when he shall be wholly dead, and the soul shall be free from sin, holy even as God is holy, to dwell with Him forever!

Now, Beloved, you clearly see that the Law could not in any of these senses destroy sin and that the judgments of God do not make men give up the love of sin. They are hardened rather than softened by the terrors of God! Instead of sin losing its power over the conscience by hearing of

the Law of God, it is strangely true that the more he understands the hatred of his Maker against sin, man just sets himself more determinately against his Maker! But the wounds of Jesus can do what nothing else can do. When I am pardoned, I hate sin! When I see the love of God in Christ Jesus, sin becomes a condemned and destroyed thing!

I must now close with the lessons to be learned from this. It gave me great consolation, when studying this text, to notice that Christ had condemned sin in the *flesh*, for the flesh is sin's stronghold. It is sin's box out of which it can scarcely be driven. Our Lord has condemned it in the *flesh*. Then, blessed be God, our very flesh shall one day be rid of this condemned, executed thing and my very bones shall rejoice! Our very flesh shall one day see Jesus in the day of the resurrection and sing because sin has no more dominion over it! Christian, this is the lesson I long for you to learn! Hate sin in every shape! Christ condemns it, do not you approve it! Christ executes it, do not you harbor it! It slew the Savior, slay it! Hate sin!

Have good heart as to its destruction. Do not think that sin is mightier than you are when Christ is with you. Up at your sins and slay them! Do not tamely yield to your besetting sin. Let this resolution this day be strong, that the victory shall be yours in every part of the battle, and that no sin shall remain in dominion over you. This day record your thanksgiving to Him who fought the battle for you and won it! He has condemned sin on your behalf, and slain it, too! Ascribe unto Him glory and honor and this day let your song go up to the place where He dwells!

And to you, Sinner, this lesson—see how sin is punished. If it is punished in Christ, it will surely be avenged in you! If Jehovah spared not His own Son, He will never spare His enemy. Take heed, Sinner, of your sin! It will be your everlasting ruin if you are not rid of it. See how you can be delivered. Even you, flesh as you are, and the slave of flesh, Christ can save from your sin. Trust your soul with Him! Come as you are, all sinful and defiled, and cast yourself at the foot of His Cross by a simple act of trust! He will cast out your sin, for He has condemned it in the flesh. Oh may He condemn it in *your* flesh, condemn it in you *now*, and save you from it by destroying it and saving you! God grant it may be so with us, and His be the glory. Amen.

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HOW GOD CONDEMNED SIN

NO. 932

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MAY 8, 1870,
BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“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.

Romans 8:3.

EVER since man has fallen away from God, two things have been highly desirable. The one, that he should be forgiven all his offenses. The other, equally if not more important, that he should be led to hate the sin into which he has fallen and love the purity and holiness from which he has become alienated. These two disabilities must be removed, or, looking at the matter from a loftier point of view, these two purposes of Divine mercy must be accomplished together.

It were impossible to make a man happy unless both be equally and simultaneously realized. If his sins were forgiven, and yet he loved sin, his prospects were dark. Over his future the direst portents would loom. If he ceased to love sin, and yet were lying under the guilt of it, his present condition would be deeply miserable rather than happy—his conscience pure and sensitive being tortured with pangs of remorse.

By what process can the two requirements be met, or the double purpose be achieved? To use our common words, how can man be both *justified* and *sanctified*, obtain clearance from his guilt in the sight of God, and then be made holy and meet to appear in His Presence? Human reason suggests that a law should be given to man which he should keep. This has been tried, and the law which was given was the best law that could be framed. The Law of God written on the conscience, of which the Law given by Moses recorded in the book of Exodus is but a copy, is a perfect Law. There is not a command in it that could be omitted. There is not one single arbitrary precept.

The right must be true, the true must be right, and God's Law is never otherwise than right and true. “Of Law,” said the judicious Hooker, “there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power.” If, therefore, that Law which is promulgated from Heaven should fail to make men what they should be, the fault will not be in the Law, but in the man. As the text says, it was “weak through the flesh.”

Because of our flesh and our tendency to sin, our weakness and our defilement of nature, it could not do what, indeed, God never intended it should do—but what some have thought Law might do—repair the breach and to renovate the depraved. The principle of Law, which is, “Do this and you shall be rewarded,” or, “Do that and you shall be punished,” never can by any means achieve either of these two purposes. The Law cannot forgive past sin. It evidently has nothing to do with that question. The Law says, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” It can execute the sentence, but it can do no more. It ceases to be Law if it lays aside the sword and does not exact its own penalty.

Yet it has been thought that surely Law might make men love holiness, albeit experience and observation prove that it never has that effect. Very often men have needed nothing more than the knowledge of sin to enamor them to it, and they have loved sin all the better for knowing it to be sin. The Apostle Paul tells us that he had not known lust if the Law had not said, “You shall not covet.” There was a citizen of Gaunt who had never been outside the city walls. For some reason or other the magistrate passed an order that he should not go outside. Strange to tell, up to the moment that the command had passed, the man had been perfectly easy and never thought of passing the line. But as soon as ever he was forbidden to do it, he pined, and sickened, and even died moaning over the restriction.

If a man sees a thing to be law, he wants to break that law. Our nature is so evil, that forbid us to do a thing, and at once we want to do the thing that is forbidden, and in many minds the principle of Law, instead of *leading* to purity has even offered opportunities for greater impurity. Beside, although you may point out the way of uprightness to a man, and tell him what is right and what is wrong with all the wisdom and force of counsel and caution, unless you can give him a heart to choose the right, and a heart to love the true, you have not done much for him.

This is just the province of Law. It can write out its precepts on the brazen tablets, and it can brandish its fiery sword, and say, “Do this or else be punished,” but man, carnal man, only wraps himself the more closely in his self-conceit, and perseveres the more doggedly in his obstinate rebellion. He defies God, defers to his own reprobate mind, goes on in sin, and waxes worse and worse, knowing the judgment threatened, yet committing the transgressions prohibited. And he takes pleasure in those that do such things as his benefit companions. Because of the malignity, as well as the infirmity of our flesh, the mere principle of Law will never do anything to purify or ennoble our moral nature. It has been tried by eminent teachers and social reformers.

Dr. Chalmers tells us that in his early ministry he used to preach morality, and nothing but morality, till, he said, he had hardly a sober or an

honest man left in the parish. The preaching of morality seemed to lead to immorality. Something more is wanted than merely to din into men's ears what they ought to be, and what they ought to do. Something is wanted more effectually to renovate the heart and move the springs of action. The water is nothing, and if you make it flow it is bitter. You want an ingredient to be cast into it that will heal its poison springs, and make them sweet and clear.

Now, in the text, we are told how God interposed to do by His Grace what His Law could not do. I will read it to you again—"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." There are here, then, two things. First, what God did. He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin. And then, what was the immediate result of this—He condemned sin in the flesh. After expounding these matters, I will try, in the third place, to show you how this bears upon the two desirable things I speak of, namely, the forgiving of the offender, and the making the offender yearn after holiness and purity.

I. First, and very briefly, let me tell you WHAT, ACCORDING TO THE TEXT, GOD DID—He sent His Son. We believe in one God, but though we understand not the mystery of the Divine Existence, we accept the propositions declared in Scripture, clearly apprehending the obvious sense of the terms employed, and heartily assenting to the Truth of the facts revealed. Thus we believe that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God—and we worship these Three as the one God—the triune God of Israel.

The second Person of that blessed unity in Trinity was sent by the Father to this earth. He is God the Father's Son, "the Only-Begotten of the Father." What that means we do not attempt to define—of the matter of fact, we feel no doubt of the manner thereof—but we can offer no explanation. We suppose that the relationship implied in the words "Father" and "Son" is the nearest description that the Divine Mind can present to our feeble intelligence of that ineffable fellowship. But we do not assume, therefore, that it explains to us anything, or was *intended* to explain anything as the basis of an argument or of a theory concerning the profound doctrine itself. It is a great mystery.

Indeed, were there no mystery in God, He were no God to us. For how, then, should we fear Him with the reverence due unto His name? The fact of there being mysteries should never stagger us, poor worms of a day, when we have to think or speak of the infinitely glorious Jehovah. So, it came to pass, that in the fullness of time God sent His Son. He is called in the text, "His own Son," to distinguish Him from us who are only His sons by creation, or His sons by regeneration and adoption. He sent His own

Son, and He sent Him in the flesh. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born into this world. He took upon Himself our manhood.

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and the Apostles declare that they beheld His Glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. The text uses very important words. It says that God sent His Son “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” not in the likeness of flesh, for that would not be true—but in the same likeness as our *sinful* flesh. He was to all intents and purposes like ourselves, tempted in all points like as we are, though without sin. He was with all our sinless infirmities, with all our tendencies to suffer, with everything human in Him except that which comes to be human through human nature having fallen.

He was perfectly Man. He was like ourselves. And God sent Him in the likeness of sinful flesh. Though it is eighteen hundred years ago and more, the Christmas bells seem to ring on. The joy of His coming is still in our hearts. He lived here His two or three and thirty years, but He was sent, the text tells us, for a reason which caused Him to die. He was sent for sin. This may mean that He was sent to do battle with sin, or that He was sent because sin was in the world—or, best of all—He was sent to be a Sin-Offering. He was sent that He might be the Substitute for sinners.

God’s great plan was this—that inasmuch as His justice could not overlook sin, and sin must be punished, Jesus Christ should come and take the sin of His people upon Himself, and upon the accursed tree, the Cross of ignominious note, should suffer what was due on our behalf. And that through His sufferings the infinite love of God should stream forth without any contravention of His Infinite Justice. This is what God did. He sent His Son to Bethlehem. He sent his Son to Calvary—He sent his Son down to the grave, and He has now recalled Him unto the excellent Glory where He sits at the right hand of God.

II. Do you ask you now, secondly, WHAT WAS THE IMMEDIATE RESULT OF THIS? Why, Brethren, the immediate result was that God condemned sin. Let me show you how He did it. God—I must use language which is for us, not for Him—must, out of necessity, if He would save men and yet not violate His Justice, send his Son to condemn sin. For it said, “This sin is such an evil, such a plague, such a curse, that it cannot be stamped out of the world unless God Himself comes down among the sons of men.”

His usual Presence among men in the power that sustains nature, it seemed, was not enough to put out sin. So venomous was the serpent that there must be born a Seed of the woman that should bruise that serpent’s head. This world of ours was such an Augean stable, that Omnipotence, itself, must come down and turn the sluices of Divine perfection right through the hideous heap, or else washed it never could be. There-

fore down from the highest Glory came the Savior, that He might achieve a task which the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh—but which He in the likeness of sinful flesh undertook to accomplish.

Moreover, the life of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth condemned sin. You can often condemn an evil best by putting side by side with it the palpable contrast—the purity to which it is so thoroughly alien, so totally opposite. So blameless was the conduct of this most blessed Man of Nazareth throughout His entire career, that even those who accept not His Deity do homage to His integrity. We have had in our own day, and in our midst, we grieve to say, some who have blasphemed our faith with bitterest words. But even *they* have paused as if they stood abashed when they came to survey the Character of Him whose Divinity and Mission they refused to acknowledge. They have seen about His life a something that they saw nowhere else, and if they have not adored they have admired.

There was a condemnation of sin in His very look. The Pharisees felt it. They could not meet or encounter Him without discovering and exposing what hypocrites they were. All sorts of men felt it. They could not fail to see through the purity of His life what crooked, ugly, deformed lives their own were in comparison with His. And thus the very existence of Christ, and the example of Christ, condemned sin. But what shall we, who are His disciples, say to that assemblage of Divine Grace found only in Him, each sparkling with peerless luster, and all blending with such exquisite gracefulness that we are at once moved with awe and touched with love as we contemplate Him?

Such majesty, yet such meekness in His manner. Such solemnity, yet such tenderness in His speech. So impartial in judgment, yet so forgiving in temper. So full of zeal, yet so equally full of patience. So keen to detect malice, yet so slow to resent it. Such a wise Mentor in the inner circle of His followers, yet such a gentle sympathizing friend. Say, my Brethren, I think some of us never commit a trespass or betray an infirmity, but we say, and say it to ourselves, Would Christ have done this? And the remembrance of His holy, harmless life condemns sin in our conscience.

God condemned sin still further by allowing it to condemn itself. The scoff has always been on this wise, “Oh, sin, sin! Well, it is a mere trifle,” and the most of men disdain to allow that their particular transgressions are at all heinous. “No, we never killed anybody. We never committed adultery. We are not thieves—ours are only sins of a *common* sort. There can be no harm in us.” But see now, God seemed to say, “I will let sin do what it can. I will let sin ripen in this world. I will let it grow to its perfection. And men shall see from now on what sin is from that sample.”

“What am I aiming at,” do you ask? Why, there came into this world a Man perfectly innocent, harmless, gentle, meek, loving, tender. All His Words were love. All His actions were kindness. He raised the dead. He

healed the sick. He spoke nothing but peace and goodwill towards men. And what did sin do? Sin said, "Away with such a Fellow from the earth! It is not fit that He should live." Sin murdered the perfect Man, as it would lay violent hands on all who interfere with its evil maxims and base habits. It would utterly destroy all goodness if it could. It convicted itself. Ferocious is a wild beast, it is always to be feared and hated, for it never can be tamed or trusted.

That Man came into this world on an errand, and that errand was one of disinterested mercy and pure affection. He need not have come. He had nothing to gain by it. He never did gain anything while here. They would have made Him a king, but He would not be a king. His was all disinterested kindness, benevolence to His bitterest foes. When they nailed His hands to the wood, they could get nothing vindictive from His lips. He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He came to save His enemies. Now, surely sin will not touch such a blessed Being as this! Surely sin will say, "I hate His holiness, but I reverence His philanthropy"!

Not so, sin shouted, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" Sin made a jest of His prayers, and mocked His tears. As we hold and believe, this Man was no other than God, God's Son. You know how the willfulness and atrocity of this sin against Christ is represented to us in the parable of a certain man that had let out his vineyard unto husbandmen. He sent unto them his servant that at the time of the crops they should pay a portion of the produce, but they treated him despitefully, and when he sent another they beat him, and stoned another.

At last he said, "I will send my son. They will surely reverence my son." But they said, "This is the heir. Let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours." And so with this very God, they seemed to say, "Let us kill Him." And though they could not give a death blow to His Deity, they showed that they would if they could. And red-handed sin stands out before the world this day as a deicide. It would wreak its vengeance on Him that inhabits eternity if it could, and hurl destruction at the Lawgiver, to secure a triumph for its own lawlessness. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God," and the great aim of human nature is to get rid of God in fact, as well as in faith. This it attempts to do, either by discoursing of Him in an abstraction, or by setting up blocks of wood and stone in simple credulity, as a correct representation of His fashion or His attributes.

To the one true and glorious God men will not pay any allegiance. If sin had power equivalent to its purpose. Had it means to accomplish its menace, it would cast down the Throne of the Most High, and assail Jehovah Himself in the Heaven of His dwelling. Oh, you abominable thing, Sin! You stand convicted. God shall smite you, you accursed thing! You have con-

demned yourself by your own act and deed—even where your craftiness has been foiled and your desperate prowess has issued in defeat.

Thus, Brethren, I have shown you that Christ's coming condemned sin, Christ's life condemned it, and by putting Christ to death, sin condemned itself. But here comes the peculiar doctrine of our faith. God condemned sin by bruising Christ, by suffering Him to be put to death, by deserting Him in the hour of nature's extremity, by permitting His soul to undergo an agony beyond all conception. Sirs, our sin—your sin, my sin—the sin of as many as do believe or ever shall believe in Jesus, was laid on Him, "who His own Self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He was the Father's Best-Beloved. He had never offended, and the Father loved Him. Will He not spare Him? Will He not spare Him?

Infinite love loved us, and infinite love loved Christ, but infinite love said, "I cannot pass by sin without punishment. What Justice demands, must be done." And it was love that made the Father pour forth the vials of His wrath upon the head of the Only-Begotten Son, till in the garden He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Oh, there was an inner sweat, of which those outward drops were but the faint types! His soul was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death, and then on the Cross He died.

I have often painted you that scene, but for the present I forbear. His inward sufferings, His soul-sufferings, were the soul of His sufferings—

***'Twas thus the Lord of Life appeared,
And sighed, and groaned, and prayed, and feared.
Bore all Incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, and none to spare.'***

Then and there He made expiation for man's guilt. What a condemnation that was of sin! Methinks it were as though the righteous Judge of all the earth had said, "I cannot suffer sin, I cannot pass by sin, even if it lies on the Innocent One. I must smite even My own Son if sin is imputed to Him. I cannot and will not clear the guilty. The Judge of all the earth am I. If My Son should be spared, or My Law should be put on one side, the thousands of worlds I govern might well be in high revolt against Me."

Poised was the cause in the impartial scales of Justice, and on His Son He visited our transgressions. Into His hands the cup of wrath was given. Against Him the sword of vengeance was unsheathed. Of Him the uttermost penalty was exacted—that we, for whom He stood as Surety—might be clear by His dying, justified by His rising from the dead, and from then on accepted in the Beloved.

Now I know it will be said, "But why did not God exercise the sovereign prerogative of mercy, and at once forgive sin? Why did He not by His own absolute fiat condone the offense and pardon the offenders?" I reply, how, then, could God have condemned sin? If sin is only such a simple misdemeanor as an arbitrary act of God can forgive, then its evil were not infi-

nite in turpitude, the prolific parent of crimes and curses numberless. But if there must be an atonement for it, an Atonement as wonderful as that which I have essayed to preach to you, then sin descried in the light of that altar-fire where it was propitiated, appears worse than felonious, worse than any word I can use, more hideous than any ghastly form I can depict.

Its summary condemnation alone could vindicate the unimpeachable holiness of the Judge. Someone else may say, "But if the righteous Law is really so spiritual, and carnal man so weak, why not alter the Law and adapt it to the exigency?" I reply again, because such a procedure would not *condemn* the sin. On the contrary, it would condemn the *Law*. It would be an admission that the Law originally was too severe. It would be making an apology for sinners, and encourage them to sin greedily with both hands. To relax the prescript and forego the punishment, were to trifle with sin and make the Law to be a contemptible thing.

The criminal will ask to have it altered still, and lowered to suit his basest passions. But would not a part-punishment have sufficed, and then let the rest be excused? I answer, No! That, too, would have condemned the Law for having asked a greater punishment than was absolutely necessary. Whatever was laid down as being the necessary punishment of sin must be enforced, or else God changes, the statute is set aside, and the Law breaks down altogether. The only way to condemn sin to the full is this—let the sin be punished, and if there is one found who, without a breach of justice, may be permitted to suffer in the place of another, let him so suffer.

But let care be taken that it is no sham, but a reality. That sin, from the dignity of the sufferer, from the amount of the suffering, from the completeness of the atonement, is effectually and thoroughly condemned. Thus far have I led you. God has sent His Son into the world, and has thus condemned sin by His Son's life and death.

III. Now, thirdly, I come to the main business of this evening, which is TO SHOW YOU HOW THIS DOES WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO. There were two desirable things, you will remember, that I started with. The first was that the offender should be *pardoned*. You can clearly see how that is done. If Jesus suffered in my place, from now on it becomes not only Mercy that absolves me, but Justice that seals my acquittal—

***"Since Christ has my discharge procured,
And freely, in my place, endured
The whole of wrath Divine;
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."***

If Jesus paid the debt, it is paid, and I am clear. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Your only ques-

tion, dear Hearers, is—have you a part in the sufferings of Christ? Was He a Substitute for you? According to this grand old Book, on which we fix our trust as an Infallible guide in this matter, Jesus died for every soul that trusts Him. So is it written—“He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved.” Have you these personal evidences? Do you without question trust Him? Then you are forgiven. You are this night absolved. You may rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom you have now received the Atonement. Your sins, past, present, and to come, are all blotted out—

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

The red mark is drawn across the bill, it is discharged. The load of obligation is gone. From its burden you are released. The sin of the Believer has ceased to be. Christ has been punished in his place. Is not that simple enough for all of you to understand, and Scriptural enough for all of you to receive?

But how comes the second necessity to be supplied? How does this tend from now on to make such a man pure in heart, and produce in his very soul an aversion and a total *abhorrence of sin*? This is not difficult to apprehend if you will give it a little quiet consideration. When the Holy Spirit comes with power into a man’s heart, and renews his nature (oh, matchless miracle!)—a miracle that has been worked many times in this house—at that moment the unhallowed and the impure are made chaste. The dishonest are made honest, and the ungodly are made to love God—“for if any man is in Christ he is a new creature.”

Such motives as the following now begin to influence his mind—The man says, “Did God, instead of forgiving my sin without a penalty, make the anointed Substitute smart for it? Then I reverence the Lawgiver, the mighty Lawgiver who would not, even though He is Love itself, suffer His Law to be broken. I reverence that dreadful Judge of all the earth, who, though I am His child, yet since I had offended, would not spare me for my sin, but executed the penalty that was due to me upon Himself.

Himself! For Christ His Son is One with Him, and dear to His Father’s soul. Why, more than that, it makes me feel an intense love to Him. What? Was He so just, and yet was He so determined to save me, that He would not spare His only Son, but freely gave Him up to die? O blessed God, I tremble at Your Justice, which yet I come to admire. But oh, Your love—what shall I say of it? It wins my love. I must love You, my God—the Just and yet the Gracious One. I must love You.”

Then there comes into the heart an enmity against the sin which caused the suffering of Christ. “What?” says the heart, “Did sin make my Redeemer, who gave Himself for me, suffer? Then, away with it! It must be

a foul, vile thing, to put such a blessed One as He to death. I will not tolerate it.” It makes the soul cry, “Revenge” against itself—a blessed vengeance it decrees against all sin. “Bring out the gallows, and let sin be hanged. The dearest idol I have known, bring out the hammer and the axe, and let it be broken in pieces. The choicest transgression I have ever nurtured in my bosom—I see what a viper it is, and I shake it into the fire! Away with it! If it grieves my Christ, and makes Him bleed, my own Beloved Savior—away with it, away with it!”

And let me tell you, there is another matter that comes in and supplies the basis for holiness, such a basis as cannot be found anywhere else. The man says, “Now I am pardoned through the love of Jesus Christ and the shedding of His precious blood. I have God for my Father, and He is my Friend. There is no one to part me from Him. My sin was laid on Another, it has been expiated, and it is gone—I am saved, I am forgiven.” The man is happy. The man is cheerful. The man is joyful, and what springs up? “Now,” says he, “there is that glorious Christ of God who has worked this for me, and I see Him with the eye of faith. I see Him in Heaven, and I am His man—body, soul, and spirit. I am not my own. He has bought me with His blood. I lay myself at His feet. What He bids me do I will do. What He asks of me I will give. What He forbids me, it shall be my joy never to touch.”

Here breaks forth in the soul an enthusiastic love to the Person of Jesus Christ, which, as it burns and glows like a refining fire, becomes a great motive—power to the spirit to pursue holiness in the power of God. When do the soldiers fight best, Sirs? When you have read their rules to them as to how they might keep place, and how they must load their guns, and fire in due order? No! Law does not inflame the soldier with martial ardor, though it is good in its place. But just when the battle lingers—take an instance from our own history—just when the battle was about to turn with the Ironsides, and the Cavaliers were coming on with one of Rupert’s hot charges, ready to break the line, and the brave old Ironsides were half inclined to turn, up came the general old Noll, riding on his horse, and they passed the word along, “It is he, boys! Here he comes!”

And every man grew into a giant at once. They stood like iron columns, like walls of granite, and the Cavaliers as they came on broke like waves against rocks, and dashed away, and were heard of no more. It was the *presence* of the *man* that fired each soldier. And so it is now with us. We believe in Jesus Christ. We know that He is with His Church. He was dead, but He rose again. He has gone to Heaven, but His spirit is with us—King of kings, and Lord of lords is He. If He seems to sleep in the midst of our ship, yet He sleeps with His hands on the helm, and He will steer the vessel rightly.

And now the love that we bear His name steers our souls to holiness, to self-denial, to seek after God, to make full proof of the faith and the fellowship of the Gospel, to seek to become like God, and to be absorbed into God that He may be All in All. This is what was wanted—a stimulus potent enough, under God’s Grace, to break through the barriers of sin. What the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God has accomplished by sending His own dear Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin. And having condemned sin in the flesh, He has now removed its guilt, and destroyed its power.

To the best of my ability I have thus set before you a doctrine in which my own heart finds perfect rest. I would that you all had the same rest, the same sweet heart’s ease in your breasts. Two words of counsel I must address to you before I close. One is, I do beseech you to receive this doctrine. It is of God. It is true. They who first bore witness to it were humble fishermen. Unsophisticated as they were, they had no motive for inventing it. Indeed, it is a theory which they had not the brains to invent if they had tried. They nearly all of them died for it. They never gained honor or emolument by professing or publishing it, but they endured contumely and persecution, even to the loss of their lives, for testifying to what they saw and heard.

Ah, since then the Church has had long lines of martyrs. Who could help hearing the same witness, fortified with the same assurances, whatever it might cost them, however they might be ridiculed as ignorant, old-fashioned, and not up to the progress of the age? I pray you accept this—especially would I address myself to those of you whom I have preached to for so long, who yet are unsaved. I do not know what forms of speech to use with some of you, or in what shape to fashion my appeal. If I thought that coming round to your pews and kneeling down before you, and entreating you to receive Christ would have any effect upon you, I would gladly do it.

I have prayed very anxiously that if perhaps my voice should not be the one that God would bless to your conversion, my brother’s voice next Sunday, or that of someone else on the following Sunday on which I shall be absent, may have the effect of leading you to Christ. O that you may but be saved! I will make no terms with God if you will but accept Christ. I am somewhat of the mind of a dear little girl, who is now dying, if she has not already departed. She sent a little note in pencil to her minister, and it was delivered at the Prayer Meeting.

A little Believer in Christ, nine years of age, asks the prayers of the people for her father, for he is an unbeliever. She was visited by her minister, and she said to him, “O Sir, I have asked Father to come and hear you preach. I thought he might get saved, but he mocks at it, and will not come. But, Sir, he must hear you preach one day, and that is when I shall

be buried, for I shall soon be with Jesus. O Sir! When he stands at the grave, do be sure to tell him about the love of Christ, and say that I asked you to do so, for perhaps when I am dead that might help to break his heart.”

Oh, yes! If anything would break your hearts, that were a mercy if it happened. If the preacher himself were dead, if his interment in the grave could bring you to the Savior, it were a cheap price to pay. Only may God save you! May the Holy Spirit renew you! May the Savior wash you in His precious blood and I shall be well content.

The other word is this. You that profess to be Christians, to believe what I have told you—take care that you do not give the lie to it. Not everyone that says, “I am a Christian” is so. No, no. It is a heathenish nation this, that has had the impudence to call itself Christian. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leads unto life, and few there are that find it,” is as true today as when Christ uttered it. To be a Christian in name is worth nothing. To be a Christian in the power of these truths, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, and being rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith as you have been taught—that is to be a Christian in all good conscience.

If your lives should be unholy, if you trades people should be dishonest, if you rich people should be proud and selfish, if you poor people should be envious, if any of you should be drunken, if you should be loose in speech, if you should be unclean in deed or in conversation, men may say—“The preacher has only laid down a theory, let him show us facts.” Well. But I can show facts. I bless God that I have it in my own soul to say that I believe the most of you do so live as to prove these things. But even so, there are others of you of whom I tell you, even weeping, that you are the enemies of the Cross of Christ. Enemies! Of all enemies the worst of enemies, too, because while professing to be actuated by them, you live in opposition to the teachings of Jesus.

O blessed Savior! Wounded worse by Your treacherous friends than by Your open foes. O holy Faith! More damaged by your professors than by your antagonists. The Lord grant us to walk and live in holiness, and in His fear, till the Master shall come, as come He will a second time without a sin-offering unto salvation. Finally, Brothers and Sisters, farewell. Let me dismiss you with a blessing.

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THE LAW'S FAILURE AND FULFILLMENT NO. 2228

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
NOVEMBER 1, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 1, 1891.

“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 in the flesh. That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”
Romans 8:3, 4.

THE Law of God is perfect. You cannot add anything to it, nor take anything from it, without spoiling it. If you will read the Ten Commandments and understand them in their spiritual meaning, you will find that they are far-reaching and that they deal with every sin. I noticed, some time ago, that a learned prelate said that he could not find any Commandment against gambling. Where were his eyes? Is it not plainly written, “You shall not covet”? What is gambling but covetousness in action? Most manifestly, the gambler desires his neighbor's goods and this desire gives zest to the vice which the Law of God quite plainly condemns. Depend upon it, there is nothing wrong but the Law of God condemns it and there is nothing right but the Law approves it. The Decalogue is an absolutely perfect Law.

If you take the soul of it, what I may call the *summary* of the Law, it seems to me to be even larger in brief than it is in the lengthy form. Here it is. First, in the Old Testament in two different passages, one in the Sixth Chapter of Deuteronomy and the other in the Nineteenth of Leviticus, and then as given by Christ in answer to the question of a lawyer—“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Wonderful Law, summed up in one word, “LOVE” but comprehending in its circle every form of duty which springs out of our relationship to God or man! Well may Paul say, as in the previous chapter, “Therefore the Law is holy and the Commandment holy, and just, and good.” If evil is worked, it is not the Law of God which works it, for that Law is the expression of the Nature of the Eternal and reveals His holiness and justice—but as “God is Love,” the Law which He gives is also

comprehended in the same word—love. “We know that the Law is good, if a man uses it lawfully.”

But there are some things which the Law cannot do. It cannot produce a new heart in a sinner. It cannot save a lost soul. It cannot justify a guilty person. It cannot draw a wanderer back to God. The Law, as originally given to Adam, a perfect man, had he carried it out, would have glorified God and would have produced in him a perfect life. But we are not in the same position towards God as Adam was and we are not free from the taint of evil as he was. We have fallen and there is now in our nature that which Paul calls, “the flesh,” which lusts to envy, and turns aside from God. This has made the Law weak for the accomplishment of God’s purpose of justification or salvation. The law of England, where it is true and good, protects honest men and deters many from committing crime—but it is practically powerless in the case of some habitual criminals who seem to have inherited the tendency to criminality. The defect is not in the law, but in the person with whom it has to deal. So the Law of God becomes weak through *our weakness*. There are some who cling to the Law and expect to be saved by their own doings, but they are leaning on a broken reed! To free from guilt and condemnation is what the Law *cannot* do, not on account of any fault in itself, but because it is weak through our flesh.

What, then, is the purpose and limit of the Law? *It sets before us a straight path.* Right up the mountain side I see the way to the summit. But I have fallen into an abyss. I am bruised and broken—I cannot stir an inch. What is the use of a straight road to me? Here I must lie, at the bottom of the crevasse, and perish unless something more than a straight road is shown to me. The way is before me, but I am weak and cannot stir. The Law of God tells us what we ought to do, but that does not enable us to do it! Still, it is useful to know the way in which we should go, for that will show us how far we have fallen, cause us to be discontented with our present state and prepare us to accept help, if help should come. The Law *can do that*.

The Law is also very useful because *it shows us our deflections and stains*. It is like the mirror which my lady holds up to her face that she may see if there are any spots on it. But she cannot wash her face with the mirror! When the mirror has done its utmost, there are the stains, all the same. It cannot take away a single spot—it can only show where it is. And the Law, though it reveals our sins, our shortcomings, our transgressions—it cannot remove the sin or the transgression. It is weak for that purpose because it was never intended to accomplish such an end.

The Law also serves another purpose—*it upbraids us for our sin*. Did you ever feel its ten-throated lash coming upon the back of your conscience? What furrows these plowers make! “Condemn him,” says whole ten-throated Law of God! The First Commandment says, “Condemn him—he has broken me.” And the Second Command says, “Condemn him—he has broken me.” And the Third says, “Condemn him—he has broken me.”

Not one of them is silent! All clamor for their due and if you truly know your own heart, you confess that not one charges you falsely, seeing that hate is murder and the thought of folly, sin! When conscience is really awake, what pain, what anguish the Law will bring to the spirit! But it cannot heal you. It cannot speak peace to you. It cannot forgive you. To convince and to condemn is all the Law can do. It is too weak to save even one poor sinner!

Again, the Law can tell you what you *ought* to do, but *it gives no inclination to do the right*. On the contrary, without any blame to the Law, it often creates inclination to do otherwise. Paul says, "I was alive without the Law once: but when the Commandment came, sin revived, and I died." There are some things men would not think of doing if they were not forbidden—but the very forbidding of them makes some desire to do them! Many a thing which is commanded, we might have freely done if it had been left to our own choice—but such is the perversity of our nature that, being commanded to do it, straightway we refuse! We kick against the Commandments. The Law does not sweetly incline us to holiness, but, through the weakness, or, rather, *wickedness* of our flesh, it often stirs up the obstinate and rebellious propensities which are in our nature. Certainly the Law does not incline us to righteousness, but, "sin, taking occasion by the Commandment," works in us all manner of evil.

The Law is weak in another way. *It does not lend us any aid* towards the fulfillment of its Commands. It says, "This do, and you shall live. Make the bricks; make the bricks," but it gives us no straw with which to make them, nor can we find any in all the land—so we are worse off than Israel in Egypt! The Law, in and of itself, does not contribute to our obedience to its commands, nor does it restrain us when we go astray. It thunders out, "You shall not kill," but when the heart darts its thought of bitterness, or the hand raises the assassin's knife, it does not hinder—it looks on, cold and unmoved. It aids us not in any way because it cannot! Only Divine Grace can do that. We have to look to another source for help in holiness.

And when we have broken the Law of God, *it brings no remedy*. Of mercy the Law knows nothing. You have broken the Law—there is the penalty and you must bear it. Through having committed sin, you have brought upon yourself a grievous malady. The Law points out the malady, but it never brings any medicine with which to cure it! It pours in no oil and wine—it is no good Samaritan. It is not the Law's business to do that. When Her Majesty's judge is on the bench, his business there is to administer the law and to see that the rules of the nation are carried out fairly and justly. He does not sit there to provide for the poor or to help the sick, but to judge men and condemn the guilty! This is all that the Law of God was meant to do. In that it is weak through our flesh, there are some things which the Law cannot do.

On one occasion some workmen were quarrying some rocks and, having made all ready for a blast—drilled the holes, filled them with gun-cotton and connected the fuses—they then warned everyone away from

the place of danger. Then the fuses were lighted and the workmen, themselves, withdrew. But, to their horror, they saw a little boy, attracted by the lights, running towards them! Those strong men raised their voices and shouted to the boy, "Go back! Go back!"—they could do no more. But of course the boy, having the same nature as the rest of us, only went the more quickly forward and into the danger. Still the men cried, "Go back! Go back!" They were like the Law, powerless. Not because their voices were weak, but because of the material with which they had to deal.

But the mother of the boy heard the call and, seeing the fearful peril in which her child was placed, she dropped on one knee, opened her arms wide and called, "Come to mother! Come to mother!" The boy stopped, turned, hesitated a moment, and then ran to her embrace and, in listening to her call and obeying it, escaped the danger which threatened him. What all the shouts of the strong men could not do, the gentle voice of the mother accomplished. Their voices were like the Law which says, "Go back! Go back!" Her voice was like the sweet sound of the Gospel, "Come to Jesus! Come to Jesus!" "For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son" easily accomplished. Behold here the wisdom and might and love of Jehovah!

Is it not a grand thing when a wise person, seeing a difficulty which he did not produce, comes in and sets everything right? Through our sinful flesh, there has come a great warp in the original order of things! God cannot be glorified by the Law, for we have broken it! And we cannot be saved by the Law, for we still continue to break it! But God, Himself, comes to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. I want to show you, first, *God's glorious method*. And when I have shown you that, I will speak of *God's glorious accomplishment*. These two things will serve us both for instruction and stimulus.

I. First, GOD'S GLORIOUS METHOD. Here we are with a Law which we have not kept, any one of us—a Law which we never shall keep! There is no hope of salvation by the Law of God. What happens, then? Does He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him forever? If He does, what are those means?

Hear these words, "For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending"—*listen!*—"God *sending*," not God waiting till we went to Him, but, seeing our misery and helplessness, *He sends*. From yonder Throne, beyond your sight, and higher than your loftiest imagination, He sends! His thoughts are with poor, struggling, guilty, unworthy men—He sees that the Law cannot help men and that they will never glorify God by the Law, except it be by being made to suffer the punishment due for their sin. Therefore Jehovah interposes! God *sends*! I say again, He does not wait for us to come to Him. If we had sent an embassy to Him and waited at Heaven's gate many long years and He had, at last, deigned to answer us, it would have been a wonderful instance of love. But now He *sends* an Ambassador! It is He who has been offended who seeks to make peace—not the guilty and the offending ones!

Read on farther. “God sending”—an angel? An archangel? No! “God sending His own Son.” Hear this! *He sends His Son*. The case was so desperate that only God, Himself, could meet it! Well, Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, is very God of very God—and He can do it. But shall He leave Heaven? Shall He come down to earth? Will He be a Servant? Will He who can command be humble, Himself, as to be *sent*? Will He, before whom angels bow with veiled faces, go on an errand down to earth? It is even so—“God sending His own Son.” He had but one, His Only-Begotten—but He determined to have many and so He sent His one Son that He might, in “bringing many sons unto Glory,” show to all worlds the riches of His love and Grace! From all eternity the Son was in the bosom of the Father—and no less than He shall be chosen to be an Ambassador of peace to the sons of men—

***“Hark, the glad sound, the Savior comes,
The Savior promised long!
Let every heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.”***

But how does He send Him? *He sends Him in the flesh*. This is the amazement of angels, the astonishment of all thoughtful beings! God sends His Son to take our flesh into communion with Himself! Not to be an angel—“for verily He took not on Him the nature of angels”—but to be a *man* and to come here, as you and I came here, by *birth*! In Bethlehem’s manger He lies, the offspring of a woman! At that woman’s breast He hangs, a Babe. Yes, He that made the heavens and the earth, “being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped,” as the Revised Version gives it to us, “to be on an equality with God.” Yet—oh, the amazing condescension—He has “emptied Himself, taking the form of a Servant, being made in the likeness of men.” He has veiled Himself under the form of an Infant and there He is, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh! “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.” The Incarnation of Christ is a great reality which we can never understand, but which we devoutly believe and, believing it, we have before us God’s way of doing what the Law could not do. He sent His own Son in human flesh!

But Paul puts it in a way which increases the wonder. God not only deigns to send His Son, but *He sends Him in the likeness of sinful flesh*. Christ did not come in sinful flesh, but He came in the *likeness* of sinful flesh. He came in the *reality* of flesh, but not in the sinfulness of flesh. His flesh was *like* sinful flesh, but it was *not* sinful flesh. It was real flesh, but it was not *sinful* flesh. It was the *likeness* of sinful flesh, for, as you looked upon Him, you could not tell Him from anyone else. That marvelous prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled—“He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” He was “a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.” This was the likeness of sinful flesh which He assumed—to be poor, to be hungry, to be thirsty,

to be despised, to be rejected, to be homeless, to be friendless, to be forsaken, to be betrayed, to be scourged, to be put to death! Yes, it was necessary that He should be “numbered with the transgressors,” though without fault. “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.”

There is in the world this strange thing called sin—a discord which mars the harmony of God’s universe—a blight which makes evil that which God at first pronounced to be “very good.” Sin! We cannot get away from it. We know more of it than of our most familiar friend—it meets us everywhere and in everything. Sin! It is the history of humanity. It is the history of the Bible, for why else was it written? It is the history of this building—why else was it built? It is the history of the ordinances of worship—why else were they instituted? Best of all, it is the history of the Christ of God!

This is a very amazing story which I am telling you, but I have not yet told you all. When the Father sends His Only-Begotten and Well-Beloved Son, *He sends Him on account of sin.* “For sin.” Why did You come here, sweet Babe, away from the royalties of Heaven? “I came because of sin.” What brought you here, dear Child, sojourning 12 years at Nazareth? “Sin brought Me here,” says the Boy. “I came on My Father’s business, and that is to put away sin.” What brought You here, dear Lord, coming up dripping from the waters of Jordan? “Ask My servant John,” He says. And John answers, “Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.” If I question our Divine Savior at any period of His life—and even at His death, “Why are You here?” He will tell me, “I am here for two reasons—for love and for sin—here because men have sinned and here because I love them and would save them from their sin.”—

**“Twas love that sought Gethsemane,
Or Judas never had found Thee.
‘Twas love that nailed You to the tree,
Or iron never had bound Thee.
‘Twas love that lived, ‘twas love that died,
With endless life to bless us!
Well have You won Your blood-bought bride,
All hail! You glorious Jesus.”**

I must ask you to notice the marginal reading here—“by a sacrifice for sin.” The Revised Version has it, “God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” *He sends Him to be a Sacrifice for sin.* Christ came here to be offered up as a Sin Offering! Our sin was laid on Him and when God came to visit sin, He found it laid on Christ—and He smote it there. There God cursed the evil thing, for Christ “was made a curse for us.” Yes, He *killed* it—for Christ drank of the cup of death, even as we read, “that He, by the Grace of God, should taste death for every man.” Wonderful is this doctrine! In that the Law was weak through the flesh and could not save us, God sent His own Son to be Incarnate here in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be offered up as a Sacrifice, to be presented as the Atonement for human guilt—“For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust,

that He might bring us to God." He has once suffered, "to declare at this time, God's righteousness, that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus."

Only one other word and I have completed the first verse. God does all this and *He thus condemns sin in the flesh*. "For sin" or, "by a sin offering," we read, He "condemned sin in the flesh." Christ's death condemned sin! You may find strong words with which to censure sin and you may talk of the bitter effects of sin, but no words can be too strong, no picture too dark to set forth the evil thing! What a curse sin is to this world of ours! You point me to the graveyard and you ask, "Who slew all these?" Sin! You point me to the prison and you ask, "Who bound all these?" Sin! You point me to the misery of this great city—the drunkenness, the wantonness, the selfishness, the crime—and ask, "What caused all this?" Sin! And you may even lift the veil and bid me gaze into the awful future where souls lie beneath the ban of God, accursed forever, and ask, "What brought man into such a plight?" Sin! Sin did it all, and we will, we *must*, condemn the cause of such horrors!

But, I tell you, sin was never so condemned as when Jesus died. By His death, Jesus, in effect, said, "Sinners have died—sinners have been cast into Hell. Their sin deserved it." But He said more than that, for when sin was laid on Him, it was taken by Him as a deed of love! It was not *His* sin. *He* had done no evil. That the sin was on Him was an act of supreme Grace! He took the awful load willingly and bore it in the place of guilty men. He was innocent, yet, because of man's sin, He must die—even *He* must die! This blot must put out, not the candles and the moon and the stars, but the sun, itself! This poison is so virulent that not only must the mortal die, but the *Immortal* must bow His head and give up the ghost. Oh, Sin, you are a poisonous thing, indeed, to slay God's own Son! All Heaven and earth unite with one voice to say that you are hateful and abhorrent! You are condemned!

If there is a king in a country and he has made a law, and there is one who is brought before him and condemned—and that person is his own son—we may be assured of his strict justice. If the king carries out the law upon the prince and puts him in prison, everyone is assured that he respects the law. If there is proved against the prince an offense whose penalty is death and the king gives up, even, his own guilty son to death, you see how he vindicates the law and how he abhors the offense charged against the prince. And God never showed His justice, as well as His love so much as when He gave up His Son! And He never showed His hatred of evil so much as when, sin being by imputation laid upon Christ, He bade Him die and Christ, "became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Now is sin condemned as the vilest thing in the universe! It has slain the Christ! It has forced the hand of Divine Justice to smite down even Christ, Himself, instead of guilty men!

This is the story more marvelous than all the annals of earth! I have told it to you in simple language. You will hear some men talk very

grandly about it—with much argument and vain philosophy. That is not my business! I have only to tell you the story as it stands. “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” This is God’s glorious method of salvation and deliverance from sin!

II. Now I am going to show you, in a few words, what is, through this, GOD’S GLORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT. The result is “that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” This righteousness is fulfilled in two ways.

First, *in Christ the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled*. It is vindicated. This is how the matter stood. God has justly annexed a penalty to sin. It is right that the offender should be punished. I, guilty by God’s Law, am condemned to punishment. But I am one with Christ. Christ is my Adam. He stands for me. I am a member of His body, joined to Him in mystical, yet real, union. He comes in and answers for me. He takes the sin as though He had committed it, though He could never commit sin. He bares His neck to the ax and suffers what I ought to have suffered, or suffers what is more than equivalent, thereunto, and so God’s Law is vindicated. I have died, for I am one with Christ and He died for me, and I have died in Him. I have borne the wrath of God, for I am one with Him and He bore the wrath of God for me. Thus the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in every Believer because his accepted Substitute and Surety has borne the punishment! The two doctrines of “Substitution” and “Union to Christ” must always go together. The second explains the first, and the first becomes possible because of the second! Christ’s death was a substitution for me because in the Covenant of Grace I am united to Him by bonds which can never be broken.

“Then that is an end of the Law,” says one. Stop—the Law of God has one great demand—obedience! If a man disobeys and is punished, he does not, thereby, escape from the duty of *obedience*. The law is still upon him, saying, Obey, obey! “Oh, but I have been punished for past offenses.” Even so, but you still are bound to *obey*. The law is always our creditor for a perfect obedience. Where, then, have we this? I answer, Christ fulfilled the Law. There never was such a Law-fulfiller as He! He did it willingly. He did it from His heart. “Lo, I come,” He said, “in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your Law is within My heart.” He did it scrupulously. In Him was no sin. “I do always those things that please Him,” said He of His Father. He was perfect. He kept the Law in every jot and tittle.

There could not have been such obedience rendered to the Law even by sinless Adam as the Christ rendered to it. Adam had not the quality of being which would have rendered him capable of offering such an overflowing obedience as Christ rendered. Christ is God and if He becomes obedient to the Law—if He is born under the Law, comes under it and carries it out—the Law receives from such a Person, so marvelously constituted, a higher fulfillment than it could have received from any mere man! I take,

today, the perfect obedience of my Lord and, appropriating it by faith to myself, I call Him, "The Lord my righteousness." I do not presume in so doing, for it is written, "This is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" and, "of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." In Christ Jesus you have done for you what the Law could never have done. The righteousness of the Law has been fulfilled in you. You have borne the penalty—you have obeyed the Law of God in the Person of your Covenant Head and Representative.

Now I take the words in the second and inferior sense, which is still very precious. *The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in the Christian by the Grace of God.* When we believe in Christ we not only receive pardon, but we also receive renewal. I am told that the teaching of certain people, nowadays, is that the Believer only gets pardon to begin with and a long time afterwards he gets the clean heart. But I say, on the authority of God's Word, that no man is pardoned unless he *has* a clean heart! God gives the clean heart at the time He gives the pardon! You must never divide the renewing of the Holy Spirit from the pardon of sin. They go together and he that receives the pardon of sin receives a new birth—and is made a new creature in Christ Jesus then and there. The work of regeneration and the act of faith which brings justification to the penitent sinner are simultaneous and must, in the nature of the case, always be so.

At the present moment, the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in the new-born, Grace-renewed mind. There is a present obedience actually rendered. We have to admit to faults, imperfections and sins, but, at the same time we strive to be holy. I speak for all of you who love Christ. You long to obey Him. Yes, and you *do* obey Him. You have laid aside the works of the flesh. If you are Believers, you cannot do what you used to do, and you are striving to do things which once would have been irksome to you. You are honest, you are true, you are righteous, you love the Lord. You make *Him*—not an *idol*—to be your God. You are seeking to do to others as you would that they should do to you. You love God and you love your neighbor.

And though not perfectly, yet, in a large measure, by the exercise of the Grace of God, the Law is fulfilled in you in a way that it never could have been fulfilled as mere law. You now obey God and attain a measure of holiness through what Christ has done for you—a measure of holiness that you never reached when you tried to be saved by good works. It is a noteworthy fact that while work-mongers cry up works, they never have any worth talking about—and while Believers in Christ decry their own good works, they abound in them! I try to live as if my salvation depended only upon my works—and yet I do so knowing all the while that I am justified by faith, through Jesus Christ—and not by the works of the Law. Thus present obedience is actually rendered.

Now we must go a little further. There is perfect obedience rendered in heart. You know how Paul puts it. He says that the things that he *would*

do, somehow he did not always do and that caused him grief. And the things that he would not do, but hated to do, he sometimes did and *that* caused him grief. But he says, "If I do that I would not, it is no more I that does it, but sin that dwells in me." The child of God is not perfect in his life, but he wills to be so—he sighs to be so—his heart is set on it. It reminds me of Mr. Bunyan when he says, "You see a man sent to get the doctor and riding on a horse that is rather sluggish. But look how he keeps kicking and whipping; whipping and kicking; pulling and tugging. He would go quicker if he could. So in his heart he is all the way to the doctor's when he is only half-way! He is all the way there in his mind, though, alas, his horse keeps him back." It is thus that we are hindered through the weakness of the flesh.

O Brothers and Sisters, if we could be perfect, we would be in Heaven, for I cannot imagine a higher Heaven than to be perfectly like Christ! A sinner, if he could have his way, would like to have some nice little smug sins all to himself and never be called to account for them. He would choose forever to have no God and no Law of God. How delicious that would be to him! And then if he let his evil heart have *full* sway, he would desire to have his glass, his merriment, his debauchery free from any restraint! His liberty would soon run into license. That would be the highest pleasure to the child of the flesh. But the child of God hates sin as sin! He loves holiness as holiness and if he could go to Heaven and sin, it would be no Heaven to him! And if God could reward him for sin—though such a thing is impossible and the very thought of such a thing is almost blasphemy—yet would he hate sin as sin and flee from it!

Even when it most condemns him, he would have the Law of God no other than it is. Not even for his salvation would he have God bate one jot or tittle of His justice. He is jealous for holiness and seeks not to be saved *in* sin, but to be saved *from* it. As far as his renewed heart is concerned, he cannot sin because he is born of God. His new nature clings and cleaves to holiness and the new nature is *perfect*—made perfect in the image of Christ—and it will never rest till it has stamped out the last spark of sin in the members. Thus a perfect obedience is rendered in his heart. The child of God says, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before my eyes—I hate the work of them that turn aside—it shall not cleave to me."

Once more, what the Law could never do—for it never made a man even *wish* to be holy, much less made him live a holy life—Christ, by coming in the likeness of sinful flesh, has done, for there is that in every Believer which will be perfect holiness before long. Absolute obedience is observed in Heaven. We shall, by-and-by, break through all the enthrallments of the old life and come into the land of the hereafter, where, says the Christ who has done all for them, "They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." Up yonder the life that is in every palm-bearer is the life that he had here below. "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life," that is, he has it *here*—and in Heaven it will be the same life, but it will be that

same life *developed*—and when developed it will be absolute perfection! Not perfection in name, nor perfection in measure, but *absolute* perfection and fully developed! We shall be absolutely free from every disobedience and absolutely perfect in every good work, doing God's will and delighting to do it, world without end!

In the third place, I would have you remember that *this righteousness is fulfilled through the Lord Jesus Christ*. We fulfill the Law, but not in any strength which the Law gives to us, nor in any power of our own. The obedience to the Law is fulfilled in us out of gratitude to Christ for what He has done for us. We flee from sin out of hatred of the things that nailed Christ to the Cross and put Him to death. What the Law could not do, the dying Christ has done! His Sacrifice makes us hate evil. Naming the name of Christ, we “depart from iniquity,” for we realize that it was not only Roman soldiers and rabble Jews who nailed Him to the tree, but it was our sins that did it! Those little sins of ours were like thorns in His blessed brow. Those ordinary commonplace sins were like nails in His hands and feet. That giant sin was like a spear to pierce His side. And yet—

***“His love to man, so sorely tried,
Proved stronger than the grave!
The very spear that pierced His side
Drew forth the blood to save.”***

O you who have long toiled in the vain endeavor to give up your sins, come and look at the Cross! See there what your sins have done and learn to hate them with a perfect hatred! See how sin stooped to the meanness of betrayal and killed the Prince of Life who went among men healing and helping them, doing nothing but good! Your instinct rises against oppressors—will you not seek to throw off the chains of the sin which worked so cruel a deed that day at Calvary? Sin is your enemy! To you who believe in Christ, I would say—Remember that on the Cross *you* were crucified, for when Christ died, *you* died. Now, say to yourself that if sin that day crucified you, then today you will crucify sin. “I am crucified with Christ,” says Paul, “nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Thus, because God sent His Son and condemned sin in the flesh, we condemn it, too. His death becomes to us the gate of life!

More than that. Not only do we seek to avoid the evil because of the Sacrifice of Christ, but gratitude to Him incites us to do good. Shall He do all this for me and I do nothing for Him? Shall He die for me and shall I henceforth not live for Him? If He gave His life for me, then I will give my life to Him! He has bought it. He deserves it and He shall have it. I will no longer live to the flesh, since in the flesh Christ condemned my sin. What a wonder it is that the Lord Jesus, by His Atonement, could condemn sin and let the condemned sinner go free! Surely, the delivered soul will henceforth count it the greatest joy of life to serve Him “who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.” Thus, what

the Law could not do, the Sent One, by His wondrous work, fulfils! He takes us from under the bondage of the Law and, in being delivered *for* our sins, He also delivers us *from* our sins! “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the Law, but under Grace.” Thus, Grace triumphs against the flesh in giving us liberty. “Being then made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.” Thus the holy Law of God is cheerfully fulfilled!

To crown all, *this righteousness is fulfilled in the energy of the Spirit*—“in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” God not only works *for* us, but He also works *in* us “both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” The Spirit applies the work of Christ to the soul, since it is *because* of the work of Christ the Spirit is given, while both are to the praise of the Father. “It needs the three Persons of the Trinity to fill up the triangular heart of man,” as one of the Puritans puts it. Why should not everyone whom I address receive, by the Spirit, this new life at this moment? Then it will grow, for we “*walk* after the Spirit”—we do not stand still! As we obey the Law of God, we shall receive more and more of His power, for it is written of the Holy Spirit that He is “given to them that *obey* Him.” He first teaches us to obey and then, when we obey, He dwells with us in greater fullness! And, when we are filled with the Spirit, then “the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

I have now set before you God’s glorious method and achievement. May you accept the one and have your part in the other! Sin is condemned and righteousness fulfilled for everyone that believes! That is what the Christ has done by coming here below. Blessed be His name! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 8.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—240, 298, 299.**

MR. SPURGEON UPDATE:

Readers of the Sermons will rejoice to know that on Monday (October 26th), Mr. and Mrs. Spurgeon traveled in safety from London to Calais, and bore the journey as well as could be expected. By the time this Sermon is in the hands of our readers, they hope to be at their destination in the sunny South. Praise for past mercies and prayer for blessings still needed may be sweetly blended under the present happy circumstances.

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

A TRAITOR SUSPECTED AND CONVICTED NO. 1878

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, JANUARY 10, 1886,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S DAY EVENING, AUGUST 16, 1885.**

*“The carnal mind is enmity against God.”
Romans 8:7.*

MEN naturally mind the things of the flesh. This is as sad as if a seraph should rake upon a dunghill! It is not amazing that a brute beast cares for the flesh, for it is only flesh, but it is lamentable in the highest degree that man, in whom there is a principle infinitely superior to mere materialism, should, nevertheless, so generally give himself up to minding the things of the body—the things of time and earth.

The world's catechism is, “What shall we eat? What shall we drink? With what shall we be clothed?” Men begin with these questions as soon as they leave their father's roof and they often die with them upon their lips. It is said of the peasants around Nice that they seem to have no thought of anything but how they can make a living and save a little money—and I am afraid they are, by no means, a unique people—in some form, or other, the world is in all men's hearts and thoughts. The dust of earth has blinded eyes that were meant for Heaven! You would think, from the talk of many a human being, that he, himself, was meant to walk about for a few years and then to occupy six feet of earth and never be heard of again. The creature's life seems in consistency with such a destiny and is, by no means, suggestive of a life to come, or an existence in a nobler sphere!

Yet there is in us an *immortal spirit*—the very heathen were convinced of this! Man has an inborn consciousness that he is not to be extinguished by death. His strange longings, hopes and fears are, in a disjointed way, the proofs of this primeval knowledge which he can never quite forget. It was not necessary that Scripture should reveal the future existence of the soul. When you miss a clear statement of that Truth of God, you only miss that which is supposed to be already known! The existence of God and of an immortal soul in man is taken for granted in Scripture. A future state is plain upon the face of things. Every thoughtful man can see that there is a wide difference between the brute that grovels and man that aspires!

Now, if this is so, one would have supposed that this immortal being would, in thought, have projected himself into the next state and that he would have been very much occupied with the consideration of *where* he should be and *what* he should be in the world to come. One would have suspected that he would have shaped the actions of the present with a view to the future and so have ceased to be earth-bound and hide-bound and would have risen into something superior to the life of the mere animal. Yet men, by nature, do not give dominion to their nobler part, but allow the brute in them to overrule the mind in them! They are earthly-minded and then, because they are earthly-minded, spiritual things are despised by them and the great God, who is the Spirit of all spirits, is most of all neglected and treated as if He were of small account. The minding of the flesh sours the soul against God so that he who minds the flesh is soon filled with enmity against God.

Our Apostle declares this fact and declares it very positively. He does not say that the carnal mind is *at* enmity to God, but he gives us the solid noun—he says, “the carnal mind *is* enmity against God.” It is enmity in *essence*—altogether and always enmity against God! It is a solid block of aversion to God and animosity against Him. It is very strong language to use, but so he puts it under the guidance of Inspiration and, therefore, he does not mistake or exaggerate. The mind that looks after the flesh, the carnal mind, is a mass of downright undiluted enmity to the Most High God! Such a mind is opposed, not merely to the things of God, the Laws of God and the Truth of God, but to God Himself! The mind which is under the dominion of the flesh cannot endure the Being of God—His Character is the object of its hate! No, such a mind is *hate*, itself, towards God!

Of some men this need not be stated, for they declare it themselves. There are men, (God be merciful to them and change them!), who deliberately say that they do not believe in God and who use all kinds of opprobrious epithets towards our Lord and the Divine Truth which He has been pleased to reveal. These men’s sins “go before them into judgment.” They will need no witnesses against them at the bar of their Maker—they themselves have testified against themselves! Their mind is evidently, confessedly, intensely enmity against God.

Many others would not care to confess their enmity so distinctly and yet their lives proclaim it. Their outward conduct shows that they are not only enemies of God and His Christ, but that their heart is a mass of enmity to Him—their speech betrays the fact that they are not reconciled to God. Some of these even make profession of being His friends and yet, of such, Paul said, “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”—the enemies beyond all others, for they have entered into the Church by treachery and thus have attacked the Lord in His own house—where they can do most mischief. They blasphemously misuse their profession of faith to comfort them in their sins—and while they vow that they are God’s servants, their lives show that they are the willing slaves of a very different master!

I am not, at this time, intending to speak to these persons, of whom I will only say—The Lord have mercy upon any of us if that is our unhappy case! If we have dared to play the Judas, if we have ventured to enroll ourselves among the friends of Jesus and yet are giving Him a traitorous kiss, may infinite Grace yet convert us! Oh, that we may not turn out to be sons of perdition, but may we be delivered from hypocrisy and made honest in the sight of the Most High!

But I *am* going to deal, at this time, with another class of persons who would say, each one for himself, “I am not a Christian, but I hope to be so, one of these days. I do not think that I am converted. I could not claim to be a believer in Christ savingly, or a lover of God so as to take my place among His people, but yet I do not think that I am an enemy to God.” The accusation of our text is very distasteful to such persons. They think it too harsh a charge to bring against them. Yet, dear Hearer, you live not for the world to come, nor for spiritual things, nor for God. And, therefore, according to the teaching of the text, your mind, being carnal or fleshly, is enmity against God!

I do not like to say any hard thing of you, because you are a very kind person. But I dare not say less than the Word of the Lord—and you would not respect me if I were wicked enough to flatter you! You are moral, excellent and amiable, but still, you are enmity against God in your heart, for the things of the flesh are uppermost in your mind. Are you angry that I tell you this? What would you have me do? You expect your physician to spy out your disease and your lawyer to discover any flaw there may be in the deeds of an estate you are purchasing—should not your minister tell you of the evils of your heart? If you want to hear soft falsehoods, go elsewhere—I will have none of your blood on my garments! If you are not born again from above, I am compelled to say, even of the best of you, that your fleshly mind is enmity against God!

At this time my business shall be, first, to discover that enmity. Secondly, to deplore it. And then, thirdly, may God the Holy Spirit be pleased to deliver you from it and deliver you from it even while we are talking about it! O Eternal Spirit, renew us in the spirit of our mind and cause us to receive that spiritual mind which is the mark of the friend of God!

I. First, then, I HAVE TO DISCOVER THIS ENMITY which is in your heart. I know what you are saying, “You cannot do so. I am indifferent, but I am *not* enmity and I will *not* be called so.” I hear your denial, but the cap will fit you very well before I have done—and you will be obliged to wear it—I am sure you will. If you are not obliged to plead guilty, none will rejoice more than I if you can prove that you are reconciled to God by the death of His Son!

The man who does not love God, nor serve Him, nor even profess to do so, has in his heart a settled enmity against God! Let me show it to you. Do not shut your eyes to clear evidence.

First, the carnally-minded man is enmity against God as a servant. Take this description of yourselves and see if it does not lead to your conviction. You are all servants of God, for He has made you and not you,

yourselves—and He who made you ought to have the use of you. You are under obligations to your Creator, your Preserver, your Redeemer—and these obligations ought to be recognized, but you do not recognize them. On the contrary, you act in a way which leads me to charge you with enmity against God, your liege Lord and King. Judge if it is not so! Here is a servant of yours and he will not serve you. Set that down to laziness, if you please, and the case will be bad enough. But you find him working very hard for somebody else! Then it cannot be laziness which makes him decline your service. Look at him—he is toiling for your enemy from morning to night! And though he is *your* servant, he altogether refuses to serve *you*. What can be his motive? Many of you are not serving God and yet you are not lazy. Your neglect of obedience to the Lord is not caused by love of ease. You are working very hard for something else—for yourselves, for your family, for approbation, for wealth or some other objective so that while you will not obey your God, whom you ought to honor, you are serving some other lord! Does not this create a natural suspicion that you are not on good terms with your Maker?

But suppose, in the case of your servant, it should turn out that he actually does heavier work for another than he would have been expected to do for you? Suppose that he does harder and more degrading labor than you would have required of him and that he does it *willingly*, does it with all his might and yet he will not serve you? I think you would say, “This man must be filled with enmity to me. He works for another and will not work for me. He does far harder work for another than ever I have proposed that he would do for me.” Do not forget that the slavery of sin is much harder and much more degrading than the service of God. The service of the world is much sterner, much more exacting, much more wearisome than the service of the Lord Jesus Christ! They that have served the world best will tell you that there is but little solace in the labor, while those who serve God best continually say that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. They that serve God with all their heart find an intense delight in His service and this is not true of the vassalage of sin. “His commandments are not grievous,” but the ways of sin are full of travail and disappointment and anguish. If a man *prefers* to bear the weary burden of the world, the flesh and the devil—and will not take upon his shoulders the lighter load of Christ—what can be the reason of it but that he is at enmity with God?

And suppose, moreover, that your servant, who is working for somebody else, should get very poor wages, while you are willing to pay him the largest wages that can be proposed—and yet he will take the harder work and the lesser wage—and will not come to you and take the easier work at higher wages? How could you account for this, except upon the supposition that the man *hated you*? Sirs, the case is thoroughly parallel with yours! “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.” Let a man work as hard as ever he may for himself and for the world, all that can come of it is death! Why then, does he choose a bitter toil and a deadly wage? “What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and

loses his soul?" Why does a man follow such a profitless business? You know what the world's poet makes Wolsey say, when he comes to die—

***"Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, he would not in my old age
Have left me naked to my enemies."***

The service of God is a remunerative service—He gives wages in the work and an abundant reward, according to His Grace, when the work is done. If men refuse such service, what can their motive be? The wages of sin is death—eternal death! Infinite misery follows upon the course of this world if men choose such service—what can be their motive, what but downright hatred of God as a Master—and a resolve to have the devil, himself, for lord, and Hell for a wage, sooner than serve the living God? Why then, Sir, it must be so, if I take you on the footing of a servant, that, inasmuch as you will serve other things with all your might at the poorest wage—and will not serve God when the recompense of His reward is altogether boundless—then my reason forces me to the conclusion that your mind is enmity against God!

Let me consider you under another figure. This time it shall be that of a *subject* towards a king. Suppose that we are living in times in which there is a king, a rightful monarch upon the throne, but there is also a pretender who has set up a claim for the crown and there is a war going on between the true monarch and the pretender? You are one of those who do not side with the pretender. At least you say you do not. You dwell among the subjects of the king and though you act somewhat strangely, yet you deny that you are the king's enemy. But, listen to me. There might be, in this city of London, certain persons who would not be willing to confess that they were on the pretender's side and yet their course of action might lead you to feel that they must be so and that they must be enemies of the king! Suppose that a certain man lives on your street and you meet with him in business, in trade and in common conversation from day to day and yet you never hear him mention the name of the king? Would not his silence be suspicious?

If anybody else mentions the king's name, he edges off from it. He never utters a word that would enable you to feel that he is a loyal subject. He does not openly propose three cheers for the pretender in a public meeting, nor does he hang out the pretender's flag, but, on the other hand, you noticed that the last time they were crying, "Bravo," for the king, he was as quiet as if he had been dumb. And you have also seen that whenever conversation has gone that way, he has been as mute as a fish! He has no opinion on politics. He says that he has enough to do to mind his own business. I am half afraid that the fellow is an enemy! Still waters run deep and I fancy that we shall find a deep traitor under the coat of this silent gentleman. I begin to think that he must be on the wrong side and it grows upon my mind that he must be an enemy to our lawful sovereign, for, month after month, while all the country has been ringing with the war-cry and the whole nation has been divided into two camps, this man has never said a good word for the king—has never so much as mentioned

him! I feel morally certain that in his heart this close-mouthed being must be an enemy to the king. Are you not very much of my mind?

Do you want me to explain the parable? Does it not fit your case, my Friend? All these years you have been hearing about God and His Christ, but you have not had a good word to say for either of them. When you are in company, you manifest a discreet silence. If there were a debate upon vital godliness, you would take no side. You have nothing to say for Jesus and His precious blood. You are neutral and silent. And why? You are such “a good easy man” that you are not willing to fight for truth and righteousness! I suspect you greatly. I am solemnly afraid that you are an enemy!

Now, suppose that the king has achieved a great success. News has come that in a great battle the pretender has sustained a heavy defeat. The flags are hanging out along the streets and there is an illumination at night. There is no flag at your house. At night there are no candles in your window. You have nothing to say upon the important tidings. Friends, what are we to make of this man? He never says a word about our king or his doings—and he does not share in the joy when everybody is in the street at night hurraing because of his Majesty’s victory! He walks along as if he had no interest in it. I am afraid that if there were any spies about, they would report him for an enemy—and I do not think they could be much blamed if they did so!

Dear Hearers, some of you feel no interest in the triumphs of Messiah’s Kingdom and are under no concern about His Gospel. So many persons were converted under a revival, but it is nothing to you. Whole streets in this city are Godless and Christless, but what of that? You do not really care whether this nation or that shall begin to acknowledge the sway of Christ. You show no opposition to King Jesus, but still, you take no delight in the growth of His dominion, or the increase of His Glory. If true religion were banished out of the land, you would not lose a single night’s rest! And if it covered the whole earth, it would excite in you no enthusiasm. Does it not look as if you might be very shrewdly suspected to have the carnal mind which is enmity against God? I might work out this subject further, but I only need to light the candle of your conscience and you will not have to look far to find a traitor.

Further than that, they have been raising regiments in the city to help the king. There have been enthusiastic meetings of young men who have enlisted in his cause. They have shouldered their rifles and have been ready to shed their blood on the behalf of their lawful sovereign. There is news of an invasion—the enemy’s ships are near the shore—the citizens have come together in crowds. This man was not at the meeting. He did not propose to be a soldier. He did not contribute a farthing to the expenses of the campaign. He did nothing whatever for his king. Putting all this with the rest, it seems to me that he must be an enemy! Why, surely, if we had enemies at London’s gates, today—if we knew that they were about to sack this city and kill our wives and children—why even the peace men among us would forget our peacefulness and shoulder arms on

behalf of our hearths and homes! If any man said, "Yes, they have been blowing up some of the houses and they are about to destroy our city, but it is no concern of mine. I am not going to bear a hand in the struggle, one way or the other," we would say, "Why, the fellow is not a true-born Englishman! He is an enemy! Depend upon it, he is a traitor!" In such a world as this, where sin is rife, if a man does not contend against evil, he is on the side of it! If a man does not serve Christ and endeavor to extend His Kingdom, however humble may be his power, surely it must be that his carnal mind is enmity against God! Jesus says, "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathers not with Me scatters abroad."

And suppose, further, that this man should find that the king had issued a certain proclamation and promulgated a code of laws, and that this man should say, "Read them? No, not I! I would not read such dry book-stuff as that!" But these laws affect your daily life, your business, your prosperity, your very life. "I do not care what they affect," he says, "they are very dry and dull reading. I do not care to hear them, much less to study them." The proclamation of the king is posted up publicly and the man turns his back upon it. A play-bill is pasted on the wall—he reads *that* and is very interested in it! Now, I should say that he must be an enemy, for he will not even read what is the will of his king and what is the law of his country! There must be in his heart some enmity against the law-giver who promulgated that law. My Hearer, your non-searching of the Scriptures, your weariness under Gospel preaching, your lack of care to understand the mind of God is *prima facie* evidence that there is some enmity in your heart against the Most High. When your King sends you a message of love and you are not willing to hear it, surely you have a prejudice against Him! When you do not even wish to know what He promises to those who are His friends, you must have made up your mind to be His foe!

But, suppose further, as in some olden time, this king were to say to all his subjects, "You are surrounded by the enemy. The city is tightly shut up and famine threatens you. But I am going to feed you all out of the royal granaries. There will be so much of bread and so much of provender for all of you who choose to come and have it, a daily portion freely given to all who ask for it"? Suppose this man, though evidently very hungry and thirsty, never went to eat at the public table? He need not say anything against the king and his table, but suppose he persistently abstained from putting himself under any obligation to the royal provider and would sooner go and eat with dogs, or pluck meat out of the hog's dish than he would be nourished by the king's bounty? I should say that the fellow who starved himself in that fashion must have deep enmity in his heart against the king!

Your case is just the same. You will not go to Christ Jesus that you may have eternal life. You do not go to the Creator of your spirits that you may find comfort and joy in Him. You are willing, rather, to perish than to apply to the Father of mercies. You look for pleasure and happiness anywhere rather than in God—yes, in places only comparable to the dog ken-

nel, or the sty of the swine! Therefore you cannot persuade me out of my solemn anxiety that your heart is enmity against God! I am sure that, hungry as you are, you would go to His table to be fed; naked as you are, you would go to His wardrobe to be clothed if it were not that you have an enmity in your heart against the Lord—terribly and deadly even though unacknowledged by yourself. He that will sullenly perish rather than accept the Gift of God must entertain desperately evil thoughts of God!

Suppose, once more, that you had offended this king and you had been tried for treason against him? And suppose you had been found guilty and he were to say to you, “Freely confess your treason and there is the pardon drawn out for you by which your life shall be spared and you, yourself, shall be taken into favor”? If you were to reply, “I will not have it!” Yes, and if you were not even to say as much as that, but only neglected to accept it and just sat carelessly in prison until the day of execution, I would say that you must have a most awful enmity in your heart against your sovereign! He that will not even accept pardon must be rancorous, indeed! My Hearer, your not accepting the free pardon of Christ; your not receiving the benefit of the act of amnesty and oblivion which the great God has passed, proves that your traitorous heart is dyed to the very core with the blackest enmity against the Majesty of Heaven! I am not talking about the villains of whom we have been reading, lately, in the newspapers, who would commit the foulest deeds of unmentionable crime, but I am talking about you good people who are not far from the Kingdom and yet are base enough to spurn your Savior’s love and blood! If you have not accepted the favor of your King and the pardon provided by a bleeding Savior, there must, at bottom, be a cruel enmity in your heart against the King of Love! Is it not so? Do you not begin to suspect yourself of not being quite all you fondly hoped you were?

So I will use yet another similitude and but one, that I may not weary you. This time it shall merely relate to the common conduct of one *person* to another. I might profess, of a certain person, that I had no enmity against him. But suppose that whenever I met him in the street, I would not look at him and, if he were on my side of the street, I somehow or other had a call from the other side of the way? And suppose that when I came into a room to meet friends, if I saw him there, I always backed out and went somewhere else? I would think that people would, before long, suspect that I had great enmity towards that person!

There are people who act in that manner towards God. They find hearing sermons very dull work. Talking with Christian people about Divine things they cannot endure. Reading a religious book is slavery—they find themselves very soon reduced to a state of slumber by treatises upon true religion. They have no care about such things. They want to get out of God’s way. Their heart has no delight in the thought of God. If there were information in tomorrow morning’s paper that God was dead, would not some of you be very happy? You would say, “Then there will be no day of judgment and I may enjoy myself, for my greatest dread is gone!” To us who love the Lord it would be a calamity worse than 10,000 deaths if we

could lose our God—but your condition of mind towards God is clear proof of enmity against Him!

Again, suppose that a person has written you a letter and you have taken no notice of it? When did it come? It came last Monday morning. Have you read it? “Oh, no,” you say, “I do not bother to read his letters!” You have had a good many, then? “Oh, yes, hundreds of them!” What have you done with them? “I have done nothing with them. I leave them alone and do not trouble to read them.” Are these letters rational? “Yes, they are wise and kind.” Yet you do not care to read them? Did you say that you are not the writer’s enemy? Ah, my Friend, I suspect that there is not much affection in your heart to him. There must, indeed, be a good deal of animosity! When you did read one of his letters, what was it about? “Well, it was about wishing to be at peace with me and desiring to do me good. He spoke of my being in great danger and said that he would help me; and of my being poor, and offered to make me rich.”

Did he talk so and have you never read any more of his letters? What can ail you? Were these letters full of bitter upbraiding and fierce threats? Do you reply, “Oh, no, they were kind, good, affectionate and, I have no doubt, they were meant to benefit me, but I don’t care about them! I think that other people ought to read them, but I have no mind to do so?” From this I feel sure that you hate the writer very heartily. Have I not described your conduct towards your Bible? That blessed Book is a love-letter from God, the great Father, and you do not read it nor care about it and, therefore, I am sure that there must be in your heart enmity against Him. I do not think that you can argue me out of that conviction. I would, therefore, be glad to convince you of your wrong state of mind until you become ashamed of it and turn to God!

Is prayer neglected by you? Is it a burden? Have you no pleasure in it? Then how can you say that you are a friend of God? Do you utterly neglect all communion with God? Do you never speak with Him? How can you think that you love Him? If I had a son who lived in my house, ate at my table and was clothed by my kindness—and that boy were to say to people outside, “I never speak to my father. He speaks to me, but I never listen to him. I live in his house, but I treat him as if he were dead”—would not everybody rightly conclude that there was a deadly animosity in the heart of such a son towards his father? I cannot help thinking that if you live without speaking to God, or hearing Him speak to you, you have a carnal mind which is enmity against God!

There I leave the matter, hoping that your conscience will awake and concern itself about this business. If these things should suggest a suspicion of your horrible and unnatural enmity against the good God and that should send you to your knees, I shall bless the Holy Spirit that it is so! Come, O great Convincer, and cause my unregenerate hearers to know their own true condition before the Lord! And then guide them to Jesus, the Savior!

II. But now, secondly, and very briefly, LET US DEPLORE THIS ENMITY AGAINST GOD. Come, gracious Spirit, and melt our hearts to penitence!

For, first, *what an injustice it is!* I cannot bear for anybody to speak ill and think ill of one who is good, kind and generous. I would interpose, if possible, to rectify that mistaken judgment. But for you not to think well of *God!* For you not to love the God of Love! For you not to be at peace with the sweet Lord Jesus! For you not to delight in Christ is a gross injustice to Him! Oh, do not continue in it! If you have any sense of rightness, may God make you feel shame that you should treat Him ill!

Moreover, I venture to say that it is more than an injustice. *What an infamy it is!* If anyone in this country could point to a person and say, "There is a man who hates the Queen and who, wherever he goes, speaks against her," we would feel that he was no man of honor, no person of right feeling. Yet to slander a lady of blameless life is *nothing* compared with hating the perfect Lord! When I think of a man's not loving God, not loving Christ, I feel that it is an awful thing for him, an infamous thing for him. Come here, angels, if you will! If you can turn your eyes from the august sight of your crowned Lord, come and look in this direction! Here is a man whom God has made, who does not love his Maker! Here is a monster that is fed every day by God's bounty and never thanks Him! Here is an immortal being who hears of the death of Christ and is told that if he believes in Him, he shall live in happiness forever—and he will not believe in Him! He does not care for Christ, or for His love, His life, or His Heaven! Surely those blessed spirits turn away their faces! They stretch their wings for flight from such loathed company! They cry, "Let us not look on such a monster. He is not fit to live." There is an infamy about not loving Christ.

In addition to all this I would say, *what an injury is this to yourself!* It is a very great injury to any man not to be perfectly at peace with God. You are losing happiness. You are losing holiness, which is still more! You are losing the full development of your being. You are missing the destiny for which a God-created soul is intended. You are finding your way into darkness which will gather blackness upon blackness forever! Oh, Sirs, I cannot bear that this should be the case—that you should be at enmity with God! Oh, the mournful consequences of living and dying at enmity with God! You cannot succeed in this enmity. You have no power with which to contend against the Lord and to prosper. You need not wish that you *could* have such power. Why should you want to contend against love, mercy, truth, goodness and righteousness? Oh, that the Spirit of All Grace would lead you to loathe yourself! You have never committed adultery; you were never a thief; you were never a swearer! But do not compliment yourself upon being free from those crimes—it is *sin enough not to love God!* It is proof enough of a base heart not to have delighted in the Lord!

When I take a friend to see a landscape that enchants me and he looks at it and mutters, "I see nothing in it," I feel sorry for him. When I cause him to hear the delightful strains of Handel's music and he murmurs,

“There is a deal of noise and I can hear a big drum,” I feel greatly sorry for him that he has no ear for music. So it is when I think of the glories of God and meet with men who do not appreciate them! I feel grieved for them. I would sooner be blind, deaf and dumb—and lose all feeling—than lose the sense of the beauty and perfection of God! The capacity to enjoy God and to understand His superlative excellence is the grandest faculty that a being can possess! And he that has it not is dead while he lives! He who does not love the ever-blessed Lord is a very Nabal, whose heart is like a stone within him. He is a fool writ large who knows not God. May the Lord manifest His Grace to those of you who are in such a condition and bring you to deplore it and escape from it!

III. This brings me to a close. The third point was to be—LET US SEEK DELIVERANCE FROM THIS CONDITION OF ENMITY AGAINST GOD. How is it to be done?

Truly, I do not believe it ever *will* be done in any man except by the Holy Spirit. This incapacity to see the beauty and loveliness of God is such an inveterate disease that none can remove it but the Holy Spirit. You must be washed, I know. You must be healed, I know. You must be clothed, I know. But I know another thing quite as clearly—“You must be born again.” Do you say, “How can a man be born when he is old?” There is but one way—He that first made you must make you *over* again! The change in you must be radical and thorough—and you *cannot* work it of yourself. You are cast upon the Omnipotent Mercy of God and that Omnipotent Mercy will freely come to your rescue if you will accept it in the Lord Jesus Christ. The crucified Son of God, alone, can be your salvation from all this spiritual inability and aversion. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to lead you to accept Jesus and so to be delivered from your enmity.

Next, the enemy of God needs to be delivered from the great guilt of not having loved God. How is that to be done? That can only be accomplished through the Infinite Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. Great guilt has accrued to you from having lived so long without loving God. The first precept of the Law is, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” And that you have not done. Now, the guilt of that unjust omission can only be put away through the bloody Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. By that one omission you have violated the whole Law of God and nothing but the blood of Jesus can make an amend to its honor. Thanks be to God, that precious Expiation can cleanse you! Trusting in that glorious Sacrifice, the guilt of your not loving God shall vanish!

How can the enmity, itself, go? I have shown you that this must be removed by the heart being changed by the Holy Spirit, but the means of it will be this—your enmity will depart by a sense of God’s love to you. I think that it is Aristotle who says that it is impossible for a person to believe that another loves him without feeling some kind of love in return. I concede that it is almost impossible, but I am not sure that it is quite so. However, this I do know—if you could but believe, at this moment, that God loves you. If, trusting in Christ, you could but know the infinite affec-

tion that is in the heart of the great Father towards you, His child, you would love God in return—you could not help it! Oh, could you understand the love that dropped from those five wounds, the love that forced your Savior to a bloody sweat, the love that cried, “It is finished,” as He gave up the ghost—the love which, when He rose from the dead, still thought of *you*, and which, when it mounted to its Throne, still remembered *you*!

If you could understand the love that pleads for the guilty, now, and intercedes for sinners, now—oh, could you but understand it—you would cry, “I cannot be at enmity with God any longer! I must love Him who has done so much for me.” The love of Jesus has such a melting power that even a heart of Hell-hardened steel softens and flows away in streams of penitence beneath its influence!—

***“Law and terrors do but harden,
All the while they work alone.
But a sense of blood-bought pardon
Soon dissolves a heart of stone.”***

May you receive a sense of that love at once and you will then find that your enmity is gone, that you are spiritually-minded and that you love God!

For that—to conclude with—is the main thing. While the man continues to mind the flesh, he cannot love God. While his first business is his body and the things of time and sense, he is and must be at enmity with God. But when the Lord Jesus Christ wins his heart. When the Spirit of God renews his mind. When he comes to love God—then he cares for spiritual things—then his treasure is in Heaven and his heart is there also! Then his hopes are in the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ when He shall come a second time—and then his life tends towards Heaven, honor and immortality. Thus the man is raised from being a worm of the earth to kinship with angels! He drops the serpentine slough and puts on the seraphic wings. He gets away from the mole life, burrowing under ground in the dark, and gains the eagle’s eye and the eagle’s pinion. He quits the gloom and night of earth and mounts aloft with his eyes upon the Sun of Glory, delighting in the holy and the heavenly!

God bring you to that state by faith in Jesus Christ! Amen.

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THE CARNAL MIND ENMITY AGAINST GOD

NO. 20

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 22, 1855,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL STRAND

“The carnal mind is enmity against God.”
Romans 8:7.

This is a very solemn indictment which the Apostle Paul here speaks against the carnal mind. He declares it to be enmity against God. When we consider what man once was, only second to the angels, the companion of God, who walked with Him in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. When we think of him as being made in the very image of his Creator, pure, spotless and unblemished, we cannot but feel bitterly grieved to find such an accusation as this declared against us as a race. We may well hang our harps upon the willows while we listen to the voice of Jehovah, solemnly speaking to His rebellious creature—“How are you fallen from Heaven, you son of the morning!” “You seal up the sun, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden, the Garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering—the workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created. You are the anointed cherub that covers and I have set you so—you were upon the holy mountain of God. You have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you and you sinned. Therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God—and will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.”

There is much to sadden us in a view of the ruins of our race. As the Carthaginian who might tread the desolate site of his much-loved city would shed many tears when he saw it laid in heaps by the Romans. Or as the Jew, wandering through the deserted streets of Jerusalem, would lament that the plowshare had marred the beauty and the glory of that city which was the joy of the whole earth. So ought we to mourn for ourselves and our race when we behold the ruins of that goodly structure which God has made—that creature, matchless in symmetry, second only to angelic intellect. That mighty being, man—when we behold how he is “fallen, fallen, fallen, from his high estate” and lies in a mass of destruction. A few years ago a star was seen blazing out with considerable brilliance but soon disappeared. It has since been affirmed that it was a world on fire, thousands of millions of miles from us and yet the rays of the conflagration reached us. The noiseless messenger of light gave to the distant dwellers on this globe the alarm of, “A world on fire!” But what is

the conflagration of a distant planet, what is the destruction of the mere material of the most ponderous orb compared with this fall of humanity, this wreck of all that is holy and sacred in ourselves? To us, indeed, the things are scarcely comparable, since we are deeply interested in one, though not in the other. The Fall of Adam was OUR fall. We fell in and with him. We were equal sufferers. It is the ruin of our own house that we lament. It is the destruction of our own city that we bemoan when we stand and see written in lines too plain for us to mistake their meaning, "The carnal mind"—that very same mind which was once holiness and has now become carnal—"is enmity against God." May God help me this morning to solemnly speak this indictment against you all! Oh, that the Holy Spirit may so convince us of sin that we may unanimously plead "guilty" before God!

There is no difficulty in understanding my text—it needs scarcely any explanation. We all know that the word, "carnal," here signifies, fleshly. The old translators rendered the passage thus—"The mind of the flesh is enmity against God." That is to say, the natural mind—that soul which we inherit from our fathers—that which was born within us when our bodies were fashioned by God. The fleshly mind, the *phronema sarkos*, the lusts, the passions of the soul. It is this which has gone astray from God and become enmity against Him!

But before we enter upon a discussion of the Doctrine of the text, observe how strongly the Apostle expresses it. "The carnal mind," he says, "it is ENMITY against God." He uses a noun and not an adjective. He does not say it is merely opposed to God, but it is positive enmity! It is not black, but blackness. It is not *at* enmity, but *enmity* itself. It is not corrupt, but corruption. It is not rebellious, it is rebellion—it is not wicked, it is wickedness itself. The heart, though it is deceitful, is positively deceit. It is evil in the concrete, sin in the essence. It is the distillation, the quintessence of all things that are vile. It is not envious against God, it is *envy*. It is not *at* enmity, it is *actual enmity*.

Nor need we say a word to explain that it is "enmity *against* God." It does not charge manhood with an aversion merely to the dominion, Laws, or Doctrines of Jehovah. It strikes a deeper and surer blow. It does not strike man upon the head but it penetrates into his heart. It lays the axe at the root of the tree and pronounces man, "enmity *against* God." Against the Person of the Godhead, against the Deity, against the mighty Maker of this World—not at enmity against His Bible or against His Gospel—though that is true, but against God, Himself! Against His Essence, His Existence and His Person. Let us, then, weigh the words of the text, for they are solemn words. They are well put together by that master of eloquence, Paul. They were, moreover, dictated by the Holy Spirit, who tells man how to speak aright. May He help us to expound, as He has already given us the passage to explain.

We shall be called upon to notice, this morning, first, *the truthfulness of this assertion*. Secondly, *the universality of the evil here complained of*. Thirdly, we will still further enter into the depths of the subject and press it to your hearts, by showing *the enormity of the evil*. And after that, should we have time, we will deduce one or two Doctrines from the general fact.

I. First, we are called upon to speak of *the truthfulness of this great statement*, “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” It needs no proof, for since it is written in God’s Word, we, as Christian men and women, are bound to bow before it. The words of the Scriptures are words of infinite wisdom and if reason cannot see the ground of a statement of Revelation, it is bound, most reverently, to believe it, since we are well-assured even should it be above our reason, that it cannot be contrary to it! Here I find it written in the Scriptures, “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” And that, of itself, is enough for me. But did I need witnesses, I would conjure up the nations of antiquity. I would unroll the volume of ancient history, I would tell you of the awful deeds of mankind. It may be I might move your souls to detestation if I spoke of the cruelty of this race to itself, if I showed you how it made the world an Aceldama by its wars and deluged it with blood by its fights and murders! If I should recite the black list of vices in which whole nations have indulged or even bring before you the characters of some of the most eminent philosophers, I would blush to speak of them and you would refuse to hear. Yes, it would be impossible for you, as refined inhabitants of a civilized country, to endure the mention of the crimes that were committed by those very men who nowadays are held up as being paragons of perfection! I fear if all the truth were written, we should rise up from reading the lives of earth’s mighty heroes and proudest sages and would say at once of all of them, “They are clean gone mad! They are altogether become unprofitable. There is none that does good. No, not one!”

And did not that suffice, I would point you to the delusions of the heathen. I would tell you of their priestcraft by which their souls have been enthralled in superstition. I would drag their gods before you. I would let you witness the horrid obscenities, the diabolical rites which are to these besotted men most sacred things! Then, after you had heard what the natural *religion* of man is, I would ask what must his *irreligion* be? If this is his devotion, what must be his impiety? If this is his ardent love of the Godhead, what must his hatred thereof be? You would, I am sure, at once confess, did you know what the race is, that the indictment is proven and that the world must unreservedly and truthfully exclaim, “guilty.”

A further argument I might find in the fact that the best of men have been always the most ready to confess their depravity. The holiest men, the most free from impurity, have always felt it most. He whose garments are the whitest will best perceive the spots upon them. He whose crown

shines the brightest will know when he has lost a jewel. He who gives the most light to the world will always be able to discover his own darkness. The angels of Heaven veil their faces. And the angels of God on earth, His chosen people, must always veil their faces with humility when they think of what they were! Hear David—he was none of those who boast of a holy nature and a pure disposition. He says, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity. And in sin did my mother conceive me.” Hear all those holy men who have written in the Inspired Volume and you shall find them all confessing that they were not clean, no, not one. Yes, one of them even exclaimed, “O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

And more—I will summon one other witness to the truthfulness of this act who shall decide the question. It shall be your conscience. Conscience, I will put you in the witness box and cross-examine you this morning! Conscience, answer truly! Be not drugged with the opium of self-security! Speak the truth! Did you ever hear the heart say, “I wish there were no God?” Have not all men, at times, wished that our religion were not true? Though they could not entirely rid their souls of the idea of the Godhead, did they not wish that there might not be God? Have they not had the desire that it might turn out that all these Divine realities were a delusion, a farce? “Yes,” says every man, “that has crossed my mind sometimes. I have wished I might indulge in folly. I have wished there were no laws to restrain me. I have wished, as the fool, that there were no God.” That passage in the Psalms, “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God,” is wrongly translated. It should be, “The fool has said in his heart, *no God.*” The fool does not say in his heart *there is no God*, for he knows there is a God. Rather he says, “No God—I don’t want any, I wish there were none.” And who among us has not been so foolish as to desire that there were no God? Now, Conscience, answer another question! You have confessed that you have at times wished there were no God. Now, suppose a man wished another dead, would not that show that he hated him? Yes, it would. And so, my Friends, the wish that there were no God proves that we dislike God! When I wish such a man dead and rotting in his grave, when I desire that he were *non est*, I must hate that man—otherwise I would not wish him to be extinct. So that wish—and I do not think there has been a man in this world who has not had it—proves that “the carnal mind is enmity against God.”

But, Conscience, I have another question. Has not your heart ever desired, since there *is* a God, that He were a little less holy, a little less pure—so that those things which are now great crimes might be regarded as venial offenses, as peccadilloes? Has your heart ever said, “Would to God these sins were not forbidden. Would that He would be merciful and pass them by without an atonement! Would that He were not so severe, so rigorously just, so sternly strict to His integrity.” Have you never said

that, my Heart? Conscience must reply, “you have.” Well, that wish to *change* God proves that you are not in love with the God that now is, the God of Heaven and earth! And though you may talk of natural religion and boast that you do reverence to the God of the green fields, the grassy meads, the swelling flood, the rolling thunder, the azure sky, the starry night and the great universe—though you love the poetic ideal of Deity, it is not the God of Scripture—for you have wished to change His nature and in that you have proved that you are at enmity with Him! So where do we go from here? You can bear faithful witness if you would speak the truth that each person here has so transgressed against God, so continually broken His Laws, violated His Sabbath, trampled on His statutes, despised His Gospel, that it is true, yes, most true, that “the carnal mind is enmity against God.”

II. Now, secondly, we are called upon to notice the *universality of this evil*. What a broad assertion it is! It is not a single carnal mind, or a certain class of characters, but “*the* carnal mind.” It is an unqualified statement, including every individual. Whatever mind may properly be called carnal, not having been spiritualized by the power of God’s Holy Spirit, is “enmity against God.”

Observe then, first of all, the universality of this as to *all persons*. Every carnal mind in the world is at enmity against God! This does not exclude even infants at the mother’s breast. We call them innocent and so they are of actual transgression, but as the poet says, “Within the youngest breast there lies a stone.” There is in the carnal mind of an infant, enmity against God. It is not developed, but it lies there. Some say that children learn sin by imitation. But no—take a child away, place it under the most pious influences, let the very air it breathes be purified by piety—let it constantly drink in draughts of holiness. Let it hear nothing but the voice of prayer and praise. Let its ears be always kept in tune by notes of sacred song—and that child, notwithstanding, may still become one of the grossest of transgressors! And though placed apparently on the very road to Heaven, it shall, if not directed by Divine Grace, march downwards to the pit of Hell! Oh, how true it is that some who have had the best of parents have been the worst of children—that many who have been trained up under the most holy auspices, in the midst of most favorable scenes of piety—have, nevertheless, become loose and wanton! So it is not by imitation but it is by *nature* that the child is evil! Grant me that the child is carnal and my text says, “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” The young crocodile, I have heard, when broken from the shell, will in a moment begin to put itself in a posture of attack, opening its mouth as if it had been taught and trained. We know that young lions, when tamed and domesticated, will still have the wild nature of their fellows of the forest and were liberty given them, would prey as fiercely as others. So with the child. You may bind him with the green

witnes of education, you may do what you will with him—but you cannot change his heart! That carnal mind shall still be at enmity against God. And notwithstanding intellect, talent and all you may give to boot, it shall be of the same sinful complexion as every other child, if not as apparently evil, for, “the carnal mind is enmity against God.”

And if this applies to children, equally does it include every class of men. There are some men who are born into this world master spirits. They walk about it as giants, wrapped in mantles of light and glory. I refer to the poets—men who stand aloft like Colossi—mightier than we, seeming to be descended from celestial spheres. There are others of acute intellect, who, searching into mysteries of science, discover things that have been hidden from the creation of the world! Men of keen research and mighty erudition—and yet of each of these—poet, philosopher, metaphysician and great discoverer—it can be said, “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” You may train him up, you may make his intellect almost angelic, you may strengthen his soul until he shall take what are riddles to us and unravel them with his fingers in a moment. You may make him so mighty that he can grasp the iron secrets of the eternal hills and grind them to atoms in his fist. You may give him an eye so keen that he can penetrate the deep secrets of rocks and mountains. You may add a soul so potent that he may slay the giant Sphinx that had, for ages, troubled the mightiest men of learning. Yet when you have done all this, his mind shall be a depraved one and his carnal heart shall still be in opposition to God. Yes, more, you may bring him to the House of Prayer. You may make him sit constantly under the clearest preaching of the Word of God where he shall hear the Doctrines of Grace in all their purity, attended by a holy unction. But if that holy unction does not *rest upon him*, all shall be vain—he shall attend most regularly, but like the pious door of the Chapel that turns in and out, he shall still be the same—having an outside superficial religion and his carnal mind shall still be at enmity against God. Now, this is not my assertion, it is the declaration of God’s Word and you must leave it, if you do not believe it! But quarrel not with me, it is my Master’s message and it is true of every one of you—men, women and children and myself, too—that if we have not been regenerated and converted, if we have not experienced a change of heart, our carnal mind is still at enmity against God!

Again, notice the universality of this at *all times*. The carnal mind is at *all times* enmity against God. “Oh,” say some, “it may be true that we are at times opposed to God, but surely we are not *always* so.” “There are moments,” says one, “when I feel rebellious. At times my passions lead me astray. But surely there are other favorable seasons when I really am friendly to God and offer true devotion. I have (continues the objector) stood upon the mountaintop, until my whole soul has kindled with the scene below and my lips have uttered the song of praise—

***“These are Your glorious works, parent of good,
Almighty, Yours this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair—Yourself how wondrous then!”***

Yes, but mark—what is true one day is not false another, “the carnal mind is enmity against God” at all times! The wolf may sleep, but it is still a wolf. The snake with its azure hues may slumber amid the flowers and the child may stroke its slimy back, but it is still a serpent. It does not change its nature, though it is dormant. The sea is the house of storms even when it is glassy as a lake. The thunder is still the mighty rolling thunder when it is so much aloft that we hear it not. And the heart, when we perceive not its boiling, when it belches not forth its lava and sends not forth the hot stones of its corruption, is still the same dread volcano! At all times, at all hours, at every moment, (I speak this as God speaks it) if you are carnal, you are each one of you enmity against God!

Another thought concerning the universality of this statement. *The whole of the mind* is enmity against God. The text says, “The carnal mind is enmity against God,” that is, the entire man, every part of him—every power, every passion. It is a question often asked, “What part of man was injured by the Fall?” Some think that the Fall was only felt by the affections and that the intellect was unimpaired. This they argue from the wisdom of man and the mighty discoveries he has made, such as the law of gravity, the steam engine and the sciences. Now I consider these things as being a very mean display of wisdom, compared with what is to come in the next hundred years—and very small compared with what might have been, if man’s intellect had continued in its pristine condition. I believe the Fall crushed man entirely! Albeit, when it rolled like an avalanche upon the mighty temple of human nature, some shafts were still left undestroyed and amidst the ruins you find here and there a flute, a pedestal, a cornice, a column not quite broken—yet the entire structure fell and its most glorious relics are fallen ones, leveled in the dust. The whole of man is defaced. Look at *our memory*—is it not true that the memory is fallen? I can recollect evil things far better than those which savor of piety. I hear a ribald song—that same music of Hell shall jar in my ear when gray hairs shall be upon my head! I hear a note of holy praise—alas, it is forgotten! Memory grasps with an iron hand ill things, but the good she holds with feeble fingers. She allows the glorious timbers from the forest of Lebanon to swim down the stream of oblivion, but she stops all the dross that floats from the foul city of Sodom! She will retain evil, she will lose good. Memory is fallen. So are the *affections*. We love everything earthly better than we ought. We soon fix our heart upon a creature but very seldom upon the Creator. And when the heart is given to Jesus it is prone to wander. Look at the *imagination*, too. Oh, how can the imagination revel when the body is in an ill condition! Only give man something that shall well near intoxicate him. Drug him with

opium and how will his imagination dance with joy! Like a bird uncaged, how will it mount with more than eagles' wings! He sees things he had not dreamed of even in the shades of night. Why did not his imagination work when his body was in a normal state—when it was healthy? Simply because it is depraved! And until he had entered a foul element—until the body had begun to quiver with a kind of intoxication—the fancy would not hold its carnival. We have some splendid specimens of what men could write when they have been under the accursed influence of ardent spirits. It is because the mind is so depraved that it loves something which puts the body into an abnormal condition. And here we have proof that the imagination, itself, has gone astray. So with the *judgment*—I might prove how ill it decides. So might I accuse the *conscience* and tell you how blind it is and how it winks at the greatest follies. I might review all our powers and write upon the brow of each one, “Traitor against Heaven! Traitor against God!” The whole “carnal mind is enmity against God.”

Now, my Hearers, “the Bible, alone, is the religion of Protestants”—but whenever I find a certain book much held in reverence by our Episcopalian brethren, entirely on my side, I always feel the greatest delight in quoting from it. Do you know I am one of the best Churchmen in the world, the very best, if you will judge me by the Articles and the very worst if you measure me in any other way? Measure me by the Articles of the Church of England and I will not stand second to any man under Heaven's blue sky in preaching the Gospel contained in them! For if there is an excellent epitome of the Gospel, it is to be found in the Articles of the Church of England. Let me show you that you have not been hearing strange Doctrine. Here is the 9th Article, upon Original or Birth Sin. “Original Sin stands not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of *every man*, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam. Whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness and is, of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusts always contrary to the spirit. And, therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserves God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature does remain, yes, in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, *phronema sarkos* which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle does confess that concupiscence and lust has of itself the nature of sin.” I need nothing more! Will anyone who believes in the Prayer Book dissent from the Doctrine that “the carnal mind is enmity against God”?

III. I have said that I would endeavor, in the third place, to show the great *enormity of this guilt*. I do fear, my Brothers and Sisters, that very

often when we consider our state, we think not so much of the guilt as of the misery. I have sometimes read sermons upon the inclination of the sinner to evil, in which it has been very powerfully proved and certainly the pride of human nature has been well humbled and brought low. But one thing always strikes me, if it is left out, as being a very great omission—the Doctrine that man is *guilty* in all these things! If his heart is against God, we ought to tell him it is *his sin*. And if he cannot repent we ought to show him that sin is the sole cause of his disability—that all his alienation from God is sin—that as long as he keeps from God it is sin! I fear many of us here must acknowledge that we do not charge the sin of it to our own consciences. Yes, we say, we have many corruptions. Oh, yes. But we sit down very contented. My Brothers and Sisters, we ought not to do so. The having those corruptions is our crime which should be confessed as an enormous evil. If I, as a minister of the Gospel, do not press home the sin of the thing, I have missed what is the very virus of it. I have left out the very essence if I have not shown that it is a crime. Now, “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” What a sin it is! This will appear in two ways. Consider the relation in which we stand to God and then remember what God is. And after I have spoken of these two things, I hope you will see, indeed, that it is a sin to be at enmity with God!

What is God to us? He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He bears up the pillars of the universe, His breath perfumes the flowers. His brush paints them. He is the Author of this fair creation. “We are the sheep of His pasture, He has made us and not we ourselves.” He stands to us in the relationship of a Maker and Creator—and from that fact He claims to be our King. He is our Legislator our Law-Maker. And then, to make our crime still worse and worse, He is the Ruler of Providence. For it is He who keeps us daily. He supplies our needs. He keeps the breath within our nostrils. He bids the blood still pursue its course through the veins. He holds us in life and prevents us from death. He stands before us, our Creator, our King, our Sustainer, our Benefactor. And I ask, is it not a sin of enormous magnitude—is it not high treason against the Emperor of Heaven—is it not an awful sin, the depth of which we cannot fathom with the line of all our judgment—that we, His creatures, dependent upon Him, should be at enmity with Him?

But the crime may be seen to be worse when we think of *what God is*. Let me appeal personally to you in an interrogatory style, for this has weight with it. Sinner! Why are you at enmity with God? God is the God of Love. He is kind to His creatures. He regards you with His love of benevolence. This very day His sun has shone upon you. This day you have had food and raiment and you have come up here in health and strength. Do you hate God because He loves you? Is that the reason? Consider how many mercies you have received at His hands all your lives long! You are born with a body not deformed, you have had a tolerable share of

health. You have been recovered many times from sickness. When lying at the gates of death, His arm has held back your soul from the last step to destruction. Do you hate God for all this? Do you hate Him because He spared your life by His tender mercy? Behold His goodness that He has spread before you! He might have sent you to Hell, but you are here. Now, do you hate God for sparing you? Oh, why are you at enmity with Him? My fellow creature, do you not know that God sent His Son from His bosom, hung Him on the tree and there allowed Him to die for sinners, the Just for the unjust? And do you hate God for that? Oh, Sinner, is this the cause of your enmity? Are you so estranged that you give enmity for love? And when He surrounds you with favors, girds you with mercies, encircles you with loving kindness, do you hate Him for this? He might say as Jesus did to the Jews—"For which of these works do you stone Me?" For which of these works do you hate God? If an earthly benefactor fed you, would you hate him? Did he clothe you, would you abuse him to his face? Did he give you talents, would you turn those powers against him? Oh, speak! Would you forge the iron and strike the dagger into the heart of your best friend? Do you hate your mother who nursed you on her knee? Do you curse your father who so wisely watched over you? No, you say, we have some little gratitude towards earthly relatives. Where are your hearts, then? Where are your hearts that you can still despise God and be at enmity with Him? Oh, diabolical crime! Oh, Satanic enormity! Oh, iniquity for which words fail in description! To hate the All-Lovely—to despise the essentially Good—to abhor the constantly Merciful—to spurn the Ever-Beneficent—to scorn the Kind, the Gracious One! Above all, to hate the God who sent His Son to die for man! Ah, in that thought—"the carnal mind is enmity against God"—there is something which may make us shake. For it is a terrible sin to be at enmity with God. I wish I could speak more powerfully, but my Master, alone, can impress upon you the enormous evil of this horrid state of heart!

IV. But there are one or two Doctrines which we will try to deduce from this. Is the carnal mind at "enmity against God?" Then *salvation cannot be by merit*, it must be by Grace. If we are at enmity with God, what merit can we have? How can we deserve anything from the Being we hate? Even if we were pure as Adam, we could not have any merit. For I do not think Adam had any desert before his Creator. When he had kept all his Master's Law, he was but an unprofitable servant. He had done no more than he ought to have done. He had no surplus—no balance. But since we have become enemies, how much less can we hope to be saved by works! Oh, no. The whole Bible tells us, from beginning to end, that salvation is not by the works of the Law but by the deeds of Grace. Martin Luther declared that he constantly preached justification by faith alone, "because," he said, "the people would forget it—so that I

was obliged almost to knock my Bible against their heads, to send it into their hearts.” So it is true we constantly forget that salvation is by Grace alone. We always want to be putting in some little scrap of our own virtue. We want to be *doing* something. I remember a saying of old Matthew Wilkes—“Saved by your works? You might as well try to go to America in a paper boat!” Saved by your works? It is impossible! Oh no! The poor legalist is like a blind horse going round and round the mill, or like the prisoner going up the treadmill and finding himself no higher after all he has done. He has no solid confidence, no firm ground to rest upon. He has not done enough—never enough.” Conscience always says, “this is not perfection. It ought to have been better.” Salvation for enemies must be by an ambassador—by an Atonement—yes, by Christ.

Another Doctrine we gather from this is *the necessity of an entire change of our nature*. It is true that by birth we are at enmity with God. How necessary, then, it is that our *nature* should be *changed*. There are few people who sincerely believe this. They think that if they cry, “Lord, have mercy upon me,” when they lie a-dying, they shall go to Heaven directly. Let me suppose an impossible case for a moment. Let me imagine a man entering Heaven without a change of heart. He comes within the gates. He hears a sonnet. He starts! It is to the praise of his *Enemy*. He sees a Throne and on it sits One who is glorious. But it is his *Enemy*. He walks streets of gold, but those streets belong to his *Enemy*. He sees hosts of angels. But those hosts are the servants of his *Enemy*. He is in his *Enemy*’s house. For he is at *enmity* with God! He could not join the song, for he would not know the tune. There he would stand—silent, motionless—till Christ should say, with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders, “What are *you* doing here? Enemies at a marriage banquet? Enemies in the children’s house? Enemies in Heaven? Get you gone! Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire in Hell!” Oh, Sirs, if the unregenerate man could enter Heaven, I mention once more the oft-repeated saying of Whitfield, “he would be so unhappy in Heaven that he would ask God to let him run down into Hell for shelter.” There must be a *change*, if you consider the future state. For how can enemies of God ever sit down at the banquet of the Lamb?

And to conclude, let me remind you—and it is in the text, after all—that *this change must be worked by a power beyond your own*. An enemy may possibly make himself a friend. But *enmity* cannot. If it is but an adjunct of his nature to be an enemy he may change himself into a friend. But if it is the very *essence* of his existence to be enmity, positive enmity, enmity cannot change itself. No, there must be something done more than we can accomplish. This is just what is forgotten in these days. We must have more preaching of the Holy Spirit if we are to have more conversion work. I tell you, Sirs, if you change yourselves and make yourselves better and better and better, a thousand times, you will never be

good enough for Heaven! Till God's Spirit has laid His hand upon you. Till He has renewed your heart—till He has purified your soul, till He has changed your entire spirit and made you a new man—there can be no entering Heaven. How seriously, then, should each stand and think. Here am I, a creature of a day, a mortal born to die, but yet an immortal! At present I am at enmity with God. What shall I do? Is it not my duty, as well as my happiness, to ask whether there is a way to be reconciled to God?

Oh, weary slaves of sin, are not your ways the paths of folly? Is it wisdom, O my fellow creatures—is it wisdom to hate your Creator? Is it wisdom to stand in opposition against Him? Is it prudent to despise the riches of His Grace? If it is wisdom, it is Hell's wisdom! If it is wisdom, it is a wisdom which is folly with God! Oh, may God grant that you may turn unto Jesus with full purpose of heart! He is the Ambassador. He it is who can make peace through His blood. And though you came in here an enemy, it is possible you may go out through that door a friend yet—if you can but look to Jesus Christ, the brazen serpent which was lifted up!

And now, it may be, some of you are convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit. I will now proclaim to you the way of salvation. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up—that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Behold, O trembling penitent, the means of your deliverance! Turn your tearing eyes to yonder Mount of Calvary. I see the Victim of Justice—the Sacrifice of Atonement for your transgression! View the Savior in His agonies, with streams of blood purchasing your soul and with most intense agonies enduring your punishment. He died for *you*, if now you confess your guilt! O come, you condemned one, self-condemned—turn your eyes this way, for one look will save! Sinner, you are bitten. Look! It is nothing but, "Look!" It is simply, "Look!" If you can but look to Jesus you are safe! Hear the voice of the Redeemer—"Look unto Me and be you saved." Look! Look! Look! O guilty souls—

***"Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude!
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good!"***

May my blessed Master help you to come to Him and draw you to His Son, for Jesus' sake. Amen and Amen

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

A FATAL DEFICIENCY

NO. 1133

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1873,
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***“If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”
Romans 8:9.***

THIS is one of the most solemn texts in the whole Bible. It is so sweeping—it deals with all of us. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” And it deals with the most important point about us, for to belong to Christ is the most essential thing for time and eternity. But we are not Christ’s unless we have His Spirit. The text does not treat of external rites and ceremonies. It does not discuss a vexed question in doctrine. It does not speak of rare attainments and unusual virtues—but it lays its axe at the root of the tree—it points its sword at a vital part. The text probes to the quick—it pierces to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow—dealing with the thoughts and intents of the heart. It speaks to the soul and though it is the voice of the Gospel, yet is its sound as terrible as the thunderclaps of Sinai. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”

Since the subject leads us to think upon the Spirit of Christ, let us entreat Him to help us at this hour, so that our thoughts shall be honest, heart-searching, and therefore profitable to us. The preacher has prayed that he may be helped to discourse upon the text. Let each hearer pray that what shall be rightly said may also rightly affect his heart and conscience. Do we not all earnestly desire to belong to Christ? Do we not tremble at the bare idea of its being said of us that we are “none of His”? With such desires and fears, I trust we shall come with the greater readiness under the influence of the heart-searching text before us.

I shall, at the outset, try to lead you to consider the remarkable title which is here given to the Holy Spirit. When we have considered that point, we will next observe the absolute necessity of possessing the Spirit. And, thirdly, meditate upon the evidences which may help us to discover whether we have the Spirit. Then we will close by weighing well the consequences of being found *without* the Spirit of Christ—“We are none of His.”

I. First, then, let us consider, well, THE REMARKABLE TITLE WHICH IS HERE GIVEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT—for certainly it is the Holy Spirit who is here intended by, “the Spirit of Christ.” He is called, in the first part of the verse, “the Spirit of God.” And then He is styled, “the Spirit of Christ.” Christ and God are essentially One. The Holy Spirit stands in intimate relationship to both the Father and to the Son and is rightly called by either name. Inasmuch as He is here called the Spirit of Christ, we may

rest assured that a deep mystery is here dimly revealed. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father. Upon this we will say but little, for we know but little.

There was a great dispute, many centuries ago, between what are now called the Eastern and Western Churches, upon this question—whether the Spirit of God proceeded from the Father only, as said the Greek Church—or proceeded from the Father and the Son—as said the Latin Church. I think, if we must have an opinion upon such a subject, that our text decides the point by declaring that the Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of God but the Spirit of Christ and proceeds, doubtless, both from the Father and from the Son. But when we have said that, what do we mean? Does any theologian know what he means by these words? Will anybody *ever* know what is meant thereby? Can any of us, by searching, find out God or know the Almighty to perfection? Is not this a mystery into which our eyes will never be able to see? And, therefore, is it not better to leave it among the inscrutable things which belong to the blessed Trinity in unity, where understanding is swamped, but where faith finds waters to swim in?

Leaving that deep matter, we pass to notice that the title, “the Spirit of Christ,” signifies, first, that the Spirit peculiarly and especially rested upon Christ. The Holy Spirit had much to do with the Person of our blessed Redeemer. The Manhood of Christ was begotten of the Spirit of God when the power of the Highest overshadowed the Virgin Mary. When our Lord first appeared in public to be recognized as the Son of God—when He went down into the waters of Jordan and came up from them—the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and rested upon Him while the Divine Voice proclaimed out of Heaven, “This is My Beloved Son.” No sooner had the Son of God passed from Jordan’s brink than He was, “led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil”—guided by the Spirit of God to undergo those processes of trial which were necessary to make Him perfect as the great High Priest, enabling Him to sympathize with our infirmities, because He was “tempted in all points like as we are.”

We read that He returned into Galilee in the power of the Spirit. When He began to preach, the first chapter that He read in public was, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor.” His ministry was not a dead ministry of the letter, but it stood in the power of the Spirit of God! He spoke not according to the flesh, with the garnishing of human eloquence and winning flatteries, but with those forcible words of wisdom which the Holy Spirit teaches. He taught the people as One having authority and not as the scribes. All through the life of Christ you see that the Spirit of God rested upon Him in fullness of power, for God “gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him.” In Him “dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” and all the sacred gifts of the Holy Spirit were treasured up in His blessed Person that out of His fullness we, also, might receive Grace for Grace.

Was it not so written of Him in the Psalm, “You love righteousness and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows”? Because upon Christ, the Anointed One, the Holy Spirit rests in fullness, the term, “the Spirit of Christ,” is most instructive. A second explanation is equally to the point. The Holy Spirit is called the “Spirit of Christ,” because our Lord Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said concerning Him, “I, indeed, baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to wear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a choice result of our Lord’s work among men. Jesus spoke of giving to men Living Water which should be in them as a springing well, and this spoke He of the Spirit which was given when Jesus was glorified. After His Resurrection He breathed on His disciples and said, “receive you the Holy Spirit.” But indeed, the whole ministry of Jesus was a Revelation of the things of the Spirit. He did not preach upon points of ritual and ceremonial observation, but He went into inward matters and with the fan in His hand, thoroughly purged His floor. His precepts concern not the washing of hands, the straining out of gnats, the wearing of phylacteries and the observance of holy days— they deal with the *heart*, the *affections*, the *spiritual nature* of man—and thus are far removed from the traditions of superstition and the frivolities of false philosophy.

Beyond all this, Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ, at His Ascension, procured for us the descent of the Holy Spirit. “It is expedient for you that I go away,” He said, “for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.” He rose to His Father, but when the fullness of time was come, the rushing, mighty Wind was heard and the cloven tongues, as if were fire, were seen sitting upon the disciples! And from that moment the Church of God was baptized into the Holy Spirit. God grant that she may never forget that day of days, but walk in the power bestowed upon her at Pentecost! On that glorious day, the Word of the Lord by the Prophet Joel was fulfilled—“I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit.”

This being so gloriously fulfilled, we are waiting for that other promise, “I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of Grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for their sins.” Therefore the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ because He is the choice gift of our ascended Lord. Mark a third explanation of the passage—the Holy Spirit may be called, “the Spirit of Christ,” because Christ lived peculiarly in the power of the Spirit. Understand the “Spirit,” as used in the text, in opposition to the “flesh,” and you will see my meaning. Never did the *flesh* rule Christ. Never in one solitary moment did bodily cravings and appetites master

Him. No, He even forgot to eat bread, finding meat to eat which even His disciples knew not of. Love sought not its own, but made Him lay down His life for His friends.

The Spirit of God shone forth upon Him in full luster of unsullied light, revealing Him as pure and spotless, a glorious Person in whom the Prince of Darkness could find nothing. Our Lord Jesus Christ was never moved by any passion of a sensual kind or swayed by a motive of a fleshly tendency. It would be blasphemous to think of such a thing in connection with so Divine a Character. Some cry aloud and strive for mastery, but not He. Some have high ambitions and would thrust down others, but not He. Some unite on the right hand and on the left, for their spirit is full of vengeance, but not He. The flesh that lusts for vengeance and that cries after power had no rule in Him. He was meek and lowly of heart. The Spirit of holiness and love was in Him—that Spirit which brings power and peace.

Always was the Holy Spirit to be seen in connection with the Character and work of our blessed Lord. His life was a life in the Spirit. His teaching was a teaching of spiritual things. The objects that He aimed at in His teaching were all spiritual. There was nothing carnal, nothing gross, nothing earthy about Him—every thought, desire and aim were of the highest, noblest, and most spiritual order. And therefore it is, I think, that the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ.

Mark, also, that the Holy Spirit is He who quickens the entire mystical body of Jesus Christ. All the saints are members of Christ's body and all the members of that body are distinguished from other men by this—that they are *spiritual* men and seek after *spiritual* things. "There is one body and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling." It is the Spirit that quickens the entire mystical body, and by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free. The true Church of Christ, being in herself a spiritual body, acts in a spiritual manner and strives after spiritual objects. Yonder Church which is wrapped up in formalism, which cannot speak a word of prayer without her book—is she moved of the Spirit, or may it not be said of her sons—"Are you so foolish; having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?"

Yonder Church, which bows before images and pictures and flaunts her banners and uplifts her crucifixes, burning her candles in the sunlight—is she the spiritual Church of Christ? I think not. You shall find the Church of Christ where faithful men worship God in the Spirit and have no confidence in the flesh—men who, if they speak, seek to be moved by the Holy Spirit, or else had rather keep silent—who desire not the wisdom that comes of man, nor the teaching which is the fabrication of human reason—but desire to wait upon the Scriptures for instruction and upon the Spirit of God to show light upon the Scriptures. This is the Church of God.

O Beloved, the times are just now very dangerous and require of all Christians to bear their testimony as to the spirituality of true religion. True religion consists not in outward forms, peculiar garbs, or modes of speech, or anything that is ritualistic and external. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Men are again becoming subject to human ordinances after the commandments and doctrines of men, saying, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." But the true faith stands not in will-worship, nor in the inventions of the flesh. Neither is that acceptable worship which men's fancies have devised that they may display the beauty of carved stone and wood, and the glory of gold and silver and copper together with blue and scarlet and fine linen, and glass of many colors, and sweet odors of the merchants. The true worshippers of God worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him.

Therefore is the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Christ, because, wherever the faith of Christ and the mystical body of Christ are found, there you will find spiritual worship—worship rendered by mind and heart—the worship of love, the worship of humility, adoration and obedience. The Church of God brings not to Him rivers of oil, or the blood of ten thousands of fat beasts. She seeks to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with her God. Sacrifices and burnt offerings are abolished—broken and contrite hearts are still, in the sight of the Lord, of great price. Therefore the Spirit of God is rightly called the Spirit of Christ.

II. Now, secondly—and may the Lord help and guide us in our thoughts and utterances—let us OBSERVE THE NECESSITY OF POSSESSING THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST. Notice that, according to the text, it is necessary in every case—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." It does not say, "If any *minister* be destitute of the Holy Spirit he is unfit for his calling." That is quite true, but the text is not dealing with any supposed divisions of laity and clergy—it speaks not to a *class*, but utters its warning voice to men as men. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

It may be urged that some have an especially amiable nature and disposition. They were never known to speak an untruth, or to do an unkind action, from their youth up. They grow up in the garden of the family like lovely flowers, the admiration of all. Yes, I admit that it is even so, but I cannot help it, I must speak the truth as I have it in my text. "If *any* man," however amiable he may be, "have not the Spirit of Christ," I must say the same of him as of the drunk and of the thief, "he is none of Christ's." The fairest flowers, as surely as the foulest weeds, are none of Christ's if they are not of the Spirit's own planting.

But we meet with instances in which, in addition to a natural amiability, the refinements of good society have exercised their best influence. The man has lived among Christian people. He has a title to birthright membership, if such a right can be. He has never mingled with the coarser sort of sinners, or learned the vulgarities of vice. The man is lovely

to look upon. Yes, and as I repeat the words of my text, I say the Truth of God and lie not, I feel a love to such an one, even as Jesus did to that young man who said, "All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?" But we must not shirk the Truth even in *this* case. This *one* lack, the lack of the Spirit of Christ, is *fatal* to the noblest character and Christ disowns utterly every man who has not His Spirit in him.

But can we not, by adding outward religiousness to moral somehow or other, rise, by our own efforts, to be true Christians without the Holy Spirit? Can we not be baptized and kneel as God's people kneel, and sing as they sing, and take the sacrament as they do? Yes, you can readily do all these, but you will still be condemned, for the text will still remain true, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And if it were possible (which it is not) for you to produce the same virtues in yourself which are produced by the Holy Spirit, yet even those would not suffice, for the text is absolute and it does not say, "If any man have not the worlds of the Spirit," or, "the influences of the Spirit," or, "the general results of character which come of the indwelling of the Spirit." No, it goes deeper and declares, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

The difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate is not one of degree, but of kind. A dead soul cannot develop into a living one, nor can the carnal mind improve into a spiritual mind. Almighty *power* is needed to bridge the separating gulf! This ought to lead every rational man to utterly despair of saving himself by any strength of his own! You must resort to Divine agency. You are driven to the Holy Spirit because without Him, whatever you may do or be, my text, like the cherubic sword which kept the entrance to Eden, prevents your hoping to obtain eternal life by your own power. "Except a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Note well that the text does not make any sort of exception, or so much as hint at any—for some might have said, "But, surely, those who have long been members of the Christian Church, and those who are officers in her midst, and those in high esteem, surely they are Christ's, and will be saved in any case, right?"

No, by no means! If they have not the Spirit of Christ, even these are none of His! We are all on a par here. The doorkeeper in our assemblies is, in this respect, exactly on the same footing as the presiding elder of the Church. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." I might even have said that the officers of the Church are in a *worse* position than other men, for their responsibility is so terribly great and their temptation to mere official religion so immense. Chrysostom said in his day, "I wonder if any of the rulers of the Church will be saved?" And had he lived in these times he might, with equal force, have said the same. Can't you see how the great ones of the Church, who call themselves the bishops and shepherds of the flock, are suffering this nation to drift away to Rome?

They are leading this nation into all the devilries of Rome's idolatry and superstition, and yet they neither lift a finger nor speak a word to stop the evil. Hirelings as they are, what do they care for the sheep? They sit in worldly state among the peers of the realm and it frets them not though the whole land reeks and rots with superstition! God have mercy on them! Well did you say, O John of the golden mouth, "I wonder if any of the rulers of the Church will be saved?" If in any other position men so shamefully neglected their master's business they would be discharged in disgrace! I speak thus in solemn soberness grieving that the charge is all too true.

Nor is this all. What must be the lot of those of us who are ordinary ministers if we have not the Spirit of Christ? And is it clear that all of us have? How many there are who occupy the pulpit, the object of whose preaching is the display of their own eloquence or learning, by the giving out of well-turned periods and pretty essays upon philosophical subjects instead of striking at men's consciences and dealing with their souls in the name of God! The world is perishing and the Church is going to sleep over it! God have mercy upon all of us who are Church officers and make us faithful! Instead of needing *less* of the Spirit, we need a *double* portion—and if there are any men about whom it may be said, "If they have not the Spirit of Christ, they are none of His"—it must be said with the greatest solemnity concerning the ministers, deacons, and elders of our Churches! If they have not the Spirit of Christ they are worse than other men! Their position puts them under extraordinary responsibility and if they are false to it, it will bring them under terrible condemnation. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Now observe that this is put in opposition to everything. For instance, there are some who glory in the name of Christians as if the name were some great thing. We have a certain unbrotherly company who call themselves "Brethren," and certain others who disapprove of denominations, and therefore in the name of Christian amity set up a denomination of their own, infinitely more exclusive than any before known. These frequently claim to be especially denominated Christians—I suppose because they would insinuate that they, alone, are Christians. Brothers and Sisters in Paul's day said, "I am of Paul." Others said, "I am of Apollos." A third group said, "I am of Christ." Now there was not a pin to choose between them—they were all equally sectarian. It is not *wearing* the name of Christ, but *having* the *Spirit* of Christ which will prove us to be accepted. Probably none were ever further off from Christ than those who called themselves by His name, namely, the Jesuits. Little enough has Jesus to do with the Society of Jesus!

The Christian Church has never been more pure or more earnest than when it has been known by an opprobrious name. There was far more power and life among the despised, "Quakers," than among the respected, "Society of Friends." I liked the "Ranters" better than the more quiet, "Primitive Methodists." And the detested "Anabaptists" were men of far

more courage and principle than the modern “Baptists.” Give me the man who can render a reproachful name illustrious—there is no shame in being disgraced! The reproach soon wears away and if it did not, blessed are they that are reproached for Christ’s sake.

But, Beloved, you may wear the literal name of Christ and you may keep on pushing yourself adrift from everybody into a state of external peculiarity if you like—but if you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His for all that. You may take to yourself very precise notions of how you should act, how you should speak, what you should eat, what you should drink, what you should wear—and you may become a very strait-laced Puritan, indeed. But remember, after you have done all that, “the kingdom of God is not meat or drink.” And, “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Nothing short of this will suffice, however commendable, however much admired among men. We shall fare ill at the Last Great Day if the Spirit of God is not in us.

But the text is expressly in opposition to “the flesh.” There is the point of its meaning. What does it mean, then, to have the Spirit of Christ in opposition to being in the flesh? Observe carefully there are two states—in one or the other every man is found. There is no middle place. We are either in the flesh or in the Spirit. Every man is born in the flesh and if left alone he will follow the desires and devices of his fleshly nature as every unregenerate man does. Some follow their fleshly nature coarsely and run into vice. Others follow it in a more refined manner and live to gain wealth, to gratify taste, or to gain the approbation of their fellow men—all which is of the flesh. There is another state and that is called being in the Spirit. Into *this* condition we are admitted by the new birth. When a man walks in the Spirit he recognizes something higher than that which can be touched by the hand, seen with the eyes, or heard with the ear.

He has entered into a new world and is a citizen of a spiritual realm. He has come where God is real to him, where Christ is real to him, where truth is real, where sin is hateful, where holiness is lovely. Judge, my Brothers and Sisters, whether you know anything concerning this. Many are in the flesh. They are, as yet, the mass of mankind. But there is a remnant who walk after the Spirit because the Holy Spirit has renewed them. He who is in the flesh is ruled by the flesh—the animal in him is the master of the man—the mere conscious mind in him is dominant over the higher nature, the Spirit.

The man who is in the Spirit tramples down the flesh and labors to keep it under. When the flesh, for awhile, prevails, he laments his fault and weeps concerning it, for he is not the willing servant of the flesh, but the Spirit in him strives for the mastery and he greatly delights in its sway. The man who is in the flesh trusts to the flesh. He looks to his own works for salvation. His prayers, his tears, his almsgivings—these are to save him. But the man who has the Spirit of Christ counts all his good works to be dross and dung. He trusts in the Lord through the Spirit. He trusts in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ and builds his hope

upon the mercy of God in his Redeemer. The man who is in the flesh worships in the flesh. His eyes must be pleased with the peculiar dress of the minister and the architectural beauty of the place of assembly, while his ears must be regaled, if not with sound of flute, harp, sackbut and psaltery, yet with the swell of organs!

His nose, also, must be gratified with sweet incense. He worships in the flesh, looking to crosses, altars and priests. While the man who has the Spirit utterly abhors these idols and desires not to see, but to *believe*, not to smell, but to *think*. The sound of the Truth of God is better to the spiritual man than tinkling bells and the noise of pipes and bellows. He wants something for his soul to think upon, something to love, something to stir his affections, something to strengthen him for goodness and to cast down the power of evil in his nature. Being a spiritual man, he worships God in the Spirit. To him the hillside is as holy as the meeting house. He counts one place as sacred as another. Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, does he worship the Father, but he worships God in spirit and in truth.

He will not yield to be judged by others in meats, drinks, new moons and holy days. He scorns to stoop to priests, but believes himself and each Believer to be a priest unto God. He makes each garment a vestment and every meal is, to him, a sacrament. To him *all* things are sanctified by the Presence of the eternal God. He lives in the Spirit and, wherever he moves, he abides in fellowship with the unseen Lord. He recognizes spiritual things where others see them not. He is swayed by spiritual motives. He seeks after spiritual objects. And while the poor creatures of the earth, like so many moles, toil to bury themselves under its surface and heap up gold and silver, and say, "These are your gods, O Israel," this man is thankful for his food and raiment, and the comforts of life. But he feels that these are not his God, nor is anything which can be seen worthy to be the object of his pursuit.

He derives his pleasure from springs above and drinks in draughts of life, not from this poor dying world, but from the ever-living and Eternal God. Blessed is the man who has come to this! We must all come to it, or we are none of Christ's. Do not think I am setting up some sublime standard. I am not. I am keeping to the level of the text. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

III. And now I want you, for a few minutes only, to meditate upon THE EVIDENCES OF HAVING THE SPIRIT, for some will say, "Have I the Spirit?" Yes, I trust all will make the enquiry. My Hearers, you either have the Spirit or you have not. See to it! If you have the Spirit, in the first place, as it is the Spirit of Christ, it has led you to Christ. Have you, then, been clean delivered from all confidence in yourselves? Have you been brought to the foot of the Cross and made to see that *there* hangs your only salvation? And are you trusting solely and entirely in the blood and righteousness of God's crucified Son? If you are, you have the Spirit of Christ, for the Spirit that leads a man to faith in Christ is the Spirit of

Christ. You could not have come to Christ if you had not been drawn, and none will draw you but the heavenly Father by His Spirit. If you are resting wholly upon Jesus you have His Spirit.

I will ask you another question. Do you feel in your soul a desire to honor the Lord Jesus? Do you love to hear Him extolled? Can you say that you hate everything which robs Him of His Glory? Do you love that sermon best which most exalts Jesus? Have you ever felt that you could die to crown our Lord's most blessed head? Do you now fall at His feet and adore Him with your heart's truest love? Then you have the Spirit of Christ, for He delights to glorify Christ by taking of the things of Christ and showing them to us!

Again. If you have the Spirit of Christ it will make you like Christ. Like Christ, first, in relation to God. Christ lived for God. When He was but 12 years old, He said, "Know you not that I must be about My Father's business?" And all His life long He could say that the zeal of God's House had eaten Him up. His meat and His drink were to do the will of His Father who had sent Him. Beloved, is that how you feel towards God? Then you have the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is a Spirit of prayer. It kept the Son in constant communion with the Father. You constantly find the Lord Jesus in converse with God. If you have the spirit of sonship as Christ had, you will be much in prayer, too, and you will thus prove that you have the Spirit of Christ.

Christ's worship of God was always spiritual. You never find Him worshipping otherwise than with His whole heart and soul. The traditions of men, their different watches and observances were nothing to Him—He walked with God and dwelt in Him—and needed not these childish ordinances. His was a spiritual life. Is yours so? Our Lord Jesus Christ towards God was always true. He was a faithful witness. You never find Him flinching a word. He was full of love, but how He could thunder against false-hearted men! "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Elijah was never more terrible against Baal than was the loving Savior against ritualistic Phariseeism—for towards His Father glowed a holy zeal and a sacred detestation of everything that would dishonor His beloved name.

Have you the Spirit of Christ in you? The Spirit of Christ was towards men a fullness of love. He was ready to do good to all. He fed the hungry. He healed the sick. He never considered Himself but spent His life for others, laying Himself out for them. They would have made Him a king in their momentary enthusiasm, but He needed no kingdom. It was kingdom enough for Him to help the miserable and succor the wretched. Do you feel in your soul a love to men for God's sake? Can you forgive them when they do you wrong? Can you pray for your enemies? Can you follow His command who said, "I say unto you, That you resist not evil, but when they smite you on the one cheek, turn to them the other also"? Then I trust you have Christ's Spirit.

But on the other hand, are you indignant when you are insulted? Are you pettish and ready to resent every little thing? You have not the Spirit of Christ if it is so! The Spirit of Christ is a gentle, forbearing, tender Spirit—stern, as I have told you, for God and for His Truth—but tender as a child towards the infirmities, sorrows and weaknesses of mankind. The Spirit of Christ is upright for that which is true and holy, but bending down towards that which is ready to die. Do you know the Spirit of Christ? Read His life and you will see it there. Have you such a Spirit? Do you long to be perfect, like Jesus? For if you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His.

My time will fail me if I continue much longer and therefore I will close this head by saying that if we have the Spirit of Christ it will show itself by its operations in our hearts. We shall feel it moving within us. It will make us hate everything that is evil, false, unholy. It will move us to repentance of all that we have done amiss towards God or man. It will make us brave and courageous for God and for His Truth. If the Spirit of God is in us, it will move us to joy in God, to hope in God, to delight in God. Fellowship with God will become necessary to us. Prayer to God will be one of our most delightful exercises and the praise of God will be our dearest enjoyment. The indwelling Spirit within us will make us spiritual, move us in spiritual directions after spiritual things and we shall thus be spiritual men to the praise of God! But if we are not this, we are none of Christ's.

IV. The last point is THE SAD CONSEQUENCES OF NOT HAVING THE SPIRIT. These are consequences for which nothing in this world can compensate. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Everything is gone if we are "none of His." Supposing it had said, "He is not a favored disciple." Well, one would have been sorry to miss the opportunity of the place nearest to the Master. But this is far worse—it says, "he is *none* of His." The Lord does not own him at all! "No disciple of Mine," says Christ. "No, if he has not My Spirit he is none of Mine." He is a lost sheep, but Jesus says he is "none of His." Whoever he may belong to, he does not belong to Christ. If he has not Christ's Spirit in him, he is "none of His."

Whatever body he may be a member of, he is no member of Christ's body, for the Spirit dwells in all the members of that body—and he who has not that Spirit is none of His. "None of His." The words wound my heart! They are like a dagger to my soul! "None of His!" "None of His!" Ah, if I am none of His because I have not the Spirit, whose am I? I beseech the man who has not the Spirit of Christ to look that question in the face! He who died upon the Cross disowns you. He who is risen into His Glory disowns you! What misery is this! When He comes in the Glory of the Father and calls His sheep to His right hand, that they may enjoy eternal blessedness in His company, He will say, "I never knew you." If you, dear Hearer, are none of His, then whose are you?

YOU are the devil's! Awful thought! Terrible words to use. But it must be so. There are two proprietors of men, two rulers whom they serve. "You are of God, little children," says the Apostle. But of others he says they lie

in the Wicked One and are heirs of wrath. There are two classes of men—the heirs of wrath and the heirs of God—if you are none of Christ’s you are the prisoner of condemnation! My dear Hearer, what are you if you are not Christ’s? You are a waif, a stray, a wreck drifted out to sea, soon to sink forever! And *where* are you if you are not Christ’s? On the way to judgment, on the road to eternal condemnation! If you are not His, you are going as fast as time can carry you away, away, away to the gloomy land where ray of hope will never pierce the midnight darkness! Away, away, away, where despair lasts for eternity!

O God, it is a dreadful thing to live a moment in an unforgiven state. “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed upon the Son of God.” If you were set up for an instant upon the top of St. Paul’s Cathedral, poised in the air upon the cross with none to hold you up, how dreadful would be your feelings as you looked beneath you and knew that the next gust of wind would sweep you down to sure destruction! Sinner, you are now in a similar position! If you are none of His you are now in awful peril! You stand over the mouth of Hell upon a single plank and that plank is rotten! You hang over the jaws of Perdition by a slender thread and the angel of Justice is ready to cut that thread in two. “None of His! None of His!”

Oh, how dreadful to live none of His and to die none of His, and to have this for your epitaph—“NONE OF HIS!” And then to wake up on the Resurrection morning and see the King in His beauty on the Throne and to know that you are none of His! To cry to the rocks to hide you, and to the hills to cover you, for you are none of His! Then to be brought out before the Great White Throne resplendent in its holiness and hear the fact announced so that all may hear, that there is a Savior but you are none of His! Ah, what will it be to see the pit open her mouth to devour you and, descending forever, to understand that you are none of His!—

***“You sinners, seek His face,
Whose wrath you cannot bear.
Bow to the scepter of His Grace,
And find salvation there.”***

If you look to Jesus by faith, the Spirit is with you as you look. There is life in a look at the crucified Redeemer. Trust Him! Trust Him! Trust Him!

And may the Lord constrain you, now, to live as you have never lived before. May you now begin the spiritual life, for if you have not the Spirit of God, you are none of His!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 8:1-23.

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

THE CHRISTIAN—A DEBTOR

NO. 96

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, AUGUST 10, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“Therefore, Brethren, we are debtors.”
Romans 8:12.***

OBSERVE the title whereby he addressed the Church—“Brethren.” It was the Gospel which taught Paul how to say *brother*. If he had not been a Christian, his Jewish dignity would never have condescended to call a Roman, “Brother”—for a Jew sneered at the Gentile—and called him, “dog.” But now in the heart of this “Hebrew of the Hebrews,” there is the holy recognition of Christian fraternity without reserve or hypocrisy! The Gospel softened the heart of Paul and made him forget all national animosities. Otherwise, one of the down-trodden race would not have called his oppressor, “brother.” The Roman had his iron foot on the Jew, yet Paul addresses those who subjugated his race, “Brethren.” We repeat, a third time, it was the Gospel which implanted in the soul of Paul the feeling of brotherhood and removed every wall of partition which divided him from any of the Lord’s Elect. “So then,” he said, “we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God.” He proclaimed the Doctrine of the “one blood” and gloried in the fact of “one family” in Christ. He felt within him affinities with all the blood-bought race and loved them all. He had not seen many of those whom he addressed—yet they were known to him in the Spirit as partakers of one glorious and blessed hope. And, therefore, he called them, “Brethren.” My Friends, there is a cementing power in the Grace of God which can scarcely be overestimated! It resets the dislocated bones of society, rivets the bonds of friendship and welds the broken metal of manhood into one united mass. It makes all, Brothers and Sisters, who feel its power. Grace links mankind in a common brotherhood. Grace makes the great man give his hand to the poor and confess a heavenly relationship. Grace compels the intellectual, the learned, the polite—to stoop from their dignity to take hold of the ignorant and unlettered—and call them friends! Grace weaves the threads of our separate individualities into one undivided unity.

Let the Gospel be really felt in the mind and it will toll the death-knell of selfishness, it will bring down the proud from their elevated solitude

and it will restore the down-trodden to the rights of our common manhood! We need only the Gospel thoroughly preached to bring about “liberty, equality and fraternity,” in the highest and best sense of these words! Not the “liberty, equality and fraternity” which the democrat seeks for, which is frequently another name for *his own superiority*, but that which is true and real—that which will make us all free in the Spirit, make us all equal in the Person of Christ Jesus and give us all this fraternity of Brothers and Sisters, seeing that we are all one with our Lord in the common bond of Gospel relationship! Let the Truths of Christianity work out their perfect work—and pride, bitterness, wrath, envy and malice must see their graves. This and this, alone, can restore the peace of divided families and unite disputing relatives. Only let the Gospel be preached and there shall be an end of war—let it thoroughly pervade all ranks of society and saturate the mind of nations—and there shall be no more lifting of the spears. They shall be used for pruning hooks! No bathing of swords in blood, for they shall be turned into the peaceful plowshares of the soil. We shall then have no hosts encountering hosts. We shall have no millions slain for widows to deplore—but every man shall meet every other man and call him, “Brother.” And men of every kindred and of every tribe shall see in the face of every man a *relative* allied to them by ties of blood. I am sure I feel, myself, the force of this word, “Brother,” and, “Sister,” with regard to many of you. If you are partakers of that glorious hope. If you are believers in our glorious Redeemer. If you have put your trust under the shadow of His wings—my hand and my heart with it—there is that word, “Brothers and Sisters,” for you!

And so, addressing you who love the Lord under that title, I come at once to the text, “Brethren, we are *debtors*.” We are, all of us, under obligations—let us consider the fact in the following manner—First, *how are we to understand this?* And secondly, *how ought it to affect us?*

I. HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THIS, “Brethren, we are debtors”? We may understand it in a thousand senses, for, indeed, we are debtors. Brothers and Sisters, we who know and love the Lord, are debtors, not to one creditor, but to many.

We are debtors *to the past*. I think I see the fathers at their midnight lamps, the ancient saints in their much frequented closets, the thrice brave preachers in their pulpits denouncing error and the faithful pastors reproving wrong. To such who have preceded us, we owe the purity of the Church and to them we are debtors! I think I see the martyrs and confessors rising from their tombs—I mark their hands still stained with blood and their bodies scarred with the wounds of persecution. They tell me that they of old maintained the Truth of God and preached it in the

midst of fire and sword—that they bore death in defense of the cause of God—that they might hand down His holy Word inviolate to us! I look on them and see among their glorious ranks some whose names are celebrated in every Christian land as the bold “lions of God,” the immovable pillars of Truth! I see men of whom the world was not worthy, whose praise is in all the Churches and who are now nearest the Eternal Throne of God. And as I look on them and they on me, I turn to you all and say, “Brothers and Sisters, we are debtors.” We are debtors to the men who crossed the sea and laughed at the fury of the storm, who risked the journeying and the weariness and all the various perils to which they were exposed, by reason of robbers and false brethren. We are debtors to each stake at Smithfield. We are debtors to the sacred ashes of the thousands who have there followed Jesus even unto death! We are debtors to the headless bodies of those who were beheaded for Christ Jesus. We are debtors to those who dared the lions in the amphitheatre and fought with wild beasts at Ephesus. We are debtors to the massacred thousands at the hands of the bloody Church of Rome and the murdered myriads of her pagan predecessors. We are debtors to them all! Remember the bloody day of St. Bartholomew, the valleys of Piedmont and the mountains of Switzerland! Let the sacred mounds of our fathers’ sepulchers speak to us. Is not this Bible opened and read by us, all, the gift of their self-denying faithfulness? Is not the free air we breathe, the purchase of their death? Did not they, by bitter suffering, achieve our liberty for us? And are we not debtors to them? Shall we not, in some degree, repay the immense debt of our obligation by seeking to make the future, debtors to *us*, that our descendants may look back and acknowledge that they owe us thanks for preserving the Scriptures, for maintaining liberty, for glorifying God? Brethren, we are debtors to the past!

And I am quite sure we are debtors *to the present*. Wherever we go, we gather fresh proofs of the common observation that we are living in a most marvelous age! It is an oft-repeated truth and one which, perhaps, has almost lost its meaning from being so often repeated, that this is the very crisis. The world has always been in a crisis, but this seems to us to be a peculiar one. We have around us appliances for doing good, such as men never possessed before. We behold around us machinery for doing evil, such as never was at work even in earth’s worst days! Good men are laboring, at least with usual zeal, and evil men are strenuously plying their craft of evil! Infidelity, popery and every other phase of anti-Christ are now straining every nerve. The tug of war is now with us. Look around you and learn your duty. The work is not yet done, the time of

folding of hands has not yet arrived! Our swords must not yet see their scabbards, for the foe is not yet slain. We see, in many a land, the proudest dynasties and tyrannies still crushing, with their mountain weight, every free motion of the consciences and hearts of men. We see, on the other hand, the truest heroism for the right and the greatest devotion to the Truth of God in hearts that God has touched. We have a work to do, as great as our forefathers and, perhaps, far greater! The enemies of Truth are more numerous and subtle than ever and the needs of the Church are greater than at any preceding time! If we are not debtors to the present, then men were never debtors to their age and their time. Brothers and Sisters, we are debtors to the hour in which we live! Oh, that we might stamp it with Truth and that God might help us to impress upon its wings some proof that it has not flown by neglected and unheeded!

And, Brethren, we are debtors *to the future*. If we, the children of God, are not valiant for Truth, now—if we maintain not the great standard of God's Omnipotent Truth—we shall be traitors to our liege Lord! Who can tell the fearful consequences to future generations if we now betray our trust? If we suffer orthodoxy to fail, or God's Truth to be dishonored, future generations will despise and execrate our name! If we now suffer the good vessel of Gospel Truth to be drifted by adverse winds upon the rock. If we keep not good watch to her helm and cry not well to her great Master that she may be led to a prosperous end, surely those who are to succeed us will look on us with scorn and say, "Shame on the men who had so great and glorious a mission and neglected it! They handed down to us a beclouded Gospel and an impure Church!" Stand up, you warriors of the Truth, stand up firmly, for you are debtors to the future, even as you are debtors to the past! Sow well, for others must reap. You are fountains for coming generations. O, be careful that your streams are pure. May the Spirit of God enable you so to live that you can bequeath your example as a legacy to the future!

And as we are debtors to all times, so we are all debtors *to all classes*. But there are some that always get well paid for what they do and, therefore, I shall not mention them, since I am not aware that their claims need my advocacy. We may be remarkably indebted to members of parliament, but for the little they do, they are tolerably well rewarded. At least we take it that the place is more an honor to some of them than they are to their place! It may be true that we owe a great deal to the higher ranks of society. We may possibly, in some mysterious way, be under much obligation to the sacred personages who are styled lords and bishops—but it is not necessary that I should stand up for their claims,

for I have no doubt they will take good care of themselves! At any rate, they have usually done so and have not allowed themselves to be robbed of much of their deservings. (Who would wish that they should? But it is possible to pay too dearly, especially when you could get on as well without them as with them). I shall not refer to any class of society and say of them, we are debtors, except to one and that is the poor. My Brothers and Sisters, we are debtors to the poor. “What?” someone says, “I, debtor to the *poor*?” Yes, My Lady, you are a debtor to the poorest man that ever walked the earth. The beggar shivering in his rags may owe you something, if you give him alms—but you owe him something more. Charity to the poor is a debt! We are not at liberty to give or to refuse. God requires us to remember the poor—and their poverty is a claim upon our generosity. But in the case of the believing poor, their claim upon us is far more binding and I beseech you do not neglect it! O how much we owe them! When I think how the poor toil, day after day, and receive barely enough to keep their souls within their bodies. When I think how frequently they serve their Church, unhonored and unrewarded. I know some of them who perform the hardest deeds of service for our common Christianity—and are yet passed by with neglect and scorn. When I remember how many of them are toiling in the Sunday school, having neither emolument nor reward. When I consider how many of the lower classes are as prayerful, as careful, as honest, as upright, as devout, as spiritual as others are—and frequently more so—I cannot but say that we are debtors to all God’s poor in a very large degree! We little know how many a blessing the poor man’s prayer brings down upon us. I beseech you, then, Beloved, wherever you see a poor saint, wherever you behold an aged Christian, remember he cannot be so much in debt to you as you are to him, for you have much and he has but little and he cannot be in debt for what he has not!

Many of you will not feel the force of Christian reasons. Let me remind you that even you are obliged to the laboring poor. The rich man hoards wealth, the poor man makes it. Great men get the blessing, but poor men bring it down from Heaven. Some men are the cisterns that hold God’s rain—other men are those who pray the rain from Heaven, like very Elijahs—and many of these are to be found in the lower ranks of society. “Brethren, we are debtors.” What I have is not my own, but God’s. And if it is God’s, then it belongs to God’s poor! What the wealthiest man has is not his own, but God’s. And if it is God’s, then it is Christ’s, and if Christ’s, then His children’s. And Christ’s children are often those who are hungry, thirsty, destitute, afflicted and tormented. Take care, then of that class, Brothers and Sisters, for we are debtors to them!

But while I have thus mentioned some of the different classes to whom we are debtors, I have not yet come to the point on which I desire to press your attention. Brothers and Sisters, we are debtors *to our Covenant God*. That is the point which swallows up all! I owe nothing to the past, I owe nothing to the future, I owe nothing to the rich and nothing to the poor, compared with what I owe to my God! I am mainly indebted to these because I owe so much to my God. Now, Christian, consider how you are a debtor to your God. Remember you are not debtor to God in a *legal* sense, as you were in Adam. You are no longer a debtor to God's *justice* as you once were. We are all born God's creatures and as such we are debtors to Him—to obey Him with all our body, soul and strength. When we have broken His commandments, as we, all of us, have, we are debtors to His *justice* and we owe to Him a vast amount of punishment which we are not able to pay. But of the Christian it can be said that he does not owe God's justice a solitary farthing, for Christ has paid the debt His people owed! I am a debtor to God's love, I am a debtor to God's Grace, I am a debtor to God's power, I am a debtor to God's forgiving mercy—but I am no debtor to His justice—for He, Himself, will never accuse me of a debt once paid! It was said, "It is finished!" And by that was meant that whatever His people owed was wiped away forever from the Book of Remembrance! Christ, to the uttermost, has satisfied Divine Justice. The debt is paid, the hand-writing is nailed to the Cross, the receipt is given and we are debtors to God's justice no longer! But then, because we are not debtors to God in that sense, we become ten times more debtors to God than we would have been otherwise! Because He has remitted all our debt of sin, we are all the more indebted to Him in another sense. Oh, Christian, stop and ponder for a moment, what a debtor you are to *Divine Sovereignty*! You are not as some who say that you did choose yourself to be saved—you believe that God could have destroyed you, if He had pleased—and that it is entirely of His own good pleasure that you are made one of His, while others are suffered to perish. Consider, then, how much you owe to His Sovereignty! If He had willed it, you would have been among the damned! If He had not willed your salvation, *all you could do* would have been utterly powerless to deliver you from Hell! Remember how much you owe to His disinterested love which tore His own Son from His bosom that He might die for you! Let the Cross and bloody sweat remind you of your obligation. Consider how much you owe to His forgiving *Grace*, that after ten thousand affronts, He loves you as infinitely as ever! And after a myriad sins, His Spirit still resides within you! Consider what you owe to His *power*—how He has raised you from your death in sin. How He has preserved your spiritual

life, how He has kept you from falling and how, though a thousand enemies have beset your path, you have been able to hold on your way! Consider what you owe to His *Immutability*. Though *you* have changed a thousand times, He has not changed once. Though you have shifted your intentions and your will, yet He has not once swerved from His eternal purpose but still has held you fast. Consider you are as deep in debt as you can be to every attribute of God. To God, you owe yourself and all you have. “Brethren, we are debtors.”

We are not only debtors to God in the light of gratitude for all these things but because of *our relationship to Him*. Are we not His sons and daughters and is there not a debt the son owes to the father which a lifetime of obedience can never remove? I feel that to the knee that held me and the breast that gave me sustenance, I owe more than I can ever pay. And to him who taught me and led me in the paths of Truth I owe so much that I dare not speak of the tremendous weight of obligation due to him. Beloved, if God is a Father, where is His honor? And if we are His children, are we not thereby bound to love, serve and obey Him? Sonship towards an earthly parent brings with it a host of duties and shall the Everlasting Father be unregarded? No! The true son of God will never blush to acknowledge that he is in subjection to the Father of Spirits. He will rather glory in his high connection and, with reverence, obey the commands of his Heavenly Parent. Remember again, we are Christ's *Brothers and Sisters* and there is a debt in brotherhood. Brother owes to brother what he cannot pay until he dies. It is more than some men think to have been rocked in the same cradle and held on the same knee. Some esteem it nothing. Alas, it is a well-known truth that if you need help, you must go anywhere for it, save to your brother's house! Go not into your brother's house in the day of your adversity. Go to the greatest stranger and he shall help you. Go to your brother and he shall often upbraid you. But this should not be so. Brotherhood has its ties of debt, and to my brother I owe what I shall not yet pay him. Beloved, are you Brothers and Sisters of Christ and do you think that you owe Him no love? Are you Brothers and Sisters of the saints and think you that you ought not to love and serve them, even to the washing of their feet? Oh yes, I am sure you ought! I am afraid none of us feel enough how much we are debtors to God. Yes, I am certain that we do not. It is astonishing how much gratitude a man will feel to you if you have been only the instrument of doing him good. But how little gratitude he feels to God, the first cause of all! There have been many who have been won from drunkenness by hearing the preaching of God's Word even under myself—and those persons have been ready to carry me on their shoulders, from very

gratitude, for joy! But I would be bound to say they make a far more feeble display of their thankfulness to my Master. At least, they seem to have lost their first love to Him far sooner than they did to His servant! We remember to be grateful to all except our God! Our little debts we can pay. Debts of honor, as we call them—which are no debts in some men's eyes—we can discharge. But the great and solemn debt we owe to God is oftentimes passed by—neglected and forgotten. “Brethren, we are debtors.”

II. In the second place, very briefly, WHAT OUGHT WE TO DRAW FROM THIS DOCTRINE, that we are debtors?

First, we think we should learn *a lesson of humility*. If we are debtors, we never ought to be proud. All we can do for God is but a trifling acknowledgment of an infinite obligation! No, less—even our good works are gifts of His Grace and do but put us under greater debt to the Author of them. Stop, then, you who are puffed up by your achievements! Consider you have but poorly performed, not a deed of supererogation, but of ordinary duty. How much have you done after all, young man? I thought I saw you the other day looking amazingly great because on such an occasion you really had done some little service to Christ's Church. And you looked astonishingly proud about it. Young man, did you do more than you ought to have done? “No, I did not,” you say, “I was a debtor.” Then who should be proud of having paid only a part of his debt, when, after all, he owes a great deal more than he is worth? Is there anything to be proud of in having paid a farthing in the pound? I take it there is not. Let us do what we may, it is but a farthing in the pound that we shall ever be able to pay of the debt of gratitude we owe to God. It is curious to see how some men are proud of being greater debtors than others. One man has ten talents and oh, how proud he is! And how he looks down upon another who has but one. He says, “Ah, you are a mean man. I have ten talents.” Well, then, you *owe* ten talents and your brother owes only one—why should you be proud that you owe more than he does? It would be a foolish pride, indeed, if two prisoners in the Queen's Bench were to boast, one saying, “I owe a hundred pounds,” and the other replying, “I am a greater gentleman than you are, for I owe a thousand.” I have heard that in the Marshalsea of old, they did take rank according to the greatness of their debts. It is often so on earth—we take rank, at times, according to the greatness of our talents. But the greatness of our talents is only the amount of our debt—for the more we have, the more we owe. If a man walks the streets sticking his bill upon his breast and proclaiming with pride that he is a debtor, you would say, “Surely he must be a madman! Lock him up!” And so if a man walks through the

earth and lifts up his head because of what God has given him and says, "I am not to notice the poor, I am not to shake hands with the ignorant because I am so great and mighty," you may, with equal reason, say, "Take that poor creature away! His pride is his insanity! Put him in safe custody and let him learn that all he has is his debt and that he has no cause for pride."

Then again, *how zealous we should be for our Master!* Though we cannot pay all, we can at least acknowledge the debt. It is something on the part of a debtor if he will but acknowledge the claim of his creditor. Oh, how ought we, day by day to seek, by living unto God, to acknowledge the debt we owe to Him! And, if we cannot pay Him the principal, yet to give Him some little interest upon the talent which He has lent to us—and upon those stupendous mercies which He has granted to us! I beseech you, my dear Friends, take this thought with you wherever you go—"I am a debtor, I must serve my God. It is not left to my pleasure whether I will do it or not. I am a debtor and I must serve Him."

If we all believed this, how much easier it would be to get our Churches into good order! I go to one Brother and I say, "Brother, there is such-and-such an office in the Sunday school. Will you take it?" "Well, Sir, you know how much I love the cause and how earnest I am in doing everything that I can to serve my Maker, but (now comes the end of it all) I really work so hard all the week that I cannot afford to go out on the Sabbath to Sunday schools." There, you see, that man does not know that he is a debtor! I take him a bill tomorrow morning and he says, "Do you come begging?" I say, "No. I have brought a bill. Look at it." "Oh yes," he says, "I see. Here is the cash." Now that is the way to act—to feel and acknowledge that you are a debtor! When there is a thing to be done, do it and say, "Do not thank me for it, I have only done what I ought to have done. I have only paid the debt that I owed."

Then let me give you just one piece of homely advice before I send you away—be just before you are generous and especially before you are generous to yourselves! Take care that you pay your debts before you spend money upon your pleasures. I would recommend that to many Christians. Now, there are some of you, here, troubling us tonight and making us very hot. You have been very generous to yourselves by coming here, but not very just to your ministers in neglecting the places of worship where you ought to have gone. You said to yourselves, "We have no doubt we ought to be there—that is our debt—nevertheless we should like to gratify our curiosity for once, by hearing this preacher who will be sure to say something extravagant that will furnish the occasion for a joke for the next fortnight." Now, why did you come here before you had

paid your debt? You should have rallied around your own minister and strengthened his hands in the work of the Lord. Again—how many a man is there who says, “I want such-and-such a luxury. I know the cause of God demands of me more than I give it, but I must have that luxury. That shilling shall go to myself and not to God.” Now, if you had a debtor who owed you more than he could pay, and you saw him going off on pleasure in a horse and gig tomorrow, you would say, “It is all very well his having that fine horse and gig and going down to Greenwich—but I would rather that he should pay me the ten-pound note I lent him the other day. If he cannot afford to pay, he ought to stay home till he can.” So in regard to God. We come and spend our time and our money upon our pleasures before we pay our just and fair debts. Now what is not right towards man, is not right towards God! If it is robbing man to spend the money in pleasure wherewith we ought to pay our debts, it is robbing God if we employ our time, our talents, or our money in anything but His service until we feel we have done our share in that service! I beseech you, members of Churches—deacons, or whatever you may be—lay this to heart! To God’s cause you are debtors! Do not expect to get thanked at last for doing much, for, after all you have done, you will only have done what is your duty.

Now, farewell to such of you as are debtors in that sense. But just one word to those who are debtors in the other sense. Sinner, you who owe to God’s justice, you who have never been pardoned—what will you do when it is time to pay up? My Friend over there, you who have run up a score of black sins—what will you do when that day comes with no Christ to pay your debts for you? What will you do if you are out of God and out of Christ at the Last Day, when the whole roll of your debts to God shall be opened and you have no Christ to give you a discharge? I beseech you, “Agree with your creditor quickly, while you are in the way with him, lest he deliver you to the judge and the judge deliver you to the officer to cast you into prison: verily I say unto you, you shall not come out till you have paid the uttermost farthing.” But if you agree with your Creditor, He will, for Jesus’ sake, blot out all your debts and set you at liberty so that you shall never be responsible for your iniquities!

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

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

THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT, THE SECRET TOKEN OF THE SONS OF GOD NO. 1220

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

***“As many as are led by the Spirit of God,
they are the sons of God.”
Romans 8:14.***

CHILDREN are expected to bear some likeness to their parents. Children of God, born of the grandest of all parents, regenerated by the almighty energy of the Divine Spirit, are sure to bear a high degree of likeness to their heavenly Father. We cannot be like God in many of His Divine attributes, for they are unique and incommunicable—it is not possible for us to wield His power, or to possess His infinite knowledge—neither can we be independent and self-existent, or possessors of sovereignty or worshipfulness. Man can never be so expressly the image of the Father as Jesus is, for He is, in a mysterious sense, the only-begotten Son of God. We can imitate God, however, in many of His attributes, mainly those of a moral and spiritual kind. We must, in these qualities be “imitators of God as dear children,” or our heavenly pedigree cannot be made out.

The point mentioned in the text must never be a matter of question, for if that is doubtful, our filial relationship to God is unproved. We must be, “led by the Spirit of God.” That Divine Spirit who is ever with the Father and the Son must be always with us so that we are guided, instructed, impelled, quickened, actuated and influenced by Him, or else we must not dare to think ourselves the sons of God. The idea of a Divine Fatherhood extending over all mankind does not appear to have been recognized by the Apostle Paul, in this text, at any rate. Here the fatherhood is for *some*, not for *all*, and the text discriminates between the, “as many as are led by the Spirit of God,” and the rest of mankind who are under no such influence.

In men who are devoid of the Holy Spirit there is another spirit—and that other spirit marks them out as sons of another father—“they are of their father the devil, for his works they do.” There have been two seeds from the beginning—the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent—and it is both untrue and immoral to believe God stands in the same relation to the two opposing families. No, my Brothers and Sisters, *our* Father who is in Heaven is not to be claimed as father by the unbeliever, for to them Jesus expressly says, “If God were your Father, you would love Me.” The text furnishes us with a very simple, but sharp and decisive test which we shall do well to use upon ourselves. It should be employed to try every one of us.

If it had said, “As many as have been baptized are the sons of God,” we might have been content to sit very easily in our places. If it had said, “As

many as eat and drink at the holy feast of Christian fellowship are the children of God," we might have remembered how short a time ago we were sitting with the saints around the communion table. If the doing of certain external acts, or the utterance of certain prayers, or the avowal of orthodox principles, or abstinence from the grosser vices had been made the royal mark and heavenly seal of the children of God we might have taken our ease after ascertaining that we are correct as to these things. If being united with an earnest Church and being members of a faithful community had been Divinely ordained to be an unquestionable certificate of sonship with the Lord Most High, we might have rested perfectly satisfied without putting ourselves into the crucible.

But, since these things are not so arranged, I trust that none of us will be so unwise as to neglect the examination which the text suggests to every prudent mind. Come, my Brethren, take nothing for granted on so weighty a business as your soul's eternal interests, but search for evidence and see to the matter as wise householders would do if their whole substance were at stake. Those who are "led by the Spirit of God" are the sons of God. Those who are *not* led by the Spirit of God are not His sons. Therefore search and see what spirit is in you, that you may know whose children you are.

To help you in this matter I purpose that we should consider, first, where it is that the Spirit of God leads men, that we may see whether He has ever led us there.

I. WHERE DOES THE SPIRIT OF GOD LEAD THE SONS OF GOD? First of all, He leads them to *repentance*. One of the first acts of the Holy Spirit is to guide the sons of God to the Mercy Seat with tears in their eyes. He leads us into the abominable chambers of imagery concealed within our fallen nature, unfastens door after door and sets open before our enlightened eyes the secret places polluted with idols and loathsome images portrayed upon the wall. He points out with His hands of Light the idol gods, the images of jealousy, the unclean and abominable things within our nature and thus He astonishes us into humility.

We could not have believed that such evil things haunted our souls, but His discoveries undeceive us and correct our boastful estimates of ourselves. Then, with that same finger, He points to our past life and shows us the blots, the errors, the willful sins, the sins of ignorance, the aggravated transgressions, the offenses against Light and knowledge which have marred our career from our youth up. And whereas, previously, we looked upon the pages of our life and thought them fair, when the Spirit has led us into Light we see how black our history has been and, being filled with shame and terror, we cry out to God that we may confess our sin and acknowledge that if He should throw us into Hell, it would be no more than we deserve!

Dear Friend, did the Holy Spirit ever lead you to the stool of repentance? Did He ever cause you to see how basely you have treated your God and how shamefully you have neglected your Savior? Did He ever make you bemoan yourself for your iniquities? There is no way to Heaven but by the weeping-cross. He who never felt the burden of his sin will yet

be crushed beneath its enormous weight when, like some tottering cliff in Judgment's dreadful hour, it will fall upon him and grind him to powder! No man ever goes to the chamber of true repentance till the Holy Spirit leads him there, but every child of God knows what it is to look on Him whom he has pierced and mourn for his sin. Holy sorrow for sin is as indispensable as faith in the atoning blood, and the same Spirit who gives us peace through the great Sacrifice also works in us a hearty grief for having grieved the Lord.

If you have, from your youth up, never felt any special mourning for sin, then may God begin the gracious work in your heart, for salvation is certainly not worked in *you*. You *must* have repentance, for repentance is absolutely necessary to the Divine Life. "Except you repent you shall all likewise perish." The prodigal must cry, "Father, I have sinned!" The publican must smite his breast and pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner." As well destroy one of the valves of the heart and yet hope to live as take away repentance which is the inseparable life-companion of faith. A dry-eyed faith is no faith at all. When a man has his face towards Jesus, his back is necessarily turned on his sins. As well look for spring in the garden without the snowdrop as look for Grace in the heart without penitence.

That faith which is not accompanied by repentance is a spurious faith, and not the faith of God's elect, for no man ever trusts Christ till he feels he needs a Savior. And he cannot have felt that he needs a Savior unless he has been wearied with the burden of his sin. The Holy Spirit leads men, first, to repentance. He leads them at the same time, while they think little of themselves, to *think much of Jesus*. Were you ever led to the Cross, Beloved? Did you ever stand there and feel the burden fall off your shoulders and roll into the Redeemer's sepulcher?

When Dr. Neale, the eminent Ritualist, took John Bunyan's, "Pilgrim's Progress," and Romanized it, he represented the Pilgrim as coming to a certain bath into which he was plunged and washed—and then his burden was washed away! He explains this to be the bath of "baptism," though I have never yet seen in any Ritualistic church a baptistery large enough to wash a pilgrim! However, according to this doctored edition of the allegory, Christian was washed in the laver of "baptism" and all his sins were thus removed. That is the High Church mode of getting rid of sin! John Bunyan's way—the true way—is to lose it at the Cross!

Now, mark what happened. According to Dr. Neale's, "Pilgrim's Progress," that burden *grew again* on the pilgrim's back, and I do not wonder that it did, for a burden which "baptism" can remove is sure to come again! But the burden which is lost at the Cross never appears again, forever! There is no effectual cleansing for sin except by faith in that matchless Atonement offered once and for all on the bloody tree! And as many as are led there by the Spirit of God are the sons of God! The Spirit of God never led a man to think little of Christ and much of *priests*. The Spirit of God never led a man to think little of the atoning blood and of simple faith in it, and much of outward forms and ceremonies! The Spirit of God sinks the man and lifts up the Savior! He lowers flesh and blood into the grave

and gives to man new life in the risen Lord who also has ascended up on high! “He shall glorify Me,” said Christ of the Comforter, and that, indeed, is the Comforter’s office.

Now, my dear Friends, has the Spirit ever made the Lord Jesus glorious in your eyes? Brothers and Sisters, this is the one point above all others. If the Holy Spirit has never made Christ precious to you, you know nothing about Him! If He has not lifted Jesus up and sunk your own confidences. If He has not made you feel that Christ is all you need and that you find more than all in Him, then He has never worked a Divine change in your heart. Repentance and Faith must stand gazing upon the bleeding Savior or else Hope will never join them and bring Peace as his companion.

When the Spirit has glorified Jesus, He leads us to know *other Truths*. The Holy Spirit leads the sons of God into all Truth. Others go astray after this falsehood or that, but the sheep of God will not hear the voice of strange leaders—their ears are closed to their flatteries—“A stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.” Beloved, no lie is of the Truth of God, and no man who receives a lie has been led by the Spirit of God into it, let him say what he may.

On the other hand, Truth is like a closed chamber to the unregenerate man. He may read the table of contents of the precious storehouse, but into that secret room he cannot enter—there is One that has the key of David, who opens and no man shuts—and the key with which He opens is the power of the Holy Spirit! When He opens up a doctrine to a man, the man learns it aright, but he never can know it otherwise. You may go to college and sit at the feet of the most learned Gamaliel of the day, but you can never know the Truth of God in the heart unless the Holy Spirit shall teach you. We never know a Truth in the power of it till it is burned into our soul, as with a hot iron, by an experience of its power, or engraved as upon brass by the mystic Revelation of the Spirit. Only the Spirit of God can interweave the Truth with the heart and make it part and parcel of ourselves, so that it is in us and we are in it. Have you thus been led into the Truth of God? If so, give God the glory, for thus the Spirit of God certifies your adoption!

The children of God are led not only into knowledge, but into *love*. They are brought to feel the warmth of love as well as to see the light of Truth. The Spirit of God causes every true-born son of God to burn with love to the rest of the family. He who is a stranger to Christian love is a stranger to Divine Grace. Brothers and Sisters, we have our disputes, for we dwell where it must be that offenses come. But we should be slow to take offense and slower, still, to give it, for we are one in Christ Jesus and our hearts are knit together by His Spirit.

I take it that no honest man ought to hold his tongue concerning any of the errors of the day—it is a dishonest way of cultivating ease for yourself and gaining a popularity not worth the having! We must speak the Truth of God whether we offend or please, but this is to be done *in love and because* of love. God save us from that suggestion of Satan which advises us to speak only those soft things which please men’s ears, for he who gives

way to this persuasion is a traitor to Truth and to the souls of men. The true man of God must speak against every evil and false way—but there beats in his heart a strong affection to every child of God—whatever his errors and his faults may be.

The knife of the surgeon is mercifully cruel to the cancer, not out of ill-will to his patient, but out of an honest desire to benefit him. Such affectionate faithfulness we have need to cultivate. Love to the saints is the token of the saints. There is an inner Church of God's own elect within every one of the Christian denominations—and this Church is made up of men spiritually enlightened—who know the marrow and mystery of the Gospel. Whenever they meet, however diversified may be their views, they recognize one another by a sort of sacred code—the one Spirit which quickens them all alike leaps within them as it recognizes the one life in the bosoms of others.

Despite their mental divergences, ecclesiastical associations and doctrinal differences, spiritual men no sooner hear the password and catch the mystic sign, than they cry, "Give me your hand, my Brother, for my heart is even as your heart. The Spirit of God has led me and he has led you. And in our way we tread step by step together. Therefore let us have fellowship with each other." The outsiders of the camp, the mixed multitude that come up out of Egypt with our Israel, fall both into fighting and lusting—but the children of the living God, who make the central body-guard of the ark of the Lord, are one in heart with each other and must be so. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren."

The Holy Spirit leads us into *intense love for the souls of sinners*. If any man shall say, "It is no business of mine whether men are lost or saved," the Spirit of God never led him into such inhumanity. Hearts of iron have never felt the touch of the Spirit of Love. If ever a preacher's spirit and teaching legitimately lead you to the conclusion that you may view the damnation of your fellow men with complacency or indifference, you may be sure that the Spirit of God never led him or you in that direction! The devil has more to do with some men's pitiless theology than they imagine. Christ's eyes wept over the sinner's doom—may the Lord save us from thinking of it in any other spirit! He who does not love his fellow man whom he has seen—how can he love God whom he has not seen? Does God look with complacency upon the ruin of our race? Did He not love men so well that He gave His only-begotten Son for them? And will He have His own children cold, stoical and indifferent to the loss of human souls? Beloved, if we dwell with Cain and cry, "Am I my brother's keeper?" the Spirit of God never led us there! He leads us into tenderness, sympathy, compassion and tearful effort, if by any means we may save some.

The Spirit of God leads the sons of God into *holiness*. I shall not attempt to define what holiness is. That is best seen in the lives of holy men. Can it be seen in your lives? Beloved, if you are of a fierce, unforgiving spirit, the Holy Spirit never led you there. If you are proud and hectoring, the Holy Spirit never led you. If you are covetous and lustful after worldly gain, the Holy Spirit never led you there. If you are false in your state-

ments and unjust in your actions, the Holy Spirit never led you there. If I hear of a professor of religion in the ballroom or the theater, I know that the Holy Spirit never led him there. If I find a child of God mixing with the ungodly, using their speech and doing their actions, I am persuaded the Holy Spirit never led him there.

But if I see a man living as Christ would have lived, loving and tender, fearless, brave, honest and in all things minding to keep a good conscience before God and men, I hope that the Spirit of God has led him. If I see that man devout before his God and full of integrity before his fellow men, then I hope and believe that the Spirit of God is His leader and influences his character. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." I do not wish to speak sharply, but I feel that I must speak plainly—and I feel bound to say that there is far too much hypocrisy among professing Christian people.

Many wear the name of Christian and have nothing else that is Christian about them. It is sorrowful that it should be so, but so it is—false professors have lowered the standard of Christian character and made the Church so like the world that it is hard to say where one begins and the other ends. We exercise Church discipline as best we can, but, for all that, there is a seed of mischief which does not develop into open and overt sin which we cannot remove by discipline, for we are forbidden to root up the tares lest we root up the wheat with them. Men and Brethren, we must be holy! It is of no use our talking about being orthodox in belief—we must be orthodox in *life*—and if we are not, the most sound creed will only increase our damnation!

I hear men boast that they are Nonconformists to the backbone, as if that were the essential matter! Better far be Christians to the *heart*! What is the use of ecclesiastical Nonconformity if the heart is still conformed to the world? Another man will glory that he is a Conformist, but what is the good of *that* unless he is conformed to the image of Christ? Holiness is the main consideration and if we are not led into it by the Spirit of Holiness neither are we the sons of God! Furthermore, the Holy Spirit leads those who are the children of God into *vital godliness*—the mystic essence of spiritual life. For instance, the Holy Spirit leads the saints to prayer, which is the vital breath of their souls. Whenever they get true access to the Mercy Seat it is by His power.

The Holy Spirit leads them to search the Word and opens their understandings to receive it. He leads them into meditation and the chewing of the cud of the Truth of God. He leads them into fellowship with Himself and with the Son of God. He lifts them right away from worldly cares into heavenly contemplations. He leads them away to the heavenly places, where Christ sits at the right hand of God and where His saints reign with Him. Beloved, have you ever felt these leadings? I am talking of them, but do you *understand* them? Are these things matters of constant experience with you? It is easy to say, "Yes, I know what you mean." Have you *felt* them? Are these everyday things with you? As the Lord lives, if you have

not been led into prayer and into communion with God, the Spirit of God is not in you, and you are none of His!

The Spirit of God, moreover, leads the sons of God into *usefulness*—some in one path and some in another—while a few are conducted into very eminent service and into self-consecration of the highest order. We bless God for Missionaries who have been led of the Spirit of God among the wildest tribes to preach Jesus Christ. We thank God for holy women who, at home, have been led into the darkest parts of this city to labor among the most fallen and depraved, to lift up Christ before them that He might lift them up to Himself. Blessed are those men and women who are led by the Spirit of God into labors more abundant, for the more abundant shall be their joy.

I think I ought to remind you all that if you are doing nothing for Jesus, the Spirit of God has never led you into this *idleness*. If you eat the fat and drink the sweet in the House of God, but never do a hand's turn for the household, the Spirit of God cannot have taught you this abominable *sloth*! There is a something for every one of us to do—a talent committed to the charge of every Believer—and if we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, He will tell us what the Lord has appointed us to perform. He will strengthen us for the doing of it and set His seal and blessing upon it when it is done. Those dead branches of the vine which yield no clusters for the Lord, either by patience in suffering or activity in working, have no evidence that they are of the household of faith! Those who take no part in labors for Jesus can hardly hope that they will ultimately be partakers in His Glory with Him.

Thus have I, in a plain manner, without diving too deeply into the matter, given you an answer to the question, “Where does the Spirit of God lead the sons of God?”

II. I shall now answer another question with still greater brevity—How DOES THE SPIRIT LEAD THE SONS OF GOD? The reply would be this—*the Spirit of God operates upon our spirits mysteriously*. We cannot explain His mode of operation, except that we shall probably be right if we conclude that He operates upon our spirits somewhat in the same way in which our spirits operate upon other men's spirits, only after a nobler sort. Now, how do I influence the spirit of my friend? I do it, usually, by imparting to him something which I know, which I hope will have power over his mind by suggesting motives to him and so influencing his acts. I cannot operate upon my neighbor's mind mechanically. No tool can touch the heart, no hand can shape the mind. We act upon matter by machinery, but upon mind by argument, by *reason*, by instruction and so we endeavor to fashion men as we desire.

One great instrument which the Holy Spirit uses upon the mind is the Word of God. The Word, as we have it printed in the Bible, is the great instrument in the hand of the Spirit for leading the children of God in the right way. If you want to know what you ought to do, say as the old Scotchman used to say to his wife, “Reach down yon Bible.” That is the map of the way—the heavenly pilgrim's knapsack guide—and if you are led by the Word of God, the Spirit of God is with the Word and works

through it, and you are led by the Spirit of God. Quote chapter and verse for an action and, unless you have twisted the passage, you may rest assured you have acted rightly. Be sure that such-and-such a thing is a command of God written in the Book, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and you do not need a voice of thunder from Heaven or an angelic whisper—you have a more sure Word of prophecy, unto which you will do well if you take heed as unto a light that shines in a dark place.

The Spirit of God also speaks through His ministers. The Word preached is often blessed, as well as the Word written, but this can only be the case when the Word preached is in conformity with the Word written. At times God's ministers seem to give the written Word its own voice, so that it sounds forth as if just spoken by the seer who originally received it. As they speak, it drops into the ears like honey from the comb. It leaps forth like water from the wellhead! And at such times it goes into the heart fresh and warm, with even a greater energy than when we read it alone in our chamber. How often do we feel, when we read a Truth of God in the Bible, (even though that Book is God's Word), our sluggish condition prevents its having such power over us as it has when a man of God who has experienced it and tasted it, and handled it, speaks of it as the outpouring of his own soul?

May God grant that the ministry which you usually attend may be to you the voice of God. May it be guidance to your feet, comfort to your heart, invigoration to your faith and refreshment to your soul! And while you are sitting in the House of Prayer may you feel, "That Word is for me. I came here not knowing what to do, but I have received direction. I was faint and weary, but I have obtained consolation and strength. The voice of the pastor has been as the oracle of God to my soul and now I go my way comforted as Hannah did when the Lord's servant had spoken peace to her soul."

Upon another point I would speak with great caution and would have you think of it with more caution, still, for it is a matter which has been sadly abused and turned to fanatical purposes. The Spirit of God does, I believe, *directly, even apart from the Word, speak in the hearts of the saints.* There are inward monitions which are to be devoutly obeyed. There are suggestions, mysterious and secret, which must be implicitly followed. It is not a subject for common talk, but is meant for the ear of the intelligent Believer who will not misunderstand us. There will come to you, sometimes, you know not why, certain inward checks, such as Paul received when he essayed to go into Mysia, but the Spirit suffered him not.

There is a certain act which you might do or might not do, but an impulse comes upon you which seems to say, "Not that, or not now." Do not violate that inward restraint! "Quench not the Spirit." At another time a proper thing, a fit thing, will have been forgotten by you for a time, but it comes upon you strongly that it is to be done at once—and for some reason you cannot shake off the impression. Do no violence to that impulse! It is not to every man that the Holy Spirit speaks in such a way, but He has His favored ones, and these must jealously guard the privilege, for perhaps if they are deaf when He speaks, He may never again speak to

them in that way. If we render reverent obedience to Divine monitions they will become far more common with us.

“Why,” says one, “you run into Quakerism.” I cannot help that! If this is Quakerism I am so far a Quaker! Names do not concern me one way or another. You, each one, know whether your personal experience gives confirmation to what I have advanced, or otherwise. There let the question end, for, mark you, I advance this with caution and do not set up such monitions as indispensable signs of a son of God. There is a story told, (and many such some of us could tell almost as striking), of a certain friend who one night was influenced to take his horse from the stable and ride some six or seven miles to a certain house where lived a person whom he had never seen.

He arrived at dead of night, knocked at the door and was answered by the master of the house, who seemed to be in great confusion of mind. The midnight visitor said, “Friend, I have been sent to you. I know not why, but surely the Lord has some reason for having sent me to you. Is there anything peculiar about your circumstances?” The man, struck with amazement, asked him to come upstairs and there showed him a halter tied to a beam. He was putting the rope about his neck to commit suicide when a knock sounded at the door. He resolved that he would go down and answer the call and then return and destroy himself. But the friend whom God had sent talked to him, brought him to a cooler mind and helped him in the pecuniary difficulty which embarrassed him, and the man lived to be an honorable Christian man.

I solemnly declare that monitions equally powerful have guided me and their results have been remarkable to me, at any rate. For the most part these are secrets between God and my own soul. Neither am I eager to break the seal and tell them to others. There are too many swine about for us to be very lavish with our pearls. If we were obedient to such impulses, if we did not save suicides, we might save souls and might often be, in the hands of God, as angels sent from Heaven! But we are like the horse and the mule which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle—we are not tender enough to be sensitive to the Divine Influence when it comes, and so the Lord does not please to speak to many of us in this way so frequently as we would desire. Still, it is true that “as many as are led by the Spirit of God,” however He may lead them, “they are the sons of God.”

Let me here remark that being, “*led* by the Spirit of God,” is a remarkable expression. It does not say, “As many as are *driven* by the Spirit of God.” No, the devil is a *driver*, and when he enters either into men or into hogs, he drives them furiously. Remember how the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea. Whenever you see a man fanatical and wild, whatever spirit is in him, it is *not* the Spirit of Christ! The Spirit of Christ is forcible. It works mightily, but it is a *quiet* Spirit. It is not an eagle, but a dove. He comes as a rushing wind and fills the house where the disciples are sitting, but at the same time He comes not as a whirlwind from the wilderness to smite the four corners of the habitation, or it would become a ruin.

He comes as a flame of fire sitting upon each of the favored ones, but it is not a flame of fire that burns the house and destroys Jerusalem. No, the Spirit of God is gentle! He does not drive, but leads. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The Spirit treats us honorably in thus working. He does not deal with us as with dumb, driven cattle, or soulless waves of the sea. He treats us as intelligent beings, made for thought and reflection. He leads us as a man guides his child, or as one leads his fellow—and we are honored by subjecting our minds and wills to so Divine a Spirit. Whatever it is, the will is truly free until the Holy Spirit sweetly subdues it to willing obedience.

Thus the Spirit of God works, though we cannot explain the method, for that is a thing too wonderful for us, and sooner may we know the path of an eagle in the air, or the way of a serpent upon a rock. As we cannot walk in search of the springs of the sea, so is this, also, hidden from all living. We have said somewhat upon the subject, and, as far as we can, have answered the question, "How does the Spirit of God lead the children of God?" But we are of yesterday and know nothing. And, therefore, confessing our ignorance, we pass on.

III. The last question is, WHEN DOES THE SPIRIT LEAD THE SONS OF GOD? Ah, Brothers and Sisters, that question needs anxious answering. The Spirit of God *would always* lead the sons of God, but, alas, there are times when even children of God will not be led! They are willful and headstrong, and start aside. The healthy condition of a child of God is to be always led by the Spirit of God. Mark this—led by the Spirit everyday—not on Sundays only! Nor alone at periods set apart for prayer—but during every minute of every hour of everyday.

We ought to be led by the Spirit in little things as well as in great matters, for, observe, if we were led by the Spirit all our lives in all matters, yet, if only one action apart from the Spirit were suffered to run to its full results, it would ruin us! The mercy is that the Lord restores our souls, but there is never a single hour when a Christian can afford to wander from the way of the Spirit. If you have a guide along an intricate pathway and you allow him to conduct you for half an hour, and then say, "Now, I shall direct myself for the next five minutes," in that short space you will lose the benefit of having a guide at all!

It is clear that a pilot who only occasionally directs the ship is very little better than none. If you were traversing an unknown and difficult pathway it would render all directions useless if you were to say, "They told me to turn to the right at this tower, but I mean to try the left." That one turning will affect the whole of your later journey. If we err, and are really sons of God, our Divine Leader will make us retrace our steps with bitter tears and feel what an evil and bitter thing it is to have chosen our own delusions. If we use our Divine Leader wisely we shall always follow Him. Child of God, the Spirit must lead you in everything!

"Well, but," you say, "*will* He?" Ah, "Will He?" Yes, to your astonishment! When you are in difficulties, consult the Holy Spirit in the Word. Hear what God speaks in the Inspired Volume and if no light comes from there, kneel down and pray. When you see a signpost in a country road,

and it tells you which way to go, you are glad to follow its directions. But, if in your perplexities you see no signpost, what are you to do? *Pray*. Cast yourself upon the Divine Guide and you shall make no mistake, for even if you happen to pick the roughest road it will be the right one if you have selected it with holy caution and in the fear of God.

Beloved, the Lord will never let a vessel be dashed upon the rocks whose tiller has been given into His hands. Give up the helm to God and your boat will thread the narrow winding channel of life, avoid every sandbank and sunken rock and arrive safely at the fair havens of eternal bliss! The question—when are the sons of God led by the Spirit? is to be answered thus—when they are as they should be they are always distinctly led by Him and though, owing to sin in them, they are not always obedient to the same degree, yet the power which usually influences their lives is the Spirit of God.

Now I close, using the text thus. First as a *test*. Am I a child of God? If so, I am led by the Spirit. Am I led by the Spirit? I am afraid some of you never think of that matter. By whom are you led? Hundreds of religious people are led by their minister or by a Christian friend and so far, so good, for them. But their religion will be a failure unless they are led by the Spirit. Let me put the question again that you may not shirk it—Are you led by the Spirit? If you are, you are a child of God—if not, you are none of His.

That gives me a second use of the text, namely, the use of *consolation*. If you are a child of God you will be led by the Spirit. Now, are you in doubt tonight? Are you embarrassed? Are you in difficulties? Then the sons of God are led by the Spirit and you will be led. Perhaps you are looking a long way ahead and you are afraid of difficulties in your old age, or at the death of a relative. Now, God has not given us eyes to pry into the future—so what is the use of our peering where we cannot see? Leave it all to your heavenly Father and you will be unerringly led by the Holy Spirit! When you come to the place where you thought there would be a difficulty, very likely there will be none.

“Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?” said the holy women. But when they came to the sepulcher, lo, the stone was rolled away already! Go on as a child of God, walking by faith, with the full assurance that the path of faith, if not an easy one, will always be a safe one—and all will be well and you will be led in a right way to a city of habitations.

The last word of all is, the text is an *assurance*. If you are led by the Spirit of God, then you are most certainly a son of God. Can you say, tonight, “I do yield myself up to the Lord’s will. I am not perfect, I wish I were. I am burdened with a thousand infirmities, but yet if the Lord will teach me I am willing to learn. If He will have patience with me I will strive to follow Him. Oh, what would I give to be perfectly holy! I long to be pure within. I wish above all things else in this world that I may never grieve my God, but walk with Him in the Light as He is in the Light, and have fellowship with Him, while the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses me from all sin”?

My Brother, my Sister, be well assured that none ever longed like that but a child of God! Flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you. No soul, except an heir of Heaven, ever had such wishes, aspirations and groaning after holiness, and such sorrow over failures and mistakes. The text does not say, "He who runs in the Spirit is a son of God," but he that is *led* by the Spirit of God. Now, we may stumble while we are being led. A man may go very slowly while he is being led. He may go on crutches as he is being led. He may even crawl on his hands and knees while he is being led. But none of these absolutely prevent his being truly led!

With all your weaknesses and infirmities, the question still is—Are you led by the Spirit of God? If you are, all your infirmities and failures are forgiven you for Christ's sake, and your being led is the mark of your being born from above! Go home and rejoice in your sonship, and ask God, if you have been weak, to make you strong. If you have been lame ask Him to heal you. And, if you have crept along on your hands and knees, ask Him to help you to walk uprightly. But, after all that, bless Him that His Spirit does lead you! If you can only walk, ask Him to make you run. And if you can run, ask Him to make you mount on wings as eagles! Do not be satisfied with anything short of the highest attainments and, at the same time, if you have not reached them, do not despair!

Remember that in most families there are babes as well as men and women—the little child in long clothes carried in the arms, and laid on the breast, is just as dear to the parent as the son who in the fullness of his manhood marches by his father's side and takes of his share in the battle of life. You are sons of God if you are led by the Spirit, however small your stature and feeble your Grace. The age, strength, or education of the man are not essential to his sonship—the trueness of his birth is the all-important matter. See to it that you are led by the Spirit, or your parentage is not from above!

If you have been condemned by this sermon, then fly away to Jesus and penitently and trustfully rest in Him! May the Spirit of God lead you to do that and you are, then, a child of God. May He bless you now. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 8:1-17.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—722, 448, 456.**

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THE FAMILY LIKENESS

NO. 3483

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON THURSDAY EVENING SEPTEMBER 28, 1870.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”
Romans 8:14.

WE shall do well to notice how much in this Chapter is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. It is a Chapter full of all good things, most instructive and consolatory. But perhaps one of its most notable points is this—that it so greatly magnifies the Holy Spirit. You observe in the second verse how it describes His gifts—that holy liberty which we now have from our former bondage—“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” Then further on, in the sixth verse, it virtually ascribes all our true life to the same power, for it is the Spirit who works in us a spiritual mind—and the Apostle tells us that “to be spiritually-minded is life and peace.” The quickening of the body is, in the 11th verse, ascribed to the same agency, “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.” Meanwhile the true living that we have even here is traced to that same Spirit, “If you, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.” No holy life is there, except as through the Spirit—sin is mortified. In the 16th verse the Spirit is described as being “a Witness with our spirit” that we are born of God. How many gracious offices does He undertake for us? And as if that were not enough, in the 26th verse He is spoken of as “helping our infirmities” in prayer, teaching us what we should pray for as we ought and “making intercession for us, or in us, according to the will of God.” I am afraid we don’t render that honor to the blessed Spirit which He deserves. Our ministry is not deficient, I trust, in magnifying the Christ of God, but too often the Holy Spirit is not sufficiently honored and, perhaps, this may be a reason why He does not do so many mighty works in the Christian Church as He did at first. This is the dispensation of the Spirit. He dwells in us! He dwells in the Church! Let us honor Him! Let us grieve Him no more, but put ourselves beneath His guidance and wait for His blessing! Our text ascribes *leading*

to the Holy Spirit! Those who have been quickened and made to live, and introduced, therefore, into the family of God, have one mark—one never-failing mark. They all have it, and none others ever have it. As many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God, and all who are the sons of God are *led* by the Spirit of God!

Now it is to this leading of the Spirit rather than to the Sonship, and all the blessed things that come out of that, that I shall direct your attention at this time. And we shall notice first—

I. WHAT IS INTENDED BY A MAN'S BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT.

Every man is led by some spirit. There is an evil spirit in the world, and it leads the mass of mankind. He who says, "I am free and led by none," is led by the spirit of pride and self-conceit. Under some form or another, the human mind subjects itself to some spiritual sway—and here we are told that those who are the sons of God are distinguished by this—that the leadership under which they move is that of the Holy Spirit! I take this to mean, first, that *the Holy Spirit becomes the governing principle of our life*. Years ago we were led by the Spirit from the wilderness of our natural state. We had been called under the preaching of the Word, but vain were those calls. The Holy Spirit came and then the call of the preacher became an effectual call to our own souls. The first active Grace we ever exercised was by the leading of the Holy Spirit! We were then, for the first time, recognized as the children of God, because then, also, for the first time, we yielded ourselves up to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. And mark, from that day to this, every act of ours that has been heavenward, every thought of ours that has been towards God and His Christ, has been under the leadership of that same Spirit! He who gave us at first to live, has kept us alive! He who guided our tottering footsteps to the foot of the Cross and there sealed our pardon, has led us along every step of the way, up every hill of difficulty and down every valley of humiliation, even until this moment! And so it must be until we reach our journey's end.

There may be steps in that journey, alas, that it should be so, in which we are not led by the Spirit, but depart from under His power for a while, and the flesh becomes dominant. Oh, that those steps might never be thought of except with bitter regret and humiliation of spirit! But in every true step onward and heavenward between here and the gate of pearl—we shall be led by the Spirit of God. We run when He draws. We are active when He makes us active. He makes us willing in the day of His Power and then we work with Him because He works in us here to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Now, Beloved, you may judge whether you are the sons of God, then, by asking yourselves this ques-

tion, “Am I under the influence of the blessed Spirit? Has He led me from darkness into light—from self to the Savior? And has He continued to lead me onward and upward in the Divine Life? And am I leaning upon Him for all future power with which I shall fulfill my pilgrimage till I come to the Celestial City?”

But opening up a little further this leadership, I would observe that when a man is said to be led, there are four things implied in the thought. The first one is very apparent, namely, guidance. If I select a pilot, I accept him to steer the vessel. If, on a dark moorland, I accept a guide who knows the way, I do not pretend to know it myself, but I put myself fully under his guidance. It is so with the child of God. He does not know. What he thinks he knows is usually his folly, if it is knowledge that has not been given to him by the Holy Spirit! But he who is under the guidance of the Holy Spirit takes Christ to be unto him, Wisdom, and expects to receive this Wisdom through the Holy Spirit taking of the things of Christ and revealing them unto him! He is not a teacher, but a disciple. He is not, himself, a guide, but one who is guided. He has put himself into the hands of Another! Self-will does not believe this. Self-love is disgusted with the thought. I may, therefore, ask you, Beloved, “Do you accept the Holy Spirit’s guidance? Do you desire to be led, not according to your own will, but according to the will of the Most High? Are you desirous that the prayer of your Master should be your prayer, ‘Not as I will, but as You will’”? Guidance—we must accept that, or we are not led by Him!

But in the second place, there is *drawing* as well as guidance, for oftentimes when a person is led, especially if it is a weaker led by a stronger, there is a general impulse. I accept the map as my guide, but the map is not my leader. A leader gives me some degree of strength. He operates upon me gently and sweetly—impels me in the direction in which he would have me go. There is a great difference between a guide and a leader—but still there is a measure of power given by a leader who leads in the way. And oh, Brothers and Sisters, I am sure you who know anything about the experience of children of God, will feel that you have not only had the Light of God from the blessed Spirit to show you the way, but you have had life and power to help you to *run in the way*, else you would have known the right way, but you would never have followed it—you would have seen the way of God’s Commandments, but you would never have run in them, unless He, the blessed Spirit, had enlarged your heart! If there is obedience to the Light of God, received, that obedience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit! Not merely the knowledge and the acquiescence in the knowledge of God’s will, but the power to carry out that will comes

from Him, and from Him only! Now I think we may say that in leading, there is something more than guidance—drawing.

There comes in yet a third point. Under the idea of leadership is that of *government*. Moses was the leader of the children of Israel through the wilderness. He was, as a leader, their ruler—and if the idea of government does not always attach to being led, yet it certainly does in this case! The Holy Spirit will never guide us along a road in which we claim to be His equal, in which we claim to still be free and to have no authority above us. He is the Lord and Governor within the soul of every man in whom He resides and on whom He bestows His guidance. I will ask you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, whether you do not acknowledge this to be the fact. You are often rebellious against the Spirit and you often grieve Him, but still, for all that, your heart desires—your *renewed heart* desires—to submit fully to the Holy Spirit! I feel in my own heart a longing to be sensitive to every impulse of the blessed Spirit, to feel His breath not only when He comes like a hurricane, but also when He comes as a gentle breeze. I would desire to be moved by the Spirit's faintest wish, and to have my soul cognizant of the Spirit's work within—pliable, malleable, so as to be easily molded, plastic beneath His Divine Touch. And you are not led by the Spirit unless it is your wish—unless you put yourself under His government as well as under His guidance.

And fourthly, this *being led implies acquiescence* in the government, and in the guidance, and in the drawing—for a person is not led unless he acquiesces in the drawing and runs when he is drawn. The Spirit of God never violates the free agency of man. It has been commonly laid to the charge of those who preach Calvinistic Doctrine that we make it out that man is passive and that the will is nowhere! I do not know who may have said so, but certainly the master theologians of our school have always endeavored carefully to show that the Holy Spirit works in us to will and to do, yet never so as to treat man as if he were not a free agent! God does not deal with man as with blocks of wood or stone. He deals with men as men. He has His will with them—His Sovereign and ever-blessed will, but He does not violate their will! There is a lock box—it is locked. Soon it is opened. Now he that made that box opens it with a key and does not violate the lock, nor even the most delicate ward of the lock. It is only the thief that comes with his crowbar and rifles it, that violates its constitution. And so God knows how to put spiritual life and Divine Grace and obedience into the human heart without destroying the fact that it was a human heart and that it had a free choice! He makes us willing in the day of His power! It is not that the day of His power is one of physical might, but of *moral spiritual might*, so that we are made *will-*

ing to do what once we would abhor to do! Now a man, then, whose religion leaves him passive cannot prove that he is a child of God because he is drawn by the Spirit, for it is as many as are *led*. Now to be led means that you are willing to go! To be led means that as you begin to feel the gentle drawing of the Guide, you follow—not always with equal footsteps, but still with willing steps, desirous to go in the way He indicates. Beloved, is it so with you, or not? Do you yield to His guidance? Do you desire to submit to all His government? Do you wish to work with Him, and He with you—working out your own salvation—to will and to do according to His good pleasure? If so, you are one of the sons of God. But now, secondly—

II. INTO WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT LEAD US?

It is a subject that would take many discourses. Therefore, very briefly, let us say He leads *us into the truth of the faith, into holiness of life and into peacefulness of spirit*. You shall know His guidance. He leads us *into the truth of the faith*. If any receives error, it is not by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And if, on the other hand, any man shall be able to enter into the soul, and marrow, and essence of the Truth of God, flesh and blood have not revealed it unto him, but the Spirit of the living God has done so! Believe me, you have learned nothing if you have learned it of the flesh. You may take a creed and suppose it to be perfection. You may also have it explained to you in the clearest manner, but if all your learning of Christian Doctrine comes from that catechism or creed, or the instruction of the minister—and if that Spirit of God has not sent it into your soul—you have learned nothing aright yet! We need to have Truth burned into us, right into our very nature, before we know it—for half of the things we think we believe we don't believe, and indeed, nothing is really grasped, truly laid hold of by a living faith until the Holy Spirit leads us into the Truth of God! Beloved, are you staggered by a Doctrine of God's Word? Are you as yet a beginner in the Divine Mystery? Then wait upon the blessed Spirit with this prayer, "Open, You, my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law, and what I know not, teach me."

At the same time I have said that the Spirit of God leads men *into holiness of life*. There have been occasions in which men have performed actions which were unjustifiable and have said that they were moved thereto by the Holy Spirit. Such men lie, for the pure and Holy Spirit could never be the author of sin! No suggestion of His was, or could be, otherwise than pure and heavenly! I remember hearing of a Brother who, one very cold winter, being very poor, felt it laid on his soul, he said, to remember that text, "All things are yours." It was one cold morning and

there was no fire to warm himself by, nor for his little family, and this text came again and again, “All things are yours.” It rushed into his mind, then, that he might go to the woodshed of a neighboring farmer, and take just a few logs to put on his own hearth, for, “All things are yours.” He thought it was the Spirit and so, away he went to the woodshed and was just about to select a few likely logs when this other text came into his mind, “You shall not steal,” and in a moment he felt ashamed that he should have imputed to the Holy Spirit what was inconsistent with the will of God! Ah, your nature, wandering and vain, would be glad enough to try and get the patronage of the Holy Spirit to its vagaries, but it must not be! He is the Spirit of *Holiness*, and He leads us in the right way—into the way everlasting—and let us not so insult His holy and blessed name by daring to lay any of our wanderings to Him! He leads us into holiness of life. No man ever goes wrong who is guided by the Spirit, and no man ever attains unto true holiness but as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit upon his understanding and his whole character!

But I say it again, that the Holy Spirit leads us *into peace of mind*, and so assuredly He does into a peace that is altogether independent of outward circumstances. He can give His children peace when the tempest blows. They shall have peace when all others are at war. Their hearts shall not be troubled because they believe in God and rest in His Divine Grace. Peace with God! The Spirit leads us to peace with our fellow creatures—peace with our own conscience. His ways are ways of peace. Wherever He conducts us, peace in the end shall be the sure result! When I meet with a very quarrelsome person and he says that he is led by the Spirit to fight, and to indulge a bad temper, and to sharply criticize and bitterly condemn, he may be led by *a* spirit, but certainly not by *the* Spirit of the ever blessed God! The spirit that is in us lusts into envy, but the Spirit of God is first, pure, and next, peaceable. And if we are not peaceable, we are not led by the great peace-giving Spirit of God! There is room for much more, but I will not enlarge. These are, however, the main things into which He leads us. Now, in the third place—

III. HOW DOES HE LEAD US?

In what way are the monitions of the Holy Spirit conveyed to those that are led by Him? How does He speak unto the sons of God? We are not to think He does this by Inspiration, or of dreams and visions, for if none were sons of God but those who receive these, surely many of the very best of the Divine Family would lose their title to sonship! And I fear, on the other hand, that there are some who think they have seen visions and dreamed dreams, and have had remarkable manifestations, who are

probably more the children of Bedlam than the children of Bethel! I rather consider that they have lost their senses than gained the Divine Graces of the Spirit! Certainly there are no things that more perplex us than the graces of many persons who think themselves spoken to by God, but rather have a ringing in their ears, or a whispering in their heads, but nothing more. How *does* the Spirit of God then, lead His people?

I would reply, first of all, by the Word. This is the “more sure Word of testimony, whereunto you do well that you take heed as unto a lamp that shines in a dark place.” If any man would know the will of God by the Spirit, let him come to the Word that is written here—let him search this to know what is God’s mind, for, “holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Spirit.” We are not to expect new Revelation! The old is perfect and complete. There is a curse pronounced upon whoever should add to it or take from it. Let us accept it as the complete mind of God, so far, at any rate, as He sees fit to reveal it to us. The Holy Spirit speaks to us through the Word! But it is not through the bare letter of the Word, for in this He does not always speak. Many an eye has glanced over the Word and seen none of the mind of the Spirit there. Yes, and many an eye of a true Believer, too, has read and read, again, and missed the glory of the passage, so that the Spirit does not always speak through the Word to us, or through the same Word to the same person at all times, but He sheds a light over a certain part of the Chapter, He illuminates it, lights it up and then puts it to our souls with power! And those who are Bereans and search the Scripture, shall come upon choice passages—words that shall make their hearts burn within them, texts that shall leap out of the page and embrace them and whisper in their ear sweet loving words—and kiss them with the kisses of Christ’s lips over again! It is in the Word, opened up by the Spirit, that we get His joy and guidance.

Sometimes that will occur under the preaching of the Gospel when the Lord gives to His servants power to speak His mind and they are His mouth. Then it is that hearts made ready “receive with meekness the engrafted Word,” and hearts are guided, led and directed. It may not be, however, by a minister at all—it may be by the words read in some book in connection with an explanation, or it may be the Word of God, itself, which, for some peculiar reason unknown to us (the work of the Spirit of God), may appear to us to be more full of meaning than ever it was before. “But,” says one, “I perceive that we learn God’s mind and are led by the Word of God as thus illuminated by the Holy Spirit. But suppose there are certain difficulties and I should need to know what is the proper course—how and in what way shall I learn the mind of the Spirit?” Brother, God does not treat us, now, altogether as little children, and

give us, by Urim and Thummim, this or that direction. He treats us as in a spiritual dispensation, somewhat more advanced than were His people under the legal types and ceremonies. And He does not say, "This is the way—walk you in it," in so many words, but He does just this—if you distrust your own wisdom, go to Him in prayer and ask His guidance. You shall then take the question and consider it. That very consideration will be a help to you to go rightly, for haste is usually unwise. That consideration shall of itself assist you and you will then look at it in this light—"If there is anything untruthful, then I cannot touch that! If there is anything unholy, then I cannot touch that! If my motive for such a course is purely selfish, then I feel I cannot do that. But if it is a path of wisdom consistent with the Truth of God, and righteousness, and the Glory of God, then, at any rate, it is not closed to me. And if there are two of the same kind and here the difficulty will be—I will now go to God again and ask Him to do something over and above what He ordinarily does through His Word, namely, *direct me either by some Providential circumstance, or by some advice that shall be tendered to me by a Christian friend, or by some direct impulse upon my will* to make me do that which He would have me to do.

Very few—none, I will venture to say—have ever gone wrong when they have thus consulted God and desired to be led aright. Something has occurred which has drifted them from the path they have chosen and has drifted them into the path that they would have chosen had they been possessed of the wisdom of the Infinite. Strangely, too, minds have been impelled to courses that did not seem to be wise, but they have turned out to be wise when those minds have humbly followed what they believed to be the impulse of the Holy Spirit. But I am persuaded there are many occasions in a Christian's life when, if he waits upon God, God will as distinctly move and guide him as ever He did the Prophets of old—and there shall be direct communication between the Holy Spirit and the Believer's soul. I am sure, unless I have been fearfully deceived, that I have often felt the motions of God's Spirit in that particular form. I have, by His Grace, been enabled to obey them, and I here confess that whenever any project has been carried out by this Church and it has been successful, whenever we have attempted any new work for God, if anyone has said that I was wise in having suggested it, I can only reply that I never took the initiative. I have been the creature of the circumstances that God has put around me. I have been led and driven by a power superior to mine before which I have bowed—and if there has been any success resting upon the course I have followed, it is because I have waited always to be guided—and have never wished to go before the cloud. And

you shall find that every man whose life has been happy before God will tell you that if at any moment there has been the wrong and the unhappiness, it has been when he has not sought counsel, and has been his own master instead of waiting upon the Most High. I speak thus of myself, only, for one knows one's own course best, and can speak with authority there. But sometimes the example of one Christian may be a help to others. Wait on the Lord and keep His way and He will establish you in due time. He has not closed the door of His counsel, but will still direct His people. Jesus is to this day The Wonderful, The Counselor, and you may seek guidance at His hands and find it, too!

And now, once again, *what are the excellencies of being under such a leadership?* They are very many. *It supplies a great need.* We are as sheep going astray, and astray we shall always go till a good shepherd leads us. It is ennobling to have such a leader. Every man under a leader participates in some degree in the honorableness of him who leads him. How sweet it is to feel that the Holy Spirit leads you! The greatest and wisest of men, Solomon, himself—well, one would feel honor by sitting at the feet of so wise a man, but oh, the honor of being guided by the Spirit of God! The poor woman whom Cowper describes—

***“Yon cottager who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
Who knew—and knew no more—her Bible true”***

and who waited upon God each day for guidance, was far nobler than Voltaire, who guided himself, but who guided himself into a maze of doubt and darkness! Put your little hand into the hand of the great Father of all Spirits, whose wisdom is Infinite, and the compact ennoble you!

And *how elevating it is to be led by the Spirit.* To be led by the world is groveling. To be led by ambition is a poor foolish thing. To be led by the noblest of human spirits is, after all, only to rise to the level of man. But to be led by God! He never lowers the tone of thought in us, but elevates us and makes even our most common actions to be Divine, seeing they are done in His might! O dear Brothers and Sisters, if we are led by the Spirit of God, we are as high as the angels are in Heaven, yes, higher than they, for unto none of them has He said that they are the sons of God. “Those who are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Let us add how safe this guidance is. There are no errors where He leads—all our mistakes are ours! Our blunders in Doctrine and our follies in life, and our divergences from the paths of peace—these are our own! If we would but follow Him, our life would be clean, and pure, and perfect!

And how blessed it is to have Him for a Leader! What happiness it gives! He comforts, He enlightens, He instructs, He sanctifies. To be near to Him is to be near to Heaven. To be completely under His guidance is to be perpetually happy. Oh, happy people, whose God is the Lord, and whose Leader is the Holy Spirit! And now in closing, perhaps there are some here who will say—

IV. “HOW CAN I OBTAIN THIS BLESSING OF BEING LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD?”

The answer is, first, dear Beloved, you must have the Spirit of God. No man is led by the Spirit till He *has* the Spirit. “You must be born-again.” Unrenewed men cannot be led by the Spirit. He never leads the flesh—it is enmity against God, and can never be otherwise. The old nature, it is not possible even for the Holy Spirit to lead! It would perpetually turn to lust. There must be a new nature! The Holy Spirit must create us anew in Christ Jesus—we must have the Spirit, or else we cannot be led by Him! It is your difficulty, then, O unrenewed men and women, that you must have the Spirit of God, or else vain will be your prayer to be led by the Spirit of God! The blessing is that He is already given to as many of you as believe in the name of Jesus Christ! And this evening, if you have never believed before, may you be led to trust in the Son of God. But you must have the Spirit before you can be led by the Spirit. If again you say, “But how can I obtain this blessing?” I would say, “Distrust yourself now.” Up to this good hour you have been a self-made man—you have believed in self-reliance. There is some truth in that in a certain sense, but as before the living God there is no man who is less a man than he who trusts himself! You shall be as cursed as the heath in the desert which sees not when good comes. Your strength shall, by-and-by, utterly fail you. You are not wise, though you whisper to yourself that you are. The fact that you believe you are wise proves that you are a fool!

Can you believe this? It is a part of the work of the Gospel to make you empty. You cannot be full till you are. You cannot be led by the Spirit till you are willing to be led—and that will never be till, first of all, you see that you need leading. Oh, may He come and convince you of your folly, of your wandering, of your ignorance—and then, laid low at His dear feet, Jesus Christ shall give you His Spirit and lead you in the way of His salvation! May this distrust happen to you tonight, if it never has done so before. Then if you would still be guided, but feel that you are not led by the Spirit, I would say to you, dear Beloved, consult the Word of God more than you do! If you have the Spirit, but don't feel that you are led by Him, but that, with desires to do right, you are often wrong—be a greater searcher of the Word of God. This is not the age in which the Bi-

ble is read much. I suppose there are more Bibles in England than any other book, but there are fewer Bible *readers* probably than of any other book! And yet the Bible readers are more numerous than the Bible searchers. I hardly remember a passage that bids you read, but I do remember a passage that says, "Search the Scriptures." May we become students of the Word, desirous to know the meaning—and then we shall feel the Spirit of God instructing us through the Word—and we shall be led by Him!

And add to this reading of the Scriptures, *abundant prayer*. Again must I sorrow that there is so little prayer among us. God grant that Prayer Meetings may begin to be better attended, that family prayer may be more regarded and that private prayer may be more diligently and more spiritually maintained. We shall not be led as a Church and as individuals by the Spirit of God if we get out of His way, neglect His Word, or neglect to draw near to Him in prayer! What is the reason why there are so many sects in the world? Surely it must be because we don't follow the guidance of the Spirit of God. If we followed the Word of God and the *will* of God in all things, we would be very much more alike than we are! I do not think that even then we should all run in the same groove, for the road to Heaven may be sufficiently wide to have several different paths in it, and yet they shall all be in the same way and in the same road. But the great differences—surely they must have come from this—that the Church did not want to be guided by the Spirit! She did not go to the Spirit's Book, nor go to the Throne of Grace to be guided—she followed first this saint and then the other, this learned doctor and then the other, and to this day you shall hear debates about all sorts of methods of working and human authorities as if that were of any consequence at all!

What has that to do with religion? This Book, the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants! And you shall have thrown before you the tenets of Independency, and the minutes of the Wesleyan Conference, or some dogma of close communion or open communion of the Baptist Church. To the dogs with it all! What does it matter, what rules and regulations we may pass? Only the Word of God and the Spirit of God should have power in the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ! And happy will the day be when we shall dash down everything traditional, however venerable it may be! When we shall tear to pieces and utterly abhor all that came of wise, and learned, and good men if it were contrary to the mind of the Spirit of God! I would that all Christians would be more fully willing to be led by the Spirit of God. But, beloved Brothers and Sisters, there are some Christian people who don't want to know too

much of their Master's will! There are some awkward texts in the Bible that some people don't like to read because they know that certain learned doctors did not square them, somehow or other, with their creed, but that it was rather a twist and a squeeze, and they feel it was rather a wrench to the text, and so they don't often read it! And certain ordinances too. Many Christian people have certain beliefs and traditions about them, but they never come to the Book of God to see what it says! And so with every ordinance, whatever it may be—Baptism, confirmation, confession to a priest—what you will, if the Spirit of God has not taught it, we know nothing of it!

But are we willing, all of us all round now, to learn what the Spirit of God would teach us, honestly and truly? Can all of us say, to whatever creed we belong, "I am a disciple at the feet of Jesus, and I desire to submit all my belief entirely to the instructions of the Divine Spirit"? We ought to say this, and must, or we lack one mark of being the sons of God! And when all through the Christian Church this shall be the spirit, there will come a fusing—a separating between the precious and the vile, a casting away of all old beliefs and old traditions! I do not believe for a moment that the Church will come to believe as I believe, or as you believe, my dear Brother. You will have something wrong to give up and I shall have something wrong to give up. We ought to desire to give up everything which is wrong and to learn everything which we do not know yet to be the Truth of God, but which is the Truth—may we all be brought there, kept there, held there—led by the Spirit, not tethered down by a creed, not tied hand and foot by a certain commentary, not made to say, "There, that is all I ever will believe under any circumstances," but led by the Spirit through His Word and through the enlightenment which He is sure to give to as many as put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Oh, that every sinner here were led to resign himself, now, to the Holy Spirit's will, for He would lead him to the Cross at once! The Holy Spirit never leads a man into self-righteousness, never leads him to put his trust in sacraments, but leads him right away to the feet of Jesus! May the Holy Spirit guide you and all of us there, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen.

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

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

THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE AND ADOPTION

NO. 1759

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

***“For you have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit, Himself, bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”
Romans 8:15, 16.***

THESE two verses are full of the word “spirit,” and they are also full of spiritual truth. We have read in previous verses about the flesh and of the result that comes of minding it, namely, death. But now, in this verse, we get away from the flesh and think only of the work of the Holy Spirit upon our spirits—and of the blessed privilege which comes of it—“that we should be called the sons of God.” We cannot enter into this except by the power of the Holy Spirit, for the spiritual Truths of God must be spiritually discerned—our eyes need God’s Light and our spirits need the Holy Spirit’s quickening. We breathe our prayer to the Great Spirit that He would make us feel the full meaning of His Words.

I think that I see in the text the fourfold work of the Spirit. First, *the Spirit of bondage*. Secondly, *the Spirit of adoption*. Thirdly, *the Spirit of prayer*—here it is, “Whereby we cry.” And fourthly, *the Spirit of witness*—“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.”

I. Consider, first of all, THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE. *Much of the bondage in which we are plunged by our fallen nature is not the work of the Spirit of God at all.* Bondage under sin, bondage under the flesh, bondage to the fashions and customs of the world, bondage under the fear of man—this is *carnal* bondage, the work of the flesh, of sin and of the devil. But there is a sense of bondage to which, I think, the Apostle here mainly alludes, which is of the Spirit of God. Before the Spirit of God within us becomes the Spirit of liberty, He is, first of all, the Spirit of bondage. The Spirit is not, first, a quickening Spirit to us, but a withering Spirit—“The grass withers, the flower fades: because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it: surely the people is grass.”

The Divine Spirit wounds before He heals, He kills before He makes alive. We usually draw a distinction between Law-work and Gospel-work, but Law-work is the work of the Spirit of God and is so far a true Gospel-

work that it is a frequent preliminary to the joy and peace of the Gospel. The Law is the needle which draws after it the silken thread of blessing and you cannot get the thread into the stuff without the needle—men do not receive the liberty wherewith Christ makes them free until, first of all, they have felt bondage within their own spirit driving them to cry for liberty to the great Emancipator, the Lord Jesus Christ!

This sense or Spirit of bondage works for our salvation by leading us to cry for mercy. Let us notice that *there is a kind of bondage which is, in part, at least, the work of the Spirit of God*, although it is often darkened, blackened and made legal in a great measure by other agencies which do not aim at our benefit. That part of the bondage which I shall now describe is altogether the work of the Spirit of God. That is, first, *when men are brought into bondage through being convicted of sin*. This bondage is not the work of Nature and certainly *never* the work of the devil. It is not the work of human oratory, nor of human reason—it is the work of the Spirit of God! As it is written, “When the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall convince the world of sin.”

It needs a miracle to make a man know that he is, in very deed, a sinner. He will not admit it. He kicks against it. Even when he confesses the outward transgression, he does not know or feel the inward heinousness of his guilt in his soul so as to be stunned, confounded and humbled by the fact that he is a rebel against his God. Now, no man can ever know a Savior without knowing himself a sinner—even as no man can value a physician while he is ignorant of the existence and evil of disease. By the killing sentence of the Law of God we are bruised, broken and crushed to atoms as to all comeliness and self-righteousness.

This, I say, is the work of the Spirit of God. He works a necessary sense of bondage within us by putting us under a sense of sin. The Spirit of God is always the Spirit of Truth and, therefore, He only convinces men of that which is true. He puts them into no false, or fanciful, or needless bondage. “When the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall convince the world of sin”—because it *is* sinful. When the Spirit puts men into bondage because they are sinners, He only puts them into their right place. When He came to some of us by the Law, He made us feel what we were by nature—and what we felt and saw was the truth. He made us see things as they really were. Until He came, we put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness! But when the Spirit of Truth was come, then sin appeared as sin. Then we were in bondage and it was no fancied slavery, but the very truth.

The Spirit of God also brought us farther into bondage when He *made us feel the assurance that punishment must follow upon sin*, when He made us know that God can by no means clear the guilty and that He was

not playing with us when He said, "The soul that sins, it shall die." We were made to feel the sentence of death in ourselves, that we might not trust in ourselves. At that time we trembled on the brink of fate. We wondered that we were not already in Hell. We were so convinced of sin that it was a matter of astonishment to us that the sentence did not immediately take place upon us. We were speechless before God as to excuse or justification. We could not offer anything by which we could turn away the edge of justice, though we saw it like a glittering sword stripped of the scabbard of almighty patience.

Do you know what this means? I can hardly hope that you will prize the Atonement, or feel the sweetness of the expiation by blood, unless, first of all, you have felt that your soul's life was due to God on account of your transgressions! We must know a shutting-up under the sentence of the Law of God, or we shall never rejoice in the liberty which comes to us by Grace through the blood of the Lamb of God! Blessed be the Spirit of God for working in us this double sense of bondage—first making us know that we are guilty and, secondly—making us feel that the justice of God must punish us for sin!

And then, further, the Spirit of God operates as a Spirit of bondage upon the hearts of those whom God will save by bringing them to *feel the bitter impossibility of their hoping to clear themselves by the works of the Law*. We heard this sentence thundered in our soul—"By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin." We could not meet our God under His Law—we looked up to Sinai's fiery summit where the Lord revealed Himself and we felt that its crags were too steep for our tottering feet to climb! Even if the way were smooth, how could we dare to pass through the thick darkness and hold communion with Jehovah, who is a consuming fire?

The Spirit of God once and for all weaned us from all thought of a righteousness of our own. We were divorced from the legal spirit and compelled to abhor the very notion of justifying ourselves in the sight of a pure and holy God by our works, or feelings, or prayers! This was, by His Grace, the work of the Spirit of God! This result is always produced in every child of God, but not always by the same degree of bondage. Fetters of different weights are used in this prison, as wisdom and prudence appoint.

The Spirit of bondage comes not to all alike, for some find peace and life in a moment, and come to Calvary as soon as Sinai begins to thunder. I have known this Spirit of bondage come with great force to men who have been open transgressors. Others who have been kept by the preventing Grace of God from the extremes of open sin have not felt as much of it. But men that have blasphemed God, broken the Sabbath and violated

every holy thing—when they are brought before God under a sense of sin—have frequently had a hard time of it. See how Saul was blinded three days and did neither eat nor drink. Read John Bunyan's, "Grace Abounding," and notice the five *years* of his subjection to this Spirit of bondage.

It must, in Bunyan's case, be noted that his bondage was far from being altogether the work of the Spirit, for much of it arose from his own unbelief. But still, there was in the core and heart of it, a work of the Spirit of God most wonderfully convincing him of sin. I would not wonder if some of my hearers who may have gone far into outward transgression are made to feel, when brought to spiritual life, great grief and humiliation under a sense of their sin. Such bondage often happens to those who, as the old authors used to say, were "close sinners"—men who did not even know that they were sinners at all, but, in consequence of their morality and the strictness of their lives, had a high conceit of their own excellence in the sight of God.

Certain of these people experience most fearful convictions of sin—as if God would say to each one, "I must rid you of your self-righteousness. I must cure you of trusting in your moral life and, therefore, I will let you see into the depths of your depravity. I will discover to you your sins against My Light and knowledge, your sins against conscience, your sins against the Love of God. You are brought into sore bondage, but that bondage shall heal you of your pride." I have noticed one thing more, and that is that those who are, in later life, to be greatly useful are often thus dug, tilled and fed in order that much fruit may be brought forth by them in later years. I have had to deal with as many troubled souls as any living man—and God has greatly used me for their deliverance—but this never could have happened, so far as I can judge, unless I had, myself, been the subject of a terrible Law-work, convincing me not only of my actual sin, but of the *source* of that sin, namely, a deep and bottomless fountain of depravity in my own nature.

When I have met with persons driven to despair and almost ready to destroy themselves, I have said, "Yes, I understand all that. I have been in those sepulchral chambers and can sympathize with those who are chilled by their damps. I know the heart of a stranger, for I, also, was a captive in Egypt and worked at the brick kilns." In such a case this bondage of spirit becomes a profitable preparation for later work. The sword that has to cut through coats of mail must be annealed in many fires. It must endure processes which a common blade escapes. Do not, therefore, expect that the Spirit of bondage will be seen in all of you to the same degree, for, after all, it is not the Spirit of bondage which is to be desired for its own sake, but that which comes after it—the Spirit of liberty in Christ Jesus!

Our text reminds us that the *result of this Spirit of bondage in the soul is fear*—"The Spirit of bondage to fear." There are five sorts of fears and it is always well to distinguish between them. There is the *natural* fear which the creature has of its Creator because of its own insignificance and its Maker's greatness. From that we shall never be altogether delivered, for with holy awe we shall bow before the Divine Majesty, even when we come to be perfect in Heaven. Secondly, there is a *carnal* fear, that is, the fear of man. May God deliver us from it! May we never cease from duty because we dread the eye of man! Who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall die? From this cowardice God's Spirit delivers Believers.

The next fear is a *servile* fear—the fear of a slave towards his master, lest he should be beaten when he has offended. That is a fear which should rightly dwell in every unregenerate heart. Until the slave is turned into a child, he ought to feel that fear which is suitable to his position. By means of this fear, the awakened soul is driven and drawn to Christ and learns the perfect love which casts it out. If servile is not cast out, it leads to a fourth fear, namely, a *diabolical* fear, for we read of devils, that they "believe and tremble." This is the fear of a malefactor towards the executioner, such a fear as possesses souls that are shut out forever from the light of God's Countenance.

But, fifthly, there is a *filial* fear which is never cast out of the mind. This is to be cultivated. This is "the fear of the Lord" which is "the beginning of wisdom." This is a precious gift of Grace—"Blessed is the man that fears the Lord." This makes the saints fearful of offending lest they should grieve Infinite Love. It causes them to walk before the Lord with the fear of a loving child who would not, in *anything*, displease his parents. When the Spirit of bondage is at work upon the heart, there is much of the fourth form of fear, namely, servile fear—and I tell you that it is the Spirit of Truth which brings this to us because we are in a condition which demands it—we are slaves until Christ sets us free and, being still under the Law, servile fear is our most natural and proper feeling. Would you have the slave rejoice in a liberty which he does not possess? Is he not the more likely to be free if he loathes his slavery? I wish that every man here, who is not a child of God, would become possessed with servile fear and tremble before the Most High!

Now, mark that *while this fear lasts, it is intended to work us toward God*. I have already touched upon that. This bondage, which causes fear, breaks us off from self-righteousness. It makes us value the righteousness of Christ and it also puts an end to certain sins. Many a man, because he is afraid of the consequences, leaves off this and that which would have ruined him and, so far, the fear is useful to him. And, in later life, the sense of the terror which fear worked in his soul will keep him nearer to

his Lord. How can he return to that evil thing which once filled his soul with bitterness and grief?

But now I want to notice that *in due time we outgrow this bondage and never receive it again*, for, “We have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear.” There comes a time when the Spirit of Truth no longer causes bondage. Why not? Because we are not slaves any longer and, therefore, there is no bondage for us because we are no longer guilty, having been cleared in the court of God and, therefore, no sin should press upon our spirit! We are made to be the children of God and God forbid that God’s children should tremble like slaves! No, we have not received the Spirit of bondage again, for the Spirit of God has not brought it to us again. And though the devil tries to bring it, we do not “receive” his goods. And though sometimes the world thinks that we ought to feel it—we are not of the world—and we will not “receive” the world’s spirit.

We are new creatures in Christ Jesus! We are not under the Law, but under Grace! And, therefore, we are free from our former bondage. “We have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear.” I know some Christians, or persons who call themselves Christians, who often come under this spirit of bondage. They erroneously say, “If I have sinned I have ceased to be a child of God.” That is the spirit of bondage with a vengeance! If a servant disobeys, he will be sent adrift—but you cannot discharge your child. My son is my son forever! Who denies that? Sonship is a settled fact and never can be altered under any possible circumstances. If I am a child of God, who shall separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, my Lord?

Some perform all religious actions from a principle of fear and they abstain from this and that iniquity because of fear. A child of God does not desire to be thus driven or held back! He works not for reward. He toils not in order to gain salvation. He *is* saved! And because God has “worked in him to will and to do of his own good pleasure,” he, therefore, works out the salvation which God has already worked in! Blessed is the man who knows that he is no longer a servant, but has become an heir of God, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ!

II. This brings us to our second head which is, THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION. I should require a week to preach properly upon this blessed theme. Instead of preaching upon it, I will give you hints. Will you kindly notice that the Apostle said, “You have not received the Spirit of bondage”? If he had kept strictly to the language, he would have added, “But you have received the Spirit of”—what? Why of “*liberty*.” That is the opposite of bondage! Yes, but our Apostle is not to be hampered by the rigid rules of composition! He has inserted a far greater word—“You have received the Spirit of *adoption*.”

This leads me to observe that from this mode of putting it, it is clear that the Spirit of adoption is, in the highest sense the Spirit of liberty! If the Son make you free, you shall be free, indeed. If you become sons through that blessed Son, oh, the freeness of your spirits! Your soul has nothing to fear—you need not dread the wrath of God, for He has sworn, “I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.” The Believer feels the love of God shed abroad within him and, therefore, he exercises a liberty to draw near to God such as he never had before. He has access with boldness! He learns to speak with God as a child speaks with his father! See what a blessed thing is this Spirit of liberty, this Spirit of *adoption*.

Now, the Apostle said, “You have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear.” What is the opposite of that? He should have added—should he not?—“but you have received the Spirit of liberty by which you have *confidence*.” He has not, in so many words expressed himself thus, but he has said all that and a great deal more by saying, “Whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” This is the highest form of confidence that can be thought of—that a child of God should be able, even when he is forced to cry, to cry nothing less than, “Abba, Father.” At his lowest, when he is full of sorrow and grief, even in his crying and lamenting, he sticks to, “Abba, Father”! This is a joyous confidence, indeed! Oh, that God may give it to you, dearly Beloved, to the very fullest!

Thus it is clear that the Spirit of adoption is a Spirit of liberty and a Spirit of confidence. As a child is sure that its father will love him, feed him, clothe him, teach him and do all that is good for him, so are we sure that, “No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly.” And He will make all things to “work together for good to them that love God.” The Spirit of bondage made us fear, but the Spirit of adoption gives us *full assurance*. That fear which distrusts God—that fear which doubts whether He will remain a loving and merciful God—that fear which makes us think that all His love will come to an end is gone, for we cry, “Abba, Father,” and that cry is the death of doubting and fearing!

We sing to brave music, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.” The Spirit of adoption, moreover, is a spirit of *gratitude*. Oh, that the Lord should put *me* among the children! Why should He do this? He did not need children that He should adopt *me*. The First-born alone was enough to fill the Father’s heart throughout eternity! And yet the Lord puts us among the children! Blessed be His name forever and ever! “Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!” The Spirit of adoption is a spirit of *child-likeness*. It is pretty, though sometimes sad, to see how children imitate their parents.

How much the little man is like his father! Have you not noticed it? Do you not like to see it, too? You know you do!

Yes, and when God gives the Spirit of adoption, there begins in us, poor fallen creatures as we are, some little likeness to Himself—and that will grow to His perfect image! We cannot become God, but we have the privilege and the power to become the sons of God. “Even to as many as believe on His name” does Jesus give this privilege and, therefore, we grow up into Him in all things, who is our Head—and at the same time the pattern and mirror of what all the children of God are to be! Thus, dear Friends, let us see with great joy that we have not received, again, the Spirit of bondage! We shall not receive Him any more! The Spirit of God will never come to us in that form, again, for now we have been washed in the blood! We have been taken away from being heirs of wrath even as others! We have been placed in the family of the MOST HIGH and we feel the Spirit of adoption within us, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father!”

III. Just two or three words upon the next office of the Holy Spirit, which is THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER. Whenever the Spirit of adoption enters into a man it sets him praying. He cannot help it. He does not wish to help it—

**“Prayer is the Christian’s vital breath,
The Christian’s native air.
His watchword at the gates of death—
He enters Heaven with prayer.”**

And this praying of the true Believer who has the Spirit of adoption is very *earnest* praying, for it takes the form of crying. He does not *say*, “Abba, Father.” Anybody can say those words. But he *cries*, “Abba, Father.” Nobody can cry, “Abba, Father,” but by the Holy Spirit. When those two words, “Abba, Father,” are set to the music of a child’s cry, there is more power in them than in all the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero! They are such heavenly sounds as only the twice-born, the true aristocracy of God, can utter, “Abba, Father.” They even move the heart of the Eternal!

But it is also very *natural* praying—for a child to say, “Father,” is according to the fitness of things. It is not necessary to send your boys to a Boarding School to teach them to do that. They cry, “Father,” soon and often. So, when we are born again, “Our Father, which are in Heaven,” is a prayer that is never forced upon us—it rises up naturally within the newborn nature and because we are born-again, we cry, “Abba, Father.” When we have lost our Father for a while, we cry after Him in the dark. When He takes the rod to us, we cry, but we cry no other way than this—“Abba, Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.”

It seems to me to be not only an earnest cry and a natural cry, but a very *appealing* cry. It touches your heart when your child says, “Don’t

hurt me, Father. Dear Father, by your love to me, forgive me.” True prayer pleads the fatherhood of God—“My Father, my Father, I am no stranger. I am no foe, I am Your own dear and well-beloved child. Therefore, like as a father pities his children, have pity upon me.” The Lord never turns a deaf ear to such pleading. He says, “I do earnestly remember him still,” and in love He checks his hand. And what a *familiar* word it is—“Abba, Father”! They say that slaves were never allowed to call their masters “Abba.” That was a word for free-born children only—no man can speak with God as God’s children may.

I have heard critics say, sometimes, of our prayers, “How familiar that man is with God.” And one adds, “I do not like such boldness.” No, you slaves! Of course you cannot speak with God as a child can! And it would not be right that you should! It befits you to fear, crouch and, like miserable sinners, to keep yourselves a long way off from God. Distance is the slave’s place—only the child may draw near! But if you are children, then you may say, “Lord, You have had mercy upon me, miserable sinner as I was, and You have cleansed me, and I am Yours. Therefore deal with me according to the riches of Your Grace. My soul delights herself in You, for You are my God and my exceeding joy.” Who but a true-born child of God can understand those Words of God—“Delight yourself, also, in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of yours heart”?

I do not know any more *delightful* expression towards God than to say to Him, “Abba, Father.” It is as much as to say—“My heart knows that You are my Father. I am as sure of it as I am sure I am the child of my earthly father! And I am *more* sure that You would deal more tenderly with me than that my earthly father would.” Paul hints at this when he reminds us that our fathers, verily, chastened us after their own pleasure, but the Lord always chastens us for our profit. The heavenly Father’s heart is never angry so as to smite in wrath, but in pity, gentleness and tenderness He afflicts His sons and daughters. “You in faithfulness have afflicted me.”

See what a blessed state this is to be brought into, to be made children of God, and then in our prayers to be praying, not like serfs and servants, but as children who cry, “Abba, Father”!

IV. Now, the last thing is, THE SPIRIT OF WITNESS—“The Spirit, Himself, bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” There are two witnesses to the adoption of every child of God. Two is a legal number—in the mouth of two witnesses the whole shall be established. The first witness is *the man’s own spirit*. His spirit says, “Yes, yes, yes, I am a child of God! I feel those drawings towards God; I feel that delight in Him; I feel that love to Him; I feel that wish to obey Him which I never would have felt if I were not His child. Moreover, God’s own Word declares,

‘To as many as received Him’—that is Christ—‘to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.’ Now, I have received Christ, and I believe on His name—therefore, I have the evidence of God’s written Word that I am one of the sons of God. I have the right, the permission, the authority, to be one of the sons of God! That is the witness of my spirit—I believe and, therefore, I am a child.”

Now comes in the *witness of the Holy Spirit*. Nobody can question His veracity, but how does the Spirit of God witness to our sonship? First, He witnesses it, as I have already said, *through the Word of God* of which He is the Author. The Word contained in Scripture is quite enough for us if we have a saving faith. We accept it and believe it. The Spirit of God thus witnesses through the Word and that is the surest medium! “We have a more sure Word of testimony,” said Peter. That is a wonderful declaration of the Apostle! Peter had spoken about *seeing* Christ transfigured on the holy mountain. Was not that sure? Yes, it was, but he, in effect, says—We have a more sure Word of testimony than all the sights that we have seen. Therefore we do well if we take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place.

Next, the Spirit of God *bears witness by His work* in us. He works in us that which proves us to be the children of God. And what is that? The first thing is that He works in us great love to God. None love God but those that are born of Him. There is no true love to God in Christ Jesus except in those that have been begotten again by God’s own Spirit, so that our love to God is the witness of the Spirit that we *are* the children of God. Furthermore, He works in us a veneration for God. We fear before Him with a childlike reverence—everything that has to do with God becomes sacred to us when He communes with us. Yes, if He only met us in a dream, we would say, “How wonderful is this place! It is none other than the House of God and the very gate of Heaven.”

The place of His feet is glorious in our eyes! The meanest of His chosen are honorable in our esteem! This holy awe of Believers is a proof of their being God’s children. If He is their Father, they will reverence Him, for we know that when we had fathers of our flesh, they corrected us and we gave them reverence, for it was due them. Shall we not be in subjection to the Father of our spirits? That subjection is the surest evidence that we are, indeed, the sons of God. In addition to this, the Spirit of God works in us a holy confidence. By His Grace we feel, in days of trouble, that we can rest in God. When we cannot see our way, we go on joyfully without seeing. What is the good of seeing with our own eyes when the eyes of the Lord are running to and fro in the earth to show Himself strong on the behalf of all them that trust in Him?

Our faith feels a joy in believing seeming contradictions; a delight in accepting apparent impossibilities! We have a belief in God's veracity so sure and steadfast that if all the angels in Heaven were to deny the Truth of God, we would laugh them to scorn! *He must be true* and we know it—every Word in His Bible is as certainly true to us as if we had seen the thing with our own eyes—yes, and truer, still, for eyes deceive and mislead—but God never can! Wherever there is this blessed child-like trust, there is the Spirit's witness that we are the children of God.

And then, again, when the Spirit of God works *sanctification* in us, that becomes a further witness of our sonship. When He makes us hate sin. When He makes us love everything that is pure and good. When He helps us to conquer ourselves. When He leads us to love our fellow men. When He fashions us like Christ—this is the witness of the Spirit with our spirit that we are the children of God! Oh, to have more and more of it! Besides which, I believe that there is a voice unheard in the outward ear which drops in silence on the spirit of man and lets him know that he has, indeed, passed from death unto life. This, also, is the *seal* of the Spirit to the truth our adoption.

Now let us begin at the beginning and bless Him that He has made us feel the bondage of sin. Let us bless Him that He made us fear and tremble—and fly to Jesus. Let us bless Him that He has brought us into the adoption of children. Let us bless Him that He helps us to cry, "Abba, Father." And, lastly, let us bless Him that, tonight, He bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God!

Dear Friend, do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, all the privileges of an heir of God are yours! If you do not believe in Christ, the Spirit of God will never bear witness to a lie and tell you that you are saved when you are not! If you are not saved and not yet a believer in Jesus, I tell you that you are like a blank document to which the Spirit of God will never set His hand and seal, for He is never so unwise as to sign a blank paper! If you have believed, you are a child of God and the Spirit of God sets His seal to your adoption! Go in peace and rejoice in the Lord forever!—

***"Nor fret, nor doubt, nor suffer slavish fear—
Your spirit is released, your path is clear!
Let praise fill up your day and evermore
Live to love, to copy and adore!"***

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 8.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—728, 647, 660.**

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON

TO MY BELOVED READERS—In putting together these three sermons, [1757-1759] to commence the 30th yearly volume, I have felt deep gratitude to God for all His past goodness in connection with these discourses. Still, my more prominent thought has been a longing for more Grace for years to come. And for this I entreat your loving prayers in increased power. Many are the kindnesses which I have received at your hands—please add to them this much more—pray for the preacher; spread the sermons among your friends; bless the Lord whenever you derive the least benefit from them. By these three helps, these sermons will be continued not only in publication but in usefulness. The times are dark—every star is precious. Wishing you A HAPPY NEW YEAR, I am, yours heartily,

C. H. Spurgeon

Mentone, France.

December 29, 1883.

P.S.—Please read what I have to say in *The Sword and the Trowel*. [**“The Well-Beloved’s Vineyard,”** *The Sword and the Trowel*, Volume Seven, Years 1883, 1884, December, 1883, p. 225 –*A communion address to a little company of Believers in his own room at Mentone.* Pilgrim Publications, P.O. Box 66, Pasadena, TX 77501 for prices.]

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

THE SONS OF GOD

NO. 339

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 7, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”
Romans 8:16, 17.

MY Brethren, what a contrast there is between the present and future estate of the child of God! The Believer is *here* the brother to the worm. In Heaven he shall be next of kin to the angels! Here he is covered with the sweat and dust which he acquired by Adam's Fall. There his brow shall be bright with the immortality which is conferred upon him by the resurrection of Christ. Here the heir of Heaven is unknown. He is in disguise, full often clad in the garb of poverty, but *there* his princely character shall be discerned and acknowledged. He shall be waited upon by angels—and shall share in the admiration which the universe shall pour upon the glorified Redeemer.

Well said our poet just now—

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

I think I need not remind you of your condition here below. You are, too, conversant with it, being hourly fretted with troubles, vexed with your own infirmities, with the temptations of Satan and with all the allurements of this world. You are quite conscious that this is not your rest. There are too many thorns in your nest to permit you to hope for an abiding city below the skies. I say it is utterly needless for me to refresh your memories about your present condition.

But I feel it will be a good and profitable work if I remind you that there are high privileges of which you are possessors even now. There are Divine joys which even this day you may taste. The wilderness has its manna. The desert is gladdened with water from the Rock. God has not forsaken us. The tokens of His goodness are with us and we may rejoice fully in many a gracious blessing which is ours this very day. I shall direct your joyous attention to one precious jewel in your treasury, namely, your adoption into the family of God.

There are four things of which I shall speak this morning. First, a special privilege. Second, a special proof of it, the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit. Thirdly, a special privilege, that of heirship. And fourthly, the practical part of the sermon and the conclusion shall be a special manner of life demanded of such persons.

I. First, then, my Brethren, a SPECIAL PRIVILEGE mentioned in the text. “We are the children of God.” And here I am met upon the very threshold by the opposition of certain modern theologians who hold that sonship is not the special and peculiar privilege of Believers. The newly discovered negative theology, which, I fear, has done some damage to the

Baptist denomination and a very large amount of injury to the Independent body—the new heresy is to a large degree—founded upon the fiction of the Universal Fatherhood of God.

The old divines, the Puritans, the Reformers, are now in these last days, to be superseded by men whose teaching flatly contradicts all that we have received of our forefathers. Our old ministers have all represented God as being to His people a Father, to the rest of the world a Judge. This is styled by our new philosophers as an old cumbersome scheme of theology and it is proposed that it be swept away—a proposition which will never be carried out, while the earth remains, or while God endures. But, at any rate, certain knight-errants have set themselves to do battle with windmills and really believe that they shall actually destroy from the face of the earth that which is a fundamental and abiding distinction, without which the Scriptures are not to be understood.

We are told by modern false prophets, that God, in everything, acts to *all men* as a father, even when He casts them into the Lake of Fire and sends upon them all the plagues that are written in His Bible. All these terrible things in righteousness—the awful proofs of holy vengeance in the Judge of all the earth—are successfully neutralized in their arousing effect, by being quietly written among the loving acts and words of the Universal Father. It is dreamed that this is an age when men do not need to be thundered at—when everybody is become so tender-hearted that there is no need for the sword to be held “in terror” over mortals.

Everything is to be conducted now in a new and refined manner—God the Universal Father and all men universal sons. Now I must confess there is something very pretty about this theory, something so fascinating that I do not wonder that some of the ablest minds have been wooed and won by it. I, for my part, take only one objection to it, which is that it is perfectly untrue and utterly unfounded, having not the slightest shadow of a pretense of being proved by the Word of God.

Scripture everywhere represents the chosen people of the Lord, under their visible character of Believers, penitents and spiritual men, as being “the children of God,” and to none but such is that holy title given. It speaks of the regenerate, of a special class of men as having a claim to be God’s children.

Now, as there is nothing like Scripture, let me read you a few texts, Romans 8:14—“As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Surely no one is so daring as to say that *all men* are led by the Spirit of God! Yet may it readily enough be inferred from our text, that those who are not led by the Spirit of God are not the sons of God, but that they, and they alone who are led, guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit, are the sons of God.

A passage from Galatians 3:26—“For you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus,” declaring as it seems to me, and rightly enough, that all Believers, all who have *faith in Christ* are the children of God. That they become actually and manifestly so by faith in Christ Jesus and implying that those who have no faith in Christ Jesus are *not* God’s sons and that any pretense which they could make to that relationship would be but arrogance and presumption.

And hear this, John 1:12—“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” How could they have been the sons of God before, for “to them gave He power to *become* the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, who were born not of blood”—then they were not made the sons of God by mere *creation*—“nor of the will of the flesh,” that is to say, not by any efforts of their own, “but of God.” If any text can be more conclusive than this against universal sonship, I must confess I know of none. And unless these words mean nothing at all, they do mean just this—that Believers are the sons of God and none besides.

But listen to another Word of the Lord in the first Epistle of John, 3:10—“In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil—whoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loves not his brother.” Here are *two* sorts of children, therefore *all* are not the children of God. Can it be supposed that those who are the children of the devil are nevertheless the children of God? I must confess my reason revolts against such a supposition and though I think I might exercise a little imagination, yet I could not make my imagination sufficiently an acrobat to conceive of a man being at the same time a child of the devil and yet a real child of God.

Hear another, 2 Corinthians, 6:17, 18—“Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” Is not that “coming out” necessary to sonship and were they His sons, were they His daughters, had they any claim or right to call Him Father, until they came out from the midst of a wicked world and were separate? If so, why does God promise them what they have already?

But again—Matthew 5:9—“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” A fine title, indeed, if it belongs to every man! Where is the blessedness of the title, for they might be lovers of strife and yet according to modern theologians they might still be the sons of God.

Let us mark a yet more positive passage, Romans 9:8—“The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God.” What then is to be said to this, “These *are not* the children of God”? If any man will contradict that flatly—well, be it so. I have no argument with which to convince the man who denies so strong and clear a witness.

Listen to the Divine Apostle John, where in one of his Epistles he is carried away in rhapsody of devout admiration, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” And then he goes on giving a description of those who are the sons of God, who could not mean any but those who, by a living faith in Christ Jesus, have cast their souls once and for all on Him. As far as I can guess, the main text on which these people build the doctrine of the universal Fatherhood, is that quotation which the Apostle Paul took from a heathen poet—“As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”

The Apostle endorses that sentiment by quoting it and against that endorsement we can, of course, have no contention. But the word there used for “offspring,” expresses no idea of Fatherhood in the majestic sense of the term. It is a word which might be used as appropriately for the

young of animals, the young of any other creature—it has not about it the human sympathies which belong to a father and a son. I know, besides this, nothing which could support this new theory. Possibly they fancy that creation is a paternal act, that all created things are sons. This is too absurd to need an answer, for if so, horses and cows, rats and mice, snakes and flies are children of God, for they are surely creatures as well as we.

Taking away this cornerstone, this fancy theory tumbles to the ground and that theory which seemed to be as tall as Babel and threatened to make as much confusion, may right soon be demolished, if you will batter it with the Word of God. The fact is, Brethren, that the relationship of a son of God belongs only to those who are “predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of the Father’s will”—Ephesians 1:5. The more you search the Bible, the more sure will you be that sonship is the special privilege of the chosen people of God and of none beside.

Having thus, as far as I can, established my point that the privilege of our text is a special one, let me dwell upon it for a moment and remark that, as a special one, it is an act of pure unmistakable grace. No man has any right to be a son of God. If we are born into His family it is a miracle of mercy. It is one of the ever-blessed exhibitions of the infinite love of God which without any cause in us, has set itself upon us. If you are this day an heir of Heaven, remember, Man, Woman, you were once the slave of Hell. Once you did wallow in the mire and if you should adopt a swine to be your child, you could not then have performed an act of greater compassion than when God adopted you.

And if an angel could exalt a gnat to equal dignity with himself, yet would not the blessing be such an one as that which God has conferred on you. He has taken you from the dunghill and He has set you among princes. You have lain among the pots, but He has made you as a dove whose wings are covered with silver and feathers with yellow gold. Remember that this is grace and parentage—look back to the hole of the pit from where you are dug and the miry clay from where you were drawn.

Boast not, if you are in the true olive. You are not there because of your original—you are a twig from an evil tree—and the Divine Spirit has changed your nature, for you were once nothing but a branch of the vine of Gomorrah. Ever let humility bow you to the very earth while yours adoption lifts you up to the third Heaven.

Consider again, I pray you, what a dignity God has conferred upon you—in making you His son. The tall archangel before the throne is not called God’s son, he is one of the most favored of His servants, but not His child. I tell you, poor Brothers and Sisters in Christ, there is a dignity about you that even angels may well envy. You in your poverty are as a sparkling jewel in the darkness of the mine. You in the midst of your sickness and infirmity are girt about with robes of glory, which make the spirits in Heaven look down upon the earth with awe!

You move about this world as a prince among the crowd. The blood of Heaven runs in your veins. You are one of the blood royal of eternity—a son of God, descendant of the King of kings. Speak of pedigrees, the glories of heraldry—you have more than heraldry could ever give you, or all the pomp of ancestry could ever bestow!

II. And now I press forward to notice that in order that we may know whether we are partakers of this high—this royal relationship of children of God, the text furnishes us with a SPECIAL PROOF—“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

You will notice here, my Beloved, that there are two witnesses in court—two who are ready to prove our affiliation to the eternal God. The first witness is *our* spirit. The second witness is *THE* Spirit—the eternal Spirit of God—who bears witness with our spirit. It is as if a poor man were called into court to prove his right to some piece of land which was disputed. He stands up and bears his own faithful testimony. But some great one of the land—some nobleman who lives near—rises, stands in the witness box and confirms his witness.

So is it with our text. The plain, simple spirit of the humble-minded Christian cries, “I am God’s child.” The glorious Spirit, one with God, attests the truth of the testimony and bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

Let us notice, in the first place, how it is that our spirit is able to bear witness. And as this is a matter of experience, I can only appeal to those who are the true children of God. For no others are competent to give testimony. Our spirit bears witness that we are the children of God when it feels a filial love to God. When bowing before His Throne we can boldly say, “Abba Father.” “You are my Father.” Then our spirit concludes that we are sons, for thus it argues, “I feel towards You as a child feels to its parent and it could not be that I should have the feelings of a son if I had not the rights of a son—if I were not a child You would never have given to me that filial affection which so dares to call you, “Father.”

Sometimes, too, the spirit feels that God is its Father not only by love but by trust. The rod has been upon our back and we have smarted very sorely, but in the darkest hour we have been able to say, “The time is in my Father’s hands. I cannot murmur. I would not repine. I feel it is but right that I should suffer, otherwise my Father would never have made me suffer.” He surely does not afflict willingly, nor grieves the children of man for nothing. And when in these dark gloomy times we have looked up to a Father’s face and have said, “Though You slay me, yet will I trust in You—by Your grace Your blows shall not drive You from me. They shall but make me say, “Show me why You contend with me and purge me from my sin.” Then our spirit bears witness that we are the children of God.

And are there not times with you, my dear Friends, when your hearts feel that they would be emptied and void unless God were in them? You have perhaps received an increase to your wealth and after the first flush of pleasure which was but natural, you have said, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. This is not my joy.” You have had many mercies in your family, but you have felt that in them all there was a lack of something which could satisfy your heart and you have felt that that something was God. My God, You are my All in All—the circle where my passions move, the center of my soul.

Now these longings—these pantings for something more than this world can give you—are but the evidences of a child-like spirit, which is panting after its Father’s presence. You feel you must have your Father, or else the gifts of His Providence are nothing to you. That is, your spirit bears witness that you are the child of God. But there are times

when the heir of Heaven is as sure that he is God's child as he is sure that he is his own father's son. No doubt can make him question. The Evil One may whisper, "If you are a son of God." But he says, "Get you hence, Satan, I *know* I am the son of God."

A man might as well try to dispute him out of the fact of his existence as out of that equally sure fact that he has been born again and that by gracious adoption he has been taken into the family of God. This is our witnessing that we are born of God. But the text, you see, furnishes us with a higher witness than this. God, that cannot lie, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, graciously condescends to say, "Amen" to the testimony of our conscience. And whereas our experience sometimes leads our spirit to conclude that we are born of God, there are happy times when the eternal Spirit, from off the Throne, descends and fills our heart and then we have the *two witnesses* bearing witness with each other, that we are children of God.

Perhaps you ask me, how is this? I was reading a passage by Dr. Chalmers the other day, in which he says that his own experience did not lead him to believe that the Holy Spirit ever gave any witness of our being the children of God, apart from the written Word of God and his ordinary workings in our hearts. Now, I am not sure that the doctor is perfectly right. As far as his own experience went I dare say he was right. But there may be some far inferior to the doctor in genius, who nevertheless were superior in nearness of fellowship with God—and who could therefore go a little farther than the eloquent Divine.

Now, I do believe with him this morning, that the chief witness of God the Holy Spirit lies in this—the Holy Spirit has written this Book which contains an account of what a Christian should be and of the feelings which Believers in Christ must have. I have certain experiences and feelings. Turning to the Word, I find similar experiences and feelings recorded. And so I prove that I am right and the Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am born of God.

Suppose you have been enabled to believe in Jesus Christ for your salvation. That faith has produced love to Christ—that love to Christ has led you to work for Christ. You come to the Bible and you find that this was just the very thing which was felt by early Believers. And then you say, "Good Lord, I am Your son, because what I feel is what You have said, by the lips of your servant, must be felt by those who are Your children." So the Spirit confirms the witness of my spirit that I am born of God.

But again—everything that is good in a Christian you know to be the work of God the Holy Spirit. When at anytime, then, the Holy Spirit comforts you—sheds a sweet calm over your disturbed spirit—when at any period He instructs you, opens to you a mystery you did not understand before—it is His work. When at some special period He inspires you with an unaccustomed affection, an unusual faith in Christ—when you experience a hatred of sin, a faith in Jesus, a death to the world and a life to God—these are the works of the Spirit. Now the Spirit never did work effectually in any but the children of God. And inasmuch as the Spirit works in you, He does by that very working give His own infallible testimony to the fact that you are a child of God.

If you had not been a child He would have left you where you were in your natural state. But inasmuch as He has worked in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure, He has put His stamp on you as being one of the family of the Most High. But I think I must go a little further than this. I do believe that there is a supernatural way in which apart from means, the Spirit of God communicates with the spirit of man. My own little experience leads me to believe that apart from the Word of God, there are immediate dealings with the conscience and soul of man by the Holy Spirit, without any instrumentality, without even the agency of the Truth of God.

I believe that the Spirit of God sometimes comes into a mysterious and marvelous contact with the spirit of man and that at times the Spirit speaks in the heart of man by a voice not audible to the ear, but perfectly audible to the spirit which is the subject of it. He assures and consoles directly, by coming into immediate contact with the heart. It becomes our business, then, to take the Spirit's witness through His Word and through His works—but I would seek to have immediate, actual, undivided fellowship with the Holy Spirit, who by His Divine Spirit, should work in my spirit and convince me that I am a child of God.

Now let me ask my congregation, do any of you know that you are God's children? Say not, "In my Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ and a child of God." There are not many in England, I think, who believe those words. There may be a few who do, but it has never been my misfortune to meet with them. Everyone knows that it is a disgrace to a matchless prayer book, that such words should be permitted to stand there—words so infamously untrue that by their gross untruthfulness they cease to have the destructive effect which more cunning language might have produced. The conscience of man revolts against the idea that the sprinkling of drops of water upon the infant's brow can ever make it a member of Christ and a child of God.

But I ask you, does your spirit say today "I am God's child"? Do you feel the longings, the loves, the confidences of a child? If not, tremble, for there are but two vast families in this world. They are the family of God and the family of Satan—their character is different—their end, how strangely divided! But let me say again to you, have you ever felt that the Holy Spirit has borne witness with your spirit in His word and in His work in you? And in that secret whisper has He ever said to you, "You are My son, this day have I begotten you"? I bid you, give no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids, till by this Divine mysterious agency, you are newly made, newly born and newly begotten—and so admitted not only nominally but *really* into the living family of the living God.

III. I shall now pass on to my third point. If it is settled in our mind by the true witness—the spirit within us and the Spirit of God—that we are God's children, what a NOBLE PRIVILEGE now appears to our view. "HEIRS OF GOD and joint-heirs with Christ." It does not always follow in human reasoning, "if children, then heirs," because in our families but one is the heir. There is but one that can claim the heir's rights and the heir's title.

It is not so in the family of God. Man, as a necessary piece of political policy, may give to the heir that which surely he can have not more real

right to in the sight of God than the rest of the family—may give him all the inheritance, while his brethren, equally true born, may go without. But it is not so in the family of God. All God's children are heirs, however numerous the family and he that shall be born of God last, shall be as much His heir as he who was born first. Abel, the proto-martyr, entering alone into Heaven, shall not have a more secure title to the inheritance than he who, last of woman born, shall trust in Christ and then ascend into his glory. In Heaven's logic it is true, "if children, then heirs."

And see what it is that we are heirs of! The Apostle opens with the grandest part of the inheritance first—heirs of God—heirs not of God's gifts and God's works, but heirs of God *Himself*. It was said of king Cyrus that he was a prince of so amiable a disposition, that when at any time he sat down at meat, if there were anything that pleased his appetite, he would order it to be taken away and given to his friends with this message, "King Cyrus found that this food pleased his palate and he thought his friend should feed upon that which he enjoyed himself." This was thought to be a singular instance of his affability and his kindness to his courtiers.

But our God does *more* than this. He does not send merely bread from His table as in the day when man did eat angel's food. He does not give us merely to drink the wines on the lees well refined—the rich wines of Heaven—but He gives Himself to us. And the Believer is to be the heir, I say, not merely of God's works, not simply of God's gifts, but of God Himself! Talk we of His Omnipotence?—His Almightyness is ours. Speak we of His Omniscience?—all His wisdom is engaged in our behalf. Do we say that He is Love?—that love belongs to us. Can we glory that He is immutable and changes not?—that eternal unchangeableness is engaged for the defense of the people of God.

All the attributes of Divinity are the property of God's children—their inheritance entailed upon them. No, He Himself is ours. Oh what riches! If we could say this morning that all the stars belong to us. If we could turn the telescope to the most remote of the fixed stars and then could say with the pride of possession, so natural to man, "That star, a thousand times bigger than the sun, is mine. I am the king of that inheritance and without me does not a dog move his tongue." If we could then sweep the telescope along the milky way and see the millions upon millions of stars that lie clustered together there and could cry, "All these are mine," yet these possessions were but a *speck* compared with that which is in the text.

Heir of *God!* He to whom all these things are but as nothing gives Himself up to the inheritance of His people. Note yet a little further concerning the special privilege of heirship—we are joint-heirs with Christ. That is, whatever Christ possesses as heir of all things, belongs to us. Splendid must be the inheritance of Jesus Christ. Is He not very God of very God, Jehovah's only begotten Son? Most High and glorious, though He bowed Himself to the grave and became the Servant of servants, yet God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Oh, what angelic tongue shall hymn His glory? What fiery lips shall ever speak of His possessions, of His riches—the unsearchable riches of God in Christ Jesus? But, Beloved, all that belongs to Christ belongs to Christ's people. It is as when a man does marry. His possessions shall be

shared by his spouse. And when Christ took His Church unto Himself He endowed her with all His goods both temporal and eternal. He gives to us His garments and thus we stand arrayed. His righteousness becomes our beauty. He gave to us His Person, it has become our meat and our drink. We eat His flesh and drink His blood. He gave to us His inmost heart. He loved us even to the death. He gave to us His crown. He gave to us His Throne. For “to him that overcomes will I give to sit upon My Throne, even as I have overcome and have sat down with My Father upon His Throne.”

He gave to us His Heaven, for “where I am, there shall My people be.” He gave to us the fullness of His joy, for, “My joy shall be in you, that your joy may be full.” I repeat it—there is nothing in the highest Heaven which Christ has reserved unto Himself, “for all things are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”

I cannot stay longer on that point, except just to notice that we must never quarrel with this Divine arrangement. “Oh,” you say, “we never shall.” Stay, stay, Brother. I have known you do so already—for when all that is Christ’s belongs to you—do you forget that Christ once had a Cross and that, too, belongs to you? Christ once wore a thorny crown and if you are to have all that He has, you must bear the thorny crown, too. Have you forgotten that He had shame and spitting, the reproach, the rebuke of men, and that He conceived all those to be greater riches than all the treasures of this world?

Come, I know as you look down the inventory, you are apt to look a little askance on that Cross and think, “Well, the crown is glorious, but I love not the spittle, I care not to be despised and rejected of men.” Oh, you are quarreling with this Divine arrangement, you are beginning to differ with this blessed policy of God. Why, one would have thought you would rejoice to take your Master for better or for worse and to be partaker with Him, not only in His glories but in His sufferings!

So it must be, “If so be that we suffer with Him that we also may be glorified together.” Is there a place into which your Master went that you would be ashamed to enter? If so, methinks your heart is not in a right state. Would you refuse to go with Him to the garden of His agony? Believer, would you be ashamed to stand and be accused as He was and have false witness borne against you? And would you blush to sit beside Him and be made nothing of as He was?

Oh, when you start aside at a little jest, let your conscience prick you and say, “Am I not a joint-heir with Christ and am I about to quarrel with the legacy?” Did He not say, “In the world you shall have tribulation. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world?” And oh, would you be ashamed to die for Christ? Methinks if you are what you should be, you will glory in tribulations also and count it sweet to suffer for Christ. I know the world turns this into ridicule and says, “That the hypocrite loves persecution.” No, not the hypocrite, but the true Believer. He feels that though the suffering must ever be painful, yet for Christ’s sake, it becomes so glorious that the pain is all forgotten.

Come, Believer, will you be partaker with Christ today in the battle and then divide this spoil with Him? Come, will you wade with Him through the deep waters and then at last climb up the topless hills with Him? Are you prepared now to be despised and rejected of men that you may at last ascend up on high, leading captivity captive? The inheritance cannot be

divided. If you will have the glory, you must have the shame. He that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. Come, Men, put your face against all weathers. Be ready to come uphill with the snow blowing in your face. Be ready to march on when the tempest howls and the lightning flashes overhead and the snow becomes knee-deep. No, be ready to go into the crevasse with Him and perish, if need be. Who quarrels with this sacred regulation? Certainly no true child of God! He would not have it altered, even if he might.

IV. And now I come to my last point, upon which briefly, but I hope interestingly—The SPECIAL CONDUCT naturally expected from those who are partakers of the peculiar privileges of being the children of God.

In the golden age of Rome, if a man were tempted to dishonesty, he would stand upright, look the tempter in the face and say to him, “I am a Roman.” He thought that a sufficient reason why he should neither lie nor cheat. It ought to be ten times more than sufficient answer to every temptation, for a man to be able to say, “I am a son of God. Shall such a man as I yield to sin?”

I have been astonished in looking through old Roman history at the wonderful prodigies of integrity and valor which were produced by idolatry, or rather, which were produced by patriotism and that principle which ruled the Romans, namely, love of fame. And I say it this morning—it is a shameful thing that ever idolatry should be able to breed better men than some who profess Christianity. And I think I may stand firmly while I argue here, that if a Roman, a worshipper of Jupiter or Saturn, became great or glorious, a Son of God ought to be nobler by far.

Look you, Sirs, at Brutus. He has established a republic, he has put down tyranny, he sits upon the judgment seat—his two sons are brought before him—they have been traitors to the commonwealth. What will the father do? He is a man of a loving heart and loves his sons, but there they stand. Will he execute justice as a judge, or will he prefer his family to his country? He covers his face for a moment with his hands and then looking down at his sons and finding that the testimony is complete against them, he says, “Lictors, do your work.”

They bare their backs, the rod scourges them. “Complete the sentence, lictors.” And their heads are smitten off in the father’s presence. Stern justice swayed his spirit and no other feeling could for a single moment make him turn aside. Christian men, do you feel this with regard to your sins? When you have been sitting on the judgment bench, there has been some favorite sin brought up and you have, oh, let me blush to say it, you have wished to spare it! It was so near your heart, you have wished to let it live, whereas should you not, as the son of God, have said, “If my eye offends me, I will pluck it out and cast it from me. If my right hand offends me, I will cut it off, rather than I should in anything offend my God”?

Brutus slays his sons. But some Christians would spare their sins. Look again at that noble youth, Mutius Scaevola. He goes into the tent of King Pyrrhus with the intention to put him to death, because he is the enemy of his country. He slays the wrong man. Pyrrhus orders him to be taken captive. A pan of hot coals is blazing in the tent. Scaevola puts out his right hand and holds it. It crackles in the flame. The young man flinches not, though his fingers drop away. “There are 400 youths,” says

he, "in Rome as brave as I am and that will bear fire as well. And Tyrant," he says, "you will surely die."

Yet here are Christian men, who, if they are a little sneered at, or snubbed, or get the cold shoulder for Christ's sake, are half ashamed of their profession and would go and hide it. And if they are not like Peter—tempted to curse and swear to escape the blessed imputation—they would turn the conversation, that they might not suffer for Christ. Oh for 400 Scoevolus—400 men who for Christ's sake would burn—not their right hands, but their bodies, if indeed Christ's name might be glorified and sin might be stabbed in the heart!

Or, did you read that old legend of Curtius, the Roman knight? A great gulf had opened in the Forum, perhaps caused by an earthquake and the auspices had said that the chasm could never be filled up, except the most precious thing in Rome could be cast into it. Curtius puts on his helmet and his armor, mounts his horse and leaps into the cleft, which is said to have filled at once, because courage, valor and patriotism, were the best things in Rome.

I wonder how many Christians there are who would leap like that into the cleft? Why, I see you, Sirs, if there is a new and perilous work to be done for Christ, you like to be in the rear rank this time. If there were something honorable, so that you might ride on with your well-caparisoned steeds in the midst of the dainty ranks you would do it. But to leap into certain annihilation for Christ's sake—Oh, heroism, where has it fled? Where has it gone?

Church of God, surely it must survive in you. For to whom should it more belong to die and sacrifice all, than to those who are the sons of God? Look again at Camillus. Camillus had been banished from Rome by false accusations. He was ill-treated, abused and slandered and went away to retirement. Suddenly the Goths, the old enemies of Rome, fell upon the city. They surrounded it. They were about to sack it and Camillus was the only man who could deliver it. Some would have said within themselves "Let the despicable nation be cut off. The city has turned me out. Let it rue the day that it ever drove me away."

But no, Camillus gathers together his body of followers, falls upon the Goths, routs them and enters in triumph into Rome though he was an exile. Oh Christian, this should ever be your spirit, only in a higher degree. When the Church rejects you, casts you out, annoys, despises you—still be ready to defend her! And when you have an ill name even in the lips of God's people, still stand up for the common cause of Zion, the city of our solemnities.

Or look you at Cincinnatus. He is chosen dictator, but as soon as ever his dictatorship is over he retires to his little farm of three acres and goes to his plow. And when he is wanted to be absolute monarch of Rome he is found at his plow upon his three acres of land and his little cottage. He served his country, not for himself, but for his country's sake. And can it be that you will not be poor, yet honest, for Christ's sake! Will you descend to the tricks of trade to win money? Ah, then, the Roman eclipses the Christian. Will you not be satisfied to serve God though you lose by it? To stand up and be thought an arrant fool, because you will not learn the wisdom of this world? To be esteemed a mad fanatic, because you cannot swim with the current? Can you not do it? Can you not do it?

Then again I say to you, “Tell it not in Gath and publish it not in Askelon, then has a heathen eclipsed a Christian.” May the sons of God be greater than the sons of Romulus. One other instance let me give you. You have heard of Regulus the Roman general. He was taken prisoner by Carthaginians, who anxiously wished for peace. They told him to go home to Rome and see if he could not make peace. But his reply was, “No, I trust they will always be at war with you, for Carthage must be destroyed if Rome is to prosper.”

They compelled him, however, to go, exacting from him this promise—that if the Romans did not make peace he would come back and if he came back they would put him to death in the most horrid manner that ever cruelty could invent. Regulus returns to Rome. He stands up in the senate and bids them never to make peace in Carthage. He then tells them that he is going back to Carthage and, of course, they tell him that he need not keep faith with an *enemy*. I imagine that he said, “I promised to go back and though it is to pangs indescribable, I will return.”

His wife clings to his shoulder, his children seek to persuade him. They attend him to the waters’ edge. He sails for Carthage—his death was too horrible to be described. Never martyr suffered more for Christ than that man suffered for his word’s sake. And shall a Christian man break his promise? Shall a son of God be less true than a Roman or a heathen? Shall it be, I say, that integrity shall be found in heathen lands and not be found here? No. May you be holy, harmless, sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

I used this argument—I thought it might be a new one. I am sure it is a forcible one. You cannot imagine, surely, that God is to allow heathens to eclipse His children. Oh, never let it be so. So live, so act, you sons of God, that the world may say of you, “Yes, these men bring forth the fruits of God. They are like their Father. They honor His name. They are, indeed, filled with His Grace, for their every word is as true as their oath. Their every act is sincere and upright. Their heart is kind, their spirit is gentle. They are firm but yet they are generous. They are strict in their integrity, but they are loving in their souls. They are men who, like God, are full of love. But like He are severely just. They are sternly holy—they are, like He, ready to forgive, but they can, by no means, tolerate iniquity, nor hear that sin should live in their presence.”

God bless you, you sons of God and may those of you who are strangers to Him, be convicted and converted by this sermon and seek that grace by which alone you can have your prayer fulfilled—

***“With them numbered may we be,
Now and through eternity.”***

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“HEIRS OF GOD”

NO. 2961

**A SERMON
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***“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.”
Romans 8:17.***

THIS chapter—the 8th of Romans—is, like the Garden of Eden, full of all manner of delights. Here you have all necessary doctrines to feed upon and luxurious Truths of God with which to satisfy your soul. One might well have been willing to be shut up as a prisoner in paradise and one might well be content to be shut up to this one chapter and never to be allowed to preach from any other part of God’s Word. If this were the case, one might find a sermon in every line—no, more than that, whole volumes might be found in a single sentence by anyone who was truly taught of God! I might say of this chapter, “All its paths drop fatness.” It is, among the other chapters of the Bible, like Benjamin’s meal which was five times as much as that of any of his brothers! We must not exalt one part of God’s Word above another, yet, as “one star differs from another star in glory,” this one seems to be a star of the first magnitude, full of the brightness of the Grace and Truth of God! It is an altogether inexhaustible mine of spiritual wealth and I invite the saints of God to dig in it and to dig in it again and again. They will find not only that it has *dust* of gold, but also huge nuggets which they shall not be able to carry away by reason of the weight of the treasure!

I notice, in this chapter, and also in many other parts of Paul’s writings, that it is his habit to make a kind of ladder—a sort of Jacob’s ladder, let me call it—which he begins to climb. But every step he takes leads to another, and that one to another, and that again to yet another. You see it here. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God”—there is the leading of the Spirit—“they are the sons of God.” And when he gets to sonship, then he says, “And if children, then heirs.” So he gets to heirship and he climbs still higher when he says, “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” I think he means us to judge, by this mode of writing, that this ought to be the style of our Christian experience. Every measure of Grace which we receive should lead us to seek after something still higher! We are never to say, “This is the pinnacle of Grace—I cannot get beyond this.” Self-satisfaction is the end of progress, so we are constantly to cry, “Higher, and yet still higher! Onward and

upward”—and still to ask to be filled yet more completely with all the fullness of God!

My text is far too large for me to attempt to preach from it in an exhaustive style, so I will just make four observations upon it. And even those observations will only give you a bird’s-eye view of the great Truths revealed here. May God grant that in each of those four things, there may be food for your souls!

I. These first thing that I see in the text is THE GROUND OF HEIRSHIP—“If children, then heirs.” The children of God are heirs of God and they come to be heirs through being His children, and in no other way.

Mark that *we are not heirs of God as the result of creation*. I cannot say what we might have been by creation had the Fall not ruined us, but that fatal disobedience of our first parent robbed us of any inheritance that might have come to us in that way. And now, by nature, we are “children of wrath, even as others,” but certainly not heirs of the promise or heirs of the Grace of God. No, beloved Friends, Nature will never entitle you to be a joint-heir with Christ. Whatever you may think of your human nature—and you may suppose that it is not so depraved as the nature of others—you may even get the notion that yours is a very superior sort of human nature—well, let it be what it may, it will not entitle you to this inheritance! For as it was not the children of the flesh who were necessarily the heirs of the Old Covenant, even as Ishmael, born after the flesh, was not the heir, but Isaac, born after the spirit—and not Esau, but Jacob—so is it now. It is not what you are by *nature*—not that which is born of the flesh, but what you are by Grace—that which is born of the Spirit that is the ground upon which heirship may be claimed before God. So, my dear Hearer, if you are in a state of nature—if you have never passed out of that state into a state of Grace—this text has nothing to do with you.

And, further, as our heirship with God depends upon our being the children of God, *it does not depend upon our natural descent*. I have already shown you that it does not depend upon our nature, but there is another phase of that Truth which needs to be mentioned. There were some, of old, who said, “We have Abraham to our father,” but being born as sons of Abraham after the flesh availed not to give them any part in the inheritance which was according to the Spirit. And, today, there are some who say, “We are the children of godly parents. We were born in a Christian land, so, of course, we are Christians.” Not so, you are no more Christians, on that ground, than if you were the children of the Hottentot in his kraal! You need as much to be born-again as does “the heathen Chinese.” You need to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit as much as if you had been taught from your childhood to bow your knee to a block of wood or stone. O you who are the inhabitants of this so-called Christian country, you stand before the living God in no sort of preference to the heathen except that you have the privilege of hearing the Gospel! But if

you reject it, it shall be more tolerable for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the inhabitants of heathen lands, in the Day of Judgment, than for you! Did not our Lord Jesus Christ say that “many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the children of the Kingdom”—the favored ones of His day, or of our day—“shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”?

Further, as the inheritance is not by creation, nor by natural descent, *neither can it come by meritorious service*. The Apostle says, “If children, then heirs”—not, “if servants.” You may toil and keep on toiling all your life, but that will not make you an heir of God! The servant in your house, however diligent, is not your heir. For a servant to claim to be the heir would not be tolerated for a moment in a court of law. The servant may be able to truthfully say, “I have been in my master’s house these many years, neither transgressed I at any time his commandments; and all that is right for a servant to do, I have done for him from my youth up.” But if he were to go on to ask, “What do I lack?” the reply would be, “You lack the one thing that is absolutely essential to heirship, namely, *sonship*.” Oh, how this Truth of God cuts at the root of all the efforts of those who hope to win Heaven by merit, or to obtain the favor of God by their own exertions! To them all God says what Jesus said to Nicodemus, “You must be born-again.” Birth, alone, can make you children and you must be children if you are to be heirs. O Sirs, if you remain what you are by nature, you may strive to do what you please, but when you have dressed out the child of nature in its finest garments, it is still only the child of nature finely dressed, but not the child of God You must be, by a supernatural birth, allied to the living God, for, if not, all the works that you may perform will not entitle you to the possession of the inheritance of the Most High!

And as good works cannot do this, *neither can any ceremonial observances*. You know that there is a ceremony of which children are taught to say, “In my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.” It does not matter what people may say in order to make an excuse for believing that this statement is true, for it is as gross a lie as was ever put into human language! We know it is not true. Look where we may, we can see numbers of persons who were sprinkled in their infancy, or were even baptized after they had reached years of discretion, but their conduct shows that they are not members of Christ, children of God, or inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven! And as that ceremony cannot make them Christians, neither can any other, whether it is devised by man, or ordained by God, Himself, for God never intended that any ceremony should take the place of the new birth, the regeneration which must be worked by the Spirit of God Himself—

**“Not all the outward forms on earth,
Nor rites that God has given,**

***Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,
Can raise a soul to Heaven!
The Sovereign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of Grace—
Born in the image of His Son,
A new peculiar race.”***

And, without the Holy Spirit to carry out that Sovereign will of God by making us to be born into the image of His Son, we are not His heirs, for thus it stands in our text, “*If children, then heirs,*” which implies that if we are not children, we are not heirs!

So this is the all-important enquiry for us to make. Do we, beloved Friends, possess this qualification which is absolutely essential to our heirship? Have we been born-again? We cannot have been born into God’s family when we were born the first time, for Christ Himself said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and nothing more—“and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” so we must be born of the Spirit, we must be born-again, born from above if we are to be children of God. Did you ever undergo that great change? Do you know what regeneration means? I do not mean have you read of it in the Confession of Faith, but have you *experienced* it in your own soul? Are you new creatures in Christ Jesus? For, as the Lord lives, before whom I stand, if any of us have not been created anew in Christ Jesus, if we have not been born-again by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot possibly be the children of God and heirs according to the promise!

If we have been thus regenerated, we shall certainly know it. There may be times when we shall doubt it, but we shall know it, partly by the indwelling of the Spirit, as Paul wrote to the Galatians, “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” And in the verse before our text, we read, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” Do you know anything, dear Friend, about this witness-bearing by the Holy Spirit? I have often asked myself that question, so I feel free to ask you the same. This is not a thing that you may know, or may not know—and yet possibly may be safe—you must have this witness of the Holy Spirit, or else the witness of your own spirit will be a very doubtful thing, indeed! The Holy Spirit never confirms a false witness, but a true witness He will confirm. And if the witness of your spirit is true, you will have, more or less definitely, the witness of the Spirit within you, bearing confirmatory testimony that it is even so.

Those who are truly the children of God have yet another mark by which they can be recognized, namely, that there is a likeness to their Heavenly Father begotten in them. If a man says to you, “I am the son of So-and-So”—some old friend of yours—you look into his face to see whether you can trace any likeness to his father. So, when a man says to us, “I am a child of God,” we have the right to expect that there shall be at least some trace of the Character of God visible in his walk and conversation. Come, dear Friend, with all your imperfections, are you

seeking to be an imitator of God as one of His dear children? Do you try to do that which He wishes you to do? Do you make His Son to be your Exemplar? Do you strive after holiness? Are you aiming at obedience to those Divine commands, “Be you holy; for I am holy,” “be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect”? Do you feel that because you are a child of God, it becomes you to walk even as His first-born Son walked while He was here below? Remember that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, because without holiness no man has the evidence that he is, indeed, a child of God!

And once more, the main evidence of our being children of God, by the new birth, lies in our believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. “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.” There are many evidences of the life of God in the soul, but there is no other that is so abiding as the possession of faith in Jesus Christ. Perhaps, dear Friend, you are afraid to say that you have the likeness of God upon you, although others can see it, but I hope you are not afraid to say, “I do believe that Jesus is the Christ” and the Apostle John says, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.” If you accept Him as appointed and anointed of God to be your Savior—and commit your soul into His hands—then you can be sure that you are a child of God, for true, simple, sincere faith in the Lord Jesus exists only in the heart of the regenerate! No unregenerate man ever did, or ever could believe in Jesus Christ—but where the Lord has given the Divine Life, He gives faith at the same time—faith which is the surest proof of the existence of that Divine Life in the soul!

God grant to each one of you the Grace to test yourself by these four questions—“Have I been born-again? Have I the Spirit of adoption? Have I at least some likeness to my Heavenly Father? Do I believe in Jesus Christ?” If so, then you are a child of God and that childhood is the ground of heirship! So we can leave that point and go on to the next.

II. The text teaches, in the second place, THE UNIVERSALITY OF HEIRSHIP TO ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD. “If children, then heirs”—not some of them heirs, but, “if children, then heirs”—all of them without an exception! Proven that they are children, it is also proven that they are heirs. It is not so among men, for, often, it is only the first-born sons who are the heirs. But with God, the rule is, “If children”—whenever born—“then heirs.”

Why is it that all the children of God are His heirs? First, *because the principle of priority as to time cannot possibly enter into this question.* There is a First-Born who has priority by nature, honor and right. But He is “the First-Born among many brethren,” and in Him all the rest of the children of God are also first-born, for Paul writes of “the general assembly and church of the First-Born which are written in Heaven.” The question of the time of birth is, sometimes, a matter of very great concern

on earth. In the ways of twins, a few minutes may make all the difference between his lordship and his brother who is no lord at all—between the brothers who shall be heir of many broad acres and the one who shall go forth upon the broad acres to earn his bread! But, with God’s children, there is no difference in point of time. Adam, if he was the first man converted, certainly has no priority over Paul, although Paul says that he was as “one born out of due time.” Noah, an early member of God’s great family, has no preference over Abraham. Indeed, Abraham seems to be mentioned with greater honor than any of those who had gone before him—they certainly had no priority over him. Time has to do with time, but time has not to do with eternity, so, whether you, my Brother, were born to God 50 years ago and I, 25 years ago—and our young friend over there 25 *days* ago—it makes no difference. “If children, then heirs,” because the date of birth cannot come into our reckoning when we have to do with eternal things.

Again, we know that *the love of God is the same toward all His children*. They are all His children—all chosen, all redeemed, all regenerated, all called, all justified and they shall all be glorified. Where a father loves all his children alike, his disposition leads him to treat them all alike, both as to what he gives them now, and also as to what he will leave them as an inheritance. But sometimes circumstances such as the law of the land and the title-deeds of estates prevent the father from treating all alike. But in the case of the children of God, laws cannot hamper or hinder Him. He is the great Law-Maker and He can control circumstances so as to do everything according to the dictates of His own heart. And His heart of love says, “I have loved all My children alike, and they shall all have the blessing.” And so they shall, Beloved. Though you, my dear Friend, think yourself obscure and one of the least in God’s Israel, your name is just as prominently written upon the heart of Christ as the names of His Apostles are! And you are as dear to the Lord as the very noblest among His saints. Indeed, He carries the lambs in His bosom, so the little ones have the best chariot of all! He may leave the sheep to walk, but He carries the lambs, and He always takes special care of the weak and feeble. “If children, then heirs,” because all God’s children are equally partakers of their Father’s love.

Again, we know, from Scripture, that *all the children of God are favored with the same promise*. If you turn to the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the 18th verse, you will find there what Paul says to all the Lord’s children. What a precious passage that is where he tells us 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.” In the previous verse he mentions the heirs of promise and by that expression he means all the children of God, for they are all heirs according to the promise—and all heirs of the promise. Well, then, as God has given them a promise, He will fulfill it! And that promise is that they shall be heirs of this world and

also heirs of the world to come! And He will fulfill it to them all and keep His oath by which He has confirmed it to them, so they shall surely be His heirs.

Notice, again, that all God's children are His heirs *because they are all equally related to Him through whom the heirship comes*, for every child of God is neither more nor less than brother to the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. In this brotherhood with Christ there can be no degrees—a man is not partly a brother and partly *not* a brother. If he is a brother of Christ, Christ is his brother. A man is not partly in Christ and partly out of Christ. If one with Christ, he *is* one with Christ. And all the members of Christ's mystical body are quickened with the same Divine Life and shall have the same Heaven to dwell in forever! Seeing, then, that we are all one in Christ Jesus, the heirship which comes to us by way of the First-Born must come equally to all the children.

And there is one more very comforting reflection and that is that *the inheritance is large enough for all the children*. Rich men sometimes have to let their estates go to the eldest son, according to the stupid regulations of this age, "to keep up the family dignity." There are some great lords who find that they can accumulate wealth enough to set up two or three sets of families and they do so. But, in other families there generally are some of the children who must remain lean in order that the first-born son may grow fat. Now, it is not so with the inheritance of God because there is enough for all! And there is this peculiarity about it, that every child of God has all the inheritance, yet there is not any the less for all the rest of the family! It can never be said, in relation to human heirs, that each heir has all the inheritance, yet no one else has any less than all. You, my Brother, if you are a child of God, are an heir of God, and so am I. And I have not any the less of God because you have Him and you have not any the less of God because I have Him. No, if it were possible for it to be so, I would have more joy in the fact that you, also, have the same blessing, and you would have more in the joy of seeing others partaking in the same privilege as you have! The whole of God belongs to Christ and the whole of God belongs to the least member of Christ! All are "heirs of God." So you see that there was no reason for the exclusion of the younger branches of God's family in order to make up a greater estate for the older ones. All the children of God are the heirs of God because the inheritance is an infinite one and there is an infinite inheritance for each one of them.

O Beloved, let us dwell for a moment or two on this theme! The text says, "If children, then heirs." It does not say, "If children, then Apostles." None of us could attain to that high office. It does not say, "If children, then preachers." Here and there, one of us could claim that title. It does not say, "If children, then deeply-experienced saints." Some of us may *never* be that! It does not say, "If children, then mighty men of valor." Perhaps some of us are too timid to ever grow to that. It does not

say, “If children, then rich men,” because some of us are poor. It does not say, “If children, then favored with health,” for some of us have little enough of that gift. It does not say, “If children, then filled with full assurance,” for some of us are vexed with many doubts and fears. But it *does* say, “If children, then heirs.” So let us rejoice that we are “heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” Let us rejoice in that fact, now, and let us begin to live worthily of our rank as heirs of God! Let us strive after holiness and seek to live as becomes the heirs of eternal life considering what manner of persons we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness!

Thus I have spoken of the universality of the heirship to all the children of God.

III. Now, thirdly, I want to speak concerning THE INHERITANCE ITSELF. “If children, then heirs; heirs of God.”

That little phrase which I have just uttered is one which none of us can fully comprehend and none of us may even attempt to do so. This is the glory of our inheritance, that we are “heirs of God.” Will you give me your most earnest attention while I remind you of some of the descriptions of our inheritance which are given in Scripture?

Here is one which you will find in the 21st chapter of the Revelation and the 7th verse—“He that overcomes shall inherit all things.” That is the extent of your inheritance, “all things.” And it is not a singular expression, for you have it again in 1 Corinthians 3:21, 22—“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.” The richest man who ever lived could not say that all things were his, but the poorest Christian who ever lived can say that! If you turn to the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the 14th verse, you will find that we are there called, “heirs of salvation.” Looking on a little further in the same Epistle, in the 6th chapter and the 17th verse, you will find that we are called, “the heirs of promise.” In his Epistle to Titus, the 3rd chapter and the 7th verse, Paul calls us, “heirs according to the hope of eternal life,” while James says, in the 2nd chapter of his Epistle at the 5th verse, that we are “heirs of the Kingdom which God has promised to them that love Him.” And Peter says, in his first Epistle, the 3rd chapter and 7th verse, that we are “heirs together of the Grace of life.” If any preacher wants to deliver a series of sermons upon the heirship of the saints, let him take these texts and preach upon them. I have not time to do that tonight and even if I should say all that I could upon all these texts put together, I should not then have said so much as my text says, for that does not speak of “the heirs of promise,” or the “heirs of salvation,” or the “heirs of the Kingdom,” but it says, “heirs of God.”

“Heirs of God”—what does that mean? Well, it means, first of all, that *we are heirs to all that God has*. Suppose I am my father’s heir and that he has an old thatched cottage worth a shilling a week—well, that is what I am heir to. But if I happened to be the heir of the Duke of

Westminster, he might take me over a county and say to me, “That is what you are heir to.” Ah, just so! Whatever the father has, *that* is what the child is heir to. Now think what God has! Stretch your wings, most vivid imagination! Fly abroad, most capacious thought! And when the remotest bounds of space have been crossed, you have only just commenced your endless journey! We will not attempt such a flight as that. We will stay at home and meditate upon the great Truth of God that all God has is ours because we are His—heirs of God!

Yet even that, great as it is, is only part of the meaning of our text, for the Apostle next means that *God Himself belongs to us*. David said, “The Lord is the portion of my inheritance”—and this is what every child of God can say! So that the portion of each child of God is not only what God *has*, but what God, Himself, *is*! O child of God, you have God’s power to protect you, God’s eyes to guide you, God’s Justice to defend you, God’s Immutability to be constant to you, God’s Infinity to enrich you! You have God’s heart of love, God’s hands of power, God’s head of glory—time would fail me to tell all that you have, for you have all that God is—to be yours forever and ever!

All the worlds that at present have been created are but as mere trifles compared with what God could make if He so pleased. A thousand, thousand, thousand, thousand worlds, when they were all made, would be but as a handful of dust scattered from His almighty hands and He could, if He willed, do the same again a thousand, thousand, thousand, thousand times over! “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, He takes up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.” Think of the whole mountain range as one great altar and all the cedars set ablaze, and then all the beasts that feed there offered up as a burnt sacrifice! Yet the Prophet says that is not sufficient for God! Then how great He must be! Oh, make Him great in your hearts and reverence and adore Him! But when you do, do not forget to say, “My God! My God! My God!” How often you have that expression in the Psalms! It never could have been there, as the utterance of any mere man, if it had not first been in the *eternal purpose of God* as the utterance which was to be on the lips of Christ in that dread hour when He cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” So now each Believer can say, “*my* God,” for Jesus Christ, Himself, puts it, “My Father and your Father; My God, and your God.” In some aspects God is as much my God as He is Christ’s God, and as much my Father as He is Christ’s Father. O Beloved, I have got out of my depth now! I wish I were able to go even deeper into this wondrous Truth of God, but there I must leave off what I have to say concerning the inheritance itself—“heirs of *God*.”

IV. My last point is, perhaps, as blessed as any in the whole text. It is, THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE CLAIMANTS TO THE INHERITANCE—“joint-heirs with Christ.”

This is, first of all, *the test of our heirship*. Listen. You are not an heir of God alone—you cannot be. You can only be an heir of God through being “in Co.”—in company—joint-heir with Christ. Now, are you and Christ in company? That is a simple question. Are you and Christ in company, or do you stand alone? If you stand alone, you are a poor miserable bankrupt, announced in the court of Heaven—so do not try to stand alone. You will perish if you do. But are Christ and you thus joined together? Have you learned to trust in Christ, to live in Christ, to pray in Christ, to trade with Heaven through Christ and to have everything in Christ? That is the test of heirship. God’s child is born God’s heir, but it is because he is in Christ and is born in union with Christ that he becomes God’s heir. If we are out of Christ we are out of the family of God and out of the heirship of God. “Without Christ” you are “without God in the world.” But in Christ, joined in company with Christ, you are an heir of God!

This, Beloved, seems to me to be *the sweetest part of all the inheritance*. Once let me know that I am one with Christ and so have become a fellow-heir with Him and it is like Heaven below to my soul! Indeed, I shall like Heaven itself all the better and I shall like all that God is going to give me, by-and-by, all the better because I am going to share it with Christ! A good deal depends upon the company we may meet in going to any place to which we may be invited. A person might ask you to his house and you might not know whether you cared to go. But suppose the host were to tell you that a very dear friend of yours was going to be there? You would then say, “Oh, yes, I will go for the sake of having his company!” Now, wherever Jesus Christ is—I do not care whether it is in the house of a Pharisee, or on some lonely hillside—it is good to be where He is and to go shares with Him. It makes everything more sweet to be able to enjoy it with Him. So, Beloved, while you are heirs of God, you are not the only heirs, for you are joint-heirs with Christ and you will share the inheritance with Him! When the Lord Jesus Christ prayed the best prayer that He could pray for His people, do you remember what He asked for? It was this—“Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory, which You have given Me”—as if He knew that His people would prize something that belonged to Him better than anything else in all the world, or even in Heaven itself! If Christ sups with us, it is a blessed supper though it is only a dish of herbs. But if Christ is absent, it is a poor dinner though there may be steak enough to make the table groan. To my mind, then, this is the sweetness of our inheritance—that it is a joint-heirship with Christ!

This also shows *the greatness of the inheritance* because, if we are to be joint-heirs with Christ, it cannot be a little thing that we are to share with Him. Can you imagine what the Father would give to His Son as the reward of the travail of His soul? Give yourself time to think what the everlasting God would give to His equal Son who took upon Himself the

form of a Servant, was made in the likeness of men, who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross! Can you think of a reward that would be large enough for Him? Let the Father’s Love and the Father’s Justice judge. Oh, it must be a large inheritance for such a well-beloved Son and such an obedient Son as He was! I, a poor worm of the dust, cannot think of anything that I consider good enough for Him. Lord, I would have Him crowned with many crowns and set up on a glorious high throne! But what must be the reward which His Father devises for Him? What must be the greatness of the infinite recompense which the Infinite God will bestow upon His Only-Begotten? Follow that line of thought as far as you can and then recollect that you are to be joint-heir with Christ. What He has, you are to share! I will read those wonderful words again, “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.” The same Glory that is to be His, He will have us to enjoy with Him!

Again, this joint-heirship *ensures the inheritance to us*. I am quite sure that I would not like to go into partnership with just anybody whom I might meet in the street. Indeed, if I had a share in any limited liability company, I would do with it as the man did with the bad bank-note—lay it down and run away from it as fast as I could! What multitudes of people have been ruined by taking shares in companies which seemed to be the nicest, neatest, most money-getting schemes under Heaven! But one need not mind going shares if one has nothing at all and the other partner is the wealthiest person in the whole world! So what a blessing it is to go shares with Christ because we know that He cannot fail. I was thinking, just now, that if I ever should lose Heaven, seeing that I am joint-heir with Christ, it would be “the firm” that would lose it, because we must stand or fall together if we are joint-heirs. Somebody once said to a holy man, “Your soul will be lost.” “Then,” he said, “Christ will be the loser.” He was like the Negro who was quite unconcerned when the ship was being wrecked. He said that he would not lose anything, for he belonged to his Massa, and his Massa would lose it. Well, what the Negro said in his simplicity, we may say in real earnest. If our souls are lost, it will be Christ who will be the loser, for He bought us with His blood and He will lose what He purchased at so great a cost! And His Father gave us to Him, so He will lose His Father’s gift. And He has loved us and is married to us, so He will lose His spouse, the beloved of His soul. But He will *not* lose us—He *cannot* lose us—and if Christ cannot lose His inheritance, then none of His people can lose theirs, for we are joint-heirs with Him! If two partners go into a court of law and the case is decided against the one, it is against the other, also, for the two are one in that matter. So, if the decision could, by any possibility, be given against anyone who is in Christ Jesus, it would be given equally against the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. But that cannot be. How secure, then, is the inheritance of the saints! We are joint-heirs with Christ.

And, my Brothers and Sisters, to conclude, *how this endears His love to us*—that He should thus put Himself on the same footing with us as to His heirship, first taking us into union with Himself, making us joint-heirs with Himself, and then Himself going back to Heaven to plead for us and to make it part of His glory up there to prepare the place which we are to share with Him! Does not this bind us fast to Him? If He lets us be sharers in His inheritance in Glory, will we not gladly be sharers here in His sufferings and in His shame? Is there anybody who desires to spit upon Christ as they did of old? Then let him do me the honor to spit upon me for Christ’s sake! Is there anyone who has an evil word for Christ? Then let that word fall upon my ears. Do you not feel, Beloved, that it is an honor for you to endure any reproach for Christ’s sake? Surely if we are to be there with Him forever, it is but right that we should be with Him here! If we are to share the splendor of His Throne, we may be joyful to share the dishonor of His Cross so far as we may.

I have thus set before you the heirship of the saints and the way to attain it. I pray God the Holy Spirit to apply the message to His own people and to make them feel glad in the Lord. As for the others, I have shown that they can only be heirs through being children—and if you are not the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus—I pray the Lord to reveal to you whose children you must be and what inheritance you must expect to have at the last. Yet I pray you to remember that the way of salvation lies in simply looking to Jesus Christ. May you look to Him tonight—not tomorrow. Before you leave this place, present this prayer, “O Lord, give me the nature of Your children, and the spirit of Your children, and faith in Jesus, as all Your children have it, for His dear name’s sake! Amen.”

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

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

THE JOINT-HEIRS AND THEIR DIVINE PORTION NO. 402

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 28, 1861,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Joint-heirs with Christ.”
Romans 8:17.*

THE Apostle has proceeded through a simple but exceedingly forcible train of reasoning till he gains this glorious point—“Joint-heirs with Christ.” He begins thus—“You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” This is a fact which he takes for granted because he has perceived it in the hearts of believers. We do cry, “Abba, Father.” From this he infers that if God has given us the Spirit whereby we call Him, “Father,” then we are His children.

Then he adds—“If children then heirs”—though this does not hold true in all families because all children are not heirs. Frequently the first-born may take all the estate. But with God so long as they are children they have equal rights. “If children then heirs.” He goes on to say, “Heirs of God.” For if they are heirs they inherit their Father’s property. God is their Father, they are therefore God’s heirs! Well, but God has another Son, one who is the First-born of every creature. Exactly so, therefore if we are heirs, as Christ Jesus is the heir of all things, we are “joint-heirs with Christ.”

I think you will see that, like links in a chain, these different truths draw each other on—the spirit of adoption proves the *fact of adoption*—by the act of adoption we are children. If children then heirs. If heirs, heirs of God. But since there is another Heir, we must therefore be joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. Blessed is the man to whom this reasoning is not abstract but experimental. Happy is he who can follow the Apostle step by step and say, “Yes, I have this morning the spirit of a son. I know that my heart loves God and I look to Him as my Father, with trust, with confidence and with love.

“Then I am surely His son, because I have the Spirit. Then I am His heir. I am the heir of God. And thus my faith lays hold upon the thrice-precious words of this glorious text—I am joint-heir with Christ.”

I would invite you, my Brethren in Christ Jesus, this morning, to do three things. First, let us consider *the terms of the Covenant or will*—“joint-heirs with Christ.” Secondly, let us go forth and *view the estates*—

what it is of which we are joint-heirs. And when we have done so, let us proceed at once *to administer* for God has made His children administrators as well as heirs.

I. First, then, there is A LEGAL TERM IN THE WILL UPON WHICH THE WHOLE MATTER WILL HINGE. We are called “joint-heirs with Christ”—what does this mean?

1. It means, first of all, that *our right to the divine heritage stands or falls with Christ’s right to the same inheritance*. We are co-heirs. If He is truly an heir, so are we. And if He is not, neither are we. Our two interests are intertwined and made one. We have neither of us any heirship apart from the other. We are joint-heirs, Christ jointly with us. Ourselves jointly with Christ. So it follows that if there is any *flaw in the Covenant* to render it not valid—if it is not rightly signed, sealed and delivered—then it is no more valid for Christ than it is for us. If there is some point in the Covenant of Grace where wisdom has been deficient—and therefore by error it may miscarry—or by lack of legal right may prove null and void, it is as surely null towards Christ as towards ourselves—for He is jointly concerned therein.

If according to Law *we* are only heirs-presumptive, whose rights may be superseded, then our great Joint-Heir so far as He is co-heir with us, is superseded also. If it is possible that by some decree in Heaven’s high court it should be certified and determined that the inheritance is not rightly ours—because any part of the Covenant was left in a precarious state so that it became void and of no effect—then Your inheritance, O You King of kings has failed You in the very day when it has failed us.

I trust you will lay hold upon that thought. If Christ as God’s Heir has a perfect right to what His Father has bestowed upon Him, even so have we. If our title is true and just, so is His and if His rights of heritage are true and just, so are ours. Oh, blessed thought for the believer! *Jesus* must lose the reward of His agonies before *we* can lose the fruits of them! *Jesus* the Mediator must lose the glory which His finished work has procured for Him, before one of His co-heirs can miss it.

He must come down from that glory which He now inhabits and cease to be honored as “the Lamb that was slain and has redeemed us unto God by His blood,” if any one of His people shall be deprived of that glory and be cast into Hell. The will, if valid for one, is valid for all.

But perhaps there may be a *lawsuit* made against the will. Some antagonist may set up a counter-claim. An enemy to the entire family may proceed at once to attack the will with venom and with malice. He may take it into the Heavenly Court of Chancery and there, before the great Judge, the question may be tried as to whether the inheritance is legally and lawfully ours. Very well, be it so. But then it is Christ’s interest that is at stake as well as mine. He will be co-respondent in the suit.

When Satan stood forth to accuse Joshua, the high priest, he did in effect accuse Christ as well as that chosen disciple and the Lord was not slow to put in His rejoinder to the objection—"The Lord rebuke you, O Satan, even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you—is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" If Satan brings an accusation before God against any of the Lord's redeemed, that accusation is made against the Redeemer Himself. For God's people are so one with Christ that you must first bring the charge against Christ Himself before you dare to lay it against any of His elect.

Do not say you can charge the members with sin. You may do so in the inferior courts of earth, but the bill will be ignored in the supreme court of Heaven—since before that bar the accepted Substitute appears to answer all demands. You must enter your suit against the Head if you would attack the members, for verily the action at law which can be pleaded against the member of the body must be pleaded against the Head itself—for no court can allow a distinction between the body and the head in any motion at law.

If it is possible that the malice and the craft of Hell could invent some scheme by which the Covenant could be put out of court and the promise of grace could be made to fail, then Christ fails with His people. Then the Heir of all things loses His inheritance as soon as one single one of the other heirs shall have his right to the inheritance disproved. Our rights are joint-rights and must be either jointly acknowledged or jointly denied. "We are joint-heirs with Christ."

To illustrate the full meaning of the joint-heirship—suppose, after the *via* had been proved and acknowledged to be right it shall be found in winding up the affairs of the testator, that *nothing is left to distribute*. Suppose, after all this boast and talk about being heirs, the property should be nil, or there should even be found a debt against the estate—what then? Why, my Brethren, if *we* get nothing, *Christ* gets nothing. If there should be no Heaven for us, there is no Heaven for Christ. If there should be no thrones for us, there would be no throne for Him. If the promise should utterly fail of fulfillment to the least of the joint-heirers, it must also fail of accomplishment to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Be the property much or little, we are co-heirs. If there are infinite treasures, Christ has them and we have them. But if there is no treasure whatever and faith should end in disappointment and hope in despair—the calamity which impoverishes us must also impoverish our great Co-heir. When we are poor and in eternity have no shelter, when we in the next world shall find no Heaven and no bliss—then, wandering as outcast orphans—we shall see our Elder Brother an outcast orphan, too. If we have no portion and are penniless, the First-born among many Brethren must be portionless and penniless also, for with Him we stand or we fall.

And then suppose that in winding up the estates it should be found, though there is something left, yet it be a *mere trifle*, scarcely worth an acknowledgment—enough to excite appetite but not sufficient to satisfy it—what if it should come out that Heaven is not the infinite joy we have been taught to expect? Suppose its bliss should be but inferior joy, such as might be found even in this world below—suppose that the harps have no melody, the crowns but little glory and Heaven's streets but slight magnificence—what then? What they are to us they are to our Co-heir.

Saints with little glory, then Christ with little glory. Believers with a narrow Heaven, then Christ with a narrow Heaven. If they drink but little from the river of pleasure, His draughts must be shallow, too, for their joy is His joy and His glory He has given them. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. And you who long for His appearing shall be satisfied also when you wake up in His likeness.

I have been dwelling upon the black side in order to bring the bright one out by contrast. We are joint-heirs. So you see, if there is any flaw, if there is any action to set aside the will, or if there is found no effects, or if the effects are slender—the loss falls upon the co-heirs. Not on one alone, nor on the other alone—but on the two—since they are jointly designated heirs in the will and they are only heirs as they stand in relationship with one another.

But oh, my Brethren, let us revel with delight for a moment in the contrast which I might present to you. There is no flaw in God's will with regard to Christ. The heathen may rage and the kings of the earth take counsel together, but God says, "I will declare the decree, yet have I set My Son upon My holy hill of Zion." There is no fear whatever that by any accident or by mistake Christ should miss the honor to which His Father has ordained Him. He must be with His Father where He is—where we will be if we are heirs of God. Thus runs the decree and thus shall the fulfillment follow—"I will that they whom You have given Me be with Me where I am."

No lawsuit can stand against Christ. It were idle to dream it for a moment. He has satisfied God's Law, magnified it and made it honorable. He has discharged all the debts which as Surety He took upon Himself. Who shall accuse the Redeemer? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Him who rose again from the dead? Nor can any creature accuse His saints, nor can Heaven, or earth, or Hell disprove our rights or infringe upon our title so long as *His* title stands undisputed and indisputable. We *shall* see His face. The devils in Hell cannot hinder it. We *shall* possess the promised rest. The fiends that are beneath shall not rob us of the heirloom.

And, Believer, there is no fear that Christ shall be the possessor of nothing or heir of little things. He is the Son of God, the infinitely rich and God will not give to His Son a petty dowry or a trifling portion. "Ask of

Me,” says He and He gives Him unlimited permission to ask—not as Herod who would give only the half of his kingdom—but as One who would give everything to His Son whom He has appointed heir of all things and by whom He made the worlds. And O my Soul your portion cannot be slender nor your dowry narrow since it is the same inheritance which Christ has from His Father’s hands.

Weigh the riches of Christ in scales and His treasures in balances and then think to count the treasures which belong to the saints. Reach the bottom of Christ’s sea of joy and then hope to understand the bliss which God has prepared for them that love Him. Leap over the boundaries of Christ’s possession if you can—and then dream of ending a limit to the possessions of the elect of God. “All things are yours, for you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”

2. There is another point under the first head which I must not omit. Then it appears if we are called joint-heirs with Christ, *we legally and strictly have no inheritance apart from Him.* Soul, this suggests to you a solemn enquiry, “Are you in Christ or not?” Think not that you can ever be a partaker of the fullness of God unless you are in Christ—with Him vitally and personally—one. One of two joint-heirs has no right apart from the other. The signature of the one will not avail to alienate the estate. Nor can one sell it by his own right, nor have it all at his own separate disposal, or in his own sole possession or holding. He has, in fact, no right at all—except as he has in connection with his co-heir.

Consider this, Believer. You have no right to Heaven in yourself. Your right lies in Christ. If you are pardoned, it is through *His* blood. If you are justified, it is through *His* righteousness. If you are sanctified, it is because *He* is made of God unto you, sanctification. If you are taught in the ways of God, it is because He becomes your wisdom. If you shall be kept from falling it will be because you are preserved in Christ Jesus. And if you are perfected, it is because you are complete in *Him*. And if you are glorified at last, it will be because God the Father has glorified His Son Jesus. The promises are yes and amen to you—but only in Christ Jesus—in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

Make sure, then, that you are in union with Christ—for out of Him you have no rights whatever.

3. The title of joint-heir contains another mystery which I cannot withhold, although it must be judiciously handled—*Christ, as Co-heir, has (of His own free grace) so identified Himself with what His rights as Co-heir are, they are not to be separated or viewed apart from ours.* As God, by His own right,

the Lord Jesus is possessor of all things since He made and supports all things. But as Jesus, the Mediator, the federal Head of the Covenant of

Grace, He has no rights apart from His people. See, Brethren, He enters into glory, but not for Himself alone, for it is written, “Where the Forerunner is *for us* entered” (Heb. 6:20).

Does He stand in the presence of God? He appears in the presence of God *for us*—Hebrews 9:24. Adam’s death was not simply his own private loss, for in Adam all died. And Christ’s life and all the consequences of His obedience are not merely His own, but the joint riches of all who are in Him, of whom He is the federal Head and on whose behalf He accomplished the divine will. When Christ gave Himself for us, He gave us all the rights and privileges which went with Himself, so that now He has, *as our Brother*, no heritage apart from us—although as Eternal God—He has essential rights to which no creature may venture to pretend.

Yet one more remark before we leave this point. While dwelling upon this joint-heirship, let us remark *what an honor is conferred upon us*. To have anything to do with a great man is thought by some persons to be a distinguished mark of honor. To be set down in a will as co-heir with some great prince or noble would be considered indeed a great thing. But what honor is conferred on you, Believer, to be joint-heir with the King of kings, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!

You came here today from your toil and your bones have scarce forgotten yesterday’s weariness. But you are co-heir with Him who rules all Heaven. You come here in poverty and you will go home to a scant meal in a narrow room—but you are co-heir with Him who made the worlds—by whom all things consist. You have come here weak and feeble, doubting, distrustful and cast down. But I tell you, weak though you are and in your own judgment less than the least of all—yet the same hand that wrote Christ heir of all things wrote your name with His! And till a hand can be found that can blot out your Redeemer’s name yours shall stand and abide fair ever and ever.

Come, lift up your head! Envy no man his Dukedom. Think no man’s princeliness worth your coveting. You are greater than the greatest for you are joint-heir with Christ. In dignified relationship you have no superior upon earth. And except those who are joint-heirs with you, you have not an equal, since you are joint-heir with Christ. And will you think, yet again, *what cause there is that you should realize today your union with Christ* since you are joint-heir with Him? Soul, you are linked with Christ in the Eternal business of the Eternal Father. When He decreed Christ to be blessed above all the blessed, He decreed you to be a partaker with Him. Christ was always considered as having *you* in Him and you were always considered by God as being in Christ.

I pray you consider *yourself* as being in Christ. Look today upon your own being, not as a stray spark, but as a portion of Christ’s fire. Not as a

solitary drop, but as a part of that deep sea of love which we call Christ Jesus. Think of yourself now not as a man or separate individual, but as a member of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. These are blessed subjects, though I cannot speak upon them as I would. I always find when I have to deal with these “fat things full of marrow,” that words fail me. And perhaps it is well, for then the excellency of the power is proved to be not by words of man but in the weight and fullness and richness of Gospel matter. Joint-heirs with Christ Jesus! I defy you to exhaust that topic though you should think about it all the days of the next week. No, though you should muse upon it till eternity commences with your soul.

II. IN VIEWING THE ESTATES we must remark that to our present apprehension they are divided into two parts. The first part of the inheritance is one which flesh and blood would desire to do without—it is the *inheritance of suffering*. When Christ was God’s heir and was here on earth, He was heir of the Cross, heir of shame and spitting and cruel mockings and scourging. If we are joint-heirs with Him, we, too, must partake of the same. Come with me, Believer, to your estates and behold, just on the edge of your Father’s great inheritance lies the swamp and morass of *affliction*.

Now this is yours. If this is not yours—neither are the rest—for they are in the same indenture and they are bequeathed to you in the same will. The same legacy that left peace with you also left tribulation with you, while you are in this world. Come now, though this be an exceedingly noisome spot, though it be a piece of ground which you would prefer be left out and given to your enemies—yet there is a possibility of getting great treasure and great riches out of it. Therefore do not scorn it. But if you scorn it, remember, you scorn the rest of the inheritance, for they are all one and indivisible in your Father’s will.

Christ’s Cross is entailed on all heirs of God. Will you take the Cross? What? Do your shoulders forbid and refuse themselves the pain of bearing it? Then remember, your head must deny itself the pleasure of wearing the crown. No Cross. No crown. If you are joint-heir and would claim one part of the estate you must take the rest. Are you ready to throw up your own claim and say, “I will not be heir of anything”? Be it so, then. But until you are you must be ready to suffer in this world the afflictions of the chosen ones—for they are a part of the inheritance.

But, remember, Christ is Co-heir with you in this. “In all their afflictions He was afflicted and the angel of His presence saved them.” Added to this you must also be the heir of *persecution*. Christ had to be persecuted and so must you. If you, for fear of shame and out of the love of the flesh, will not follow Christ through an evil generation—neither shall you follow Him when He marches through the streets of Heaven in triumph—amidst the acclamations of angels. You must endure persecution. But then, remember He will be Joint-Heir with you.

“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” “He had not persecuted Christ,” you say, “it was only some poor men and women that he had hauled to prison, or scourged in the synagogue, to compel them to blaspheme.” Yes, but Christ was Co-Heir with them—and when Saul persecuted the poor servants of Jesus—he persecuted the Master, too. Will you suffer with *Him*? Will you be scoffed at for *His* sake? Will you be willing to endure the reviling of slanderous tongues? If not, inasmuch as you reject one part of the inheritance you reject the rest.

There is a third black portion, too, namely, *temptation*. You must be tempted of Satan. You must be tried by the world, the flesh, the devil. Do you shrink from it? Do you say, “I would not be a Christian, if I must always be on my guard and always fighting against temptation from without and from within”? Remember, in this, too, Christ is your Co-heir. “He was tempted in all points like as we are.” “We have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.” Do you shrink from being tempted? Would you take Job’s jewels but not his dung-hill? Would you have David’s crown but not his caves of Adullam and rocks of the wild goats?

Would you have your Master’s Throne but not His temptation in the wilderness? Then, remember, it cannot be. When you refuse the one, you relinquish all claim to the other. The co-heir is heir to the entire estate. And if he says, “No, not to that portion,” then he is not heir to any. And if he makes exemption anywhere, he makes exemption to the whole. The joint-heirship reaches from the gloomy patina of deep affliction up to the bright ineffable splendor of the throne of bliss—nor can any man reverse the record. “If so be that we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together.”

Now, let us march with joyful footsteps onward to the other part of the inheritance. As this is a legal question and as in matters of wills everything should be proven and sworn to, let us have, concerning our inheritance, the evidence of God—*that* cannot lie. Now, first, Brethren, as co-heirs with Christ we are *heirs of God*—so the text tells us. Oh, who can tell what God is? The finite cannot grasp the infinite. We who are but babes cannot hold the great ocean of Godhead in our infantile palms. We know not what God is—nor the measure of His attributes.

But, remember, the text tells us that all God is, is ours. Is he omnipotent? Your omnipotence is ours, O God, to be our defense. Is he omniscient? Your infinite wisdom, O God, is mine to guide me. Is he eternal? Your eternity, O God, is mine to keep me in existence that I may ever be preserved. Is He full of love and grace? Then all Your love, as though there were not another to be loved, is mine, O God. And all Your grace, as though there were never another sinner to partake of it, is mine. “The

Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup”—Psalm 16:5. “God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever”—Psalm 73:26.

Take another passage. Turn to Romans, the 4th chapter, 13th verse and you will find that there the promise that was made to the Seed was that he should be *heir of the world*. “Ask of Me,” said His Father, “and I will give you the heathen for Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession.” “This world is ours,” says the Apostle in another place and ours because it is Christ’s by right of inheritance. There is nothing here below which does not belong to a believer. If he has wealth, let him use it in his Master’s service, for it is *His*. If he has poverty, it is better for him, for poverty is his to help him to be sanctified and to long for Heaven.

Whatever happens to him—sickness or health, adversity or prosperity—everything is *His* here below. You may walk the broad acres of this round globe and never look upon a single spot that is not yours. You may cast your eye to the remotest star, or send your thoughts beyond into the untraversed leagues of space—but look where you will—as all is Christ’s—so all is yours. You have not come of age, so you do not possess it yet—but the day shall come when Christ shall come to this earth and take possession of it—and then His saints shall reign with Him. “The meek shall inherit the earth and delight themselves with the abundance of peace.”

In Hebrews 1:2 we are told that God has appointed Christ *heir of all things*. Then *we* are heirs of all things—Heaven and Earth—time and eternity. Anything that you can conceive of—the things that can be named and cannot be named, things conceivable and inconceivable—finite and infinite, human and divine. Christ’s property extends to all and we are co-heirs. Therefore our rights and our property extend to all things whatsoever they may be. “For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours and you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”

Then in James 2:5 we are spoken of as being *heirs of the kingdom*. Christ has a Kingdom that shall never be moved. He rules over all. Does He call Himself a King? He has made us kings. Is Christ a Priest? We are priests unto our God. Does He sit upon a Throne? We shall overcome and sit down with Him upon His Throne. Will He judge the nations? Know you not that the saints shall judge the world? Will He be received with triumph by His Father? So shall we when His Father shall say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Will He be ruler over many things? So shall we be when He shall say unto us, “Enter you into the joy of your Lord.”

Has He joy? We shall have joy, too, for we shall have *His* joy. Is He glorious? So must we be for we shall be made like He. Is He everlasting? So shall we be, for because He lives we shall live also. Brethren, I pray you, if your thoughts now can bring themselves to the matter—gather up all the honors, glories, treasures, riches that your thoughts have ever conceived

as belonging to Christ—and while the hymn is ringing in your ear—“Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him, Lord of all”—remember that *you* are co-heirs with Him. Oh, it is a glorious Truth!

Oratory may stand back and eloquence may hold her tongue. The doctrine must be stated in its naked Truth. She is, “when unadorned, adorned the most.” This glorious Truth is most sweet when earth’s honed words are taken away and most lustrous when we no longer attempt to illuminate her with human language. WE ARE HEIRS WITH CHRIST! All that He *has*, all that He *is*, therefore, *belongs to us!*

III. Now thirdly and this is the practical part of the discourse, let us proceed to ADMINISTER TO THE EFFECTS.

How can we do that, you say? Well, in the first place, there is one part of the property which we may enjoy at once. Behold, I present to you the fair Cross of your once crucified Elder Brother. When you came here this morning you were troubled and as you came in you were envying your neighbor. You were saying of such-and-such an ungodly person, “Everything seems to go well with him, but as for me, all the day long am I plagued and chastened every morning.” You were murmuring at the dispensations of God. Now, you have heard your Father’s will read and you find that you are joint-heirs with Christ.

You discover that Christ had His Cross and you are asked to administer to the will. Come, take your cross up and bear it with joy. You will have to carry it. Whether you take it up or not, your murmuring will not lighten your afflictions. You can make your wooden cross into an iron one if you choose, by being of a fretful disposition. Resignation to God’s will takes the weight out of the cross—but a proud spirit that will not bow to God’s will changes a wooden cross into an iron one. Now which shall it be? You must be chastened, you must feel the goad—will you kick against the pricks and so wound yourself more than you would have been by the goad itself?

Why will you inflict more sorrow on yourself than God indicts? Be patient and you will only feel the rod as it is in God’s hands. But when you are impatient and clutch at the rod you bring it down with the weight of God’s hand and your own hand, too. Now be quiet. Not only be quiet, but be glad. Say, “I count it to be my joy to be permitted to be a partaker of the sufferings of Christ. I will count it to be my highest glory if I may be made a knight of the Cross and may carry that Cross upon my shoulder—to the world a badge of dishonor—but to me the ensign of glory, the badge of honor.”

I cannot, of course, picture what your precise trouble is. Some of you have a trouble perhaps, in her who is dearest to you. Others of you have affliction in your children. Many of you are tried in your business and some of you in your bodies with chronic or acute diseases. I know you all

have a cross, or if you have not, I hope you will soon have one—for where there is no cross there is no Christ. The Cross and Christ are nailed together by four nails and they will never be disassociated in the experience of any Christian. All the sheep of the Great Shepherd are marked with the Cross—and this not only in the fleece—but in the flesh.

“If you are without chastisement whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards and not sons.” Now, I say begin at once to administer, by shouldering the Cross and bearing your troubles and your persecutions with patience and with joy.

But next—why cannot we administer also to the blessed part of the glorious testament? Brethren, faith can do wonders. While sense is groveling down below, faith with eagle wings cuts through the clouds and mounts to Heaven. If you have faith enough, Brethren, you may this morning be raised up to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. Come, Faith and help me now to lay my fingers among the strings of the golden harp! Yes, that harp is mine and my soul, by faith, would make every string resound with melody. Glory be unto You, O God, glory be unto You. My soul is in Heaven. I with the cherubim and seraphim would bow and sing and rejoice with them.

I veil my face in this most joyful moment. Wiping every tear from my poor eyes I bid them look upon Your glory in Christ. My soul would even now take her seat upon the Throne. Where my treasure is, there shall my heart be also—

***“Even now I will adore Him,
With the glorious hosts above,
Who forever bow before Him,
And unceasing sing His love.
I will begin the music here.
And so my soul shall rise;
Oh, for some heavenly note to bear
My passions to the skies.
Even now by faith I join my hands
With those that went before.
All hail you blood-besprinkled bands
Upon the eternal shore.”***

Brethren, begin by faith to partake of your glory. Methinks my head wears the crown. The white robe is girt about me and my feet tread no more the battlefields, but the streets of peaceful bliss. Jerusalem, my spirit is come to you and unto your glorious assembly. O you first-born whose names are written in Heaven, I take my seat with you and join your rapturous adoration. O God, Judge of all, my spirit meets You robed in my Savior’s righteousness and salutes You as my Father and my All. O eternity, eternity, eternity!—time is gone and change is over and I am floating on your pacific waves where winds can never howl and tempests never lower. My soul has made me like the chariots of Amminadib and I have come to the hills of myrrh and the mountains of frankincense.

Last of all, I have another practical point. God has given Christ the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost ends of the earth for His possession and we are co-heirs with Him. Brethren, let us advance to take the property. But how? Why some of you can do so by preaching the Gospel to poor sinners in the streets. Others, this afternoon, by teaching your children in the classroom. You can say, "God has given these souls to Christ. I am going to take them in Christ's name." Others of you who can do little yourselves can this day assist by sending forth men of God to preach the Gospel of Christ.

Germany belongs not to the cloudy philosopher, but to Christ. Holland, Belgium, Russia and Poland belong not to their kings and czars—Christ is the King of kings—these lands belong to us. Go up. Take them. Say not, "There are giants in the land"—you are strong enough to smite them. Say not, "Lutheranism and Popery are mighty." So they are—but He that is with you is mightier far. As Jonathan of old, with his armor-bearer, climbed up the steep place in the cleft of the rock and began to mow down his enemies—so, Believer, alone, or with your friend—as God has called you, climb up—for verily the possession is yours and you may take it.

All that the Church wants today is courage and devotion. Let but the Church know her rights and claim them. Let her cease to assimilate herself to the sons of earth. Let her cease from her accursed fornication with the State and she shall become the pure, chaste bride of Christ. Let her, then, as Christ's queen, claim the earth as hers and send her heralds forth from sea to sea to bid all men bow before Him and confess Him to be their King. God's power will be with her heralds. God's might shall be with her armies and the earth shall soon submit—and Christ shall reign forever and ever.

"Say to the North, give up and to the South, keep not back. Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth." Say it, Christians, say it this morning. Say it by your prayer, your deeds, your constant energy. Say it by your benefactions. Demand the earth for Christ. Demand it for yourselves—for you are "joint-heirs with Christ."

I pray you take the possession now. Poor prodigal Sinner, may our Father bring you home, for there is an inheritance even for you. "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved."

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CREATION'S GROANS AND THE SAINTS' SIGHS NO. 788

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 5, 1868,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"We know that the whole creation groans and travails 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."
Romans 8:22, 23.*

MY venerable friend, who, on the first Sabbath of the year always sends me a text to preach from, has on this occasion selected one which it is very far from easy to handle. The more I have read it, the more certainly have I come to the conclusion that this is one of the things in Paul's Epistles to which Peter referred when he said, "Wherein are some things hard to be understood." However, dear Friends, we have often found that the nuts which are hardest to crack have the sweetest kernels, and when the bone seems as if it could never be broken, the richest marrow has been found within. So it may be possible this morning—so it *will* be if the Spirit of God shall be our Instructor and fulfill His gracious promise to "lead us into all truth."

The whole creation is fair and beautiful even in its present condition. I have no sort of sympathy with those who cannot enjoy the beauties of nature. Climbing the lofty Alps, or wandering through the charming valley, skimming the blue sea, or traversing the verdant forest we have felt that this world, however desecrated by sin, was evidently built to be a temple of God, and the grandeur and the glory of it plainly declare that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." Like the marvelous structures of Palmyra or Baalbek in the far off east, the earth in ruins reveals a magnificence which betokens a royal Founder and an extraordinary purpose.

Creation glows with a thousand beauties even in its present fallen condition! Yet clearly enough it is not as when it came from the Maker's hand—the slime of the serpent is on it all—this is *not* the world which God pronounced to be "very good." We hear of tornadoes, of earthquakes, of tempests, of volcanoes, of avalanches and of the sea which devours its thousands. There is sorrow on the sea, and there is misery on the land. And into the highest palaces as well as the poorest cottages, Death, the insatiable, is shooting his arrows, while his quiver is still full to bursting with future woes. It is a sad, sad world. The curse has fallen on it since

the Fall and it brings forth thorns and thistles, not from its soil alone, but from all that comes of it.

Earth wears upon her brow, like Cain of old, the brand of transgression. Sad would it be to our thoughts if it were always to be so. If there were no future to this world as well as to ourselves, we might be glad to escape from it, counting it to be nothing better than a huge penal colony from which it would be a thousand mercies for both body and soul to be emancipated. At this present time the groaning and travailing which are general throughout creation are deeply felt among the sons of men. The dreariest thing you can read is the newspaper. I heard of one who sat up at the end of last year to groan last year out—it was ill done, but in truth it was a year of groaning—and the present one opens with turbulence and distress.

We heard of abundant harvests, but we soon discovered that they were all a dream, and that there would be very little in the worker's cottage. And now, what with strifes between men and masters which are banishing trade from England, and what with political convulsions which unhinge everything, the vessel of the State is drifting fast to the shallows. May God in mercy put His hand to the helm of the ship and steer her safely.

There is a general wail among nations and peoples. You can hear it in the streets of the city. The Lord reigns or we might lament right bitterly. The Apostle tells us that not only is there a groan from *creation*, but this is shared in by God's people. We shall notice in our text, first, to what the saints have already attained. Secondly, in what we are deficient, and thirdly, what is the state of mind of the saints in regard to the whole of the matter.

I. TO WHAT THE SAINTS HAVE ATTAINED. We were once an undistinguished part of the creation subject to the same curse as the rest of the world—"heirs of wrath, even as others." But distinguishing Grace has made a difference where no difference naturally was! We are now no longer treated as condemned criminals but as children and heirs of God. We have received a Divine life by which we are made partakers of the Divine nature, having "escaped the corruption, which is in the world through lust."

The Spirit of God has come unto us so that our "bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit." God dwells in us and we are one with Christ. We have at this present moment in us certain priceless things which distinguish us as believers in Christ from all the rest of God's creatures. "We *have*," says the text, not, "we *hope and trust sometimes we have*," nor, "*possibly we may have*," but, "we have, we *know we have*, we are *sure we have*." Believing in Jesus we speak confidently—we have unspeakable blessings given to us by the Father of spirits. Not we *shall have*, but we *have*. True, many things are yet in the future, but even at this present moment we have obtained an inheritance.

We have already in our possession a Divine heritage which is the beginning of our eternal portion. This is called "the first fruits of the Spirit," by which I understand the first works of the Spirit in our *souls*. Brethren, we have *repentance*, that gem of the first water. We have *faith*, that priceless, precious jewel. We have *hope*, which sparkles—a hope most sure and steadfast. We have *love*, which sweetens all the rest. We have that work of the Spirit within our souls which always comes before admittance into Glory. We are already made "new creatures in Christ Jesus" by the effectual working of the mighty power of God the Holy Spirit. This is called the first fruit because it comes first. As the wave sheaf was the first of the harvest, so the spiritual life, which we have, and all the Divine Graces which adorn that life, are the first gifts, the first operations of the Spirit of God in our souls. We have this by His Grace.

It is called "first fruits," again, because the first fruits were always the pledge of the harvest. As soon as the Israelite had plucked the first handful of ripe ears, they were to him so many proofs that the harvest was already come. He looked forward with glad anticipation to the time when the wagon should creak beneath the sheaves, and when the harvest home should be shouted at the door of the barn. So, Brethren, when God gives us "faith, hope, charity"—these three—when He gives us "whatever things are pure, lovely, and of good report," as the work of the Holy Spirit, these are to us the guarantee of the coming glory! If you have the Spirit of God in your soul, you may rejoice over it as the pledge and token of the fullness of bliss and perfection "which God has prepared for them that love Him."

It is called "first fruits," again, because these were always holy to the Lord. The first ears of corn were offered to the Most High, and surely our new nature, with all its powers, must be regarded by us as a consecrated thing. The new life which God has given to us is not ours that we should ascribe its excellence to our *own* merit—the new nature is Christ's peculiarly. As it is Christ's image and Christ's creation, so it is for Christ's glory alone. That secret we must keep separate from all earthly things. That treasure which He has committed to us we must watch both night and day against those profane intruders who would defile the consecrated ground. We must stand upon our watchtower and cry aloud to the Strong for strength that the adversary may be repelled, that the sacred castle of our heart may be for the habitation of Jesus, and Jesus alone. We have a sacred secret which belongs to Jesus as the first fruits belong to Jehovah.

Brethren, the work of the Spirit is called "first fruits," because the first fruits were *not* the harvest. No Jew was ever content with the first fruits. He was content with them for what they were, but the first fruits enlarged his desires for the harvest. If he had taken the first fruits home, and said, "I have all I want," and had rested satisfied month after month, he would have given proof of madness—for the first fruit does but whet the appetite—does but stir up the desire. It never was meant to satisfy. So, when

we get the first works of the Spirit of God, we are not to say, "I have attained, I am already perfect. There is nothing further for me to do, or to desire."

No, my Brothers and Sisters, all that the most advanced of God's people know as yet should but excite in them an insatiable thirst after more! My Brother with great experience, My sister with enlarged acquaintance with Christ—you have not yet known the *harvest*—you have only reaped the first handful of corn. Open your mouth wide and God will fill it! Enlarge your expectations—seek great things from the God of Heaven and He will give them to you. But by no means fold your arms in sloth and sit down upon the bed of carnal security. Forget the steps you have already trod and reach forward towards that which is ahead, looking unto Jesus.

Even this first point of what the saint has attained will help us to understand why it is that he groans. Did I not say that we have not received the *whole* of our portion and that what we have received is to the whole no more than one handful of wheat is to the whole harvest, a very gracious pledge, but nothing more? Therefore it is that we groan. Having received *something*, we desire *more*. Having reaped handfuls, we long for sheaves. For this very reason—the fact that we are saved—we groan for something beyond! Did you hear that groan just now? It is a traveler lost in the deep snow on the mountain pass. No one has come to rescue him and, indeed, he has fallen into a place from which escape is impossible.

The snow is numbing his limbs and his soul is breathed out with many a groan. Keep that groan in your ear, for I want you to hear another. The traveler has reached the hospice. He has been charitably received. He has been warmed at the fire. He has received abundant provision. He is warmly clothed. There is no fear of storm—that grand old hospice has outstood many a thundering storm! The man is perfectly safe and quite content as far as that goes, and exceedingly grateful to think that he has been rescued. But yet I hear him groan because he has a wife and children down in yonder plain, and the snow is lying too deep for traveling, and the wind is howling, and the blinding snow flakes are falling so thickly that he cannot pursue his journey.

Ask him whether he is happy and content. He says, "Yes, I am happy and grateful I have been saved from the snow. I do not wish for anything more than I have here. I am perfectly satisfied as far as this goes, but I long to look upon my household, and to be once more in my own sweet home—and until I reach it I shall not cease to groan." Now, the first groan which you heard was deep and dreadful, as though it were fetched from the abyss of Hell. That is the groan of the ungodly man as he perishes and leaves all his dear delights. But the second groan is so softened and sweetened that it is rather the note of *desire* than of distress. Such is the groan of the Believer, who, though rescued and brought into the hospice of Divine mercy, is longing to see his Father's face without a veil between,

and to be united with the happy family on the other side the Jordan where they rejoice forevermore!

When the soldiers of Godfrey of Bouillon came in sight of Jerusalem it is said they shouted for joy at the sight of the holy city. For that very reason they began to groan. Do you ask why? It was because they longed to enter it! Having once looked upon the city of David they longed to carry the holy city by storm, to overthrow the crescent and place the cross in its place. He who has never seen the New Jerusalem has never clapped his hands with holy ecstasy—he has never sighed with the unutterable longing which is expressed in words like these—

**“O my sweet home, Jerusalem,
Would God I were in you!
Would God my woes were at an end,
Your joys that I might see!”**

Take another picture to illustrate that the obtaining of something makes us groan after more. An exile, far away from his native country, has been long forgotten. But all of a sudden a vessel brings him the pardon of his monarch and presents from his friends who have called him to remembrance. As he turns over each of these love tokens, and as he reads the words of his reconciled prince, he asks, “When will the vessel sail to take me back to my native shore?” If the vessel tarries, he groans over the delay. And if the voyage is tedious and adverse winds blow back the ship from the white cliffs of Albion, his thirst for his own sweet land compels him to groan. So it is with your children when they look forward to their holidays—they are not unhappy or dissatisfied with the school—but yet they long to be at home.

Do you not remember how, in your schoolboy days, you used to make a little almanac with a square for every day and how you always crossed off the day as soon as ever it began, as though you would try and make the distance from your joy as short as possible? You groaned for it—not with the unhappy groan that marks one who is to perish, but with the groan of one who, having tasted of the sweets of home, is not content until again he shall be indulged with the fullness of them. So you see, Beloved, that because we have the “first fruits of the Spirit,” for that very reason, if for no other, we cannot help but groan for that blissful period which is called “the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.”

II. Our second point rises before us—IN WHAT ARE BELIEVERS DEFICIENT? We are deficient in those things for which we groan and wait! And these appear to be at least four. The first is that this *body* of ours is not delivered. Brethren, as soon as a man believes in Christ he is no longer under the curse of the Law. As to his spirit, sin has no more dominion over him and the Law has no further claims against him. His soul is translated from death unto life, but the *body*, this poor flesh and blood, does it not remain as before?

Not in one sense, for the members of our body which were instruments of unrighteousness, become, by sanctification, the instruments of right-

eousness unto the glory of God. And the body, which was once a workshop for Satan, becomes a temple for the Holy Spirit in which He dwells. But we are all perfectly aware that the Grace of God makes no change in the body in *other* respects. It is just as subject to *sickness* as before—pain travels quite as sharply through the heart of the saint as the sinner—and he who lives near to God is no more likely to enjoy bodily health than he who lives at a distance from Him.

The greatest piety cannot preserve a man from growing old! And although in Grace he may be “like a young cedar, fresh and green,” yet the body will have its gray hairs and the strong man will be brought to totter on the staff. The body is still subject to the evils which Paul mentions, when he says of it that it is subject to corruption, to dishonor, to weakness and is still a *natural* body. Nor is this a little thing, for the body has a depressing effect upon the soul. A man may be full of faith and joy *spiritually*, but I will defy him under some forms of disease to feel as he would. The soul is like an eagle to which the body acts as a chain—preventing it from mounting.

Moreover, the appetites of the body have a natural affinity to that which is sinful. The natural desires of the human frame are not in themselves, sinful, but through the degeneracy of our nature they very readily lead us into sin, and through the corruption which is in us, even the natural desires of the body become a very great source of temptation. The body is redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. It is redeemed by *price*, but it has not as yet been redeemed by *power*. It still lingers in the realm of bondage and is not brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Now this is the cause of our groaning and mourning, for the soul is so married to the body that when it is, itself, delivered from condemnation, it sighs to think that its poor friend, the body, should still be under the yoke. If you were a free man and had married a wife, a slave, you could not feel perfectly content—the more you enjoyed the sweets of freedom yourself, the more would you pine that she should still be in slavery. So is it with the soul—it is free from corruption and death—but the poor body is still under the bondage of corruption, and therefore the soul groans until the body, itself, shall be set free.

Will it ever be set free? O my Beloved, do not ask the question! This is the Christian's brightest hope! Many Believers make a mistake when they long to die and long for Heaven. Those things may be desirable, but they are not the ultimatum of the saints. The saints in Heaven are perfectly free from sin, and, so far as they are capable of it, they are perfectly happy. But a disembodied spirit never can be *perfect* until it is reunited to its body. God made man not pure spirit, but body *and* spirit, and the spirit alone will never be content until it sees its corporeal frame raised to its own condition of holiness and glory.

Think not that our longings here below are not shared in by the saints in Heaven. They do not groan, so far as any *pain* can be, but they long with greater intensity than you and I long, for the “adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body.” People have said there is no faith in Heaven, and no hope—they know not what they say—in Heaven it is that faith and hope have their fullest swing and their brightest sphere, for glorified saints believe in God’s promise, and hope for the resurrection of the body! The Apostle tells us that “they without us cannot be made perfect.” That is, until our bodies are raised, theirs cannot be raised. Until we get our adoption day, neither can they get theirs.

The Spirit says, Come. And the bride says, Come—not the bride on earth only, but the bride in Heaven says the same, bidding the happy day speed on when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed! For it is true, Beloved, the bodies that have molded into dust will rise again! The fabric which has been destroyed by the worm shall rise into a nobler being, and you and I, though the worms devour this body, shall in our flesh behold our God!—

**“These eyes shall see Him in that day,
The God that died for me;
And all my rising bones shall say,
‘Lord, who is liken to you?’ ”**

Thus we are sighing that our entire manhood, in its trinity of spirit, soul, and body may be set free from the last vestige of the Fall. We long to put off corruption, weakness, and dishonor and to wrap ourselves in incorruption, in immortality, in glory, in the spiritual body which the Lord Jesus Christ will bestow upon all His people! You can understand, in this sense, why it is that we groan, for if this body really is still, though redeemed, a captive, and if it is one day to be completely free and to rise to amazing glory, well may those who believe in this precious doctrine groan after it as they wait for it.

But, again, there is another point in which the saint is deficient as yet, namely, in the manifestation of our *adoption*. You observe the text speaks of *waiting* for the adoption, and another text, further back, explains what that means—waiting for the manifestation of the children of God. In this world saints are God’s children but you cannot see that they are so except by certain moral characteristics. That man is God’s child, but though he is a prince of the blood royal, his garments are those of toil—the smock frock or the fustian jacket. Yonder woman is one of the daughters of the King, but see how pale she is, what furrows are upon her brow! Many of the daughters of pleasure are far more fair than she!

How is this? The adoption is not *manifested* yet, the children are not yet *openly* declared. Among the Romans a man might adopt a child and that child might be treated as his for a long time. But there was a *second* adoption in *public*, when the child was brought before the constituted authorities, and in the presence of spectators its ordinary garments, which it

had worn before, were taken off. And the father who took it to be his child put on garments suitable to the condition of life in which it was to live.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be.” We have not yet the royal robes which become the princes of the blood. We are wearing in this flesh and blood just what we wore as the sons of Adam. But we know that when He shall appear who is the “first born among many brethren,” we shall be like He, that is, God will dress us all as He dresses His eldest Son—“We shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.” Cannot you imagine that a child, taken from the lowest ranks of society who is adopted by a Roman senator, will be saying to himself, “I wish the day were come when I shall be *publicly* revealed as the child of my new father. Then I shall leave off these plebeian garments and be robed as becomes my senatorial rank.” Happy in what he has received, for that very reason he groans to get the fullness of what is promised him.

So it is with us today. We are waiting till we shall put on our proper garments and shall be manifest as the children of God! You are young princes but you have not been crowned yet. You are young brides but the marriage day is not come, and by the love your spouse bears you, you are led to long and to sigh for the marriage day. Your very happiness makes you groan! Your joy, like a swollen spring, longs to leap up like some Iceland geyser climbing to the skies, and it heaves and groans within your spirit for lack of space and room by which to manifest itself to men!

There is a third thing in which we are deficient, namely, liberty—the glorious liberty of the children of God. The whole creation is said to be groaning for its share in that freedom. You and I are also groaning for it. Brethren, we *are* free. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” But our liberty is incomplete. When Napoleon was on the island of St. Helena he was watched by many guards. But after many complaints he enjoyed comparative liberty and walked alone. Yet, what liberty was it? Liberty to walk round the rock of St. Helena, nothing more.

You and I are free, but what is our liberty? As to our soul, we have liberty to soar into the third Heaven and sit in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus! But as for our *bodies*, we can only roam about this narrow cell of earth and feel that it is not the place for us. Napoleon had been used to gilded halls and all the pomp and glory of imperial state, and it was hard to be reduced to a handful of servants. Just so, we are kings—we are of the blood imperial! But we have not our proper state and becoming dignities—we have not our royalties here. We go to our lowly homes. We meet with our Brothers and Sisters here in their earth-built temples and we are content, so far as these things go. Still, how can kings be content till they mount their *thrones*? How can a heavenly one be content till he ascends to the heavens? How shall a celestial spirit be satisfied until it sees celestial things? How shall the heir of God be content till he rests on his Father's bosom and is filled with all the fullness of God?

I want you, now, to observe that we are linked with the creation. Adam in this world was in liberty, perfect liberty. Nothing confined him—paradise was exactly fitted to be his seat. There were no wild beasts to tear him, no rough winds to cause him injury. There were no blighting heats to bring him harm. But in this present world everything is contrary to us. Evidently we are exotics here. Ungodly men prosper well enough in this world—they root themselves and spread themselves like green bay trees—it is their native soil. But the Christian needs the hothouse of Divine Grace to keep him alive at all—and out in the world he is like some strange foreign bird native of a warm and sultry climate—being let loose here under our wintry skies is ready to perish!

Now God will, one day, change our bodies and make them fit for our souls. And then He will change this world itself! I must not speculate, for I know nothing about it. But it is no speculation to say that we look for new heavens and a new earth in which dwells righteousness. And that there will come a time when the lion shall eat straw like an ox, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. We expect to see this world that is now so full of sin as to be an Aceldama, a field of blood, turned into a paradise, a garden of God! We believe that the tabernacle of God will be among men. We believe that He will dwell among them, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

We expect to see the New Jerusalem descend out of Heaven from God. In this very place, where sin has triumphed, we expect that Grace will much more abound. Perhaps after those great fires of which Peter speaks when he says, "The heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," earth will be renewed in more than pristine loveliness. Perhaps since matter may not be annihilated, and probably cannot be, but will be as immortal as spirit, this very world will become the place of an eternal jubilee from which perpetual hallelujahs shall go up to the Throne of God! If such is the bright hope that cheers us, we may well groan for its realization, crying out—

***"O long-expected day, begin!
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin."***

I shall not enlarge further, except to say that our glory is not yet revealed, and that is another subject of sighing. "The glorious liberty" may be translated, "The liberty of glory." Brethren, we are like warriors fighting for the victory. We share not, as yet, in the shout of them that triumph. Even up in Heaven they have not their full reward. When a Roman general came home from the wars he entered Rome by stealth. He slept at night and tarried by day, perhaps for a week or two, among his friends. He went through the streets, and people whispered, "That is the general, the valiant one," but he was not *publicly* acknowledged.

But, on a certain set day the gates were thrown wide open, and the general, victorious from the wars in Africa or Asia, with his snow-white horses bearing the trophies of his many battles, rode through the streets which were strewn with roses while the music sounded and the multi-

tudes, with glad acclaim, accompanied him to the Capitol. That was his triumphant entry! Those in Heaven, have, as it were, stolen there. They are blessed, but they have not had their public entrance. They are waiting till their Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel, and the voice of God! Then shall their bodies rise! Then shall the world be judged! Then shall the righteous be divided from the wicked!

And then, in marvelous procession, leading captivity captive for the last time—the Prince at their head—the whole of the blood-washed host, wearing their white robes and bearing their palms of victory shall march up to their crowns and to their thrones to reign forever and ever! After *this* consummation the believing heart is panting, groaning, and sighing!

Now I think I hear somebody say, “You see these godly people who profess to be so happy and so safe, they still groan, and they are obliged to confess it.” Yes, that is quite true, and it would be a great mercy for you if you knew how to groan in the same way. If you were half as happy as a groaning saint is, you might be content to groan on forever! I showed you, just now, the difference between a groan and a groan. I will show you yet again. Go into yonder house. Listen at that door on the left, there is a deep, hollow, awful groan. Go to the next house, and hear another groan. It seems to be, as far as we can judge, much more painful than the first and has an anguish in it of the severest sort. How are we to judge between them?

We will come again in a few days. As we are entering the first house we see weeping faces and flowing tears, a coffin, and a hearse. Ah, it was the groan of death! We will go into the next. Ah, what is this? Here is a smiling cherub, a father with a gladsome face—if you may venture to look at the mother, see how her face smiles for joy that a man is born into the world to cheer a happy and rejoicing family. There is all the difference between the groan of death and the groan of life! Now, the Apostle sets the whole matter before us when he said, “The whole creation groans,” and you know what comes after that, “travails.” There is a result to come of it of the best kind! We are panting, longing after something greater, better, nobler, and it is coming! It is not the pain of *death* we feel, but the pain of *life*! We are *thankful* to have such a groaning.

The other night, just before Christmas, two men who were working very late were groaning in two very different ways, one of them saying, “Ah, there’s a poor Christmas day in store for me, my house is full of misery.” He had been a drunkard, a spendthrift, and had not a penny to bless himself with and his house had become a little Hell. He was groaning at the thought of going home to such a scene of quarrelling and distress. Now, his fellow workman, who worked beside him, as it was getting very late, wished himself at home and therefore groaned. A shop mate asked, “What’s the matter?” “Oh, I want to get home to my dear wife and children. I have such a happy house, I do not like to be out of it.” The other

might have said, "Ah, you pretend to be a happy man, and here you are groaning." "Yes," he could say, "and a blessed thing it would be for you if you had the same thing to groan after that I have." So the Christian has a good Father, a blessed, eternal home, and groans to get to it.

And ah, there is more joy in the groan of a Christian after Heaven than in all the mirth and merriment, and dancing, and lewdness of the ungodly when their mirth is at its greatest height! We are like the dove that flutters and is weary, but thank God we have an ark to go to! We are like Israel in the wilderness and footsore, but blessed be God, we are on the way to Canaan! We are like Jacob looking at the wagons, and the more we look at the wagons, the more we long to see Joseph's face! And our groaning after Jesus is a blessed groan, for—

***" 'Tis Heaven on earth, 'tis Heaven above,
To see His face, and taste His love."***

III. Now I shall conclude with WHAT OUR STATE OF MIND IS. A Christian's experience is like a rainbow made up of drops of the grief of earth, and beams of the bliss of Heaven. It is a checkered scene, a garment of many colors. He is sometimes in the light and sometimes in the dark. The text says, "we groan." I have told you what that groan is. I need not explain it further. But it is added, "We groan within ourselves." It is not the hypocrite's groan, when he goes mourning everywhere, wanting to make people believe that he is a saint because he is wretched. We groan within ourselves.

Our sighs are sacred things. These griefs and sighs are too hallowed for us to tell abroad in the streets. We keep our longings to our Lord and to our Lord alone. We groan within ourselves. It appears from the text that this groaning is universal among the saints—there are no exceptions—to a greater or less extent we all feel it. He that is most endowed with worldly goods, and he who has the fewest—he that is blessed in health, and he who is racked with sickness—we all have, in our measure, an earnest inward groaning towards the redemption of our body.

Then the Apostle says we are "waiting," by which I understand that we are not to be petulant, like Jonah or Elijah, when they said, "Let me die." Nor are we to sit still and look for the end of the day because we are tired of work. Nor are we to become impatient and wish to escape from our present pains and sufferings till the will of the Lord is done. We are to groan after *perfection*, but we are to *wait* patiently for it, knowing that what the Lord appoints is best. Waiting implies being ready. We are to stand at the door expecting the Beloved to open it and take us away to Himself. In the next verse we are described as hoping. We are saved by hope. The Believer continues to hope for the time when death and sin shall no more annoy his body, when, as his soul has been purified, so shall his body be and his prayer shall be heard that the Lord would sanctify him wholly—body, soul, and spirit.

Now, Beloved, the practical use to which I put this, I am afraid, somewhat discursive discourse of this morning is just this—here is a test for us

all. You may judge of a man by what he groans after. Some men groan after wealth—they worship Mammon. Some groan continually under the troubles of life—they are merely impatient—there is no virtue in that. Some men groan because of their great losses or sufferings. Well, this may be nothing but a rebellious smarting under the rod, and if so, no blessing will come of it. But the man that yearns after more *holiness*, the man that sighs after *God*, the man that groans after *perfection*, the man that is discontented with his *sinful self*, the man that feels he cannot be easy till he is made like Christ—that is the man who is blessed, indeed! May God help you, and help me, to groan all our days with that kind of groaning!

I have said before there is Heaven in it, and though the word sounds like sorrow, there is a depth of joy concealed within—

**“Lord, let me weep for nothing but sin,
And after none but You.
And then I would, O that I might,
A constant weeper be.”**

I do not know a more beautiful sight to be seen on earth than a man who has served his Lord many years, and who, having grown gray in service, feels that in the order of nature he must soon be called Home. He is rejoicing in the first fruits of the Spirit which he has obtained, but he is panting after the full harvest of the Spirit which is guaranteed to him! I think I see him sitting on a jutting crag by the edge of Jordan, listening to the harpers on the other side and waiting till the pitcher shall be broken at the cistern, and the wheel at the fountain, and the spirit shall depart to God that made it.

A wife waiting for her husband's footsteps—a child waiting in the darkness of the night till its mother comes to give it the evening's kiss—are portraits of our waiting. It is a pleasant and precious thing so to wait and so to hope. I fear that some of you, seeing you have never come and put your trust in Christ, will have to say, when your time comes to die, what Wolsey is said to have declared, with only one word of alteration—“O Cromwell, Cromwell! Had I but served my God with half the zeal I served the world, He would not, in my age, have left me naked to my enemies.”

Oh, before those days fully come, quit the service of the master who never can reward you except with death! Cast your arms around the Cross of Christ and give your heart to God! And then, come what may, 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.” While you shall for awhile sigh for more of Heaven, you shall soon come to the abodes of blessedness where sighing and sorrow shall flee away. The Lord bless this assembly, for Christ's sake. AMEN.

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SAVED IN HOPE

NO. 1616

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 28, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“For we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope:
for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if
we hope for what we see not, then do we with
patience wait for it.”
Romans 8:24, 25.***

ACCORDING to our version “we are saved by hope,” but that is scarcely in accordance with other parts of Holy Scripture. Everywhere in the Word of God we are told that we are saved by *faith*. See the first verse of the fifth chapter—“Therefore being justified by *faith*.” Faith is the saving Grace—not hope—unless only as hope is, under some aspects, tantamount to faith. Faith is the saving Grace and the original should be rendered thus. One wonders that it is not so in the Revised Version—“We were saved in hope.” It would prevent misapprehension if the passage were so rendered, for as that eminent critic, Bengel, well says, “the words do not describe the means, but the *manner* of salvation: we are so saved that there may even yet remain something for which we may hope, both of salvation and glory.”

Believers receive the salvation of their souls as the end of their faith and it is of *faith* that it might be of Grace. They are saved *by* faith and *in* hope. At this present moment Believers are saved and, in a certain sense, completely saved. They are entirely saved from the guilt of sin. The Lord Jesus took their sin and bore it in His body on the tree. He offered an acceptable Atonement, by which the iniquity of all His people is once and forever put away. By faith we are at once saved from the defilement of evil and have free access to God our Father. By faith we are saved from the reigning power of sin in our members. As says the Scripture, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace.”

The crown is removed from the head of sin and the arm of its strength is broken in the heart of every Christian by the power of *faith*. Sin strives to get the mastery, but it cannot win the day, for he that is born of God does not commit sin with delight, or as his daily habit, but he keeps himself so that the Evil One touches him not. As to the *penalty* of sin, that has been borne by our great Substitute and by faith we have accepted His sacrifice. “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” We rejoice, therefore, at this moment, in salvation already obtained and enjoyed by faith which is in Christ Jesus. Yet we are conscious that there is something more than this to be had. There is salvation in a larger sense, which as yet we see not, for at the present moment we find ourselves in this tabernacle, groaning because we are burdened.

All around us the creation is evidently in travail—there are signs of birth-pangs in a certain unrest, upheaval and anguish of the creation. Things are not as God originally made them. Thorns are in earth's furrows; a blight has fallen on her flowers; a mildew on her grain. The heavens weep and saturate our harvests; earth moves and shakes our cities. Frequent calamities and disasters are portents of a great future which shall be born of this travailing present. Nowhere on earth can a perfect paradise be found. Our best things are expectant of something better. The whole creation groans and travails in pain with us. Even we that have received the first fruits of the Spirit and so are blessed and saved, nevertheless, groan within ourselves, waiting for a further *something*, a Glory not seen as yet.

We have not yet attained, but are pressing on. Our first soul-thirst as sinners has been quenched, but there are within us still greater desires by which we hunger and thirst after righteousness with longings insatiable. Before we ate of the Bread of Heaven we hungered for mere husks—but now our newborn nature has brought us a new appetite which the whole world could not satisfy! What is the cause of this hungering? We are under no difficulty whatever in answering the question. Our grief, longings and unsatisfied desires are principally gathered up in two things. First, we long to be totally free from sin in every form. The evil which is in the world is our burden—we are vexed with the evil conversation of the ungodly and are grieved by their temptations and persecutions.

The fact that the world lies in the Wicked One and that men reject Christ and perish in unbelief is a source of much affliction to our hearts. We have said with David, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" We wish for a lodge in a wilderness far off from the haunts of men, that we might in peace commune with God and hear no more of blasphemy, murmuring, lewdness and crime. This is not our rest, for it is polluted, and so far we look for a great deliverance when we shall be taken out of this world to dwell in perfect company. Yet even the presence of the ungodly were a small matter if we could be completely delivered from sin within *ourselves*. That is among the things not seen as yet.

If a man were free from all tendency to sin, he would no longer be liable to temptation, or under necessity to watch against it. That which cannot possibly be burned or blackened has no need to dread the fire. We feel that we must shun temptation because we are conscious that there is material within us which may soon take fire. "The Prince of this world comes," said our Lord, "and has nothing in Me." But when he comes to *us* he finds not only something, but much congenial to his purpose. Our heart all too readily echoes to the voice of Satan! When he sows the tares, the furrows of the old nature soon produce a harvest. Evil does remain, even in the regenerate, and it infects all the powers of the mind. Oh that we could get rid of the memory of sin! What a torment it is to us to remember snatches of loose songs and words of ill savor.

Oh, that we were rid of the *imagination* of sin! Do we mourn enough over sins of thought and fancy? A man may sin, and sin horribly, in

thought and yet may not have sinned in act. Many a man has committed fornication, adultery, theft and even murder in his imagination by finding pleasure in the thought thereof and yet he may never have fallen into any of the overt acts. Oh that our imagination and all our inward parts were purged of the corrupt matter which is in them and which ferments towards foulness! There is in us that which makes us cry out from day to day, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me?"

If any man here says, "I feel no such emotions," I pray God that he may soon do so! Those know very little of true spiritual perfection who are content with themselves. A perfect child *grows* and so does a perfect child of God. The nearer we come to perfect cleanness of heart, the more shall we mourn over the tiniest spot of sin—and the more shall we see that to be sin which once we excused. He who is most like Christ is most conscious of imperfection and most weary that the least iniquity should hang about him. When a man says, "I have reached the goal," I fear he has not *begun* to run. As for me, I endure many growing pains and feel far less pleased with myself than I used to be. I have a firm hope of something better, but were it not for hope, I should account myself truly unhappy to be so conscious of need and so racked with desires. This is one great source of our groaning. We are saved, but we are not completely delivered from tendencies to sin, neither have we reached the fullness of holiness. "There is yet very much land to be possessed."

Another cause of this winter of our discontent is our body. Paul calls it a "vile body" and so, indeed, it is when compared with what it shall be when fashioned in the image of Christ Jesus. It is not vile in itself, viewed as the creature of God, for it is fearfully and wonderfully made. There is something very noble about the body of a man, made to walk erect and to look upward and gaze toward Heaven. A body so marvelously prepared to be the tenement of the mind and to obey the soul's behests is not to be despised. A body which can be the Temple of the Holy Spirit is no mean structure, therefore let us not despise it! It is a thing for which to be eternally grateful, that we have been made men if we have been also made *new men* in Christ Jesus.

The body came under the power of death through the Fall and it remains so. And, remaining so, its lot is to die, sooner or later, unless the Lord should suddenly appear—and even then it must be changed—for flesh and blood, as they are, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And so, poor Body, you are not well matched with the newborn soul since you have not been born again. You are a somewhat dull and dreary dwelling for a Heaven-born spirit! What with aches and pains, weariness and infirmity, your need of sleep and food and clothing, your liability to cold, heat, accident, decay—as well as to excessive labor and exhausting toil—you are a sorry servant of the sanctified soul! You drag down and hamper a spirit which otherwise might soar aloft!

How often does poor health repress the noble flame of high resolve and holy aspiration! How often do pain and weakness freeze the genial current of the soul! When shall we be emancipated from the shackles of this natural body and put on the wedding dress of the spiritual body? What with

the sin dwelling in our breast and this vesture of mortal clay, we are glad that now is our salvation nearer than when we believed—and we long to enter into the full enjoyment of it! Here my text gives us good cheer. From the sources of our present groaning there is a full deliverance, a salvation so wide that it covers the whole area of our needs, yes, of our desires! A salvation awaits us whose sweep is eternity and immensity. All our capacious powers can wish are compassed within it and of this the text says, “We are saved in hope.”

That most grand, most wide salvation we have seized by hope. Glory be to God for this! This, then, is the subject of our present meditation—the hope which embraces the salvation for which we long.

I. Let us begin by recapitulating under the first head, THE OBJECT OF THIS HOPE. I have already gone over the principal points. Our hope, first of all, embraces our own absolute perfection. We have set our faces towards holiness and, by God’s Grace, we will never rest till we attain it. Every sin that is in us is doomed, not only to be conquered, but to be slain. The Grace of God does not help us to *conceal* our infirmities, but to destroy them. We deal with sin as Joshua did with the five kings when they went into the cave at Makkedah. While he was busy in the battle, he said, “Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave.”

Our sins, for a while, are shut up by restraining Grace, as in a cave, and great stones are rolled at the cave’s mouth, for they would escape, if they could, and once more snatch at the reins. But in the power of the Holy Spirit, we mean to deal with them more effectually by-and-by. “Bring out those five kings unto me,” said Joshua, and he smote them, and slew them, and hanged them.” By God’s Grace we will never be satisfied till all our natural inclinations to sin shall be utterly destroyed, loathed and abhorred. We expect a day when there will not remain in us a taint of past sin, or an inclination for future sin! We shall still be possessed of will and freedom of choice, but we shall choose only good. Saints in Heaven are not passive beings, driven along the path of obedience by a power which they cannot resist, but as intelligent agents they freely elect to be holiness unto the Lord.

We shall enjoy forever the glorious liberty of the children of God which lies in the constant voluntary choice of that which should be chosen and a consequent unbroken happiness. Ignorance also shall be gone, for we shall all be taught of the Lord and we shall know, even as we are known. Perfect in service and clean delivered from all self-will and carnal desire, we shall be near our God and like He is. As Watts has it—

***“Sin, my worst enemy before,
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more!
My inward foes shall all be slain,
Nor Satan break my peace again.”***

What a Heaven this will be! I think if I could be sure of getting free from every liability to sin, I would not have a choice as to where I should live, whether on earth or in Heaven, at the bottom of the sea with Jonah, or in the low dungeon with Jeremiah. Purity is peace—holiness is happiness! He who is holy as God is holy will, in consequence, be happy as God is happy! This is one main object of our hope.

The other object of our desire is the redemption of the body. Let us read the verses in which Paul teaches us that Truth of God—"And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you." When we die we shall leave our body behind us for a while—we shall not, therefore, as to our entire manhood, be perfect in Heaven till the Resurrection—we shall be morally perfect, but as a complete man is made up of body as well as soul, we shall not be *physically* perfect while one part of our person shall remain in the tomb.

When the Resurrection trumpet shall sound, this body will rise, but it will rise redeemed! And as our soul regenerated is very different from our soul under the bondage of sin, so the body, when it is risen, will be widely different from the body as it now is. The infirmities caused by sickness and age will be unknown among the glorified, for they are as the angels of God. None shall enter into Glory halt or maimed, or decrepit or malformed. You will have no blind eyes there, my Sister! No deaf ears there, my Brother! There shall be no quivering of paralysis or wasting of consumption. There we shall possess everlasting youth! The body which is sown in weakness shall be raised in power and shall at once fly upon the errands of its Lord!

Paul says, "It is sown a natural (or soulish) body," fit for the soul. "It is raised a spiritual body," fit for the spirit, the highest nature of man! I suppose we shall inhabit such a body as cherubs wear when they fly upon the wings of the wind, or such as may be fit for a seraph when, like a flame of fire, he flashes at Jehovah's bidding. Whatever it is, poor frame of mine, you shall be very much changed from what you are now! You are the shriveled bulb which shall be put into the earth—but you shall arise a glorious flower—a golden cup to hold the sunlight of Jehovah's face! The greatness of your glory you know not as yet, except that you shall be fashioned like the glorious body of the Lord Jesus! This is the second object of our hope—a glorified body to consort with our purified spirit.

Viewed in another light, the object of our hope is this—that we shall enter upon our inheritance. Paul says, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God; joint heirs with Christ." Whether we have little or much in *this* life, our estate is nothing when compared with that which we have, in the future, secured to us against the day when we shall come of age! The fullness of God is the heritage of the saints—all that can make a man blessed, noble and complete is laid up in store for us. Measure, if you can, the inheritance of the Christ, who is heir of all things! What must be the portion of the well-beloved Son of the Highest? Whatever that may be, it is ours, for we are joint heirs with Christ! We shall be with Him and behold His Glory! We shall wear His image; we shall sit upon His Throne.

I cannot tell you more, for my words are poverty-stricken. I wish we all meditated upon what the Scripture reveals upon this subject till we knew all that can be known. Our hope looks for many things, yes for *all* things. Rivers of pleasure, of pleasures forevermore, are flowing for us at God's

right hand! Paul speaks of, “the glory which shall be revealed in us,” and tells us in another place that it is, “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” What a word is that—Glory! Glory is to be ours! Even ours, poor sinners as we are! Grace is sweet, but what must glory be? And it is to be revealed in us, and about us, and over us, and through us to all eternity! Paul also speaks of, “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” O charming word, liberty!

We love it even as we hear it rung from the silver bugles of those who fight with tyrants. But what will it be when the trumpets of Heaven shall proclaim eternal jubilee to every spiritual bond slave! Liberty? The liberty of the children of God! Liberty to enter into the holiest, to dwell in God’s Presence and behold His face forever and ever! The Apostle speaks, also, of, “the manifestation of the sons of God.” Here we are hidden away in Christ as gems in a case, but by-and-by we are to be revealed as jewels in a crown! As Christ had His time of manifestation to the Gentiles after He had, for a while, been hidden, so we who are now unknown are to have a manifestation before men and angels! “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

What our manifestation shall be, O my Brothers and Sisters, I cannot tell you. Eye has not seen it, nor ear heard it, neither has it entered into the heart of man. And though God has revealed it unto us by His Spirit, yet how small a part of that revelation have our spirits been able to receive! I suppose that only he who has seen the home of the perfect can tell us what it is like and I conceive that even he could not do so, for language could not set it forth. When Paul was in Paradise he heard words, but he does not tell us what they were, for he says they were not lawful for a man to utter—they were too Divine for mortal tongue! Not yet, not yet, but by-and-by the object of our hopes shall be clear to us.

Do not think the less of it because we say, by-and-by, for the interval of time is a trifling matter. It will soon be gone. What are a few months or years? What if a few hundred years should intervene before the Resurrection? They will soon have swept by us like the wing of a bird and then! Oh, then! The invisible shall be seen! The unutterable shall be heard! The eternal shall be ours forever and ever! This is our hope!

II. Let us now muse upon THE NATURE OF THIS HOPE. We are saved in hope. What kind of hope is it in which we are saved? First, our hope consists of three things—belief, desire, expectancy. Our hope of being clean delivered from sin as to our soul and rescued from all infirmity as to our body arises out of a solemn assurance that it shall be so. The revelation of Him who has brought life and immortality to light bears witness to us that we, also, shall obtain glory and immortality. We shall be raised in the image of Christ and shall partake in His Glory! This is our belief because Christ is risen and glorified and we are one with Him. This, also, we desire, O how ardently! We so desire it that we, at times, wish to die that we may enter into it!

At all times, but especially when we get a glimpse of Christ, our soul pines to be with Him. This desire is accompanied with a confident expectation. We as much *expect* to see the Glory of Christ, and to share it, as

we expect to see tomorrow morning! No—perhaps we shall not see tomorrow's sun—but we shall certainly see the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off! We believe it, we desire it and we expect it! That is the nature of our hope. It is not an indefinite, hazy, groundless wish that things may turn out all right, such as those have who say, "I hope it will go well with me," though they live carelessly and seek not after God. But it is a hope made up of right knowledge, firm belief, spiritual desire and warranted expectancy.

This hope is grounded upon the Word of God. God has promised us this and, therefore, we believe it, desire it and expect it. He has said, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," and the widest sense that we can give to that word, "saved," must be *God's* sense of it since His thoughts are always above our thoughts. We expect God to do as He has said to the fullest extent of His promise, for He will never run back from His Word, nor fail in His engagement. We have committed our souls to the keeping of the Savior who has declared that He will save His people from their sins. We are trusting in our Redeemer and our belief is that our Redeemer lives! And that when He shall stand, in the last day upon the earth, though after our skin, worms destroy this body, yet in our *flesh* we shall see God!

Many and precious are the Words of God to the same effect and we lay hold upon them, being certain that what He has promised He is able, also, to perform. We will die, never doubting that we will rise again, even as we have already committed to the dust many of our beloved ones in sure and certain hope of *their* resurrection to eternal life. As the farmer drops his grain into the ground and does not doubt to see it rise again, so do we bury the bodies of the saints and so shall we resign our own bodies in the certain expectation that they shall as surely live again as they have lived at all! This is a hope worth having, for it is grounded on the Word of God, the faithfulness of God and His power to carry out His own promise and, therefore, it is a hope most sure and steadfast which makes no man ashamed who has it.

This hope is worked in us by the Spirit of God. We should never have known this hope if the Holy Spirit had not kindled it in our bosoms. Ungodly men have no such hope and never will have. It is only when men are renewed that this hope enters into them, the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. And herein do I exult with unspeakable joy, for if my hope of perfection and immortality has been worked in me by *God*, then it must be fulfilled, for the Lord never could inspire a hope which should put His people to shame! The true God never gave men a false hope. That cannot be! The God of hope who has taught you, my Brothers and Sisters, to expect salvation from sin and all its effects, will do unto you according to the expectation which He has, Himself, excited! Therefore be very confident and patiently wait the joyful day of the Lord's appearing.

This hope operates in us in a holy manner, as every gracious and holy thing that comes from God must do. It purifies us. As John says, "He that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as God is pure." We are so certain of this inheritance that we prepare for it by putting off all things con-

trary to it and putting *on* all things which suit it. We endeavor to live as in the prospect of Glory! How often has it occurred to me and I doubt not to you, my Brothers and Sisters, to say of such-and-such a thing, "How will this look in the Day of Judgment?" And we have done this act of generosity or that act of consecration, not because we cared a whit what men would think of it, but because we looked at it in the light of the coming Glory. To us the most grand stimulus is that there is laid up for us a crown of life that fades not away.

This blessed hope makes us feel that it is a shame for us to sin, a shame that princes of the blood imperial of the skies should dabble in the mire like children of the gutter! We would gladly live as those who are destined to dwell in the blaze of the ineffable Light of God. We cannot walk in darkness, for we are to dwell in a splendor before which the sun grows pale—in the very Godhead, itself, are we to baptize ourselves in fellowship! Shall we, therefore, be the slaves of Satan, or the serfs of sin? God forbid! This blessed hope draws us towards God and lifts us out of the pit of sin!

III. Having described the object and the nature of this blessed hope, I come more closely to the text to observe THE ANTICIPATORY POWER OF THIS HOPE, for the Apostle says in our text, "We were saved in hope"—that is to say we got the greater salvation, about which we are now speaking, when we were taught to *know* this hope. We obtained the first part of salvation, the forgiveness of sin and justification of our persons, by faith. And we have fellowship with God and access into countless blessings by faith—some of us are as conscious of this as that we eat and drink. But, beside all this, we have, in *hope*, the fuller range of salvation—total deliverance of the soul from sin and complete redemption of the body from pain and death. We have this salvation in hope and we rejoice in hope of the Glory of God.

How is this? Why, first, Hope saw it all secured by the promise of Grace. As soon as ever we believed in Christ our faith secured forgiveness and we cried, "I am not yet free from tendencies to sin, but inasmuch as I have believed in Christ unto salvation I shall surely be perfected, for Christ could not have come to give me a partial and imperfect salvation—He will perfect that which concerns me." Thus Hope saw within the promise of salvation much that as yet was not actually experienced. Knowing that the whole of the promise is of equal certainty, Hope expected the future mercy as surely as Faith enjoyed the present blessing!

Moreover, Hope saw the full harvest in the first fruits. When sin was subdued by Grace, Hope expected to see it utterly exterminated. When the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the body, Hope concluded that the body would be delivered as surely as the soul. The moment that Faith introduced Hope into the heart she sang, "I have the complete salvation not in actual enjoyment, but in sure future in Christ Jesus." Hope waved the first sheaf and so took possession of the harvest. Ask any farmer who holds up a little handful of ripe wheat ears whether he has ripe wheat and he tells you that it is even so. "But you have not reaped it yet." "No, not yet, but it is mine and in due season I shall reap it—these full ears are a

full assurance of the existence of the wheat and of the fact that it is ripening.”

So when God gave to you and me love to Jesus and deliverance from the dominion of evil, these first fruits betokened a perfect salvation yet to be revealed in us. Our first joy was the tuning of our harps for everlasting song. Our first peace was the morning light of a never-ending day. When first we saw Christ and worshipped Him, our adoration was the first bowing before the Throne of God and of the Lamb. So that in hope we were saved—it brought us the principle of perfection, the pledge of immortality, the commencement of glorification.

Moreover, Hope is so sure about this coming favor that she reckons it as obtained already. You get advice from a merchant with whom you have traded beyond the seas. He says, “I have procured the goods you have ordered and will send them by the next vessel which will probably arrive at such a time.” Another trader calls in and asks you whether you wish to buy such goods and you reply, “No, I have them.” Have you spoken the truth? Certainly, for though you have them not in your *warehouse*, they are invoiced to you—you know they are on the way and you are so accustomed to trust your foreign correspondent that you regard the goods as yours. The deed is done that makes them yours. So it is with Heaven, with perfection, with immortality—the deed is done which makes these the heritage of saints.

I have advice from One whom I cannot doubt, even my Lord, that He has gone to Heaven to prepare a place for me and that He will come again and receive me to Himself! So sure is Hope of this fact, that she reckons it and makes comparisons and draws practical conclusions. A good old proverb tells us, “Never count your chickens before they are hatched,” but here is a case in which you may count as accurately while the bird is in the egg as when it is fledged, for the Apostle says, “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 is so sure of it that he keeps a debtor and creditor account about it! He puts down the sufferings of this present time in his *expenditures* and the glory which shall be revealed among his *assets*—and he declares that the one is so vast and the other so utterly insignificant as not to be worth notice! No, he is not only so sure as to count upon it, but to groan after it! We that are in this body groan for the full adoption! Our groans do not arise from doubt, but from eagerness—we are urged, by our confident expectancy, to vehemence of desire! It is idle to cry for that which you will never have. The child is foolish which cries for the moon. But to groan for what I am sure to have is proper and fit—and shows the strength of my faith.

The Apostle is so sure of it that he even triumphs in it. He says that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us—that is to say, although we are not yet perfect and although our body is not delivered from pain, yet we are so sure of perfection and complete deliverance that we joyfully endure all things, triumphing over every difficulty! Friend, you will not be poor many weeks longer—you shall dwell where the streets are

paved with gold! Your head will not ache many months longer, for it shall be surrounded with a coronet of glory and of bliss! Never mind shame—they will not be able to laugh at you long—you shall be at the right hand of God, even the Father! And the Glory of Christ shall clothe you, world without end! Oh, it is an infinite blessing to have such a hope and to be so sure of it as to anticipate its joys before they actually come to us! “We are saved in hope.”

IV. Let us for a moment observe THE PROPER SPHERE OF HOPE. The sphere of hope is “things not seen.” Hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for it? Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, a Christian’s real possession is not what he sees. Suppose God prospers him in this world and he has riches? Let him be grateful, but let him confess that these are not his treasure. One hour with the Lord Jesus Christ will bring more satisfaction to the Believer than the largest measure of wealth!

Although he may have been prospered in this world, the saint will ridicule the idea of making the world his portion. A thousand worlds with all the joy which they could yield are as nothing compared with our appointed inheritance! Our hope does not deal with trifles—it leaves the mice of the barn to the owls and soars on eagle wings where nobler joys await her—

***“Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll;
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul.”***

But it is clear that we do not, at present, enjoy these glorious things for which we hope. The worldling cries, “Where is your hope?” And we confess that we do not see the objects of our hope. For instance, we could not claim to be already perfect and neither do we expect to be so while we are in this body. But we believe that we shall be perfected in the image of Christ at the time appointed of the Father.

By no means is our body free from infirmity at this moment—aches and pains and weariness remind us that the body is under death because of sin. Yet our firm conviction is that we shall bear the image of the heavenly even as we now bear the image of the earthly. These are subjects of hope and, therefore, outside of present experience. Let us not be cast down because it is so. We must have something reserved for hope to feed on. We cannot have all of Heaven and yet remain on earth. Dearly Beloved, if you feel tormented by indwelling sin and your holiness seems battered and blotted, yet be fully persuaded that He who has promised is able to perform! Away, then, with judging by what you do, or see, or feel, or are! Rise into the sphere of the things which *shall* be. Can you do that?

When there is no joy in the present, there is an infinite joy in the future. Do not say, “Oh, but it is a long way off.” It is not so! Many among you are 60, 70, or even 80 years of age—your time for the sight of Christ in your disembodied state cannot be far away, for the thread of life is snapping. Some of us are in middle age, but as we have already reached the average of life, we are bound to reckon that our lease is far advanced—and as so many are snatched away in their prime, we may at any

moment be caught up to the land for which we hope! We ought not to fret about what we shall do 10 years from now, for it is very likely that we shall, by that time, have entered into the promised rest and shall be serving the Lord day and night in His Temple and beholding His face with unspeakable joy!

Even suppose that any of us should be doomed to exile from Heaven for another 50 years, the time of our sojourn will soon fly away. Let us labor to our utmost for the Glory of God while we are here, for the moments flash away. Do you not remember this time last year when autumn's ripeness was all around? It seems but the other day! You boys and girls think it a long year, but the old folks are of another opinion. We have no long years, now that we are growing gray! For me, time travels so fast that its axles are hot with speed! Fear cries—"Oh, for a little breathing space!" But Hope answers—"No, let the years fly! We shall be Home the sooner!" There is but a step between us and Heaven—do not let us worry ourselves about things below. We are like people in an express train who see a disagreeable sight in the fields, but it is gone before they have time to think of it!

If there should be some discomfort in the carriage. If they have been put into a third-class compartment when they had a first-class ticket, they do not trouble if it is a short journey. "See," says one, "we have just passed the last station and shall be in the terminal directly, so never mind." Let us project ourselves into the future. We shall not need much dynamite of imagination to send us upward—we can leap that little distance by hope and seat ourselves among the thrones above! Resolve, my Brothers and Sisters, that, at least for today you will not tarry in this cloudy, earth-bound time, but will mount unto the bright, cloudless eternity! O to leave these turbid streams and bathe in the river of Hope, whose crystal floods flow from the pure fountain of Divine joy!

V. Our time has fled and we must close by merely glancing at THE EFFECT OF THIS HOPE which is thus described—"Then do we with patience wait for it." We wait and must wait, but not as criminals for execution! Our tarrying is rather that of the bride for the wedding. We wait with patience, constancy, desire and submission. The joy is sure to come—we have no doubt about it—therefore we do not complain and murmur, as though God had missed His appointment and put us to needless delay. No, the time which God has settled is the best and we are content with it. We would neither desire to tarry here nor to depart at any time but the Lord's.

Dear Rowland Hill is said to have searched out an aged friend who was dying, that he might send a message up to Heaven to John Berridge and other beloved Johns who had gone before him. He playfully added a word of hope that the Master had not forgotten old Rowland and would let him come home in due time. Yet he never dreamed that he could be passed over. Among the last expressions of the famous John Donne was this—"I were miserable if I might not die." This would be a horrible world, indeed, if we were doomed to live in it forever! I saw a gentleman sometime ago who told me that he would never die, but should, at certain intervals, cast off the effects of age and start on a new term of life. He kindly came to tell

me how I might enjoy the same favor, but as I am not ambitious of earthly immortality, such an offer did not tempt me.

He told me I could renew my youth and become young, again, for the space of hundreds of years, but I refused his offer and declined the gift at any price. I have no desire for anything of the sort! My most comfortable prospect about this life is that it will melt away into *eternal* life! It seems to me that the most joyous thing about the most joyous life is that it leads upward to another and a better state. I am not unhappy or discontented, but since I have a good hope of perfection for my soul and body and a sure prospect of face-to-face fellowship with *God*, how can I speak well of anything which divides me from my joy? Yes, it will come, surely come—therefore let us patiently wait for it.

When Satan would buffet us; when temptation would overcome us; when affliction would wear us down; when doubts would torment us, let us bear the temporary trial with constancy, for we shall soon be out of range of gunshot. The consummation shall come and must come—and when it comes we shall remember no more our travail for joy that our Heaven is born to us and we to it!

Now, then, you that do not believe in God, tell us what your hope is. Publish it in the world and let all men estimate it. What is your hope? To live long? Yes, and what then? To bring up a family? Yes, and what then? To see them comfortably settled in life? Yes, and what then? To be a grandfather to a numerous progeny? Yes, and what then? To reach extreme old age in peaceful retirement? Yes, and what then? The curtain falls! Let me lift it. The *cemetery*. The Throne of God. Sentence on your soul! The trumpet of Resurrection. Final doom. Body and soul in Hell forever! You have no better prospect! Pray look out of the window and see what is to be seen. The Lord have mercy upon you and give you a better hope!

As for you believers in Christ, I charge you, begin to sing, today, the sonnets of the hereafter! Charm your pilgrim life with the minstrelsy of hope!

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THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION

NO. 1532

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 11, 1880,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”
Romans 8:26, 27.

THE Apostle Paul was writing to a tried and afflicted people and one of his objectives was to remind them of the rivers of comfort which were flowing near at hand. He first of all stirred up their pure minds by way of remembrance as to their sonship, for he says, “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” They were, therefore, encouraged to take part and lot with Christ, the elder Brother, with whom they had become joint heirs. And they were exhorted to suffer with Him that they might afterwards be glorified with Him. All that they endured came from a Father’s hand and this should comfort them. A thousand sources of joy are opened in that one blessing of *adoption*. Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have been begotten into the family of Grace!

When Paul had alluded to that consoling subject, he turned to the next ground of comfort, namely, that we are to be sustained under present trial by *hope*. There is an amazing glory in reserve for us and though as yet we cannot enter upon it, but in harmony with the whole creation must continue to groan and travail, yet the hope itself should minister strength to us and enable us to bear patiently “these light afflictions, which are but for a moment.” This, also, is a Truth of God full of sacred refreshment—Hope sees a crown in reserve, mansions in readiness and Jesus, Himself, preparing a place for us—and by the rapturous sight she sustains the soul under the sorrows of the hour! Hope is the grand anchor by whose means we ride out the present storm.

The Apostle then turns to a third source of comfort, namely, the abiding of the Holy Spirit in and with the Lord’s people. He uses the word, “likewise,” to intimate that in the same manner as hope sustains the soul, so does the Holy Spirit strengthen us under trial. Hope operates spiritually upon our spiritual faculties and so does the Holy Spirit, in some mysterious way, Divinely operate upon the new-born faculties of the Believer so that he is sustained under his infirmities. In His light shall we see light—I pray, therefore, that we may be helped of the Spirit while we consider His mysterious operations—that we may not fall into error or miss precious Truths of God through blindness of heart.

The text speaks of “our infirmities,” or as many translators put it in the singular—of “our infirmity”—by this is intended our affliction and the weakness which trouble discovers in us. The Holy Spirit helps us to bear the infirmity of our body and of our mind. He helps us to bear our cross, whether it is physical pain, mental depression, spiritual conflict, slander, poverty, or persecution. He helps our infirmity—and with a Helper so Divinely strong, we need not fear for the result! God’s Grace will be sufficient for us! His strength will be made perfect in weakness! I think, dear Friends, you will all admit that if a man can pray, his trouble is at once lightened. When we feel that we have power with God and can obtain anything we ask for at His hands, then our difficulties cease to oppress us.

We take our burden to our heavenly Father and tell Him in the accents of childlike confidence and we come away quite content to bear whatever His holy will may lay upon us. Prayer is a great outlet for grief—it draws up the sluices and abates the swelling flood which, otherwise, might be too strong for us. We bathe our wounds in the lotion of prayer and the pain is lulled, the fever is removed. But the worst of it is that in certain conditions of heart we *cannot* pray. We may be brought into such perturbation of mind and perplexity of heart that we do not know *how* to pray. We see the Mercy Seat and we perceive that God will hear us. We have no doubt about that, for we know that we are His own favored children and yet we hardly know what to desire.

We fall into such heaviness of spirit and entanglement of thought that the one remedy of prayer, which we have always found to be unfailing, appears to be taken from us. Here, then, in the nick of time, as a very present help in time of trouble, comes in the Holy Spirit! He draws near to teach us how to pray and in this way He helps our infirmity, relieves our suffering and enables us to bear the heavy burden without fainting under the load. At this time our subjects for consideration shall be, first, the help which the Holy Spirit gives. Secondly, the prayers which He inspires. And thirdly, the success which such prayers are certain to obtain.

I. First, then, let us consider THE HELP WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES. The help which the Holy Spirit renders to us meets the weakness which we deplore. As I have already said, if in time of trouble a man can pray, his burden loses its weight. If the Believer can take anything and everything to God, then he learns to glory in infirmity and to rejoice in tribulation. But sometimes we are in such confusion of mind that we know not what we should pray for as we ought to. In a measure, through our ignorance, we *never* know what we should pray for until we are taught of the Spirit of God, but there *are* times when this beclouding of the soul is dense, indeed, and we do not even know what would help us out of our trouble if we could obtain it.

We see the disease, but the name of the medicine is not known to us. We look over the many things which we might ask for of the Lord and we feel that each of them would be helpful, but none of them would precisely meet our case. For spiritual blessings which we know to be according to the Divine will, we could ask with confidence, but perhaps these would not meet our peculiar circumstances. There are other things for which we are allowed to ask, but we scarcely know whether, if we had them, they

would really serve our turn and we also feel a diffidence as to praying for them. In praying for temporal things, we plead with measured voices, always referring our petition for revision to the will of the Lord.

Moses prayed that he might enter Canaan, but God denied him. The man that was healed asked our Lord that he might be with Him, but he received the answer, "Go home to your friends." We pray on such matters with this reserve, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." At times this very spirit of resignation appears to increase our mental difficulty, for we do not wish to ask for anything that would be contrary to the mind of God and yet we must ask for *something!* We are reduced to such straits that we must pray, but what shall be the particular subject of prayer we cannot, for a while, make out. Even when ignorance and perplexity are removed, we know not what we should pray for "as we ought."

When we know the *matter* of prayer, yet we fail to pray in a right *manner*. We ask, but we are afraid that we shall not have, because we do not exercise the thought, or the faith which we judge to be essential to prayer. We cannot, at times, command even the *earnestness* which is the life of supplication. A torpor steals over us, our heart is chilled, our hands are numbed and we cannot wrestle with the angel. We know what to pray for as to objects, but we do not know what to pray for "as we ought." It is the *manner* of the prayer which perplexes us, even when the matter is decided upon! How can I pray? My mind wanders. I chatter like a crane. I roar like a beast in pain. I moan in the brokenness of my heart, but oh, my God, I know not what it is my inmost spirit *needs*, or if I know it, I know not how to frame my petition aright before You! I know not how to open my lips in Your majestic Presence—I am so troubled that I cannot speak! My spiritual distress robs me of the power to pour out my heart before my God!

Now, Beloved, it is in such a plight as this that the Holy Spirit aids us with His Divine help and hence He is "a very present help in time of trouble." Coming to our aid in our bewilderment, He instructs us. This is one of His frequent operations upon the mind of the Believer—"He shall teach you all things." He instructs us as to our need and as to the promises of God which refer to that need. He shows us where our deficiencies are; what our sins are and what our necessities are. He sheds a light upon our condition and makes us feel our helplessness, sinfulness and dire poverty very deeply. And then He casts the same light upon the promises of the Word and lays home to our heart that very text which was intended to meet the occasion—the *precise promise* which was framed with foresight of our present distress!

In that light He makes the promise shine in all its truthfulness, certainty, sweetness and suitability so that we, poor trembling sons of men, dare take that Word into our mouth which first came out of God's mouth and then come with it as an argument and plead it before the Throne of the heavenly Grace. Our prevalence in prayer lies in the plea, "Lord, do as You have said." How greatly we ought to value the Holy Spirit because when we are in the dark He gives us light! And when our perplexed spirit is so befogged and beclouded that it cannot see its own need and cannot find out the appropriate promise in the Scriptures, the Spirit of God comes in and teaches us all things and brings all things to our remem-

brance whatever our Lord has told us. He guides us in prayer and thus He helps our infirmity.

But the blessed Spirit does more than this! He will often direct the mind to the special subject of prayer. He dwells within us as a Counselor and points out to us what it is we should seek at the hands of God. We do not know why it is so, but we sometimes find our minds carried as by a strong undercurrent into a particular line of prayer for some one definite objective. It is not merely that our judgment leads us in that direction, though usually the Spirit of God acts upon us by enlightening our judgment, but we often feel an unaccountable and irresistible desire rising again and again within our heart and this so presses upon us that we not only utter the desire before God at our ordinary times for prayer, but we feel it crying in our hearts all day long—almost to the supplanting of all other considerations.

At such times we should thank God for direction and give our desire a clear road—the Holy Spirit is granting us inward direction as to how we should order our petitions before the Throne of Grace and we may now reckon upon good success in our pleading. Such guidance will the Spirit give to each of you if you will ask Him to illuminate you. He will guide you both negatively and positively. Negatively, He will forbid you to pray for such-and-such a thing, even as Paul essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit would not allow him. And, on the other hand, He will cause you to hear a cry within your soul which shall guide your petitions, even as He made Paul hear the cry from Macedonia, saying, “Come over and help us.” The Spirit teaches wisely, as no other teacher can. Those who obey His prompting shall not walk in darkness. He leads the spiritual eyes to take good and steady aim at the very center of the target and thus we hit the mark in our pleading.

Nor is this all, for the Spirit of God is not sent merely to guide and help our devotion, but He Himself “makes intercession for us” according to the will of God. By this expression it cannot be meant that the Holy Spirit ever groans or personally prays, but that He excites intense desire and creates unutterable groans *in us* and these are ascribed to Him. Even as Solomon built the temple because he superintended and ordained all, yet I know not that he ever fashioned a timber or prepared a stone, so does the Holy Spirit pray and plead within us by *leading* us to pray and plead. This He does by awakening our desires. The Holy Spirit has a wonderful power over renewed hearts—as much power as the skillful minstrel has over the strings among which he lays his accustomed hand.

The influences of the Holy Spirit, at times, pass through the soul like winds through an Aeolian harp, creating and inspiring sweet notes of gratitude and tones of desire to which we should have been strangers if it had not been for His Divine visitation. He knows how to create in our spirit hunger and thirst for good things. He can awaken us from our spiritual lethargy. He can warm us out of our lukewarmness. He can enable us, when we are on our knees, to rise above the ordinary routine of prayer into that victorious importunity against which nothing can stand! He can lay certain desires so pressingly upon our hearts that we can never rest till they are fulfilled! He can make the zeal for God's house to eat us up

and the passion for God's Glory to be like a fire within our bones—this is one part of that process by which, in inspiring our prayers, He helps our infirmity. He is a true Advocate and most effectual Comforter. Blessed be His name!

The Holy Spirit also Divinely operates in the strengthening of the faith of Believers. That faith is at first of His creating and afterwards it is of His sustaining and increasing. And oh, Brothers and Sisters, have you not often felt your faith rise in proportion to your trials? Have you not, like Noah's ark, mounted towards Heaven as the flood deepened around you? You have felt as sure about the promise as you felt about the trial! The affliction was, as it were, in your very bones, but the promise was also in your very *heart*. You could not doubt the affliction, for you smarted under it, but you might almost as soon have doubted that you were afflicted as have doubted the Divine Help, for your confidence was firm and unmoved! The greatest faith is only what God has a right to expect from us, yet we never exhibit it except as the Holy Spirit strengthens our confidence and opens up before us the Covenant with all its seals and securities.

He it is that leads our soul to cry, "Though my house is not so with God, yet has He made with me an Everlasting Covenant ordered in all things and sure." Blessed be the Divine Spirit, then, that since faith is essential to prevailing prayer, He helps us in supplication by increasing our faith! Without faith, prayer cannot go anywhere, for he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind and such an one may not expect anything of the Lord! Happy are we when the Holy Spirit removes our wavering and enables us, like Abraham, to *believe* without staggering, knowing full well that He who has promised is able, also, to perform!

By three figures I will endeavor to describe the work of the Spirit of God in this matter, though they all fall short and, indeed, all that I can say must fall infinitely short of the Glory of His work. The actual mode of His working upon the mind we may not attempt to explain—it remains a mystery and it would be an unholy intrusion to attempt to remove the veil. There is no difficulty in our believing that as one human mind operates upon another mind, so does the Holy Spirit influence our spirits. We are forced to use words if we would influence our fellow men, but the Spirit of God can operate upon the human mind more directly and communicate with it in *silence*. Into that matter, however, we will not dive lest we intrude where our knowledge would be drowned by our presumption.

My illustrations do not touch the mystery, but set forth the Grace. The Holy Spirit acts to His people somewhat as a prompter to a reciter. A man has to deliver a piece which he has learned, but his memory is treacherous and, therefore, somewhere out of sight there is a prompter so that when the speaker is at a loss and might use a wrong word, a whisper is heard which suggests the right one. When the speaker has almost lost the thread of his discourse, he turns his ear and the prompter gives him the catch-word and aids his memory. If I may be allowed the simile, I would say that this represents, in part, the work of the Spirit of God in us—suggesting to us the right desire and bringing all things to our remembrance whatever Christ has told us.

In prayer we should often come to a dead stand, but He incites, suggests and inspires—and so we go onward. In prayer we might grow weary, but the Comforter encourages and refreshes us with cheering thoughts. When, indeed, we are, in our bewilderment, almost driven to give up prayer, the whisper of His love drops a live coal from off the Altar into our soul and our hearts glow with greater ardor than before! Regard the Holy Spirit as your Prompter and let your ears be opened to His voice. But He is much more than this. Let me attempt a second simile—He is as an Advocate to one in peril at law. Suppose that a poor man had a great lawsuit touching his whole estate and he was forced, personally, to go into court and plead his own cause and speak up for his rights. If he were an uneducated man, he would be in a poor plight. An adversary in the court might plead against him and overthrow him, for he could not answer him. This poor man knows very little about the law and is quite unable to meet his cunning opponent.

Now, suppose one who was perfect in the law should take up his cause warmly and come and live with him and use all his knowledge so as to prepare his case for him, draw up his petitions for him and fill his mouth with arguments—would not that be a grand relief? This counselor would suggest the line of pleading, arrange the arguments and put them into right courtly language. When the poor man was baffled by a question asked in court, he would run home and ask his adviser and he would tell him exactly how to meet the objector. Suppose, too, that when he had to plead with the judge, this advocate at home should teach him how to behave and what to urge and encourage him to hope that he would prevail—would not this be a great gift?

Who would be the pleader in such a case? The poor client would plead, but still, when he won the suit, he would trace it all to the advocate who lived at home and gave him counsel. Indeed, it would be the advocate pleading for him, even while he pleaded himself! This is an instructive emblem of a great fact. Within this narrow house of my body, this tenement of clay, if I am a true Believer, there dwells the Holy Spirit and when I desire to pray I may ask Him what I should pray for as I ought and He will help me! He will write the prayers which I ought to offer upon the tablets of my heart and I shall see them there and so I shall be taught how to plead! It will be the Spirit's own self pleading *in* me and *by* me and *through* me before the Throne of Grace! What a happy man, in his lawsuit, would such a poor man be! And how happy are you and I that we have the Holy Spirit to be our Counselor!

Yet one more illustration. It is that of a father aiding his boy. Suppose it to be a time of war, centuries back. Old English warfare was then conducted by bowmen, to a great extent. Here is a youth who is to be initiated in the art of archery and, therefore, he carries a bow. It is a strong bow and, therefore, very hard to draw—indeed, it requires more strength than the urchin can summon to bend it. See how his father teaches him. “Put your right hand here, my Boy, and place your left hand so. Now pull”—and as the youth pulls, his father's hands are on his hands and the bow is drawn! The lad draws the bow, yes, but it is quite as much his father, too.

We cannot draw the bow of *prayer* alone. Sometimes a bow of steel is not broken by our hands, for we cannot even bend it. And then the Holy Spirit puts His mighty hand over ours and covers our weakness so that we draw, and lo, what splendid drawing of the bow it then is! The bow bends so easily we wonder how! Away flies the arrow and it pierces the very center of the target, for He who gives the strength, directs the aim! We rejoice to think that we have won the day, but it was His secret might that made us strong and to Him be the glory of it! Thus have I tried to set forth the cheering fact that the Spirit helps the people of God.

II. Our second subject is THE PRAYER WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRES, or that part of prayer which is especially and peculiarly the work of the Spirit of God. The text says, "The Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered." It is not the Spirit that groans, but *we* that groan, but as I have shown you, the Spirit excites the emotion which causes us to groan. It is clear then the prayers which are indited in us by the Spirit of God are those which arise from our inmost soul. A man's heart is moved when he groans. A groan is a matter about which there is no hypocrisy. A groan comes not from the lips, but from the heart. A groan, then, is a part of prayer which we owe to the Holy Spirit and the same is true of all the prayer which wells up from the deep fountains of our inner life.

The Prophet cried, "My heart, my heart, I am pained at my very heart: my heart makes a noise in me." This deep ground-swell of desire, this tidal motion of the life-floods is caused by the Holy Spirit. His work is never superficial, but always deep and inward. Such prayers will rise within us when the mind is far too troubled to let us speak. We know not what we should pray for as we ought and then it is that we groan, or utter some other inarticulate sound. Hezekiah said, "like a crane or a swallow did I chatter." The Psalmist said, "I am so troubled that I cannot speak." In another place he said, "I am feeble and sorely broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart." But he added, "Lord, all my desire is before You and my groaning is not hid from You."

The sighs of the prisoner surely come up into the ears of the Lord. There is real prayer in these "groans that cannot be uttered." It is the power of the Holy Spirit in us which creates all real prayer, even that which takes the form of a groan because the mind is incapable, by reason of its bewilderment and grief, of clothing its emotion in words. I pray you never think lightly of the supplications of your anguish. Rather judge that such prayers are like Jabez, of whom it is written, "He was more honorable than his brethren because his mother bore him with sorrow." That which is thrown up from the depth of the soul, when it is stirred with a terrible tempest, is more precious than pearl or coral, for it is the intercession of the Holy Spirit!

These prayers are sometimes "groans that cannot be uttered" because they concern such great things that they cannot be spoken. I *need*, my Lord! I need, I need; I cannot tell you *what* I need, but I seem to need all things! If it were some little thing, my narrow capacity could comprehend and describe it, but I need all Covenant blessings! You know what I have need of before I ask You and though I cannot go into each item of my

need, I know it to be very great and such as I, myself, can never estimate. I groan, for I can do no more! Prayers which are the offspring of great desires, sublime aspirations and elevated designs are surely the work of the Holy Spirit and their power within a man is frequently so great that he cannot find expression for them! Words fail and even the sighs which try to embody them cannot be uttered.

But it may be, Beloved, that we groan because we are conscious of the littleness of our desires and the narrowness of our faith. The trial, too, may seem too mean to pray about. I have known what it is to feel as if I could not pray about a certain matter and yet I have been obliged to groan about it. A thorn in the flesh may be as painful a thing as a sword in the bones and yet we may go and beseech the Lord thrice about it and, getting no answer, we may feel that we know not what to pray for as we ought—and so it makes us groan. Yes, and with that natural groan there may go up an unutterable groaning of the Holy Spirit!

Beloved, what a different view of prayer God has from that which men think to be the correct one! You may have seen very beautiful prayers in print and you may have heard very charming compositions from the pulpit, but I trust you have not fallen in love with them. Judge these things rightly. I pray you never think well of fine prayers, for before the thrice holy God it ill becomes a sinful suppliant to play the orator! We heard of a certain clergyman who was said to have given forth “the finest prayer ever offered to a Boston audience.” Just so! The Boston audience *received* the prayer and there it ended! We need the mind of the Spirit in prayer and not the mind of the flesh! The tail feathers of pride should be pulled out of our prayers, for they need only the wing feathers of faith—the peacock feathers of poetical expression are out of place before the Throne of God.

“Dear me, what remarkably beautiful language he uses in prayer!” “What an intellectual treat his prayers are!” Yes, yes. But God looks at the *heart*. To Him fine language is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal—while a groan has music in it! We do not like groans—our ears are much too delicate to tolerate such dreary sounds—but not so the great Father of Spirits. A Methodist Brother cries, “Amen,” and you say, “I cannot bear such Methodistic noise!” No, but if it comes from the man’s *heart*, God can bear it! When you get upstairs into your chamber this evening to pray and find you cannot pray, but have to moan, “Lord, I am too full of anguish and too perplexed to pray. Hear the voice of my roaring.” Though you reach to nothing else, you will be really praying!

When, like David, we can say, “I opened my mouth and panted,” we are by no means in an ill state of mind. All fine language in prayer and especially all intoning or performing of prayers must be abhorrent to God! It is little short of profanity to offer solemn supplication to God after the manner called, “intoning.” The sighing of a true heart is infinitely more acceptable, for it is the work of the Spirit of God! We may say of the prayers which the Holy Spirit works in us that they are prayers of *knowledge*. Notice our difficulty is that we know not what we should pray for—but the Holy Spirit *knows* and, therefore, He helps us by enabling us to pray intelligently, knowing what we are asking for, so far as this knowledge is necessary to valid prayer.

The text speaks of the “mind of the Spirit.” What a mind that must be! The mind of that Spirit who arranged all the order which now pervades this earth! There was once chaos and confusion, but the Holy Spirit brooded over all and His mind is the originator of that beautiful arrangement which we so admire in the visible creation! What a mind His must be! The Holy Spirit’s mind is seen in our intercessions when, under His sacred influence, we order our case before the Lord and plead with holy wisdom for things convenient and necessary. What wise and admirable desires must those be which the Spirit of Wisdom, Himself, works in us!

Moreover, the Holy Spirit’s intercession creates prayers offered in a proper manner. I showed you that the difficulty is that we know not what we should pray for “as we ought,” and the Spirit meets that difficulty by making intercession for us in a right manner. The Holy Spirit works in us humility, earnestness, intensity, importunity, faith, resignation and all else that is acceptable to God in our supplications. We know not how to mingle these sacred spices in the incense of prayer. We, if left to ourselves, at our very best get too much of one ingredient or another and spoil the sacred compound. But the Holy Spirit’s intercessions have in them such a blessed blending of all that is good that they come up as a sweet perfume before the Lord!

Spirit-taught prayers are offered as they ought to be. They are His own intercession in some respects, for we read that the Holy Spirit not only helps us to intercede but, “makes intercession.” It is twice over declared in our text that He makes intercession for us and the meaning of this I tried to show when I described a father as putting his hands upon his child’s hands. This is something more than helping us to pray, something more than encouraging us or directing us—but I venture no further except to say that He puts such force of His own mind into our poor weak thoughts and desires and hopes that He, *Himself*, makes intercession for us, working in us to will and to pray according to His good pleasure!

I want you to notice, however, that these intercessions of the Holy Spirit are only in the saints. “He makes intercession for us” and, “He makes intercession for the saints.” Does He do nothing for sinners, then? Yes, He *quickens* sinners into spiritual life and He strives with them to overcome their sinfulness and turn them into the right way. But in the saints He works *with* us and enables us to pray after *His mind* and according to the will of God! His intercession is not *in* or *for* the unregenerate. O, unbelievers you must first be made saints or you cannot feel the Spirit’s intercession within you! What need we have to go to Christ for the blessing of the Holy Spirit which is peculiar to the children of God and can only be ours by faith in Christ Jesus!

“To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” And to the sons of God, alone, comes the Spirit of adoption and all His helping Grace. Unless we are the sons of God, the Holy Spirit’s indwelling shall not be ours—we are shut out from the intercession of the Holy Spirit. Yes, and from the intercession of Jesus, too, for He has said, “I pray not for the world, but for them which You have given Me.” Thus I have tried to show you the kind of prayer which the Spirit inspires.

III. Our third and last point is THE SURE SUCCESS OF ALL SUCH PRAYERS. All the prayers which the Spirit of God inspires in us must succeed, because, first, there is a meaning in them which God reads and approves. When the Spirit of God writes a prayer upon a man's heart, the man himself may be in such a state of mind that he does not altogether know what it is! His interpretation of it is a groan and that is all. Perhaps he does not even get so far as that in expressing the mind of the Spirit, but he feels groans which he cannot utter. He cannot find a door of utterance for his inward grief.

Yet our heavenly Father, who looks immediately upon the heart, reads what the Spirit of God has indited there and does not need even our groans to explain the meaning! He reads the heart itself—"He knows," says the text, "what is the mind of the Spirit." The Spirit is one with the Father and the Father knows what the Spirit means! The desires which the Spirit prompts may be too spiritual for such babes in Grace as we are actually to describe or to express and yet they are *within* us. We feel desires for things that we should never have thought of if He had not made us long for them. We have aspirations for blessings which as to the understanding of them are still above us, yet the Spirit writes the desire on the renewed mind and the Father sees it!

Now that which God reads in the heart and approves of, for the word, "to know," in this case includes approval as well as the mere act of Omniscience—what God sees and approves of in the heart must succeed. Did not Jesus say, "Your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things before you ask them"? Did He not tell us this as an encouragement to believe that we shall receive all necessary blessings? So it is with those prayers which are all broken up, wet with tears and discordant with sighs and inarticulate expressions and heaving of the bosom and sobbing of the heart and anguish and bitterness of spirit—our gracious Lord reads them as a man reads a book and they are written in a character which He fully understands!

To give a simple example—if I were to come into your house, I might find there a little child that cannot yet speak plainly. It cries for something and it makes very odd and objectionable noises, combined with signs and movements which are almost meaningless to a stranger. But his mother understands him and attends to his little pleas. A mother can translate baby talk. She comprehends incomprehensible noises! Even so does our Father in Heaven know all about our poor baby talk, for our prayers are not much better. He knows and comprehends the cries and moans and sighs and chattering of His bewildered children! Yes, a tender mother knows her child's needs before the child knows what it needs. Perhaps the little one stutters, stammers and cannot get its words out—but the mother senses what he would say and understands the meaning. Even so we know concerning our great Father—

***"He knows the thoughts we mean to speak,
Before from our opening lips they break."***

Rejoice in this because the prayers of the Spirit are known and understood of God and, therefore, they will be sure to reach Him!

The next argument for making us sure that they will reach Him is this—they are "the mind of the Spirit." God the Ever-Blessed is One and

there can be no division between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These Divine Persons always work together and there is a common desire for the Glory of each blessed Person of the Divine Unity and, therefore, it cannot be conceived, without profanity, that anything could be the mind of the Holy Spirit and not be the mind of the Father and the mind of the Son! The mind of God is one and harmonious! If, therefore, the Holy Spirit dwells in you and He moves you to any desire, then His mind is in your prayer and it is not possible that the eternal Father should reject your petitions. That prayer which *came* from Heaven will certainly go back to Heaven! If the Holy Spirit prompts it, the Father must and will accept it, for it is not possible that He should put a slight upon the Ever-Blessed and adorable Spirit.

But one more word and that closes the argument, namely, that the work of the Spirit in the heart is not only the *mind* of the Spirit which God knows, but it is also according to the will or mind of *God*, for He never makes intercession in us other than is consistent with the Divine will. Now, the Divine will or mind may be viewed two ways. First, there is the will declared in the proclamations of holiness by the Ten Commandments. The Spirit of God never prompts us to ask for anything that is unholy or inconsistent with the precepts of the Lord. Then secondly, there is the secret mind of God, the will of His eternal predestination and decree of which we know nothing. But we do know this—that the Spirit of God never prompts us to ask anything which is contrary to the eternal purpose of God.

Reflect for a moment—the Holy Spirit knows all the purposes of God and when they are about to be fulfilled, He moves the children of God to pray about them and so their prayers keep touch and tally with the Divine decrees. Oh would you not pray confidently if you knew that your prayer corresponded with the sealed book of destiny? We may safely entreat the Lord to do what He has, Himself, *ordained* to do! A carnal man draws the inference that if God has ordained an event we need not pray about it, but faith obediently draws the inference that the God who secretly ordained to give the blessing has openly commanded that we *should* pray for it and, therefore, faith obediently prays!

Coming events cast their shadows before them and when God is about to bless His people, His coming favor casts the shadow of prayer over the Church. When He is about to favor an individual, He casts the shadow of hopeful expectation over His soul! Our prayers—let men laugh at them as they will and say there is no power in them—are the indicators of the movement of the wheels of Providence! Believing supplications are forecasts of the future! He who prays in faith is like the Seer of old—he sees that which is yet to be—his holy expectancy, like a telescope, brings distant objects near to him and things not seen as yet are visible to him! He is bold to declare that he has the petition which he has asked of God and he, therefore, begins to rejoice and to praise God before the blessing has actually arrived! So it is—prayer prompted by the Holy Spirit is the footfall of the Divine decree.

I conclude by saying, my dear Hearers, see the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit, for if the saints know not what they should pray for as they

ought—if consecrated men and women, with Christ suffering in them, still feel their need of the instruction of the Holy Spirit—how much more do you who are *not* saints and have never given yourselves up to God, require Divine teaching! Oh, that you would know and feel your dependence upon the Holy Spirit that He may prompt you this day to look to Jesus Christ for salvation! It is through the once crucified but now ascended Redeemer that this gift of the Spirit, this promise of the Father is shed abroad upon men! May He who comes from Jesus lead you to Jesus.

And, then, O you people of God, let this last thought abide with *you*—what condescension is this that this Divine Person should dwell in you forever and that He should be with you to help your prayers! Listen to me for a moment. If I read in the Scriptures that in the most heroic acts of faith, God the Holy Spirit, helps His people, I can understand it. If I read that in the sweetest music of their songs, when they worship best and chant their loftiest strains before the Most High God, the Spirit helps them, I can understand it. And even if I hear that in their wrestling prayers and prevalent intercessions God, the Holy Spirit helps them, I can understand it. But I bow with reverent *amazement*—my heart sinking into the dust with adoration—when I reflect that God, the Holy Spirit, helps us when we cannot speak but only groan!

Yes, and when we cannot even utter our groans He does not only help us but He claims as His own particular creation the “groans that cannot be uttered”! This is condescension, indeed! In deigning to help us in the grief that cannot even vent itself in groans He proves Himself to be a true Comforter! O God, my God! You have not forsaken me! You are not far from me, nor from the voice of my roaring. You did, for awhile, leave Your Firstborn when He was made a curse for us, so that He cried in agony, “Why have You forsaken Me?” But You will not leave one of the “many brethren” for whom He died—Your Spirit shall be with them and when they cannot so much as *groan*, He will make intercession for them with groans that cannot be uttered!

God bless you, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, and may you feel the Spirit of the Lord thus working in you and with you. Amen and amen.

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A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, OCTOBER 18, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”
Romans 8:28.

I. WE have here the description of a true Christian and a declaration of that Christian's blessedness. We have him first very succinctly but very fully described in these words—“Them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” These two expressions are the great distinguishing marks whereby we are able to separate the precious from the vile by discovering to us who are the children of God.

The first contains an outward manifestation of the second—“Them that love God.” Now, there are many things in which the worldly and the godly do agree but on this point there IS a vital difference. No ungodly man loves God—at least not in the Biblical sense of the term. An unconverted man may love a god, as, for instance, the god of nature and the god of the imagination. But the God of Revelation no man can love unless grace has been poured into his heart to turn him from that natural enmity of the heart towards God in which all of us are born.

And there may be many differences between godly men, as there undoubtedly are. They may belong to different sects. They may hold very opposite opinions but all godly men agree in this—that they love God. Whosoever loves God, without doubt, is a Christian. And whosoever loves Him not, however high may be his pretensions, however boastful his professions—he has not seen God, neither known Him—for “God is love and he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.” True Believers love God as their *Father*. They have “the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba, Father.” They love Him as their King, they are willing to obey Him. To walk in His commands is their delight.

No path is so soft to their feet as the path of God's precepts and the way of obedience to them. They love God also as their *Portion*, for in Him they live and move and have their being. God is their All. Without Him they have nothing. But possessing Him, however little they may have of outward good, they feel that they are rich to all the intents of bliss. They love God as their future *Inheritance*. They believe that when days and years are past they shall enter into the bosom of God. And their highest joy and delight is the full conviction and belief that one day they shall

dwell forever near His Throne, be hidden in the brightness of His glory and enjoy His everlasting favor.

Do you love God—not with *lip* service—but with *heart* service? Do you love to pay Him homage? Do you love to hold communion with Him? Do you frequent His mercy seat? Do you abide in His Commandments and desire to be conformed unto His Image? If so, then the sweet things which we shall have to say this morning are yours. But if you are no lover of God but a stranger to Him, I beseech you do not pilfer today and steal a comfort that was not intended for you. “All things work together for good,” but not to all men. They only work together for the good of “them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”

Note the second phrase which contains also a description of the Christian—“the called according to His purpose.” However much the Arminian may try to fritter away the meaning of this 8th chapter of Romans—we are obliged, as long as we use terms and words—to say that the 8th and 9th chapters of Romans are the very pillars of that Gospel which men now call Calvinism. No man after having read these chapters attentively and having understood them can deny that the doctrines of sovereign, distinguishing grace are the sum and substance of the teaching of the Bible.

I do not believe that the Bible is to be understood except by receiving these doctrines as true. The Apostle says that those who love God are “the called according to His purpose” by which he means to say two things—first, that all who love God love Him because He called them to love Him. *He* called them, mark you. All men are called by the ministry, by the Word, by daily Providence to love God—that is a *common call* always given to men to come to Christ. The great bell of the Gospel rings a universal welcome to every living soul that breathes. But alas, though that bell has the very sound of Heaven and though all men do in a measure hear it, for “their line is gone out into all the earth and their word unto the end of the world,” yet there was never an instance of any man having been brought to God *simply by that sound*.

All these things are insufficient for the salvation of any man. There must be superadded the *special call*, the call which man cannot resist, the call of *efficacious grace* working in us to will and to do of God's good pleasure. Now, all them that love God love Him because they have had a special, irresistible, supernatural call. Ask them whether they would have loved God if left to themselves—and to a man—whatever their doctrines, they will confess—

**“Grace taught my soul to pray,
Grace made my eyes overflow,
‘Tis grace that kept me to this day
And will not let me go.”**

I never heard a Christian yet who said that he came to God of himself, left to his own free will. Free will may look very pretty in *theory* but I never yet met anyone who found it works well in *practice*. We all confess that if we are brought to the marriage banquet—

***“It was the same love that spread the feast
That gently forced us in
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin.”***

Many men object to election. The very word with some is a great bug-bear. They no sooner hear it than they turn upon their heel indignantly. But know this, O Man—whatever you say of this doctrine—it is a stone upon which, if any man fall, he shall suffer loss. But if it fall upon him it shall grind him to powder. Not all the sophisms of the learned, nor all the slight of hand of the cunning will ever be able to sweep the doctrine of election out of Holy Scripture. Let any man hear and judge. Harken you to this passage in the 9th chapter of Romans—

“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 calls. It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! For He says 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 wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” And—

“You will say then unto me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? No but, O man, who are you that reply against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why have you made me this way? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor! 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 has called, not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles.”

These are God's Words. If any man object, let him object. He rejects the testimony of God against himself. If I promulgated the doctrine on my own authority I could not blame you if you should turn against me and reject it. But when, on the authority of Holy Scripture I propound it, God forbid that any man should quarrel therewith. I have affirmed and I am sure most Christians will bear witness, that what I said was the truth—that if any man loves God he loves Him because God gave him grace to love Him.

Now, suppose I should put the following question to any converted man in this hall. *Side by side with you there sits an ungodly person. You two*

have been brought up together, you have lived in the same house, you have enjoyed the same means of grace—you are converted, he is not. Will you please tell me what has made the difference?

Without a solitary exception the answer would be this—"If I am a Christian and he is not, unto God be the honor." Do you suppose for a moment that there is any injustice in God in having given you grace which He did not give to another? I suppose you say, "Injustice, no. God has a right to do as He wills with His own. I could not claim grace, nor could my companions. God *chose* to give it to me, the other has rejected grace willfully to his own fault and I should have done the same but that He gave 'more grace,' whereby my will was constrained."

Now, Sir, if it is not wrong for God to do the thing, how can it be wrong for God to *plan* to do the thing? And what is election but God's plan to do what He does? It is a fact that any man must be a fool who would dare to deny that God does give to one man more grace than to another. We cannot account for the salvation of one and the non-salvation of another but by believing that God has worked more effectually in one man's heart than another's—unless you choose to give the honor to *man* and say it consists in one man's being better than another. And if so, I will have no argument with you, because you do not know the Gospel at all.

If you did, you would know that salvation is not of works but of grace. If, then, you give the honor to God, you are bound to confess that God has done more for the man that is saved than for the man that is not saved. How, then, can *election* be unjust, if its *effect* is not unjust? However, just or unjust as man may choose to think it, God has done it and the fact stands in man's face—let him reject it as he pleases. God's people are known by their outward mark—they love God and the secret cause of their loving God is this—God chose them from before the foundation of the world that they should love Him and He sent forth the call of His grace so that they were called according to His purpose and were led by grace to love and to fear Him.

If that is not the meaning of the text I do not understand the English language. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, *to them who are the called according to His purpose.*"

Now, my Hearers, before I proceed to enter into the text, let the questions go round. Do I love God? Have I any reason to believe that I have been called according to His purpose? Have I been born again from above? Has the Spirit operated in my heart in a manner to which flesh and blood never can attain? Have I passed from death unto life by the quickening agency of the Holy Spirit? If I have, then God purposed that I should do so and the whole of this great Promise is mine.

II. We shall take the words one by one and try to explain them.

1. Let us begin with the word "work." "We know that all things *work*." Look around, above, beneath and all things *work*. They work *in opposition to idleness*. The idle man that folds his arms or lies upon the bed of sloth is an exception to God's rule. For except himself all things work. There is not a star though it seems to sleep in the deep blue firmament which does not travel its myriads of miles and work. There is not an ocean, or a river, which is not ever working, either clapping its thousand hands with storms, or bearing on its bosom the freight of nations.

There is not a silent nook within the deepest forest glade where work is not going on. Nothing is idle. The world is a great machine but it is never standing still—silently all through the watches of the night and through the hours of day the earth revolves on its axis and works out its predestinated course. Silently the forest grows, soon it is felled. But all the while between its growing and felling it is at work. Everywhere the earth works. Mountains work—nature in its inmost heart is at work. Even the center of the great heart of the world is ever beating. Sometimes we discover its working in the volcano and the earthquake but, when most still, all things are working.

They are ever working too, *in opposition to the word play*. Not only are they ceaselessly active but they are active for a purpose. We are apt to think that the motion of the world and the different evolutions of the stars are but like the turning round of a child's windmill. They produce nothing. That old preacher Solomon once said as much as that. He said—"The sun also rises and the sun goes down and hastens to his place where he arose. The wind goes toward the south and turns about unto the north. It whirls about continually and the wind returns again according to his circuits." But Solomon did not add that things are not what they seem.

The world is not at play. It has an object in its wildest movement. Avalanche, hurricane, earthquake are but order in an unusual form. Destruction and death are but progress in veiled attire. Everything that is and is done works out some great end and purpose. The great machine of this world is not only in motion but there is something weaving in it which as yet mortal eye has not fully seen—which our text hints at when it says it is working out good for God's people.

And once again—all things work *in opposition to Sabbath*. We morally speak of work, especially on this day, as being the opposite of sacred rest and worship. Now, at the present moment all things work. Since the day when Adam fell all things have had to toil and labor. Before Adam's Fall the world kept high and perpetual holiday. But now the world has come to its workdays, now it has to toil. When Adam was in the garden the world had its Sabbath—and it shall never have another Sabbath till the Millennium shall dawn and then when all things have ceased to work and the

kingdoms shall be given up to God, even the Father. Then shall the world have her Sabbath and shall rest. But at present all things do work.

Dear Brethren, let us not wonder if we have to work, too. If we have to toil let us remember—this is the world's week of toil. The 6,000 years of continual labor and toil and travail have happened not to us alone but to the whole of God's great universe. The whole world is groaning and travailing. Let us not be backward in doing our work. If all things are working, let us work, too—"work while it is called today, for the night comes when no man can work."

And let the idle and slothful remember that they are a great anomaly. They are blots in the great work of God. They mean nothing. In all the book of letters with which God has written out the great word "work," they are nothing at all. But let the man that works, though it be with the sweat of his brow and with aching hands remember that he, if he is seeking to bless the Lord's people, is in sympathy with all things—not only in sympathy with their work but in sympathy with their aim.

2. Now, the next word, "All things work *together*." That is *in opposition to their apparent confliction*. Looking upon the world with the mere eye of sense and reason, we say, "Yes, all things work but they work contrary to one another. There are opposite currents. The wind blows to the north and to the south. The world's boat, it is true, is always tossed with waves but these waves toss her first to the right and then to the left. They do not steadily bear her onward to her desired haven. It is true the world is always active but it is with the activity of the battlefield, wherein hosts encounter hosts and the weaker are overcome."

Be not deceived. It is not so—things are not what they seem—"all things work *together*." There is no opposition in God's Providence. The raven wing of war is co-worker with the dove of peace. The tempest strives not with the peaceful calm—they are linked together and work together although they seem to be in opposition. Look at our history. How many an event has seemed to be conflicting in its day that has worked out good for us? The strifes of barons and kings for mastery might have been thought to be likely to tread out the last spark of British liberty. But they did rather kindle the pile. The various rebellions of nations, the heaving of society, the strife of anarchy, the tumults of war—all, all these things—overruled by God, have but made the chariot of the Church progress more mightily.

They have not failed of their predestinated purpose—"good for the people of God." I know, my Brethren, it is very hard for you to believe this. "What?" you say, "I have been sick for many a day and wife and children, dependent on my daily labor, are crying for food—will this work together for my good?" So says the Word, my Brother, and so shall you find it before long. "I have been in trade," says another, "and this commercial pressure has brought me exceedingly low and distressed me—is it for my

good?" My Brother, you are a Christian. I know you do not seriously ask the question—for you know the answer.

He who said, "all things work together," will soon prove to you that there is a harmony in the most discordant parts of your life. You shall find, when your biography is written, that the darkest page did but harmonize with the bright one—that the dark and cloudy day was but a glorious foil to set forth the brighter noontide of your joy. "All things work together." There is never a clash in the world—men think so—but it never is so. The charioteers of the Roman circus might with much cleverness and art, with glowing wheels—avoid each other. But God, with skill infinitely consummate, guides the fiery coursers of man's passion, yokes the storm, bits the tempest and keeping each clear of the other from seeming evil still educes good and better still. And better still in infinite progression.

We must understand the word "together," in another sense. "All things work *together* for good"—that is to say, *none of them work separately*. I remember an old Divine using a very pithy and homely metaphor which I shall borrow today. Said he, "All things work *together* for good. But perhaps, anyone of those 'all things' might destroy us if taken alone. The physician," says he, "prescribes medicine. You go to the chemist and he makes it up. There is something taken from this drawer, something from that vial, something from that shelf—any one of those ingredients, it is very possible, would be a deadly poison and kill you outright if you should take it separately.

"But he puts one into the mortar and then another and then another and he works them all up with his pestle and makes a compound. He gives them all to you as a whole and together they work for your good. But any one of the ingredients might either have operated fatally, or in a manner detrimental to your health." Learn, then, that it is wrong to ask, concerning any particular act of Providence, "is this for my good?" Remember, it is not the one thing alone that is for your good—it is the one thing put with another thing and that with a third and that with a fourth and all these mixed together that work for your good.

Your being sick very probably might not be for your good only. God has something to follow your sickness—some blessed deliverance to follow your poverty and He knows that when He has mixed the different experiences of your life together they shall produce good for your soul and eternal good for your spirit. We know right well that there are many things that happen to us in our lives that would be the ruin of us if we were always to continue in the same condition. Too much joy would intoxicate us, too much misery would drive us to despair—but the joy and the misery, the battle and the victory, the storm and the calm—all these compounded make that sacred elixir whereby God makes all His people per-

fect through suffering and leads them to ultimate happiness. "All things work *together* for good."

3. Now we must take the next words. "All things work together *for good.*" Upon these two words the meaning of my text will hinge. There are different senses to the word "good." There is *the worldling's sense*—"Who will show us any good?"—by which he means *transient good*, the good of the moment. "Who will put honey into my mouth? Who will feed my belly with hidden treasures? Who will garnish my back with purple and make my table groan with plenty?" That is "good"—the vat bursting with wine, the barn full of corn! Now God has never promised that "all things shall work together" for such good as that to His people. Very likely all things will work together in a contrary way to that.

Expect not, O Christian, that all things will work together to make you rich. It is just possible they may all work to make you poor. It may be that all the different Providences that shall happen to you will come wave upon wave, washing your fortune upon the rocks till it shall be wrecked. And then waves shall break over you till in that poor boat the humble remnant of your fortune, you shall be out on the wide sea with none to help you but God the Omnipotent.

The Christian understands the word "good" in another sense. By "good," he understands *spiritual good*. "Ah," says he, "I do not call gold good but I call faith good! I do not think it always for my good to increase in treasure but I know it is good to grow in grace. I do not know that it is for my good that I should be respectable and walk in good society. But I know that it is for my good that I should walk humbly with my God. I do not know that it is for my good that my children should be about me, like olive branches round my table—but I know that it is for my good that I should flourish in the courts of my God and that I should be the means of winning souls from going down into the pit.

"I am not certain that it is altogether for my good to have kind and generous friends with whom I may hold fellowship. But I know that it is for my good that I should hold fellowship with Christ, that I should have communion with Him, even though it should be in His sufferings. I know it is good for me that my faith, my love, my every grace should grow and increase and that I should be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ my blessed Lord and Master." Well, Christian, you have got upon the meaning of the text, then. "All things work together," for *that kind* of good to God's people.

"Well!" says one, "I don't think anything of that, then." No, perhaps you do not. It is not very likely swine should ever lift their heads from their troughs to think anything of stars. I do not much wonder that you should despise spiritual good, for you are yet "in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity." You are a stranger to spiritual things and let your des-

prising of spiritual things teach you that you are not spiritual and therefore you can not understand the spiritual—because it must be spiritually discerned.

To the Christian, however, the highest good he can receive on earth is to grow in grace. “There!” he says, “I had rather be a bankrupt in business than I would be a bankrupt in grace. Let my fortune be decreased—better that than that I should backslide. Let Your waves and Your billows roll over me—better an ocean of trouble than a drop of sin. I would rather have Your rod a thousand times upon my shoulders, O my God, than I would once put out my hand to touch that which is forbidden, or allow my foot to run in the way of gainsayers.”

The highest good a Christian has here is spiritual good. And we may add, the text also means *good eternal*, lasting good. All things work together for a Christian's lasting good. They all work to bring him to Paradise—all work to bring him to the Savior's feet. “So He brings them to their desired haven,” said the Psalmist—by storm and tempest, flood and hurricane. All the troubles of a Christian do but wash him nearer to Heaven. The rough winds do but hurry his passage across the straits of this life to the port of Eternal Peace. All things work together for the Christian's eternal and spiritual good.

And yet I must say here, that sometimes all things work together for the Christian's *temporal good*. You know the story of old Jacob. “Joseph is not, Simeon is not and now you will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me,” said the old Patriarch. But if he could have read God's secrets, he might have found that Simeon was not lost, for he was retained as a hostage—that Joseph was not lost but gone before to smooth the passage of his gray hairs into the grave. And that even Benjamin was to be taken away by Joseph in love to his brother. So that what *seemed* to be against him, even in temporal matters, was for him.

You may have heard also the story of that eminent martyr who was likely always to say, “all things work together for good.” When he was seized by the officers of Queen Mary to be taken to the stake to be burned, he was treated so roughly on the road that he broke his leg. And they jeeringly said, “All things work together for good, do they? How will your broken leg work for your good?” “I don't know how it will,” said he, “but for my good I know it will work and you shall see it so.”

By God's grace it proved true that it was for his temporal good. For being delayed a day or so on the road through his lameness, he arrived in London in time enough to hear that Elizabeth was proclaimed queen and so he escaped the stake by his broken leg. He turned round upon the men who carried him, as they thought, to his death and said to them, “Now will you believe that all things work together for good?” So that though I said the drift of the text was spiritual good, yet sometimes in the main current

there may be carried some rich and rare temporal benefits for God's children as well as the richer spiritual blessings.

4. I am treating the text as you see, verbally. And now I must return to the word "work"—to notice the tense of it. "All things *work* together for good." It does not say that they *shall* work, or that they *have* worked—both of these are implied—but it says that they do work *now*. All things at this present moment are working together for the Believer's good. I find it extremely easy to believe that all things *have* worked together for my good. I can look back at the past and wonder at all the ways whereby the Lord has led me. If ever there lived a man who has reason to be grateful to Almighty God I think I am that man.

I can see black storms that have lowered over my head and torrents of opposition that have run across my path but I can thank God for every incident that ever occurred to me from my cradle up to now. And I do not desire a better Pilot for the rest of my days than He who has steered me from obscurity and scorn, to this place to preach His Word and feed this great congregation. And I doubt not that each of you, in looking back upon your past experience as Christians, could say very much the same. You have passed through many troubles but you can say they have all been for your good. And somehow or other you have an equal faith for the future. You believe that all things *will* in the end work for your good.

The pinch of faith always lies in the *present tense*. I can always believe the past and always believe the future—but the present, the present, the present—that is what staggers faith. Now please notice that my text is in the present tense. "All things *work*"—at this very instant and second of time. However troubled, downcast, depressed and despairing the Christian may be, all things are working *now* for his good. And though like Jonah he is brought to the bottom of the mountains. And he thinks the earth with her bars is about him forever. And the weeds of despair are wrapped about his head—even in the uttermost depths all things are *now* working for his good.

Here, I say again, is the pinch of faith. As an old countryman once said to me, from whom I gained many a pithy saying—"Ah, Sir, I could always do wonders when there were no wonders to do. I feel, Sir, that I could believe God. But then at the time I feel so there is not much to believe." And he just paraphrased it in his own dialect like this—"My arm is always strong and my sickle always sharp when there is no harvest. And I think I could mow many an acre when there is no grass. But when the harvest is on I am weak and when the grass grows then my scythe is blunt."

Have not you found it so, too? You think you can do wondrous things. You say—

***"Should earth against my soul engage,
And hellish darts be hurled,***

***Now I can smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning world."***

And now a little capful of wind blows on you and the tears run down your cheeks and you say, "Lord, let me die. I am no better than my fathers." You that were going to thrash mountains find that molehills cast you down.

It behooves each of us, then, to comfort and establish our hearts upon this word "work." "All things work." Merchant, though you have been sore pressed this week and it is highly probable that next week will be worse still for you—believe that all things even then are working for your good. It will cost you many a pang to keep that confidence. But oh, for your Master's honor and for your own comfort retain that consolation! Should your house of business threaten to tumble about your ears—so long as you have acted honorably—still bear your Cross. It shall work—it is working for your good.

This week, mother, you may see your firstborn carried to the tomb. That bereavement is working for your good. O Man, within a few days, he that has eaten bread with you may lift up his heel against you. It shall work for your good. O you that are high in spirits today, you with the flashing eye and joyous countenance—before the sun does set some evil shall befall you and you shall be sad. Believe then that all things work together for your good—if you love God and are called according to His purpose.

5. And now we close by noticing the *confidence* with which the Apostle speaks. "A fiction!" says one. "A pleasant fiction, Sir!" "Sentimentalism!" says another, "a mere poetic sentimentalism." "Ah," cries a third, "a downright lie." "No," says another, "there is some truth in it, certainly. Men do get bettered by their afflictions but it is a truth that is not valuable to me, for I do not realize the good that these things bring." Gentlemen, the Apostle Paul was well aware of your objections. And therefore mark how confidently he asserts the doctrine. He does not say, "I am persuaded." He does not say, "I believe."

But with unblushing confidence he appears before you and says, "We" (I have many witnesses)—*we know* that all things work together." What, Paul, are you saying? So strange and startling a doctrine as this asserted with such dogmatic impudence? What can you be saying? Hear his reply! "We know. In the mouth of two or three witnesses it shall all be established. But I have tens of thousands of witnesses." "We know," and the Apostle lifts his hand to where the white-robed hosts are praising God forever—"These," says he, "passed through great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—ask them!"

And with united breath they reply, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David,

Daniel—all the mighty ones that have gone before us—tell the tale of their history. They write their autobiography and they say, “We!” It is proven to a demonstration in our own lives. It is a fact which runs like a golden clue through all the labyrinth of our history—“All things work together for good to them that love God.” “We,” says the Apostle again—and he puts his hand upon his poor distressed Brethren—he looks at his companions in the prison house at Rome. He looks at that humble band of teachers in Rome, in Philippi, in all the different parts of Asia and he says, “We!” “We *know* it. It is not with us a matter of doubt. We have tried it, we have proved it. Not only does faith believe it but our own history convinces us of the truth of it.”

I might appeal to scores and hundreds here and I might say, Brethren, you with gray heads, rise up and speak. Is this true or not? I see the reverend man rise, leaning on his staff and with the tears flooding his old cheeks, he says, “Young man it is true. I have proved it. Even down to gray hairs I have proved it. He made and He will carry. He will not desert His own!” Veteran! You have had many troubles, have you not? He replies, “Youth! Troubles? I have had many troubles that you reckon not of. I have buried all my kindred and I am like the last oak of the forest—all my friends have been felled by death long ago. Yet I have been upheld till now—who could hold me up but my God?”

Ask him whether God has been once untrue to him and he will say, “No. Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised. All has come to pass!” Brethren, we can confidently say, then, hearing such a testimony as that, “We *know* that all things work.” Besides, there are you of middle age and even those of us who are young—the winter has not spared our branches, nor the lightning ceased to scathe our trunk. Yet here we stand—preserved by conquering grace. Hallelujah to the grace that makes all things work together for good!

O my Hearer, are you a Believer in Christ? If not, I beseech you, stop and consider! Pause and think of your state. And if you know your own sinfulness this day, believe on Christ who came to save sinners, and that done, all things shall work for you—the tumbling avalanche, the rumbling earthquake, the tottering pillars of Heaven—all, when they fall or shake, shall not hurt you, they shall still work out your good.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized and you shall be saved,” for so runs the Gospel. The Lord bless you! Amen.

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

***“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.”
Romans 8:29.***

You will have noticed that in this chapter Paul has been expounding a very deep inward *spiritual* experience. He has written concerning the spirit of bondage and the spirit of adoption, the infirmities of the flesh and the help of the Holy Spirit. He writes of the waiting for the redemption of the body and the groans which cannot be uttered. It was most natural, therefore, that a deep spiritual experience should bring him to a clear perception of the Doctrines of Grace, for such an experience is a school in which alone those great Truths of God are effectually learned. A lack of depth in the inner life accounts for most of the doctrinal error in the Church.

Sound conviction of sin, deep humiliation on account of it and a sense of utter weakness and unworthiness naturally conduct the mind to the belief of the Doctrines of Grace while shallowness in these matters leaves a man content with a superficial creed. Those teachings which are commonly called Calvinistic doctrines are usually most beloved and best received by those who have had much conflict of soul and so have learned the strength of corruption and the necessity of Grace.

Note, also, that Paul in this chapter has been treating of the sufferings of this present time—and though by faith he speaks of them as very inconsiderable compared with the Glory to be revealed—yet we know that they were not inconsiderable in his case. He was a man of many trials. He went from one tribulation to another for Christ's sake. He swam through many seas of affliction to serve the Church. I do not wonder, therefore, that in his Epistles he often discourses upon the doctrines of foreknowledge and predestination, and eternal love because these are a rich cordial for a fainting spirit. To be cheered under many things which otherwise would depress him, the Believer may betake himself to the matchless mysteries of the Grace of God which are wines on the lees well refined!

Sustained by distinguishing Grace a man learns to glory in tribulations, and strengthened by electing love, he defies the hatred of the world and the trials of life. Suffering is the college of orthodoxy. Many a Jonah who now rejects the doctrines of the Grace of God only needs to be put into the whale's belly and he will cry out with the soundest free Grace advocate—“Salvation is of the Lord.” Prosperous professors who do no business amid David's billows and waterspouts may set small store by the blessed

anchorage of eternal purpose and everlasting love but those who are “tossed with tempest, and not comforted, are of another mind.”

Let these few sentences suffice for a preface. I utter them not in the spirit of controversy, but the reverse. Our text begins by the expression, “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate,” and many senses have been given to this word, “foreknow,” though in this case one commends itself beyond every other. Some have thought that it simply means that God predestinated men whose future history He did foreknow. The text before us cannot be so understood because the Lord foreknows the history of every man, and angel, and devil. So far as mere prescience goes, every man is foreknown and yet no one will assert that all men are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus.

But it is further asserted that the Lord foreknew who would exercise repentance, who would believe in Jesus, and who would persevere in a consistent life to the end. This is readily granted, but a reader must wear very powerful magnifying spectacles before he will be able to discover that sense in the text! Upon looking carefully at my Bible, again, I do not perceive such a statement. Where are those words which you have added, “Whom He did foreknow *to repent, to believe, and to persevere in Grace?*” I do not find them either in the English version or in the Greek original. If I could so read them, the passage would certainly be very easy and would very greatly alter my doctrinal views! But, as I do not find those words there, begging your pardon, I do not believe in them.

However wise and advisable a human interpolation may be, it has no authority with us—we bow to holy Scripture, not to glosses which theologians may choose to put upon it. No hint is given in the text of foreseen virtue any more than of foreseen sin, and, therefore, we are driven to find another meaning for the word. We find that the word “know” is frequently used in Scripture, not only for knowledge but also for favor, love, and complacency. Our Lord Jesus Christ will say, in the judgment, concerning certain persons, “I never *knew* you,” yet in a sense He knew them, for He knows every man! He knows the wicked as well as the righteous. But there the meaning is, “I never knew you in such a respect as to feel any complacency in you or any favor towards you.”

See also John 10:14, 15, and 2 Timothy 2:19. In Romans 11:2, we read, “God has not cast away His people which He foreknew,” where the sense evidently has the idea of fore-love, and it is so to be understood here. Those whom the Lord looked upon with favor as He foresaw them, He has predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. They are, as Paul puts it in his letter to the Ephesians, “predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His will.”

I am anxious not to tarry over controverted matters, but to reach the subject of my sermon this morning. Here we have in the text conformity to Christ spoken of as the aim of predestination. We have, secondly, predestination as the impelling force by which this conformity is to be achieved. And we have, thirdly, the first-born Himself set before us as the ultimate end of the predestinations and of the conformity—“that HE might be the first-born among many brethren.”

I. Mark then, with care, that OUR CONFORMITY TO CHRIST IS THE SACRED OBJECT OF PREDESTINATION. Into predestination itself I will not now pry. The deeper things shall be left with God. I think it was Bishop Hall who once said, "I thank God I am not of His counsels, but I am of His court." If I cannot understand, I will not question, for I am not His Counselor—but I will adore and obey—for I am, by His Grace, His servant.

Now today, seeing we are here taught the object of His predestination, it will be our business to labor after it—to bless God that He has set such an object before Him—and pray that *we* may be partakers in it. Here stands the case. Man was originally made in the image of God, but by sin he has defaced that image and now we who are born into this world are fashioned, not in the heavenly image of God, but in the earthy image of the fallen Adam. "We have borne," says the Apostle, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, "the image of the earthy."

The Lord, in boundless Grace, has resolved that a company whom no man can number, called here, "many brethren," shall be restored to His image in the particular form in which His Eternal Son displays it. To this end Jesus Christ came into the world and bore *our* image, that we, through His Grace, might bear *His* image. He became a partaker of our infirmities and sicknesses that we might be partakers of the Divine Nature in all its excellence and purity. Therefore, the one thing to which the Lord is working us through His Spirit, both by Providence and by Grace, is the likeness of the Lord from Heaven. He is evermore transforming the chosen—removing that defilement of sin and molding them after the perfect model of His Son, Jesus Christ—the second Adam, who is the first-born among the "many brethren."

Now, observe that this conformity to Christ lies in several things. First, we are to be conformed to Him as to our nature. What was the Nature of Christ, then, as Divine? We must not pry into it, but we know that He was verily of the Nature of God. "Begotten, not made," says the Athanasian Creed, and it says truly, too, "being of one substance with the Father." Now, we also, though we at our conversion are new creatures, are also said to be, "begotten again into a lively hope." To be begotten is something more than to be made—this is a more personal work of God—and that which is begotten is in closer affinity to Himself than that which is only created. As Christ was, as the Only-Begotten of the Father, far above mere creatures, so also to be begotten of God, in *our* case, means far more than even the *first* and perfect creation could imply.

As to His Humanity our blessed Lord, when He came into this world, underwent a birth which was a remarkable type of our second birth. He was born into this world in a very humble place, amidst the oxen and in the manger. But He lacked not the songs of angels, and the adoration of the heavenly hosts! Even so, we, also, were born of the Spirit without human observation—men of this world saw no Glory whatever in our regeneration for it was not performed by mystic rites, or with sacerdotal pomp. The Spirit of God found us in our low estate and quickened us without outward display. Yet at that same moment, where human eyes

saw nothing, seraphic eyes beheld marvels of Grace—and angels in Heaven rejoiced over one sinner that repented, singing once again—“glory to God in the highest!”

When our Lord was born, a few choice spirits welcomed His birth. An Anna and a Simeon were ready to take the new-born Child into their arms and bless God for Him. And even so there were some that hailed *our* new birth with much thanksgiving. Friends and well-wishers who had watched for our salvation were glad when they beheld in us the true heavenly life, and gladly did they take us up into the arms of Christian nurture! Perhaps, also, there was one who had travailed in birth till Christ was formed in us the hope of glory, and how happy was that spirit to see us born unto God! How did our spiritual parent ponder each gracious word which we uttered and thank God for the good signs of Grace which could be found in our conversation!

Then, too, a worse than Herod sought to kill us. Satan was eager that the new-born child of Grace should be put to death, and therefore sent forth fierce temptations to slay us. But the Lord found a shelter for our infant spiritual life and preserved the young child alive. In us the living and incorruptible Seed abode and grew. As many of you as have been born-again have been conformed to the image of Christ in the matter of His birth, and you are now partakers of His Nature. It is not possible for us to be Divine, yet it is written that we are made “partakers of the Divine Nature.” We cannot be precisely as God is, yet as we have borne the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, whatever that image may be.

The new birth as surely stands us with the image of Christ as our first birth impressed us with a resemblance to the fathers of our flesh. Our first birth gave us humanity—our second birth allies us with Deity. As we were conceived in sin at the first, and shaped in iniquity, even so, in regeneration our new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. He that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one—for which cause He is not ashamed to call them Brethren. Furthermore, this conformity to Christ lies in *relationship* as well as in nature. Our Lord is the Son of the Highest—the Son of God! And truly, Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is.

Jehovah has declared that He will be a Father to us and that we shall be His sons and His daughters. As surely as Jesus is a Son, so surely are we, for the same Spirit bears witness to both, as it is written, “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” When Jesus came into the world as God’s Son, He was not left without attesting proofs. His first public appearance, when He came to the waters of Baptism, was signaled by a Voice out of the excellent Glory which said, “this is My beloved Son,” and the descending Spirit, like a dove, rested upon Him.

So is it also with us. The voice of God in the Word has testified to us our Heavenly Father’s love, and the Holy Spirit has borne witness with our

spirits that we are the children of God. When first we dared to come forward and say, “we are on the Lord’s side,” some of us had sacred tokens of sonship which have never been forgotten by us. And oftentimes, since then, we have received renewed seals of our adoption from the Great Father of our spirits. “He that believes on the Son has the Witness in himself,” so that he can, with his brethren, say plainly, “we know that we have passed from death unto life.”

God has given us full assurance, and infallible testimony, and in all this we rejoice. We have believed in Jesus, and it is written, “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on His name.” Our Lord was declared to be the Son of God by the actions which He performed, both towards God and towards man. As a Son He served His Father—you could see the Nature of God in Him—in His deep sympathy with God and in His exact imitation of God. Whatever God would have done under the circumstances, Jesus did. You perceive at once, by His deeds, that His Nature was Godlike. His works bore witness of Him. It was evermore most clear that He acted towards God as a son towards a father.

Now in proportion as God’s determination has been carried out in us, we also act to God as children towards a loving father. And whereas the children of darkness speak of their own, and like their father, who is a liar, speak the lie—and like their father, who is a murderer, act out wrath and bitterness—even so the children of God speak the truth, for God is true. And they are full of love, for God is love. And their life is light, for their God is light. They feel that they must act, under the circumstances in which they are placed, as they would suppose Jesus would have acted, who is the Son of the ever-blessed Father.

Moreover, Christ worked miracles of mercy towards men which proved Him to be the Son of God. It is true we can work no miracles, yet we can do works which mark God’s children. We cannot break the bread and multiply it. We can, however, generously distribute what we have and thus, in feeding the hungry, we shall prove ourselves children of our Father who is in Heaven. We cannot heal the diseased with our touch, still we can care for the sick and so in love towards the suffering we can prove ourselves to be children of the tender and ever-pitiful God. But our Lord has told us that greater works than His own shall we do because He is gone to His Father—and these greater works we do.

We can work *spiritual* miracles. Today, can we not stand at the grave of the dead sinner, and say, “Lazarus, come forth?” And has not God often made the dead to rise at our word, by the power of His Spirit? Today, also, we can preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, casting it about us as it were our garment, and he that touches the hem thereof, shall he not also be made whole today, even as when Jesus was among men? This day, if we do not break fish and barley loaves, we bring you better food! This day, if we cannot give to men opened eyes and unstopped ears, yet in the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus, by the power of the Spirit, the mental eye is cleansed and the soul’s ear also is purged—so that in every child of God, in proportion as he labors in the power of the Spirit for Christ—the

works which he does bear witness of him that he is a son of God! His zeal in doing them proves that he has the spirit of a child of God. And the result of those works proves that God works in him as He will never do in any but His own children. Thus, in relationship, as well as in nature, we are conformed to the image of Christ!

Thirdly, we are to be conformed to the image of Christ in our experience. This is the part of the subject from which our cowardly spirit often shrinks, but if we were wise it would not be so. What was the experience of Christ in this world? That ours will be! We may sum it up as referring to God, to men, to the devil, and to all evil. His experience with regard to God, what was that? "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." Though without sin, He was not without suffering. The first-born of the Divine family was more sorely chastened than any other of the household. He was smitten of God and afflicted till, as the climax of all, He cried Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?

Oh, the bitterness of that cry—"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" It was the Father bruising the First-Born Son! And, if you and I, Brothers and Sisters, are to be conformed to the image of the first-born, though we may expect from God much fatherly love, we may also reckon that it will show itself in parental discipline. If you are without chastisement, where all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons! But, if you are true sons, like to the First-Born, the rod will make you smart and sometimes you will have to say, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chastens not?" If we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, the Lord has predestinated us to much tribulation, and through it shall we inherit the kingdom!

Next survey our dear Covenant Head in His experience in relation to men. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." "He was despised and rejected of men." He said, "Reproach has broken My heart, and I am full of heaviness." Now, Brethren, in the very proportion in which we are conformed to the image of Christ we shall have to "go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." The disciple, if he is a true disciple, is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, much more will they call them of His household by some yet more opprobrious title if they can invent it. The saints of God must not expect crowns where Christ found a Cross! They must not reckon to ride in triumph through those streets which saw the Savior hurried to a malefactor's death. We must suffer with Him if we would be glorified with Him. Fellowship in His sufferings is necessary to communion with His Glory.

Then, consider our Lord's experience with regard to the prince of the power of the air. Satan was no friend to Christ, but finding Him in the desert he came to Him with this accursed "if"—"If you are the Son of God." With that attack upon His Sonship the fiend commenced the battle. "If you are the Son of God." You know how thrice he assailed Him with those

temptations which are most likely to be attractive to poor humanity, but Jesus overcame them all. The arch enemy, the old dragon, was always nibbling at the heel of our great Michael, who has forever crushed his head. We are predestinated to be conformed to Christ in that respect—the serpent's subtlety and cruelty will assail us, also—a tempted head involves tempted members.

Satan desires to have us and to sift us as wheat. He attacked the Shepherd and he will never cease to worry the sheep. Inasmuch as we are of the seed of the woman, there must be enmity between us and the seed of the serpent. And, as to all evil, our Lord's entire life was one perpetual battle. He was fighting evil in the high places and evil in the low—evil among the priests and evil among the people—evil in a religious dress, in Phariseeism and evil in the dress of philosophy among the Sadducees. He fought it everywhere—He was the foe of everything that was wrong, false, selfish, unholy or impure. And you and I must be conformed to Christ in this respect. We are to be holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. You are of God, little children, and the whole world lies in the Wicked One. We are chosen out of the world to be a peculiar people, adversaries to all evil, never sheathing our sword till we enter into our rest. We are to be like He, then, in nature, in relation, in experience.

Fourthly. We are to be conformed to Christ Jesus as to His Character. Time and ability alike fail us to speak of this. I only pray that God's Spirit may make our *lives* to speak of it. He was consecrated to God—so are we to be. The zeal of God's House ate Him up—so should it consume us, also. He went about His Father's business—so should we ever be occupied. Towards man He was all love—it becomes us to be the same. He was gentle and kind and tender—as He was, so are we to be in this world. He did not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax—neither should we. Yet was He stern in the denunciation of all evil—so should we be. Purity, holiness, unselfishness—all the virtues should glow in us as they shone in Him. Ah, and blessed be God they will, too, by the work of the Spirit!

Our text speaks not only of what we ought to be, but of what we *shall* be, for we are *predestinated* to be conformed to the image of God's Son! My Brothers and Sisters, what a glorious Model! Behold it! Wonder at it! And bless God for it! You are not to be conformed to the mightiest of the Apostles—you will one day be purer than were Paul or John while here below! You are not to be conformed to the most sublime of the Prophets—you shall be like the Prophets' Master! You are not to be content with your own conception of that which is beautiful and lovely—God's perfect conception Incarnated in His own Son is that to which you shall certainly be brought by the predestination of God!

Just a sentence upon another point. We are to be conformed to the image of His Son, fifthly, as to our inheritance, for He is Heir of all things, and what less are we heirs of, since all things are ours? He is Heir of this world. "You made Him to have dominion over all the works of Your hands: You have put all things under His feet, all sheep and oxen, yes, and the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the

paths of the sea.” We see not, yet, all things put under man, but we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with Glory and honor! And in the Person of Christ Jesus this day, we, the men who are made in His image, have dominion over all things, being all made kings and priests unto God—and in Christ Jesus ordained to reign with Him forever and ever! “If children then heirs,” says the Apostle. Therefore, whatever Christ has we have, and though we may be very poor and unknown, yet whatever belongs to Christ belongs to us. “The good of all the land of Egypt is yours,” said Joseph to his brothers. And Jesus says this to all His people, “All are yours, for you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

I must close this point—time goes much too swiftly this morning when descanting upon this delightful theme—by observing that we are to be conformed to Christ in His Glory. We will think of our bodies, for that is a point surrounded with consolation, since He shall change our vile body and make it like unto His glorious body! We are like Adam, now, in weakness and pain, and we shall soon be like he in death—returning to the ground where we were taken. But we shall rise again to a better life! And then shall we wear in Glory and incorruption the image of the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven!

Conceive the beauties of the risen Redeemer! Let your faith and your imagination work together to portray the unutterable glories of Immanuel, God With Us, as He sits at the right hand of the Father! Such and so bright shall our glories be in the day of the redemption of the body! We shall behold His Glory! We shall be with Him where He is, and we shall be, ourselves, glorious in His Glory! Is He exalted? You also shall be lifted up! Is He King? You shall not be uncrowned! Is He a victor? You also shall bear a palm! Is He full of joy and rejoicing? So, also, shall your soul be filled to the brim with delights! Where He is, every saint shall be before long!

Thus much upon the sacred end of predestination.

II. Now, observe that PREDESTINATION IS THE IMPELLING FORCE TOWARDS THIS CONFORMITY. This Truth of God divides itself thus—It is the will of God that conforms us to Christ’s image rather than our own will. It is our will now, but it was God’s will when it was not our will, and it only became according to our will when we were converted, because God’s Grace had made us willing in the day of its power. We cannot be made like Christ unwillingly—a consenting will is essential to the likeness of Christ! Unwilling obedience would be disobedience.

Naturally we never will towards good without God, but God works in us to will and to do. God treats us as men responsible and intelligent, and not as stone or metal. He made us free agents and He treats us as such. We are willing now to be conformed to the image of Jesus. Yes, we are *more* than willing—we are anxious and desirous for it! But still the main and first motive power lay not in our will, but in His will, and today the Immutable force which is best to be depended upon does not lie in our fickle, feeble will—but in the unchanging and Omnipotent will of God. The force that is conforming us to Christ is the will of God in predestination!

And so, too, it is rather God's work than our work. We are to work *with* God in the matter of our becoming like Christ. We are not to be passive like wood or marble—we are to be prayerful, watchful, fervent, diligent, obedient, earnest and believing—but still the work is God's. Sanctification is the Lord's work in us. "You have worked all our works in us." From the first, and now, and to the last, "He that has worked us to the same thing is God, who also has given to us the earnest of the Spirit." There is no holiness in us of our own creating. There is no good thing in us of our own fashioning. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be praise."

Still, true as it is that we are free agents, yet the Lord is the Potter and we are the clay upon the wheel, and it is His work, and not ours, that makes us like Christ. If there is a touch of our finger anywhere upon the vessel, it mars and does not beautify. It is only where God's hand has been that the vessel begins to assume the form of the Model. Therefore, Beloved, all the Glory must be unto God and not to us. It is a great honor to any man to be like Christ—God does not intend that His children should have no honor, for He puts honor upon His own people. But, the true Glory lies with Him, since He has made us and not we ourselves. Cannot we say, this morning, with thankful hearts, "By the Grace of God I am what I am?" And do we not feel that we shall lay all our honors, whatever they may be, at His dear feet who has, according to His abundant mercy, predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son?

III. Now I must come to the third point with brevity. It sweetly appears that the **ULTIMATE END OF ALL THIS IS CHRIST**. "Predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that HE"—"that HE"—God is always driving at something for Him, His well-beloved Son. He aims at His own Glory in the Glory of His dear Son. If He blesses us, the text of last Sunday [Sermon #1041, *Mercy's Master Motive*] is still true, "not for Your sakes do I this." It is for the sake of a higher, a better One than we are—it is "that He might be the first-born."

Now, if I understand the passage before us, it means this. First, God predestinates us to be like Jesus that His dear Son might be the first of a new order of beings elevated above all other creatures, and nearer to God than any other existences. He was Lord of angels, seraphim and cherubim who obeyed His behests. But the Son desired to be at the head of a race of beings more nearly allied to Him than any existing spirits. There was no kinship between the Lord Jesus and angels, for to which of the angels had the Father said at any time, "You are My Son?" They are, by nature, servants, and He is the Son—this is a wide distinction. The Eternal Son desired association with beings who should be sons as He was, towards whom He could stand in a close relationship as being like to them in nature and Sonship.

And the Father, therefore, ordained that a seed whom He has chosen should be conformed to the image of the Son, that His Son might head up and be chief among an order of beings more nearly akin to God than any other. The serpent said to Eve, "God knows that you shall be as gods,

knowing good and evil.” That lie had in it a residuum of truth, for by Sovereign Grace we have become such. There were no obedient creatures in the world of that sort, knowing good and evil, in the days of Eden’s glory. The angels in Heaven had known good, and only good—and preserved by Grace had not fallen. The evil spirit had fallen, and he knew evil, but he had forgotten good and was incapable of ever choosing it again. He is now forever banished from hope of restoration.

But here are we who know both good and evil! We understand the one, and the other, too. And now there is begotten in us a nature which loves holiness and cannot sin because it is born of God—we are left free agents, yes—we are freer than ever we were. And yet in this life, and in the life to come, our path is like that of the just which shines more and more unto the perfect day! Angels know not evil. They have never had to battle with evil known and felt within. They have not tried the paths of sinful pleasure. And through Grace they are turned from them so as with full purpose of heart they cleave to holiness forever.

Jesus now heads a race assailed but victorious—sorely tempted, but enabled to overcome! Joyfully and cheerfully forever shall it be our delight to do the Father’s will. Forever with Christ at our head, we shall be the nearest to the Eternal Throne—the most attached of servants, because also sons—the most firmly adhesive to good, because we once knew the bitterness of evil! Even as Christ had to drink the cup of suffering for sin, we also have sipped of it. We have known horror caused by guilt and, therefore, for the future shall be throughout eternity a nobler race, freer to serve, and serving God after a nobler fashion than any other creatures in the universe! I take it that it is the meaning of the text that the Lord would have Christ to be the first of a nobler order of beings.

But, secondly, the object of Grace is that there may be some in Heaven with whom Christ can hold brotherly converse. Note the expression, “Many brethren”—not that He might be the first-born among many, but among “many brethren,” who should be like He. Our blessed Lord delights in fellowship—such is the greatness of His heart that He would not be alone in His Glory, but would have associates in His happiness. Now, I speak with bated breath. God can do all things, but I see not any way by which He could give to His only-begotten Son beings that should be akin to Himself except through the processes which we discover in the economy of Grace.

Here are beings that know evil, and know also good. Here are beings placed under infinite obligations by bonds of love and gratitude to choose forever the good. Here are beings with a nature so renewed that they always must be holy beings—and these beings can commune with the Incarnate God upon *suffering* as angels cannot. They can discuss upon the penalty of *guilt* as angels cannot—upon heart-throes, conflicts, reproaches and brokenness of spirit as angels cannot—and to them the Lord Jesus can reveal the glory of holiness, the bliss of conquering sin, and the sweetness of benevolence as only they can comprehend!

Renewed men are made fit companions for the Son of God! He shall feast all the more joyously because they shall eat bread with Him in His

kingdom! He shall be joyful when He declares the Lord's name unto His Brethren! He shall joy in their joy, and be glad in their gladness. No doubt, however, the text means that these will forever love and honor the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The children look up to the first-born. In the East the first-born is the lord and king of the household. We love Jesus now, and esteem Him our Head and Chief. How will we, when we once get to Heaven, love and adore Him as our dear Elder Brother with whom we shall be on terms of the closest familiarity and most reverent obedience! How joyfully will we serve Him! How rapturously adore Him! Shall we not need to have our voices made more loud till they become as thunder, or like many waters, or surely we shall not be able to praise Him as we would?

If there is work to do for Him in future ages we will be the first to volunteer for service. If there are battles to be fought in times to come with other rebellious races. If there is needed servants to fly over the vast realms of the infinite to carry Jehovah's messages—who shall fly so swiftly as we shall when once we feel that in His courts we shall dwell not as mere servants, but as members of the royal family, partakers of the Divine Nature, nearest to God Himself? What bliss to know that He, who is “very God of very God,” and sits on the Eternal Throne, is also of the same Nature with ourselves, our kinsman who is not ashamed, even amidst the royalties of Glory, to call us Brethren!

O Brethren, what honors are ours! What a heritage lies before us! Who among us would change with Gabriel? We shall have no need to envy angels, for what are they but ministering spirits, servants in our Father's halls? We are sons, and sons of no inferior order! No sons of a secondary rank like Abraham's children born of Keturah, or like the son of the bondwoman, but we are the Isaacs of God born according to the promise! We are heirs of all that He has, a seed beloved of the Lord forever! Oh, what joy ought to fill our spirits, this morning, at the prospect which this text reveals, and which predestination secures!

Perhaps our fullest thought upon the text is this. God was so well-pleased with His Son, and saw such beauties in Him that He determined to multiply His image. “My Beloved,” He said, “You shall be the Model by which I will fashion My noblest creatures. I will, for Your sake, make men able to converse with You, and bound to You by bands of love, shall be next akin to Myself, and in all things like You.” Behold, from Heaven's mint, golden pieces of inestimable value are sent forth, and each one bears the image and superscription of the Son of God! The face of Jesus is more lovely to God than all the worlds! His eyes are brighter than the stars! His voice is sweeter than bliss—therefore does the Father will to have His Son's beauty reflected in 10,000 mirrors in saints made like He, and His praises chanted by myriads of voices of those who love Him because His blood has saved them!

The Father knew how happy His Son would be to associate His chosen with Himself, for of old His delights were with the sons of men. As a shepherd loves his sheep, as a king loves his subjects, so Jesus loves to have His people around Him. But deeper, yet, is the mystery, as it is not

good for a man to be alone. And as for this cause does a man leave his father and mother and is joined unto his wife and they are one flesh—even so is it with Christ and His Church. He was made like her for her salvation, and now she is made like He for His honor. In what way could the Father put greater honor on His Son than by forming a race like unto Himself who shall be the many brethren among whom He is the well-beloved First-Born?

Now, Brothers and Sisters, this word I say and send you home. Keep your Model before you! You see what you are to come to, therefore set Christ before your eyes always. You see what you are predestinated to be—aim at it! Aim at it every day. God works, and He works in you not to sleep, but to will and to do according to His own good pleasure. Brethren, grieve at your failures! When you see anything in yourselves that is not Christ-like, mourn over it, for it must be put away. It is so much dross that must be consumed. You cannot keep it, for God's predestination will not let you retain anything about you which is not according to the image of Christ. Cry mightily to the Holy Spirit to continue His sanctifying work in you! Beseech Him not to be grieved and vexed, and, therefore, in any measure to stay His hand. Cry, "Lord, melt me! Pour me out like wax and set Your seal upon me until the image of Christ is clearly there."

Above all, commune much with Christ. Communion is the fountain of conformity. Live with Christ and you will soon grow like Christ. They said of Achilles, the greatest of the Grecian heroes, that when he was a child they fed him upon lion's marrow and so made him brave. Feed upon Christ and be Christ-like. They record, on the other hand, of blood-thirsty Nero is that he became so because he was suckled by a woman of a ferocious, barbaric nature. If we drink in our nutriment from the world, we shall be worldly—but if we live upon Christ and dwell in Him, our conformity with Him shall be readily accomplished—and we shall be recognized as Brethren of that blessed family of which Jesus Christ is the First-Born.

How I wish everyone here had a share in the text! I mourn that some have not, for he that believes not on the Son has not life, and therefore cannot have conformity to a living Christ! God grant to you all to be Believers in Christ, now and forever. Amen and amen.

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PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

NO. 355

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 13, 1861,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate
to be conformed to the image of His Son.”
Romans 8:29.***

IT is not so much predestination which will occupy our attention this morning, as the fact that believers are predestinated *to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son.*

Perhaps nothing in the world is a surer sign of littleness than a slavish imitation of any man. Men lose that which is an *honor* to them—individuality. And then they lose that which is a *power* to them—originality—the moment they commence walking in another man's shoes. When one painter slavishly copies another, he is only known as the satellite of the greater luminary, he himself is neither respectable nor respected.

But this is not the case when men select models which are confessed to be perfect. You never hear a man accused of a want of originality because he studies the models in sculpture of Ancient Greece. It is not usual to hear the accusation of imitation brought against painters who have studiously examined the works of Michelangelo or of Raphael. These men are put at the head of their respective schools and the following of these masters of the art is voted to be no folly, but true wisdom.

'Tis even so with the imitation of Christ. To imitate other men is weakness. To copy Christ is strength. Christ is the perfect type of manhood. He who should imitate Him the most nearly, would be the most original man upon earth. It may seem a paradox, but it is one which nevertheless needs only to be tried to be proved. No man will be looked upon as so strange, so singular a being among his fellows, as the man who shall nearest approach to the image of the Lord Jesus.

He *imitates*, we grant you. He *copies*, we confess it, but he is himself, despite his copying, an original to other men and he stands out from the common herd as being a distinguished and celebrated individual—he will be “known and read of all men.” If I should stand here this morning, my Hearers, to exhort you to imitate any one model in manhood *except* Christ, I should feel that I had a difficult task with sensible men. There is not in all the annals of our race a single name which I could bid you love and reverence so much as to shut your eyes to the faults connected therewith.

There is not a single biography truthfully written which I would have you read and then say, “I will re-live this man's life precisely as he lived it.” You would make shipwreck if you should blindly steer in the wake of the noblest of your brethren. You may take a virtue here and a virtue there and then in God's strength seek to imitate those men who excelled in those points—but to imitate an Abraham in all things, would not make

you an Abraham—nor would it make you what you should be. To seek to follow a Job in all respects would not bring you to be perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

There remains but one model we can ever commend to you and only one which a man of strong mind can accept as his copy in every jot and tittle. That I shall endeavor to present to you this morning, while I preach the great doctrine that all believers are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus. *In what sense? Wherefore? And Is it possible?* Three points each interesting.

I. IN WHAT SENSE IS A BELIEVER TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST?

There are some views which would be taken of this subject which I think would be shallow and would not reach the full meaning of the Word of God. Some men conceive that they are to bear the image of Christ to warrant them as being His followers, although their works tell another tale. They are to be called Christians and then under the garb and cover of Christianity, they are to make their vices appear like virtues and their crimes are to be dignified as though they were the highest morality.

Now a Christian is not to bear the image of Christ as a penny bears the superscription of the Queen. That image is put there to make the coin current among men. But a penny is not the image of the Queen, it is only stamped with it. There are some Christians who think that they have the seal of the Spirit upon them, the stamp of Christ's warranty and that they can claim to be accepted as Christians because they imagine they have the seal of the Spirit and the stamp of Christ's warranty upon them.

Now, as the penny is not conformed after all to the image of the person whose face it bears, so such a man is not, by any pretended warranty he thinks he has, really conformed to the image of Christ. There is something more required of us and something more will be bestowed upon us by the Spirit, than having in some dark corner the name of Jesus tattooed into the skin of our profession.

Nor, again—neither have they attained to a conformity to the image of Christ who are content with a cold morality. You have seen a statue so exceedingly well chiseled that it is the very image of the statesman or the warrior whom it represents. You might dream that it looked from those stony eyes. You might imagine that it would step from its pedestal. Is it not put in the attitude of one who is about to lead the troops to battle? Could you not conceive it crying, "On, comrades, on!" But it stands there stiff and stolid and its lips move not. It is dumb and blind and motionless.

I know some whose imitation of Christ is as if it were cut in marble—there is no life in it. Now this is not the conformity to Christ's image which the Spirit will give to us. We are not to be mere pictures of Christ, dead and lifeless. The very lifeblood of Christ is to run in our veins. Our activity and our energy is to be consecrated and Christ-like. We are to be like He as living men. Not as cold frozen things, or mummies swathed in the bandages of Law—but as living freemen we are to be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus.

Some there are, too, who imagine that to be conformed to the image of Christ Jesus, it will be quite enough to act publicly as Christ would have

acted. They are always talking about points of conscience—"Would Christ have done this" or "that?" And then they answer it according to their own fancies. They see some Christian man who walks under "the perfect law of liberty," and is not bound by the "touch not, taste not, handle not," of the old Mosaic spirit and they cry over him, "Would Christ have done such a thing?" They see a believer laugh, "Would Christ have done it?" If a Christian man keeps a carriage, "Ah," they say, "did Christ ever ride in a carriage?"

And so they think that by putting on a face that is more marred than that of any other man they shall become the very image of Christ Jesus. You know that in the theatres men come forth as kings, "and strut their little hour." And for awhile they are the very image of Julius Caesar, or of Richard III—and do you suppose that such is the intention of the Holy Spirit—that you and I should be so dressed that in outward appearance we should be the image of Christ and yet not be like Christ really and truly? God forbid we should indulge so idle a dream.

The fact is, Brothers and Sisters, while practically we must be like the Savior, yet the greatest conformity to His image must be *within*. It must be that unseen spirit, that essential holiness which dwells where only God can see it which shall constitute the main part of our likeness to Christ. Tomorrow you might put on a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout. You might put sandals on the soles of your feet. You might wear your beard uncut and so say, "In all this I seek to be like Christ." And you might even ride through the streets of Jerusalem upon "a colt, the foal of an ass," but you would be a great deal more the image of a fool than you would be the image of Christ. This imitation is not to be in mere externals—it is to be in internals, in the very essence and spirit of your Christian character.

1. In what, then, is this conformity to be found? I reply, in three things. First, the believer is to be conformed to the image of Christ *in character*. Now, when we think of Christ, what thoughts arise at once? We think, in the first place, of an *humble* one, of one who, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." We think of a man who was meek and lowly in heart, who took no lordship over the sons of men, but was a Servant of servants and washed His disciples' feet. If we would be like Christ we must be humble, we must cast aside that self-conceit which is interwoven into our nature. We must strive against that pride, which is, alas, too natural to us all.

When we think of Christ we always bring up before our minds the idea of one who was diligent in His Father's business. We see before us not an idle sluggard, not one who sought His own rest, who slept upon the oar that He ought to tug, or reclined upon the sword with which He should fight. We find Him one who went about doing good, who knew no rest except that wondrous rest which His holy toil afforded to His spirit. "I have meat to eat," says He, "that you know not of."

Now if we would be like Christ we must conquer our constitutional sloth, we must spurn all the softness of ease, we must be good soldiers and bear hardness. We must spend and be spent if we would bear His image. When we think of Christ, again, we see One who was full of *love*—not

that love which cants and whines, but the love which is true and honest and which for love's sake dare not flatter. We see a love which dwelt not in words, but in very deeds—a love which gave its whole self up to the objects which it had chosen.

If we would be like Christ we must be pillars of love. We must not be so loving that we yield up everything that is masculine in our nature. Our love must be that faithful love which, in faithfulness, gives wounds even to a friend. And yet must it be so deep, so true that we would prefer to be sacrificed and to be offered up in the most painful manner rather than the objects of our affection should be made to suffer.

Oh, we have never come to be like Christ till love is legible upon our very face, till we have got rid of our crabbed and stern visage, till we have had cast out of us that seven-fold devil of intolerance and bigotry. We have never come to be like Christ till we have arms that would embrace a world. We have never come to be like He till we have a heart on which the name of the Church is written and a breast which bears the names of all the redeemed as the High Priest bore the breastplate before the mercy seat.

But yet, further—I think we always associate with the name of Christ not simply humility and service and love, but *devotion* and *prayerfulness*. We know that when He had ceased to preach He began to pray. When He had left the mountain side which had been His pulpit, He went to another mountain which became His silent oratory. The disciples might sleep, but not the Master. They might sleep for sorrow, but He sweats great drops of blood for agony—

**“Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of His prayer.”**

We can never be like the Master till not only in public but in private we are God's own—never till we know the power of knee-work—till we know how to struggle with strong crying and tears. Never till we could almost shed great drops of blood when we are pleading for the souls of men. Never till our heart is ready to burst with a sacred agony when we are wrestling with God—never till then shall we be conformed to the image of God's dear Son. Ah, my Brethren, I feel, in trying to describe what that image is like one who handles the brush with a shaking, palsied hand—although he has the outlines of the most beauteous form sketched upon the canvas.

Lo! I have daubed where I ought to have been skillful. I have but sought to paint one feature. But who among us can describe the whole? We can but gather up all thoughts and say, one man is admirable for his faith, another for his patience. One is distinguished for his courage and another for his affection. But Christ is *altogether lovely!* Christ is not a mixture of many beauties, but He is *all* beauty put together—

**“Nature, to make His beauties known,
Must mingle colors not her own.”**

We must exhaust all the eulogies which were ever poured upon the heads of the excellent. We must drain dry all the earnest strains of the enthusiastic songs that were ever cast at the feet of the heroes of this world—and when we have done all this—we have not begun to sing the

praises which are due to our Beloved, our Perfect Exemplar and Covenant Head. In moral virtues, then, the Christian is to be conformed to Christ.

2. But further, there is one thing which is so linked to Christ that you cannot think of Him without it and that is, *His Cross*. You do not see all of Christ till you see His Cross. By four nails was He fastened to it. By more than four sure thoughts is He ever linked in the minds of His people with His agony and His death. If we are ever conformed to Christ, we must bear His Cross. Do you see Him, Christian? He is despised and rejected of men. Do you see Him passing through the midst of a crowd that is yelling and hooting at Him? Men whom He had blessed are cursing Him. Lame men whom He had healed are using the power which He gave that they may run to scorn Him. Lips that had been dumb if He had not given them speech are venting blasphemies upon Him and He, the Lovely, the Forsaken of All, goes without the camp bearing His reproach.

Do you see Him, Believer? The world counts Him to be the offscouring of all things. It cries, "Away with Him, away with Him! It is not fit that He should live." It awards Him a slave's death. He must not only die, but die as a menial dies. He must not simply so die, but die *without the camp*, as a thing accursed and unclean. See there an image of yourself, if you ever are conformed to His likeness. You must bear the Cross of suffering. You must bear the shame and spitting of ungodly men. You, too, must become in your measure the song of the drunkard. You must go without the camp—even His professed followers—you must be crucified to the flesh and its affections and lusts. You must be dead to the world and the world must be dead to you, or else you will never completely bear the image of Christ.

And while I talk on this subject I am smitten with grief, for, indeed, if I wanted a living illustration of this, must I not rather find it in contrast than in comparison? O, what multitudes of professors we have who have found out a new way to shun the Cross! We have ministers who could preach all the year round and no man would ever find fault with them. We have some who can prophecy such smooth things, that none of their hearers gnash their teeth in anger against them. We have Christian merchants who find it not at all impossible to keep their profession and yet to be dishonest in their trade.

We find men who are first and foremost in all manner of worldliness. They are the world's men and yet they are Christ's men too, they say. Where they shall stand in that Day when the secrets of all hearts shall be known I will not say. But I leave that text to declare it in which it is written, "The love of this world is enmity against God." If any man professes to be a Christian, let him count the cost first if he means to be a thorough Christian and let him put down among the first items *loss of reputation* and if he means to be decisive in his convictions, let him put down *loss of many friends* and let him think it no strange thing when the fiery trial shall come upon him.

God grant you, my Brothers and Sisters, that you may have fellowship with Christ in His sufferings and that in the bearing of the Cross you may be conformed to His image.

Once more only upon this first point. Today we think of Christ not merely as the bearer of the Cross, but as the wearer of the crown—

***“The head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns
The mighty Victor’s brow.
No more the bloody spear,
The Cross and nails no more.
For Hell itself shakes at His name,
And all the heavens adore.”***

And—blessed thought!—the believer is to be conformed to the image of the Crowned One as well as of the Crucified One. If we are Cross-bearers we shall be crown-wearers. If the hand shall feel the nail it shall grasp the palm. If the foot shall be tightly fastened to the wood, it shall one day be girt with the sandals of immortal bliss!

Fear not, Believer! It is necessary that you should first bear the image of the sorrowful that you should afterwards bear the image of the glorious. Christ Himself came not to His crown except by His Cross. He descended that He might ascend. He stooped to conquer. He went into the grave that He might rise above all principalities and powers. As the Man-Mediator, He earned His dignity by His sufferings and you, too, must fight if you would reign. You, too, must endure if you would win, you must run the race if you would obtain the reward. O then let your hearts be cheered! As you have borne “the image of the earthy,” you shall also bear “the image of the heavenly.” You shall be like He is when you shall see Him as He is. You shall be perfect, blessed, honored, magnified and glorified in Him.

Does He sit at the right hand of God, even the Father? You, too, shall sit at His right hand. Does the Father say to Him, “Well done,” and look on Him with inexpressible delight? He shall say, “Well done, good and faithful servant,” even to *you* and you shall enter into the joy of your Lord. Is He without a pain, without a fear? Is He without anything to mar the splendor of His magnificence? So shall *you* be. You are as He was in this world—you shall be in the world to come just what He is there. Come, Cross! I bend my willing shoulders to you, if I may afterward bow my head to receive that crown!

Come, earth! Lay your heaviest Cross upon me. Come, you adversaries of the Truth! Bring your hammer and your nails. Come, you chief enemies! Bring your sharpest spears. My soul shall bare her breast and hold out hands and feet to receive the marks of the Lord Jesus, that in these she may afterwards arise to claim the crown, to claim the Image of the Glorious, because she has borne the Image of the Despised.

Now all this, I take it, is contained in my text. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s Son in *character*, in *suffering* and afterwards, in *glory*.

II. But, secondly and though it be a very extensive subject, hurriedly—WHY SHOULD WE BEAR THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY? Why should we be transformed as unto the image of Christ?

Very many answers spring up and each one of them claims the preference. But to begin, well may we desire to bear the image of Christ because *it was that which we lost in Eden*. We look back to Paradise with many a sigh, but well the *spiritual mind* sighs not for the spice-groves, nor

for the verdant walks, nor for the trees luxuriant with fruit. If Eden had been a Sahara, a howling desert, the truly *spirituals mind* would still long to have it back again for only one reason—namely that there man was in the image of his Maker.

“Let us make man in Our own image,” said God, “after Our own likeness.” All the losses we sustained by Adam’s ruin were very little compared with that great loss of the likeness and image of the immortal and immaculate Deity. Oh, if we had been spotless and undying, like the God whose image Adam bore, we might well have endured to have the earth sterile and barren. And all the pains and pangs which the curse brought upon us would have been light and trivial—if we had still retained the image of our God.

Now then, my Brethren, it is this which Christ restores to us. He re-makes us, takes away the sinful, rebellious visage, which our father bore when he was expelled from the garden. He re-stamps God’s own face on us and makes us in the image of the Most High again. Oh, if Eden were a sorrowful loss and if it were desirable to obtain its Paradise again, surely the image of God must be desirable first and foremost of all.

But, then, ought not that to be the object of all ambition, which is *the ultimate end of God’s decree*? God, it is true, has predestinated believers to Heaven—but that is not all. I do not read in so many words that the saints are predestinated to Paradise, but I do read that they are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His dear Son. This is the end of the whole predestination of God—to make His elect like their Elder Brother, that He may be the first-born among many brethren. And that which God sees great enough to be the object of all His acts in Providence and all His deeds in grace—that which He makes the ultimate end of His predestination—ought certainly never to be a trifle to you and to me. Rather, we ought to pant and long for it as the highest desire of our souls.

But again—the image of Christ is *the Spirit’s latent work in us*. In that day, when we are regenerated, the new man is put into us. Now in what image is that new man? It is in the image of Him that created him. The new man, we are expressly told by Paul is renewed in the image of Christ Jesus. The moment that a sinner believes there is put into him the first germ of a perfect Christ. It needs but that it should be nourished by the Spirit and continually fed and it will grow into the perfect stature of a man in Christ.

Yet even now in a believer, who was converted but yesterday, there is the image of Christ, though it has not come to the perfect stature—just as the new-born child is a man and in a certain sense perfect and bears completely the image of manhood. Yet it is true that that image is not fully developed. So in the new-born believer there is Christ, the indwelling Christ, but it is the Christ of the manger rather than the Christ of the wilderness.

There is an infant Christ in every Christian—that Christ is to grow and to expand—and then at last in death, shaking off the coils—the troublesome burden of the old man—this new man which has been growing these years by grace shall step out. And as the serpent casts off its old skin and comes out fresh and young covered with azure hues, so shall the new man

leave all corruptions behind. And we shall be discovered to be made in the perfect image of Christ Jesus our Lord and Master. Now, if this is the Spirit's work, certainly it ought to be our love and we ought to be ever seeking after it.

But further, my dear Friends, I need not plead this case with you if you are Christians, for *there is not a believer alive who does not pant to be like Christ*. If I had but one prayer to pray and might not pray another, it would be this, "Lord, make me like Christ," for that is to comprehend all our other prayers in one. Like Christ, free from all corruptions should I be—free from infirmity and passion. I might be tempted, but I could say, "The Prince of this world comes and has nothing in me." "Like Christ"—O if that prayer should involve the lion's den, or the furnace's fiery heat, never mind!

We could take these encumbrances upon the blessed estate if we could but once have the fair hands. To be like Christ—Oh, what trial would you not endure with it even though you had the direst tribulations? Better to be like Christ in His poverty, in His wanting a place whereon to lay His head—better to be like He is as despised and rejected of men, than to be like a Caesar, or the richest man in the world's eye, the most happy of men. Better to be with Christ in His worst estate than to be with an evil man in his best. If, then, this is the universal prayer and cry of the Christian, shall not we, my Brethren, as part of the same family, join in it and say, "Lord, make me to be conformed to the image of Christ, my Lord"?

And after all, if we need anything to whet our appetites and to stimulate our desires once more—is not this *our highest glory on earth and is not this our crowning privilege above*? What more glorious for a man than to be like Christ? I do believe that if the spirit of envy could penetrate the hierarchy of angels, Gabriel would envy the poorest man on earth, because that man has a possibility of being like Christ—while the angel—though he may be like He is in some respects, can never grow into the perfect stature of a *man* in Christ.

I do think, Brethren, that if it came to the point today and the angelic spirits could have permission to exchange their robes of light for our livery of rags—if they could lay aside their harps to take up the tools of our toil—if they could relinquish their crowns to have their immortal brows moistened with our sweat. If they could give up the golden streets to tread earth's mire and dirt—they would think it a high honor and a matchless privilege to be allowed to make the exchange—with this proviso—that thereby they might be recognized as being in the likeness of the Son of God. Why this will make believers throughout eternity distinguished.

Many a man has thought that a few hour's toil was but a mere trifle—a few minutes' exposure of his life was a little thing only to be snapped at if he might by that win years of honor and esteem among the sons of men. But what must it be in comparison when these light afflictions which are but for a moment, and put us in the posture and give us the possibility of becoming conformed to the image of Christ? I tell you, Gabriel—if you can hear the voice of mortals—that sinner though I am and groaning beneath the load of my inbred sin. Mixed though I am with the sons of men and often groaning in the tents of Kedar. Yet I would not change places with

you, for I have the hope, the hope to which you can not aspire, that after I have slept in death, I shall wake up in *His* likeness!

And as I have borne “the image of the earthy,” so shall I bear “the image of the heavenly.” You will not scorn me, I know, bright spirit, because I bear the broken and disfigured image of the earthy. You, too, would be glad to try to bear it if you might afterwards, as the result thereof, bear the image of the heavenly. To see the glee of Christ is angels’ joy. To wear that face is ours. To bow before it is their delight, but to be transformed into it is our privilege—a privilege, I dare say, which no other creature that God has ever made shall possess—the privilege of being like the Son of Man and so, like the Son of God.

III. But, thirdly and lastly, IS IT POSSIBLE? IS IT POSSIBLE? “I have tried,” says Belle, “to make myself like Christ and I cannot.” Indeed, you can not. Ah, there is a skill needed to make you like Christ. Why, Sirs, the most wondrous artists who have never failed before, always fail in the very portrait of Christ. They cannot paint the Chief among ten thousand, the Altogether Lovely. They fail entirely when they once come there. They may labor, they may strive, but He is fairer than the sons of men. And if so with the earthy image, what must it be with that within?

Orators, before whose eloquence men have been swayed to and fro as the waves are tossed by the fourth wind, have confessed their utter inability, by many figures of speech, ever to reach the excellencies of Christ. Divine poets, whose hearts have been pregnant with celestial fire, have been compelled to lay down their harps and relinquish all hope ever to sing the song of songs concerning this fairest Solomon.

And must it not be a vastly harder task for a man to be made like Christ? If we can neither paint Him, nor sing Him, nor preach Him, how can we live Him? How can we be like Him? How can we bear His image if we cannot even paint it? Indeed, if this were our work, it were impracticable and we might dissuade you from the task. But it is not *your* work, it is *God’s* work. ‘Twas God who predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son. And God who “made the decree” will fulfill it Himself. And by His omnipotence, the same power which created Christ in the virgin’s womb shall create a Christ even in our sinful hearts and cause our sins to die out before the indwelling of the living Christ.

But wherein lies the hardness of our being made like Christ? I suppose it lies first, in *the material to be worked upon*. “Oh,” says one, “there is never a possibility of making an image of Christ out of *me*. Sculptors choose polished marble. I, indeed, am but a rough unhewn stone of the quarry—unworkable. I know that the chisel will only blunt its edge upon me. I never can be made like Christ. What? Build a temple for God out of bramble bushes? Make a crown for the King of kings out of common pebbles of the brook? No,” say we, “it cannot be.”

But, stop, Sir—what *matters* the *material* when you know the great Creator? God is the great Artist who has predestinated and decreed that He will make you, who are today like a devil, one day to be like Christ! It is a daring task. It is like God. It is an impossible task. It is only fit for one hand and that One has undertaken it and will achieve it. For, sirs, when God decrees a thing, what is to stand in His way? He can make pathways

through the flood—He that can take the fiery power out of the flame—He can take the drowning influence out of the waters. To Him all things are possible. Can He not, then, even in the charnel-house of your heart, put a Christ who shall bring a glorious resurrection, put a new life in you and transmute even the base metal of your nature till you shall become like the golden nature of Him who is God incarnate? Oh, when we have God to deal with—what matters the material? He can overthrow your depravity, can cast off your lust and make you like your Lord.

“Ah, but,” says one, “there is another difficulty. Think *what a world I live in*. How can I be like Christ? It is very well preaching this, Sir, to us. If you had a number of hermits’ cells for us all to live in, it might be done. If you would build a large monastery and let us all live as Christian brethren together, it might be possible. But I tell you, Sir, you do not know my business. It cannot be done, Sir. I have to mix with men that curse and blaspheme. I cannot be like Christ. Besides, my business is so trying to the temper, so irritating, it cannot be done, Sir, I tell you.

“And then, you do not know we have so many tricks in trade and our trade has so many temptations in it that it is very difficult for us to prevent ourselves being decoyed. Sir, it is not possible for us to be like Christ while we have to mix with this wicked world. We get one touch, as it were, put into the picture on a Sunday and we think we shall be like Christ one day, but the devil puts six black touches in during the week and spoils the whole. It cannot be done. Sir, it is not possible we should ever be like Christ.”

But God says it *shall* be done. God has predestinated you, if you are a believer, to be conformed to the image of His dear Son. Of course Satan will do his best to stop God’s decrees. But what shall become of anything that stands in the way of God’s decree? As the car of Juggernaut rolls remorselessly on and crushes any man—be he king or whatever—who dares to place himself in his way so shall God’s decree. On, on it goes and through blood and bones of your carnal nature and natural depravity that triumphant chariot of God shall grind.

“A hideous figure,” you say. Indeed, Sirs, you shall find that there is something hideous in your experience. You will have to suffer for it. If you are in this world you will have to be as Jesus was in this world. Rest assured that though God will make you like Christ, yet inasmuch as you are in a world of sinners, it will necessitate your suffering *like He* suffered. It will not take from you the power to bear His image, but it will bring about you, as a hornet’s nest, all those who hated Christ aforetime.

I was standing one day at my window when living far from London and I saw on a house opposite a canary, which had by some means or other got loose from its cage. It had no sooner rested upon the roof than about twenty sparrows came round it and began to pick and pull and although the poor thing resisted and flew here and there, it stood but a very poor chance in the midst of so many enemies. I remembered that text—“My heritage is unto me as a speckled bird. The birds round about are against her.”

That will be your lot. Mark this! If you are to be like Christ you will be a speckled bird and if you are not pecked upon by others, you may question

whether you are not one of their own kind and therefore they let you alone and freely associate with you. But if you differ from them and prove you have another nature than theirs, you will surely be opposed and maligned, even as your Master was.

Once more and I have done. Many a Christian heart has said, "I think the difficulty about the material is not so great when I think of the omnipotence of God. And the difficulty about the associations is not so very hard, for I can suffer and I am willing to suffer if I may but be like Christ. But the great and insurmountable obstacle is this—that *image is so perfect* I can never reach it. It is high as Heaven—what can I know? It surpasses my thoughts, I cannot even conceive the ideal. How then can I reach the feet? If it were to be like David I might hope it. If it were to be made like Josiah, or some of the ancient saints, I might think it possible.

"But to be like *Christ*, who is without spot or blemish and the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely, I cannot hope it. I look, Sir. I look and look and look again, till I turn away, tears filling my eyes and I say, 'Oh, it were presumption for such a fallen worm as I to hope to be like Christ.' " And did you know it, that while you were thus speaking, you were really getting the thing you thought to be impossible? Or did you know that, while you were gazing on Christ, you were using the only means which can be used to effect the Divine purpose? And when you bowed before that image overawed, do you know it was because you began to be made like it? When I come to love the image of Christ it is because I have some measure of likeness to it.

It was said of Cicero's works if any man could read them with admiration, he must be in a degree an orator himself. And if any man can read the life of Christ and really love it, methinks there must be somewhat—however little—that is Christ-like within himself. And if you as believers will look much at Christ, you will grow like Him. You shall be transformed from glory to glory as by the image of the Lord. I look at you, I do not grow like you. You look at me, you grow not like me.

You look at Christ—Christ looks at you—he is photographed on you by His own power of light. Without need of any light beyond Himself, He photographs His image on the face of those who live much in fellowship with Him and who contemplate much His character. Now then Believer, it is true the image of Christ is sublime, but then it, by the Spirit, makes you into itself so that the difficulty supplies the means and that which looks like the obstacle becomes really the means to the attainment thereof. Go again and look at Christ. Go and weep because you are not like He is. Go and bow before Him with adoration. Go and strain upwards to that great height.

In doing so your very failures are successes. Your fears are proofs that you are beginning to be like He is. Are you not beginning to sorrow as He sorrowed? Your very agony, because you cannot be as He is, is a beginning of the agony which He endured, because He would have had the cup pass from Him. I say, Brothers and Sisters, that the more you look at Him though it may tend to dispirit you, that very dispiriting is a part of the divine process. It is a chipping away from the block of marble an excrescence, which, if not removed, would have ruined the image entirely. God

help you to live near to Christ and so shall you be more and more like He is every day!

To conclude—one thing is certain and having mentioned that, I have done. You will either bear the image of Christ or the image of Satan. You will be developed, everyone of you, Brothers and Sisters. Either those eyes will develop till they are the very eyes of fiends and roll with the hellish leer of blasphemy—that mouth will be developed till it gnashes its teeth in diabolic scorn. That hand will be developed till it has itself as though it were iron and dares to defy the Eternal—that soul will be developed till it becomes a living Hell, a Hell as full of pains as Hell itself is full of demons.

Or else—and God grant that you may have this last alternative!—or else those eyes will shine till they become like the eyes of Christ, which are as flames of fire. That face will be transformed till it becomes like the face of Christ, as though it glowed with Heaven itself. That heart will be developed till it becomes a Heaven as full of songs as Heaven itself is full of music. By faith in Christ, or unbelief, your destiny may be known. Do you believe in Christ? You are predestinated to be like He is. Are you an unbeliever? Then if you die so, you shall be transformed into the image of darkness. God save you! Christ help you! “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved,” for “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believes not shall be damned.”

God add his blessing for Jesus' sake!

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

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

PREDESTINATION AND CALLING

NO. 241

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 6, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called.”
Romans 8:30.***

THE GREAT BOOK OF GOD’S DECREES is fast closed against the curiosity of man. Vain man would be wise. He would break the seven seals thereof and read the mysteries of eternity. But this cannot be. The time has not yet come when the book shall be opened and even then the seals shall not be broken by mortal hand, but it shall be said, “The lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed to open the book and break the seven seals thereof.”—

***Eternal Father, who shall look
Into your secret will?
None but the Lamb shall take the book,
And open every seal.***

None but He shall ever unroll that sacred record and read it to the assembled world. How, then, am I to know whether I am predestinated by God unto eternal life or not? It is a question in which my eternal interests are involved—am I among that unhappy number who shall be left to live in sin and reap the due reward of their iniquity? Or do I belong to that goodly company, who albeit that they have sinned shall nevertheless be washed in the blood of Christ and shall in white robes walk the golden streets of Heaven?

Until this question is answered my heart cannot rest, for I am intensely anxious about it. My eternal destiny infinitely more concerns me than all the affairs of time. Tell me, oh, tell me, if you know, Seers and Prophets, is my name recorded in that book of life? Am I one of those who are ordained unto eternal life, or am I to be left to follow my own lusts and passions and to destroy my own soul? Oh, man, there is an answer to your inquiry. The book cannot be opened, but God Himself has published many a page thereof. He has not published the page whereon the actual names of the redeemed are written. But that page of the sacred decree whereon their *character* is recorded is published in His Word and shall be proclaimed to you this day. The sacred record of God’s hand is this day published eve-

rywhere under Heaven and he that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says unto him.

O my Hearer, by your name I know you not and by your name God's Word does not declare you, but by your *character* you may read your name. And if you have been a partaker of the calling which is mentioned in the text, then may you conclude beyond a doubt that you are among the predestinated—"For whom He did predestinate, them He also called." And if you are called, it follows as a natural inference you are predestinated.

Now, in considering this solemn subject, let me remark that there are two kinds of callings mentioned in the Word of God. The first is the *general* call, which is in the Gospel sincerely given to everyone that hears the Word. The duty of the minister is to call souls to Christ, he is to make no distinction whatever—"Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." The trumpet of the Gospel sounds aloud to every man in our congregations—"Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters and he that has no money; come you, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Unto you, O men, I call. And My voice is to the sons of man" (Prov. 8:4).

This call is sincere on God's part. But man by nature is so opposed to God that this call is never *effectual*, for man disregards it, turns his back upon it and goes his way, caring for none of these things. But mark, although this call be rejected, man is without excuse in the rejection. The universal call has in it such authority that the man who will not obey it shall be without excuse in the Day of Judgment. When you are commanded to believe and repent—when you are exhorted to flee from the wrath to come—the sin lies on your own head if you despise the exhortation and reject the commandment. And this solemn text drops an awful warning—"How shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?" But I repeat it, this universal call is rejected by man. It is a call, but it is not attended with Divine force and energy of the Holy Spirit in such a degree as to make it an unconquerable call. Consequently men perish, even though they have the universal call of the Gospel ringing in their ears. The bell of God's House rings every day. Sinners hear it, but they put their fingers in their ears and go their way, one to his farm and another to his merchandise. Though they are bid and are called to the wedding (Luke 14:16, 17, 18), yet they will not come and by not coming they incur God's wrath and he declares of such—"None of those men which were bid shall taste of My supper" (Luke 14:24).

The call of our text is of a different kind. It is not a universal call, it is a special, particular, personal, discriminating, efficacious, unconquerable call. This call is sent to the predestinated and to them only. They by grace

hear the call, obey it and receive it. These are they who can now say, "Draw us and we will run after You."

In preaching of this call this morning, I shall divide my sermon into three brief parts. First, I shall give illustrations of the call. Second, we shall come to examine whether we have been called. And then third, what delightful consequences flow from there. Illustration, examination, consolation.

I. First, then, for ILLUSTRATION. In illustrating the effectual call of grace, which is given to the predestinated ones, I must first use the picture of Lazarus. See you that stone rolled at the mouth of the sepulcher? Much need is there for the stone that it should be well secured, for within the sepulcher there is a putrid corpse. The sister of that corrupt body stands at the side of the tomb and she says, "Lord, by this time he stinks, for he has been dead four days." This is the voice of reason and of nature. Martha is correct. But by Martha's side there stands a Man who, despite all His lowliness, is very God of very God. "Roll away the stone," said He and it is done. And now, listen to Him. He cries, "Lazarus, come forth!" That cry is directed to a mass of putridity, to a body that has been dead four days and in which the worms have already held carnival. But, strange to say, from that tomb there comes a living man. That mass of corruption has been quickened into life and out he comes, wrapped about with grave clothes and having a napkin about his head. "Loose him and let him go," said the Redeemer. And then he walks in all the liberty of life.

The *effectual* call of Grace is precisely similar. The sinner is dead in sin. He is not only in sin but *dead* in sin, without any power whatever to give to himself the life of grace. No, he is not only dead, but he is corrupt. His lusts, like the worms, have crept into him. A foul stench rises up into the nostrils of justice, God abhors him and justice cries, "Bury the dead out of my sight, cast it into the fire, let it be consumed." Sovereign Mercy comes and there lies this unconscious, lifeless mass of sin. Sovereign Grace cries, either by the minister, or else directly without any agency, by the Spirit of God, "come forth!" and that man lives.

Does he contribute anything to his new life? Not he—his life is given solely by God. He was dead, absolutely dead, rotten in his sin. The life is given when the call comes and, in obedience to the call, the sinner comes forth from the grave of his lust, and begins to live a new life, even the life eternal, which Christ gives to His sheep. "Well," cries one, "but what are the words which Christ uses when He calls a sinner from death?" Why the Lord may use *any* words. It was not long ago there came unto this hall a man who was without God and without Christ and the simple reading of the hymn—

“Jesus lover of my soul,”

was the means of his quickening. He said within himself, “Does Jesus love me? then I must love Him,” and he was quickened in that selfsame hour.

The words which Jesus uses are various in different cases. I trust that even while I am speaking this morning, Christ may speak within me and some word that may fall from my lips, unpremeditated and almost without design, shall be sent of God as a message of life unto some dead and corrupt heart. May, by His Grace, some man who has lived in sin up to now, shall now live to righteousness and live to Christ! That is the first illustration I will give you of what is meant by effectual calling. It finds the sinner dead, it gives him life and he obeys the call of life and lives.

But let us consider a second phase of it. You will remember while the sinner is dead in sin, he is alive enough so far as any opposition to God may be concerned. He is powerless to *obey*, but he is mighty enough to *resist* the call of Divine Grace. I may illustrate it in the case of Saul of Tarsus—this proud Pharisee abhors the Lord Jesus Christ—he has seized upon every follower of Jesus who comes within his grasp. With the avidity of a miser who hunts after gold he has hauled men and women to prison. He has hunted after the precious life of Christ’s disciple and having exhausted his prey in Jerusalem, he seeks letters and goes off to Damascus upon the same bloody errand. Speak to him on the road, send out the Apostle Peter to him, let Peter say, “Saul, why do you oppose Christ? The time shall come when you shall yet be His disciple.” Paul would turn round and laugh him to scorn—Get you gone, you fisherman, get you gone—I, a disciple of that imposter Jesus of Nazareth? Look here, this is my confession of faith—here will I haul your brothers and your sisters to prison and beat them in the synagogue and compel them to blaspheme and even hunt them to death, for my breath is threat and my heart is as fire against Christ.”

Such a scene did not occur, but had there been any remonstrance given by men you may easily conceive that such would have been Saul’s answer. But Christ determined that He *would* call the man before the foundation of the world! Oh, what an enterprise! Stop HIM? Why he is going fast onward in his mad career. But lo, a light shines round about him and he falls to the ground and he hears a voice crying, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.” Saul’s eyes are filled with tears and then again with scales of darkness and he cries, “Who are You?” And a voice calls, “I am Jesus, whom you persecute.” It is not many minutes before he begins to feel his sin in having persecuted Jesus, nor many hours before he receives the assurance of his pardon and not many days before he who persecuted Christ stands up to

preach with vehemence and eloquence unparalleled, the very cause which he once trod beneath his feet.

See what effectual calling can do? If God should choose this morning to call the hardest-hearted wretch within hearing of the Gospel, he must obey. Let God call—a man may resist, but he cannot resist effectually. Down you shall come, Sinner, if God cries down. There is no standing when He would have you fall. And mark, every man that is saved, is always saved by an overcoming call which he cannot withstand. He may resist it for a time, but he cannot resist so as to overcome it, he must give way, he must yield when God speaks. If He says, “Let there be light,” the impenetrable darkness gives way to light. If He says, “Let there be Grace,” unutterable sin gives way and the hardest-hearted sinner melts before the fire of effectual calling.

I have thus illustrated the call in two ways, by the state of the sinner in his sin and by the omnipotence which overwhelms the resistance which he offers. And now another case. The effectual call may be illustrated in its sovereignty by the case of Zaccheus. Christ is entering into Jericho to preach. There is a publican living in it who is a hard, griping, grasping, miserly extortioner. Jesus Christ is coming in to call someone, for it is written He must abide in some man’s house. Would you believe it, that the man whom Christ intends to call is the worst man in Jericho—the extortioner? He is a little short fellow and he cannot see Christ, though he has a great curiosity to look at him. So he runs before the crowd and climbs up a sycamore tree and thinking himself quite safe amid the thick foliage, he waits with eager expectation to see this wonderful man who had turned the world upside down. Little did he think that Christ was to turn him also.

The Savior walks along preaching and talking with the people until He comes under the sycamore tree. Then lifting up His eyes, He cries—“Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide in your house.” The shot took effect, the bird fell. Down came Zaccheus, invited the Savior to his house and proved that he was really called not by the voice merely but by grace itself, for he said, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give unto the poor and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore unto him fourfold.” And Jesus said, “This day is salvation come unto your house.” Now why call Zaccheus? There were many better men in the city than he. Why call him? Simply because the call of God comes to unworthy sinners. There is nothing in man that can deserve this call—nothing in the best of men that can invite it. God quickens whom He will, and when He sends that call, though it come to the vilest of the vile, down they come speedily and swiftly. They come down from

the tree of their sin and fall prostrate in penitence at the feet of Jesus Christ.

But now to illustrate this call in its effects, we remind you that Abraham is another remarkable instance of effectual calling. "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, get you out of your country and from your kindred and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you," and "by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed. And he went out, not knowing where he went." Ah, poor Abraham. As the world would have had it, what a trial his call cost him! He was happy enough in the bosom of his father's household, but idolatry crept into it and when God called Abraham, he called him alone and blessed him out of Ur of the Chaldees and said to him, "Go forth, Abraham!" And he went forth, not knowing where he went.

Now, when effectual calling comes into a house and singles out a man, that man will be compelled to go forth without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach. He must come out from his very dearest friends, from all his old acquaintances, from those friends with whom he used to drink and swear and take pleasure. He must go straight away from them all, to follow the Lamb where ever He goes. What a trial to Abraham's faith, when he had to leave all that was so dear to him and go he knew not where! And yet God had a goodly land for him and intended greatly to bless him.

Man! If you are called, if you are truly called, there will be a going out and a going out alone. Perhaps some of God's professed people will leave you. You will have to go without a solitary friend—maybe you will even be deserted by Sarah herself and you may be a stranger in a strange land, a solitary wanderer, as all your fathers were. Ah, but if it is an effectual call and if salvation shall be the result thereof—what matters it though you go to Heaven alone? Better to be a solitary pilgrim to bliss, than one of the thousands who throng the road to Hell.

I will have one more illustration. When effectual calling comes to a man, at first he may not know that it is effectual calling. You remember the case of Samuel. The Lord called Samuel and he arose and went to Eli and he said, "Here am I, for you called me." Eli said, "I called not, lie down again. And he went and lay down." The second time the Lord called him and said, "Samuel, Samuel," and he arose again and went to Eli and said, "Here am I, for you did call me," and then it was that Eli, not Samuel, first of all perceived that the Lord had called the child. And when Samuel knew it was the Lord, he said, "Speak. For your servant hears." When the work of grace begins in the heart, the man is not always clear that it is God's work. He is impressed under the minister and perhaps he is rather more occupied with the impression than with the agent of the impression; he

says, "I know not how it is, but I have been called. Eli, the minister, has called me."

And perhaps he goes to Eli to ask what he wants with him. "Surely," said he, "the minister knew me and spoke something personally to me, because he knew my case." And he goes to Eli and it is not till afterwards, perhaps, that he finds that Eli had nothing to do with the impression, but that the Lord had called him. I know this—I believe God was at work with my heart for years before I knew anything about Him. I knew there was a work. I knew I prayed and cried and groaned for mercy, but I did not know that was the Lord's work. I half thought it was my own. I did not know till afterwards, when I was led to know Christ as all my salvation and all my desire, that the Lord had called the child, for this could not have been the result of nature, it must have been the effect of grace. I think I may say to those who are the beginners in the Divine life, so long as your call is real, rest assured it is Divine. If it is a call that will suit the remarks which I am about to give you in the second part of the discourse, even though you may have thought that God's hand is not in it, rest assured that it is, for nature could never produce effectual calling. If the call is effectual and you are brought out and brought in—brought out of sin and brought to Christ, brought out of death into life and out of slavery into liberty, then, though you cannot see God's hand in it, yet, by God's grace it is there.

II. I have thus illustrated effectual calling. And now as a matter of EXAMINATION let each man judge himself by certain characteristics of heavenly calling which I am about to mention. If in your Bible you turn to 2 Timothy 1:9, you will read these words—"Who has saved us and called us with an holy calling." Now here is the first touchstone by which we may try our calling—many are called but few are chosen, because there are many kinds of calls but the true call and that only, answers to the description of the text. It is "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."

This calling forbids all trust in our own doings and conducts us to Christ alone for salvation, but it afterwards purges us from dead works to serve the living and true God. If you are now living in sin, you are not called. If you can still continue as you were before your pretended conversion, then it is no conversion at all. That man who is called in his drunkenness, will forsake his drunkenness. Men may be called in the midst of sin, but they will not continue in it any longer. Saul was anointed to be king when he was seeking his father's asses. And many a man has been called when he has been seeking his own lust, but he will leave the asses and leave the lust, when once he is called.

Now, by this shall you know whether you are called of God or not. If you continue in sin, if you walk according to the course of this world, according to the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, then are you still dead in your trespasses and your sins. But as He that has called you is holy, so must you be holy. Can you say, "Lord, You know all things, You know that I desire to keep all Your commandments and to walk blamelessly in Your sight. I know that my obedience cannot save me, but I long to obey. There is nothing that pains me so much as sin. I desire to be quit and rid of it. Lord help me to be holy"? Is that the panting of your heart? Is that the tenor of your life towards God and towards his Law? Then, Beloved, I have reason to hope that you have been called of God, for it is a *holy* calling wherewith God does call His people.

Another text. In Philippians 3:13 and 14 you find these words. "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Is then your calling a *high* calling, has it lifted up your heart and set it upon heavenly things? Has it lifted up your hopes, to hope no longer for things that are on earth, but for things that are above? Has it lifted up your tastes, so that they are no longer groveling, but you choose the things that are of God? Has it lifted up the constant tenor of your life, so that you spend your life with God in prayer, in praise and in thanksgiving and can no longer be satisfied with the low and mean pursuits which you followed in the days of your ignorance?

Remember, if you are truly called it is a *high* calling, a calling from on High and a calling that lifts up your heart and raises it to the high things of God, eternity, Heaven and holiness. In Hebrews 3:1, you find this sentence. "Holy Brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Here is another test. Heavenly calling means a call from Heaven. Have you been called, not of man but of God? Can you now detect in your calling, the hand of God and the voice of God? If man alone call you, you are uncalled. Is your calling of God? And is it a call *to* Heaven as well as *from* Heaven? Can you heartily say that you can never rest satisfied till you—

***"Behold His face
And never, never sin,
But from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in"?***

Man, unless you are a stranger here and Heaven is your home, you have not been called with a heavenly calling, for those who have been so called, declare that they look for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God and they themselves are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth.

There is another test. Let me remind you, that there is a passage in Scripture which may tend very much to your edification and help you in your examination. Those who are called, are men who before the calling, groaned in sin. What says Christ?—"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Now, if I cannot say the first things because of shyness, though they are true, yet can I say this—that I feel myself to be a sinner, that I loathe my sinnership, that I detest my iniquity, that I feel I deserve the wrath of God on account of my transgressions? If so, then I have a hope that I may be among the called host whom God has predestinated. He has called not the righteous but *sinners* to repentance. Self-righteous Man, I can tell you in the tick of a clock, whether you have any evidence of election. I tell you—No. Christ never called the righteous. And if He has not called you and if He never does call you, you are not elect and you and your self-righteousness must be subject to the wrath of God and cast away eternally. Only the sinner, the awakened sinner, can be at all assured that he has been called. And even he, as he gets older in grace, must look for those higher marks of the high heavenly and holy calling in Christ Jesus.

As a further test—keeping close to Scripture this morning, for when we are dealing with our own state before God there is nothing like giving the very Words of Scripture—we are told in the first Epistle of Peter, the second chapter and the ninth verse, that God has called us out of darkness into marvelous light. Is that your call? Were you once in darkness in regard to Christ? And has marvelous light manifested to you a marvelous Redeemer, marvelously strong to save? Say Soul, can you honestly declare that your past life was darkness and that your present state is light in the Lord? "For you were sometime darkness, but now are you light in the Lord; walk as children of the light." That man is not called who cannot look back upon darkness, ignorance and sin and who cannot now say that he knows more than he did know and enjoys at times the light of knowledge and the comfortable light of God's countenance.

Yet again—another test of calling is to be found in Galatians, the fifth chapter and the fifteenth verse. "Brethren, you have been called into liberty." Let me ask myself again this question, Have the fetters of my sin been broken off and am I God's free man? Have the manacles of justice been snapped and am I delivered—set free by Him who is the great Ransomer of spirits? The slave is not called. It is the free man that has been brought out of Egypt, who proves that he has been called of God and is precious to the heart of the Most High.

And yet once more, another precious means of test in the first of Corinthians, the first chapter and the ninth verse. "He is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." Do I

have fellowship with Christ? Do I converse with Him, commune with Him? Do I suffer *with* Him, suffer *for* Him? Do I sympathize with Him in His objects and aims? Do I love what He loves? Do I hate what He hates? Can I bear His reproach? Can I carry His Cross? Do I tread in His steps? Do I serve His cause and is it my grandest hope that I shall see His kingdom come, that I shall sit upon His Throne and reign with Him? If so, then am I called with the effectual calling, which is the work of God's Grace and is the sure sign of my predestination.

Let me say now, before I turn from this point, that it is possible for a man to know whether God has called him or not and he may know it, too, beyond a doubt. He may know it as surely as if he read it with his own eyes—no, he may know it *more surely* than that—for if I read a thing with my eyes, even my eyes may deceive me. The testimony of sense may be false, but the testimony of the Spirit must be true. We have the witness of the Spirit within, bearing witness with our spirits that we are born of God. There is such a thing on earth as an *infallible assurance* of our election. Let a man once get that and it will anoint his head with fresh oil, it will clothe him with the white garment of praise and put the song of the angel into his mouth. Happy, happy man, who is fully assured of his interest in the Covenant of Grace, in the blood of atonement and in the glories of Heaven! Such men there are here this very day. Let them “rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice.”

What would some of you give if you could arrive at this assurance? Mark, if you anxiously desire to know, you may know. If your heart pants to read its title clear it shall do so before long. No man ever desired Christ in his heart with a living and longing desire, who did not find Him sooner or later. If you have a desire, God has given it to you. If you pant and cry and groan after Christ, even this is His gift—bless Him for it. Thank Him for little Grace and ask Him for great Grace. He has given you hope, ask for faith. And when He gives you faith, ask for assurance. And when you get assurance, ask for *full* assurance. And when you have obtained full assurance, ask for enjoyment. And when you have enjoyment, ask for glory itself. And He shall surely give it you in His own appointed season.

III. I now come to finish up with CONSOLATION. Is there anything here that can console me? Oh, yes, rivers of consolation flow from my calling. For, first, if I am called then I am predestinated, there is no doubt about it. The great scheme of salvation is like those chains which we sometimes see at horse ferries. There is a chain on this side of the river fixed into a staple and the same chain is fixed into a staple at the other side, but the greater part of the chain is for the most part under water and you cannot see it. You only see it as the boat moves on and as the chain is drawn out of the water by the force that propels the boat. If today I am enabled to

say I am called, then my boat is like the ferry in the middle of the stream. I can see that part of the chain, which is named "calling," but blessed be God, that is joined to the side that is called "election," and I may be also quite clear that it is joined on to the other side, the glorious end of "glorification."

If I am called I must have been elected and I need not doubt that. God never tantalized a man by calling him by effectual grace, unless He had written that man's name in the Lamb's Book of Life. Oh, what a glorious doctrine is that of election, when a man can see himself to be elect. One of the reasons why many men kick against it is this—they are afraid it hurts them. I never knew a man yet, who had a reason to believe that he himself was chosen of God, who hated the doctrine of election. Men hate election just as thieves hate Chubb's patent locks. Because they cannot get at the treasure themselves, they therefore hate the guard which protects it. Now election shuts up the precious treasury of God's Covenant blessings for His children—for penitents, for seeking sinners. These men will not repent, will not believe. They will not go God's way and then they grumble and growl and fret and fume, because God has locked the treasure up against them. Let a man once believe that all the treasure within is his and then the stouter the bolt and the surer the lock, the better for him. Oh, how sweet it is to believe our names were on Jehovah's heart and graven on Jesus' hands before the universe had a being! May not this electrify a man of joy and make him dance for very mirth? Chosen of God before time began!

Come on, slanderers! Rail on as pleases you. Come on you world in arms! Cataracts of trouble descend if you will and you, you floods of affliction, roll if so it is ordained, for God has written my name in the Book of Life. Firm as this rock I stand, though nature reels and all things pass away. What consolation, then, to be called—for if I am called, then I am predestinated! Come, let us rejoice at the sovereignty which has called us and let us remember the words of the Apostle, "For you see your calling, Brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. And God has chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty. And the base things of the world and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are—that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, according as it is written, he that glories, let him glory in the Lord."

A second consolation is drawn from the grand Truth of God, that if a man is called he will certainly be saved at last. To prove that, however, I will refer you to the express words of Scripture—Romans 11:29—“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” He never repents of what He gives, nor of what He calls. And indeed this is proved by the very chapter out of which we have taken our text. “Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified,” every one of them.

Now, Believer, you may be very poor and very sick and very much unknown and despised, but sit down and review your calling this morning and the consequences that flow from it. As surely as you are God’s called child today, your poverty shall soon be at an end and you shall be rich to all the intents of bliss. Wait awhile. That weary head shall soon be girt with a crown. Stay awhile. That calloused hand of labor shall soon grasp the palm branch. Wipe away that tear.; God shall soon wipe away your tears forever. Take away that sigh—why sigh when the everlasting song is almost on your lip? The portals of Heaven stand wide open for you. A few winged hours must fly. A few more billows must roll over you and you will be safely landed on the golden shore. Do not say, “I shall be lost. I shall be cast away.” Impossible—

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

If He has called you, nothing can divide you from His love. The wolf of famine cannot gnaw the bond. The fire of persecution cannot burn the link, the hammer of Hell cannot break the chain. Old Time cannot devour it with rust, nor Eternity dissolve it, with all its ages. Oh, believe that you are secure. That voice which called you shall call you yet again from earth to Heaven, from death’s dark gloom to immortality’s unuttered splendors. Rest assured, the heart that called you, beats with infinite love towards you, a love undying, that many waters cannot quench and that floods cannot drown. Sit down. Rest in peace. Lift up your eyes of hope and sing your song with fond anticipation. You shall soon be with the glorified, where your portion is. You are only waiting here to be made ready for the inheritance and that done, the wings of angels shall waft you far away, to the mount of peace and joy and blessedness, where—

**“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in,”**

you shall rest forever and ever. Examine yourselves, then, whether you have been called. And may the love of Jesus be with you. Amen.

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JUSTIFICATION AND GLORY

NO. 627

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 30, 1865,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Whom He justified, them He also glorified.”
Romans 8:30.*

WELL said the Apostle in another place, “All things are of God.” And here in this passage all works of Divine Grace are evidently so. The pronoun, “He,” is repeated yet again and again, as if to set the Lord always before us. “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” “Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also justified and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” It is of God all the way through. There is not an inch of ground left to be covered by the creature’s foot. The eternal Creator works all things in the Covenant of Grace according to the counsel of His own will. Haldane has an admirable note on this passage which we will quote in full:

“In looking back on this passage we should observe that in all that is stated man acts no part, but is passive and all is done by God. He is elected and predestinated and called and justified and glorified by God. The Apostle was here concluding all that he had said before in enumerating topics of consolation to Believers. He is now going on to show that God is ‘for us,’ or on the part of His people. Could anything, then, be more consolatory to those who love God, than to be in this manner assured that the great concern of their salvation is not left in their own keeping? God, even their Covenant God, has taken the whole upon Himself. He has undertaken for them. There is no room, then, for chance or change, He will perfect that which concerns them.”

Does not this account for the majestic manner in which these Covenant mercies follow one another as in a triumphal procession? Foreknowledge leads the van with eyes beaming with love. Then come predestination, calling, justification, glorification—all in their proper order. Not one of these gigantic mercies limps along the road—but marching with stately tread, adorned in robes of glory, each one keeping its place—they make up a magnificent procession to the praise of the Glory of His Grace who has set them all in order and written His own name upon them all.

Observe, there is no “if,” no “but,” no “maybe,” no “perhaps” here. He foreknows. He predestinates. No creature lifts up its puny voice to object to the predestinating decree. Having predestinated, He calls and it is such an effectual calling, that we hear of no resistance. Having called, He justifies and “who is he that condemns?” Having justified without let or hindrance, He achieves His eternal purpose without impediment and brings forth the top stone of the temple of His Grace with shouting, as it is written, “Whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

Let our souls be glad as we clearly see the mighty Presence of our God in every work of Divine Grace. And let us understand from where the

force, the certainty, the immutability, the majesty of the whole matter comes—namely, from the fact that, “He orders all things according to the counsel of His own will.” “Who shall stay His hand, or say unto Him, What are you doing?”

This morning, God the Holy Spirit, I trust, will make it to your profit to weigh these two precious gems of loving-kindness, to count over these priceless treasures of mercy, to swim in these two seas of love, justification and glorification. And then we shall need time carefully to search after the connection between them both, for they are riveted together by rivets of diamonds. They are fastened together so fast and firmly that neither death nor Hell can separate them. “Whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

I. Let us begin, then, by considering WHAT IT IS TO BE JUSTIFIED. If you wish for an answer in a few words, ask your children who have learned our catechism and you have it—“Justification is an act of God’s free Grace, wherein He pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.”

Perhaps, however, I had better unfold this Truth of God in detail. You will perceive by reading the connection and by a moment’s reflection that the justification here meant is an act of God passed upon a person needing it—consequently passed upon a person who could not justify himself—a person naturally guilty of sin and being in a state of condemnation naturally and needing to be lifted out of it by an act of justification of a Divine order. It is not possible that God should have devised a plan of justification for those who were already justified by their own actions.

We do not talk with any wonder, or speak with any astonishment of a justification which a man achieves for himself. The guiltless need no justification. They have it already. If any man has kept the Law of God and made it honorable, he is in himself just and needs not to be made just—he is so already. Justification is an act of Divine Grace passed upon a sinner. Upon one who has transgressed the Law and cannot be justified by it and who, therefore, needs to be made just in another way—a way out of his own reach, above his own coming and going, as in the text—from God Himself. For it says, “*He justifies.*”

This, though it is a very commonplace observation, is a very sweet Truth of God to begin with. Oh, Sinner! However black your sins may have been, you may yet be justified! Though your sins are as scarlet, they may yet be as wool. And though you are red like crimson, you may be white as snow! It is written that, “He justifies the ungodly.” Yes, the *ungodly*—such as *you* have been! Christ came not into the world as a physician for those who are whole, but for those who are sick. Justification is an act of Grace which looks out for a sinner upon whom to exercise itself. May the eyes of Grace find you out this morning, poor Transgressor, and make you just!

In the next place, justification is the result of Sovereign Grace and of Sovereign Grace alone. We are told that, “by the works of the Law shall no flesh living be justified.” And yet again, “justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” I cannot *earn* justification. Nothing which I can ever *do* can merit justification at the hands of

God. I have so offended that all which is due to me is God's wrath and that forever. If I shall ever be accounted just it must be because God wills to make me just. It must be because out of His Divine compassion and for no other reason whatever, He looks upon me in my sin and misery, lifts me up from the dunghill of my ruin, and determines to wrap me about with the royal apparel of a righteousness which He has prepared!

There is no justification, then, as an act of *merit*. The day for that was past when Adam fell and when we fell in him. Justification now comes as a priceless *gift* from the liberal hand of God's Grace. Justification has for its matter and means the righteousness of Jesus Christ set forth in His vicarious obedience both in life and death. Certain modern heretics, who ought to know better, have denied this and there were some in older times who, by reason of ignorance said that there was no such thing as the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. He who denies this, perhaps unconsciously, cuts at the root of the Gospel system.

I believe that this doctrine is involved in the whole system of substitution and sanctification. We all know that substitution and a vicarious sacrifice are the very marrow of the Gospel of Christ. The Law, like the God from whom it came, is absolutely immutable and can be satisfied by nothing else than a complete and perfect righteousness at once suffering the penalty for guilt incurred already and working out obedience to the precept which still binds those upon whom penalty has passed. This was rendered by the Lord Jesus as the representative of His chosen and is the sole legal ground for the justification of the elect.

As for me, I can never doubt that Christ's righteousness is mine when I find that Christ Himself and all that He has belongs to me! If I find that He gives me *everything*, surely He gives me His righteousness among the rest. And what am I to do with that if not to wear it? Am I to lay it by in a wardrobe and not put it on? Well, Sirs, let others wear what they will—my soul rejoices in the royal apparel! For me the term, "the Lord our righteousness" is significant and has a weight of meaning. Jesus Christ shall be my righteousness so long as I read the language of the Apostle, "He is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

My dear Brothers and Sisters, do not doubt the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ whatever cavilers may say. Remember that you must have a *righteousness*. It is this which the Law requires. I do not read that the Law made with our first parents required *suffering*—it demanded it as a penalty *after* its breach—the righteousness of the Law required not suffering, but *obedience*. Suffering would not release us from the duty of *obeying*. Lost souls in Hell are still under the Law and their woes and pangs, if completely endured, would never justify them. Obedience and obedience alone can justify, and where can we have it but in Jesus our Substitute?

Christ comes to magnify the Law—how does He do it but by obedience? If I am to enter into life by the keeping of the Commandments, as the Lord tells me in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew and the seventeenth verse, how can I, except by Christ having kept them? And how can He have kept the Law except by obedience to its commands? The promises in the Word of God are not made to suffering. They are made to *obedience*—

consequently Christ's sufferings, though they may remove the penalty, do not, alone, make me the inheritor of the promise.

"If you will enter into life," said Christ, "keep the Commandments." It is only *Christ's* keeping the Commandments that entitles me to enter life. "The Lord is well-pleased for His righteousness' sake. He will magnify the Law and make it honorable." I do not enter into life by virtue of His sufferings—those deliver me from *death*, those purge me from filthiness. But entering the enjoyments of the life eternal must be the result of *obedience*. And as it cannot be the result of mine, it is the result of His which is imputed to me.

We find the Apostle Paul putting Christ's obedience in contrast to the disobedience of Adam—"As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Now this is not Christ's death merely, but Christ's *active* obedience which is here meant and it is by this that we are made righteous. Beloved, you need not sing with stammering tongues that blessed verse of our hymn—

**"Jesus, Your perfect righteousness,
My beauty is, my glorious dress."**

In spite of all the outcry of modern times against this doctrine—it is written in Heaven and is a sure and precious Truth of God to be received by all the faithful—that we are justified by faith through the righteousness of Christ Jesus *imputed* to us.

See what Christ has done in His living and in His dying—His acts becoming our acts, and His righteousness being imputed to us so that we are rewarded as if *we* were righteous—while He was punished as though He had been guilty. This justification, then, comes to sinners as an act of pure Grace, the foundation of it being Christ's righteousness. The practical way of its application is by faith. The sinner believes God and believes that Christ is sent of God and takes Christ Jesus to be his only confidence and trust. And by that act he becomes a justified soul. It is not by repenting, but by *believing* that we are justified! It is not by deep experience of the guilt of sin. It is not by bitter pangs and throes under the temptations of Satan. It is not by mortification of the body, nor by the renunciation of self. All these are good, but the act which *justifies* is a *look* at Christ!

We, having nothing, being nothing, boasting of nothing and being utterly emptied, do look to Him whose wounds stream with life-giving blood. And as we look to Him, we live and are justified by His life. There is life in a *look* at the Crucified One and life in the sense of justification. He who a minute before was in himself a condemned criminal fit only to be taken to the place from where he came and to suffer Divine wrath, is at once, by an act of faith, made an heir of God, joint-heir with Jesus Christ—taken from the place of condemnation and put into the place of acceptance—so that now he dreads no more the wrath of God! The curse of God cannot touch him, for Christ was made a curse for him, as it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree."

Now concerning this great mercy of justification let us say that it is *instantaneous*. *Sanctification* needs a whole life. Justification is the work of a second, perhaps it needs no appreciable time. The sinner looks to Christ. It is all done—his sin is gone in a moment. The righteousness of Christ is, as in an instant, imputed to the believing sinner. Sanctification,

however, progresses or declines. It is a thing of changes. The work of the Holy Spirit sometimes ripens swiftly and at other times, by reason of temptation or trial within, it is but slow in its advance. But justification is complete in a moment! The dying thief was as clean one moment after he had trusted in Christ as he was when he was with Christ in Paradise.

Justification in Heaven is not more complete than it is on earth. No, listen to me, Child of God. When your soul seems to be a very pandemonium through the blasphemies of Satan. When your doubts and fears leap upon you like so many lions. When your sins prevail against you so that you cannot look up, yet, if you are a Believer you are even then, in your worst moments, as completely and perfectly *justified* as in those happy days when on Tabor's summit you were apt to say, "Let us build three tabernacles and here abide." Justification never alters in a child of God. God pronounces him guiltless and guiltless he is! Jehovah justifies him and neither his holiness can improve his righteousness, nor his sins diminish it. He stands in Christ Jesus the same yesterday, today and forever—as accepted one moment as at another moment—as sure of eternal life at one instant as at another. Oh, how blessed is this Truth of God—justified in a moment and justified completely!

And observe, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that he who is thus justified is justified *infallibly*. There is no mistake concerning the transaction. "It is God that justifies." Where, then, can there be a mistake? If I justify myself, I am a tool and I make God a liar. But if God justifies me, who is he that condemns? I, a poor sinner, black as night, fly to the shelter of the great Shield stained with blood which God holds over my head and there I stand at all times. And though I know that every lightning of Justice might well dart its force upon me, as I am in myself, yet as I see my Shield, the Lord's Anointed, I am not afraid. Standing under that Shield, I defy Heaven, and earth and Hell! Crying in the language of Paul, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?"

There is a prisoner at the bar and the jury has just brought in a verdict of, "Not guilty." The judge bids him go free. There are people in the court who gnash their teeth at him. There are persons in the street who hate him—what does he care? "I have been pronounced 'not guilty' by the proper tribunal. The Judge himself tells me that I am acquitted. No law officer can touch me. Not the fiercest enemy in the world can drag me into court again. I have been tried and found 'not guilty.' And who is he that condemns?"

It is just so with the Christian. Christ's righteousness is put upon him. Christ takes his sins and when he stands before God's bar, the eternal Voice seems to say, "I see no sin in that man." How can He? All that man's sins Christ took away! The eternal Voice sounds forth again, "I can see righteousness there." And well He may see it, for Christ's righteousness is there and therefore the man is infallibly, upon grounds of justice which are not disputable—infallibly, upon grounds which he himself may realize as being certain—justified through Christ Jesus! Remember, dear Brethren—and I will not occupy you much longer over a theme where we might be tempted to say that this justification is irreversible!

Once justified you shall never be condemned. Jehovah never plays fast and loose with men. He does not look upon a sinner and say, "I forgive you," and then afterwards say, "Depart, you cursed!" Arminians may think so, but the God of Believers will not do so. The God of Christians says, "I am the Lord, I change not. Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed." Having taken the prodigal into the house and put the ring on his finger and the shoes on his feet, He never turns that prodigal out of doors. Being married to His people He never sues for divorce, for the Lord, the God of Israel, says He hates putting away.

"I, even I, am He that blots out your iniquities for My name's sake and will not remember them against you anymore forever." "I have cast your iniquities into the depths of the sea." Pardon and justification are irreversible and consequently the blessings which justification brings to us belong to us by a promise that can never be broken, forever and ever. If I am justified then I have peace with God and that peace shall be like a river, never dried up, because my righteousness is like the waves of the sea, never exhausted. If I am justified I can claim Jehovah's protection. And I shall have it, for He will not suffer the just man to perish. If I am justified I may come before God and ask for Heaven as my *right*, as a reward of righteousness imputed to me. And I shall have it, for He will never deny to a justified person the fullness of joy which is at His right hand forevermore. Oh, what a blessing to be justified!

Once more, before I leave this point, I must ask you to be kind enough to question yourselves as to whether you have been justified. "Well," says one, "perhaps I have been and do not know it." My dear Friend, I do not think so. The work of justification is generally attended with such a flood of joy that I think you *must* know it. Bunyan's pilgrim did not lose the burden off his back and not know it! As soon as it was gone, he gave three great leaps for joy and went on his way singing. You may have doubts about whether you are justified—I hope you will not be easy under them—but will seek after an assured interest in Christ.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you have any doubt, go to Christ again! If you are not justified, go to Him to be justified. Just as you are, with nothing but the plea of His blood in your mouth—go to Him—for He casts out none that come unto God by Him. Know that the act of faith justifies and be not afraid to exercise that act of faith, notwithstanding all your shortcomings and your sins. "Hear me, Jesus! If I never was a saint, I am a sinner and You did come to save sinners and I cast myself on You. Your promise is that You will cast out none that come. Oh, cast me not out! Receive even me, and accept me for Your love's sake."

II. Thus much upon justification. And now a little upon GLORY. How that golden word has been debased in the coinage of human speech. It has come to mean the glitter of war's helmet and the noise of the crowd's hurrahs. Smollet called it, "the fair child of peril." Johnson wrote—"Glory, the casual gift of thoughtless crowds. Glory, the bride of greedy virtue!" It is a far other and higher Glory of which we speak today. As high as the Heaven is above the earth is God's Glory from all the poor stuff which mortals dignify with that fair name.

“Whom He justified, them He also glorified.” They follow close together, you see. A little stream divides them, but the Apostle says nothing about it and you and I need not say much. It is a narrow stream called Death—there is no Glory without passing through that, or through the great change when the Lord comes. But there is nothing said about it and so we will not say anything. It is not worth thinking of, it is swallowed up in victory. It may be an enemy, but it is an enemy that is to be destroyed.

Now, while speaking of Glory, I think I must divide the Glory which God gives to the justified into three parts. There is, first of all, the Glory which disembodied spirits are enjoying even now. There is, secondly, the Resurrection Glory, which they will enjoy when the soul and body shall be reunited and when, through the millennium, they shall be “forever with the Lord.” And then there is “the eternal weight of Glory,” which is to be revealed both in body and soul in the never-ending state of bliss which God has prepared for His people.

Let us raise our thoughts a little while to the state of disembodied spirits. The moment that the soul leaves the body, the believing soul, the justified soul, is in Glory. We know that there is no preparatory process for it to pass through. Romanism holds that some of the best saints go to Heaven when they die, but that the great mass of inferior saints are not qualified for Heaven and must undergo a purgation for a series of years till they are prepared to enter Glory. They say that the saints who died under the Old Testament, or at least the most of them, went to the limbus patrum—which some wicked Protestants call Limbo—where they remained without the beatific vision until the Lord Jesus went and preached to the spirits in prison and led them up afterwards to Heaven with Him.

As for the grossly wicked who have by mortal sin lost the grace of Baptism, they go to Hell at once. But the better sort of partially sanctified Christians must suffer more or less intensely till their sins are atoned for and *purged* away. It was well said by Hugh Latimer that the key of Purgatory hangs in the pope’s treasury, for, said he, it has helped to keep it pretty full—and I have no doubt it has. It has been a very profitable invention! More money has been paid, I suppose, for getting souls out of Purgatory than people have been tempted to pay in order to keep them out of Hell. However, we are not deceived in this matter! Let the Council of Trent say what it may, the case of the dying thief is to the point.

He was no eminent saint. He had not for many years performed works of supererogation by which he reached perfection and could claim that the gates should be opened to him. He was a sinner up to the very last moment and the only good deed that we ever read of his doing, was, when he claimed Christ as Lord and rebuked his fellow thief for slandering the Savior. Yet, hear the words—“Today shall you be with Me in Paradise.” Nor is this the only instance. We find, when Lazarus died, according to the parable, that he was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom, a place of unspeakable rest and delight which the rich man greatly envied.

Stephen expected the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit and the Apostle Paul was in a strait betwixt two, being willing “to depart and to be with Christ.” He evidently did not anticipate any delay between earth and Heaven, for he says, “knowing that while we are at home in the body, we

are absent from the Lord.” He puts the two as an alternative. We are not in trouble about them that sleep. We know that they that sleep in Jesus, He will bring with Him. In Ephesians 3:15, the Apostle mentions the whole family as being in Heaven and earth, but he speaks of none of the Lord’s people being in Limbo or Purgatory.

Those whom we are bid to follow, in Hebrews 6:12, are now inheriting the promises. Let the voice of God decide the case forever. Revelation 14:13—“And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from therefore. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors. And their works do follow them.” Perhaps that word, “Paradise,” which Christ uses to describe the state of disembodied spirits may be a help to us in judging of the condition of the blessed. Paradise was a place of perfect peace, of sinlessness, of rest, of enjoyment and freedom from evil.

Eden! Oh, how shall we talk of its glories long since faded? Let us, however, remember its winding walks among trees loaded with luscious fruits. Let us remember the glory of its rising and its setting sun. The immortality, the peace, the joy, the love, the brightness which our first parents enjoyed in their naked innocence. That happy garden is a faint picture of the naked spirits, unclothed with bodies, who are now before the Eternal Throne. They have no pain, nor weariness, no evil, nor fear of death. They possess everything that can make them blessed except the resurrection body—

***“There fruits that never fade,
On trees immortal grow.
There, rocks and hills and floods and vales,
With milk and honey flow.”***

I think Dr. Watts was right when he said—

***“There everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers.”***

They are in a blessed state of tranquility and perfection! But the Savior added, what was the beauty of all—“*Today* shall you be with Me in Paradise.” The Glory of Paradise was that God walked there in the cool of the evening with His creatures. And the Glory of Heaven is that “they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light,” and the days of their mourning shall be ended. God wipes away all tears from their eyes and the Lamb leads them to the living fountains of waters. God is with them to be their God and they are with Him to be His happy people at His right hand where there are pleasures forevermore. This is the state of the justified disembodied spirits now.

If I read the word aright and it is honest to admit that there is much room for difference of opinion here, the day will come when the Lord Jesus will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel and the voice of God. Some think that this descent of the Lord will be post-millennial—that is, after the thousand years of His reign. I cannot think so. I conceive that the advent will be pre-millennial—that He will come first. And then will come the millennium as the result of His personal reign upon earth.

But whether or not, this much is fact—Christ will suddenly come, come to reign and come to judge the earth in righteousness. Now at that time

those of us who are alive and remain shall have no preference over them that sleep. It is true, "We shall not all sleep, 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." Christ will bring with Him those who sleep in Him. Their bodies are now in that state which is called sleep—that is, a state of hallowed rest, tranquility and enjoyment—but they shall come with Him.

Lo, He comes with ten thousands times ten thousands of His saints. Then, from beds of dust and silent clay their bodies shall wake up. The very bodies that were put into the tomb shall rise instinct with life. I say the *very* bodies. And it is not necessary that that there should be the very same particles of matter. My body is the same body that it was ten years ago, yet I am told, and I believe it, that there is not a particle of matter in my body now that was in it ten years ago! And yet its identity is not disturbed by that fact! Protect the germ, as God doubtless will, the life-germ of the seed corn which you sow in the earth—protect that and you have protected identity.

And though when we rise it will not be as flesh and blood, "for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption," yet it shall be the same body, for all bodies are not the same bodies, for there are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial. And the glory is not the same—for there is the glory of the sun, the glory of the moon and of the stars. So I may have the same body, the same for identity and yet as to its constituent elements and especially as to its qualities of weakness, mortality and corruption, it may be as distinct and changed as light is distinct and changed from darkness.

Oh, my Brethren, let this be an assured Truth of God to us that we do not put the body into the grave to lose it! Watts is right when he says—

***"Corruption, earth and worms
Do but refine this flesh."***

We put the body there as the chemist puts gold into the furnace. It shall come out the same as to its gold, but the dross shall be left behind. All that was precious in the fabric shall remain—that which was corruptible, defiled, sinful, shall have passed away. According to our belief the soul will then return to the body. There will be a joyful meeting. Soul and body often quarrel here—but they are always loath to part—which proves how true is the wedlock between them. But what a happy meeting it will be when there will be no more quarrels between this husband and wife—when the soul and body shall be merged together in the perfection of union!

Then, whatever may be the splendor of Christ will be the splendor of His people. Our bodies shall be like His glorious body and we ourselves shall be like He—

***"It does not yet appear
How great we must be made.
But when we see our Savior here,
We shall be like our Head."***

Will He reign? We shall reign with Him. Will He judge the earth? "Know you not that you shall judge angels." "The saints shall judge the world." Will He be ruler over cities? He will make us ruler over many cities. All the

splendor and triumph and victory and shouting—we shall have a share! And when the grand song of praise shall go up from earth, and land and sea and from the depths that are under the earth, our tongue shall swell the tremendous chorus and our ears shall be a partaker of the ever-blessed harmony! Let us not fear. “Whom He justified, them He also glorified”—both in the sense of giving their disembodied spirits joy and giving the soul and body power to reign with Him.

Well, and what then? Then comes the end—when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father. When the mediatorial dispensation shall be finished, what then? Will the earth be renovated and fitted up anew as a new Heaven and a new earth? Will that new Jerusalem that is to come down at the coming of Christ be the future abode of saints? We do not know and we do not care one whit! This much we know—that we shall be forever with the Lord! With Christ shall be the Heaven of Believers forever, according to the Lord’s own prayer, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.”

If I might very hastily divide this Glory into its constituent elements, I think I should say it means perfect rest. “There remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God.” Life in its fullest sense! Life with emphasis! Eternal life! Nearness to God! Closeness to the Divine heart! A sense of His love shed abroad in all its fullness! Likeness to Christ! Fullness of communion with Him! Abundance of the Spirit of God—being filled with all the fullness of God! An excess of joy! A perpetual influx of delight! Perfection of holiness! No stain nor thought of sin! Perfect submission to the Divine will! A delight and acquiescence in and conformity to that will! Absorption as it were into God—the creature still the creature—but filled with the Creator to the brim!

And more—serenity caused by a sense of safety! Continuance of heavenly service! An intense satisfaction in serving God day and night! Bliss in the society of perfect spirits and glorified angels! Delight in the retrospect of the past! Delight in the enjoyment of the present and in the prospect of the future! Something ever new and forevermore the same! A delightful variety of satisfaction and a heavenly sameness of delight! Clear knowledge! Absence of all clouds! Ripeness of understanding! Excellence of judgment! And, above all, an intense vigor of heart and the whole of that heart set upon Him whom our eye shall see to be altogether lovely!

I have looked at the crests of a few of the waves as I see them breaking over the sea of immortality. I have tried to give you the names of a few of the peaks of the long alpine range of Glory. But, ah, what are *my* words, and what are *my* thoughts? “Eye has not seen, nor has ear heard the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.” Our only satisfaction in thinking of it is that, “He has revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” May His Spirit dwell in you and give you foretastes of the rest which remains—ante pasts of the eternal banquet where Christ will drink the new wine with us in His heavenly Father’s kingdom.

III. Briefly on the last point—THE BOND OF INTIMATE CONNECTION BETWEEN JUSTIFICATION AND GLORY. “Whom He justified, them He glorified.” Let me show you why it must be—in the first place, a justified

person has in him the bud of Glory. What is Glory? It is a state of perfect peace—"Therefore, being justified, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." What is Glory? It is a state of rest—"We, which have believed, do enter into rest." What is Glory? It is a state of safety. When sin is pardoned I am secure. I am safe—safe now—through being justified.

What is Heaven? It is a place of nearness to God—but He has made us near by the blood of His Son having justified us. What is Heaven? It is communion with Christ—but, Beloved, we have already boldness and access with boldness unto our Lord Jesus, seeing He has made us accepted in Himself. If you will but look carefully into justification you may see Heaven hidden within it. They tell us that inside the acorn there is the whole oak with all its branches and roots. And, certainly, within justification, there is Heaven with all its light, and life, and love, and joy, and perpetual serenity and security.

If you are justified, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you are already in a sense glorified. You notice how the text puts it. It does not say, "Whom He justified, them He *will* glorify," but, "them He *also* glorified," as if the thing came at the same time. Certainly it does in *embryo*, in the germ, in the *essence* of the thing. He that is justified, is, in a certain sense, glorified, for, "He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Even this day, the life that we live is, "not I that live, but Christ that lives in me." Heaven is begun, Glory is begun *below*.

Note again, justification is a *claim* to glorification. I speak with great reverence here and caution, I hope. But it does not strike me that it could be consistent with the Justice of God to deny eternal Glory to a justified person. Certainly, justification has its rights. I am now speaking forensically, using forensic or legal terms. Justification is a legal term, signifying that the person is right in the eyes of the Law. Now he that is right in the eyes of the Law has a claim to the protection and smile of the Law. And if I have a righteousness to which a promise is appended, I have a right to the promise appended to the righteousness which I possess.

The promise is, "He that does these things, shall live by them." And I claim to live by them. I claim to live by virtue of what Christ has done for me! I come before God with His Son's righteousness in my hands. And I claim as a matter of justice to His own dear Son that He should give to me what His Son has merited because the merits of His dear Son have been by Him willed over in His dying breath to *me*! Oh, Christian, God cannot condemn you unless He should cease to be just. He will not, for He cannot cease to be gracious. Justification would be but a very sorry gift of God if it did not involve Glory.

Oh, to be justified and then cast into Hell? Brethren, can you suppose such a thing? If you can so pervert your imaginations and make your judgments play the acrobat as to conceive a justified soul damned, then I ask you what greater curse could the infernal Fiend himself confer upon a mortal than this so-called justification? A spirit pronounced just and then sent down to Hell, accursed of God, accursed by the same lips that justified it? Blasphemous thought! To lie in those flames and to remember that I once had the righteousness of Christ—that I once was washed in His precious blood—oh, impossible! It shall not, must not, cannot be while the

Deity is immutable and while the strong hand of God will not suffer the righteousness of Christ thus to be covered with disgrace!

He did not begin to build and then fail to finish. “Whom He justified, them He also glorified.” Where a man has done the greater, he does not fail to do the less. Now it is a greater thing to justify a man than it is to glorify him. I mean this—that justification cost the Savior’s life and the Savior’s death—but to glorify a man who is already justified costs God nothing. The expense is already laid out in the justification of the soul. And to take a man to Heaven is only to take him to a prepared place for which he is, himself, prepared. Shall He do the greater and then neglect the less? “He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things?”

The only question is, am I justified? I would say in closing, do not let that be a question, dear Hearer. But look to Him who freely justifies every believing soul and trust yourself now in His hands. May the Spirit of God bring you graciously to do it and you shall find it true, “Whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

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GOD IS WITH US

NO. 580

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 17, 1864,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“If God is for us, who can be against us?”
Romans 8:31.*

THE Truth of God here asserted is indisputable. Even heathens have taken this for their motto and emblazoned it upon their standards of war. “God is for us!” has been the war cry of many a warrior as he has dashed to the fight, however out of place it was in such association its force was clearly perceived. Our text, however, protects itself from ill usage, for you observe that the text is guarded with the little word, “If,” as a sentinel. No man, therefore, has any right to the treasures of this text unless he can give the password and answer the question!

It is not every man who can say that God is on his side. On the contrary, the most of men are fighting against the Lord. By nature we are the friends of sin and then God is *against* us—with all the powers of Justice He is against us for our destruction unless we turn and repent. Is God for us? Remember He is so if we have been reconciled to Him by the death of His Son. But an absolute God must be in arms against us, for even our God is a consuming fire. It is only when we behold the Lord Jehovah in the Person of Jesus Christ that our hope and joy can begin! When we see Deity Incarnate, when we see God surrendering the glories of His Throne to become Man and then stooping to the shameful death of the Cross—it is then that we perceive Emmanuel, “God with us,” and perceiving Him, we feel that He is on our side.

Question yourself then, Soul, whether you are in Christ. He who is not with Christ is not with God. If you are without Christ, you are without God and a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel. But if through the sprinkled blood you can say that you are reconciled unto God, then take the full meaning of this text and feast upon it and be blessed, for “If God is for us, who can be against us?” We shall handle the text thus and may the Holy Spirit make it profitable—how is God for us? Secondly, who are against us? And thirdly, who are not against us?

I. First, HOW IS GOD FOR US? Augustine, in his notes upon the verses preceding our text has very beautifully said that God is for us according to the preceding words of the chapter in four senses. Look back a verse or two and you will find it. He is for us, for He has predestinated us. He is for us for He has called us. He is for us for He has justified us. He is for us because He has virtually glorified us and will actually do so. To the people of God here are four very prolific subjects of thought.

1. God is for us, because, according to the words of the Apostle He has predestinated His people to be conformed to the image of His own dear Son. Now, if God has predestinated us to eternal life, who can be against us? Must not the predestinating decree of God take effect? If God has de-

terminated it, who shall disannul it? If God has said it shall be, who is he that shall stay His hand, or resist the Omnipotent fiat of the Most High? He said, "Let there be light: and there was light." He bade the world spring out of nothing and forth it came. All things obey Him. Heaven adores Him. Hell trembles at Him. No creature can resist Him.

As the potter molds the clay according to his own will while it revolves upon the wheel, even so the Infinite, the Omnipotent Jehovah does according to His good pleasure in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world. "It is He that sits upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." He takes up the isles as a very little thing. Who then, out of these little things, can stand against or resist Him?

See, my Brethren, the force of God's decree of old in the case of Israel. The Lord had promised to Abraham that his seed should inherit the whole land of Canaan, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. See, amid the smoke of the brick kilns Israel toils in Egypt. How was God's decree to be fulfilled? When God makes bare His arm, you shall see and wonder! Pharaoh and all his hosts cannot hold those captives whom God determines to set free!

There they go, led forth like sheep by the hands of Moses and Aaron. They cross the desert until they come to the sea, even to the Red Sea. See, the mighty stream rolls before them and their ferocious enemies are behind but the Lord has determined that they shall inherit the land and therefore neither can the sea refuse to divide, nor can Pharaoh save himself when he goes down into the depths thereof. They are in the wilderness—famine shall destroy them! No, the heavens drop with manna! Thirst shall scorch them! No, the Rock follows them with its living stream! The serpents shall surely bite them! Yes, but the brazen serpent is lifted up and whoever looks shall be healed! The Amalekites attack them, but while Moses holds up his hands Joshua puts the foe to the route.

They come to the banks of the Jordan—what ailed you, O Jordan, that you were driven back? The priests go through dry-shod and all the people of God march after them. Then the Canaanites, with their chariots of iron, came against them in battle. The kings of mighty cities anointed the shield and laid hold on sword and buckler. But which of them prevailed? Did not Jehovah destroy them all? As He had given them Og, king of Bashan, "because His mercy endured forever," and Sihon, king of the Amorites, "because His mercy endured forever," so not a man could stand against them until they possessed the land!

The right hand of the Lord fulfilled His own decree. His own right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory. As with a rod of iron He dashes His enemies in pieces like a potter's vessel. None could withstand the hosts of Israel! The walled cities were cast down and the people of God dwelt in the fat of the land. See, Beloved, the result of God's decree! The sons of Jacob were feeble and weak but the Lord made them strong enough to drive out the Anakim who were men of gigantic stature—for His purpose shall stand—He will do all His pleasure. Let us beware of fighting against one who has God in league with him! It is in vain to fight against God!

It was a good remark of the soothsayers to Haman of old. They said, "If Mordecai is of the seed of the Jews, before whom you have begun to fall, you shall not prevail against him but shall surely fall before him." And so if any man is of the company of the elect—if he is one of those whose names are written in the Book of Life—his enemies may contend but they shall never prevail against him! He must stand whom the Lord ordains to hold. And if God determines his salvation, neither mortal nor infernal power shall prevail to destroy him.

On this account we may boldly say with the Apostle, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" You cannot believe in a disappointed God—you cannot imagine the imperial decree from the Throne of Heaven treated as waste paper. It would be far from us so to blaspheme God as to think that any power, known or unknown, can ever overcome Him! "Has He said and shall He not do it? Has He commanded and shall it not come to pass?" If your soul is written upon the palms of Jesus' hands and engraved on His heart, no weapon which is formed against you shall prosper and every tongue which rises against you in judgment, you shall condemn!

2. But in looking back you observe the second thing—God is on our side for He has called us. In the Word of God much stress is laid upon calling. When Abraham left the land of his forefathers and went forth, not knowing where he went, he was quite safe, though in the midst of implacable enemies, because God had called him. "Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his feet, gave the nations before him and made him rule over kings?" Who but the God that called him?

On that memorable occasion, when Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings, you remember Melchizedek met him. At that time Abraham was in great peril for there was every probability that the defeated kings would gather their troops, would form alliances with other kings and would certainly come up to cut down so insignificant a person as that wandering shepherd, Abraham. But what does God say to him—"Fear not, Abraham, I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward." This became his comfort—God had called him. He was a called man and where God calls, He will not desert His chosen.

"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." He does not reverse the call which He has given, but having once called His children He remains faithful to the call He has given. To use the illustration we have used before, when God called His son out of Egypt, when He fetched Israel from the furnace who could stand against the called Israelites? Plague after plague ravaged the land. The cattle died. The crops were blasted. Frogs came up into the king's chamber! Lice covered all their borders—at last the first-born of Egypt died and they besought Israel to go forth—for when God called them out, who could hold them in? When He said to His prisoners, "Go forth," what bolts of iron, or what gates of brass could keep them captives? Let the Lord call by the effectual voice—who is he that shall stand against Him?

Many of us, I trust, have heard the sacred call—we have made our calling and election sure. You know how you were called from darkness to light—from sin to holiness—from self-righteousness to spiritual faith in Jesus. Now, He who has called you is faithful and He will not forsake the work of His own hands. He has not called you in order to put you to

shame! He has not quickened you and preserved you and brought you thus far to deliver you over to the hands of your enemies! “Be of good courage and He shall strengthen your heart.” Wait upon the Lord for His call will give you comfort. “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

3. But again—God proves that He is for us by having justified us. All the people of God are wrapped about with the righteousness of Christ. And wearing that glorious robe, the eyes of God see no fault in them—Jehovah sees no sin in Jacob, neither iniquity in Israel. Christ is seen and not the sinner! Christ being therefore perfection’s own self, the Believer is seen as perfect in Him. God regards His people with the same affection as that wherewith He loves His only-begotten Son!

He has pronounced them clean and clean they are. He has proclaimed them just, covered with the righteousness of Christ and just they are. Come on you accusing devil—come on you who lay a thousand things to our charge—if our Jesus pronounces our acquittal, who is he that condemns? If He mounts the chariot of salvation, who is he that can be against us? Is it not a mysteriously blessed thing to wear upon one’s soul the mark of complete justification? The heathen have a custom of marking themselves upon the forehead with the seal of their God. But, oh, what a seal is this to wear—what a mark of the Lord Jesus—to go about this world a perfectly justified man!

God looks upon common men with anger—they are not reconciled unto Him. But towards His people He looks always with eyes of love—no anger is in His heart to them—not a jot of wrath. All this has been put away through the great Sacrifice. Towards them His whole heart goes out—“The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their cry.” Being justified, they have peace with God through Jesus Christ their Lord. O dear Friends, if God is at peace with you, it matters not who is at war with you!

If your Master acquits, it little matters who condemns. If Jehovah absolves, it matters not if your name is cast out as evil! It matters not if you are ranked among the vilest of the vile—if your name is a byword and a proverb only fit to be worked up into the drunkard’s song—for who is he that can be against you? What are all these things if put into the balance but lighter than vanity, if Jehovah Himself has justified you?

4. And yet again, another sweet reflection comes here—He has also glorified us! Remember the four golden links of the chain—“Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” Now, in one sense God’s people are glorified even now for He “has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

Mark, it does not say, “He has *promised* that we shall sit there,” but He “has” made us sit there! *We* do sit there at this hour for Christ is the Representative of every soul for whom He shed His blood! And when Christ took His seat in Heaven every elect soul took his seat in Heaven representatively. Remember, Beloved, that the glorification of God’s people is a certain fact. It is not a thing which *may* be, but it is a thing which *must* be. What does Jesus Christ say to His people when He gathers them at His right hand? “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Observe that. Do you think God has prepared a kingdom and that He will not bring His people there? Moreover it is said, "Prepared for you"—for *you*—the chosen people of God. And do you imagine that the Covenant wisdom of God would prepare a kingdom for men who would not ultimately get there? Would He plan and arrange how to make them eternally blessed and yet allow them to perish by the way? "Prepared for you," remember, "from the foundation of the world."

There is a crown in Heaven which no head can fit but mine. There is a harp there which no fingers must ever touch but mine! Child of God there is a mansion in Heaven which will never be rightly tenanted if you do not get there! And there is a place at God's right hand which must be empty—it will be said, "David's seat was empty," unless you shall arrive there! Will it be so? Will there be empty mansions in Heaven? Will there be crowns without heads to wear them? Will there be harps without hands to strike them?

No! The muster roll of the redeemed shall be read and not *one* shall be found absent! As many as were written upon the breastplate of the great High Priest shall be securely found there—

***"Not death nor Hell shall ever divide
His chosen from His breast.
In the dear bosom of His love
They must forever rest."***

This gives a fourth reason why God is for us.

But, O my Brethren, though this brings in the context, I cannot—it is impossible for any human speech to bring out the depth of the *meaning* of how God is for us! He was for us before the worlds were made—He was for us, or else He never would have given His Son. He was for us even when He struck the Only-Begotten and laid the whole weight of His wrath upon Him! He was for *us* though He was against Him! He was for us when we were ruined in the Fall—He loved us notwithstanding all. He was for us when we were against Him and with a high hand were bidding Him defiance! He was for us, or else He never would have brought us humbly to seek His face.

He has been for us in many struggles. We have had to fight through multitudes of difficulties. We have had temptations from without and within—how could we have held on until now if He had not been with us? He is for us, let me say, with all the Infinity of His heart, with all the Omnipotence of His love! He is for us with all His boundless wisdom. Arrayed in all the attributes which make Him God He is for us—eternally and immutably for us! He is for us when yon blue skies shall be rolled up like a worn out vesture—for us throughout eternity! Here, Child of God, is matter enough for thought even though you had ages to meditate upon it—God is for you! And if God is for you, who can be against you?

II. In the second place, WHO ARE AGAINST US? The Apostle never meant to say that Christians have no enemies for he knew better than that! An old Latin writer observes upon this text that the succeeding context will show us the enemies we have who are against us. Very briefly let us notice that there are four main enemies who conspire against the life of the children of God—these are man, the world, the flesh and the devil. These always will be against us but who are they?

1. First, there is man. How man has struggled against man! Man is the wolf of mankind. Not the elements in all their fury nor the wild beasts of prey in all their cruelty have ever been such terrible enemies to man as man has been to his own fellow! When you read the story of the Marian persecution in England, you are astounded that ever creatures wearing a human form could be so bloodthirsty. Call these Catholics who thus persecuted the Protestants? Call them Catholics? Much better call them cannibals for they behaved more like savages than Christians in their bloody martyrdoms and murders of the saints of God!

We do not in this age feel the cruelty of man to that extent but this is only because the custom of the land will not allow it. There are many who dare not strike with the hand who are very busy in laying on their tongue—and this not by exposing our errors which they have a perfect right to do—but in many cases the children of God are misrepresented, slandered, abused, persecuted, ridiculed for Truth's sake. We know many instances where other means are resorted to— anything to drive the servants of God away from their integrity and from their simple following of their Master.

Well did the Lord Jesus say, "Beware of men." "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be you wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Do not expect men to be the friends of your piety, or if they are, suspect the reality of that piety of which ungodly man is a friend. You must expect to be sometimes bullied and sometimes coerced—to be sometimes flattered and threatened.

You must expect at one time to meet with the oily tongue which has under it the drawn sword and at another time with the drawn sword itself. Look out and expect that men will be against you. But what are they all? Suppose every living man in the world were against you and that you had to stand in solitude like Athanasius? You might say, as Athanasius did, "I, Athanasius, against the whole world! I know I have Truth on my side and therefore against the world I stand."

Of what use was the malice of men against Martin Luther? They thought to burn him, but he died in his bed despite them all. They thought to put an end to him, but his little tracts went everywhere and the words of Luther seemed to be carried on the wings of angels until in the most distant places the Pope found an enemy suddenly springing up where he thought the good seed had all been destroyed. I do not know that it is of any great service to have numbers with you. I question whether Truth has not generally to be with the minority and whether it is not quite as honorable to serve God with two or three as it would be with two or three millions.

If numbers could make a thing right, idolatry ought to be the right religion and if in countries across the sea numbers made the thing right, why, those who fear the Lord would be few, indeed, and idolatry and Romanism would be the right thing! Never judge according to numbers—say they are nothing but men after all. If they are good men fight on their side. But if they and the Truth of God fall out, fall out with Truth! Be a friend to the Truth—make your appeal to the Law and to the Testimony—and if they speak not according to this Word it is because there is no light

in them. And if there is no light in them do not trust your soul with them—for if the blind leads the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch.

Who then, what then, are men? Only puppets moved by God's hand. He has the string to pull them all which way He wills and if they will not serve Him He can soon put them quietly into the grave. Therefore be not afraid of the son of man who is but a worm, a little heap of dust! Be not dismayed by him. And if he puts on a black and terrific face, look him in the face with your own truthfulness and put him to the blush. That was grand of Latimer when he preached before Henry VIII. He had greatly displeased His Majesty by his boldness in a sermon preached before the king and was ordered to preach again on the following Sunday and to make an apology for the offense he had given.

After reading his text, the bishop thus began his sermon—"Hugh Latimer, do you know before whom you are this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away your life if you offend. Therefore, take heed that you speak not a word that may displease. But then consider well, Hugh, do you not know from where you I? Upon whose message you are sent? Even by the great and mighty God who is All-Present, and who beholds all your ways and who is able to cast your soul into Hell! Therefore, take care that you deliver your message faithfully."

He then proceeded with the same sermon he had preached the preceding Sunday, but with considerably more energy! Such courage should all God's children show when they have to do with man. You are yourself nothing but a worm! But if God puts His Truth into you, do not play the coward or stammer out His message, but stand up manfully for God and for His Truth!

Some people are forever crying up what they call a becoming modesty. Modesty is very becoming but an ambassador of God must recollect there are other virtues besides modesty. If Her Majesty sent an ambassador to a country with whom we were at war and the little man should step into the conference and say, "I humbly hope you will excuse my being here. I wish to be in all things complacent to your honors and lordships the ambassadors. I feel I am a young man and you are much older than I am and therefore I cheerfully submit my judgment to your superior wisdom and experience," and so on. Why I am sure Her Majesty would command him back again and then command him into a long retirement!

What business has he to humble himself when he is an ambassador for the Queen! He must remember he is clothed with the dignity of the power which sent him. And even so is God's minister and he counts it foul shame to stoop to any man! He takes for his motto, *Cedo nulli*, "I yield to none," and preaching God's Truth in love and honesty, he hopes to be able to render a fair account to his Master at last—for only unto his Master does he stand or fall!

2. The second adversary is the world. This world is like a great field covered with brambles and thorns and thistles and as the Christian goes through it he is continually in danger of tearing his garments or cutting his feet. Yet—

***"The dear path to our abode,
Lies through this barren land."***

Every citizen of Heaven must be taught with thorns and briars, as were the men of Succoth. Every child of God must march through the enemies' land, for Christ says, "I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One."

When is a Christian out of danger? Never. If he is prosperous, then he is apt to grow purse-proud or carnally secure. If adversities press upon him, then he is apt to murmur and to grow unbelieving. There are temptations in the high places of the earth and the valleys are not without them. When the Christian is in honor he is in great peril. Ah, how many have found the high places to be slippery ones? When the Believer is in shame and disrepute, he is in danger, too, for many professors have found this cross too heavy for their shoulders. A Believer ought to walk through this world expecting to meet with an enemy behind every hedge, reckoning it a wonder if he shall escape for a single day without a bullet from the foe!

You are in an enemy's country and this enemy is on the alert continually. You may sleep, but the world never sleeps! Its customs are always seeking to bind you with their chains. Its spirit is creeping over you while you are in the Exchange, or in the market, or even in the family! You will find the very atmosphere of this world tends to make you sleep as do others. You will have much ado while you are in this state of temptation to stand your ground and unless you watch and pray the world will be too much for you.

O Brethren, I would that we knew the world to be more our enemy than we do, for many walk as if they were friends with this world! But such is not the Christian's position—he can say, "The world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." Luther used to say there was no love lost between him and the world, for the world hated him and he hated it no less. There is a memorable story told of a good old minister when some young minister went weeping to him because he had been slandered. "Ah," said he, "that is a trouble I shall never have again, for I lost my character the first year of my ministry and Slander herself can say no more than she has said."

God's servants must expect to lose their characters, to have every virtue denied them and every vice imputed to them. But under all this they can face the world and say to it, "You think badly of me, do you? Not so badly as I think of you! You throw this and that in my teeth—I throw worse things in yours. And whereas you say I am a noisy busybody and a meddler, I will tell you I purpose to be wilder still and to be noisier still against you and to meddle yet more with your vanities which ruin the souls of men."

The world is a terrible assailant if we are left alone in the conflict, but what is the world, after all, if God is for us? As for this present age, where will it be in forty years? I see a long line of turf mounds and many a, "Here he lies"! And this generation is all gone, it passes away in the fashion thereof. It is like a candle-snuff and he that cares for it is like a man worshipping a dying taper. Care little for this world, but think much of the world to come! This poor quicksand—get off of it lest it swallow you up! But yonder Rock of Ages—build on *it* and you shall never suffer loss!

3. I think we said there is a third enemy and that is the flesh. It is the worst of the three. We should never need to fear man nor the world if we

had not this wicked flesh to carry about with us. Inbred corruption is the worst corruption. "Lord," said Augustine, "deliver me from my worst enemy, that wicked man myself." If a Christian could lay himself down and run away from himself and never see himself again he would be delighted beyond measure, for, "truly in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing," is the experience not of the Apostle only, but of every child of God!

When you would do good, evil is present with you. You want to flee, but like the hawk which has a chain to her leg you can but stretch your wings and flutter—you cannot mount aloft. You long to feel your heart as hot as an oven, but there is a mountain of ice within you which chills your flaming desires. To will is present with you—oh, if you could be what you would be! But how to perform that which is good you find not by reason of the infirmity and weakness of your nature and the depravity you have inherited from your parents.

Some of you have an irritable temper. It will be your plague until you die. Others find that though you desire to be liberal to the cause of God, yet a covetous disposition has to be struggled with. Some have to fight against levity, others against pride. And, on the other hand there are some of us whose daily burden is to fight against despondency and lowness of spirits—so that we have all some besetting sin. But if God is for us, what matters the flesh? Ah, poor Flesh! You may kick and struggle as you will, but when God holds His silver scepter over you, you shall surely yield! When Jehovah decrees that a man shall be sanctified, that man's flesh may cry and groan but the furnace shall refine him. The Holy Spirit shall purify him and experience shall teach him and the blood of Christ shall perfect him. Despite that wicked heart of ours, we shall on eagles' wings ascend and be found without fault before the Throne of God!

4. The last enemy is the devil. I do not know whether he is worse than the flesh or not, but I think I may put him down as being about on a par with it. For when the devil meets our flesh, the two shake hands and say, "How do you do, Brother?" Truly the two are brothers—for our flesh was originally in the family of wrath.

Ah, that arch-traitor Satan! Little do we know what temptations he is plotting and planning for us even now. He is so crafty that he understands human nature better than human nature understands itself. He has been playing the trade of a tempter for six thousand years! He ought to be a thorough master of the business. And certainly he is. He who made us knows more of us than Satan does—but, next to God—Satan is the best student of humanity.

He knows our weak points, too. He understands where to touch us so as to touch our bone and our flesh. He knows how to cover up the hook with the bait—for every soul he has his lure and for every sinner he has his trap. He knows how to take one this way and the other the opposite—some by straining after pretended spirituality and others by descending into the grossest sensuality. Depend on it, my Brothers and Sisters, you may think yourself to be safe against Satan but there is a joint in your harness and he will find it. And remember, as one leak may sink a ship, so one weak point may be and would be your ruin if God did not prevent it! But what matters the devil when we have this text—"If God is for us, who can be against us?"

The devil is mighty, but God is Almighty! Satan is strong, but all strength belongs to God! What is Satan, after all, but an enemy who has had his head broken? He is a broken-headed dragon. The Lord has a hook in his nose and a bridle in his jaws and He knows how to pull him back. Sometimes I wish He would take him up a link or two, that he might not be so busy among some of our Churches. But he is a *chained* enemy—the Lord lets him go just so far—but never any further. Oh, if the Fiend could get just a little further, what havoc he would work!

You know how it was with Job—Satan dared not touch his flesh at first—he could only touch his children and cattle. He had to get permission to touch his flesh and even then he dared not touch his life. He went as far as his tether and vexed poor Job with sore troubles—but he could not go any further—for God restrained him. Rejoice, Christian, whether it is man, or the world, or your flesh, or Satan—if God has predestinated you, called you, justified you and in the Person of Jesus Christ glorified you—you may put the whole together and then say, “Who can be against us?” As chaff is driven away, so, O Lord, have You driven them away.”

III. We shall close our meditation this morning—God make it profitable to His own people—by observing WHO ARE THOSE WHO ARE NOT AGAINST US. There are some who cannot be our enemies. Here is a very pleasing part of the subject. God the Father cannot be against us. He is our Father! He cannot be against His own children! He has chosen us—He will not cast us away—He has adopted us into His family, He will never discard us. He has been pleased to ordain us unto eternal life, He will never reverse the decree.

He was for us in the Covenant of Grace when He planned the way to save rebellious man. He has been for us in the great ordering of Providence—all things have worked together for good for us until now. We wonder how we have arrived where we now are—but surely Providence, under God, has worked wondrously on our behalf! He is for us in all the decrees which are yet to be fulfilled. There is not a single line in the great Book which is against the Christian. You may rest assured that whether the earth shall rock and reel, or the moon is black as a sackcloth of hair, or the earth is licked up with tongues of fire, still Jehovah has not a single thought, nor wish, nor word, nor look against any one of the blood-bought ones. They are all safe in Him! God the Father cannot be against us.

Then God the Son is not against us. O Beloved, how sweetly He has been for us! I think I see Him now, lifting up that face all covered with bloody sweat and saying to every Believer, “I am for you. These goutts of gore fall to the dust for you. I sweat great drops of blood that I might redeem you.” He stands before Pilate. And when He is brought forth with the “Ecce homo,” I think I hear Him say, “Poor Sinner, I am for you.” I see Him carrying the Cross upon His bleeding shoulders and every step He takes is to this tune, “I am for you.”

I behold Him bleeding upon the Cross with outstretched hands and all His wounds and all the drops of blood which flow from His side, all say, “Christ is for you.” Today, as He pleads before the Eternal Throne, this is the tenor of His plea, “I am for you.” When He shall come a second time without a sin offering, unto salvation, the sound of the mighty trumpet which shall herald His advent will ring out, “Christ is for you, O you

blood-bought saints.” When He shall sit upon the Throne of His Father and His kingdom shall come—of which there shall be no end—this shall be the tenor of that kingdom, “I am for My people. I will rule My people righteously and bless the nations upon earth.”

Christ cannot be against you. You cannot look into that dear face of His and think that He will ever leave you. Your Husband is married to you and He has proved His love by such indisputable tokens that you must not, oh, you *cannot* doubt it! Child of God, I almost defy you to doubt the love of your Lord Jesus Christ. How can He put you away? Could He have bought you at such a price—could He have suffered so much for you and yet leave you—throw you away upon the dunghill? Impossible! Impossible! Those wounds forever seal your everlasting security!

Then the Holy Spirit cannot be against us. He must always, as the Comforter, comfort His own people. As the Illuminator He must lead us into the Truth of God. As the great Giver of Life He must always quicken us from our death of sin. Whatever power the Holy Spirit has it is all engaged for us! “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Then the holy angels—these cannot be against us. Before Elisha opened his servant’s eyes, the servant had cried, “Alas, Master, what shall we do?” when he saw the Syrians and their chariots. But now he sees horses of fire and chariots of fire round about Elisha. It is so with you! The angels are ministering spirits who minister unto the heirs of salvation. They bear you up in their hands lest you dash your foot against a stone.

Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth both when we wake and when we sleep—and when the black angels come to attack us, the good angels contend against them and many a heavenly duel is fought where none but spirit eyes can see! Many a sacred fight goes on for the defense of the saints, even as Michael fought with the dragon for the body of Moses. The good angels are all for us and here we may rejoice. Then we know the Law of God cannot be against us. It was our enemy once through our sins, but it is now satisfied. Christ has made it honorable. It has not a word to say against any soul that is justified in Christ.

The Justice of God has not a word to say against the Christian! On the contrary, Justice is well content to confirm the saving decree, “For,” says Justice, “that sinner owes me nothing—Christ has discharged his debts. I will not put that sinner in prison—I have no right to do so, for Christ was imprisoned instead of him. I will not lay my whip upon his shoulders for Christ suffered with His much-plowed shoulders in the place of that poor believing soul.” So, Christian, whoever may be against you, here is a comfort—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit never can be against you! Nor the angels of Heaven, the Law and Justice of God—they must always be for you. And if it is so, who can be against you?

Two remarks and then I have done. One is there is an opposite to all this, and it belongs to some who are present here this morning. If God is AGAINST you, who can be for you? If you are an enemy to God this morning, your very blessings are curses to you! Your pleasures are only the prelude to your pains. Remember, Sinner, that whether you have adversity or prosperity, so long as God is against you, you can never truly prosper. If you spread yourself like a green bay tree it is only that you may be ready for the axe! You may be fattened with wealth but you are only pre-

pared as the bullock for the slaughter. Take these words home, I pray you, and let them ring in your ears—"If God is against me"—just that supposition! A supposition which is *fact* because you have not believed in Christ—you have not given your heart to God. "If God is against me!"

Will you just think this over on your road home? Take half-an-hour this afternoon to think it over. "If God is against me, what then? What will become of me in time and eternity? If God is against me, how shall I die—how shall I rise again? How shall I face Him in the Day of Judgment if God is against me?" It is not an impossible "if," but an "if" which amounts to a certainty, I fear, in the case of many who are sitting in this house today.

Then, Christian, here is another thought and I have done. If God is for you, do you not see how you ought to be for God? If God has espoused your cause, ought you not to espouse His? I pleaded with you last Sunday since Christ has pleaded the causes of your soul to plead the cause of Christ. There is a great battle which has only just began! The trumpet which musters the warriors sounds loud and long and the fight will be stern and desperate between Christ's pure Truth and the ceremonials of the world's Church.

You must take your post, every one of you, on one side or the other. "If the Lord is God, follow Him—but if Baal, then follow him." One side or the other you must be on and I beg you, if God has been for you and defended you, stand up for Him! Never deny a jot of Christ's Truth. Not a hair of the head of Christ's Truth must ever be suffered to be touched with the smell of the fire of compromise. Be not as the harlots were who stood before Solomon. You remember one was quite content to have half the living child. But be your motto, "All or none—I will never take a particle of error. Death to it all!" No amalgamation, no compromise, no peace with error!

The men of this generation cry to me and say, "Is there peace?" and my answer is, "What peace can there be so long as the sins of Jezebel are so many?" Then they revile me and say, "Are you he that troubles Israel?" I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house, in that you have forsaken the Commandments of the Lord and you have followed Baal."

Stand up and bear witness against regeneration by Baptism and against those who use Popish words and would have us believe that it is right to attach another sense to them! Take your part with Christ and His despised people and when the day comes when He shall distribute His rewards, happy shall that man be who never flinched. And blessed shall he be and shall she be who stood fast in the evil day and stood still in the integrity of the Lord and in the firmness of His Truth, firm even to the end! The Lord bless you in this thing for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE SAINTS' RICHES

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***“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?”
Romans 8:32.***

MANY of you, dear Friends, are coming to the Lord's Table at the close of this service. Our blessed Redeemer instituted that simple but sublime ordinance so that we might be kept in constant remembrance of Him. The bread is nothing but bread, yet it is the very suggestive emblem of Christ's flesh. And it shall be well with you if, after a spiritual fashion, you shall thus eat the flesh of Christ. The wine is nothing but wine, yet is it the emblem of Christ's blood. And they are thrice blessed who experimentally understand the meaning of Christ's words, "Whoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life." Christ is yours, Believer! You know that He is more yours than even your own life, for that you may lose. When God gave you your existence, He gave it to you without any covenant as to its prolongation, but He has given Christ to you by an Everlasting Covenant, to be yours forever and ever! Christ is yours, Beloved! Oh, that you knew how to make the best use of this blessed property! Christ is yours to live upon and to spend, yours to have and to hold, to keep and to enjoy, yours not only to look at that you may be saved, and to wear that you may be justified, but yours to eat that you may be refreshed by Him and live upon Him! Christ is yours to the fullest extent possible! There is no reservation—He is your absolute, indefeasible and inalienable property—yours, today, as perfectly as He will be when you are in Heaven! Yours as certainly as you are His. Oh, that you may now, knowing that Christ is thus your property, live upon Him, rejoice in Him and feel that you are, indeed, immeasurably rich!

When we come to this Communion Table, to partake of these emblems of Christ's death, it will be a very happy thing for us if we remember that possessing Christ, we have everything. There is no need that you have which will not be supplied if you really know that Christ is yours. There is no necessity, however great, which may press upon you which shall not be instantaneously supplied if Christ is truly yours. You come to Christ's Table to meet with Christ and you know that when you have Him, you have everything, so you do well to sing—

“You, O Christ, are all I need”—

for in Him you have all that you can possibly need. And, moreover, the gift of Christ is God's solemn pledge that He will keep back from you nothing that you really need. “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” “Whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.” Having given you Christ, He must, He will—with Christ—freely give you all things—

**“How vast the treasure we possess!
How rich Your bounty, King of Grace!
This world is ours and worlds to come—
Earth is our lodge and Heaven our home.
All things are ours—the gift of God!
The purchase of a Savior's blood
While the good Spirit shows us how
To use and to improve them, too.”**

I am going to make it my business, in a very simple but earnest manner, to try and exhort the children of God to cast aside all thoughts of their being poor and to rejoice, now, in their boundless riches in Christ Jesus!

I. First, let me remind you, Believer, that, whatever you may really require, God will not deny it to you, for He has already given you Christ! THINK WHAT THIS GIFT WAS TO THE FATHER—it was His only-begotten and well-beloved Son!

Perhaps you have a willful, wayward boy—one who costs you much, but brings you little comfort—yet, would you like to lose him? If you saw him in his coffin tomorrow, would you not cry over him as David cried over his son, “O my son, Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son”? Vile he may be, and a disgrace to your name, yet he is still your child and you could not bear to give him up. But what shall I say of the child who, from his youth up, has been obedient to you? Who, having grown up to manhood, has become your friend as well as your offspring? Who has been with you in every holy enterprise and has proved himself to be worthy of his father's love and esteem? Could you give him up? Mother, you know how dear is your first-born son to you. Of all griefs that tear a mother's heart, perhaps the greatest is to lose her first-born. Even if he is only in his infancy, it is a wound from which the mother's tender heart does not soon recover. But to lose that son in manhood. To see the hale strong man suddenly cut down—this is no small sorrow—and many, under such trying circumstances, have found it no easy task to say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

To lose one's child even for some object which is nearest and dearest to our heart, is pain and grief, indeed. Then what must it have cost God to give up His Son to die for His people? What must God's love to His only-begotten Son be? We can only speak of God after the manner of men, for we know not how otherwise to speak of Him and, inasmuch, as God is infinitely greater than we are, His love is infinitely greater than ours! We

can only love to the finite degree of which humanity is capable, but God loves beyond all degree. The heart of God is filled with fathomless oceans of eternal affection—and this affection has always been fixed upon His Son! Christ is infinitely more dear to God than your son can ever be to you because of the greatness of the heart of the Father who loves His Son who has always been with Him, and ever His delight, who has never offended Him, who takes His share in all the Father's plans and who said of old, and says it always, "I delight to do Your will, O My God."

Besides, Christ is One with His Father in essence. What that mysterious Unity is, we cannot tell. And how Christ is the Son of God, we do not know. We know that His Sonship does not imply any inferiority in the Son, nor that the Father existed before the Son. He was not the Father till the Son was His Son and the names, "Father," and, "Son," are not to be understood as they are used among us, although the marvelous, indescribable relationship which we cannot fully understand cannot be better expressed than by the terms used, "the Father" and, "the Son." Again I ask—what must it have cost such a Father's heart to give up such a Son—a Son so near and so dear to Him? Yet the Father gave up His Son to die for you and for me, Beloved! Theologians lay it down as an axiom that God cannot suffer, but I am not sure that they are right. I cannot understand God's love to me. I cannot rejoice as I should in His goodness to me unless I believe that the gift of His Son cost His heart awful pangs. I know that I am treading upon delicate ground and that I am standing where thick darkness gathers, but I am not certain that what theologians take for granted is necessarily true. That God can do everything, I do believe. And I also believe that if He wills to suffer He can do so. I cannot think of God as an insensible Being when He gave His Son to die for sinners. I cannot imagine Him giving His only-begotten Son and feeling no more than a heathen idol of stone could have done. I think that the Father, in giving up that Son who had always given Him such intense joy, must have suffered in His Son's death.

Well then, as God has thus given up His only-begotten and well-beloved Son, how can He deny anything to you who believe in Him? Do you feel anxious about the bread that perishes? Is that worthy to be compared with God's only-begotten Son? Are you concerned about how you are to get food and clothing? How can God deny you such trifles as these when He has given you His Son? Perseverance in Grace—is that what you ask? Even that is but a crumb under the Master's table compared with His Son! You need certain virtues, you need help in trouble, you need sustenance under stern difficulties—I know not what you need, but this I know—all the needs of all of us put together could only make one little drop in comparison with the tremendous ocean of benevolence which flowed out of God's heart when He spared not His own Son but de-

livered Him up for us all! As we look at Christ, whom God has given to us, we must believe that, with Him, He will give us whatever we need!

II. I shall try to knock a second time at the door of your hearts to comfort you by reminding you how PRECIOUS CHRIST WAS INTRINSICALLY IN HIMSELF.

The wonder is not only that God gave His Son, but that His Son was what He was. Paul says He is “over all, God blessed forever.” Jesus Himself said, “Before Abraham was, I Am”—claiming the very name of the eternal Jehovah. In due time, Christ became Man and, as Man, He was very dear to His Father. Even His earthly mother could not look upon her Child with half the affection that His Father had for Him. He was a perfect Man and, therefore, lovely in His Father’s sight. He was, indeed, Himself God and, therefore, One with the Father even while He was Man. The loftiest angel could not adequately preach to you upon this point—unto what, then, shall I liken the preciousness of this gift? Similes fail me, metaphors I have none, “no mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls, for the price of Jesus is above rubies.” He shall not be given for gold, no, not for much fine gold. As for topaz, and onyx, and sapphire, and all other precious stones, these must not be mentioned in comparison with Him. Paul’s expression is the only appropriate one, “Thanks be unto God for His *unspeakable* gift.” Eternity alone can reveal the value of Christ! By the miseries of the Hell from which He saves us, let us measure Him! By the bliss of the Heaven to which He lifts us, let us estimate His worth! By the depths of ignominy and shame into which He dived, let us conceive of Him! By the glories He relinquished and by the agonies He bore, let us attempt to form some faint idea of His value! But this Pearl of Great Price is so precious that I am bold to say that if Heaven, and earth, and all the starry orbs could be sold, their united price could not buy such another pearl as this one which God has given to us in Christ Jesus!

So, Beloved, as God has already given you this priceless pearl, will He not also give you all else that you need? If a man gave you ten thousand pounds, would you doubt his willingness to give you a farthing? If he should give you a munificent income to last throughout all your life, would you doubt his willingness to give you a penny if you were ever in need of one? I think I need not attempt to draw the inference—you can draw it for yourselves. See, then, the wondrous treasure you possess if you are a Believer in Jesus—God is yours, the perfect Man is yours, Christ’s life, His death, His blood, His righteousness, His intercession, His Incarnation, His Second Advent are all yours—and all else that you need. Do but ask boldly, receive gratefully, wait patiently, hope trustfully and walk rejoicingly, for as God has given you His Son, shall He not, with Him, also freely give you all things? Sing with good old John Ryland—

***“He that has made my Heaven secure,
Will here all good provide!”***

***While Christ is rich, can I be poor?
What can I need beside?"***

III. But now, as a third blow at your unbelief, I want you to remember, Beloved, THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS GIFT WAS GIVEN.

The text says, "He that spared not His own Son." A mother may give up her tall strong son to fight in the army of her country and he may perish by an enemy's hand. But I cannot conceive of a mother slaughtering her own son for her country's good! We have wondered as we have read of Brutus, who, when his sons had entered into a conspiracy against the Republic, could say, "Lictors, do your duty." The father saw the corpses of his sons with the pangs of a father, but with the stern serenity of a judge they had offended—so they must die. Strong must be a man's sense of justice to be able to overcome his love so as to give up his own son to die. But our gracious God not only gave up His Son to die for us, but He was Himself, (if I may use such an expression), the executioner of Christ. Isaiah tells us in his wonderful 53rd Chapter, that "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all...It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief...you shall make His soul an offering for sin...We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." This, indeed, was the very sting of Christ's death, for He cried out in His worst agony, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Oh, what love God must have had to you and to me, for it overcame His love to His only-begotten Son! So we read in Zechariah 13:7, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the Man that is My Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." My tongue cannot tell the story of this marvelous Grace of God to you and to me, but I again remind you that although God knew that His plan of salvation involved His smiting His own Son and deserting Him in His hour of deepest need so that you and I should not perish—the Father smites, and wounds, and slays His own Son! And there upon the accursed tree, in intense pangs, unutterable, unknown, the Son of God dies, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

Well, then, Beloved, as God has given you His Son, will He not also give you all else that you need? You are about to ask for fellowship with Christ, but that will not cost the Father the smiting of His Son, again, so He will surely give it to you! You are going to ask God for holiness, but it will give Him pleasure, and nothing but pleasure to make you holy! It will certainly not involve His lifting up His hand against His only-begotten Son anymore, so it shall be God's delight to give you your heart's desire! Having given you His Son, will He not, with Him, give you whatever you believingly ask of Him? He still says, "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it." Tell Him what your present need is and you shall have all that you need. Cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you and He will take all your cares away. Shame on you, Christian, if you shall give way to

sadness—surely you will not let unbelief vex you, now! You know that God has given Christ for you—then can you fear that He will deny you anything, or leave you, at last, in trouble to sink? That is impossible! God forbid that you should slander Him by thinking that He can so act! What were you saying, poor aged Christian? “I shall want for bread.” How can it be? How can it be? The God who out of His amazing love to you has smitten His only-begotten Son will certainly give to you whatever your soul or body may need—

***“Seek first His Kingdom’s Grace to share.
Its righteousness pursue,
And all that needs your earthly care
Will be bestowed on you!
Why then despond in life’s dark vale?
Why sink to fears a prey?
The Almighty Power can never fail,
His love can never decay.”***

IV. Now, as a fourth stroke of the axe at the root of unbelief, let me remind you of THE SPIRIT IN WHICH CHRIST WAS GIVEN.

The Father gave His Son, but who asked Him to do so? Not you, certainly, for even after the Father had given Christ, you despised the wondrous gift! Who asked Him? No one of the whole human race! The thought never crossed any created mind. Angels did not throw themselves down between justice and the sinner and intercede for him. I have never read of any burning seraph crying to God, “Spare the guilty, Lord, spare the guilty! Give up Your only-begotten Son to die and let the guilty live!” I cannot conceive of anyone proposing to the Most High to make so tremendous a sacrifice. The Father did it according to His own Sovereign Will, unswayed by anything outside Himself. That self-sustained, almighty Being deigned to give this matchless manifestation of His inflexible Justice and His infinite Love to the sons of men—it was His own conception freely welling up from the depths of His own loving heart! Well, Beloved, if He gave His Son unsolicited, will He not give you all you need, now that you have learned to ask of Him, now that you understand the art of the widow woman who came to the unjust judge and can plead with the Lord in holy importunity? Now that you have been taught to knock and knock again at God’s door—as the man knocked at his friend’s door until, at last, he arose at midnight to give him the loaves he needed—surely He will not deny you what you ask! As He gave you Christ unasked, unsought—when you were dead in sin, when you were His enemy, when you hated Him—how much more, now that you are His son, adopted into His family and taught by His Spirit to pray and to plead the promises He has given you—how much more will He give you all things that you need! If you have not, surely it must be because you ask not, or because you ask amiss. Ask now! Ask in faith! Ask in the name of Jesus and all your need shall be given to you!

V. A fifth time let me try to smite down that old giant, Incredulity, by bidding you remember THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS GIFT WAS GIVEN—"delivered Him up for us all.

Not one child of God is left without that gift. Little Benjamin has as great a share in Christ as Reuben or Judah has. Mr. Ready-to-Halt has as true an interest in the blood of Jesus as Mr. Greatheart, himself, has. The ancient Jews, on the day they were numbered, had to each pay half a shekel as a ransom for their souls. The Lord said to Moses, "The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less." The redemption money was the same for all—and Christ has paid the redemption money equally for all who believe in Him! Not one of those whom He bought with His blood is left out! Not one of His chosen, not one whom He calls, not one whom He justifies—all are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. I know you are apt to say, "No doubt the Lord will give much to So-and-So, for he is an eminent saint, but not to me." Yet, as He gave Christ to you, why should He not give you all else that you need? "Oh, but I am so obscure, no one will take notice of me." Did not the Lord take notice of you when He gave you Christ? Then why should He not, with Him, freely give you all things?

"Ah," says another, "but I have been such a backslider. Not only my faith, but all my other graces are so feeble, I do not feel fit to be numbered with the Lord's people." Ah, poor Heart, that may be true, yet as God has given you Christ, why should He deny you anything that you need? I wish I could put this Truth of God in words that would never be forgotten! I would like to help every heir of Heaven to carry this Truth with him even to his tomb! It is certain that as you believe in Christ, He is yours—then it must be equally certain, be you who you may be, that "all things are yours." Go, you lonely ones, up from the hour of your mourning! Take down your harps from the willows and make every string in them praise the name of the Lord! Come, you afflicted ones, wherever you wander! Come, you who think yourselves poverty-stricken, and find yourselves infinitely rich in Christ Jesus! It always delights me to know how many poor people there are, and some very poor ones, too, who say that this House of Prayer is the happiest place to which they ever go. Dearly do they love the Truth of God and the preacher, too, for the Truth's sake. And he often thinks with gratitude, when other things have failed to cheer him, that there are poor and needy ones who will come up to the sanctuary, seeking comfort and finding it, while critics, who come only to judge, will go away thinking there is nothing notable here. And the wise men of the world and the disputers will quibble at this, and carp at that, and get no good out of it at all. But these afflicted and poor people of God know the joyful sound of His Truth and they walk in the Light of His Countenance and find it sweet, indeed, to know that Christ is theirs and that all good is theirs in Christ!

VI. Now let us turn to another argument from THE VALUE OF CHRIST TO US.

What is the value of Christ to us? Christ is to us—I pause, for what shall I say? I cannot tell all that Christ is to us, for what is He *not* to us? He is the Sun of our day! He is the Star of our night! He is our Life! He is our life's Life! He is our Heaven on earth and He shall be our Heaven in Heaven! How sweetly does Madame Guyon sing of Christ and of His exceeding preciousness to her soul! I was reading only yesterday, an account that she gives of herself and of the persecutions she endured for Christ's sake. Yet she says that it seemed to her to be just the same whether she was a prisoner in the Bastille or in the gay society of Paris, as long as she was in communion with Christ, for Christ was everything to her! And the Grace-taught Christian will tell you that he has had his happiest times on a bed of sickness, or when losses and crosses have come quickly, one upon another! Fellowship with Christ transforms a desert into a garden, a wilderness into a paradise! It makes the beggar a prince and sets the prince above the angels. Give a man, Christ—and this is no dream I speak of, no vision of a heated imagination, but in sober solemn earnest do I say it—and he has everything that a Believer can desire! Yes, there is more in Christ than a Christian can hold and, like good John Welsh, the old Covenanter, he is ready to cry, at times, when Christ's love is very sweet to him, "Hold, Lord, hold! For I can bear no more! The joy of Your love is too great for me!" Beloved of God—not beloved of kings, though men grow great if they have a king's affection—not beloved of angels, yet it were no trifle to have a seraph's affection, but Beloved of Jesus, the eternal Son of God! To have our names written on His heart and engraved on His hands, oh, how exceedingly precious is Christ to us!—

***"Precious in His death victorious,
He the host of Hell overthrows!
In His Resurrection glorious,
Victor crowned over all His foes!
Precious, Lord! Beyond expressing,
Are Your beauties all Divine!
Glory, honor, power and blessing
Be henceforth forever Thine."***

Well then, I hope you never set your food and raiment in comparison with Christ. He who gave you His unspeakable gift will give you such trifles as those! I hope you never put your worldly estate, nor even your spiritual comforts, in comparison with your blessed Lord Jesus, for as God has given you Him, what can He deny you? Pluck up your heart, poor fainting one! Be of good courage and face the foe again! You have no armor for your back, so show your breastplate to your adversary and never even dream of defeat. He who has brought you thus far and enriched you with such a priceless Gift can deny you nothing that you really need!

VII. And, lastly, remember THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH GOD GAVE HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, FOR US.

His purpose was our salvation and it is inconsistent with all right ideas of Deity to believe that the purposes of God can be frustrated. We know that our God made the heavens and the earth and that the Word of our God shall stand forever. Our God is not a lackey to the will of men and His purposes are not like footballs to be kicked about as men may please. What God says, is done! What He commands, stands fast forever! And what His heart devises, that His hands do. "God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should change." And if He wills to save, none can damn. He has proved the honesty and sincerity of His purpose to save us by giving us Christ. And if my faith has laid hold of Christ, and Christ is mine, then I know that it is God's purpose to save me! And I also know that all things that are necessary to my being saved must surely be bestowed upon me. I have never yet been able to put my mind into such a condition as to understand that God would give Christ to die with the intention of saving a man—and yet that man would not be saved!

I know that you and I, in ordinary business transactions, are accustomed to expect, if we pay the price for anything, that we should have what we buy. I am sure that I could not speculate with another man's blood—and especially I know that I could make no speculation with the blood of my own son! I must know beforehand what so great a sacrifice would effect. In like manner, we believe that God well knew what Christ's blood would buy, and what Christ's death would effect—and we cannot think that Calvary was a venture, that the Cross was a speculation—and that the death of Christ was a lottery. God forbid! Be of good courage, then, you who are redeemed—not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ—all things must be yours! How can He who has already given Christ to be the Way to Heaven, leave you without shoes for your feet, or without armor for the fight, or without anything else that you will need? He who has given the greater must and will give the less! Lay your many needs before Him. Your plea is a plea that must prevail, a knock that shall make Heaven's gates ring till the porter shall open them—and the favor that you need shall be given with open hands!

The only question I have to ask before I have done is this—*Is Christ yours?* Is Christ yours, my Hearer? Answer "Yes," or "No," tonight! He is yours, or He is not yours, there is no third answer! Is Christ yours? Do you say "No"? Alas, poor wretch, how miserable is your state now!—"condemned already." How wretched shall your state be hereafter, when, "Depart, you cursed," shall be your sentence! "I know not," says one, "whether Christ is mine or not." Do you trust Him? This is the deciding question. If you fully and implicitly trust yourself with Christ, He is

yours! If you rest in any degree upon your own works, feelings, doings, or willings, He is not yours! But if you take Him now to be your All-in-All, trusting Him and Him, alone, He is yours and He shall be yours forever and ever! Let there be no aching heart at this Communion Table tonight! Let everyone of us come to this feast of love with joy and gladness because when we can say that Christ is ours we—

***“Can smile at Satan’s rage,
And face a frowning world.”***

May the Lord give Christ to each one of us and unto Him shall be the glory world without end! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 8:26-39.

Verse 26. *Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities.* Oh, how many these are! Lack of memory, lack of faith, lack 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 makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered.* These groans are too deep, too full of meaning to be expressed in words. There are some things the Christian needs for which he cannot ask. Perhaps he does not even know what it is that he needs. 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 needs. But the Holy Spirit 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 searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* [See Sermon #1532, Volume 26—THE HOLY SPIRIT’S INTERCESSION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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.* [See Sermon #159, Volume 3—THE TRUE CHRISTIAN’S BLESSEDNESS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Almost everything in this world looks to us to be in confusion, but to God’s eyes, 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 first-born among many brethren.* [See Sermons #355, Volume 7—PORTRAITS OF CHRIST and #1043, Volume 18—GLORIOUS PREDESTINATION—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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.* [See Sermon #241, Volume 5—PREDESTINATION AND CALLING—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] My Soul, have you been called of God? Has the Spirit of God ever called you? If so, rejoice in your predestination! Have no doubts and fears concerning that matter, for He would never have called you if He had not intended to save you from before the foundation of the world!

30. *And whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.* [See Sermon #627, Volume 11—JUSTIFICATION AND GLORY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] My Soul, do you believe in Jesus? Have you trusted in His precious blood? Then you are justified! Never give way, then, to any fears concerning your eternal salvation, for as surely as there is a Heaven, you shall 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 is for us, who can be against us?* [See Sermon #580, Volume 10—GOD IS WITH US—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Have you the world against you, Christian? What is the opposition of the world when God is on your side? Is your own heart against you? What then? God is greater than your heart! Is the devil against you? 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 anything 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 justifies.* He is both Just and the Justifier of all who believe in Jesus, and they are "God's elect."

34. *Who is He that condemns?* [See Sermons #256, Volume 5—THE BELIEVER'S CHALLENGE and #2240, Volume 38—A CHALLENGE AND A SHIELD—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] "Why," says one, "Christ, the great Judge, will condemn." No, that He will not, for—

34. *It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.* 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 Your sake we are killed all 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. *No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* [See Sermon #2492, Volume 45—PAUL'S PERSUASION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

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

THE GOSPEL OF ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE OF ISAAC NO. 869

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING MAY 2, 1869,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.”
Romans 8:32.*

We have selected this verse as our theme, but our true text you will find in the 22nd chapter of Genesis, the narrative which we read to you this morning at full length and upon which we spoke in detail in our discourse. I thought it meet to keep to one point this morning, on the ground that one thing at a time is best and therefore I endeavored to lead your undivided contemplations to the peerless example of holy, believing obedience which the father of the faithful presented to us when he offered up his son.

But it would be a very unfair way of handling Holy Scripture to leave such a subject as this, so full of Christ, without dwelling upon the typical Character of the whole narrative. If the Messiah is anywhere symbolized in the Old Testament, He is certainly to be seen upon Mount Moriah where the beloved Isaac, willingly bound and laid upon the altar, is a lively foreshadowing of the Well-Beloved of Heaven yielding His life as a ransom! We doubt not that one great intent of the whole transaction was to afford Abraham a clearer view of Christ's day. The trial was covertly a great privilege, unveiling as it did to the Patriarch, the heart of the great Father in His great deed of love to men and displaying at the same time the willing obedience of the great Son who cheerfully became a burnt offering unto God.

The Gospel of Moriah, which is but another name for Calvary, was far clearer than the revelation made at the gate of Paradise, or to Noah in the ark, or to Abraham, himself, on any former occasion. Let us pray for a share in the privilege of the renowned friend of God, as we study redemption in the light which made Abraham glad. Without detaining you with any lengthened preface, for which we have neither time nor inclination, we shall first *draw the parallel between the offering of Christ and the offering of Isaac*. Then, secondly, we shall show *how the Sacrifice of Christ goes far beyond even this most edifying type*. O blessed Spirit of God, take of the things of Christ at this hour and show them unto us!

I. First, THE PARALLEL. You know the story before you. We need not repeat it, except as we weave it into our meditation. As Abraham offered up Isaac, it might be said of him that he, “spared not his own son,” so the ever blessed God offered up His Son Jesus Christ and spared Him not. There is a likeness in the person offered. Isaac was Abraham's son and in that emphatic sense, his only son—therefore the anguish of resigning him to sacrifice.

There is a depth of meaning in that word, “only,” when it is applied to a child. Dear as life to a parent's heart is his only child, no gold of Ophir nor

sparkling gems of India can be compared with it. Those of you blessed with the full quiver, having many children, would yet find it extremely difficult if one had to be taken from you, to say which it should be. A thousand pangs would rend your hearts in making a choice of one out of the seven or the 10, upon whose clay-cold brow you must imprint a last fond kiss.

But what would be your grief if you had but one?! What agony to have torn from you the only token of your mutual love, the only representative of your race! Cruel is the wind which uproots the only heir of the ancient tree! Rude is the hand which dashes the only blossom from the rose. Ruthless spoiler, to deprive you of your sole heir, the cornerstone of your love, the polished pillar of your hope! Judge, then, the sadness which pierced the heart of Abraham when God bade him take his son, his only son, and offer him as a burnt offering! But I have no language with which to speak of the heart of God when He gave up His only begotten Son!

Instead of attempting the impossible, I must content myself with repeating the words of Holy Writ: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Nothing but infinite love to man could have led the God of Love to bruise His Son and put Him to grief. Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is, in His Divine Nature, one with God, co-equal and co-eternal with Him, His only begotten Son in a manner mysterious and unknown to us! As the Divine Son the Father gave Him to us—"Unto us a Son is given, and His name shall be called the Mighty God."

Our Lord, as Man, is the Son of the Highest, according to the angel's salutation of the Virgin—"The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you: therefore also that holy Thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God." In His human Nature Jesus was not spared, but was made to suffer, bleed and die for us. God and Man in one Person, two Natures being wondrously combined, He was not spared but delivered up for all His chosen. Here is love! Behold it and admire! Consider it and wonder! The beloved Son is made a Sacrifice! He, the Only-Begotten is struck of God and afflicted and cries, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Remember that in Abraham's case *Isaac was the child of his heart*. I need not enlarge on that. You can readily imagine how Abraham loved him. But in the case of our Lord what mind can conceive how near and dear our Redeemer was to the Father? Remember those marvelous words of the Incarnate Wisdom, "I was by Him as One brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." Our glorious Savior was more the Son of God's love than Isaac could be the darling of Abraham! Eternity and infinity entered into the love which existed between the Father and the Son!

Christ in human Nature was matchlessly pure and holy, and in Him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Therefore was He highly delightful to the Father and that delight was publicly attested in audible declarations, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Yet He spared Him not, but made Him to be the Substitute for us sinners, made Him as a curse for us to be hanged on a tree. Have you a favorite child? Have you one who nestles in your bosom? Have you one dearer than all other?

Then, should you be called to part with him, you will be able to have fellowship with the great Father in delivering up His Son.

Remember, too, that *Isaac was a most lovely and obedient son*. We have proof of that in the fact that he was willing to be sacrificed, for being a vigorous young man, he might have resisted his aged father—but he willingly surrendered himself to be bound and submitted to be laid on the altar. How few there are of such sons! Could Abraham give him up? Few, did I say, of such sons? I cannot apply that term to Christ, the Son of God, for there was never another such as He! If I speak of His humanity, did anyone ever obey his father as Christ obeyed His God? “Though He were a Son yet learned He obedience.” It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him.

“Don’t you know,” He said, “that I must be about My Father’s business?” And yet this obedient Son, this Son of sons, God spared not, but unsheathed His sword against Him and gave Him up to the agony and bloody sweat, the Cross and death itself! What mighty love must have led the Father to this! Impossible is it to measure it—

**“So strange, so boundless was the love
Which pitied dying men,
The Father sent His equal Son,
To give them life again.”**

It must not be forgotten, too, that *around Isaac there clustered mysterious prophecies*. Isaac was to be the promised seed through which Abraham should live down to posterity and evermore be a blessing to all nations. But what prophecies gathered about the head of Christ?! What glorious things were spoken of Him before His coming!

He was the conquering Seed destined to break the dragon’s head. He was the Messenger of the Covenant, yes, the Covenant itself! He was foretold as the Prince of Peace, the King of kings and Lord of lords. In Him was more of God revealed than in all the works of creation and of Providence. Yet this august Person, this heir of all things, the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, must bow His head to the stroke of sacred vengeance, being given up as the Scapegoat for all Believers, the Lamb of our Passover, the Victim for our sin.

Brethren, I have left the shallows and am far out to sea tonight. I am swimming in a great deep. I find no bottom and I see no shore. I sink in deeps of wonder! My soul would rather meditate than attempt to utter herself by word of mouth. Indeed, the theme of God’s unspeakable Gift, if we would comprehend its breadth and length, is rather for the closet than for the pulpit! It is rather to be meditated upon when you muse alone at eventide than to be spoken of in the great assembly. Though we speak with the tongues of men and of angels, we cannot attain to the height of this great argument.

God gave such a One to us that the world could not find His fellow nor Heaven reveal His equal. He gave to us a Treasure so priceless that if Heaven and earth were weighed like the merchants’ golden wedge, they could not buy the like thereof. For us was given up the Chief among ten thousand and the altogether Lovely! For us the Head of most fine gold was laid in the dust, and the raven locks stained with gore. For us those eyes which are soft as the eyes of doves were red with weeping and washed

with tears instead of milk! For us the cheeks which were as a bed of spices were defiled with spit and the Countenance like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars, marred more than the sons of men! And all this was by the Father's appointment and ordaining according to the eternal purpose written in the volume of this Book.

The parallel is very clear in *the preface of the sacrifice*. Let us show you in a few words. Abraham had three days in which to think upon and consider the death of his son. Three days in which to look into that beloved face and to anticipate the hour in which it would wear the icy pallor of death. But the Eternal Father foreknew and foreordained the Sacrifice of His only begotten Son, not three days nor three years, nor 3,000 years, but before the earth was, Jesus was to His Father, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Long before His birth at Bethlehem it was foretold, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

It was an *eternal* decree that from the travail of the Redeemer there should arise a seed that should serve Him, being purchased by His blood. What perseverance of disinterested love was here! Brothers and Sisters, suffer me to pause and worship, for I fail to preach! I am abashed in the Presence of such wondrous love! I cannot understand You, O great God! I know You are not moved by passions, nor affected by grief as men are. Therefore I dare not say that You did sorrow over the death of Your Son. But oh, I know that You are not a God of stone—impassible, unmoved. You are God and therefore we cannot conceive You, but yet You do compare Yourself to a father having compassion on a prodigal. Do we err, then, if we think of You as yearning over Your Well-Beloved when He was given up to the pangs of death?

Forgive me if I transgress in so conceiving of Your heart of love, but surely it was a costly Sacrifice which You did make, costly even to You! I will not speak of You in this matter, O my God, for I cannot, but I will reverently think of You and wonder how You could have looked so steadily through the long ages and resolved so unwaveringly upon the mighty Sacrifice—the immeasurable generosity of resigning Your dear Son to be slaughtered for us!

Remember, Brothers and Sisters, that *Abraham prepared with sacred forethought everything for the sacrifice*. As I showed you this morning, he became a Gibeonite for God, acting as a hewer of wood, while he prepared the fuel for his son's burning. He carried the fire and built the altar, providing everything necessary for the painful service. But what shall I say of the great God who, through the ages, was constantly preparing this world for the grandest event in its history—the death of the Incarnate God? All history converged to this point! I venture to say it, that every transaction, whether great or small, that ever disturbed Assyria, or aroused Chaldea, or troubled Egypt, or chastened Jewry, had for its ultimate object the preparing of the world for the birth and the sacrifice of Christ!

The Cross is the center of all history! To it, from ancient ages, everything is pointing! Forward from it everything in this age proceeds and backward to it everything may be traced! How deep is this subject, yet how true! God was always preparing for the giving up of the Well-Beloved for the salvation of the sons of men! We will not tarry, however, on the preface of the sacrifice, but advance in lowly worship to behold *the act it-*

self. When Abraham came,, at last, to Mount Moriah, *he bade his servants remain at the foot of the hill*. Now, gather up your thoughts and come with me to Calvary, to the true Moriah. At the foot of that hill God bade all men stop. The 12 have been with Christ in His life-journey, but they must not be with Him in his death throes.

Eleven go with him to Gethsemane—only three may draw near to Him in His passion. But when it comes to the climax of all, they forsake Him and flee! He fights the battle by Himself. “I have trod the wine-press alone,” said He, “and of the people there was none with Me.” Although around Calvary there gathered a great crowd to behold the Redeemer die, yet *spiritually* Jesus was there alone with the avenging God. The wonderful transaction of Calvary as to its real essence and spirit was performed in solemn secrecy between the Father and the Son. Abraham and Isaac were alone. The Father and the Son were equally alone when His soul was made a Sacrifice for sin.

Did you observe, also, that *Isaac carried the wood!*—a true picture of Jesus carrying His Cross! It was not every malefactor who had to bear the tree which was afterwards to bear him—but in our Lord's case and by an excess of cruelty, wicked men made Him carry His Cross. With a felicity of exactness to the prophetic type, God had so ordered it, that as Isaac bore the wood up to the altar, so Christ should carry His Cross up to the place of doom. A point worthy of notice is that it is said, as you will find if you read the chapter of Abraham and Isaac, “that they went both of them together.” He who was to strike with the knife and the other who was to be the victim, walked in peaceful converse to the altar.

“They went both together,” agreeing in heart. It is to me delightful to reflect that Christ Jesus and His Father went both together in the work of redeeming love. In that great work by which we are saved, the Father gave us Christ, but Christ equally gave us Himself. The Father went forth to vengeance dressed in robes of love to man and the Son went forth to be the victim of that vengeance with the same love in His heart. They proceeded together and at last, *Isaac was bound*, bound by his father. So Christ was bound and He says, “You could have no power against Me unless it were given to you of My Father.”

Christ could not have been bound by Judas, nor Pilate, nor Herod if the Eternal Father had not virtually bound Him and delivered Him into the hands of the executioner. My Soul, stand and wonder! The Father binds His Son—‘tis God your Father who binds your elder Brother and gives Him up to cruel men that He may be reviled, spit upon and nailed to the Cross to die! The parallel goes still further, for while the father binds the victim, *the victim is willing to be bound*. As we have already said, Isaac might have resisted, but he did not. There are no traces of a struggle. There are no signs of so much as a murmur. Even so with Jesus. He went cheerfully up to the slaughter—willing to give Himself for us. Said Jesus, “No man takes My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again.”

You see how the parallel holds and as you behold the earthly parent, with anguish in his face, about to drive the knife into the heart of his dear child, you have before you, as nearly as earthly pictures can paint heavenly things, the mirror of the Divine Father about to give up the Well-Beloved, the Just, for the unjust, that He may bring us to God! I pause

here. What further can I say? It is not, as I have said before, a theme for words, but for the heart's emotions, for the kisses of your lips and the tears of your soul.

Yet the parallel runs a little further. After having been suspended for a moment, *Isaac was restored again*. He was bound and laid upon the altar. The knife was drawn and he was in spirit given up to death, but he was delivered. Leaving that gap, wherein Christ is not typified fully by Isaac, but by the *ram*, yet was Jesus also delivered. He came again, the living and triumphant Son, after He had been dead. Isaac was for three days looked upon by Abraham as dead. On the third day the father rejoiced to descend the mountain with his son. Jesus *was* dead, but on the third day He rose again! Oh, the joy on that mountain summit! The joy of the two as they returned to the waiting servants, both delivered out of a great trial.

But, ah, I cannot tell you what joy there was in the heart of Jesus and the great Father when the tremendous Sacrifice was finished and Jesus had risen from the dead! Brothers and Sisters, we shall know some day for we shall enter into the joy of our Lord! It is a bold thing to speak of God as moved by joy or affected by grief, but still, since He is no God of wood and stone, no insensible block, we may, speaking after the manner of men, declare that God *rejoiced* over His risen Son with exceeding joy—while the Son rejoiced, also, because His great work was accomplished. Remembering that passage in the Prophet, where God speaks of His saints and declares that He will rejoice over them with singing, what if I say that much more He did this with His Son and, resting in His love, He rejoiced over the Risen One, even with joy and singing?

What followed the deliverance of Isaac? You heard, this morning, that from that moment *the covenant was ratified*. Just at the base of that altar the angel declared the oath wherein God swore by Himself. Brothers and Sisters, the risen Savior, once slain, has confirmed the Covenant of Grace, which now stands forever fast upon the two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie. Isaac, also, had *that day been the means of showing to Abraham the great provision of God*. That name, Jehovah-Jireh, was new to the world. It was given forth to men that day from Mount Moriah, and in the death of Christ men see what they never could have seen—and in His Resurrection they behold the deepest of mysteries solved.

God has provided what men wanted. The problem was, How can sinners be forgiven? How can the mischief of sin be taken away? How can sinners become saints and those who were only fit to burn in Hell be made to sing in Heaven? The answer is yonder, where God gives up His Only-Begotten to bleed and die instead of sinners and then bids that Only-Begotten return in Glory from the grave. "Jehovah-Jireh," is to be read by the light which streams from the Cross! "The Lord will provide" is beheld on the Mount of Calvary as nowhere else in Heaven or earth!

Thus have I tried to show the parallel, but I am sadly conscious of my lack of power. I feel as if I were only giving you mere sketches, such as schoolboys draw with chalk or charcoal. You must fill them in. There is abundance of room—Abraham and Isaac, the Father and Christ. In proportion to the tenderness and love with which you can enter into the human wonder, so, I think by the loving and affectionate teaching of the Holy

Spirit, you may enter into the transcendent wonder of the Divine Sacrifice for men.

II. But now, in the second place, I have to HINT AT SOME POINTS IN WHICH THE PARALLEL FALLS SHORT. The first is this, that *Isaac would have died in the course of nature*. When offered up by his father, it was only a little in anticipation of the death which eventually must have occurred. But Jesus is He “who only has immortality,” and who never needed to die. Neither as God nor Man had He anything about Him that rendered Him subject to the bands of death. To Him Hades was a place He need never enter and the sepulcher and the grave were locked and barred fast to Him, for there were no seeds of corruption within His sacred frame. Without the taint of original sin, there was no need that His body should yield to the mortal stroke.

Indeed, though He died, yet His body did not see corruption. God had shielded Him from that. So Isaac must die, but Jesus need not. His death was purely voluntary and herein stands by itself, not to be numbered with the deaths of other men. Moreover, *there was a constraint upon Abraham to give Isaac*. I admit the cheerfulness of the gift, but still the highest law to which his spiritual nature was subject rendered it incumbent upon believing Abraham to do as God commanded. But no stress could be laid upon the Most High. If He delivered up His Son, it must be with the greatest freeness. Who could deserve that Christ should die for Him? Had we been perfection itself and like the sinless angels, we could not have deserved such a gift as this.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, we were, instead, full of evil! We hated God! We continued to transgress against Him! And yet out of pure love to us He performed this miracle of Grace—He gave His Son to die for us. Oh, unconstrained love—a fountain welling up from the depth of the Divine Nature, unasked for and undeserved! What shall I say of it? O God, be You ever blessed! Even the songs of Heaven cannot express the obligations of our guilty race to Your free love in the gift of Your Son!

Furthermore, remember that *Isaac did not die after all, but Jesus did*. The pictures were as nearly exact as might be, for the ram was caught in the thicket, and the animal was slaughtered instead of the man. In our Lord's case He was the Substitute for us, but there was no substitute for Him. He took our sins and bore them in His own body upon the tree. He was personally the Sufferer. Not by proxy did He redeem us, but He Himself suffered for us. In *propria Persona* He yielded up His life for us. And there is one other point of difference, namely that *Isaac, if he had died, could not have died for us*. He might have died for us as an *example* of how we should resign life, but that would have been a small gift. It would have been no greater blessing than the Unitarian Gospel offers when it sets forth Christ as dying as our exemption.

Oh, but Beloved, the death of Christ stands altogether alone and apart because it is a death altogether for others and endured solely and only from disinterested affection to the fallen! There is not a pang that rends the Savior's heart that needed to have been there if not for love to us! There is not a drop of blood that trickled from that crown of thorn on His head or from those pierced hands that needed to be spilled if it were not for affection to such undeserving ones as we. And look at what He has done for us! He has procured our pardon! We who have believed in Him

are forgiven! He has procured our adoption! We are sons of God in Christ Jesus!

He has shut the gates of Hell for us! We cannot perish, nor can any pluck us out of His hands! He has opened the gates of Heaven for us! We shall be with Him where He is. Our very bodies shall feel the power of His death, for they shall rise again at the sound of the trumpet at the last day. He was delivered for us, His people, "for us all." He endured all for all His people—for all who trust Him—for every son of Adam that casts himself upon Him! For every son and daughter of man that will rely, alone, upon Him for salvation, He was a Sacrifice. Was He delivered for you, dear Hearer? Have you a part in His death? If so, shall I need to press upon you as you come to this Table to think of the Father's gift and of the Father Himself?

Do I need to urge you with tearful eyes and melting heart as you receive the emblems of our Redeemer's passion, to look to His Father and to Him, and with humble adoration to admire that love which I have failed to depict, and which you will fail to measure? I never felt, I think, in all my life, more utterly ashamed of words and more ready to abandon speech. The thoughts of God's love are too heavy for the shoulders of my words! They burden all my sentences and crush them down! Even thought itself cannot bear the stupendous load. Here is a deep, a great deep and our boat knows not how to sail on it! Here deep calls unto deep and our mind is swallowed up in the vastness and immensity of the billows of love that roll around us.

But what *reason* cannot measure, *faith* can grasp! And what our understanding cannot comprehend, our hearts can love! And what we cannot tell to others we will whisper out in the silence of our spirits to ourselves, until our souls bow with lowest reverence before the God whose name is Love. As I close, I feel bound to say that there may be some here to whom this is but an idle tale. Ah, my heart breaks as I think of you, that you should continue to sin against your Maker and forget Him from day to day as most of you do. Your Maker gives His own Son to redeem His enemies and He comes to you tonight and tells you that if you will repent of your sins and trust yourselves in the hands of His dear Son, who died for sinners, you shall be saved!

But, alas, you will not do so! Your heart is so evil that you turn against your *God* and you turn against His mercy! Oh, do you say, "I will not turn against Him any more"? Are your relentings kindled? Do you desire to be reconciled to the God you have offended? You may be reconciled! You *shall* be reconciled *tonight*, if you do now but give yourselves up to God your Father and to Christ your Savior! Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life, for this is His Gospel—"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believes not shall be damned." What that damnation is may you never know, but may His Grace be yours. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 6.

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FALSE JUSTIFICATION AND TRUE NO. 2932

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*“If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me.”
Job 9:20.*

*“It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?”
Romans 8:33, 34.*

THE great question for the human race to answer has always been this, “How can man be just with God?” It is clear to every conscience that is at all awake that the thrice-holy God demands obedience to His Law and that disobedience to the Divine Law will certainly entail punishment. Hence the grand essential for each one of us is to be right towards God—to be accounted just even at His judgment bar. This is a most important matter at all times, but it appears to increase in importance as we advance in years and get nearer to that great testing time when the Lord shall put everyone into His unerring balances, to weigh him and so to prove what he really is. Woe unto the man who shall stand before the Bar of God unjustified! But happy shall he be who, in that last dread day, shall be approved and accepted by the Judge of all the earth!

I am going to speak about the way in which we are justified in the sight of God and I have taken two texts because so many people seem to have thought that there are two ways by which sinners can be justified before God. The first way that I shall describe is the false one. The second is the true way. The first is that which is mentioned by Job, the way of self-justification, of which it may be truly said that it is *self-condemning* instead of self-justifying. The second mode of justification is the one that is ordained by God and of that it may rightly be said that it never can be condemned. It challenges Heaven and earth and Hell in those grand words which I have just read to you, “It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?”

I. First, for a few minutes, let us consider THE SELF-JUSTIFICATION OF WHICH JOB SPEAKS—“If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me.”

I call to your remembrance the fact the it is Job who speaks thus, because, if there ever was a man in this world who might have been justified before God by his own works, it was Job. Did not the Lord Himself say of him to Satan, “There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and eschews evil”? Yet, so far was Job from imagining that he had attained a sinless condition that he here declares concerning himself, “If I say I am perfect, it shall

also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet I would not know my soul—I would despise my life.” In addition to Job’s excellence of character, he paid devout attention to religious observances. When his children met together for feasting, he ordered special sacrifices on their behalf, saying, “It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Job was evidently as devout towards God as he was upright towards man, yet, you see, he tells us that if he were to justify himself, his own mouth would condemn him! Further, as if to show us how notable Job was in all respects, he had, in addition to his excellent character and his devotional spirit, most remarkable afflictions. But, putting together all his good works, all his religious observances and all his afflictions, he says, “If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me.” Job, at any rate, was not one of those who have imagined that they could work out a righteousness of their own which could be acceptable in the sight of God!

Let us try to find out what he meant when he said, “If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me.” I think he meant, first, that *it would not be true*. He could not and dare not say that he was just before God—it would be a lie for him to stand up before the Lord and say, “Great God, I deserve commendation at Your hands, for in me is found true righteousness.” Instead of talking like that, Job says, “If I were to say that, my own mouth would contradict me while I was trying to say it. I could not say it—I dare not say it.” I hope there are many here who feel that to talk about any righteousness of their own would be utterly absurd. If I were to attempt to justify myself before God, I should have to lie to my conscience, my self-knowledge and my whole being! Whatever anyone else may think or say, I know that I must be saved by the Grace of God or else I shall never be saved at all! I have not done a single good work in which I cannot see any fault—not one solitary thing which I cannot perceive to be marred and stained and, like a vessel spoiled even while it is on the potter’s wheel, not fit to be presented before God at all! That is what Job meant when he said, “If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me.”

But he meant, next, that *his words, themselves, would be sufficient to condemn him*. I know that I am addressing a large number of persons whose lives are apparently blameless. The most observant critic here would be unable to bring any very grave or serious charge against you and yet, my dear Friends, if you were to try to justify yourself before God, your words, themselves, would be enough to condemn you, for what sort of words do you use? I do not suppose that you use profane words—I will not imagine that you take the name of God in vain! Though, alas, that is a sin that is not at all uncommon. But do you not often utter proud, boastful words? Do you not often speak in a very lofty way concerning yourselves and your own doing? Do we not all use far too many light and trifling words—not merely such as cheerfulness may warrant, but such as are a mere waste of time, diverting the mind from serious purposes? And did not our Lord Jesus Christ say that, “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment”?

And, Friends, let me whisper other questions in your ear. Do you never use words of a very doubtful kind? Is it not far too common in society for people to go to the very verge of propriety in what they say? Have you never done so? And have you never used false words? Have you always spoken the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? Has your heart always gone with your tongue? Have there been no false compliments—no lying expressions of an affection that you never felt? I wish that certain people would more often go to the mirror and examine their tongues. Doctors judge their patients' health by looking at their tongues—and we might judge of our moral and spiritual health in a similar way. Oh, what tongues some people would have if their words could blister their tongues as they ought to do! How common it is to hear scandalous words and slanderous words—and how many hearts are made to bleed, full often, by the cruel things that are said! “If I justify myself,” says Job, “my own mouth shall condemn me,” and I think he means, “because my very words have been sufficient to cause me to plead guilty before God.” I trust we also feel like that and if we do, we shall never dare to be self-righteous.

I think, further, that Job meant that if he were to plead that he was righteous before God, he would be sure to make such a muddled statement that, somehow or other, *the statement, itself, would contain its own condemnation*. If a man says, “I have kept God's Law perfectly, so I can enter Heaven by the merit of my own good works,” every intelligent person thinks, “What a proud man that is!” And can a proud man be accepted before God? Is it not written, “Though the Lord is high, yet has He respect unto the lowly: but the proud He knows afar off”? So you see that a statement of justification by betraying the pride of our heart, straightway condemns us! Men who believe themselves to be saved by their own good works generally have something harsh and evil to say against God's Divine Grace, or against His Son, or against the Divine plan of salvation through the substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ. And the very fact that they say anything against those things shows that their heart is in rebellion against God and, therefore, their own mouth condemns them!

Years ago there was an old man in Wiltshire who, according to his own statement, was 103 years of age. He had never neglected his parish church, he had brought up 11 children and had no help from the parish. And he expected that, by-and-by, he would go Home to God, for, “he had never done anything wrong in his life that he knew of.” “But,” said someone to him, “you are a sinner, you know.” “I know I ain't,” he said. “Well, but God says that you are.” And what, do you think, that old man replied? He said, “God may say what He likes, but I know I ain't.” So, you see, he even contradicted God, Himself, and is not that a great sin for anybody to commit? What worse sin can there be and what clearer proof of the alienation of the human heart than that a man should flatly contradict God? Well, none of you ever did that, did you? No, you have not honesty enough to do that, but you mean it all the same! Many of you mean it in your very souls. When a man does not accept salvation by

Jesus Christ, if you probe his heart to its very depths, you will find that his rejection means that he does not really feel that he is guilty in the sight of God. He will not admit that he needs Divine Mercy, nor will he accept salvation by the blood and righteousness of Christ. Self-righteousness often lies concealed far down in the heart of man—but whenever he ventures to speak it out, the very way in which he talks of it condemns him!

I have heard men talk in this fashion—“Well, I am quite as good as others are. And if I am not all right at last, it will be a very bad look-out for a great many.” Oh, yes, I see what you mean! Because others are not what they should be, you are content with your own condition because you are like they! There is no fear of God before your eyes and your only hope is that as you are like others, for it will be as well with you as it will be with them! But is not that a poor hope to lean upon? Do you not know that the broad road is thronged with travelers and yet that it leads to destruction? Even if you fare as others do, it will be no comfort to you to perish as they do! There is a very ancient declaration which ought to be a warning to you—“Though hand joins in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.”

“Well,” says another, “I have done my best and I cannot do more than that.” When you speak like that, you mean to imply that God asks of you more than He ought to ask, that He is really unjust in His dealings with you and that the great evil is not that you are a bad servant, but that He is a tyrant Master! What is that but flinging down the gauntlet to the Almighty and charging Him with injustice? Such language as that betrays the enmity of your heart against the Most High.

“Well,” says another, “I pay everybody all that is due.” I am glad that you do so and wish everybody else did the same, but have you paid to God all that is due to *Him*? There is the great flaw in your life—you pay every creditor except your God to whom you owe all that you have! Many a man who would not treat his dog badly, does not mind ill treating his God! The last one of whom many of you think is your Creator, Provider and Preserver—the God who keeps the breath of life in your nostrils! You give some sort of consideration to the meanest servant in your kitchen, but to Him who made the Heavens and the earth, to Him who sustains all things by the word of His Power, you pay no regard whatever! As this is the real meaning of your attempt at self-justification, it carries its condemnation upon its very surface!

“Still,” says one, “whatever I may seem to be, I am reasonably good at heart.” Ah, that is another of the sayings that I have often heard, but I have never yet been able to believe that a man could be bad in life yet good at heart. It is sometimes said of a man who dies drunk and cursing his Maker, “Ah, he was a good fellow at bottom.” That is not the way that men talk in the market. If you go to buy a barrel of apples and see a lot of rotten and spoiled ones at the top of the barrel, do you believe the salesman when he says, “Ah, but the apples underneath are very good ones”? Of course you do not believe anything of the kind! You always reckon that the fruit below is worse than that at the top, for the universal practice is to put the best at the top and the poorer quality underneath.

In like manner, we do not believe the man who says that he is good at bottom and good at heart, although his life is evil! No, Sir, you are even worse in heart than you ever were in life because there are many things that restrain you from revealing your naked self to these who only see your outward life! But your sin is there, down at the bottom of your heart—and if you attempt to justify yourself in the sight of God—the very statement that you make will condemn you!

Besides, so conscious are men that their own good works will not justify them before God, that *I do not remember ever meeting with a person who absolutely professed to be at peace with God as the result of his own endeavors*. If I were to ask any man who says that he is righteous simply because of what he has done or been, himself, “Are you prepared to die?” he would shake his head, and say, “Oh, no! I am not prepared to die.” You say that you have done nothing wrong and that you are right. But suppose that tomorrow you were to be called to stand at God’s Judgment Bar—would you feel comfortable at the prospect? “Oh, no!” you say. I felt sure that must be your answer. Indeed, all the religions in the world that teach the doctrine of salvation by works are at least honest enough not to pretend to ensure for any man present salvation!

Take, for instance, that gigantic form of error, the Roman Catholic system of religion. It never tells anybody that he is saved. There is not a cardinal, though he is called a prince of the church, and there is not a pope, though he is called Christ’s vicar on earth, who dares to say that he is saved! They have some kind of faint hope that they may be saved at some future period, but there are none of them who dare to say that they are already saved. As to using the language of the Apostle Paul, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”—language which even boys and girls in our Sunday school can use as soon as they have believed in Jesus Christ—well, even the greatest and the wisest of them cannot say that, either while they are in full health and strength, or when they are about to die. What becomes even of their great cardinals when they die? I have seen a notice of this sort put up in their churches and probably many of you have also seen it—“Of your charity, pray for the repose of the soul of Cardinal So-and-So.” So that it is evident that he has gone somewhere or other where he is not at rest! It is quite clear that he has not gone to Heaven, so all that he has done, all the “masses” that he has said, all the confessions he has made and all the penances he has undergone have done nothing for him but land him somewhere where he has not repose for his soul! But it is the glory of the Gospel of Christ that it says to the sinner, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be justified immediately. Trust in what He has done and you shall be saved, and you shall know that you are saved, and that you shall be saved forever!” This is a Gospel that is worth preaching! And I pray you, therefore, to regard it as worth hearing while I try to expound it during the few remaining minutes available for my discourse. And in order that you may do so, I urge you to put away all

self-righteousness in which you have up to now trusted! Bury it! Bury it forever! It will only ruin you if you rely upon it!

II. Our second text reveals THE DIVINE JUSTIFICATION OF WHICH THE APOSTLE PAUL SPEAKS—"It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns?"

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you know that God *can justify the ungodly*. We may put this Truth of God very broadly and say that God can take an unjust, unrighteous sinner and, by a wondrous process which made even the angels in Heaven to be astonished when it was revealed to them, He can take the guilt from the guilty one and cast it into the depths of the sea! And He can cover the unrighteous man with a spotless robe of righteousness so that he shall be accounted fair and lovely and whiter than the newly-fallen snow. God can do this, at once, for every soul that is willing to accept the Divine plan of salvation! Well might the Apostle say, "It is God that justifies." Oh, what a blessing it is that God is able to pardon the guilty and both to impute and impart righteousness to those who have none of their own!

Notice how this great work is done. *The whole wondrous plan of salvation can be summed up in a single word—Substitution*. As the first Adam stood before God as the representative and federal head of the whole human race, and as it was by his sin that our whole race fell, it became possible for God to regard our race as a whole and to find for us another Adam who would come and stand in our place and represent us as the first Adam did. So that, as in the first Adam we fell, we might be raised up by a second Adam! That second Adam is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, the Lord from Heaven! He has been here upon this earth and He has kept the Law of God in every jot and tittle and has woven a righteousness which covers the sinner from head to foot when he is enabled to put it on. And then, when the Law of God examines him, it cannot find a flaw, or a tear—or even a faulty thread in that matchless robe which is woven from the top throughout!

In addition to this, inasmuch as we had actually sinned against the Lord, this glorious God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, suffered the terrible consequences of our sin. Oh, wondrous Truth of God! He went up to the accursed tree and freely gave Himself up to die a felon's death so that, in that death the Justice of God might be vindicated and that God might be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus! It is thus that God can reckon the sinner to be just because Jesus has taken his place and borne the penalty that was due for his sin!

"But," asks someone, "how is that great work accomplished? I see that Christ suffered instead of sinners and worked out a righteousness which sinners could never have worked for themselves, but how can that righteousness become theirs?" God's plan, my Friend, is that you should hide yourself in Christ. You must come to Christ and take what He has done to be yours by an act of simple faith. I cannot use a better illustration than that of the sin-offering brought to the priest under the Mosaic dispensation. When the sacrificial animal was about to be slain, the sinner came and laid his hands upon the head of the beast and confessed his sin over the appointed sin-offering. Thus his sin was put

on the animal—which was then killed and consumed—and so, in type, the man's sin was put away. In a similar fashion, come, Beloved, to my Lord Jesus Christ at this very moment and, by an act of faith, put your sin where God long ago laid it and, in token of that act, say to your Lord and Savior, Himself—

***“My faith does lay her hand
On that dear head of Yours,
While like a penitent I stand,
And thus confess my sin.”***

If you do thus trust Christ, even though you have never done so in all your life before, it does not matter, for, if you have done so now, then your sin is laid upon Christ and He has so completely borne the penalty for it that it has ceased to be—and His righteousness is accounted yours seeing that you are a Believer in Him. When God looks at you, He see no sin in you, nor does He mark any lack of righteousness in you—for the sake of Jesus Christ, His Son, He does accept and look upon you as though you had always kept His righteous Law!

“But for whom is this great work accomplished?” someone asks—“you surely do not mean that it is for *me*?” I do mean that it is for you if you are a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. But if you will not trust Him, on your own head be the guilt of your soul's eternal ruin! If you will have Christ's righteousness, it is for you. “What,” you say, “for such a guilty sinner as I am?” Listen, man—if you had not been guilty, God need not have provided a righteousness for you! Of course Christ's righteousness is for the guilty—for whom should it be if not for them? “Do you mean,” asks one, “that in a moment I may be cleansed from all sin simply by believing in Jesus?” Yes, I do mean that! You, even *you* may be cleansed this very instant! “But I have not lived a good life.” If you had lived a good life, you would not have needed a Savior. Christ Jesus came into the world to save, not the good, but the bad! “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Publish that blessed Truth of God around the whole earth and let the ungodly especially hear it! Jesus Himself said, “They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” Therefore, you sin-sick souls, trust yourselves to the Christ who came on purpose to heal just such souls as you are! Only trust Him and there is immediate pardon and immediate salvation for you! “This is too good to be true,” says one. Not so, for high as the Heavens are above the earth, so are God's thoughts above your thoughts and His ways above your ways. You feel that you could not forgive like this, any who had wronged you, but God's ways are not to be measured by yours! You have often heard us praise and extol Him by singing—

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

My first text said, “If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me.” But my second text as good as says, “*If God justifies me, nobody can condemn me.*” Paul, who wrote these words and who had been a blasphemer, a persecutor and a murderer, boldly declares, “It is God that justifies,” and then utters the confident challenge, “Who is he that condemns?” Are you not astonished to hear that little man from Tarsus

talk in such a fashion as that? Why, there is the blood of the martyr Stephen crying out of the ground and saying, "Why, Paul, I condemn you!" Then there is the blood of all the poor men and women whom he dragged off to prison, or compelled to blaspheme the name of Christ. And those whom he put to death in every city—does not the blood of the martyrs cry out against Paul the Apostle, who was once Saul the persecutor? How does he dare to cry, "Who is he that condemns?" Yet there is no voice of blood raised against him! All is still and silent, for God has blotted out forever even that great sin which he had committed! But do not the fiends of Hell bring accusations against him? Does not the arch-fiend lift up his head and say, "Saul of Tarsus, you are a liar, for I can condemn you. You know what a self-righteous man you used to be and how you sinned against God in that way"? No, even Satan, himself, dares not accuse the Apostle, for, "it is God that justifies!" He has so effectually silenced the powers of darkness with the blood and righteousness of Christ that, like dogs which dread their master's whip, they lie down in their kennel not daring even to howl against a blood-washed child of God!

But do you not expect the angels in Heaven, who saw Stephen die and watched Saul of Tarsus in all his cruel persecutions, to bend down from their shining thrones and say, "O Paul, it ill becomes you to ask, 'Who is he that condemns?' when all of us can condemn you"? Oh, no! They all see the splendor of the righteousness of Christ and they are all glad to take their harps and sing a new song to the praise and glory of Jesus! Paul's triumphant declaration, "It is God that justifies," seems to start them singing again, as John heard them in his island prison, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!" You may thus challenge Hell, earth and Heaven if you believe in Jesus—for if God has justified you, who is he that can condemn you?

"But," says someone, "we must feel *something*." Just so, but if you ever do feel aright, *Christ* must make you feel aright! You must not bring your feelings to Christ any more than your works—salvation by feelings is no more possible than salvation by good works! Salvation is all of Grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

"Well," says one "I am spiritually brought to a bankrupt condition, for if I turned my pockets inside out, metaphorically, I could not find a solitary farthing in them." Well, then, you are the very man to receive the Free Grace of Christ! When you have no merits, no good feelings, nothing whatever to recommend you—when at Hell's dark door you lie, then it is that salvation's joyful sound is pleasant to your ears and blessed are the ears that hear it and blessed is the heart that accepts it! Ask Christ for it and you shall have it! The Holy Spirit, Himself, will help you to ask for it aright. Ask Him to teach you how to ask for it. Ask Christ for everything—for all your salvation, from foundation to topstone—is in Him and He will freely bestow it upon you for His own Glory!

Now I must close my discourse by reminding you that *this way of finding justification by faith in Jesus Christ has commended itself to the best of men*—and I hope it will commend itself to you. Cowper, in one of

his later letters, says—(I will give you his words as nearly as I can remember them)—“I cannot survey the future with any joy when I look upon it from the top of my own good works. Though I have labored ever since my conversion to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men, yet my only hope in death is in the blood and righteousness of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in whom death once sheathed his sting.” And when Dr. Watts, that sweet singer of Israel, was dying, he said to one who stood by his bedside, “I heard an old Divine once say that when the most learned Christian minister comes to die, he draws his greatest comfort from the most plain promises of God’s Word. And so,” said Dr. Watts, “do I and I bless God that they are so simple that they do not need any great understanding in order to grasp them! My hope is simply in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior.” And so the good man fell asleep. If we had time and opportunity, we might multiply such testimonies almost indefinitely, for all the children of God who have lived the best conceivable lives uniformly declare that they do not trust for salvation in anything they have done, or felt, or been, or suffered—but that they live by faith upon the Son of God who loved them and gave Himself for them!

I should like to finish by telling you the way in which one of the old Puritans, Mr. Thomas Doolittle, once finished a sermon. And I pray that God will set His blessing on it. The preacher turned to one of the members of the church, sitting in the left-hand gallery and, addressing him by name, he said, “Brother So-and-So, do you repent having trusted your soul to Christ?” And the Brother answered, “No, Sir, I do not repent it, for I never knew what true joy and peace meant until I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Mr. Doolittle then turned to the other side of the gallery and said to Brother So-and-So, “Do you repent having trusted your soul with Christ?” And he answered, “No, Sir, I do not. I have known the Lord since I was a child and my soul’s rest and confidence have been found in Him. And the more I know Him, the more I rejoice in Him.” Then, looking straight before him, to a young man who had been somewhat uneasy during the sermon, the preacher said, “Young man, I do not know your name, but will you have the blood and righteousness of Christ to save you?” The young man was so abashed by this public appeal that he hid his face and said nothing. The person sitting next to him nudged him and the minister, looking straight at him, said to him, “Young man, will you answer this question? There is salvation for you in Jesus Christ if you believe in Him. Are you ready to believe in Him?”

The young man looked up and said, “Yes, Sir.” “When?” asked the preacher. The young man replied, “Now, Sir.” “Then,” he said, “listen to the voice of God! ‘Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.’” That young man and his father became two earnest Christian men renowned in the church in years afterwards. It might not be wise for me to exactly imitate that good man’s actions. And if I especially addressed a young man, the old men might think that I did not mean them to trust in Christ—and the young women might imagine that I had passed them over. So, instead of speaking only to one person, I will

put the question to everybody here. I have told you about God's way of making you just in His sight—now, are you willing to be made just in God's way? If you die unjust, you will be lost forever. If you live unjust, you will miss all true peace and rest of heart. Are you willing to have God's righteousness? You say, "Yes." Well, faith is the accepting of what God gives. Faith is the believing what God says. Faith is the trusting to what Jesus has done. Only do this and you are saved, as surely as you are alive!

You may have come into this place unsaved and have been sitting here a lost soul—yet you may go home saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation and you may know it, too! So I say to each individual here—If *you* believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are saved, saved now and saved forever! Therefore be of good courage, you who have trusted in the Lord, and go your way rejoicing in Him and may God bless you both now and forever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 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 10th Chapter should immediately follow the subject dealt with in the 9th Chapter. In the 9th 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!

Verse 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 spins 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 everyone that believes.* “The end of the Law” is to make a man righteous and Christ makes righteous everyone who believes in Him. The act of faith in Christ accomplishes what all the good works in the world can never accomplish!

5. *For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the Law, That the man which does these things shall live by them.* That is the message of the Law of God—“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 speaks on this wise, Say not in your 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 says it? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.* 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 believes 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 believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture says, Whoever believes 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 whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* What precious promises these are, and how wide they are! “Whoever—whoever.” 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 are 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 have they interjected! God requires none of their fripperies, fineries and ornate performances, but simply says, “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! If you reject it, you are disobedient to it.

16-18. *For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report? So then faith comes 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 says, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are not a nation and by a foolish nation I will anger you.* So the poor outcast Gentiles have received Christ although Israel rejected Him!

20, 21. *But Isaiah is very bold, and says, I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel He says, 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 Savior!

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

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***“Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather,
that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God,
who also makes intercession for us.”***

Romans 8:34.

THE most dreadful alarm that can disturb a reasonable man is the fear of being condemned by the Judge of All. To be condemned of God, how dreadful! To be condemned of Him at the Last Great Day, how terrible! Well might Belshazzar's loins be loosed when the handwriting on the wall condemned him as weighed in the balances and found wanting! And well may the conscience of the convicted one be comparable to a little Hell when, at its lesser judgement seat, the Law pronounces sentence upon him on account of his past life.

I know of no greater distress than that caused by the suspicion of condemnation in the Believer's mind. We are not afraid of tribulation, but we dread condemnation. We are not ashamed when wrongly condemned of men, but the bare idea of being condemned of God makes us, like Moses, “exceeding fear and quake.” The bare possibility of being found guilty at the great judgement seat of God is so alarming to us that we cannot rest until we see it removed. When Paul offered a loving and grateful prayer for Onesiphorus he could ask no more for him than, “the Lord grant that he may find mercy in that day.”

Yet though condemnation is the most fatal of all ills, the Apostle Paul, in the holy ardor of his faith dares ask, “Who is he that condemns?” He challenges earth and Hell and Heaven! In the justifiable venturesomeness of his confidence in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, he looks up to the excellent Glory and to the Throne of the thrice holy God, and even in His Presence, before whom the heavens are not pure, and who charged His angels with folly, he dares to say, “Who is he that condemns?”

By what method was Paul, who had a tender and awakened conscience, so completely delivered from all fear of condemnation? It certainly was not by any of the enormity of sin. Among all the writers who have ever spoken of the evil of sin, none have inveighed against it more heartily, or mourned it more sincerely from their very soul, than the Apostle Paul. He declares it to be exceedingly sinful. You never find him suggesting apologies or ex-

tenuations. He neither mitigates sin nor its consequences. He is very plain when he speaks of the wages of sin and of what will follow as the consequences of iniquity.

He sought not that false peace which comes from regarding transgression as a trifle. In fact, he was a great destroyer of such refuges of lies. Rest assured, dear Hearer, that you will never attain to a well-grounded freedom from the fear of condemnation by trying to make your sins appear *little*. That is not the way—it is far better to feel the weight of sin till it oppresses your soul than to be rid of the burden by presumption and hardness of heart. Your sins are damnable and must condemn you unless they are purged away by the great Sin-Offering!

Neither did the Apostle quiet his fears by confidence in anything that he had himself felt or done. Read the passage through and you will find no allusion to himself. If he is sure that none can condemn him, it is not because he has prayed, nor because he has repented, nor because he has been the Apostle of the Gentiles, nor because he has suffered many stripes and endured much for Christ's sake. He gives no hint of having derived peace from *any* of these things—but in the humble spirit of a true believer in Jesus he builds his hope of safety upon the work of his Savior!

His reasons for rejoicing in noncondemnation all lie in the death, resurrection, power and the plea of his blessed Substitute! He looks right out of himself, for there he could see a thousand reasons for condemnation, to Jesus through whom condemnation is rendered impossible. And then, in exulting confidence he lifts up the challenge, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" He dares to demand of men and angels and devils, yes, of the great Judge, Himself, "Who is he that condemns?"

Now, since it is not an uncommon thing for Christians in a weakly state of mind, exercised with doubts and harassed with cares, to feel the cold shadow of condemnation chilling their spirits, I would speak to such, hoping that the good Spirit may comfort their hearts. Dear child of God, you must not live under fear of condemnation, for "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and God would not have you fear that which can never come to you. If you are not a Christian, delay not till you have escaped from condemnation by laying hold on Christ Jesus.

But if you have, indeed, believed in the Lord Jesus, you are not under condemnation and you never can be—either in this life or in that which is to come! Let me help you by refreshing your memory with those precious Truths of God, concerning Christ, which show that Believers are clear before the Lord. May the Holy Spirit apply them to your souls and give you rest.

I. And first you, as a Believer, cannot be condemned because CHRIST HAS DIED. *The Believer has Christ for his Substitute* and, upon that Substitute his sin has been laid. The Lord Jesus was made sin for His people. “The Lord has made to meet upon Him the iniquity of us all.” “He bore the sin of many.” Now, our Lord Jesus Christ, by His death has suffered the penalty of our sin, and made recompense to Divine Justice. Observe, then, the comfort which this brings to us. If the Lord Jesus has been condemned for us, how can *we* be condemned? While Justice survives in Heaven and Mercy reigns on earth, it is not possible that a soul condemned in Christ should also be condemned in itself!

If the punishment has been meted out to its Substitute, it is neither consistent with Mercy nor Justice that the penalty should, a second time, be executed. The death of Christ is an all-sufficient ground of confidence for every man that believes in Jesus. He may know of a surety that his sin is put away and his iniquity is covered. Fix your eyes on the fact that you have a Substitute who has borne Divine Wrath on your account, and you will know no fear of condemnation—

**“Jehovah lifted up His rod—
O CHRIST, it fell on Thee!
You were sore stricken of Your God;
There’s not one stroke for me.”**

Observe, dear Brothers and Sisters, *who it was that died*, for this will help you. Christ Jesus, *the Son of God*, died! The Just for the unjust. He who was your Savior was no mere Man. Those who deny the Godhead of Christ are consistent in rejecting the Atonement. It is not possible to hold a proper substitutionary propitiation for sin unless you hold that Christ was God.

If one man might suffer for another, yet one man’s sufferings could not avail for ten thousand times ten thousand men. What efficacy could there be in the death of one innocent person to put away the transgressions of a multitude? No, but because He who carried our sins up to the tree was God over all, blessed forever—because He who suffered His feet to be fastened to the wood was none other than that same Word who was in the beginning with God, and who also was God—because He who bowed His head to death was none other than the Christ, who is Immortality and Life, His dying had efficacy in it to take away the sins of all for whom He died!

As I think of my Redeemer and remember that He is God, Himself, I feel that if He took my nature and died, then, indeed, my sin is gone. I can rest on that. I am sure that if He who is Infinite and Omnipotent offered a satisfaction for my sins I need not enquire as to the sufficiency of the Atonement, for who dares to suggest a limit to its power? What Jesus did

and suffered must be equal to any emergency. Were my sins even greater than they are, His blood could make them whiter than snow. If God Incarnate died in my place, my iniquities are cleansed.

Again, remember who it was that died, and take another view of Him. It was *Christ*, which being interpreted, means, "*The Anointed.*" He who came to save us did not come unsent or uncommissioned. He came by His Father's will, saying, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O God." He came by the Father's power, "for Him has God set forth to be a Propitiation for our sins." He came with the Father's anointing, saying, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." He was the Messiah, sent of God. The Christian need have no fear of condemnation when he realizes Christ died for him, because God Himself appointed Christ to die. And if God arranged the plan of Substitution and appointed the Substitute, no one cannot repudiate the vicarious work.

Even if we could not speak as we have done of the glorious Person of our Lord, yet if the Divine Sovereignty and Wisdom elected such an One as Christ to bear our sins, we may be well satisfied to take God's choice and rest content with that which contents the Lord. Again, Believer, sin cannot condemn you because Christ *died*. His sufferings, I doubt not, were vicarious long before He came to the Cross, but, still, the substance of the penalty due to sin was *death*, and it was when Jesus *died* that He finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting Righteousness.

The Law could go no further than its own capital sentence which is death—this was the dire punishment pronounced in the garden—"In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." Christ died *physically*, with all the concomitants of ignominy and pain, and His inner death, which was the most bitter part of the sentence, was attended by the loss of His Father's Countenance and an unutterable horror. He descended into the grave and for three days and three nights He slept within the tomb really *dead*.

Herein is our joy—our Lord has suffered the extreme penalty and given blood for blood, and life for life. He has paid all that was due, for He has paid His life. He has given Himself for us and borne our sins in His own body on the tree, so that His death is the death of our sins. "It is Christ that died." I speak not upon these things with any flourishes of words, I give you but the bare doctrine. May the Spirit of God apply these Truths to your souls and you will see that no condemnation can come on those who are in Christ!

It is quite certain, Beloved, that the death of Christ must have been effectual for the removal of those sins which were laid upon Him. It is not conceivable that Christ died in vain—I mean not conceivable without

blasphemy—and I hope we could not descend to that! He was appointed of God to bear the sins of many and, though He was God, Himself, yet He came into the World and took upon Himself the form of a Servant and bore those sins, not merely in sorrow but in death itself. And it is not possible that He should be defeated or disappointed of His purpose. Not in one jot or tittle will the intent of Christ's death be frustrated!

Jesus shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. That which He meant to do by dying shall be done and He did not pour His blood upon the ground in waste in any measure or sense. Then, if Jesus died for you, there stands this sure argument—that as *He* did not die in vain, *you* shall not perish. He has suffered and you shall *not* suffer. He has been condemned and you shall *not* be condemned. He has died for you and now He gives you the promise—“Because I live, you shall live also.”

II. The Apostle goes on to a second argument, which he strengthens with the word, “rather.” “It is Christ that died, yes, *rather*, THAT IS RISEN AGAIN.” I do not think we give sufficient weight to this, “rather.” The death of Christ is the rocky basis of all comfort, but we must not overlook the fact that the Resurrection of Christ is considered by the Apostle to yield richer comfort than His death—“yes, rather, that is risen again.” How can we derive more comfort from Christ's Resurrection than from His death, if from His death we gain a sufficient ground of consolation? I answer, because *our Lord's Resurrection denoted His total clearance from all the sin which was laid upon Him.*

A woman is overwhelmed with debt. How shall she be discharged from her liabilities? A friend, out of his great love to her, marries her. No sooner is the marriage ceremony performed than she is, by that very act, clear of debt because her debts are her husband's, and in taking her, he takes all her obligations. She may gather comfort from that thought, but she is much more at ease when her beloved goes to her creditors, pays all, and brings her the receipts. First she is comforted by the marriage, which legally relieves her from the liability—but much more is she at rest when her husband, himself, is rid of all the liability which he assumed.

Our Lord Jesus took our debts—in death He paid them and—in Resurrection He blotted out the record. By His Resurrection He took away the last vestige of charge against us, for the Resurrection of Christ was the Father's declaration that He was satisfied with the Son's Atonement. As our hymnster puts it—

***“The Lord is risen, indeed,
Then Justice asks no more.
Mercy and Truth are now agreed
Which stood opposed before.”***

In His prison of the grave, the Hostage and Surety of our souls would have been confined to this very hour unless the satisfaction which He offered had been satisfactory to God. But being fully accepted He was set free from bonds and all His people are thereby justified. "Who is he that condemns? Christ is risen again."

Mark further that *the Resurrection of Christ indicated our acceptance with God*. When God raised Him from the dead, He thereby gave testimony that He had accepted Christ's work, but the acceptance of our Representative is the acceptance of ourselves. When the French ambassador was sent away from the Court of Prussia it meant that war was declared and when the ambassador was again received, peace was re-established. When Jesus was so accepted of God that He rose again from the dead, everyone of us who believes in Him was accepted of God, too, for what was done to Jesus was, in effect, done to all the members of His mystical body. With Him we are crucified. With Him we are buried. With Him we rise again and in His acceptance we are accepted.

Did not His Resurrection also indicate that *He had gone right through with the entire penalty* and that His death was sufficient? Suppose for a moment that 1,800 and more years had passed away and that He still slumbered in the tomb. In such a case we might have been enabled to believe that God had accepted Christ's substitutionary Sacrifice and would ultimately raise Him from the dead, but we would have our fears. But now we have before our eyes a sign and token as consoling as the rainbow in the day of rain, for Jesus is risen and it is clear that the Law can exact no more from Him. He lives, now, by a new life and the Law has no claim against Him. He against whom the claim was brought has died. His present life is not that against which the Law can bring a suit.

So with us—the Law had claims on us once, but we are new creatures in Christ Jesus, we have participated in the Resurrection Life of Christ and the Law cannot demand penalties from our new life. The incorruptible Seed within us has not sinned, for it is born of God. The Law cannot condemn us, for we have died to it in Christ and are beyond its jurisdiction. I leave with you this blessed consolation! Your Surety has discharged the debt for you and, being justified in the Spirit, has gone forth from the tomb. Lay not a burden upon yourselves by your unbelief! Do not afflict your conscience with dead works, but turn to Christ's Cross and look for a revived consciousness of pardon through the blood washing.

III. I must pass on now to the third point upon which the Apostle insists. "WHO IS EVEN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." Bear in mind that what Jesus is, His people are, for they are one with Him. His condition and position are typical of their own. "Who is even at the right hand of God." That means *love*, for the right hand is for the Beloved. That means

acceptance. Who shall sit at the right hand of God but one who is dear to God? That means *honor*. To which of the angels has He given permission to sit at His right hand? *Power* also is implied! No cherub or seraph can be said to be at the right hand of God.

Christ, then, who once suffered in the flesh is, in love, acceptance, honor and power at the right hand of God. Do you see the force, then, of the question, "Who is he that condemns?" It may be made apparent in a twofold manner. "Who can condemn me while I have such a Friend at court? While my Representative sits near to God, how can I be condemned?" But next, I am where He is, for it is written, "He has raised us up *together* and made us sit *together* in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Can you suppose it possible to condemn one who is *already* at the right hand of God? The right hand of God is a place so near, so eminent, that one cannot suppose an adversary bringing a charge against us there!

Yet there the Believer is in his Representative! Who dare accuse him? It was laid at Haman's door as his worst crime that he sought to bring about the death of queen Esther, herself, so dear to the king's heart. And shall my foe condemn or destroy those who are dearer to God than ever Esther was to Ahasuerus, for they sit at His right hand, vitally and indissolubly united to Jesus! Suppose you were actually at the right hand of God, would you, then, have any fear of being condemned? Do you think the bright spirits before the Truth of God have any dread of being condemned, though they were once sinners like yourself?

"No," you say, "I should have perfect confidence if I were there." And you *are* there in your Representative! If you think you are not, I will ask you this question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Is Christ divided? If you are a Believer, you are one with Him and the members must be where the Head is. Till they condemn the Head, they cannot condemn the members! Is that clear? If you are at the right hand of God in Christ Jesus, who is he that condemns? Let them condemn those white-robed hosts who forever circle the Throne of God and cast their crowns at His feet. Let them *attempt* that, I say, before they lay anything to the charge of the meanest Believer in Christ Jesus!

IV. The last word which the Apostle gives us is this, "WHO ALSO MAKES INTERCESSION FOR US." This is another reason why fear of condemnation should never cross our minds if we have, indeed, trusted our souls with Christ, for if Jesus intercedes for us, He must make a point of interceding that we may never be condemned. He would not direct His intercession to minor points and leave the major unheeded! "Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am," includes their being forgiven all their sins, for they could not come there if their sins were not forgiven.

Rest assured that a pleading Savior makes secure the acquittal of His people. Reflect that our Lord's intercession must be prevalent. It is not supposable that Christ asks in vain. He is no humble Petitioner at a distance who, with moan and sigh, asks for what He deserves not. But with the breastplate on, sparkling with the jewels which bear His people's names, and bringing His own blood as an infinitely satisfactory Atonement to the Mercy Seat of God, He pleads with unquestioned authority. If Abel's blood, crying from the ground, was heard in Heaven and brought down vengeance, much more shall the blood of Christ, which speaks *within* the veil, secure the pardon and salvation of His people!

The plea of Jesus is indisputable and cannot be put aside. He pleads this—"I have suffered in that man's place." Can the infinite Justice of God deny that plea? "By Your will, O God, I gave Myself a Substitute for these, My people. Will You not put away the sin of these for whom I stood?" Is not this good pleading? There is God's Covenant for it. There is God's promise for it. And God's honor is involved in it so that when Jesus pleads, it is not only the dignity of His Person that has weight, and the love which God bears to His Only-Begotten, which is equally weighty, but His claim is overwhelming and His intercession Omnipotent!

How safe is the Christian since Jesus ever lives to make intercession for him? Have I committed myself into His dear hands? Then may I never so dishonor Him as to mistrust Him. Do I really trust Him as dying, as risen, as sitting at the Father's right hand and as pleading for me? Can I permit myself to indulge a solitary suspicion? Then, my Father, forgive this great offense and help Your servant, by a greater confidence of faith, to rejoice in Christ Jesus and say, "There is therefore now no condemnation."

Go away, you that love Christ and are resting on Him, with the savor of this sweet doctrine on your hearts! But, O, you that have not trusted Christ, there is present condemnation for you! You are condemned already because you have not believed on the Son of God! And there is future condemnation for you, for the day comes, the dreadful day, when the ungodly shall be as stubble in the fire of Jehovah's wrath! The hour hastens when the Lord will lay justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and sweep away the refuges of lies. Come, poor Soul, come and trust the Crucified and you shall live! And with us you shall rejoice that none can condemn you.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah 53.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—329, 404, 299.**

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A CHALLENGE AND A SHIELD

NO. 2240

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 24, 1892,
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***“Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died.”
Romans 8:34.***

HERE are two very wonderful challenges thrown out by the Apostle Paul. First, he boldly defies anyone to charge the chosen of God with sin—“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” and then, even if any charges should be brought against them, he defies all our foes to secure an adverse verdict—“Who is he that condemns?” This would be a very bold challenge even for a man who had been righteous from his youth up! If there had been a man in the history of the world, who, from his infancy, had known God and who had grown up serving Him, devoting himself entirely to the cause of the Lord Christ, and if he had kept the Commandments without fail, as far as man could judge, it would be a very hazardous thing, even for *him* to say, “Who is he that condemns?” For human righteousness is only *human*—being human, it is finite and, being finite, it falls short somewhere or other. The best of men are but men at the best! To be a man is to be a fallen creature and, being fallen creatures, we cannot, of ourselves, perfectly please the thrice-holy Jehovah. In many things we all offend.

The man who uttered this challenge, “Who is he that condemns?” and uttered it under the Inspiration of God, did not, however, occupy the position of a sinless man. His early years had been spent in opposition to his Savior. He had been exceedingly vicious against the disciples of Christ and had persecuted them even unto strange cities! In another place he calls himself the very chief of sinners and yet it is *this* man who dares to ask the question, “Who is he that condemns?” It is a bold, brave challenge, but it never could have been uttered by Paul if it had not been accompanied by the next sentence, “It is Christ that dies.” First, he flings down the gauntlet and challenges a battle, crying, “Who is he that condemns?” And then he holds up a shield so broad that he is completely concealed behind it—and every enemy is defeated in the conflict—because, “It is Christ that died.”

Happy shall you and I be if, though covered with sin, though guilty and unclean, we nevertheless shall have faith to believe in the Christ that died—a faith so strong and confident that we shall dare to stand, both now, and at the Judgement Seat of Christ and say—“Who is he that condemns?” May we have this faith on our dying bed, when the pulse is faint

and feeble, and heart and flesh begin to fail! May we still, between the very jaws of death, have solid confidence in God and dare to ask, before the presence of men and devils, too, “Who is he that condemns?” being made bold to do so because we have believed in the Christ that died!

Paul has, in this case, only one answer to the question, “Who is he that condemns?” He meets it by the blessed fact that, “It is Christ that died.” I recommend that we should, each one of us, have but one hope of salvation. As long as we have half-a-dozen, we have half-a-dozen doubtful ones. But when it comes to only one—and that such a sufficient one as the Truth of God that, “It is Christ that died”—we have a well-founded hope in which we may rest with confidence! Such a hope as this is “an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.” And the man who has this anchor on board the boat of his life can never suffer spiritual shipwreck!

When Emperor Charles the Fifth went to war with Francis the First, King of Naples, he sent a herald to him, declaring war in the name of the Emperor of Germany, King of Castille, King of Aragon, King of Naples, King of Sicily. And he went on with many more titles, giving his sovereign all the honors that were his due. When the herald of Francis the First took up the gage of battle, he would not be outdone in the list of honors, so he said, “I take up the challenge in the name of Francis the First, King of France; Francis the First, King of France.” He just repeated his master’s name and office as many times as the other gentleman had titles. So it is a grand thing, whenever Satan comes and begins to accuse you, just to say, “Christ has died; Christ has died.” If any confront you with other confidences, still keep to this almighty plea, “Christ has died!”

If one says, “I was christened, and confirmed,” answer him by saying, “Christ has died.” Should another say, “I was baptized an adult,” let your confidence remain the same—“Christ has died.” When another says, “I am a sound, orthodox Presbyterian,” you stick to this solid ground—“Christ has died.” And if still another says, “I am a red-hot Methodist,” answer him in the same way—“Christ has died.” Whatever may be the confidences of others, and whatever may be your own, put them all away and keep to this one declaration—“It is Christ that died!” There is enough in that one Truth to include all that is excellent in the others and to answer all the accusations that may be brought against you! “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died.” I would put the trumpet to my lips while I preach and sound out this one note, praying that it may be a death-blast to all accusations that can be brought against Believers in Christ.

I want you to notice that Paul does not even rest his confidence as to the Believers’ safety upon the fact that they are able to say, “We have trusted in Christ; we have loved Christ; we have served Christ.” He allows nothing to mar the glory of this one blessed fact, “It is Christ that died.” If he adds anything at all, it is still something about that same Christ—“yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

This is a subject upon which I delight to speak, for here is all my hope and confidence! In these words I see first, *a challenge to all comers*—“Who is he that condemns?” Secondly, I see here, *a remedy for all sin*. If any take up the gage of battle and say, “We condemn you,” we shall have this for our complete answer to everyone—“It is Christ that died.” And lastly, I see here, *an answer to every accusation* arising from sin. “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died.”

I. Here is A CHALLENGE TO ALL COMERS. By the Grace of God the Apostle stands defiantly in the midst of all the Believer’s foes and flings down the gauntlet before them all. The encounter to which he challenges them is not to be a mere tilt in a tournament, but a battle for life or death! Who enters the lists against the Believer? First comes Satan; then the world; then conscience and, last of all, the Law of God. Over them all the Believer triumphs! “It is Christ that died,” becomes both his sword and his shield! And when the dread conflict is over and even while it is raging, he sings, “Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The first who takes up the Believer’s challenge is *Satan*. Some do not believe in the personality of the devil, but I am as sure of it as I am of the personality of his children who deny their own father. Those of us who have passed through any spiritual conflicts know that Satan is a terribly real person. He attacks us on the right hand and on the left, from beneath and from above. Very dexterously, with infernal malice, he endeavors to condemn the child of God. It is his business to be the accuser of the Brethren and he carries it on with very great vigor. He knows enough of our conduct to be able, truthfully, to bring to our memory much that might condemn us. When this fails, he never sticks at an accusation because it does not happen to be true. Being the father of lies, he will accuse us of things of which we are not guilty, or, when it suits his purpose, he will exaggerate our guilt and make it appear worse than it is, in order that he may drive us to despair. There is only one way to successfully resist the onset of the arch-enemy, but that one way ensures certain victory! Up with your shield and say, “Yes, it is all true, or it might have been, for my heart is so evil that it would have led me to any sin—but, ‘It is Christ that died.’” This will defeat your great adversary!

Suppose Satan should come to anyone who is seeking the Savior and say, “You will never find the Lord. You have sinned beyond all limit. You are too far gone for mercy to reach you—you must perish”? It will be your highest wisdom to give him this one reply, “It is Christ that died.” That short sentence completely answers all his accusations! There is no terror to him like the terror of the Cross. Once he gloated over the Crucifixion, but he has been distressed and terrified by it ever since! Tell him that you *are* a sinner and that if he should paint your sin in its blackest colors, you would not even then, despair, for it would still be true that Christ “is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” Christ has died and there is more than enough virtue in His death to atone for the blackest or most crimson sins ever committed by men! Close beside the bottomless pit of our iniquity stands the Cross whereon Christ has

made recompense for all our faults—and when we set Christ over against the gulf of our sin we see that He far transcends it! Sin is great, but Christ is greater! His precious blood takes away every stain of guilt. Take care that you do not answer Satan with any other argument than this—“It is Christ that died.” Again and again let this blow, from the sword of the Spirit, descend upon him, “It is Christ that died,” and you will soon be acclaimed the victor over your greatest foe! In this way, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

When you have overcome Satan, *the world* will come forth to attack you and to dispute your claim to be numbered among the people of God. As long as you go with evil companions, they will applaud you. You will be “a jolly good fellow” while you join them in their folly. But when you give up their ways, their habits and their society, then they will say that you are melancholy and no longer fit company for such, “hail fellows, well met”—and they will turn away from you. If you follow after Christ and find eternal life, when they hear of it, they will sneer at you and bring up all your past life against you. They will say, “What? *You* converted? You are as bad as any one of us! What? *You* a saint? Well, certainly, you made no pretension to it six months ago—you were about as evil as a man could be!” The world will begin to throw in the Believer’s teeth all his former iniquities when he sets forth with the cry, “Who is he that condemns?” Tell the world, once and for all, that it may condemn you, if it pleases, for it condemned the Lord Jesus long ago—and say that, therefore, you think but little of the condemnation of your fellow men.

Tell the men of the world that it is right that they condemn you for all your past life, for doubtless you have been what they say you are, you will not dispute that fact. But also tell them that what Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth is true of you, “You are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Tell even *them* that Christ died! If they say that Christ’s death does not repair the injury you have done to your fellow men, tell them that, as far as you can, you mean to make restitution to them and, wherein you have done the world an evil turn, let them know that your Master has done it more good than you ever did it harm! The influence of His holy religion has made abundant atonement to the world for any wrong that you ever did to it. He has rendered more of good to men than you ever rendered of evil. In all your answers to the accusations of the world, take care that you base your hopes concerning forgiven sin upon the death of Christ.

The world will, before long, understand what you mean by saying that Christ has made atonement for your sin and, perhaps, here and there, a few of those who ridiculed you will be inclined to know more about this matter—and in private may come and ask you how the death of Christ has saved your soul. At any rate, meet the attack of the world as you met the attack of Satan—with only this weapon—“It is Christ that died”—and you will be “more than conquerors through Him that loved us.”

The third foe that will seek to condemn you—and one that you have great cause to fear—is *your own conscience*. And the weapon which has discomfited your other foes will also avail you against this one. Still, this

foe is fierce and terrible. Let me feel the worm that never dies rather than the stings of an offended conscience if, indeed, this is not, itself, “the worm that dies not.” Fire such as martyrs felt at the stake were but a plaything compared with the flames of a burning conscience! We read that when David had cut off a piece Saul’s cloak, “It came to pass afterward that David’s heart smote him.” It is an ugly knock that a man’s heart gives when it smites him! There is no getting away from yourself and when you condemn yourself, then you are condemned, indeed! You go to your bed, but your conscience is there, and it will not sleep. You go out to your pleasures, but your conscience goes with you, and spoils your mirth. You would forget your guilt in your daily business, but your conscience calls out at such a rate that there is no hearing anything else! Thunderbolts and tornadoes are nothing in force compared with the charges of a guilty conscience.

What is to be done when a man condemns himself? Can he still be valiant and maintain his ground, calling out, “Who is he that condemns?” Yes, blessed be God! Even this foe can be overcome by the weapon the Believer wields in the power of God, for he can tell conscience, as he told his former opponents, “It is Christ that died.” It is a wonderful story—this old, old story of Jesus and His love to guilty sinners! Let me tell it once again. God so loved me that He willed to forgive me! But for the sake of the world which He governs righteously, He could not forgive me without an Atonement for my *sin*. It would not have been consistent with His justice for Him to pass by my sin. What was to be done? His own dear Son came and stood in my place, and took my sin upon Him. Knowing that my sin deserved death, He willingly died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring me to God. God is well pleased with the death of Christ as the vindication of His justice and, for Christ’s sake, He says to me, “I have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions, and as a cloud your sins: return unto Me; for I have redeemed you.” Tell conscience that Christ has died for your sins, according to the Scriptures, and it will be perfectly satisfied—it will not go to sleep, but it will use its voice for other purposes—and it will no longer seek to condemn you!

There is still another foe that answers your challenge, “Who is he that condemns?” It steps forth into the arena and we behold *the Law of God*. What shall we say to that? The Law of God says, “You shall,” and we have not done what it commands. The Law of God says, “You shall *not*,” and we have done exactly what we were forbidden to do! Only too true is that confession, “We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us.” The Law of God condemned us in former days and would again overthrow us if we ventured to meet it unarmed. It must condemn sin, for, “the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, and just and good.” But when it has attacked us and done its worst, there comes in the majesty of Divine Sovereignty! God is King over all and able to govern the world according to His own mind, which mind is always infinitely just. He decrees that Christ Jesus, the Well-Beloved, even His own other Self, who is One with Him, should come into the world and bear the sin of

man, make amends to the injured honor of God and magnify the Law before the eyes of the whole universe!

If the guilty sinner dies, the Law is honored. But if God shall assume human flesh and *die* for that sinner, the Law of God is even *more* honored. When Christ Jesus took away our guilt and “His own Self bore our sins in His own body on the tree,” justice was more terribly displayed than when guilty sinners sink to Hell! We are only creatures, after all, and when we are condemned, we sink down into destruction and suffer for our sin. But *He* is the eternal God and when He takes our nature and cries, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” and bleeds His life away in agony, then is the Law of God abundantly honored! Therefore we say to that Law, “Law, you have nothing to do with me! I am ‘not under Law, but under Grace.’ My Substitute has kept the Law on my behalf. He has borne the penalty which I ought to have borne and I am clear. I am now dead to the Law. I have died in Christ and my life is now that of a child of God, for I have been lifted to that high estate by my redeeming Lord.”

There is, now, nobody left that I know of, that can condemn us, except the Judge. But if we have escaped our opponents—Satan, the world, conscience, and the Law—we need not fear to stand even at God’s judgment seat! The Judge is now on our side and none of us need fear anybody’s condemnation if the Judge does not condemn us! You come into court with your case and the counsel on the other side condemns you. When he sits down, he has done his worst and his witnesses also condemn you. But if the verdict is in your favor and the judge says that you may leave the court with a stainless character, you do not care about the condemnation of others! Now, there is but one Judge—the Man, Christ Jesus. It is He that *died for us*. He cannot bring us in debt to Divine Justice, for in His own hands and feet are the nail-prints which are the receipts of Justice in full settlement of all claims against us! He has paid all we owed and He will vindicate His own death and claim, for the travail of His soul, its due reward which is the forgiveness and the salvation of all guilty men who have come and put their trust in Him!

Why, since it is only our Judge who can condemn us. And since He is the very Person who has paid our debt for us and put our sin away, we dare to repeat, again, with additional emphasis, our ringing challenge to all the universe, “Who is he that condemns?”—

***“Who now accuses them,
For whom their Ransom died?
Who now shall those condemn
Whom God has justified?
Captivity is captive led—
For Jesus lives, who was dead!”***

II. In the second place, I see in our text A REMEDY FOR ALL SIN. On this I shall speak very briefly. We stand boldly in front of all our foes because we know that we are free from the evil which once condemned us—it is all gone! Our confidence is, therefore, strong, and it is so because Christ’s dying has removed all sin from all Believers.

“Look,” says one, “*there is sin*. It is true that you are a Believer, but you have sinned often, for years, in all sorts of ways!” Yes, as we look, we must

confess that it is true, there is the sin. But *yonder is the Savior*—and He is called Jesus, “For He shall save His people from their sins.” He has come on purpose to put away our sin—and when He died, He made an end of it. The answer, therefore, to the statement, “There is sin,” is this—“Christ has died.”

Another says, “Yes, but then you have been especially guilty, *there is great sin* against a great God. You have continued in it and persisted in it.” True, we do confess that accusation—but *there is a great Sacrifice*, for He that came to save us, laid down His life for us—and greater sacrifice than this could never be! “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” This is the grandest message of the Gospel, that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” The Apostle Paul puts this, “first of all,” and every true preacher of the good tidings of salvation will follow his example. We have, indeed, in the death of Christ, a great Atonement—an Atonement so great that none can measure its height and depth, its length and breadth! The Glory of the Person who died, the anguish and the suffering He endured, the love that moved Him to give Himself up to death for us—all make us see how great the Atonement is! There is great sin—that we know only too well—but we also rejoice in the knowledge that there is a great Atonement to cover all our sin, “For it is Christ that died.”

“But,” interrupts another, “*God must punish sin*. It is not optional with Him—it is an inevitable law of the universe. Transgress the law and punishment will follow.” It is even so, but listen, God must punish sin, and *God has punished sin*. He took the great mass of the sins of Believers and piled the whole on Christ—and when He hung upon the Cross as His people’s Substitute, even His Father hid His face from Him. He died—the Prince of Glory died the ignominious felon’s death—in the place of guilty men! God *has punished sin*! And when men say, “God must punish sin,” we answer, “Sin has been punished, for Christ has died.”

Not only is our sin punished, but *the sin is gone*. If my friend over yonder has paid my debt, it is gone. I owe no man anything after the debt has been paid, whether by myself, or by somebody else. And if Christ took our sin upon Himself and suffered for it, the sins for which He suffered are gone—plunged as in a shoreless sea—drowned in the Redeemer’s blood. They are gone, and gone forever!—

***“He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoners free!
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me!”***

And that my sins are gone is further clear, for He rose again from the dead! “It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again.” If He had not paid the debt, He would have remained in the prison of the grave—but He rose again! He has discharged the debt and we have another assurance that it is all gone, for the Apostle goes on to speak of Christ “who is even at the right hand of God.” He would not be there if He were a debtor! If Christ owed *anything* to the justice of God by reason of His suretyship engagements, He would not be at God’s right hand—but He owes nothing

whatever! Both the sinner and the Surety are now free! The debt is paid and Christ is at the right hand of God. And as to our weaknesses and infirmities, He is there to plead for His people—"Who also makes intercession for us." He always lives to secure effectually the eternal salvation of every soul for whom He died, even for everyone who puts His trust in Him.

Are you among the number? Oh, if you, my dear Hearers, knew the joy and peace that would come to you if you but trusted in the doctrine of Substitution, you would not rest until you were able to say, "Christ was in my place, that I might stand in His place—my sins were laid on Him, that His righteousness might be girded on me!" If you understood how delightful it is to get out of yourself into Christ and to live because Jesus died, you would not linger and doubt, and fear, but you would say, "If it is so, I will come to Christ and I will trust Him, that with you I may say, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.'" This, then is God's great remedy for sin—"It is Christ that died."

III. Now I want your attention while I try to show that this blessed sentence, "It is Christ that died," is AN ANSWER TO EVERY ACCUSATION which, under *any* circumstances, may arise from sin. We have seen that Christ's death enables us to conquer our foes and frees us from our sins. It also delivers us from every fear and doubt. The death of Christ gives us a full salvation. I cannot mention all the accusations which sin makes, but I will mention a great many of them very quickly, and show how the man who believes in Christ, the *dying* Christ, the *risen* Christ, the *reigning* Christ, is able to meet and overcome them.

Sometimes the accusing whisper comes to your ear, "*You have sinned against a great God.* It will be a terrible thing to have to answer to the great and mighty God for having so sinned." I will make no answer to that accusation but this—"It is Christ that died." Christ, Himself, the great and mighty God, is the "Interpreter, one among a thousand," able to stand between me and God! It is true that God is great, but He cannot ask for more than Divine righteousness—and in Christ I present that! No, His Law never asked for more than *human* righteousness. The Law of God has, therefore, more than it asked for, and I am thus not afraid of the anger of the great God! It is the mighty God, Himself, who came here to be a Man and to die in our place, for is it not written that God has bought His people with His own blood? We read of "the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood." It is a strong expression, but as it is Scriptural, we cannot alter it—and we have no wish to do so. Oh, Beloved, if we have a God for our Redeemer, though our sins against God are very many, and though they are very black and foul, yet Christ's infinite Sacrifice meets them all—

***"Love of God, so pure and changeless,
Blood of God, so rich and free,
Grace of God, so strong and boundless,
Magnify them all in me,
Even me."***

"You have robbed God of His Glory," *another voice seems to say.* "You know how you used to blaspheme His name." Or, perhaps, you were more polite—you did not curse and swear, but the accusation comes—"You ar-

gued against God and His Son, and against His blessed Gospel. You have robbed Him of His Glory.” To that I give the same answer, “It is Christ that died.” I know that I have robbed God of His Glory, but Christ has brought all the Glory back. I see “the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” A dying Savior brings more Glory to the love of God, yes, and to the *justice* of God, than any mortal sinner could have done—more than any perfect man, though he lived throughout eternity, could have done! Thus, that doubt is answered by the same all-powerful argument—“It is Christ that died.”

“But *you have sinned willfully*,” says the upbraiding accuser! “You went after evil with all your heart—you know what you did! As a young man, you were a ringleader in evil. You were not stirred up and led by others—you *led* other people! You drank down sin as a greedy ox drinks water.” True, true, I sinned willfully, but then my Lord Jesus came *willingly* to stand in my place. He willing died for me, the willful sinner! He had power to lay down His life and He had power to take it up again—of His own free will He went to prison and death for His people’s sake. So the evil worked by my free will is met and covered by the Sovereign obedience of *His* free will—“It is Christ that died.”

“Ah,” says the accuser, “but *you sinned against light and knowledge*. You cannot deny it. When you sinned, you were not like the common people of the street who know no better! You had a godly father. You had a Christian mother. You were trained in the fear of God. You read your Bible in early youth and you went astray with a vengeance, for when you sinned, you knew that you were sinning and yet you transgressed!” Yes, I know that it was so. And Christ, to meet my sin against knowledge, brings a Sacrifice offered with His own full knowledge of all that it involved—

***“This was compassion like a God,
That when the Savior knew
The price of pardon was His blood,
His pity never withdrew.”***

“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands,” poured out water and began to wash His disciples’ *feet*, and then went, with full knowledge of all that was before Him, to pour out His blood to wash their *souls* from guilt! In the midst of His agony on the tree, He still had full understanding concerning His sacrifice—“Knowing that all things were now accomplished”—He bowed His head and died. Thus my ill knowledge is met by the great and heavenly knowledge with which He went about the work of offering a complete Atonement in my place. “It is Christ that died.”

“Yes, yes!” says yet another accuser, “but *you have sinned with delight*! You took a pleasure in it! You were not as some who were mere drudges to sin—you drank it down like sweet wine and you could not have too much of it!” Ah, It is so, but then my Lord Christ delighted to come to be my Savior. In the volume of the Book it is written of Him—“I delight to do Your will, O my God! Yes, Your Law is within my heart.” I took pleasure in sin but, “He, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame.” Therefore, over against my delight in sin, I set His de-

light in presenting to the Father His perfect righteousness and His all-sufficient substitutionary Sacrifice—"It is Christ that died."

I do not seem to want to preach. I want to sit down and suck all the sweetness out of this blessed Truth of God—"It is Christ that died." Ah, but another bitter taunt comes to me, "*You have sinned in spirit*. You not only sinned with your body, with your eyes, your lips, your hands—but you have sinned very horribly in imagination and desires." Ah, Brothers and Sisters! Here we must bow our heads. All manner of evil things we commit in our thoughts—sin runs riot in our spirit. Well, we confess that, too, but then Christ suffered in His spirit. The sufferings of His soul were the very soul of His sufferings! He not only groaned in body, when beaten by the Roman soldiers, and pierced with nails and thorns, but in soul He was overwhelmed by exceeding heaviness and by the desertion of His God. To atone for the sin of my soul there is the sorrow of His soul—if I poured out my soul in sin, He poured out His soul unto death and He was numbered with the transgressors. "It is Christ that died."

If the black thought then comes up, "Ah, but *you have before refused Christ*. Many times you put Him away. You quenched conscience. You went to the House of God, not to pray, but to laugh. Yes, and when Christ would have pulled you away, you held hard onto your sin! You long rejected Christ." Yes. But I set over against that the fact that He always would have me. He loved me to death and, albeit that He foresaw and foreknew that I should reject Him, yet He would not take, "No," for answer from me—but He resolved that His true Grace should truly conquer me and make me willing in the day of His power!

Still the accuser continues reminding us of our past life—"You have *trusted in others* and turned away from Christ. You went everywhere before you came to Him." Did you ever need to hire a horse in a market town? You went to some place and asked the price—and thought it too high. Then you went away to half-a-dozen other stable keepers and could not do any better, so you came back to the first. But he, displeased with you, very possibly said, "I do not need your business. You have been to everybody else—you may go to them now." I have known a surly man act in that way, but Christ never turns us away because we only come to Him when others fail us! Many have gone round the world to look for a savior other than the Lord Jesus Christ—and they have only come to Him when all others have failed them! It is astonishing where men will go to seek salvation. Some go to Rome and some to Oxford. Some go, I know not where. They seek in vain, for there is no Savior to be found except at Calvary! And after you have made the circuit of the globe and compassed Heaven and Hell to find another way of salvation, you will have to come back to Christ! Blessed be His name, He will not refuse you even then, if you will but believe Him! The proof of love to the uttermost is, "It is Christ that died."

But I feel a darkness coming down over my spirit and in the darkness there is a fiendish voice that says, "But *you have committed unknown sins*, sins that nobody else knows, and there have been sins which you, yourself, did not know. Hidden in your heart there is a damning spot which

your eyes have not discovered.” Here comes in this blessed word taken out of the Greek litany, “By Your unknown sufferings.” It is almost as good as Scripture, for Scripture leads us to think of the sufferings of Christ as an unfathomable deep. Who can tell us what Christ’s suffering really was? It goes into the region of unknown things—it goes beyond the knowable—for flesh and blood will never be able to comprehend what Jesus suffered when the great flood of human sin came rushing down upon Him and filled His spirit to the brim! “It is Christ that died.” My unknown sins are buried in the unknown deeps of His almighty Sacrifice!

Ah, but another thought comes up, “You know that He died, but then, *you have slain your Lord*. You had a share in His death! You know that every sinner is guilty of the murder of Christ.” I know it. I know it to my shame and confusion. Yet do I live by Him I slew! I am saved by Him I murdered! And, by His Grace, I glory in the Grace that makes such a miracle of mercy possible!”—

**“With pleasing grief and mournful joy
My spirit now is filled,
That I should such a Life destroy,
Yet live by Him I killed.”**

Whether it was by mine or by any other wicked hands, yet it was by “the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” that Jesus died in the place of all who believe in Him! I believe in Him, therefore He has died for me! He died for His murderers, for those that mocked and insulted Him, for He commanded His disciples to begin preaching the Gospel at *Jerusalem*, where they crucified Him—to preach it even to those who had hounded Him to His doom! O dear Friends, what comfort lies in this word, “It is Christ that died!”

“Ah,” says the accuser, but *you are still sinful*. What if Christ died for all your past sins? What about your *present* sinfulness?” Well, about that, I have this to say, “It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” I believe that when Christ died, He took all the sins of all His people—past, present and *to come*—and when the whole mass was condensed into one bitter cup, He drank it all up—

“At one tremendous draught of love,”

leaving not so much as a single drop of wormwood or gall for any to drink who put their trust in Him! Come, my Hearer, if what I say to you is true (and I will answer for its truth at God’s great Judgement Seat), then I pray you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for, “He that believes in Him shall not be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end.” I am in this boat myself. If it sinks, I am lost—but it will not sink, for the Pilot of the Galilean Lake is on board!

Come in with me! Let us sail together to Glory. I will not say, “Let us sink or swim together,” for there is no sinking to a soul that rests in Christ! This is a good seaworthy vessel—“It is Christ that died.” God has accepted Christ in the place of His people—and you, accepting Christ to stand in your place—shall find that your sin is put away, that His righteousness is yours and that you are “accepted in the Beloved!”

I have once more preached the Gospel to you as plainly and as simply as I can. Whether you will receive it, or not, must rest with yourselves. May God the Holy Spirit lead you to trust in “Christ that died!” God bless you! Amen.

Portion of Scripture Read before Sermon—Romans 8:26-39.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—537, 553, 297.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

MY DEAR READERS—Your weekly preacher is still weakly, but though his progress towards strength is slow, it has been steadily maintained during the late trying weather. When we consider how many have died, your chaplain is very grateful to be alive, to be able to send forth his usual discourse from the press and to be, as he hopes, half an inch nearer to his pulpit. Happy will he count himself when he is able to preach with the living voice.

Would it not be well for all the Churches to hold special meetings for prayer concerning the deadly scourge of influenza? The suggestion has, no doubt, been made by others, but I venture to press it upon Christians of all denominations that they may, in turn, urge all their pastors to summon such meetings. Our nation is fast learning to forget God. In too many instances, ministers of religion have propagated doubt—and the result is a general hardening of the popular feeling and a greatly-increased neglect of public worship. It is written, “When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Let us, who believe in inspired Scripture, unite our prayers that it may be even so! With a court and a nation in deepest mourning, it is a time to cry mightily unto the Lord!

I have been able, again, to revise a sermon without assistance. It is upon Psalm 105:37 and, if the Lord wills, it will be published next week. Yours, in deep sympathy with all the sick and the bereaved,

C. H. Spurgeon,

Mentone, January 17, 1892.

[This was Brother Spurgeon’s last note to his readers. The next sermon was, in fact, upon Psalm 105:37, and read on the morning of January 31, 1892, in the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Brother Spurgeon went Home to his Master, Jesus Christ, that evening at 11:00 p.m.—EOD.]

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THE BELIEVER'S CHALLENGE

NO. 256

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 5, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather,
that is risen again, who is even at the right
hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”
Romans 8:34.***

The protest of an innocent man against the charge of an accuser may well be strong and vehement. But here we have a more uncommon and a sublimed theme. It is the challenge of a justified sinner protesting with holy and inspired fervor that his character is clear and his conscience clean, even in the sight of Heaven. Yet it is not the natural innocence of his heart, but the perfect mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, which gives him this amazing confidence. May the Spirit of God enable me to expound to you this most blessed portion of God's Word.

We have before us in the text the four marvelous pillars upon which the Christian rests his hope. Any one of them were all-sufficient. Though the sins of the whole world should press on any one of these sacred columns, it would never break nor bend. For our strong consolation, that we may never tremble or fear, God has been pleased to give us these four eternal rocks, these four immovable foundations upon which our faith may rest and stand secure. But why is this? Why does the Christian need to have such firm, such massive foundations? For this simple reason—he is himself so doubtful, so ready to distrust, so difficult to be persuaded of his own security. Therefore has God, as it were, enlarged His arguments. One blow might, we should have imagined, have been enough to have smitten to death our unbelief forever. The Cross ought to have been enough for the crucifixion of our infidelity, yet God, foreseeing the strength of our unbelief, has been pleased to smite it four times that it might be razed to rise no more.

Moreover, He well knew that our faith would be sternly attacked. The world, our own sin, and the devil, God foresaw would be continually molesting us. Therefore has He entrenched us within these four walls, He has protected us in four strong lines of revolution. We cannot be destroyed. We have bulwarks, none of which can possibly be stormed—but when combined they are so irresistible, they could not be carried—though

earth and Hell should combine to storm them. It is, I say, first, because of our unbelief. And secondly, because of the tremendous attacks our faith has to endure, that God has been pleased to lay down four strong consolations with which we may fortify our hearts whenever the sky is overcast, or the hurricane is coming forth from its place.

Let us now notice these four stupendous doctrines. I repeat it again, any one of them is all-sufficient. It reminds me of what I have sometimes heard of the ropes that are used in mining. It is said that every strand of them would bear the entire tonnage and consequently, if each strand bears the full weight that will ever be put upon the whole, there is an absolute certainty of safety given to the whole when twisted together. Now each of these four articles of our faith is sufficient to bear the weight of the sins of the whole world. What must be the strength when the whole four are interlaced and intertwisted and become the support of the Believer? The Apostle challenges the whole world and Heaven, and Hell, too, in the question, "Who is he that condemns?" and in order to excuse his boldness, he gives us four reasons why he can never be condemned. "Christ has died, yes, rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." We shall first look over these four pillars of the Believer's faith and then, afterwards, we shall ourselves take up the Apostle's challenge and cry, "Who is he that condemns?"

I. The first reason why the Christian never can be condemned is because CHRIST HAS DIED. We believe that in the death of Christ there was a full penalty paid to Divine justice for all the sins which the Believer can possibly commit. We teach every Sabbath Day that the whole shower of Divine wrath was poured upon Christ's head, that the black cloud of vengeance emptied out itself upon the Cross and that there is not left in the book of God a single sin against a Believer, nor can there possibly be even a particle of punishment ever exacted at the hand of the man that believes in Jesus—for this reason—that Jesus has been punished to the full. In full tale has every sin received sentence in His death. He has suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

And now, if you and I are enabled this morning to go beneath the bloody tree of Calvary and shelter ourselves there, how safe we are! Ah, we may look around and defy all our sins to destroy us. This shall be an all-sufficient argument to shut their clamorous mouths—"Christ has died." Here comes one and he cries, "You have been a blasphemer." Yes, but Christ died a blasphemer's death and He died for blasphemers. "But you have stained yourself with lust." Yes, but Christ died for the lascivious. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's own Son, cleans us from all sin. Away, foul Fiend, *that*, also, has received its due. "But you have long resisted grace and long stood out against the warnings of God." Yes, but "Jesus

died.” And say what you will, O Conscience, remind me of what you will, lo this shall be my sure reply—“Jesus died.” Standing at the foot of the Cross and beholding the Redeemer in His expiring agony, the Christian may, indeed, gather courage.

When I think of my sin, it seems impossible that any atonement should ever be adequate. But when I think of Christ's death it seems impossible that any sin should ever be great enough to need such an atonement as that. There is in the death of Christ enough and more than enough. There is not only a sea in which to drown our sins, but the very tops of the mountains of our guilt are covered. Forty cubits upwards has this red sea prevailed. There is not only enough to put our sins to death, but enough to bury them and hide them out of sight. I say it boldly and without a figure—the eternal arm of God now nerved with strength, now released from the bondage in which Justice held it, is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Christ.

This was my subject last Sabbath Day, therefore I take it I shall be fully justified in leaving the first point—that Christ has died—while I pass on to the other three. You will bear in mind that I discussed the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ's atonement by His death in the sermon of last Sunday morning. I come, therefore, to notice the second argument. Our first reason for knowing that we cannot be condemned is, because Christ has died for us.

II. The second reason a Believer has, is that CHRIST HAS RISEN AGAIN. You will observe that the Apostle has here prefixed the words, “yes rather”! Do you see the force of this expression? As much as to say, it is a powerful argument for our salvation, that Christ died. But it is a still more cogent proof that every Believer shall be saved, that Christ rose again from the dead. This does not often strike us. We generally receive more comfort at the Cross than we do at the empty sepulcher. And yet this is just through our ignorance and through the blindness of our eyes. For verily to the enlightened Believer there is more consolation in Jesus arising from the tomb, than there is in Jesus nailed to the Cross. “Yes rather,” said the Apostle. As if he would have it that this is a still more powerful argument.

Now what had the resurrection of Christ from the dead to do with the justification of a Believer? I take it thus—Christ by His death paid His Father the full price of what we owed to Him. God did, as it were, hold a bond against us which we could not pay. The alternative of this bond, if not paid, was that we should be sold forever under sin and should endure the penalty of our transgressions in unquenchable fire. Now Jesus by His death paid all the debt. To the utmost farthing that was due from us to God Christ did pay by His death. Still the bond was not cancelled until the day when Christ rose from the dead. Then did His Father, as it were, rend

the bond in halves and blot it out, so that it ceases to have effect. It is true that death was the payment of the debt, but resurrection was the public acknowledgment that the debt we paid.

“Now,” says Paul, “yes rather, He is risen from the dead.” O Christian, you cannot be condemned, for Christ has paid the debt. Look at His gore, as it distils from His body in Gethsemane and on the accursed tree. But rather, lest there should be a shadow of a doubt that you cannot be condemned, your debts are cancelled—here is the full receipt—the resurrection has rent the bond in two. And now at God’s right hand there is not left a record of your sin. For when our Lord Jesus Christ quit the tomb, He left your sin buried in it—once and for all cast away, never to be recovered. To use another figure—Christ’s death was, as it were, the digging out of the gold of grace out of the deep mines of Jesus’ sufferings. Christ coined, so to speak, the gold which should be the redemption of His children, but the resurrection was the minting of that gold. It stamped it with the Father’s impress, as the current coin of the realm of Heaven. The gold itself was fused in the atoning sacrifice, but the minting of it, making it into that which should be the current coin of the merchant, was the resurrection of Christ. Then did His Father stamp the atonement with His own image and His own superscription.

On the Cross I see Jesus dying for my sins as an expiating sacrifice. But in the resurrection I see God acknowledging the death of Christ and accepting what He has done for my indisputable justification. I see Him putting His own imprimatur thereupon, stamping it with His own signet, dignifying it with His own seal and again I cry, “Yes rather, who is risen from the dead,”—who then can condemn the Believer? To put Christ’s resurrection yet in another aspect—His death was the digging of the well of salvation. Stern was the labor, toilsome was the work. He dug on and on and on, through rocks of suffering, into the deepest caverns of misery. But the resurrection was the springing up of the water. Christ dug the well to its very bottom, but not a drop did spring up. Still was the world dry and thirsty, till on the morning of the resurrection a voice was heard, “Spring up O well,” and forth came Christ Himself from the grave and with Him came the resurrection and the life. Pardon and peace for all souls sprang up from the deep well of His misery. Oh, when I can believe enough for my faith to be satisfied with even in the digging of the well, what shall be my satisfaction when I see it overflowing its brim and springing up with life everlasting? Surely the Apostle was right when he said, “Yes rather, who has risen from the dead.”

And yet another picture. Christ was in His death the hostage of the people of God. He was the representative of all the elect. When Christ was bound to the tree, I see my own sin bound there. When He died, every Be-

liever virtually died in Him. When He was buried we were buried in Him and when He was in the tomb, He was, as it were, God's hostage for all His Church, for all that ever should believe on Him. Now, as long as He was in prison, although there might be ground of hope, it was but as light sown for the righteous. But when the hostage came out, behold the first fruit of the harvest! When God said, "Let my Anointed go free, I am satisfied and content in Him," then every elect vessel went free in Him. Then every child of God was released from vile imprisonment no more to die, not to know bondage or fetter forever. I see ground for hope when Christ is bound, for He is bound for me. I see reason for rejoicing when He dies, for He dies for me and in my place. I see a theme for solid satisfaction in His burial, for He is buried for me. But when He comes out of the grave, having swallowed up death in victory, my hope bursts into joyous song!

He lives! And because He lives I shall live also! He is delivered and I am delivered, too. Death has no more dominion over Him and no more dominion over me. His deliverance is mine, His freedom mine forever. Again, I repeat it, the Believer should take strong draughts of consolation here. Christ is risen from the dead, how can we be condemned? There are even stronger arguments for the non-condemnation of the Believer in the resurrection of Christ than in His precious death and burial. I think I have shown this—only may God give us grace to rest upon this precious—"yes, rather, who is risen from the dead."

III. The next clause of the sentence reads thus—"WHO IS EVEN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." Is there not any word of special commendation to this? You will remember the last one had, "Yes, rather." Is there nothing to commend this? Well, if not in this text, there is in another. If, at your leisure, you read through the fifth chapter of this Epistle to the Romans, you will there very readily discover that the Apostle proves that if Christ's death is an argument for our salvation, His life is a still greater one. He says in the tenth verse of that chapter, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more"—that's the word I wanted—"much more we shall be saved by His life." We may look, then, at this third clause, as having a "much more" before it, comparing Scripture with Scripture. We cannot be condemned for "Christ has died. Yes rather, is risen again—(much more)—is even at the right hand of God." Here is an argument which has much more power, much more strength, much more force than even Christ's death. Sometimes I have thought that impossible. Last Lord's Day I thought, by God's good help, I was enabled to persuade some of you that the death of Christ was an argument too potent to be ever denied—an argument for the salvation of all for whom He died. Much more, let me now tell you, is His life—much more the fact that He lives and is at the right hand of the Father.

Now I must call your attention to this clause, remarking that in other passages of God's Word, Christ is said to have sat down forever at the right hand of God. Observe with care the fact that He is always described in Heaven as sitting down. This seems to me to be one material argument for the salvation of the Believer. Christ *sits* in Heaven. Now, He never would sit if the work were not fully done. Jesus, when He was on earth, had a Baptism to be baptized with and how was He straitened until it was accomplished! He had not time so much as to eat bread, full often, so eager was He to accomplish all His work. And I do not, I cannot imagine that He would be sitting down in Heaven in the posture of ease, unless He had accomplished all—unless, "It is finished!" were to be understood in its broadest and most unlimited sense.

There is one thing I have noticed, in looking over the old Levitical law, under the description of the tabernacle. There were no seats whatever provided for the priests. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering sacrifice for sin. They never had any seats to sit on. There was a table for the showbread, an altar and a brazen laver. Yet there was no seat. No priest sat down—he must always stand. For there was always work to be accomplished, always something to be done. But the great High Priest of our profession, Jesus, the Son of God, has taken His seat at the right hand of the majesty on high. Why is this? Because now the sacrifice is complete forever and the Priest has made a full end of His solemn service. What would the Jew have thought if it had been possible for a seat to have been introduced into the sanctuary and for the high priest to sit down? Why, the Jew would then have been compelled to believe that it was all over, the dispensation was ended. For a sitting priest would be the end of all.

And now we may rest assured, since we can see a sitting Christ in Heaven, that the whole atonement is finished, the work is over, He has made an end of sin. I do consider that in this there is an argument why no Believer ever can perish. If he could, if there were yet a chance of risk, Christ would not be sitting down. If the work were not so fully done that every redeemed one should at last be received into Heaven, He would never rest, nor hold His peace. Turning, however, more strictly to the words of the text, "Who is even at the right hand of God"—what does this mean? It means, first of all, that Christ is now in the honorable position of an accepted one. The right hand of God is the place of majesty and the place of favor, too. Now, Christ is His people's representative. When He died for them they had rest. When He rose again for them, they had liberty. When He was received into his Father's favor, yet again and sat at His own right hand, then had they favor and honor and dignity. Do you not remember that the two sons of Zebedee asked to sit, one on the right

hand and the other on the left? Little did they know that they had already what they asked for—for all the Church is now at the right hand of the Father. All the Church is now raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

The raising and elevation of Christ to that throne of dignity and favor, is the elevation, the acceptance, the enshrinement, the glorifying of all His people, for He is their common head and stands as their Representative. This sitting at the right hand of God, then, is to be viewed as the acceptance of the Person of the Surety, the reception of the Representative and therefore, the acceptance of our souls. Who is he that condemns him? Condemn a man that is at the right hand of God! Absurd! Impossible! I am there in Christ. Condemn a man who sits next to his Father, the King of kings? Yet there is the Church and how can she in the slightest degree incur condemnation, when she is already at the right hand of the Father with her covenant Head? And let me further remark, that the right hand is the place of power. Christ at the right hand of God signifies that all power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth. Now, who is he that condemns the people that have such a Head as this?

O, my Soul, what can destroy you if omnipotence is your helper? If the aegis of the Almighty covers you, what sword can smite you? If the wings of the Eternal are your shelter, what plague can attack you? Rest secure. If Jesus is your all-prevailing King and has trod your enemies beneath His feet—if sin, death and Hell are now only parts of His empire—for He is Lord of all—and if you are represented in Him and He is your Guarantee, your sworn Surety, it cannot be by any possibility that you can be condemned. While we have an Almighty Savior, the redeemed must be saved. Until omnipotence can fail and the Almighty can be overcome, every blood-bought, redeemed child of God is safe and secure forever. Well did the Apostle say of this—“much more—much more than dying and rising again from the dead, He lives at the right hand of God.”

IV. And now I come to the fourth. And this also has a tribute passed upon it—“Who ALSO MAKES INTERCESSION FOR US.” Our Apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, has a very strong tribute upon this sentence. What does he say upon it? A little more than he said about the others. The first one is, “Yes rather.” The second one is, “Much more.” And what is the third? Remember the passage—“He is able also to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Lo, this is—“to the uttermost.” What we thought, perhaps, to be the very smallest matter in the recital, is just the greatest. “To the very uttermost” He is able to save, seeing He ever lives to intercede—the strongest argument of the whole four. Let us try to meet this question, “Why does Christ intercede today in Heaven?” A quaint old Di-

vine says, that, "When God in His justice rose from His throne to smite the Surety, He would make no concession whatever. The Surety paid the debt." "Yet," said the Judge, "I will not come down to earth to receive the Payment—bring it to Me."

And therefore the Surety first groped through death to fight His way up to the eternal throne and then mounting aloft by a glorious ascension, dragged His conquered foes behind Him and scattering mercies with both His hands. Like Roman conquerors who scattered gold and silver coins in their triumph, He entered Heaven. And He came before His Fathers' Throne and said, "There it is. The full price—I have brought it all." God would not go down to the earth for Payment, it must be brought to Him. This was pictured by the high priest of old. The high priest first took the blood, but that was not accepted. He did not bring the Mercy Seat outside the veil, to carry the Mercy Seat to the blood. No—the blood must be taken to the Mercy Seat. God will not stoop when He is just—it must be brought to Him. So the high priest takes off his royal robes and puts on the garments of the minor priest and goes within the veil and sprinkles the blood upon the Mercy Seat.

Even so did our Lord Jesus Christ. He took the Payment and bore it to God—took His wounds, His rent body, His flowing blood, up to His Father's very eyes and there He spread His wounded hands and pleaded for His people. Now here is proof that the Christian cannot be condemned—because the blood is on the Mercy Seat. It is not poured out on the ground, it is *on* the Mercy Seat, it is on the Throne. It speaks in the very ears of God and it must, for a fact, prevail.

But, perhaps the sweetest proof that the Christian cannot be condemned is derived from the intercession of Christ, if we view it thus. Who is Christ and who is it with whom He intercedes? My soul was in rapture when I mused yesterday upon two sweet thoughts. They are but simple and plain, but they were very interesting to me. I thought that had I to intercede for anybody and do a mediating part, if I had to intercede for my brother with my father, I should feel I had got a safe case in hand. This is just what Jesus has to do. He has to intercede with His Father and mark, with our Father, too. There is a double precedent to strengthen our confidence that He must prevail. When Christ pleads, He does not plead with one who is stronger than He or inimical to Him, but with His own Father. "My Father," said He "it is My delight to do Your will and it is Your delight to do My will. I will, then, that they, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am."

And then He adds this blessed argument, "Father those for whom I plead are Your own children and You love them as much as I do," yes, "You have loved them as You have loved Me." Oh, it is no hard task to

plead, when you are pleading with a Father for a brother and when the advocate can say, "I go to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God." Suppose, my dear Friends, that any of you were about to be tried for your life—do you think you could trust your advocacy with any man you know? I do really think I should be impatient to speak for myself. But my counsel would say, "Now just be quiet, my dear Sir, you, perhaps, may plead more earnestly than I can, because it is for your own life, but then you do not understand the law—you will make some blunder or other and commit yourself and spoil your own cause."

But still, I think if my life were in hazard and I stood in the dock and my counsel were pleading for me, my tongue would be itching to plead for myself and I should want to get up and say, "My lord, I am innocent, innocent as the babe newly born, of the crime laid to my charge. My hands have never been stained with the blood of any man." Oh, I think I could indeed plead if I were pleading for myself. But, do you know, I have never felt that with regard to Christ. I can sit down and let Him plead and I do not want to get up and conduct the pleading myself. I feel that He loves me better than I love myself. My cause is quite safe in His hands, especially when I remember again that He pleads with my Father and that He is His own Father's Beloved Son and that He is my Brother—and such a Brother! A brother adversity—

***"Give Him, my Soul, your cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's grace."***

It is enough. He has the cause, nor would we take it from His hands even if we could—

***"I know that safe with Him remains,
Protected by His power —
What I've committed to His hands
Till the decisive hour."***

Well did the Apostle say, "To the very uttermost He is able to save them that come unto God by Him, because He ever lives to make intercession for them."

I have thus given you the four props and pillars of the Believer's faith. And now my Hearers, let me just utter this personal appeal to you. What would you give, some of you, if you could have such a hope as this? Here are four pillars. Oh, unhappy souls, that cannot call one of these your own! The mass of men are all in uncertainty. They do not know what will become of them at last. They are discontented enough with life and yet they are afraid to die. God is angry with them and they know it. Death is terrible to them—the tomb frightens them—they can scarcely understand the possibility of having any confidence this side of the grave. Ah, my Hearers, what would you give if you could obtain this confidence? And yet

it is within reach of every truly penitent sinner. If you are now led to repent of sin. If you will now cast yourself on the blood and righteousness of Christ, your eternal salvation shall be as sure as your present existence. He cannot perish who relies on Christ and he who has faith in Jesus may see the heavens pass away, but not God's Word. He may see the earth burned, but into the fire of Hell he can never go. He is safe and he must be saved, though all things pass away.

And now this brings me to the challenge. I wish I could picture the Apostle as he appeared when he was uttering it. Hark! I hear a brave, strong voice, crying, "Who shall lay anything to my charge?" "Who is that?—Paul. What? Paul, a Christian! I thought Christians were a humble, timid people." They are so. But not when they are arrayed in the robes and invested with the credentials of their Sovereign. They are lambs in the harmlessness of their dispositions, but they have the courage of lions when they defend the honors of their King. Again, I hear him cry, "Who shall lay anything to my charge?"—and he casts his eyes to Heaven. Is not the wretch smitten dead? Will not such presumption as this be avenged? Does he challenge purity to convict him of guilt? O Paul, the thunderbolt of God will smite you! "No," says he, "it is God that justifies, I am not afraid to face the highest Heaven since God has said that I am just. I can look upward without distressing fear." But hush! Repeat not that challenge. "Yes," said he, "I will. Who is he that condemns." And I see him look downwards—there lies the old dragon, bound in chains—the accuser of the Brethren. And the Apostle stares him in the face and says, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

Why, Paul, Satan will bring thundering accusations against you—are you not afraid? "No," says he, "I can stop his mouth with this cry. 'It is Christ that died'—that will make him tremble, for He crushed the serpent's head in that victorious hour. And I can shut his mouth again—yes rather, that is risen again, for He took him captive on that day—I will add, who sits at the right hand of God. I can foil him with that for Jesus Christ sits there to judge him and to condemn him forever. Once more I will appeal to His advocacy. 'Who makes intercession for us.' I can stop Satan's accusation with this perpetual care of Jesus for His people." Again, cries Paul, "Who shall lay anything to my charge?" There lie the bodies of the saints he has martyred and they cry from under the altar—"O Lord! How long will You not avenge Your own elect?" Paul says—"Who can lay anything to my charge?" And they speak not, "because," says Paul, "I have obtained mercy—who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, that in me first He might show forth all longsuffering." "Christ has died, yes rather, has risen again." And now standing in the midst of men who mock and boast and jeer, he cries—"Who can lay anything to my charge?"

and no one dares to speak, for man himself cannot accuse. With all his malevolence and acrimony and malice, he can bring nothing against Paul—no charge can stand at the bar of God against the man whom he has absolved through the merits of the death of Christ and the power of His resurrection.

Is it not a noble thing for a Christian to be able to go where he may and feel that he cannot meet his accuser? That wherever he may be, whether he walks within himself in the chambers of conscience, or out of himself among his fellow men, or above himself into Heaven, or beneath himself into Hell, yet is he a justified one and nothing can be laid to his charge? Who can condemn? Who can condemn? Yes, echo, O you skies, reverberate, you caverns of the deep. Who can condemn when Christ has died, has risen from the dead, is enthroned on high and intercedes?

But all things pass away. I see the heavens on fire, rolling up like a scroll—I see sun, moon and stars pale now their feeble light—the earth is tottering. The pillars of Heaven are rocking. The grand assize is commenced—the herald angels descend, not to sing, this time, but with thundering trumpets to proclaim, “He comes, He comes to judge the earth in righteousness and the people in equity.” What says the Believer, now? He says, “I fear not that assize, for who can condemn?” The great white throne is set, the books are opened, men are trembling, fiends are yelling, sinners are shrieking—“Rocks hide us, mountains on us fall.” These make up an awful chorus of dismay. There stands the Believer, and looking round on the assembled universe of men and angels, he cries, “Who shall lay anything to my charge?” And silence reigns through earth and Heaven.

Again he speaks, and fixing his eyes full on the Judge Himself, he cries, “Who is he that condemns?” And lo, there upon the Throne of Judgment sits the only One who *can* condemn. And who is that? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again who sits on the right hand of God, who makes intercession for him. Can those lips say, “Depart you cursed,” to the man for whom they once did intercede? Can those eyes flash lightning on the man whom once they saw in sin and from there with rays of love they did lift him up to joy and peace and purity? No, Christ will not belie Himself. He cannot reverse His grace. It cannot be that the throne of condemnation shall be exalted on the ruins of the Cross. It cannot be that Christ should transform Himself at last, but till He can do so, none can condemn. None but He has a right to condemn, for He is the sole Judge of right and wrong. And if He has died for us shall He put *us* to death? If He has risen for us, shall He thrust us downwards to the pit? And if He has reigned for us and has been accepted for us, shall He cast us away? And if He has pleaded for us, shall He curse us at the last? No.

Come life, come death—my soul can rest on this. He died for me. I cannot be punished for my sin. He rose again, I must rise and though I die, yet shall I live again. He sits at the right hand of God and so must I. I must be crowned and reign with Him forever. He intercedes and He must be heard. He beckons me and I must be brought at length to see His face and to be with Him where He is.

I will say no more. Only may God give us all an interest in these four precious things. An angel's tongue might fail to sing their sweetness, or tell their brightness and their majesty. Mine has failed—but that does not matter—the excellency of the power is in the *doctrine* and not in my preaching. Amen.

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A BOLD CHALLENGE JUSTIFIED

NO. 3067

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1907.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 1, 1871.**

***“Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes rather,
who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God,
who also makes intercession for us.”
Romans 8:34.***

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon, upon this passage are as follows—#256, Volume 5—
THE BELIEVER'S CHALLENGE; #1223, Volume 21—*JESUS, THE SUBSTITUTE FOR
HIS PEOPLE* and #2240, Volume 38—*A CHALLENGE AND A SHIELD*—
Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge,
at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

ALL through this very wonderful chapter the Apostle seems to be piling up, in heaps upon heaps, the many marvels of Divine Grace. I might quote from the old classic fable of the giants who piled the mountains, one upon the other—Pelion upon Ossa—and I might say that even so has Paul done here. He has piled mountain upon mountain of wondrous Grace in his description of the way to Heaven! And now he seems to have climbed to the top of them all and to have transformed them into a kind of Tabor or Pisgah. And as he stands there, he exults in the Lord! He waves the palm branch of triumph. He boasts with holy boasting. And he challenges all his enemies to attack him—“Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, yes rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

I. Here, first of all, is A SOLEMN QUESTION—a very solemn question if it were put to all here present—“Who is he who condemns?”—for I am afraid that some of my hearers, if they asked that question, might have a speedy answer—“It is your own conscience that condemns you; it is the Word of God that condemns you; it is Christ Himself who condemns you. It is God, the Judge of All, who condemns you because you have not fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you in the Gospel—you have not believed in Jesus Christ.” But Paul is speaking as a Believer in Christ and for him to ask the question, or for any other Believer to ask it, is a very different thing, for he may say what others must not, “Who can lay anything to *my* charge? Who is he that can condemn *me*, now that I have believed in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior?”

Now, Beloved, one answer that might be given to this question, “Who is he who condemns?” is that, *there are many who would if they could* for probably no Believer in Christ is without his enemies. There are few good men and women who are not slandered. The majority of God’s people have been persecuted in some way or other—and some of them have had to lie in prison year after year. Many more have been condemned to die and yet, inasmuch as slanderers and persecutors have no right to condemn the man of God, he may challenge his slanderers and his persecutors and say, “You may profess to condemn me if you please, but I count your condemnation to be no more potent than the whistling of the wind. You would condemn me if you could, but you cannot really do so.” Satan, our arch-enemy, would condemn us if it were in his power. Only fancy him for a moment sitting on the Judgment Seat. If we had the devil to judge us, he would soon bring to our recollection our many faults, follies and failings—and condemn us for them. But, O you fiend of Hell, God has not made you the judge of His saints! You may cast foul insinuations against them, but the Lord says to you concerning each one of them, “The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” Satan has no right to judge us and no power to condemn us! So when he speaks the worst he can about us, we laugh him to scorn, rejoicing that God will shortly bruise him under our feet!

But, Beloved, *sometimes our own conscience condemns us*. The best man here will, at times, have painful memories of the past and to look at the past, except through the glass made red by our Savior’s precious blood, is to look upon despair—for our past transgressions would drag us down to Hell were it not for the Atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Yes, and we need not look back far to have this sad view, for the sins of any one of the best days we have ever lived might cause us to tremble! The sins of our holy things are black enough to cause us great sorrow. Did you ever pray a prayer that you could not have wept over afterwards? Have you ever preached a sermon with which you could feel content? Is not sin mixed with all that we do? But here is the mercy, that our conscience is not set upon God’s Throne to judge and to condemn us, although we do well to listen to the voice of conscience and to give heed to its admonitions. The Apostle John reminds us that, “if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things.” And that, “if any man sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” With all our imperfections and our consciousness of guilt we rejoice that—

**“There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins.
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.”**

It looks like a bold question for any man to put so unreservedly, “Who is he that condemns?” But *there is really only One who can condemn*. Our characters may have been pulled to pieces by a thousand accusers, but they could not condemn us. When a prisoner stands in the dock, he need

not be afraid of anybody except the judge and jury. It does not matter what you or I may believe about him—nobody but the 12 men in the box can give the verdict against him or in his favor. These are the persons before whom he has cause to tremble but before none besides. So whoever may pretend to condemn us, there is only One who can really do so—and that is the Judge—and what is His name? O Christian, what a comforting fact is this to you! Your Judge is your Savior! And it is not possible to conceive that He who died and rose again, and entered into Heaven—and every day pleads for us—can ever use His blessed lips to pronounce condemnation upon any one of His own people! “Oh,” you say, “but He must do it as He is the Judge! He must not show any favor on the Judgment Seat.” That is a correct remark and I have been sorry whenever I have heard a preacher say that. It is a consolation to think that the Judge will be our Friend. Why, Beloved, we must not imagine that Jesus will judge partially and give His verdict in our favor because we are His friends. No, but here is our comfort—He who is our Judge, beyond everybody else, knows the whole truth about us and He would not justify us at the last if we really ought to be condemned. Ah, no, He is too just to do that! But He knows that every Believer is so completely justified that he cannot be condemned. He knows, as nobody else does, how the Believer was justified—what blood it was that washed the Believer white! And what righteousness it is that has made the Believer “accepted in the Beloved.” He knows His own and He knows the way in which He has justified His own and, therefore, as an Omniscient, Infallibly just Judge, He knows that the sentence which will be passed upon the Believer, which is a sentence of acquittal, is the only one that could be passed!

“Who is he who condemns? Christ who died.” So the fact stands that whatever there may be in store for others in connection with the coming Day of Final Judgment and the banishment of the condemned to Hell, all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ will never be condemned! Under no possible or conceivable circumstances can they ever be condemned, for they who are once forgiven and justified always shall be forgiven and justified in time and throughout eternity! There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus—and there never shall be! [See Sermon #1917, Volume 32—IN CHRIST NO CONDEMNATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

II. Our second point is THE GROUND OF THIS HOLY CONFIDENCE.

It was holy confidence that made Paul ask, “Who is he who condemns?” And he has given us the reasons for his confidence, but I shall first call your attention to what he has *not* given as the ground of confidence.

He does not say, “Who is he who condemns?—for we have never sinned.” That would be a very good ground of confidence if it were true, for if we had never sinned, nobody could condemn us. God is not unrighteous, so He does not condemn an innocent man. But there is not one glorified person in Heaven who will ever dare to plead that he never

sinned, for “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” We have all gone astray from God like lost sheep. Everyone of us has gone the downward road. By the works of the Law we can never be justified, for the Law only brings to us a knowledge of sin and proves to us that our fancied perfection can never be the ground of our confidence.

Neither does the Apostle ground his confidence on the fact of his repentance. Some people seem to have a notion that although sin is a very evil thing, yet if repentance is sincere and deep, it will suffice to wash out the sin. But Paul does not say, “Who is he who condemns?—for I have felt the plague of sin and hated it, and wept over it and turned from it.” He makes no mention whatever of his repentance as a ground of his confidence! He *had* truly repented, yet he never dreamed of relying upon his repentance as a reason for his justification in the sight of God!

Nor does he say that he puts any dependence upon a long life of holiness. From the time of his conversion, Paul had been an example to all the flock, so that he could even write, “Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” Yet he does not say, “Who is he who condemns?—for I have lived a blameless life among you all, and none can convict me of sin.” Not a word of that sort does he utter! I know that some of you seekers after salvation fancy that those good Christian people whom you very much admire must get a great deal of comfort out of the good lives that they lead. But I can assure you that this is not the case with any of them. They will all tell you that they have not the least confidence in themselves, or in their own works, but that their confidence is found in quite another direction!

Paul does not say that his confidence was based upon the fact that he had practiced great self-denial and had been a most devoted missionary of the Cross of Christ. It is true that he had been beaten, and stoned, and shut up in prison, and that he had been quite willing to lay down his life for his Lord, but he makes no mention of all that as the reason why he felt that he could not be condemned. What do you think was Paul’s opinion of all the good works he had ever done, and of all that he had suffered for the name of Christ? This is what he says, “I do count them but dung,” (he could hardly have used a more opprobrious word than that), “that I may win Christ and be found in Him.” A good man, when he was dying, said that he was gathering all his good works and his bad works together in one bundle and flinging them all overboard. In his estimation, the one set was about as good as the other as a ground of confidence in the sight of God—and he meant to be rid of the whole and to put his trust somewhere else. And believe me, dear Hearer, as I stand here before you, I know whom I have believed—and I have not only a hope of eternal life, but I know that I have eternal life within my own soul! But, if you ask me whether I base my confidence of my salvation upon the fact that these many years I have preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I tell you, “No, I place no reliance upon my own preaching as any ground of merit in the sight of God.” And if I am asked whether, having experienced much of the Grace of God, I build my confidence on my

experience, I answer, “No, in no wise. Infinitely better than anything within me or of me is the Rock upon which my soul rests, or else I should be resting upon a shifting quicksand which would be my destruction.” On Christ and what He has done, my soul hangs for time and eternity! And if your soul also hangs there, it will be saved as surely as mine shall be! And if you are lost trusting in Christ, whoever you may be, I will be lost with you—and I will go to Hell with you! I must do so, for I have nothing else to rely upon but the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived, died, was buried, rose again and went up to Heaven—and still lives and pleads for sinners at the right hand of God!

I have thus shown you that the Apostle’s confidence was not founded upon anything of himself. Now I want to explain to you the reasons why he knew that he was not condemned and never should be. He had four pillars to his confidence.

And the first great massive pillar was this—“*It is Christ who died.*” But Paul, you have broken God’s Law, so He must punish you. He replies, “God cannot punish me. He cannot even condemn me.” But Paul, you helped put Stephen to death—your hands were red with the blood of the martyrs! You hunted the saints of God and delighted to put them to death—and yet you say that God cannot condemn you for that and never will? “Yes,” says the Apostle, “He never will. He never can!” And why? “Because Christ died.” But Paul, what has Christ’s death to do with *your* guilt? His answer is, “All my sins, however many or however black they may have been, were laid upon Christ and He stood in my place in the sight of God. And in my place He suffered that which has rendered full satisfaction to the Law of God for all my evil deeds, thoughts and words. The sufferings of Jesus were the sufferings of my Substitute. He bore, that I might never bear, the wrath of God on account of my sin.” Do you see this, poor sin-burdened soul? If Jesus Christ died in your place, God cannot condemn you! If Jesus Christ did really suffer in your place, as your Substitute, where would God’s honor and justice be if He should punish the sinner for whom Jesus had died as Substitute? That can never be!

The comfort of the text lies here. Paul says, “It is Christ who died.” That is to say, it is the Son of God who died and there must be infinite merit in the Atonement which was presented by the sufferings of so august a Person. Paul says, “It is *Christ* who died.” That word signifies “the Anointed One”—the Divine Person who was sent by the Father and anointed by the Holy Spirit—and who Himself undertook to suffer in the place of His people. He did not do it of His own will alone—He was authorized to do it—appointed and anointed to do it! God put His Son into that place, as the Prophet Isaiah says, “All we like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned, everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Now, if Christ was Substitute, and if God appointed Him and anointed Him as my only Substitute, to suffer in my place, where in the whole Universe can there be found any reason why

God should first punish Christ and then punish me? The only question is—Did He so die in *my* place? The answer to that question is this—If I believe in Christ, I am one of those for whom He died as Substitute. If I trust Him with my whole heart. If I rely alone upon Him as my Substitute and Savior, I have the mark and sign upon me that He suffered in my place, that He offered a full and complete Atonement for my sin and, knowing this, I dare to say as confidently as the Apostle Paul said it, that Christ died for me! Who can ever condemn the sinner for whom Christ died as Substitute and Savior? Is not this a good foundation to have under my feet? May I not stand here securely and, knowing that Jesus died instead of me, may I not feel assured that I can never die and that I can never be sent to Hell—for Jesus Christ has suffered all that I ought to have suffered?

But the Apostle had a second reason for feeling sure that he should not be condemned, and that was that Christ had risen from the dead. “*Yes rather,*” he says, “*who is risen again.*” Now, if Christ had not risen from the dead, He would have been proved to be an impostor. If He had not risen from the dead, it would have been clear that He was not God, or the Son of God. But His rising from the dead proved that He was both God and the appointed and anointed Savior. Christ’s death paid the debt that His people owed to Divine Justice—and when He came out of the prison of death in which He had been detained for a while, it was, so to speak, God’s receipt by which He said to the whole universe, “My Son has paid the debts of all His people; therefore I let Him go free.” Jesus was the Hostage for all His chosen ones and until the last farthing of the tremendous price of their redemption had been paid, He must lie in the prison of the tomb. But when it had been certified by Infallible Justice that the great transaction was finished and the redemption of His people was fully accomplished, then Christ was set free and “He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” Now see, Believer, what is the effect of this glorious Truth of God! How can God ever condemn you after He has accepted Christ as your Substitute—after He has publicly accepted Him by raising Him from the dead in the presence of men and angels? God cannot so belie himself! It is not possible that after He has accepted the Substitute, He should afterwards condemn those for whom that Substitute bled and died!

Paul had those two pillars—the death and Resurrection of Christ—but he added a third. He says that *Christ is at the right hand of God*. This is another weighty reason for our feeling that we never can be condemned, for the right hand of God is the place of power and the place of majesty! Christ at the right hand of God is there as King. And as King He is able to defend His people against all their adversaries. False accusers, therefore, shall be driven away by the power of His Omnipotent arm. While Christ is King, at the right hand of God, what accuser shall dare to impeach us in the courts of Heaven? Christ’s sitting at the right hand of God proves that His great redeeming work is done! If He had not completed it, He would not be sitting down. But it is done and done

forever! Finished in that matchless loom is the perfect Robe of Righteousness that we are to wear forever! The last throw of the sacred shuttle of His untold agony has been made. Dyed is the wondrous garment that we are to wear, for it has been dipped in His precious blood. And when it was finished, the Divine Worker “sat down at the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies are made His footstool.” For Christ to sit at the right hand of God is a continual certificate from the Father that He is satisfied with the substitution of His Son instead of us and satisfied with us as we are represented in Him. Every moment that Christ is at the right hand of God, every Believer is safe. For Christ to be in Heaven and for the people for whom He died to be in Hell is utterly impossible! For Christ to be there as our Representative and yet for those whom He represents to be cast out from the favor of God would be a monstrosity, a blasphemy which cannot be imagined for a single instant! The Head is glorified, so the members of His mystical body shall never be condemned. They must be eternally saved because He is at the right hand of God! Look up, then, Christian! You looked down into the tomb and saw Him there paying your debts. You looked round to the garden from where He rose and saw that your debts were all discharged. Now look up to the Heaven where He dwells with His Father—and see yourself “accepted in the Beloved.”

The Apostle had yet one more ground of confidence for he says that Christ “*also makes intercession for us.*” And if any doubt could linger until now, surely this must expel it! When Jesus pleads for His people, His pleas are Omnipotent and God will never deny to His Son the reward of His soul-travail. I suppose that in Heaven Christ pleads for His people vocally, but it is not at all necessary that He should, for His very Presence there is an irresistible plea. If someone were pleading before an earthly court and if he had been an old soldier, and had rendered valiant service to his country, if he were to bare his chest and show the scars of the wounds that he received in battle, he would not have to say much, for his scars would plead better than any words could. And Jesus in Heaven lifts His hands and feet, and shows His pierced side. His scarred Person still adorned with the marks of His passion and death is an everlasting and overwhelming plea. If Jesus pleads for me, can His Father reject me? If so, He must also reject His Son! He must refuse the authoritative requests of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son! He must deny to Jesus that which He well deserves—and that He can never do. O Believer, if you still have any doubts about your acceptance in Christ, let them fly before this fourth mighty blow, “who also makes intercession for us.”

I am not going to keep you here much longer, but I want to remind you that the main difficulty with some of you seems to be that you do believe these great Truths of God, but you do not fully realize what is contained in them. I am speaking now only to you who really do believe

in Jesus. You are resting upon Him alone—you know you are. Unless you are awfully deceived, each one of you can say—

***“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.”***

Well, Beloved, do not let me merely say this and you simply hear it, but believe it, enjoy it, drink it in, live on it! You are not condemned by God and, therefore, the opposite of that is true—you are accepted by God, you are Beloved of God, you are dear to God—you are pure and precious in God’s sight. Let that blessed thought get into your brain and when it is there, pray to God to let it get down deeper, even into your heart and soul, and then say as Paul did, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And “there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Why do I see you hang down your head and look as gloomy as an owl? You might well look so if you were condemned or if there were any threat of your being condemned—but there is no such fear if you are a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ!

I sometimes hear preachers say that we are in a state of probation, but I should like to know who is in such a state as that. Certainly the sinner is not, for he is already lost! And the saint is not, for he is saved and can never be lost. The sinner is already condemned and the saint is already justified! We are not waiting for the verdict for it has already been given! It is recorded concerning every Believer that he is justified and that the claim he makes that he is a child of God is a true one and that all the glorious inheritance in the land of the blessed is his and he may claim it at once as his own, for it all belongs to him! So, up with you child of God! Up with you, bird of the day! Eagle of God, will you sit day after day moping in the dark when you might soar up into the light and gaze even at the sun? Up with you, son of the morning! Up with you, child of light! Away from all your gloomy doubts and fears! You have a million a year for spending money, given to you by the God of Grace, so will you go on spending a few pence a day, like a beggar who needs to be careful even of his farthings? You are forgiven! Then live as a forgiven man should. What if God smites you every now and then with trouble? Can you not say, as one did long ago, “Smite, Lord, as hard as You will, for there is now no anger in Your blows and, therefore, I can bear them without complaining”? Are you suffering severe losses and carrying heavy crosses? They ought to seem very light to you now! As long as you are forgiven, what does anything else matter? Go to a man in Newgate, condemned to die, and take him a free pardon. Tell him that by the favor of his sovereigns, he is to live! And do you think he will begin murmuring because some little thing is not just as he would like it? Oh, no! He will say, “It is enough for me that my life is spared.” Now you are forgiven! You are God’s child! You are on the way to Heaven, so “fret not yourself because of evil-doers.” Murmur not against the Most High. Take your harp down from the willows and sing unto the Lord a new song, for He has worked marvels of mercy for you!

And then, in the light of this wonderful love of God to you, so live at home and abroad that others shall ask, "What makes this man so happy? What makes this woman so glad?" I will not say to you who are forgiven—Sing with your voice all the day, though I would have you praise the Lord with joyful lips as much as you can. But let the bells of your hearts go on ringing all day! Sometimes when I think of what the Lord has done for me, I feel myself to be like a church steeple that I saw some few months ago. There had been a wedding in the place and the bells were pealing out a merry chime. And as they rang, I distinctly saw that steeple reel and rock, and the four pinnacles seemed to be tossing to and fro—the whole tower seemed as though it would come down as the bells pealed out again and again. And sometimes when my soul pulls the big bell—"Jesus loved you and gave Himself for you, and you are accepted in Him, you are God's own child, and on your way to Heaven, and a crown of eternal life is yours"—I feel as if this crazy steeple of my body would rock and reel beneath the excessive joy and be scarcely able to hold the ecstatic bliss which the love of God creates within my soul! And then do I sing—

***"In the heavenly Lamb, thrice happy I am,
And my heart it does leap at the sound of His name!"***

Oh, I would that everyone of you had that joy! And surely everyone shall have it who will have it in God's way! If you believe in Jesus Christ, you shall be absolved from all your guilt. If you will but trust yourself to Him, whoever you are, He will take your sin and lift it off from you—and cause you to be accepted, as all His people are!

God give to all of you the Grace to believe in Jesus and to go your way rejoicing, for His name's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 20:1-18.

Verse 1. *The first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and saw the stone was 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 ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said 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.* 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 ointments that had been used—“He saw the linen clothes.”

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 came Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher and saw the linen clothes.* 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 would 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 homes.* 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 would happen next.

11. *But Mary stood.* She was not going home. Love cannot leave the place where it lost its objective. It will continue to search there. “But Mary stood.”

11. *Outside of 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 saw 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 said unto her, Woman, why do you weep? She said 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 said thus, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said unto her, Woman, why do you weep?* Christ often repeats the words of His messengers as if to endorse them. The angels said, “Woman, why do you weep?” The angels’ Master said the same. I pray Him, tonight, not only to give me the right words to say, but also to say it, Himself, to your hearts. But Jesus added another question to the angels’, “Woman, why do you weep?”

15. *Whom do you seek? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said unto Him, Sir, if you have borne Him from here, tell me where you have 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 thought, 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 images 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 you have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

16. *Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned and said 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 said unto her, Touch Me not.* Or, as the words may be read, "Hold Me not; detain Me not."

17. *For I have not yet ascended to My Father.* "I have to go away from you, so do not imagine that you can hold Me back. No, 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 have 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!

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

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

MORE THAN CONQUERORS

NO. 751

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 19, 1867,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“No, in all these things we are more
than conquerors through Him that loved us.”
Romans 8:37.***

THE distinguishing mark of a Christian is his confidence in the love of Christ and the yielding of his affections to Christ in return. First, faith sets her seal upon the man by enabling the soul to say with the Apostle, “Christ loved me and gave Himself for me.” Then love gives the counter-sign and stamps upon the heart gratitude and love to Jesus in return. “We love Him because He first loved us.” “God is love,” and the children of God are ruled in their inmost powers by love—the love of Christ constrains them. They believe in Jesus’ love and then they reflect it. They rejoice that Divine love is set upon them. They feel it shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given to them, and then by force of gratitude they love fervently the Savior with a pure heart.

In those grand old ages, which are the heroic period of the Christian religion, this double mark was very clearly to be seen in all believers in Jesus. They were men who knew the love of Christ and rested upon it as a man leans upon a staff whose trustiness he has tried. They did not speak of Christ’s love as though it were a myth to be respected, a tradition to be revered—they viewed it as a blessed *reality* and they cast their whole confidence upon it, being persuaded that it would bear them up as upon eagles’ wings, and carry them all their days. They were assured that it would be to them a foundation of rock against which the waves might beat, and the winds blow, but their soul’s habitation would stand securely if founded upon it.

The love which they felt towards the Lord Jesus was not a quiet emotion which they hid within themselves in the secret chamber of their souls, and which they only spoke of in their private assemblies when they met on the first day of the week and sung hymns in honor of Christ Jesus the Crucified. It was a *passion* with them of such a vehement and all-consuming energy that it permeated all their lives, became visible in all their actions, spoke in their common talk, and looked out of their eyes—even in their most common glances. Love to Jesus was a flame which fed upon the very marrow of their bones, the core and heart of their being, and, therefore, from its own force burned its way into the outer man and shone there.

Zeal for the glory of King Jesus was the seal and mark of all genuine Christians. Because of their dependence upon Christ's love they dared much! And because of their love to Christ they *did* much. Because of their reliance upon the love of Jesus they were not afraid of their enemies! And because of their love to Jesus they scorned to shun the foe even when he appeared in the most dreadful forms. The Christians of the early ages sacrificed themselves continually upon the altar of Christ with joy and willingness. Wherever they were they bore testimony against the evil customs which surrounded them.

They counted it foul scorn for a Christian to be as others were—they would not conform themselves to the world—they *could* not, for they were transformed by the renewing of their minds! Their love to Christ compelled them to bear their witness against everything which dishonored Christ by being contrary to truth, and righteousness, and love. They were innovators, reformers, image-breakers everywhere! They could not be quiet and let others do as they pleased while they followed out their own views. And their protest was continual, incessant, annoying to the foe, but acceptable to God.

In every place the Christian was a speckled bird, because love to Jesus would not allow him to disguise his convictions. He was everywhere a stranger and an alien because the very language of his everyday life differed from that of his neighbors. Where others blasphemed, he adored. Where others used oaths habitually, his "yes" was yes, and his "no," no. Where others girt on the sword, he resisted not evil. Where others were, each man, seeking his own and not his brother's welfare, the Christian was known as being one whose treasure was in Heaven, and who had set his affections upon things above.

This love to Jesus made the Christian a perpetual protestor against evil for the sake of Jesus. It led him yet further—he became a constant witness to the Truth of God which he had found so precious in his own soul. Christian men were like Naphtali, of whom it was said: "Naphtali is a hind let loose he gives goodly words." Tongue-tied Christians, silent witnesses, were scarcely known in Apostolic days. The matron talked of Christ to her servants. The child, having learned of Jesus, spoke of Him in the schools.

The Christian workman at the shop testified, and the Christian minister (and these were many in those days, for all men ministered according to their ability) stood in the corners of the streets, or met in their own hired houses with tens or twenties, as the case might be. They were always declaring the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ, and of His death and Resurrection and of the cleansing power of His blood. The love of Jesus, I have said at the commencement, was a real passion with those men and their confidence in Jesus was real and practical. And therefore their testimony for Jesus was bold, clear, and decided.

There was a trumpet ring in ancient Christian testimony which startled the old world which was lying in a deep sleep, dreaming filthy dreams.

That world loved not to be so aroused, and turning over in its sleep, muttered curses deep and many and vowed revenge against the disturber who dared break its horrible repose. Meanwhile believers in Jesus, men not satisfied with witnessing by their lives and testifying by their tongues in the places where their lot was cast, were continually commissioning fresh bands of missionaries to carry the Word into other districts.

It was not enough for Paul to preach the Gospel at Jerusalem or Damascus, he must journey into Pisidia and Pamphylia. He must journey to the utmost verge of Asia Minor, and then, so full of Christ is he that he dreams of eternal life, and when he falls asleep, he sees in a vision a man of Macedonia across the blue Aegean, entreating him, "Come over and help us." And with the morning light Paul rises, fully resolved to take ship and preach the Gospel among the Gentiles.

Having preached Christ throughout all Greece, he passed over to Italy, and though chained, he entered as God's ambassador within the walls of the imperial city of Rome! And it is believed that after that, his sacredly restless spirit was not satisfied with preaching throughout Italy, but he must cross into Spain, and it is said even into Britain itself. The ambition of the Christian for Christ was boundless! Beyond pillars of Hercules, to the utmost islands of the sea, believers in Jesus carried the news of a Savior born for the sons of men!

Those were days of ardor. I fear *these* are days of lukewarmness. Those were times when the flame was like coals of juniper which have a most vehement heat, and neither shipwreck, nor peril by robbers, nor peril by rivers, nor peril by false brethren, nor the sword itself, could stay the enthusiasm of the saints, for they believed, and therefore spoke! They loved, and therefore served—even to the death.

Thus I introduce to you our text. Behold the men and their conflict for Christ! It was natural, it was inevitable that they should provoke enmity. You and I do not love Christ much, nor believe much in His love—I mean the most of us. We are a sickly, unworthy, degenerate generation. We let the world alone. The world lets us alone. We conform a great deal to worldly customs and the world is not annoyed by us. We do not dog the world's heels, perpetually declaring the Truth of God as we ought to do, and therefore the world is not impatient with us—it thinks us a very good sort of people, a little whimsy, crazed about the head perhaps, but still very bearable and well-behaved—and so we do not meet with half the enemies which they did of old because we are not half such true Christians, no, not one-tenth such saints as they!

But if we were more holy, in proportion as we were so we should meet with the same battle, though it may be in another shape. Though I spoke thus censoriously of all, there are some few here, I trust, who have been enabled by Divine Grace to know the power of the love of Jesus and who are living under its influences, and contending for the sovereignty of the thorn-crowned King! These are they who will endure the same fight in

other forms as the conflict of Apostolic days, and these are they who may use, without falsehood, the language of my text: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

I will ask you, this morning, as we are assisted by the Holy Spirit, first, to consider the victories already won. Secondly, the laurels of the fight. Thirdly, the men who won them, and fourthly, the power by which the conquest was achieved.

I. First, this morning, we shall view THE VICTORIES ALREADY WON by those who have been possessed by the love of Jesus. Look attentively at the champion. It needs no stretch of the imagination to conceive this place to be a Roman amphitheatre. There in the midst of the arena stands the hero. The great doors of the lion's dens are lifted up by machinery, and as soon as the lairs are open, rushing forth with fury come bears and lions, and wild beasts of all kinds, that have been starved into ferocity, with which the champion is to contend.

Such was the Christian in Paul's day, such is he now. The world is the theater of conflict—angels and devils look on. A great cloud of witnesses view the fight—and monsters are let loose against him, with whom he must contend triumphantly. The Apostle gives us a little summary of the evils with which we must fight, and he places first, "tribulation." The word "tribulation," in the Latin, signifies *threshing*, and God's people are often cast upon the threshing floor to be beaten with the heavy flail of trouble. But they are more than conquerors since they lose nothing but their straw and chaff, and the pure wheat is thus separated from that which was of no benefit to it.

The original Greek word, however, suggests pressure from *without*. It is used in the case of persons who are bearing heavy burdens, and are heavily pressed upon. Now, Believers have had to contend with outward circumstances more or less in all ages. At the present day there are very few who do not at some time or other in their lives meet with outward pressure—either from sickness or from loss of goods, or from bereavements—or from some other of the thousand and one causes from which affliction springs. The Christian has not a smooth pathway. "In the world you shall have tribulation," is a sure promise which never fails of fulfillment. Under all burdens true Believers have been sustained. No afflictions have ever been able to destroy their confidence in God. It is said of the palm tree that the more weights they hang upon it the more straight and the more lofty does it tower towards Heaven. And it is so with the Christian. Like Job, he is never so glorious as when he has passed through the loss of all things—and at last rises from his dunghill more mighty than a king! Brethren, you must expect to meet with this adversary so long as you are here, and if you now suffer the pressure of affliction, remember you must overcome it and not yield to it. Cry unto the Strong for strength—that your tribulation may work out for you patience, and patience experience—and experience hope that makes not ashamed.

The next in the list is “distress.” I find that the Greek word rather refers to mental grief than to anything external. The Christian suffers from external circumstances, but this is probably a less affliction than internal woe. “Straitness of place” is something like the Greek word. We sometimes get into a position in which we feel as if we could not move, and are not able to turn to the right hand or to the left. The way is shut up. We see no deliverance and our own consciousness of feebleness and perplexity is unbearably terrible.

Do you ever get into this state in which your mind is distracted and you know not what to do? You cannot calm and steady yourself. You would, if you could, consider calmly the conflict and then enter into it like a man with all his wits about him. But the devil and the world—outward trial and inward despondency combined—toss you to and fro like the waves of the sea, till you are, to use John Bunyan’s Saxon expression, “much tumbled up and down in your mind.” Well, now, if you are a genuine Christian you will come out of this all right enough. You will be more than a conqueror over mental distress.

You will take this burden, as well as every other, to your Lord, and cast it upon Him. And the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to be the Comforter, will say to the troubled waves of your heart, “Be still.” Jesus shall say, as He walks the tempest of your soul, “It is I, be not afraid.” And though the outward tribulation and the inward distress meet together like two contending seas, they shall both be calmed by the power of the Lord Jesus.

The third evil the Apostle mentions is “persecution,” which has always fallen upon the genuine lovers of Christ. Their good name has been slandered. I should blush to repeat the villainies which have been uttered against the saints of the olden times. Suffice it to say there is no crime in the category of vice which has not been falsely laid to the door of the followers of the pure and holy Jesus. Yet slander did not crush the Church! The fair name of Christianity outlived the reputation of the men who had the effrontery to accuse her. Imprisonment followed slander, but in prisons God’s saints have sung like birds in cages—better than when they were in the fields of open liberty!

Prisons have glowed into palaces, and been sanctified into the dwelling places of God Himself—more sacred by far than all the consecrated domes of gorgeous architecture! Persecution has sometimes taken to banishing the saints—but in their banishment they have been at home—and when scattered far and wide they have gone everywhere preaching the Word and their scattering has been the gathering together of others of the elect. When persecution has even resorted to the most cruel torments, God has had many a sweet song from the rack. The joyful notes of holy Lawrence, broiling upon the gridiron, must have been more sweet to God than the songs of cherubim and seraphim—for he loved God more than the brightest of them—and he proved it in his bitterest anguish!

And holy Mr. Hawkes, when his lower extremities were burnt and they expected to see him fall over the chain into the fire, lifted his flaming hands, each finger spurting fire, and clapped them three times, with the shout of, "None but Christ, none but Christ!" God was honored more by that burning man than even by the ten thousand times ten thousand who ceaselessly hymn His praises in Glory. Persecution, in all its forms, has fallen upon the Christian Church, and up to this moment it has never achieved a triumph, but rather it has been an essential benefit to the Church, for it cleared her of hypocrisy. When cast into the fire the pure gold lost nothing but its dross and tin which it might well be glad to lose.

Then the Apostle adds "famine." We are not exposed to this evil so much nowadays, but in Paul's time those who were banished were frequently carried to places where they could not exercise their handicraft to earn their bread. They were taken away from their situations, from their friends, from their acquaintances. They suffered the loss of all their goods and consequently they did not know where to find even the necessary sustenance for their bodies. And no doubt there are some now who are great losers by their conscientious convictions—who are called to suffer, in a measure, even famine itself. Then the devil whispers, "You ought to look after your house and children. You must not follow your religion so as to lose your bread." Ah, my Friend, we shall then see whether you have the faith that can conquer famine! A faith that can look gaunt hunger in the face—look through the ribs of the skeleton, and yet say, "Ah, famine itself I will bear sooner than sell my conscience, and stain my love to Christ."

Then comes nakedness, another terrible form of poverty. The Christian banished from house to house and prevented from working at his trade, was not able to procure necessary funds and therefore his garments gradually fell to rags, and the rags, one by one, disappeared. At other times the persecutors stripped men and women naked to make them yield to shame. But nakedness, even in the case of the most tender and sensitive spirits, though such were exposed to this evil in the olden days, was unable to daunt the unconquerable spirit of the saints! There are stories in the old martyrologies of men and women who have had to suffer this indignity, and it is reported by those who looked on that they never seemed to be so gloriously arrayed! For when they were stood naked before the whole bestial throng, that they might gaze upon them with their cruel eyes, their very bodies seemed to glow with glory, as with calm countenance they surveyed their enemies, and gave themselves up to die.

The Apostle mentions next to nakedness, peril—that is, constant exposure to sudden death. This was the life of the early Christian. "We die daily," said the Apostle. They were never sure of a moment's mercy for a new edict might come forth from the Roman emperor to sweep the Christians away. They went literally with their lives in their hands wherever they went. Some of their perils were voluntarily encountered for the spread of the Gospel—perils by rivers and by robbers were the lot of the

Christian missionary going through inhospitable climes to declare the Gospel. Other perils were the result of persecution, but we are told here that Believers in Jesus so steadily reposed upon Christ's love that they did not feel peril to be peril—and the love of Christ so lifted them up above the ordinary thoughts of flesh and blood, that even when perils became perils, indeed, they entered upon them with joy, out of love to their Lord and Master.

And to close the list, as if there were a sort of perfection in these evils, the seventh thing is the sword, that is to say, the Apostle Paul singles out one cruel form of death as a picture of the whole. You know, and I need not tell you, how the noble army of my Master's martyrs have given their necks to the sword as cheerfully as the bride upon the marriage day gives her hand to the bridegroom. You know how they have gone to the stake and kissed the firewood. How they have sung on the way to death, though death was attended with the most cruel torments. And you know how they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy, even to leaping and dancing at the thought of being counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.

The Apostle tells us that the saints have suffered all these things put together. He does not say in *some* of these things we are conquerors, but in *all!* Many Believers literally passed through outward need, inward trial, persecution, need of bread, lack of raiment, the constant hazard of life, and at last laid down life itself—and yet in every case through the whole list of these gloomy fights—Believers were more than conquerors. Beloved, this day you are not, the most of you, called to peril, or nakedness, or sword. If you were, my Lord would give you Grace to bear the test! But I think the troubles of a Christian man at the present moment, though not outwardly so terrible, are yet more hard to bear than even those of the fiery age!

We have to bear the sneer of the world—that is little—its blandishments, its soft words, its oily speeches, its fawning, its hypocrisy are far worse! O Sirs, your danger is lest you grow rich and become proud! Lest you give yourselves up to the fashions of this present evil world and lose your faith! If you cannot be torn in pieces by the roaring lion, you may be hugged to death by the bear! And the devil cares little which it is so long as he gets your love to Christ out of you, and destroys your confidence in Him. I fear that the Christian Church is far more likely to lose her integrity in these soft and silken days than she was in those rough times! Are there not many professing Christians whose methods of trade are just as vicious as the methods of trade of the most shifty and tricky of the unconverted?

Have we not some professed Christians who are worldly altogether? Whose non-attendance at our meetings for prayer, whose want of liberality to Christ's cause, whose entire conduct, indeed, proves that if there is any grace in them at all, it is not the Grace which conquers the world, but the pretended grace which lets the world put its foot upon its neck? We

must be awake now, for we traverse the enchanted ground, and are more likely to be ruined than ever, unless our faith in Jesus is a reality, and our love to Jesus a vehement flame.

We are likely to become bastards and not sons, tares and not wheat, hypocrites with fair vineyards, but not the true living children of the living God! Christians, do not think that these are times in which you can dispense with watchfulness or with holy ardor? You need these things more now than ever, and may God the eternal Spirit display His Omnipotence in you, that you may be able to say, in all these softer things as well as in the rougher, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

II. I shall with great brevity turn to the second head of the discourse. Let us inspect THE LAURELS OF THE FIGHT. Up to now Believers have been conquerors, but the text says they have, been "more than conquerors." How is that? The word in the original is one of the Apostle Paul's strong expressions. It might be rendered, "more exceedingly conquerors." The Vulgate, I think, has a word in it which means, "over over-comers," over and above conquering. For a Christian to be a conqueror is a great thing—how can he be *more* than a conqueror?

I think in many respects, first, a Christian is better than some conquerors because the power by which he overcomes is far nobler. Here is a champion just come from the Greek games. He has well-near killed his adversary in a severe boxing match, and he comes in to receive the crown. Step up to him, look at that arm, and observe the muscles and sinews. Why, the man's muscles are like steel, and you say to him, "I do not wonder that you beat and bruised your foe. If I had set up a machine made of steel that worked by a little watery vapor, it could have done the same, though nothing but mere matter would have been at work.

"You are a stronger man and more vigorous in constitution than your foe—that is clear—but where is the particular glory about that? One machine is stronger than another. No doubt credit is to be given to you for your endurance, after a sort, but you are just one big brute beating another big brute. Dogs, and bulls, and gamecocks, and all kinds of animals would have endured as much, and perhaps more." Now, see the Christian champion coming from the fight, having won the victory! Look at him! He has overcome human wisdom—but when I look at him, I perceive no learning nor cunning. He is a simple, unlettered person who knows that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Yet he has won the victory over profound philosophers—then he *is* more than a conqueror!

He has been tempted and tried in all sorts of ways, and he was not at all a crafty person. He was very weak, yet somehow he has conquered. Now this is being more than a conqueror—when weakness overcomes strength—when brute force is baffled by gentleness and love! This is victory, indeed, when the little things overcome the great things! When the base things of this world overthrow the mighty, and the things that are not bring to nothing the things that are! Yet this is just the triumph of Di-

vine Grace. The Christian is, viewed according to the eye of sense, weak as water. Yet faith knows him to be irresistible. According to the eye of sense he is a thing to be trampled upon, for he will not resist. And yet, in the sight of God he becomes in this very way, by his gentleness and patience, more than a conqueror!

The Christian is more than a conqueror, again, because the conqueror fights for victory—fights with some selfish motive. Even if the motive is patriotism—although from another point of view, patriotism is one of the highest of worldly virtues—yet it is only a magnificent selfishness by which one contends for one's own country instead of being subject to the far more generous cosmopolitan thought of caring for *all* men. But the Christian fights neither for any set of men nor for himself—in contending for the Truth of God he contends for all men, but especially for God! And in suffering for the right he suffers with no prospect of earthly gain.

He becomes more than a conqueror both by the strength with which he fights and the motives by which he is sustained—which are better than the motives and the strength which sustain other conquerors. He is more than a conqueror because he loses nothing even by the fight itself. When a battle is won, at any rate the winning side loses something. In most wars the gain seldom makes any recompense for the effusion of blood. But the Christian's faith, when tried, grows stronger! His patience, when tempted, becomes more patient! His graces are like the fabled Anteus, who, when thrown to the ground, sprang up stronger than before by touching his mother, Earth.

The Christian, by touching his God and falling down in helplessness into the arms of the Most High grows stronger by all that he is made to suffer. He is more than a conqueror because he loses nothing even by the fight, and gains wondrously by the victory. He is more than a conqueror over persecution because most conquerors have to struggle and agonize to win the conquest. But, my Brothers and Sisters, many Christians, yes, and *all* Christians—when their faith in Christ is strong and their love to Christ is fervent—have found it even *easy* to overcome suffering for the Lord. Look at Blandina, enveloped in a net, tossed upon the horns of bulls, and then made to sit in a red hot iron chair to die, and yet unconquered to the end!

What did the tormentors say to the emperor—"Oh, Emperor," said the tormentors, "We are ashamed, for these Christians mock us while they suffer your cruelties." Indeed, the tormentors often seemed to be themselves tormented—they were worried to think they could not conquer timid women and children. They devoured their own hearts with rage! Like the viper which gnaws at the file, they broke their teeth against the iron strength of Christian faith! They could not endure it because these people suffered without repining, endured without retracting, and glorified Christ in the fires without complaining!

I love to think of Christ's army of martyrs! Yes, and of all His Church marching over the battlefield, singing as they fight—never ceasing the song, never suffering a note to fall—and at the same time advancing from victory to victory chanting the sacred hallelujah while they tramp over their foes. I saw one day upon the lake of Orta, in northern Italy, on some holy-day of the church of Rome, a number of boats coming from all quarters of the lake towards the church upon the central islet of the lake. It was singularly beautiful to hear the splash of the oars and the sound of song as the boats came up in long processions, with all the villagers in them, bearing their banners to the appointed place of meeting. As the oars splashed they kept time to the rowers, and the rowers never missed a stroke because they sang—neither was the song marred because of the splash of the oars—but on they came, singing and rowing!

And so has it been with the Church of God. That oar of *obedience*, and that other oar of *suffering*—the Church has learned to ply both of these, and to sing as she rows: “Thanks be unto God, who always makes us to triumph in every place!” Though we are made to suffer, and are made to fight, yet we are more than conquerors, because we are conquerors even while fighting! We sing even in the heat of the battle, waving high the banner and dividing the spoil even in the center of the fray. When the fight is hottest we are then the most happy! And when the strife is most stern, then most blessed! And when the battle grows most arduous, then, “calm mid the bewildering cry, confident of victory.” Thus the saints have been in those respects more than conquerors.

More than conquerors I hope, this day, because they have conquered their enemies by doing them *good*, converting their persecutors by their patience. To use the old Protestant motto, the Church has been the anvil, and the world has been the hammer—and though the anvil has done nothing but bear the stroke, she has broken all the hammers as she will do to the world's end! All true Believers who really trust in Jesus' love, and are really fired with it, will be far more glorious than the Roman conqueror when he drove his milk-white steeds through the imperial city's streets. Then the young men and maidens, matrons and old men gathered to the windows and chimney tops and scattered flowers upon the conquering legions as they came along.

But what is this compared with the triumph which is going on even *now* as the great host of God's elect come streaming through the streets of the New Jerusalem? What flowers are they which angels strew in the path of the blessed! What songs are those which rise from yonder halls of Zion, jubilant with song as the saints pass along to their everlasting habitations!

III. The time has almost failed me, and therefore, in the third place, but two or three words. Who are THE PERSONS THAT HAVE CONQUERED? Attentively regard these few words which I utter. The men who conquered in the fight up till now have been known only by this—the two things I

mentioned at the first—men who *believed* in Christ's love *to them*, and who were possessed with love *to Christ*! There has been no other distinction than this. They have been rich—Caesar's household yielded martyrs. They have been poor—the inscriptions on the tombs of the catacombs are few of them spelt correctly—they must have been very poor and illiterate persons who constituted the majority of the first Christian Churches, yet all classes have conquered.

At the stake bishops have burned and princes have died. But more numerous, still, have been the weavers and the tailors, and the seamstresses. The poorest of the poor have been as brave as the wealthy! The learned have died gloriously, but the unlearned have almost stolen the palm. Little children have suffered for Christ. Their little souls, washed in the blood of Jesus, have also been encrimsoned with their own! Meanwhile, the aged have not been behind. It must have been a sad but glorious sight to see old Latimer, when past seventy, putting off all his garments but his shirt, and then standing up and saying, as he turned round to Mr. Ridley, "Courage, Brother! We shall this day light such a candle in England as, by the Grace of God, shall never be put out."

Oh, if you wish to serve my Master, old men, you have not passed the prime of your days for *that*! Young men, if you would be heroes, now is the opportunity! You who are poor, you may glow with as great a glory as the rich! And you who have substance may count it your joy if you are called in the high places of the field to do battle for your Lord! There is room for all who love the Lord in this fight, and there are crowns for each. O that God would only give us the spirit and the strength to enlist in His army and to fight till we win the crown! I leave that point, beloved Friends, hoping that you will enlarge upon it in your thoughts.

IV. And now to close. The Apostle distinctly tells us, THE POWER, MYSTERIOUS AND IRRESISTIBLE, WHICH SUSTAINED THESE MORE THAN CONQUERORS, was, "through Him that loved us." They conquered through Christ's being their Captain. Much depends upon the leader. Christ showed them how to conquer by personally enduring suffering and conquering as their Example. They triumphed through Christ as their Teacher, for His doctrines strengthened their minds, made them strong, made them angelic, made them Divine—for He made them partakers of the Divine Nature.

But, above all, they conquered because Christ was actually with them! His body was in Heaven, for He has risen, but His Spirit was with them. We learn from all the history of the saints that Christ has a way of infusing supernatural strength into the weakest of the weak. The Holy Spirit, when He comes into contact with our poor, wavering, feeble spirits, girds us up to something which is absolutely impossible to man alone. You look at man as he is, and what can he do? Brethren, he can do *nothing*! "Without Me, you can do nothing." But look at man with God *in* him and I will reverse the question—What can he *not* do?

I do not see a *man* burning in yonder fires, I see *Christ* suffering in that man! I do not see a martyr in prison so much as the Divine power laughing at the thought of imprisonment and scorning iron bands. I do not so much see a simpleminded virgin, uneducated, contending with sophists and cavilers as I see the Spirit of the living God speaking through her simple tongue—teaching her in the same hour what she shall speak—and proving the Truth of God that the foolishness of God is greater than the wisdom of man, and the feebleness of God is stronger than the power of man!

Oh, it is glorious to think that God should thus take the meanest, poorest, most feeble things and should put Himself into them, and then say, “Come on, all you that are wise and great, and I will baffle you through those that are foolish and feeble! Now, come, you devils of Hell! Come, you men of earth who breathe out threats, and foam with cruelty! Come all of you, and this poor defenseless one shall laugh you all to scorn, and triumph even to the last!”

It is the power of Christ! And did you notice the name by which the Apostle called our Lord in the text? It is so significant that I think it is the key to the text, “Through Him that loved us.” Yes, *love* yielded them victory! They knew He loved them, *had* loved them, *always would* love them! They knew that if they suffered for His sake it was His *love* which let them suffer for their ultimate gain, and for His permanent honor. They *felt* that He loved them. They could not doubt it! They never mistrusted that fact and *this* it was that made them so strong.

O Beloved, are you weak today? Go to Him that loved you! Does your love grow cold today? Do not go to Moses to get it improved. Do not search your own heart with a view of finding anything good there, but go at once to Him that loved you! Think, this morning, of our Lord’s leaving Heaven and of His Incarnation upon earth. Think especially of the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, the wounds of Calvary, the dying thirst, the, “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?” Think of all that! Get Christ’s love to you burnt into your inmost consciousness, and in the strength of this fear no difficulties, dread no tribulations, but march to your life-battle as the heroes of old went to theirs—and you shall return with your crowns of victory as they returned with theirs!

And you shall find that verse which we just now sang to be most divinely true—

***“And they who, with their Leader, have conquered in the fight,
Forever and forever, are clad in robes of white.”***

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PAUL'S PERSUASION

NO. 2492

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
NOVEMBER 22, 1896.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 7, 1886.**

***“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 8:38, 39.***

A CHRISTIAN Brother was asked, one day, “To what persuasion do you belong?” He parried the question at first, for he did not think that it was very important for him to answer it. So the enquirer asked him again, “But what is your persuasion?” “Well,” he said, “if you must know my persuasion, this is it, ‘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 created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’” I also am of that persuasion. Somebody says, “That is Calvinistic doctrine.” If you like to call it so, you may, but I would rather that you made the mistake of the good old Christian woman who did not know much about these things and who said that she herself was “a high *Calvarist*.” She liked “high Calvary” preaching and so do I. And it is “high Calvary” doctrine that I find in this passage. He who hung on high Calvary was such a lover of the souls of men that from that glorious fact I am brought to this blessed persuasion, “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 created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Paul was fully persuaded of this great Truth of God. Did he not learn it by Revelation? I doubt not that God at first supernaturally revealed it to him, but yet, in order that he might be still more sure of it, God was pleased to reveal it to him again and again, till his trembling heart was more and more completely persuaded of it. It may have seemed to him, as it does to some of us, to be almost too good to be true and, therefore, the Holy Spirit so shed abroad this Truth in the Apostle's mind that he yielded to it and said, “I am persuaded.” He may have thought, with a great many in the present day, that it was necessary to caution Believers

against falling from Grace, and to be a little dubious about their final perseverance in the ways of God, but, if he ever had such fears, he gave them up and said, "I am—yes, I am *persuaded* that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Beside that, I suppose that the Apostle was persuaded through reasoning with himself from other grand Truths of God. He said to himself, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." He argued that if the death of Christ reconciled God's enemies to Himself, the life of Christ will certainly preserve safely those who are the friends of God! That was good argument, was it not?

I have no doubt that Paul also argued with himself from the nature of the work of Grace which is the implantation of a living and incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. Christ spoke of it as the putting of a well into us and He said, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And as Paul thought of the nature of this new life, he felt persuaded that it would not die—he was convinced that he would never be separated from the love of God!

Moreover, I doubt not that Paul remembered the doctrine of the Union of Believers with Christ, and he said to himself, "Shall Christ lose the members of His body? Shall a foot or an arm be lopped off from Him? Shall an eye of Christ be put out in darkness?" And he could not think that it could be so! As he turned the matter over mentally, he said, "If they are, indeed, one with Christ, I am persuaded that nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, if I could extend the time for this service to 24 hours, I might give you all the arguments, or the most of the arguments, which support the blessed Truth of the non-separation of Believers from the love of Christ. As for my own convictions, I can never doubt it! I am fully persuaded concerning it. This Truth seems to me to have struck its roots into all the other Truths of Scripture and to have twisted itself among the granite rocks which are the very foundation of our hope! I, too, am persuaded by a thousand arguments, and persuaded beyond all question, that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Yet more, I fancy that Paul had been persuaded of this Truth by his own experience. He had endured persecution, imprisonment, famine, shipwreck. He had suffered from scorn and scandal, pain of body and depression of spirit. "A night and a day," he said, "I have been in the deep." And I will guarantee you that many a night and many a day he had been in *spiritual* deeps, yet he had survived them all and he could testify to the faithfulness of his God and say at the end, as the issue of his sufferings, "I am persuaded that nothing in creation is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Thus he was persuaded of this Truth of God by Revelation, by argument and by experience. And I should like you to notice that he was not

only persuaded that *none* of the powers he mentions *will separate us from the love of Christ*, but that they *cannot*! He puts it thus—they are not able to separate us. Yet these are the strongest forces imaginable—death, life, angels, principalities, powers, the dreary present and the darker future. Paul summons all our foes and sets them in battle array against us! And when he has added up the total of all their legions, he says that he is persuaded that they shall not be able—shall not be *able*, mark you—to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

I. In this discourse I am only going to handle the topic of Paul's persuasion. Paul says, "I am persuaded," and it is implied that, first, HE IS PERSUADED OF THE LOVE OF GOD. He could not be persuaded that nothing could separate us from a thing which did not exist! And so he is persuaded, first of all, of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Come, my Brothers and Sisters, *are you persuaded of the love of God?* Are you intelligently persuaded not only that God is Love, but that God loves *you*? Are you fully persuaded of the love of God—the love of the Father who chose us because He would choose us for nothing but His love? The love of Jesus, the Son of God, who bowed Himself from His Glory that He might redeem us from our shame? The love of the Holy Spirit who has quickened us and who comes to dwell in us that we may, by-and-by, dwell with Him? Are you persuaded of this love of God to you? Happy man, happy woman, who can truly say, "I am persuaded that God loves me. I have thought it over, I have fully considered it, I have thoroughly weighed it and I have come to this conclusion, that the love of God is shed abroad in my heart."

Then, next, it is *the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*. That is, His great love in giving His dear Son to die for us. I am not going to expatiate upon this wondrous theme. The thoughts are too great to need to be spun out, or you can do that in your private meditations. Is it not a wonderful thing that God loved *me*, and loved *you*, (let us individualize it)—that God so loved you that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life? He gave His Son for you! And for me. It is as though one bartered a diamond to buy a common pebble from the brook, or gave away an empire to purchase some foul thing not worthy of being picked off a dunghill! Yet we are persuaded that He did it, and that the love of God is most clearly to be seen in the fact that He gave His Son Jesus Christ to die instead of us.

And, once more, we are persuaded of *the love of God to all who are in Christ*. We believe in Christ and so we come to be in Christ by our believing. And now we are persuaded that to as many as receive Christ, to them gives He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name and, therefore, all who believe in Jesus are beloved of the Lord, not because of anything good in them, but for Jesus Christ's sake. He loves Christ so much that He loves us notwithstanding our

unloveliness, because Jesus Christ has covered us with His robe of righteousness and He has said, "My Father, consider them as lost in Me, hidden in Me, made one with Me." And the Father says, "Yes, My beloved Son, I will love them. Jesus, I will love them for Your sake."

So we are persuaded of these three things. First, that God loves us. Next, that God has shown His love to us by the gift of His Son Jesus Christ. And then, that His Divine Love comes streaming down to us because we are in Christ and are loved for His sake. I want you, dear Friends, to get this persuasion into you. If you are not so persuaded, here is honey, but you do not taste it! Here is light, but you do not see it! Here is Heaven, but you do not enter the pearly gate. Beloved, if you would be saved, you *must be persuaded of this Truth of God*—and when you are persuaded of it, you will know the joy of it.

II. That leads me to pass on to the second thing of which Paul was persuaded. It does not appear on the surface of the text, but if you look a minute you will see that PAUL WAS PERSUADED THAT HE AND ALL THE SAINTS ARE JOINED TO GOD BY LOVE. Otherwise he could not have said, "I am persuaded that things present and things to come shall not be able to *separate* us." We must be *joined together*, or else the Apostle would not talk of separation! There is a picture for you to contemplate—God and ourselves joined together by the bonds of love in Christ Jesus. God loves Christ and we love Christ, so we have a meeting place—we love the same blessed Person—and that brings us to love one another.

There are two things that join God and a Believer together. The first is God's love to the Believer. And the second is the Believer's love to God. It is as when two dear friends lovingly embrace with their arms around each other's neck—there is a double link binding them together. Or, to come nearer the truth, it is as when a mother puts her arms around the neck of her little child and her child puts its tiny arms about the mother's neck—that is how we and God are joined together.

Are you persuaded that it is so with you, dear Friends? Can you, each one, say, as you sit in your pew tonight, "*God loves me, and that love joins Him to me*"? And, "*I love God, and that love joins me to Him*"? I believe that the Apostle was persuaded that these two blessed links existed between Him and the great God, and He was persuaded that neither of those two links would ever be broken. God could not withdraw from Paul, His embrace of love, and Paul felt that, by Divine Grace, he could not withdraw his embrace of love from his God. But he must have been, first of all, persuaded that both those embraces were there. Are *you*, my dear Hearer, persuaded that it is so with you? Are your arms about the neck of the great Father? Are the great Father's loving arms about your neck? Be persuaded of that Truth and you are, indeed, happy men and happy women! What more could you wish to say than to be able truthfully to say that?

III. Now, to come to what is evidently in the text, and to dwell upon it for a little while, Paul, being thus persuaded that there was a love of God

and that there was a union through love between the soul and its God, now says that HE IS PERSUADED THAT NOTHING CAN EVER BREAK THOSE BONDS.

He begins by mentioning some of the things that are supposed to separate. And the first is, *death*. It sends a shiver through some when we begin to speak of death and the bravest man who ever lived may well tremble at the thought that he must soon meet the king of terrors. But, Brothers and Sisters, if Christ loves us and we love Christ, we may well be persuaded that death will not break the union which exists between us! I have lately seen one or two of our friends almost in the very article of death. I think that they cannot long survive, but I have come out from their bedchamber greatly cheered by their holy peacefulness and joy! I can see that death does not break the Believer's peace—it seems, rather, to strengthen it! I can see that there is no better place than the brink of Jordan, after all.

I have seen the Brothers and the Sisters, too, sit with their feet in the narrow stream, and they have been singing all the while! Death has not abated a single note of their song! No, more. I have known some of them who are like the fabled swan which is said never to sing till it dies. Some of them who were rather heavy and sad of spirit in their days of health, have grown joyous and glad as they have neared the eternal Kingdom. There is nothing about death that the Believer should construe into a fear that it will separate him from the love of Christ. Christ loved you when He died—He will love you when you die! It was after death—remember that—it was *after* death that His heart poured out the tribute of blood and water by which we have the double cure! See, then, how He loves us in death and after death! There is nothing about death that should make Christ cease to love us—our bodies will be under His protection and guardian care and our souls shall be with Christ, which is “far better” than being anywhere else. Do not, therefore, fear death!

In the days when this Epistle was written, the saints had to die very cruel deaths by fire, by the cross, by wild beasts in the amphitheatre. They were sawn in two. They wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Yet they never feared death. It is very amazing how the Church of Christ always seems to brighten up at the idea of death by martyrdom. The grandest, most heroic days in Christendom were the days of the Pagan persecutions, when, to be a Christian meant to be doomed to die! In English history, the days of Mary, when the saints at Smithfield bore witness for Christ at the stake, were grand days! And in Madagascar—did you ever read a more thrilling story than the record of the bravery of those Christian men and women who suffered the tyrant's cruelty? And at the present moment, in Central Africa, where Bishop Hannington has been put to death, we hear that there is an edict for the killing of Christians, yet hundreds of black men came forward to confess that they are followers of Christ. It is a wonderful thing. We do not ask for these persecutions, but they might do us

great good if they came. Certainly, this wondrous ship of Christ's Church, when she plows her way through waves of blood, makes swifter headway to the heavenly haven than she does in times of calm. So, beloved Friends, there is nothing in death to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle says next, "*nor life.*" I must confess that I am more afraid of life than of death. "Oh," says one, "but dying is such hard work." Do you think so? Why, dying is the *end* of work—it is *living* that is hard work! I am not so much afraid of dying as I am of sinning—that is ten times worse than death. And what if some of us should live very many years? "There's the respect that makes calamity of so long a life," that there is so much longer time for temptation and trial. If one might have his choice, one might be content to have a short warfare and to enter upon the crown at once. But we may be permitted to live on to extreme old age—do you dread it? There is nothing about old age to separate you from the love of Christ! He has made and He will bear—even to hoar hairs will He carry you—therefore, be not afraid. The ills of life are many, the trials of life are many, the temptations of life are more. O life, life, life here below, you are, after all, little better than a lingering death! The true life is hereafter. "Yet," says Paul, "I am persuaded that life cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus." He means that if we were tempted by the love of life to deny Christ, we would be strengthened so that we would not deny Him even to save our lives, for His people have been brave enough in this respect in all times. Paul counted not his life dear to him that he might win Christ and be found in Him. Therefore he says that he is persuaded that neither death nor life shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Then he mentions *angels, principalities and powers*. Well, the good angels cannot separate us from the love of God—we are sure that they would not wish to do so! And whatever spiritual creatures may frequent the earth, *they* cannot separate us from the love of Christ. Does the Apostle mean devils—fallen angels that would overthrow us, some of them as "principalities" by their dignity, others of them as, "powers" by their subtle, crafty force—does he refer to devils? I think he does and this, then, is our comfort, that if we have to meet the arch-fiend, himself, foot to foot in terrible duel—and we may, for men of God have had so to meet him, and he that does battle with the adversary will gain nothing by it but sweat of blood and aching heart, even if he shall win the victory, so that we may well pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One"—still we have this comfort, that even though he may rejoice over us for a moment and may cast us down, he cannot *separate us from the love of Christ!* He may open many of our veins and make us bleed even to utter weakness, but the life-vein he can never touch!

There is a secret something about the Christian of which Satan wishes to spoil, but which is entirely out of his reach, so the saint sings, "I am persuaded that neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers can sepa-

rate me from the love of Christ. You may come on, battalions of the adversary, with all your terrible might sweeping hypocrites and deceivers before you like chaff before the wind, but as many as are linked to Christ by His eternal love shall stand firm against you, like the solid rocks against the billows of the sea." Therefore, be confident, dear Brothers and Sisters, that these spiritual beings, these unseen forces, these strange and mysterious powers which you cannot fully understand can, *none of them*, separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus your Lord!

Having summarily disposed of all of them, Paul adds, "*nor things present*." I like this thought. He is persuaded that things present cannot separate us from Christ. I wonder what the things present are with you, my dear Hearers. One of you says, "Well, it is an empty pocket with me." Others will say, "It is a family of children who have no bread." Some may say, "It is the prospect of bankruptcy." Another will say, "Ah, it is an insidious disease that will soon carry me to my grave!" A mother will say, "It is rebellious children who are breaking my heart." Well, whatever it may be—and the woes of the present are very many—there is *nothing* that can separate us from the love of Christ!

I was feeling very heavy, I scarcely knew why, when I caught at this text. And it seemed to come in so pleasantly for me when my spirits were down. "Things present." Even a depressed and desponding state of mind, whatever the cause of it is—whether weariness of brain or heaviness of heart—cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus!

Then, what can it do? Why, sometimes it can *drive us to Christ*—let us pray that it may! But anyhow, things present cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Then the Apostle says, "*nor things to come*." Well, I wonder what is "to come." O Friends, I sometimes feel a strange trembling when I stand upon this platform to speak to you because the words that I utter are often so remarkably fulfilled of God as really to amaze me! Two Sunday nights ago, when I stood here to preach about the long-suffering of God being salvation, [Sermon No. 1997, Volume 33: *God's Long-suffering—An Appeal to the Conscience*—Read/download at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>] I spoke, in the middle of the sermon, as if personally addressing someone who was present, who had lately been ill with fever, and who had come to the Tabernacle, still weak and scarcely recovered. There was a young man here who exactly answered to the description I gave, and who wrote home to his mother something like this (I have the letter)—"I went to Spurgeon's Tabernacle on Sunday night and I heard such a sermon! I never felt anything like it before. He looked at me and picked me out as if I was the only man there, and described me exactly."

Then he gave the words I used and continued, "It was a true description of myself. If the sermon is printed, pray get me a copy that I may read it when I come home, for I felt the power of it and I prayed, then and there, that God would bring me to my mother's God and save me." That

was on the Sunday, mark you. On the Wednesday he was at Gravesend—there was a collision and he and five others were drowned. The mother received that letter about an hour before she heard the news that her son was dead—and the parents wrote to tell me what a balm it was to their spirits that God's Providence should bring their boy in here just before he was to meet his God.

So, you see, I cannot help wondering what the "things to come" will be for you who are here. With some—who can tell?—as the Lord lives, there may be but a step between you and death. And if you have no Christ, and have never tasted of His love, you are running awful risks even in going one step further. You have walked on, and on, and on, and there has up to now always been something beneath your feet—but the next step may precipitate you into the abyss! Therefore, seek the Lord now before it be too late! As for the child of God, he knows no more about his immediate future than you do, but he knows this—that there is nothing in the future that can separate Him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord! Therefore, let the future bring with it what it may, all will be well with him.

Now the Apostle adds two more expressions, "*nor height, nor depth.*" There are some people who dwell in the heights. I am rather pleased to meet with dear friends who never have any doubts or fears, but are always full of joy and ecstasy, and who go on to tell us that they have left all these things behind and have risen to the heights of bliss. But what I do not like is when they look down from those awful heights upon us poor Christians and say that they cannot believe in us because we are anxious, because we practice self-examination, because we have to struggle against sin! They do not struggle—they have risen beyond all struggling—they rub their hands and sing of everlasting victory. Well, my dear Brother—you up there on the topmost bough—you will not frighten me with all your heights though I cannot get up there—and I could not stay there if I could get up so high! This one thing I know, I am sure that there is nothing in those heights that can separate me from the love of Christ! I will stick to that. Whatever revelations there may be to the enthusiastic, whatever raptures and ecstasies and extreme delights any may have, they cannot separate me from Christ! I am glad that you have them, Brother, may you always keep them. And if I cannot have them, I shall sit down in my struggles and temptations and *still* say that there is nothing in the heights—in high doctrine or in high living—that can separate me from the love of Christ!

I am a little more acquainted with the depths and I meet with many Christian people who are very familiar with those depths. I could indicate some dear friends here who I hope are not in the depths right now, but I have seen them there. You were very low down, Brother—we had to stoop to call to you—the waters of God's waves and billows seemed to have gone over you. You have been down to the depths and I have been there with you. But there is nothing in the depths that can separate us from

the love of Christ! Jonah went down to the depths of the sea, but he came up with this testimony, that there was nothing there to separate us from the love of God! No,; though you should be weary of your life, though you should never have a ray of light by the month together, there is nothing there to separate you from the love of Christ! You may go down, down, down, till you seem to have got beyond the reach of help from mortal man, but there are cords and bands which bind you to Christ that even these depths can never break, come what may.

The Apostle ends the list by saying, "*nor any other creature.*" It may be read, "Nor any other created thing, nor anything that ever is to be created," *nothing* shall ever separate us from the love of Christ. Oh, what a sweet persuasion is this! Let us go forward into the future, however dark it is, with this confidence that at least one thing we know—the love of Christ will hold us fast and, by His Grace, we will hold fast to Him. We are married to Him and we shall never be divorced. We are joined to Him by a living, loving, lasting union that never shall be broken!

IV. I have done when I have called your attention to one more thing. Did you notice how the text begins? It begins with the word "for." "*For* I am persuaded." What does that mean? That shows that this is used as an argument drawn from something mentioned before. What is that? "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us, *for* I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life," and so on. It seems, then, dear Friends, that PAUL'S PERSUASION HELPED TO BRING HIM TO VICTORY.

He was persuaded that Christ would not leave him and that he would not be allowed to leave Christ—and *this stirred him up to deeds of daring.* Oh, where there is real cause for fighting, there cannot be victory without striving! Paul was so persuaded that Christ would never leave him, that he became a fighter, and he went in with all his might against the world, the flesh and the devil. Some say that this doctrine would send us to sleep—it never does—it wakes us up! The doctrine that I am quite sure to gain the victory makes me fight. If I did not know that I should win it, I might think that I would let discretion be the better part of my valor, but, being assured that Christ will be with me all through, I feel incited to war against all that is evil that I may overcome it in *His* strength!

Yes, and the Apostle seems to hint that this persuasion that Christ would not leave him *made him aspire to a very great victory.* Men do not reach what they do not aspire to—and Paul says, "We are more than conquerors." Therefore, he aspired to be a complete and perfect conqueror. And this persuasion *helped him to gain his aspiration.* By God's Grace, the man who trusts in Christ's eternal love and believes in the Immutability of the Divine Purpose and, therefore, is persuaded that he can never be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus—he is the man to win a glorious victory by his faith in his great God! Therefore, let us be encouraged to go on and fight against everything that is evil, especially in ourselves, and tread down all the powers of darkness

since *nothing* can stand against us while Christ is for us! And for us He must be forever and ever.

I wish that all here present had a share in my blessed text. It is an intense regret to me that I cannot present it to some of you. You do not know the love of Christ. Oh, that you would come and learn it! May the sweet Spirit lead you to Jesus, cause you to look to Him upon the Cross and trust in Him! Then you will have something worth hearing, for you will have a love that never changes—a love that shall never be separated from you nor you from it! God bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 6.**

In the previous chapter Paul was writing to some who ought to have been teachers, but who still needed 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 more sublime 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.

Verse 1. *Therefore leaving the principles*—The rudiments, the elementary Truths of God—

1. *Of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to 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 anymore, but go on to still higher matters.

3. *And this will we do, if God permits.* 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 Spirit, 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 to 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 briars.

7, 8. *For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God: but that which bears thorns and briars is rejected, and is near to cursing; whose end is to be burned.* If, after having plowed 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 labor 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. Now notice what Paul says—

9. *But, Beloved, we are persuaded better things 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 *worked 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 labor of love, which you have showed toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister.* If you have proven 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 everyone of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end.* Keep it up! Be as earnest, today, as you

were 20 years ago, when you were baptized and joined the Church—“Show the same diligence to the end.” Still, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”

12-15. *That you 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 swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, 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 show to 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 of God—both equally true—the one necessary 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. Therefore, be of good courage, and press forward in the Divine Life, for your work of faith and labor 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 enters 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 deeps 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. *Where the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.*

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***“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that I were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsman according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertains 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.”
Romans 9:1-5.***

WHAT an intense man Paul was! Once convince him and his whole nature moved in the direction which he judged to be right. He was whole-hearted when he persecuted the Church of God and he was equally whole-hearted when, afterwards, he labored with all his might to build up the Church which he had sought to destroy! I would to God we were all as thorough-going in the service of our Lord! The pity is that so many professing Christians appear to have no heart, while others borrow a heart for some occasions but do not seem to keep one permanently beating in their own bosoms. O for a warm, engine-like heart all consecrated and forever pulsing mightily!

What a change was worked in Saul of Tarsus, that he who was so ardent a persecutor should become so fervent a preacher! His conversion is one of the proofs of the Divinity of Christianity. The study of the story of Paul was the means of the conversion of Lord Lyttleton who read it with the design of exposing it as a hoax. His friend, Gilbert West, was, at the same time, considering the resurrection of our Lord in a similar spirit and, happily, with the same result—the friends met to unite in the joint conviction that the Bible is the Word of God! Dr. Johnson says of Lyttleton's, *“Observations upon the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul,”* “it is a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer.”

Consider for a moment the renowned conversion of Paul. It was singularly Providential that just at that period when the Church needed such a man, the Apostle with his remarkable education, his noble purpose and his acquaintance with Jewish and Greek literature, should have been called out from the world and placed in the very forefront of the battle for Christ! Truly might he say that he was not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles, though in his humility, he felt himself to be nothing. No name in the Christian Church can be pronounced with greater honor after

that of our glorious Master than the name of Paul who was, indeed, a wise master builder.

When you remember what he was by nature, you will marvel at the extraordinary change of thought and feeling which was worked in him! He who was cruel to the saints, who gave his voice against Stephen and held the garments of those that stoned him, became tenderhearted as a nurse towards her child! Though his Jewish brethren terribly persecuted him and pursued him from city to city, there is not a trace of resentment in any word he writes! Rather, he is full of gentleness. The lion had become a lamb and he that breathed out threats breathed out prayers! He who seemed to burn with enmity became a flame of love!

Dear Friends, before we go any further, pause and answer this question—has such a change as this been worked in you? Perhaps you have never been conspicuously a blasphemer or a persecutor as Paul was, but still, if converted, there will have been a very wonderful change in you. Old things will have passed away and all things will have become new. Do you feel that and do you recognize the change both in your inner and outer life? If not, you must be born again! Unless you are converted and become as little children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God!

Our first thought, after reading this passage, is, what a wonderfully tender and loving preacher Paul must have been. One of the early fathers was known to say that he wished he could have seen Solomon's temple in its glory, Rome in its prosperity and Paul preaching! I think the last the grandest sight of the three! Oh, to have heard him speak! It might have shamed us into deeper tones of earnestness. Though, I suppose, his oratory was not very astonishing as mere rhetoric, for some said his speech was contemptible, yet it must have been wonderfully powerful upon the heart, for it abounded in sighs and tears and other tokens of evident emotion! Besides, his awful intensity of look and tone must have made his discourses irresistible!

He would never have written as he has done in his Epistles if he had been one who could speak with icicles hanging about his lips. He must have spoken from a burning heart which shot forth red-hot bolts of fiery words! He poured his language out like lava from a volcano from the flaming furnace of his soul! His sentences burned their way into the hearts of those who heard him! Brother, if you are called to preach the Gospel, let Paul be your model! I reckon that we never preach aright unless we pour out our inmost soul! And unless we long and hunger and thirst for the conversion of our hearers, we might as well be in bed and asleep! We shall teach them to be indifferent if we, ourselves, are indifferent.

If it will satisfy us to read through a little essay or to speak a few godly words without heart and life, we are not called to the ministry—we are not sent, for we feel no woe upon us! We have not the anointing, for the live coal from off the altar has never blistered our lips! John Bunyan says that he often felt, while preaching, that he would give up his own salvation for the salvation of his hearers—and I pity the man who has not felt the same. To preach with the harps of angels ringing in your ears, anxious

that all your hearers should stand, at last, among the elect company above, or to preach with the groans of Hell rising in your ears and piercing your heart, anxious beyond all things that no man who listens to your voice should ever come into that place of torment—this is the Pauline style! The style of Demosthenes, the manner of Cicero, the method of the forum—these are nothing! Commend me to the eloquence of Paul and to the oratory of his Master, for Paul was a great preacher because he caught his Master's spirit and spoke in the manner of Him of whom they said of old, "Never man spoke like this Man."

Now, coming to the text and dwelling upon it, I shall want to notice first, the persons about whom Paul felt the anxiety which he expresses. Then, secondly, we shall look further into the character of that anxiety. And, lastly, we shall dwell awhile upon the excellence of each one of us feeling just as Paul did, for a thousand good results would follow if God the Spirit would bring us to the same condition of heart!

I. First, then, WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE FOR WHOM PAUL WAS ANXIOUS BEYOND MEASURE? To begin with, they were his worst enemies! The name of Paul brought the blood into the face of a Jew. He spat in rage. More than 40 of them had bound themselves with an oath that they would slay him and the whole company of the circumcised seemed, wherever he went, to be moved by the same impulse. He frequently gathered large congregations of Gentiles who attended to him earnestly, but the Jews stirred up riots and mobs and, frequently, he was in danger of his life from them. They detested him, regarding him as an accursed apostate from the faith of his fathers.

Remembering how earnest he had been *against* Christ, they could not believe in his sincerity when he became a Christian, or, if they did, they hated him as a fanatic whose delusion was mischievous beyond measure. His generous retaliation was to *pray* for them—no, more—to carry the whole nation on his heart as a burden. "I have great heaviness," says he, "and continual sorrow of heart for my kinsmen according to the flesh." Now, if any of you, in following Christ, should meet with opposition, avenge it in the same way! Love *most* the man who treats you worst! If any man would kill you in his anger, kill him with your loving prayers. If he strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other, also, in submission and lift both hands and eyes to Heaven and cry, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Never let oppressors see your anger. They will observe your emotion and your grief and they will perceive that you are naturally vexed and troubled, but let them also see that you bear them no malice and only desire their welfare. I commend this to those who have a hard fight for Christ in the workroom, in the midst of sneers and jests. Never use the devil's weapons, though they lie very handy and look very suitable. Only use Christ's Omnipotent weapon of love and so shall you be His disciples.

Next, these people for whom Paul was in so much concern were his kinsfolk according to the flesh. It is well said that charity must begin at home, for he that does not care for his own household is worse than a

heathen and a publican. He who does not desire the salvation of those who are his own kin, "how dwells the love of God in him?" Christianity is expansive—it makes the bosom glow with love to *all* that God has made—but, at the same time, our love does not expand so as to lose force and this is seen when it turns its power towards those who are nearest home. Is your husband unsaved? O Woman, *love* him to Christ! Is your child unconverted? O Parent, *pray* that child to Christ! Are your neighbors still out of Christ? Lay them on your heart as an intercessor before God on their account—and cease not to plead till they are saved!

Think much of the heathen—by all means regard India and China and the like—but do not forget Newington, Butts, Lambeth and Southwark, or wherever else it is your lot to live! Next to your homes let your own neighborhoods be first of all considered and then your country, for all Englishmen are kin! Wherever we wander we are proud of our common country and, like the Romans of old, we are somewhat quick to make known our citizenship. Therefore, let us never cease to plead for this beloved island and our kinsmen according to the flesh! Paul prayed for his countrymen and never let us bear within our bones a soul so dead as to forget our native land!

We may regard those for whom he prayed, in the next light, as persons of great privileges—a very important point. They had privileges by birth—"who are Israelites." Many of you are highly favored. You are not Israelites, but you are the children of godly parents which is much the same thing. Almost the first sound you ever heard from your mother's lips was the voice of prayer for you. You can remember when you were taken, for the first time, to the House of Prayer, when, perhaps, you did not understand anything, but still, your godly friends thought it well that you should sit, in your earliest days, in the courts of the Lord's house! In that sense you are like the Jews. You have the privilege of being born in the midst of holy and gracious influences—an advantage not to be despised.

Those poor gutter children, born, we scarcely know where, who pine in poverty and breathe an atmosphere of vice—their young ears are from the first so much acquainted with the voice of blasphemy that they will never tingle should the profanity of Hell be let loose around them. Those, I say, start in the race of life under terrible disadvantages! But you, some of you, have had everything in your favor! For you, the path of right is smooth and there are many beckoning you to walk in it. And yet we tremble for you, lest you, with other children of the kingdom, should be cast out while many come from the east and from the west and sit down at the banquet of Grace! If there are any people we ought to pray for above others, it seems to me they are the unconverted who live in the light but will not see—who have the bread of Heaven upon the table before them but will not eat—who have Free Grace and dying love sounding in their ears, but yet refuse the wondrous message of Grace! Beloved, let us not rest unless we feel a deep concern for those who stand on a par with Israelites, since they have the privilege of being born under a Christian roof.

The objects of Paul's prayer had yet a higher privilege, for it is said, "to whom pertains the adoption." There was an *outward* adoption. "Israel is my first-born," says God. Israel enjoyed national advantages and we, also, living in such a land as this, possess innumerable Gospel privileges. England is, as it were, the favorite of Heaven! God has been pleased to adopt the nation as His child, giving it special liberty, an open Bible, the free proclamation of the Gospel and the Church of God in the midst of it to be its light. To Israel belonged the glory, too. That is to say, God had revealed Himself in their midst from the Mercy Seat in the bright light of the Shekinah.

And, oh, in this very House of Prayer, I am sure I may say it, the Lord has manifested His Glory very wonderfully! How many hundreds have been turned from darkness to light in this place! At times the power of God has been gloriously revealed. It was so last Sunday evening! We felt it, we distinctly recognized it and we are looking for many to come forward to declare what God did for souls on that occasion! Well, then, if you have seen this Glory, if you have heard the glorious Gospel, if you have felt, in some degree the working of the gracious Spirit and have had some longings, some wishes towards salvation, what a sad thing will it be if, after all, you should be cast away! I fear that this will be true of many of you and I have great heaviness in my heart at the thought!

And then they had the first hold of all the spiritual gifts which the Lord bestowed upon the sons of men. They had, as it were, a monopoly of Light and Truth among them. The Jewish people had been singularly favored—they had seen God revealing His Son to them by types, by priests, by sacrifices, by the temple, by a thousand signs and marks. Verily the kingdom of God had come very near to them. But the privileges of the Jews were not greater than the privileges of men and women who hear the Gospel in these days, for Christ is not so well seen in bleeding bulls and rams and hyssop and scarlet wool as He is seen in the preaching of the Gospel! In the Gospel, God has torn the veil and made bare His heart to us in the Person of His dying Son.

You have no longer to search for the mind of God by mysterious hieroglyphs—it is written in plain letters and the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein! You have but to *hear* it and with the exercise of an ordinary understanding, the letter of its meaning may be comprehended. And if there is a willing heart, no matter how small the capacity of the mind, there is intellect enough to receive the saving Truth of God! You do not now live in the moonlight of the Jewish dispensation, but you bask in the noontide sunlight of the Truth of God! God, who spoke to our fathers by the Prophets, has, in these last days, spoken to us by His Son who is the express image of His Person and the brightness of His Glory! "See that you refuse not Him that speaks."

Because we fear you may do so, our heart is heavy and we have sorrow of heart for some of you. We are distressed for you whose feeling comes and goes like the midnight meteor. Your case is one of such peril that we are deeply concerned about you. O God, help all Your servants to feel

what a dreadful thing it will be for persons so highly privileged to be lost forever! I should not have completed the subject if I did not say that Paul had a great concern for these people because he saw them living in the commission of great sin. Some of them were exceedingly moral and the bulk of them extremely religious, yet they were living in gross sin! Do you know what is the greatest of sins? It is to be at enmity with God! The most damning of iniquities is to refuse Christ!

Did God send out of His bosom His only-begotten Son to die for men and do men reject Him? Ah, this is worse than rejecting the Law! This is worse than rejecting the Gospel! It is a direct personal insult to the loving God—this rejecting the Son of God, His only Son, His bleeding, dying Son! Here sin reaches its climax and surpasses itself in infamy! These men rejected Christ and set up their phylacteries, their paying of tithes of anise and mint and cumin, their fasting thrice in the week and I know not what trifles besides, in insulting competition with the Savior! In the same manner at this hour, many persons value their external religiousness above faith in Jesus. They attend to the ceremonies of this Church or of the other and refuse the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ! The greatest of sins lies there!

You may as easily be lost religiously as irreligiously unless your religion is God's religion and is based upon faith in His dear Son! This grieved the Apostle, that they were mad against Him whom they ought to have loved, and were violent against Him in whom they should have believed, so that they had become a race anathematized from Christ! I know he means that, because he says he could wish that he himself could stand in their place and take that anathema upon himself which he felt was upon them. They had said, "His blood be on us and on our children" and Paul knew that it would be! He remembered the Master's words when He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings and you would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate." He could see in spirit the siege of Jerusalem—the most tremendous of all human slaughters—the most fearful of all scenes of blood enacted on the face of the earth! And His heart sank within him and his spirit quailed at the thought of the tremendous judgment!

Some in these days describe the penalty of sin as though it were a trifle. I beseech you, do not regard it such! If I had one dying before me whom I loved, if I was in any fear about the salvation of that dying person, I would not say, "Perhaps when you go out of this world you may be unsaved, but there is a larger hope, and I would not have you distress yourself about immediate repentance, for mercy may come to you in another state." Sirs, I dare no more talk that way than administer a draught of poison to one I love! No, rather would I say. "My Brother, my Sister, it is now or never with you. Seek the Lord while He may be found! Call upon Him while He is near! For when once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door and you begin to stand outside and knock and to say,

'Lord, Lord, open unto me,' He will not say, 'Wait a while. I will open by-and-by,' but His final reply will be, 'Verily I say unto you, I know you not.'

There is no hope of blessing for those who die impenitent anyhow or anywhere! They must depart, depart, depart, and that forever! O my Hearer, I beseech you, do not run the risk of the everlasting wrath of God! May God help you, by His infinite mercy, to feel how terrible a thing it is to be out of Christ, for our God is a consuming fire and it is written, "Beware you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver."

Now the thought of all this made the Apostle feel great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart for his brethren, his kinsfolk according to the flesh. If he had thought that they would be annihilated when they died, he would have had no heaviness about them. If men and women are nothing, after all, but cats and dogs and have no immortal souls, I, for one, will never bother my head about them. If they can die, let them die—it is nothing to me that they should be immortal! It is because I *know* that they are immortal and if they die unsaved they will have forever to endure the wrath of God that my soul feels and desires to feel more than ever, a continual heaviness of heart concerning every unsaved soul that still lives! May God grant us more of this heaviness of spirit! May we be deeply pained by that dread, awful, overwhelming—I will even dare to add—*horrifying* thought of souls being lost forever!

II. I have spoken enough, then, as to the persons for whom Paul was anxious. Now let us notice, secondly, HIS DESCRIPTION OF THIS ANXIETY, which was very truthful. There was no sham about it. It is pretty easy to work yourself up into a state of feeling, but it was not passing emotion with Paul, it was deep, true, constant grief. He says, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit." He did not *fancy* that he felt, but he *really* was heart-broken for guilty souls. He did not *sometimes* get up into that condition or down into it, but he *lived* in it. "I lie not," he says, "I do not speak more than the truth. I do not exaggerate." For fear he should not be believed he asserts as strongly as is allowed to a Christian man—"I say the truth in Christ. I lie not."

His was true heaviness, real sorrow. Do we feel the same, or is it only a little excitement at a revival meeting, a chance feeling which passes over us through sympathy with other people who are earnest? May the Lord plow your soul deep, dear Friend! If He means you to be a soul-winner, He will. May the plowers make deep furrows upon your heart, as once they did upon your Master's back! You are not fit to carry souls on your heart till it has been bruised with grief for them. You must feel deeply for the souls of men if you are to bless them. Paul's feeling was very gracious. It was not an animal feeling, or a natural feeling—it was a gracious feeling, for He says—"I say the truth in Christ." When he was nearest to his Lord. When he felt most his union with Christ and communion with Him, then he felt that he did mourn over men's souls.

It was truth in Christ that he was expressing because he was *one* with Christ! He had a love for sinners because his very soul was knit to Christ. He had a heaviness such as his Master knew when He, also, was very heavy and sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane, in the day of His passion. O Beloved, we need the Spirit of God to work this feeling in us! It is of no use to try to get it by reading books, or to pump yourself up to it in private—this feeling is the work of God! A soul-winner is a creation. As a Christian has to be created, so out of a Christian the soul-winner has to be fashioned. There has to be a careful preparation, a softening of the soul to make the worker know how naturally to care for the welfare of others. Paul had been trained and qualified for soul-saving work. He says that his conscience bore him witness that he spoke the truth and then he says the Holy Spirit bore witness with his conscience. May we have such a manifest love for sinners that we can ask the Holy Spirit to bear witness that we have it!

Brothers, Sisters, I am sometimes afraid that our zeal for conversion would not stand the test of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we want to increase our denomination, or enlarge our Church for our own honor. Or we want to get credit for doing good, or to feel that we have power and influence over others. None of these motives can be tolerated! Our concern for souls must be worked in us by the Holy Spirit. It must come irresistibly upon us and become a master passion. Just as the birds, when the eggs are in the nest, have upon them what the Greeks call an *oropyn*—a natural feeling that they must sit on those eggs and that they must feed those little fledglings which will come from the eggs—so if God calls you to win souls, you will have a natural love for them, a longing worked in you by the Holy Spirit so that the whole of your being will run out in that direction, seeking the salvation of men!

Then the Apostle goes on to say that he had great heaviness—not only heaviness, but *great* heaviness. Was he, therefore, an unhappy man? By no means! He had great joy in other things, though he had great heaviness on this point. We are not to imagine that Paul went about publicly groaning and sighing because Israel was not saved. Oh, no! He rejoiced in the Lord and bade others rejoice. But still there was the skeleton in the closet—a silent, heartbreaking grief was on him. We are many men in one and each man is a very complicated piece of mental machinery. We can be in great heaviness and in great exultation at the same time! Whenever Paul's thoughts turned towards his Jewish brethren, a great heaviness came upon him. It bore him down and he would have sunk under it if it had not been for sustaining Grace. "O God," he said, "shall my nation perish? Shall my people die? Shall my kinsmen be anathema? Shall it come to this, that they shall hear the Gospel in vain and perish, after all?"

He had great heaviness and he tells us that this did not come on him at times, but that he always felt it whenever his thoughts turned that way—I have "continual sorrow in my heart." In his very *heart*, for it was not a superficial desire. A continual sorrow, for it was no fitful emotion. It always grieved him to think that his kinsmen should reject Christ. He thought of

Jerusalem and of its doom. He thought of his brethren and their unbelief—and then he thought of how they had been the enemies of Christ and, therefore, sorrow filled his heart. I could wish that in full many a professor the same sorrow reigned, for then there would be much more holy work done for souls! The strongest expression which Paul uses is that which is contained in the third verse, “For I could wish that I were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”

The margin reads, “separated from Christ.” Now this text has so puzzled the expositors that they have done their very best to kill it and tear out its heart—to get rid of its obvious meaning. They have invented all kinds of interpretations, such as that he did *once* wish himself separated from Christ. Now, do you think the Apostle Paul would have begun by saying, “I say the truth in Christ. I lie not,” and so on, if, after all that mountain of expression, he was going to bring out this little insignificant sense, that *once upon a time* he also wished to be separated from Christ? Besides, the Greek does not bear such a preposterous rendering! Our version has given, as fully as it could, the meaning of the Apostle. The gentlemen who like to dissect texts and pull them to pieces say, “Well, but he could not have wished to be an enemy to Christ, an enemy to God and to be lost—and yet he could not be lost without being an enemy to Jesus.”

My dear Friends, if you take passionate expressions to pieces with icy hands, you will never understand anything which comes from the heart! Of course the Apostle never thought of wishing that he could be an enemy to Christ! But he did, sometimes, look at the misery which comes upon those who are separated from Christ until he felt that *if he could* save his kinsmen by his own destruction, yes—by himself enduring their heavy punishment—he could wish to stand in their place. He did not say that he ever *did* wish it, but he felt as if he *could* wish it when his heart was warm. His case was parallel with that of Moses when he prayed the Lord to spare the people and said, “If not, blot my name out of the Book of Life.”

Do you think He wished it done? No! It was because that blotting out would have been, to him, the most horrible thing supposable that, therefore, he went even to that length for the good of his people! Because the last of all things the Apostle could have thought of was being separated from Christ, therefore he says there were times when he could even have borne that most horrible, unthinkable thing if he could but have saved the people! Is there a minister of Christ who has not, sometimes, used expressions which cool logic could never justify? Why, Sirs, love knows nothing of grammar even in its common talk! A true passion grinds words to dust. When the heart is full of love, even the boldest hyperboles are simple truths! Extravagances are the natural expression of warm hearts even in ordinary things and, when a man's whole soul gets to seething like a caldron and boiling like a pot with sympathy and pity for men that are being lost, he speaks what, in cold blood, he never would have said.

What the cool doctrinalist pulls to pieces and the critic of words regards as being altogether absurd, true zeal, nevertheless, feels! Some of us have felt, at times, that our lives would have been cheaply spent a thousand times over by the bloodiest and most cruel deaths if we could save our hearers! And there have been moments of passion when we have been ready to say, "Ah, if even my destruction could save them, I could almost go that length." Why this is Christ's method! This is Christ's method! "He saved others, Himself He could not save." It may be an extravagance in us, since we are not able to redeem our Brothers and Sisters or give God a ransom, but it is a blessed extravagance! Men are extravagantly prudent, nowadays, extravagantly dubious, extravagantly profane—and some of them extravagantly able to deny what their conscience must know is true!

They may, therefore, well permit the minister of Christ to be extravagant in his love for others. I like a bit of hyperbole in our hymns. For instance, I admire the extravagance of that verse of Addison's—

***"But, oh, eternity's too short
To utter half His praise."***

A gentleman said to me, "That cannot be, because eternity cannot be short and, therefore, it cannot be too short!" If the Lord had put a drop of poetry into that critic's nature, he would not have dealt so harshly with the poet's language! And if the same Lord had put a little of the fire of Grace into the nature of some hard-headed commentators, they would have understood that this passage is not meant to be cut to pieces and discussed—but it is intended to be taken boiling hot and poured upon the enemy after the fashion of the olden times, when they poured melted lead or boiling pitch upon the besiegers who wished to take a tower or city!

Such a text as this must be fired off red-hot! It spoils if it cools! It is a *heart* business, not a head business! The Apostle means us to understand that there was nothing which he would not suffer if he might save his kindred according to the flesh.

III. Well, now, I close my sermon by speaking upon THE EXCELLENCIES OF THIS SPIRIT, because I pray the Lord to work it in each of you. I wish all felt it, but there are generally some in every Church who will never warm up to the right point. If we could once get the whole Church up to blood heat, we might be content. I never want you to get to *fever* heat, but to blood heat—the heat of the blood of Christ—to love as He loved! Oh, to get there and to stay there! Well, what would be the result, if we all felt as Paul did? The first effect would be likeness to Christ! After that manner *He* loved—He did become a *curse* for us! He entered under the awful shadow of Jehovah's wrath for us. He did what Paul could *wish* but could not do. He passed under the awful sword that we might be delivered from its edge forever!

Brethren, I want you to feel that you would pass under poverty if you could save souls better by being poor! That you would gladly endure sickness if from your sick bed you could speak better for Christ than now! Yes, and that you would be ready to *die* if your death might give life to those dear to you! I heard of a dear girl, the other day, who said to her

pastor, "I could never bring my father to hear you, but I have prayed for him long and God will answer my request. Now, dear pastor," she said, "you will bury me, won't you? My father must come and hear you speak at my grave. Do speak to him, then. God will bless him." And he did and her father was converted! The death of his child brought him to Christ!

Oh to be willing to die if others may be saved from the eternal death! God give us just such a spirit as that! This should be our constant feeling—how else can we become like Christ? If we have this spirit it will save us from selfishness. They say—but it is a great falsehood—that we teach people to look after their own salvation and then, being saved, we bid them wrap themselves up in self-content. Was anything ever spoken more contrary to fact? We do urge men to seek to be saved from sin! How can they bear to abide in it? But the first instinct of a saved soul, to which we continually appeal, is a longing to bring others to Christ! Yet, Brothers and Sisters, lest there should grow up in your spirit any of that Pharisaic selfishness which was seen in the elder brother in the parable, ask to feel a heaviness for your prodigal younger brother who is still feeding swine!

Pray for him that he may come to his father's house. It will keep your soul sweet if you open the window of sympathy and let the heavenly air of love blow through you. This will save you from any difficulty about forgiving other people. I do not suppose that Paul forgave the Jews for what they did to him, because he never went the length of thinking that he had *anything to forgive*—he loved them so much that he took their ill usage without anger or resentment! He loved them and, therefore, he bore with them. You will bear with those who scoff at you and you will put up with the idleness of the boys and girls in your class if you love them! Love mankind with all your soul and you will feel no difficulty in exercising patience, forbearance and forgiveness.

This spirit will also keep you from very many other griefs. Some people are always fretting for need of something to fret about. No people are more uneasy than those who have nothing to do and nothing to think about! Such persons keep a little growlery in the house and use it as a trouble factory where they invent grievances. There are people that I know of who ought to be as merry as the birds of the morning and yet they are always worrying and stewing about nothing at all. Now, the best way to kill one grief is to introduce another. John Foster wrote of the expulsive power of a new affection and I want you to experience it. Get love for the souls of men—then you will not be whining about a dead dog, or a sick cat, or about the conceits of a family and the little disturbances that John and Mary may make by their idle talk. You will be delivered from petty worries (I need not further describe them) if you are concerned about the souls of men!

When certain persons come to me with their sentimental sorrows, I wish the Lord would fill them with the love of souls and make their hearts break with anxiety for their conversion—then would their griefs be of a nobler sort. You would no longer weep over a mole hill if you began to move mountains! Get your soul full of a great grief and your little griefs

will be driven out. These thoughts of Paul about his brethren cause us to feel that we, too, may make our lives sublime if in our hearts there shall burn the same ardent affection towards our fellow men. If you are moved by this feeling, it will put you much upon prayer. You will bring one and another before God, because you cannot help it. That is the right style of praying—when a man does not pray at a set time because it is his rule, but prays because he has an awful weight upon him and pray he must!

You cannot force yourself to this, but when the Spirit of God has brought you to it, you will pray day and night for those whom you love! As you go down the road, something will suggest your praying for them. The very oaths and blasphemies so common in our streets will make you pray for sinners. A gracious meeting where some are saved will move you to prayer. A thousand things will lead you to pray and that prayer will lead you to *effort*—to proper and fitting effort. It is wonderful how a man can talk to souls when he loves them! If any one of you should say, “I do not feel any particular concern about other people’s souls, but still, I will look out for somebody and speak to him,” you will fail in it, Brothers and Sisters. You must love before you can plead! You must have such a concern for a man that you feel even if you could not say anything, still, you could put your hand on his shoulder and blurt out, “Friend, I am concerned about your salvation.” The evident concern of your spirit will be one of God’s ways of touching the hearts of others. I suppose His Spirit has used deep emotion more than almost any other instrument in arousing careless minds.

Now, tonight, a good many of our friends are away, for the lawful claims of business detain them at this season. I hope that you who have come here on such a week evening are among those who aspire to the highest things in the kingdom of God. Do so, I pray you—they are all before you and within reach—and among them, aspire after great sensitiveness as to others. Let other men’s sins grieve you! Let their eternal destiny be often on your mind! No better spur can be needed. You will labor for their good in proportion as you feel for them. I do not think that I can ask a better thing for the unconverted than that the converted may be in heaviness over them!

We long to see many enquirers coming forward. Very well. Enquiring saints always bring enquiring sinners. “For this will I be enquired of by the house of Israel”—not by the sinners first of all—but “by the house of Israel, to do it for them.” My Brethren, go and enquire at the Lord’s hands and then you will soon prove a blessing to others!

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AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”
Romans 9:13.***

DO not imagine for an instant that I pretend to be able thoroughly to elucidate the great mysteries of predestination. There are some men who claim to know all about the matter. They twist it round their fingers as easily as if it were an everyday thing. But depend upon it, he who thinks he knows all about this mystery, knows but very little. It is but the shallowness of his mind that permits him to see the bottom of his knowledge. He who dives deep finds that there is in the lowest depth to which he can attain a deeper depth still. The fact is that the great questions about man's responsibility, free will and predestination, have been fought over and over and over again and have been answered in ten thousand different ways. And the result has been that we know just as much about the matter as when we first began. The combatants have thrown dust into each other's eyes and have hindered each other from seeing. And then they have concluded, because they put other people's eyes out, *they* could therefore see.

Now, it is one thing to refute another man's doctrine, but a very different matter to establish my own views. It is very easy to knock over one man's hypothesis concerning these truths—not quite so easy to make my own stand on a firm footing. I shall try tonight, if I can, to go safely, if I do not go very fast. For I shall endeavor to keep simply to the letter of God's Word. I think that if we kept more simply to the teachings of the Bible, we should be wiser than we are. By turning from the heavenly light of Revelation and trusting to the deceitful will-o-the-wisps of our own imagination we thrust ourselves into quays and bogs where there is no sure footing and we begin to sink. And instead of making progress, we find ourselves sinking fast.

The truth is, neither you nor I have any right to want to know more about predestination than what God tells us. That is enough for us. If it were worthwhile for us to know more, God would have revealed more. What God has told us, we are to believe. But to the knowledge thus gained, we are too apt to add our own vague notions and then we are sure to go wrong. It would be better, if in all controversies, men had simply stood hard and fast by “Thus said the Lord,” instead of having it said, “Thus and thus I think.” I shall now endeavor, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to throw the light of God's Word upon this great doctrine of Divine Sovereignty and give you what I think to be a Scriptural statement of the

fact, that some men are chosen, other men are left—the great fact that is declared in this text—“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

It is a terrible text and I will be honest with it if I can. One man says the word “hate” does not mean hate. It means “love less”—“Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I loved less.” It may be so. But I don’t believe it is. At any rate, it says “hate” here. And until you give me another version of the Bible, I shall keep to this one. I believe that the term is correctly and properly translated. That the word “hate” is not stronger than the original—but even if it is a little stronger, it is nearer the mark than the other translation which is offered to us in those meaningless words, “love less.” I like to take it and let it stand just as it is. The fact is, God loved Jacob and He did not love Esau. He did choose Jacob, but He did not choose Esau. He did bless Jacob, but He never blessed Esau. His mercy followed Jacob all the way of his life, even to the last, but His mercy never followed Esau—He permitted him still to go on in his sins and to prove that dreadful truth, “Esau have I hated.”

Others, in order to get rid of this ugly text, say, it does not mean Esau and Jacob. It means the nation. It means Jacob’s children and Esau’s children. It means the children of Israel and Edom. I should like to know where the difference lies. Is the difficulty removed by extending it? Some of the Wesleyan brethren say that there is a national election—God has chosen one nation and not another. They turn round and tell us it is unjust in God to choose one man and not another. Now, we ask them by everything reasonable, is it not equally unjust of God to choose one nation and leave another? The argument which they imagine overthrows us overthrows them, also. There never was a more foolish subterfuge than that of trying to bring out national election. What is the election of a nation but the election of so many units, of so many people? And it is tantamount to the same thing as the particular election of individuals. In thinking, men cannot see clearly that if—which we do not for a moment believe—that if there is any injustice in God choosing one man and not another, how much more must there is injustice in His choosing one nation and not another.

No, the difficulty cannot be rid of thusly, but is greatly increased by this foolish wresting of God’s Word. Besides, here is the proof that that is not correct—read the verse preceding it. It does not say anything at all about nations, it says, “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 calls: It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger”—referring to the children, not to the nations. Of course the threat was afterwards fulfilled in the position of the two nations—Edom was made to serve Israel. But this text means just what it says. It does not mean nations, but it means the persons mentioned.

“Jacob”—that is the *man* whose name was Jacob—“Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated.” Take care, my dear Friends, how any of you meddle with God’s Word. I have heard of folks altering passages they did not like. It will not do, you know, you cannot alter them. They are really just

the same. Our only power with the Word of God is simply to let it stand as it is and to endeavor by God's grace to accommodate ourselves to that. We must never try to make the Bible bow to us, in fact we cannot, for the Truths of Divine Revelation are as sure and fast as the Throne of God.

If a man wants to enjoy a delightful prospect and a mighty mountain lies in his path, does he commence cutting away at its base, in the vain hope that ultimately it will become a level plain before him? No, on the contrary, he diligently uses it for the accomplishment of his purpose by ascending it, well knowing this to be the only means of obtaining the end in view. So must we do. We cannot bring down the Truths of God to our poor finite understandings. The mountain will never fall before us, but we can seek strength to rise higher and higher in our perception of Divine things and in this way only may we hope to obtain the blessing.

Now, I shall have two things to notice tonight. I have explained this text to mean just what it says and I do not want it to be altered—"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." To take off the edge of this terrible doctrine that makes some people bite their lips so, I must just notice that this is a fact and, after that I shall try to answer the question—Why was it that God loved Jacob and hated Esau?

I. First, then, THIS IS A FACT. Men say they do not like the doctrine of election. Verily, I do not want them to. But is it not a fact that God has elected some? Ask an Arminian brother about election and at once his eye turns fiercely upon you and he begins to get angry—he can't bear it—it is a horrible thing, like a war cry to him and he begins to sharpen the knife of controversy at once. But say to him, "Ah, Brother! Was it not Divine Grace that made you to differ? Was it not the Lord who called you out of your natural state and made you what you are?" "Oh, yes," he says, "I quite agree with you there." Now, put this question to him—"What do you think is the reason why one man has been converted and not another?" "Oh," he says, "the Spirit of God has been at work in this man." Well, then, my Brother, the fact is, that God does treat one man better than another.

And is there anything wonderful in this fact? It is a fact we recognize every day. There is a man up in the gallery there, that work as hard as he likes—he cannot earn more than fifteen shillings a week. And here is another man that gets a thousand a year. What is the reason of this? One is born in the palaces of kings, while another draws his first breath in a roofless hovel. What is the reason of this? God's Providence. He puts one man in one position and another man in another. Here is a man whose head cannot hold two thoughts together, do what you will with him. Here is another who can sit down and write a book and dive into the deepest of questions—what is the reason? God has done it. Do you not see the fact, that God does not treat every man alike? He has made some eagles and some worms. Some he has made lions and some creeping lizards—ho has made some men kings and some are born beggars. Some are born with gigantic minds and some verge on the idiot.

Why is this? Do you murmur at God for it? No, you say it is a fact and there is no good in murmuring. What is the use of kicking against facts? It is only kicking against the pricks with naked feet and you hurt yourself and not them. Well, then, election is a positive fact. It is as clear as daylight, that God does, in matters of religion, give to one man more than to another. He gives to me opportunities of hearing the Word, which He does not give to the Hottentot. He gives to me parents who, from my infancy, trained me in the fear of the Lord. He does not give that to many of you. He places me afterwards in situations where I am restrained from sin. Other men are cast into places where their sinful passions are developed. He gives to one man a temper and disposition which keeps him back from some lust and to another man he gives such impetuosity of spirit and depravity turns that impetuosity so much aside, that the man runs headlong into sin. Again, he brings one man under the sound of a powerful ministry, while another sits and listens to a preacher whose drowsiness is only exceeded by that of his hearers. And even when they are hearing the Gospel, the fact is God works in one heart when he does not in another.

Though I believe to a degree the Spirit works in the hearts of all who hear the Word, so that they are all without excuse, yet I am sure He works in some so powerfully that they can no longer resist Him, but are constrained by His grace to cast themselves at His feet and confess Him Lord of all. While others resist the grace that comes into their hearts and it does not act with the same irresistible force that it does in the other case—and they perish in their sins, deservedly and justly condemned. Are not these things facts? Does any man deny them? Can any man deny them? What is the use of kicking against facts? I always like to know when there is a discussion, what is the fact.

You have heard the story of King Charles the Second and the philosophers—King Charles asked one of them, “What is the reason why, if you had a pail of water and weighed it and then put a fish into it, that the weight would be the same?” They gave a great many elaborate reasons for this. At last one of them said, “Is it the fact?” And then they found out that the water did weigh more, just as much more as the fish put into it. So all their learned arguments fell to the ground. So, when we are talking about election, the best thing is to say, “Put aside the doctrine for a moment, let us see what is the fact!” We walk abroad. We open our eyes, we see, there is the fact. What, then, is the use of our discussing any longer? We had better believe it, since it is an undeniable Truth of God. You may alter an opinion, but you cannot alter a fact. You may change a mere doctrine, but you cannot possibly change a thing which actually exists.

There it is—God does certainly deal with some men better than He does with others. I will not offer an apology for God. He can explain His own dealings. He needs no defense from me—

***“God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain,”***

but there stands the fact. Before you begin to argue upon the doctrine, just remember that whatever you may think about it, you cannot alter it.

And however much you may object to it, it is actually true that God did love Jacob and did not love Esau.

For now look at Jacob's life and read his history. You are compelled to say that, from the first hour that he left his father's house, even to the last, God loved him. Why, he has not gone far from his father's house before he is weary and he lies down with a stone for his pillow and the hedges for his curtain and the sky for his canopy. And he goes to sleep and God comes and talks to him in his sleep. He sees a ladder, whereof the top reaches to Heaven and a company of angels ascending and descending upon it and he goes on his journey to Laban. Laban tries to cheat him and as often as Laban tries to wrong him, God suffers it not, but multiplies the different cattle that Laban gives him. Afterwards, you remember, when he fled unawares from Laban and was pursued, that God appears to Laban in a dream and charges him not to speak to Jacob either good or bad. And more memorable still, when his sons Levi and Simeon have committed murder in Shechem and Jacob is afraid that he will be overtaken and destroyed by the inhabitants who were rising against him, God puts a fear upon the people and says to them, "Touch not My anointed and do My Prophet no harm."

And when a famine comes over the land, God has sent Joseph into Egypt, to provide corn in Goshen for his brethren, that they should live and not die. And see the happy son of Jacob—"I shall see my son Joseph before I die." Behold the tears streaming down his aged cheeks, as he clasps his own Joseph to his bosom! See how magnificently he goes into the presence of Pharaoh and blesses him. It is said, "Jacob blessed Pharaoh." He had God's love so much in him, that he was free to bless the mightiest monarch of his times. At last he gave up the ghost and it was said at once, "This was a man that God loved." *There* is the fact reiterated that God did love Jacob.

On the other hand, there is the fact that God did not love Esau. He permitted Esau to become the father of princes, but he has not blessed his generation. Where is the house of Esau now? Edom has perished. She built her chambers in the rock and cut out her cities in the flinty rock. But God has abandoned the inhabitant thereof and Edom is not to be found. They became the bond-slaves of Israel. And the kings of Edom had to furnish a yearly tribute of wool to Solomon and his successors. And now the name of Esau is erased from the book of history. Now, then, I must say, again, this ought to take off at least some of the bitterness of controversy, when we remember that it is the fact, let men say what they will, that God did love Jacob and He did not love Esau.

II. But now the second point of my subject is, WHY IS THIS? Why did God love Jacob? Why did He hate Esau? Now, I am not going to undertake too much at once. You say to me, "Why did God love Jacob? And why did He hate Esau?" We will take one question at a time. For the reason why some people get into a muddle in theology is because they try to give an answer to two questions. Now, I shall not do that. I will tell you one thing at a time. I will tell you why God loved Jacob. And, then, I will tell you

why He hated Esau. But I cannot give you the same reason for two contradictory things. That is wherein a great many have failed They have sat down and seen these facts, that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, that God has an elect people and that there are others who are not elect. If, then, they try to give the same reason for election and non-election, they make sad work of it. If they will pause and take one thing at a time and look to God's Word, they will not go wrong.

The first question is, why did God love Jacob? I am not at all puzzled to answer this, because when I turn to the Word of God, I read this text—"Not for your sakes, do I this said the Lord God, be it known unto you—be ashamed and confounded for your own ways O house of Israel." I am not at a loss to tell you that it could not be for any good thing *in Jacob* that God loved him, because I am told that "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 calls." I can tell you the reason why God loved Jacob. It is Sovereign Grace. There was nothing in Jacob that could make God love him. There was everything about him that might have made God hate him as much as He did Esau and a great deal more. But it was because God was infinitely gracious that He loved Jacob and because He was sovereign in His dispensation of this Grace, that He chose Jacob to the object of that love. I am not going to deal with Esau, until I have answered the question on the side of Jacob. I want you to just notice this, that Jacob was loved of God, simply on the footing of Free Grace.

Come now, let us look at Jacob's character. I have already said in the exposition, what I think of him. I do think the very smallest things of Jacob's character, as a natural man, he was always a bargain maker. I was struck the other day with that vision that Jacob had at Bethel—it seemed to me a most extraordinary development of Jacob's bargain-making spirit. You know he lay down and God was pleased to open the doors of Heaven to him, so that he saw God sitting at the top of the ladder and the angels ascending and descending upon it. What do you suppose he said as soon as he awoke? Well, he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the House of God and this is the gate of Heaven."

Why, if Jacob had had faith, he would not have been afraid of God—on the contrary, he would have rejoiced that God had thus permitted him to hold fellowship with Him. Now, hear Jacob's bargain. God had simply said to him, "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac—the land whereon you lie, to you will I give it and to your seed." He did not say anything about what Jacob was to do—God only said, 'I will do it,'—"Behold I am with you and will keep you in all places where you go and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken to you of."

Now, can you believe, that after God had spoken face to face with Jacob, that he would have had the impudence to try and make a bargain

with God? But he did. He begins and says, “If.” There now, the man has had a vision and an absolute promise from God and yet he begins with an “if.” That is bargain-making with a vengeance! “If God will be with me and will keep me in the way that I go and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father’s house in peace, then”—not without—mark, he is going to hold God to His bargain—“then shall the Lord be my God—and this stone which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s House—and of all that You shall give me I will surely give the tenth unto You.” I marvel at this! If I did not know something about my own nature, I should be utterly unable to understand it. What? A man that has talked with God, then begins to make a bargain with Him! A man that has seen the only way of access between Heaven and earth, the ladder Christ Jesus, and has had a Covenant made between himself and God, a covenant that is all on God’s part—all a *promise*—and yet wants after that to hold God to the bargain—as if he were afraid God would break His promise! Oh, this was vile, indeed!

Then notice his whole life. While he lived with Laban, what miserable work it was. He had got into the hands of a man of the world. And whenever a covetous Christian gets into such company, a terrible scene ensues! There are the two together, greedy and grasping. If an angel could look down upon them, how would he weep to see the man of God fallen from his high place and become as bad as the other. Then, the device that Jacob used, when he endeavored to get his wages was most extraordinary. Why did he not leave it to God, instead of adopting such systems as that? The whole way through we are ashamed of Jacob, we cannot help it. And then, there is that grand period in his life, the turning point, when we are told, that “Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed.” We will look at that—I have carefully studied the subject and I do not think so much of him as I did. I thought Jacob wrestled with God, but I find it is the contrary, he did not wrestle with God—God wrestled with him.

I had always set Jacob up, in my mind, as the very model of a man wrestling in prayer. I do not think so now. He divided his family and put a person in front to appease Esau. He did not go in front himself, with the holy trust that a Patriarch should have felt. Guarded with all the omnipotence of Heaven, he might boldly have gone to meet his brother, but no! He did not feel certain that the latter would bow at his feet, although the promise said, “The elder shall serve the younger.” He did not rest on that promise. It was not big enough for him.

Then he went at night to the brook Jabbok. I do not know what for, unless he went to pray, but I am afraid it was not so. The text says, “And Jacob was left alone—and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.” There is a great deal of difference between a man wrestling with me and my wrestling with him. When I strive with anyone, I want to gain something from him and when a man wrestles with me, he wants to get something out of me. Therefore, I take it, when the man wrestled with Jacob, he wanted to get his cunning and deceit out of him and prove what a poor sinful creature he was, but he could not do it. Jacob’s craft was so

strong, that he could not be overcome. At last, the angel touched his thigh and showed him his own hollowness. And Jacob turned round and said, "You have taken away my strength, now I will wrestle with You."

And when his thigh was out of joint, when he fully felt his own weakness, then and not till then, is he brought to say, "I will not let You go, except You bless me." He had had full confidence in his own strength, but God at last humbled him and when all his boasted power was gone, then it was that Jacob became a prevailing prince. But, even after that, his life is not clear. Then you find him an unbelieving creature. And we have all been as bad. Though we are blaming Jacob, Brothers and Sisters, we blame ourselves. We are hard with him, but we shall be harder with ourselves. Do you not remember the memorable speech of the Patriarch, when he said, "Joseph is not and Simeon is not and you will take Benjamin away—all these things are against me?" Ah, Jacob, why cannot you believe the promise? All other promises have been fulfilled. But no—he could not think of the promise. He was always wanting to live by sight.

Now, I say. if the character of Jacob is as I have described it and I am sure it is—we have got it in God's Word—there was, there could have been nothing in Jacob that made God love him. And the only reason why God loved him must have been because of His own Grace, because "He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy." And rest assured, the only reason why any of us can hope to be saved is this, the Sovereign Grace of God. There is no reason why I should be saved, or why you should be saved, but God's own merciful heart and God's own omnipotent will. Now that is the doctrine. It is taught not only in this passage, but in multitudes of other passages of God's Word. Dear Friends, receive it, hold fast by it and never let it go.

Now, the next question is a different one—Why did God hate Esau? I am not going to mix this question up with the other, they are entirely distinct and I intend to keep them so. One answer will not do for two questions, they must be taken separately and then can be answered satisfactorily. Why does God hate *any* man? I defy anyone to give any answer but this—because that man deserves it. No reply but that can ever be true. There are some who answer, Divine Sovereignty. But I challenge them to look that doctrine in the face. Do you believe that God created man and arbitrarily, sovereignly—it is the same thing—created that man, with no other intention, than that of damning him? Made him and yet, for no other reason than that of destroying him forever? Well, if you can believe it, I pity you, that is all I can say—you deserve pity, that you should think so meanly of God, whose mercy endures forever.

You are quite right when you say the reason why God loves a man, is because God does so. There is no reason in the man. But do not give the same answer as to why God hates a man. If God deals with any man severely, it is because that man deserves all he gets. In Hell there will not be a solitary soul that will say to God, O Lord, you have treated me worse than I deserve! But every lost spirit will be made to feel that he has got his deserts, that his destruction lies at his own door and not at the door of

God. That God had nothing to do with his condemnation except as the Judge condemns the criminal—that he himself brought damnation upon his own head, as the result of his own evil works. Justice is that which damns a man. It is *mercy*, it is Free Grace, that saves. Sovereignty holds the scale of *love*. It is *justice* holds the other scale. Who can put that into the hand of sovereignty? That were to libel God and to dishonor Him.

Now, let us look at Esau's character. Says one, "did he deserve that God should cast him away?" I answer, he did. What we know of Esau's character, clearly proves it. Esau lost his birthright. Do not sit down and weep about that and blame God. Esau sold it himself. He sold it for a mess of pottage. Oh, Esau, it is in vain for you to say, "I lost my birthright by decree." No, no. Jacob *got it* by decree, but you lost it because you sold it yourself—didn't you? Was it not your own bargain? Did you not take the mess of red pottage of your own voluntary will, in lieu of the birthright? Your destruction lies at your own door, because you sold your own soul at your own bargain and you did it yourself. Did God influence Esau to do that? God forbid, God is not the author of sin. Esau voluntarily gave up his own birthright. And the doctrine is that every man who loses Heaven gives it up himself. Every man who loses everlasting life rejects it himself. God denies it not to him—he will not come that he may have life.

Why is it that a man remains ungodly and does not fear God? It is because he says, "I like this drink, I like this pleasure, I like this Sabbath-breaking—better than I do the things of God." No man is saved by his own free will, but every man is damned by it that is damned. He does it of his own will—no one constrains him. You know, Sinner, that when you go away from here and put down the cries of conscience, that you do it yourself. You know that, when after a sermon you say, "I do not care about believing in Christ," you say it yourself—you are quite conscious of it and if not conscious of it, it is notwithstanding a dreadful fact, that the reason why you are what you are, is because you will to be what you are. It is your own will that keeps you where you are, the blame lies at your own door, your being still in a state of sin is voluntary. You are a captive, but you are a voluntary captive.

You will never be willing to get free until God *makes* you willing. But you are willing to be a bond slave. There is no disguising the fact that man loves sin, loves evil and does *not* love God. You know, though Heaven is preached to you through the blood of Christ and though Hell is threatened to you as the result of your sins, that still you cleave to your iniquities. You will not leave them and will not fly to Christ. And when you are cast away, at last it will be said of you, "you have lost your birthright." But you sold it yourself. You know that the ballroom suits you better than the House of God. You know that the pothouse suits you better than the Prayer Meeting. You know you trust yourself rather than trust Christ. You know you prefer the joys of the present time to the joys of the future. It is your own choice—keep it. Your damnation is your own election, not God's. You richly deserve it.

But, says one, "Esau repented." Yes, he did, but what sort of a repentance was it? Did you ever notice his repentance? Every man who repents and believes will be saved. But what sort of a repentance was his? As soon as he found that his brother had got the birthright, he sought it again with repentance. He sought it with tears, but he did not get it back. You know he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. And he thought he would buy it back by giving his father a mess of pottage. "There," he says, "I will go and hunt venison for my father. I have got over him with my savory meat and he will readily give me my birthright again." That is what sinners say—"I have lost Heaven by my evil works—I will easily get it again by reforming. Did I not lose it by sin? I will get it back by giving up my sins." "I have been a drunkard," says one, "I will give up drinking and I will now be a teetotaler." Another says, "I have been an awful swearer. I am very sorry for it, indeed. I will not swear any more." So all he gives to his father is a mess of pottage, the same as that for which he sold it.

No, sinner, you may sell Heaven for a few carnal pleasures, but you cannot buy Heaven by merely giving them up. You can get Heaven only on another ground—the ground of Free Grace. You lose your soul justly, but you cannot get it back by good works, or by the renunciation of your sins. You think that Esau was a sincere penitent? Just let me tell you another thing. This blessed penitent when he failed to get the blessing, what did he say? "The days of mourning for my father are at hand—then will I slay my brother Jacob." *There* is a penitent for you! That is not the repentance that comes from God the Holy Spirit. But there are some men like that. They say they are very sorry they should have been such sinners as that, very sorry that they should have been brought into such a sad condition as that and then they go and do the same that they did before. Their penitence does not bring them out of their sin, but it leaves them in it and, perhaps, plunges them still deeper into guilt.

Now, look at the character of Esau. The only redeeming trait in it was that he did begin with repentance, but that repentance was even an aggravation of his sin, because it was without the effects of evangelical repentance. And I say, if Esau sold his birthright he did deserve to lose it. And, therefore, am I not right in saying, that if God hated Esau, it was because he deserved to be hated. Do you observe how Scripture always guards this conclusion? Turn to the ninth chapter of Romans, where we have selected our text, see how careful the Holy Spirit is here, in the 22nd verse. "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." But it does not say anything about fitting men for destruction. They fitted themselves. They did that—God had nothing to do with it. But when men are saved, God fits them for that. All the glory to God in salvation. All the blame to men in damnation.

If any of you want to know what I preach every day and any stranger should say, "Give me a summary of his doctrine," say this, "He preaches

salvation all of grace and damnation all of sin. He gives God all the glory for every soul that is saved, but he won't have it that God is to blame for any man that is damned." That teaching I cannot understand. My soul revolts at the idea of a doctrine that lays the blood of man's soul at God's door. I cannot conceive how any human mind, at least any Christian mind, can hold any such blasphemy as that. I delight to preach this blessed Truth of God—salvation of God, from first to last—the Alpha and the Omega. But when I come to preach damnation, I say, damnation of man, not of God. If you perish, at your own hands must your blood be required.

At the Last Great Day, when all the world shall come before Jesus to be judged, have you noticed, when the righteous go on the right side, Jesus says, "Come, you blessed of My Father,"—"of My Father," mark—"inherit the kingdom prepared"—(mark the next word)—"for you, from before the foundation of the world." What does he say to those on the left? "Depart, you cursed." He does not say, "you cursed of My Father," but, "you cursed." And what else does He say? "Into everlasting fire, prepared"—(not for *you*, but)—"for the *devil* and his *angels*." Do you see how it is guarded? Here is the salvation side of the question. It is all of God. "Come, you blessed of My Father." It is a kingdom prepared for them. There you have *election*, Free Grace in all its length and breadth.

But, on the other hand, you have nothing said about the Father—nothing about Him at all. "Depart, you cursed." Even the flames are said not to be prepared for *sinner*s, but for the *devil* and his *angels*. There is no language that I can possibly conceive that could more forcibly express this idea, supposing it to be the mind of the Holy Spirit, that the glory should be to God and that the blame should be laid at man's door.

Now, have I not answered these two questions honestly? I have endeavored to give a Scriptural reason for the dealings of God with man. He saves man by Grace and if men perish they perish justly by their own fault. "How," says someone, "do you reconcile these two doctrines?" My dear Brethren, I never reconcile two friends, never. These two doctrines are friends with one another. For they are both in God's Word and I shall not attempt to reconcile them. If you show me that they are enemies, then I will reconcile them. "But," says one, "there is a great deal of difficulty about them." Will you tell me what Truth of God there is that has not difficulty about it? "But," he says, "I do not see it." Well, I do not ask you to see it. I ask you to *believe* it. There are many things in God's Word that are difficult and that I cannot see, but they are there and I believe them.

I cannot see how God can be omnipotent and man be free. But it is so and I believe it. "Well," says one, "I cannot understand it." My answer is, I am bound to make it as plain as I can, but if you have not any understanding, I cannot give you any. There I must leave it. But then, again, it is not a matter of understanding. It is a matter of *faith*. These two things are true. I do not see that they at all differ. However, if they did, I should say, if they appear to contradict one another, they do not really do so, because God never contradicts Himself. And I should think in this I exhib-

ited the power of my faith in God, that I could believe Him, even when His Word *seemed* to be contradictory. That is faith. Did not Abraham believe in God even when God's promise seemed to contradict His Providence?

Abraham was old and Sarah was old, but God said Sarah should have a child. How can that be? said Abraham, for Sarah is old? And yet Abraham believed the promise and Sarah had a son. There was a reconciliation between Providence and Promise. And if God can bring Providence and Promise together, He can bring doctrine and promise together. If I cannot do it, God can, even in the world to come.

Now, let me just practically preach this for one minute. Oh, sinners, if you perish, on your own head must be your doom. Conscience tells you this and the Word of God confirms it. You shall not be able to lay your condemnation at any man's door but your own. If you perish you perish by suicide. You are your own destroyers, because you reject Christ, because you despise the birthright and sell it for that miserable mess of pottage—the pleasures of the world. It is a doctrine that thrills through me. Like a two-edged sword, I would make it pierce to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow. If you are damned it shall be your own fault. If you are found in Hell, your blood shall be on your own head. You shall bring the fire wood to your own burning. You shall dig the iron for your own chains—and on your own head will be your doom. But if you are saved, it cannot be by your merits, it must be by Grace—free, Sovereign Grace. The Gospel is preached to you. It is this—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.”

May grace now be given to you to bring you to yield to this glorious command. May you now believe in Him who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Free Grace, who shall tell your glories? Who shall narrate your achievements, or write your victories? You have carried the cunning Jacob into glory and made him white as the angels of Heaven and you shall carry many a sinner there also and make him glorious as the glorified. May God prove this doctrine to be true in your own experience! If there still remains any difficulty upon your minds about any of these points, search the Word of God and seek the illumination of His Spirit to teach you.

But remember after all, these are not the most important points in Scripture. That which concerns you most is to know whether you have an interest in the blood of Christ—whether you really believe in the Lord Jesus. I have only touched upon these, because they cause a great many people a world of trouble and I thought I might be the means of helping some of you to tread upon the neck of the dragon. May God grant that it may be so for Christ's sake.

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VESSELS OF MERCY—A SERMON OF SELF-EXAMINATION NO. 327

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 5, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“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 has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.”
Romans 9:23, 24.***

IT is with no view to controversy that I have selected this text, but for a far higher and more practical purpose, namely, that by this Truth of God, many of us may search ourselves and that we may be able to discover whether we have any of the marks of the vessels of mercy which God has afore prepared unto glory. We must take the next verse to complete our text—“Even us, whom He has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.”

The context invites us to visit the potter’s house. There, in the workshop you perceive sundry vessels in process of formation. The wheel is revolving and from it you see continually taken, vessels of an ignoble sort, fitted only for the very meanest purposes. On the other hand, from the same clay you see produced vessels that might grace the palace of a king—vessels of honor fit for honorable purposes. We now conduct you to a greater workshop—to the Great Potter’s house of Providence. Continually revolving is the wheel of circumstances. Men, like masses of clay are placed upon it, but they are not all fashioned alike. There are some men who are evidently to the casual observer, vessels not adapted for the high and honorable occupations of Heaven and glory.

There are men who, every time the wheel revolves, become worse in character and more depraved in mind. There are men who, by the very Providence which is blessed to others, become more complete adepts in iniquity and masters in crime. On the other hand, with pleasure you may perceive that on the same wheel there are some vessels, which, touched by the skillful hand of the Great Potter are being daily more and more finished and completed and you can soon perceive that they are not of the same sort as those we have just now passed by. They are intended for higher uses and nobler purposes. In fact, they are preparing to stand at last, in the midst of Paradise, the glorious trophies of the skill and power of the great Maker.

As my sermon is intended to be practical and not controversial, I shall solemnly invite each hearer to tremble lest he should belong to the reprobate and abandoned vessels of wrath. I speak with the deepest sorrow when I ask the question, with the probability, no, the almost certainty that it must be answered in the affirmative. Are there not some of you, here present, who are being fitted for destruction? God is not fitting you, you are fitting yourselves, by daily developing and indulging

the depravity of your heart. You are seeking out every new pleasure and every new sin and though often warned to turn from your course of evil, are there not some of you who are rushing headlong to destruction? Are not many of you by a course of sin and folly, ripening yourselves for the great harvest of the Lord? Are you not making yourselves ready to be as stubble fully dried, cast into the oven of His wrath?

This is not to be laid to the charge of God, but at your own door the guilt must be. If you perish—any one of you—on your own head shall be your blood. The eternal God is not guilty of the murder of men's souls—they that die and sink in Hell are suicides. They have rejected mercy, they have despised the Savior, they have chosen sin and hated holiness. As was their choice, such is their portion. As was their rebellious will on earth, such must be their tormented destiny forever. Oh, if I could see with an infallible glance, the hearts and consciences of all present! Might I not, as I cast my eye along these seats, say of such an one and of such an one—even in the judgment of charity—that man is preparing for destruction? His crimes demand punishment, his spirit is of such a character that he requires to dwell forever at a distance from God? His will is so headstrong, his intentions so obstinate, his passion so desperate that everyone may see with half an eye, that he is preparing to dwell forever where bliss and even hope, are everlasting strangers.

O my dear Brethren, what shall I say to you, how shall I preach to you? You are filling up the measure of your iniquity and preparing with all diligence to be fitting companions for the devils in Hell. It needs a tender heart and an earnest voice, to address such as you are. Permit me to speak to you in the language of Scripture. Why will you die, O house of Israel, why will you hug the pleasures of sin—pleasures which you know must be followed by the torments of eternity? Why will you put from you the hope of life? Why will you reject the Savior? It will be an awful thing, you that are vessels of mirth, when you shall be filled with wrath.

You that are now vessels of pleasure and vessels of pride—it will be a dreadful thing when God shall fill you to the brim with misery and you shall be overflowing with His anger. Oh Lord, we beseech You, undo the sinner's work. Great Potter, reverse the wheel, re-mold the clay, break in pieces the old vessel that is preparing to be a drinking cup for Satan. Melt it down and re-fashion it and bring it forth again upon the wheel and touch it with Your own hand and make it yet a vessel for honor, fitted for the Master's use!

And now I have a more pleasing task of turning immediately to our text and considering the character of those who, on the other hand, are the "vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory. Even us, whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." There are three things we will look at this morning. First, the vessels. Secondly, the Potter at his work. And then, the Potter's stamp which is set upon the vessels—the stamp of Divine calling, which marks them as being the vessels of mercy.

I. First, then, let us look upon the saints of God as here described, under the title of VESSELS OF MERCY.

1. And the first thing we here observe is, that as vessels of mercy it is distinctly said that they are made of the same lump as the vessels of wrath. The same piece of clay from which the vessel of wrath is fashioned

may be used by God to make also a vessel of mercy. Oh, dear Brothers and Sisters! You who have hope of Heaven hereafter and a foretaste of it even now—look back to the hole of the pit from where you were dug, to the miry clay from where you were drawn!

There was nothing in you by nature better than that which is found in any other man. You did lie in the impure mass of fallen creatureship and if God has made you a vessel of mercy it was not because there was anything in you that could merit esteem. There was no fitness, no natural adaptation in you to become what you are. You are a miracle of His love and of His distinguishing grace. Had He left you to yourself, you had been as base and vile as others in your life. You had been as despairing and as Christless as others in your death. You would have been as surely damned in eternity as the man who has descended into the pit, red with the blood of many a murdered one.

Remember, you were in the loins of Adam, in the loins which begat a Judas. You are a son of the same mother Eve, who conceived and brought into the world Cain the murderer and of Demas who forsook the Lord and of Judas who sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. You know, too, in your own experience, that your temper is as evil, your disposition as vile and your tendency as hellish as that of any man who has perished upon the gallows. If there is a difference in you, the difference is of God's Grace and not of nature. This very morning you have had in your own soul a proof that you are taken from the old block and are but a shred from the leprous rag of fallen humanity.

My dear Hearers, have you learned this Truth of God in your souls? I know there are some who will not believe that you are depraved. You cannot be brought to think that you are as fallen as the worst of men. You set yourselves up with pride, pretending to believe that there is something in you better than is to be found in the criminal or the profligate. I give you but little hope that you are a child of God if you have never learned this Truth of God. I find that God's elect here are of the same lump as the chief of sinners and if you are of a different lump it argues that you are not one of the chosen people of God.

All God's people must learn, as surely as ever grace teaches them, that they are vile. Christians may differ in a thousand doctrines, but they never differ in this one point. We all believe and we are all constrained to confess, that our nature is vile from its original—evil—only evil and that continually. If there is any good in any of us, we all acknowledge it is the work of Divine Grace and not the fruit of creature strength, nor an emanation from our depraved hearts. I pray God that you may learn this lesson and if you have learned it, let it not discourage you, but rather give you hope. As you look upon yourselves and say, "I see that I am of the old stock," lift up your eyes to the God of all Grace and cry, "O Great Potter! Though I am of the old clay, yet fashion me by Your grace and make me a vessel of mercy prepared unto glory."

2. Further, it appears both from the text and the context that these vessels of mercy were as much as any other portion of the clay, entirely in the Potter's hand. Had the Potter willed to leave that mass of clay alone and let it revolve upon the wheel untouched by His gracious hand, or surrendered to the tools of Satan and his craft—if, I say, the Great Potter had left you or me who are vessels of mercy to ourselves, we should have

been vessels of wrath most surely. Jehovah might have done this if He had willed to do so and there would have been no power in us to fit ourselves for Heaven. Hell's thistles grow self-sown, but God's wheat needs a Husbandman. Vessels of mercy fit themselves for destruction, but God's Grace alone can prepare a soul for Glory.

There is no reason in the world why any man should be saved apart from the sovereign and distinguishing Grace of God. If the Lord had permitted the whole human race to perish He would have been infinitely just and throughout eternity the angels must have hymned Him in songs of adoration. If He had chosen to spare a few of mankind, the sparing of but a few would have been an act of surprising mercy—and mercy and judgment would have constituted the two elements of the eternal song. Inasmuch however, as He has taken so much of the clayey mass and has been pleased to make vessels of mercy innumerable as the stars of Heaven, unto His name be all the glory forever and ever.

Take heed that when you think of the number of the redeemed you do not mar the idea that God is a Sovereign, still. Had He saved but one, you would have said it was an instance of absolute sovereignty—though He has saved tens of thousands the sovereignty is just as absolute as it was before. Had the Lord left you to become all that your evil nature and Satan could have made you, you could not have murmured.

If He had permitted you to go on in your drunkenness without sending the Gospel to you. If he had allowed you to reject that Gospel as you would have done unless He had constrained you to receive it—you could not have impugned His justice—even though you might have murmured at it. You have been made what you are, not as the result of any compulsion of merit demanding a debt from the Lord, nor by any effort of your own. You are what you are as the effect of the sovereign discriminating love of God the Father in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now let me ask my hearers again, have you learned this Truth of God? Have you learned how entirely you lie in God's hands? Have you ever been brought, my Hearer, to believe that if saved, it must be His will that saves you, though if lost it is *your* will that damns you? Have you ever been stripped so naked, so thoroughly naked, that you have said, "I have no claim upon God. If He save me, it must be mercy, pure mercy, unmingled mercy"? Oh, if you have never been brought here I tremble for you. I pray the Lord to bring you to this spot, for it is the very threshold of the door of grace. And when a man is brought here, he is not far from the kingdom of God. Be it so with each of us, that we may acknowledge the sovereignty and then admire Grace in the sovereignty.

3. But to proceed. The text speaks of God's chosen ones as being "vessels." Now as we all know, a vessel is nothing but a receiver. A vessel is not a fountain—it is not a creator of the water—but a container and holder of that which is poured into it. Such are the redeemed of God. They are not fountains by nature, out of whom there springs up anything that is good. They are simply receivers, and receivers only. At one time they are full of themselves, but God's Grace empties them—and then as empty vessels they are set in the way of God's goodness, God fills them to the brim with His loving kindness and so are they proved to be the vessels of His mercy.

Sinner! Remember all that God asks of you in order to your salvation is that you would be a receiver and this He *gives* you—even the power to receive. You may receive from Him who gives all. He asks you not to *do* anything but to hold out your empty hand and take all you want. He does not ask you to come with your mouth full as one that is fat and filled with bread—but to open wide your empty mouth and he will fill it with his salvation. He does not bid you store your granaries and become rich—He bids you simply confess your poverty and open the doors of your empty chambers that He may pour you out a blessing such as you shall scarcely find room to receive.

The elect of God, to repeat again my text, are vessels and vessels, only. They may, as vessels, afterwards give out to others, but they can only give out what God has put in them. They may work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, but they cannot work it out unless God works in them both to will and to do of His good pleasure. They may run over with gratitude, but it is only because God has filled them with grace—they may stream forth with holiness, it is only because the Lord keeps the supply overflowing. They are receivers and receivers only.

And now let me ask, have you ever learned this Truth, my Hearer? Have you come to live as a receiver at the hand of God? Have you stood at mercy's gate as a ragged beggar crying for His bread? Have you ever been compelled to say—

***“Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to your Cross I cling”?***

In God's name I assure you, if you have never become a vessel of mercy, if you have never yet been willing to *take* from God instead of giving of your own doings to Him, if you are not willing to be a recipient of His own gratuitous goodness you are a total stranger to everything like the Gospel of Christ.

The Romanist who brings his prayers, the formalist who brings his ceremonies, the hypocrite who brings his profession—all these men have mistaken the Gospel. The Gospel is a scheme not of *giving* to God, but of *taking* from God. It is not of bringing something to the Eternal Jehovah, but it is taking from His fullness, drinking from His well, receiving from His storehouse. You have not yet begun to spell out salvation unless you have learned first of all that *you can do nothing and be nothing*, except God makes you something and enables you to do something in His cause.

4. But furthermore and lastly upon this first head, the children of God are called vessels, but they have this added by way of distinction—they are “vessel of mercy.” In order that they may be vessels of mercy it is certainly necessary that they should be sinful and that they should be miserable. Pity may be given to the miserable, but mercy must be bestowed upon the sinful. For a judge to talk of mercy to those who never had offended would be to insult them and for the philanthropist to offer pity to the man who knows no sorrow, would be but to mock him. The only qualifications that a man can have for being a vessel of mercy, are the qualifications of being sinful and of being sorrowful—two qualifications, which I doubt not many of you now possess, although because you have them, you think that you never can be a child of God.

O rejoice in this thought, that in order to be filled with grace the qualification is emptiness! In order to be clothed with righteousness, the

indispensable qualification is nakedness. In order to be washed in Jesus' blood all that is wanted of you is that you should feel your need of that washing. The redeemed of God are not vessels of merit but vessels of mercy. They are sinful men and women who have felt their sin and have mourned over their iniquity and have hence become sorrowful and miserable. Then it is that God shows to them that they are vessels of mercy.

If I could wander through this hall and read each heart, I should find some, I doubt not, who have come here saying, "I am the chief of sinners. I feel that if all the world were saved there is no room for me, for there is not one good trait in my character. My sin is so aggravated. I have heard the Gospel so often and yet I have rejected it. Conscience has attired me so many times and yet I would not listen to its admonitions. I am sure, I am certain that I am in the most hopeless plight and I am fearfully miserable upon this account. Oh, that there were mercy to be had in Heaven and that God would have pity upon such an one as I am!"

Soul, there is comfort for you in this text! Have I not told you and do you not believe it, that the vessel must be empty before it can be filled? And you are empty. There is hope, then, that God will save you. The vessel must be black with sin before it can be washed with mercy. And you are black. There is hope then, that you shall be cleansed. A vessel must be filled with misery before it can be filled with mercy—you are filled with misery and full of sorrow. Oh, be of good cheer. Bring this vessel of yours, full of misery though it is, and empty it all at the foot of the Cross. And I tell you, Sinner—my words are true—He will fill your vessel with the richest mercy that ever He gave to the brightest of His saints, or to the boldest of His Apostles.

What a glad and joyous hour it is, when God, for the first time, fills the vessel with His mercy! My soul cannot help going back to the hour in my own experience, when the first flood of mercy brimmed this poor empty vessel. Filled to bursting with worm-wood and gall had that vessel been for many and many a day. Often had it seemed as if the vessel must be shivered with the workings of inward sorrow. At last the hour had come, Jehovah said, "Look unto Me and be you saved all the ends of the earth." These eyes, by God's grace, looked. This heart believed and in a moment that vessel emptied of self. And emptied of misery, I was plunged into the sea of mercy and fully submerged!

I thought I should have a little hope at first and then a stronger confidence, but no, my sun arose in the fullness of His strength. The stream came not by slow degrees, but in an instant was the vessel covered, swallowed up and lost in joy and love. The gladness of that hour, I can remember, but I cannot tell. Then I knew my sins forgiven. I could dance for mirth. Then I knew my name inscribed in the Lamb's fair Book of Life and nothing that earth could have afforded could give a drop of joy that was comparable to the bliss of that hour.

Oh, may it be so with some of you this morning! Men, Brothers and Sisters, Fathers, Mothers and Children—may it be so with you. Turn, I beseech you, your tearful eyes to Jesus hanging on the Cross and it shall be so now. Come, bring your empty vessels, for the fountain flows. Break not your pitcher with despair, but come and fill it with the hand of faith. There is room for you here at the marriage feast—you shivering beggar

clothed with the rags of sin. Come, the voice of mercy bids you. The arms of Jesus are outstretched to woo you. You are not rejected, mercy's door is not shut—come and welcome! It is the eleventh hour—the twelfth hour, though it has struck on earth, has not struck in Heaven—there is time yet. Your noon-time of mercy is not passed. The hour of grace still lasts and even now you may read your name as a vessel of mercy fully prepared unto eternal glory.

II. We have cast our eye upon the vessels, let us now pause a little while and see THE POTTER AT HIS WORK.

When a potter is about to make a vessel you must not imagine that he takes up the mere clay and puts it on the wheel and then leaves it to chance as to what shall be made of it. No, he has his plan. Before he sits down to the labor, he knows what kind of vessel he is about to make. So it is with our Divine Potter who is in Heaven. He takes the poor sinner as a mass of clay—He puts him on the wheel and as that wheel revolves the Potter looks and sees in that clay a future something which does not appear to the vessel, but which only appears to the great Workman's eyes.

We may truly say of each of us who know the Lord, that "it does not yet appear what we shall be." And what we shall be never will appear until we shall see Christ as He is and be like He. The Potter, however, knows what we are to be. Our Father who is in Heaven will not be deceived at last as to what He will make of His people. He has a plan and that plan, I think, I may say to you in these few words—"He will present us without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Sweet and blessed consideration! God intends to make of every sinner that believes on Him a spotless, perfect vessel, full of glory. He does not intend to leave a single sin unpardoned, or to let a single evil principle remain in your soul.

He means to tear up your iniquity by the roots and make you totally free from the very being and indwelling of sin. He means to wash you so completely in the blood of Christ, that both the power and the guilt of sin shall all be taken away. And He means as the completion of all to make you in the image of Christ Jesus—as fair and lovely as that spotless and perfect Lamb of God. Oh, Christian, does not this rejoice your heart? You shall yet be like Christ! Oh, do you say, "I am as much like the devil sometimes as I can be and I often have to mourn that there is so much of the old Adam in me"? Yes, but rejoice. It does not yet appear what you shall be.

Every mark of Satan shall yet be put away from you. Every tinge of the old depravity shall yet be cleansed. And when you shall be taken into Heaven as a vessel thoroughly finished, you will be a theme of wonder to all the angels and the glorified spirits who shall gather round about you to see the matchless skill and Grace of God as it is manifested in your character and in your nature. The Lord grant that we may ever have an eye to the great plan of the Potter, so that when sharp afflictions make us whirl upon the wheel, we may rejoice that the plan is being accomplished and that we shall come forth perfect from the hand of the Maker.

And now while we are stopping here to notice the Potter at His work, having glanced at the plan, let us observe that like every potter He first of all makes the outlines in the clay. You may have seen the man at work executing designs in glass. Perhaps at the very first moment you may form a rough guess of what the whole thing is to be, though the ornament and

elaboration which constitute the main part of the beauty you cannot yet discover. Certain it is, that the moment a man begins to be prepared for Heaven by the Grace of God in his soul, you may see the outlines of what he is to be, although it is but the bare outline.

Shall I tell you what those outlines are? There is first of all in him faith in Christ. A simple, childlike trust in Him that did hang upon the tree. There is next in him another mark of the Potter's hand—that is love to Christ—a love that is strong as death, though sometimes it seems to be feeble as a worm. There is in him also a hope that makes him not ashamed and a joy which makes glad his countenance. It is but the bare outline, as I have said, for the glory which excels is not there.

The vase is only in its embryo, but yet sufficiently developed to give a prophecy of its finished form. But as for the pictures that shall be inlaid. As for all the different colors that shall be spent upon it, you cannot guess as yet—nor could you—unless you could climb to the Potter's seat and see the plan upon which He looks as the clay revolves upon the wheel.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, have you anything in you as yet of the great outlines? Can you say in truth, "I do believe on the Lord Jesus"? Fear not then, my Hearer, you are a vessel of mercy. Not a finished vessel, but one that shall be finished. Can you any—

***"O yes, I do love Jesus,
Because he first loved me"?***

If that is true, you are not yet what you shall be, but you are a vessel of mercy for all that. And does your hope sometimes tell you that through Jesus you shall stand among the glorified? Then be glad. The Potter has begun with you and He will never leave you. He mars no vessel on the wheel, or if it is marred He will remake it. He casts not away the clay which He has once taken in His hand. He will complete what He has begun. He knows no failures and no disappointments. You shall yet be all that He would have you be and, filled with glory, you shall glitter in Heaven at last.

But to proceed—as the Potter goes on with His work, you may perceive the gradual completion of the article which He manufactures. And so, dear Brethren, if you are vessels of mercy, there will not always be in you the bare outline, but as time goes on there will be some of the beautiful lines and firings He puts there. It is always a joy to me that such a large proportion of gray-headed Christians always attend here and it is a theme of wonder, also, as well as of joy, because I can scarcely understand what they can learn from *me*. The Lord must have taught them so much more in these many years. He must have been engraving them and using the tools of discernment upon them so long that they must be getting ready—they must be getting nearer to that glorious readiness which prepares the people of God for entrance into eternal life.

I am not among those who think that a Christian is a thing that stands still. He is a vessel, but is a vessel on the wheel. He is clay, but he is clay in the Potter's hand gradually being formed. I should question whether there is any of the life of God in a man if that life does not germinate and grow—for life is a thing that will grow and you cannot prevent it. You may seek to bind up the branch of a tree or to restrain it, but if it cannot grow in one direction it will in another. If it cannot swell in one place where you

have bandaged it—although it will often burst the tightest bond you can put around it—if it cannot swell there it will surely grow somewhere else.

So is it with the life of God in the Christian—it will grow. The Christian will be getting more and more like his Master. You sometimes seem to think you are going backward—yet if you are the children of God there is a constant going forward after all. There may be occasional backslidings, but the tenor of your life will be progress. You may slip, yes, and fall—but still “Onward” will be the true motto of your course. You will be progressing in the Divine life and I do not think, Brothers and Sisters, that you are a vessel of mercy, if after twenty or thirty years of union with Christ’s Church there has been no growth in you.

If you do not know more of your Lord’s faithfulness. If you do not feel more of your own weakness and depravity. If your faith has not become more unstaggering and more confident in Him that is faithful and true. If you have not more longings after Him and more will to be spent in His cause, I should begin to question whether you are a vessel on the Master’s wheel. I do not think He would lose five and twenty years over you—that He would let you be spinning round on the wheel of Providence all that while and yet never have touched you. And never have made you more meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. In fact, it is just this *growth of God’s Grace* that is one of the evidences of life and though you may not be able at all times to discover it, yet it is there.

If you are a vessel of mercy you are getting nearer towards completion—nearer to the day when with everlasting songs you shall be presented before the Father’s face. Oh, Brethren, if we can only see here on earth vessels getting ready for perfection and if those vessels have so much beauty in them as the children of God really have, what must they be when at last they shall be finished? Jehovah, how glorious shall be Your workmanship in this, Your second creation. If this world be fair, how much fairer shall the new world be—if in this, Your old creation, You have made such beauties that the admiring angels may come down to view them and the morning stars may find in them subjects for song—what shall Your new creation be?

If that rough work, which You did but speak from Your mouth, is so marvelously beautiful—what must be that work to accomplish which You have sat down to the potter’s wheel? That work to perform which You have shed Your own blood and to perfect which You have not spared the treasures of Heaven, but emptied them out that You might complete those vessels which shall be for Your glory? Oh, the songs! Oh, the hallelujahs that shall greet Jehovah’s workmanship, when all shall be completed, when all the vessels shall be brought Home—when Heaven’s tables shall be loaded with the richest of all ware, when souls shall be filled with the red wine of bliss and all the glorified shall rejoice in God! What songs, I say, what hallelujahs shall make the courts of Heaven echo and re-echo throughout eternity forever and ever!

III. And now I shall come to my last point, upon which I shall be somewhat brief, but I hope, thoroughly in earnest. The last point was THE POTTERS MARK UPON HIS VESSELS.

In all manufactories of costly wares there is always some trademark peculiar to the firm that has manufactured the article—a mark which is not to be imitated—and without which no vessel is the genuine production

of the professed maker. Brethren, you may know today whether you are a vessel of mercy. You may know by the Master's mark upon you. That mark, the Apostle tells you, is *calling*. Have you been called? For if you are called you are elected. Has Divine Grace called you out of darkness into marvelous light? If so, it is not a matter of question as to whether you are ordained to eternal life. You may rest assured that, without a doubt, your name was in the Lamb's Book of Life from before the foundations of the world—if you have in time been called from sin unto righteousness.

Mark, then, the distinguishing mark of the Great Potter upon His vessels of mercy is effectual calling. And I would here remark that that is a mark which no man can put upon you. It is one which God alone can impress. We can call you, but we cannot call you *effectually*. The earnest minister may cry aloud and spare not and bid sinners come to the marriage supper of the Lamb—but it is in vain calling to deaf ears and such are the ears of all men by nature. The Lord alone can so speak that the deaf, no, the *dead*, will hear. Have you ever, then, felt a calling which is not of man, neither by man? Has the voice of mercy ever spoken to your soul and said, "Come to Jesus"? And has it so spoken that your heart has said, "Your face, Lord, will I seek"?

Oh, my dear Hearers, you have been called time enough by *me*—so many times that if you perish, your blood must lie at your own door. God is witness that over the most of you these eyes have wept many and many a time. The Lord knows how earnestly I have called to you, how I have pleaded with you as though it were my own soul that was at hazard—and as though I pleaded for my own life. If you have rejected these callings, be prepared to answer for it at the Last Great Day.

But alas, these callings you may have and they may only sink you lower than the lowest Hell. Have you ever received the irresistible calling of the Holy Spirit? Has He said to you, "Mary," and have you said, "Rabboni"? Has He cried to you, "Zaccheus make haste and come down," and have you come down and received Him into your house? None but a call from Christ's own lips shall ever compel such stubborn hearts as ours to follow Him. Have you had that call? If so, you have the mark of the Potter upon you. You are not a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction, but a vessel of mercy prepared unto glory.

I would further remark, that as this is a mark which no man can put upon you, so blessed be God, it is one which no man can take away from you. If God has called you, that calling is without repentance, God will not repent and take back the gift which He has given you. If He has called you by His Grace to repentance, He will call you to faith and then from faith to love, from love to patience and to hope and onwards till at last he whispers, "Come up here," and He calls you unto Glory. I do not believe in that Gospel which teaches that a man may be effectually called and yet may perish, that a heart may be thoroughly renewed and yet may go back to its old state—that, in fact—God's work may melt away like "the baseless fabric of a vision." I do not believe that His new creation is but froth and foam—that it only lives by the will of a creature and it dies if that creature has a will that it should do so.

No, my Brethren, if the Lord has put Heaven's light in you, once, it is there forever—and not death nor Hell can quench it—but in your soul it must and will burn. "Ah, but," says one, "If I indulge in sin." Yes, but you

shall not indulge in sin, the Lord will preserve and keep you so that the Wicked One touches you not. “But if I go back and sin as I used to do.” Yes, but you can not do it. That Grace of God which has changed your nature will hold you to the end—you shall walk in light till you come to walk in Glory. “Your path shall be as the shining light which shines more and more unto the perfect day,” and if you go back, we will say of you, “He went out from us because he was not of us, for if he had been of us, he doubtless would have continued with us.”

“The dog has returned to his vomit, because he was a dog and the sow that was washed has returned to her wallowing in the mire, because she was a sow.” But had the natures been changed they would never have returned to their old propensities. Had they been made new creatures in Christ Jesus, that new creation could never have been undone. God’s tapestry could not have been unraveled. His work could not have been consumed. It is eternal and must abide. It must last even to the perfection in Glory. Be of good cheer then, if the Lord has put His mark upon you, the devil cannot wash it out.

And then, to conclude, let me remark, if you have had the seal of calling put upon you, that seal is sure and certain. There never was a man yet called out of darkness into light by mistake. There never was a man who repented and then found he was not an elect one. Never a man went to Christ and then found he had not a right to come and must go back. “Whoever comes unto Me I will in nowise cast out.” God has never made mistakes in the callings of His Grace. The right man is called at the right time and the right place. He goes to Christ and finds that what is a fact in time was a purpose in all eternity.

Between calling and election there is an indissoluble union. If you have the link of calling in your hand, depend upon it that it is fastened—though you can not see it—unto the other golden link of Divine Decree. You could not have come to Christ unless the Father had drawn you and the Father would not have drawn you unless He had intended to draw you and that intention is election’s decree. Be, then, quite certain that if you come, it was intended that you should come. And you were chosen of God from before the foundation of the world.

Am I but certain that I am regenerate? I cannot allow a dispute about whether I am elected or not. Am I sure that—

***“My faith is fixed on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.”***

I may be as sure of my election, as if I could climb to Heaven and turn over the red roll and read my name in letters of gold. The Lord has given you a test which never did fail yet and never will. You shall not meet, either in time or in eternity, a single penitent who found that he had repented and believed through error. Oh, no! The fruit proves the life of the tree and the fact that you have mercy proves that God intended to give you the mercy. And what is that, but what we mean by the doctrine, that God hash, from the beginning, chosen unto salvation them that believe in Christ Jesus?

And now, before I send you away, let me say one or two earnest words. It makes my heart glad to see what work the Lord is doing in our day everywhere. I do not think these are times over which God’s people ought to sorrow. There is more doing in London now than has been

accomplished for the last twenty years. The people of God are earnest in prayer. There are men raised up to preach in simple language the Truth of God as it is in Jesus and I do hope that whatever good we have seen in the past is about to be quite eclipsed and outdone by greater things that are on their way.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, who can shut his eyes to the sad fact that in days of revival there are some who are unblessed? I am anxious about you, that while God is working on the right hand and on the left, you should not escape without receiving the blessing from on high. Oh, to be like Gideon's fleece—dry when the floor is wet! To remain in a barren spot of ground when all the earth is filled with fertility! And yet, my dear Hearers, this is the case with some of you. You are still becoming more and more fitted for destruction. Oh, I would solemnly warn you that fitness for destruction will certainly end in destruction.

Sin and Hell are married unless Repentance proclaim the divorce. As you sow, you must reap. It is of no use your looking into mysterious doctrines to find anything which can contradict this Truth of God. As your life is such must your evil be. And if your course is out of Christ your end shall be out of Christ and your eternal home shall be out of hope and far away from eternal happiness. But oh, I pray that instead thereof, the Lord in His infinite bounty may call you effectually by His Grace. I pray that the Holy Spirit may descend—but how shall we obtain that Holy Spirit? Only by the conjoined and united prayers of the Church of Christ.

My dear Friends, let us pray more earnestly. Not only our own comfort, but the salvation of sinners lies in the hands of God. We cannot save them. We cannot awaken them. Let us cry—"Oh Lord! You take the work in hand." And from this hour let every Christian in our midst resolve that he will give the Lord no rest until He sends down the showers of His Grace and revives His work in the midst of our Church and throughout every land. Let me dismiss you with just a word of prayer to that effect.

Oh Lord! Revive Your work we pray! We are feeble and weak. We can do nothing. But come Yourself and achieve triumphs and let victories be won. Come and break the hard heart and subdue the stubborn will. Lord, save the unsaved. O God, awaken those here present who are dead in sin and let the vessels of mercy whom in Your sovereign good pleasure You have chosen out of the mass of mankind be filled with mercy till they overflow with gratitude and joy. Oh Lord! Hear us and let the feeble effort of this morning be crowned with richer success than we can ask or even think, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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GOD'S PEOPLE—OR NOT GOD'S PEOPLE

NO. 2295

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1893.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, You are My people; and they shall say, You are my God.”
Hosea 2:23.*

*“As He says also in Hosea, I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.”
Romans 9:25.*

To my mind, it is very instructive to notice how Paul quotes from the Prophets. The Revelation of the mind of God in the Old Testament helps us to understand the Gospel revealed in the New Testament. There is no authority that is so powerful over the minds of Christian men as that of the Word of God. Has God made known any Truth in His Word? Then it is invested with Divine authority! Paul, being himself Inspired by the Holy Spirit and, therefore, able to write fresh Revelations of the mind of God, here brings the authority of God's Word in the olden times to back up and support what he says—“As he says also in Hosea.”

Beloved Friend, if you are seeking salvation, or if you need comfort, never rest satisfied with the mere word of man. Be not content unless you get the Truth from the mouth of God. Say in your spirit, “I will not be comforted unless God, Himself, shall comfort me. I want chapter and verse for that which I receive as Gospel.” Our Lord's reply to Satan was, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Give me, then, but a Word out of God's mouth, and I can live upon it! But all the words out of man's mouth, apart from Divine Inspiration, must be as unsatisfying food as if men tried to live on stones.

Notice, again, how Paul teaches that the very essence of the authority of the Scriptures lies in this, that *God* speaks through His revealed Word—“As HE says also in Hosea.” It is God speaking in the Bible whom we ought to hear. The mere letter of the Word, alone, will kill, but when we hear God's voice speaking in it, then it has power which it could not possess otherwise. It is a blessed thing to put your ear down to the promises of Scripture till you hear God speaking through them to your soul. It is truly profitable to read a Gospel Commandment and to listen to its voice until God, Himself, speaks it with power to your heart. I pray you, do not regard anything that is preached here unless it agrees with what is written there in the Bible. If it is only my word, throw it away! But if it is

God's Truth that I declare to you, if God, Himself, speaks it through my lips, you will disregard it at your peril.

I will make only one other observation by way of introduction. Is it not wonderful how God's Word is preserved century after century? There were seven or 800 years between Hosea and Paul and it is remarkable that the promise to the Gentiles should lie asleep all that time, and yet should be just as full of life and power when Paul was quoting it after all those centuries! God's Word is like the wheat in the hand of the mummy, of which you have often heard. It had lain there for thousands of years, but men took it out of the hand and sowed it—and there sprang up the bearded wheat which has now become so common in our land! So you take a Divine promise, spoken hundreds or thousands of years ago, and lo, it is fulfilled to you! It becomes as true to you as if God had spoken it for the first time this very day and you were the person to whom it was addressed. O blessed Word of God, how we ought to prize you! We cannot yet tell all that lies hidden between these covers, but there is a treasury of Grace concealed here which we ought to seek until we find it.

Having thus introduced our texts as taken from God's Word in the Old and New Testaments, and as being God's voice to us, speaking adown the centuries with all the freshness and force it would have if it were uttered anew tonight, I invite every unconverted person to listen with both his ears and his whole heart, to hear if there shall drop some living word of cheer and promise that shall make this evening to be his birth night! If so, this shall be the time wherein his captivity shall be ended, his mouth shall be filled with laughter and his tongue with singing—and his spirit shall rejoice in God his Savior!

I. Now, first, in considering the words in the Epistle to the Romans, let us look at THE ORIGINAL STATE OF GOD'S PEOPLE. "I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved."

If we look at the original state of God's people, we shall gaze upon a very gloomy picture. Yet this portrait reveals the state in which every unconverted man is tonight—the state in which all of us, who are now saved, once were! We were not God's people—that is to say, *we had not God's approval*. I speak now of all those whom God has saved. There was a time when there was no approval of them! As the Apostle says, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." So was it with those who were not God's people—their thoughts were contrary to God's thoughts, their ways were such as God could not endure—their speech grated in His ears, they followed the devices and imaginations of their own hearts! The prince of this world had dominion over them and God's Grace had not been displayed upon them. They went astray like lost sheep.

That is *your* condition tonight, Sinner—you are the object of Divine *disapproval*. "Not beloved," says the text. "Not beloved." How can you be beloved of God? How can the Lord take any delight in a man who takes no delight in his God, who tries not even to *think* of Him—who breaks His Law with impunity—and finds pleasure in that which God abhors? "Not My people," says the text. That is, they were not the subjects of Divine approval.

Next, such people *receive from God no good thing of the highest order*. “Oh,” say some, “but we are receiving all sorts of temporal blessings from God.” I know you are and you ought to thank Him for them. But as you are not His people, and not beloved, even these good things turn out to be evil things to you. Your table becomes a snare and a trap to you. Men who receive God's mercies before His Grace has brought them to Himself, make idols of the good things He bestows upon them. They receive benefits at His hands and use them to provoke Him to anger! They take of their wealth and they say, with the rich fool, “Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years. Take your ease—eat, drink, and be merry!” And so they forget that they must die and they forget their God.

Oftentimes, even health and strength become a snare to men. They will plunge into greater sin because they have so much vigor of body. We have known some who have been so robust in health that they would not *think* of God, or of Christ, or of their souls, or of eternity! I tell you, Sinners, that while you are as you are, God's curse rests upon your blessings! There is no good thing out of Christ, for that which would be good *with* Christ becomes evil *without* Christ! It becomes a thing which destroys rather than blesses and which helps men the more rapidly to destroy their souls. Oh, what a sad state is yours of whom God says, “They are not My people, and they are not beloved”! While they are as they are, they cannot receive the highest good from God—even the best things that He sends them, they turn into evil.

Remember, too, you who know not God, that you are in a very miserable condition because to you *there is no application of the precious blood of Christ*. Jesus died for sinners, but you pass by His Cross as though you had nothing to do with it. Israel in Egypt was saved because God saw the blood and passed over the houses of His people. But you are not beneath that crimson sign! You have never looked to Christ by faith! No blood is on the lintel and on the two side posts of your door. All we can say of you, as we look at you, is, “Not beloved! Not beloved.” Oh, poor Souls, you who have not believed, what does the Scripture say to you? Why, that you are “condemned already” because you have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God! You who have not believed in Christ are lying in the Wicked One—and what does that expression mean? Why, lying in his bosom, as if you were the darling children of the devil! How can there be any sign of the Divine delight or complacency towards you while your delight is in Satan and in sin? No, you have no interest in the precious blood of Jesus! Ah, me, what would I do if this were my case? I would sooner lose my eyes, my hearing, my sense of taste! I would sooner lose life, itself, than lose an interest in the precious blood of Jesus! Yet some of you live at ease though there has been for you no pardon of sin, no washing in the blood of sprinkling. You are still guilty before God.

Again, when these people were called by God, “not My people,” and, “not beloved,” there had been *no saving work of the Spirit of God upon them*. I am addressing some here, tonight, who have never had their hearts broken by the Spirit of God. They have never been brought to repentance, they have never been led to faith in Christ. Consequently, to them the Spirit of God is not a Quickener. To them He is not a Comforter.

To them He is not an Illuminator. All His Divine offices are fulfilled in other people, but not in them. They are strangers to that blessed power without which no man can come to God, or believe in Christ. Oh, what a sad condition for any to be in—"not My people," and, "not beloved"! They have no trace of that life which they would have if the Spirit of God had made them to pass from death unto life. God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living—and as long as you are dead in sin, He is not your God in this special sense—neither does He call you His people.

Those who are in that sad state have no relief in prayer. They do not pray—they cannot pray! Now, when I am in trouble, I need nobody to advise me to pray. A trouble no sooner comes to me than I spread it before God and I find a sweet relief at once. Oh, if there were no Mercy Seat, I should wish that I had never been born! But there are some of you who never truly pray. Such prayers as you do offer have no heart in them, no life in them and, therefore, God does not hear you, and you live on in this world without prayer. Men, how can you exist thus? Life must be to you like a burning desert where every particle of sand blisters the foot that treads upon it. What can this world be to a prayerless man?

And as you are without prayer, so you are *without the promises of God to sustain you*. The wealth of God's people seldom lies in ready money. Their treasure consists mostly in promises to pay—promises which God has made to His own people. But for the ungodly there are no blessed promises! God will give nothing to you who will not even believe His Word! He has made no Covenant with you who will not even trust His Son! You remain as He says—it is not my word, but His—"not My people," and, "not beloved," as long as you are without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! Whatever promises He has made to His people, you are without power to plead those promises at the Throne of Grace, for they do not belong to you.

In addition to all this, you are now *without any fellowship with God, or with His Son, Jesus Christ*. God made this world, but you never speak with the world's Maker. You are guarded by His Providence and yet you have no fellowship with the God who rules over all. Why, the joy of life to some of us lies mainly in our fellowship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! He is the very center of the circle in which we move. He is the height and glory of our manhood. He is the All in All of our existence. We would not wish to live if it were not for Him. He is the sun that makes our Heaven bright—all would be dark without Him—and yet some of you have no communion with Him, perhaps not even any knowledge of Him! Oh, my dear Friend, you have no Christ, no Savior, no communion with God, no fellowship with the Most High! What a terrible condition is yours!

Besides this, *you have no hope of Heaven*. If you were to die as you now are, what could be your eternal portion but to be driven from the Presence of God, and from the Glory of His power? The Lord Jesus would say of you, "I never knew them, I never knew them. They are not My people. They are not My beloved." Why, you have never even sought Him! You have never cried to Him! You have never forsaken the sin which He hates! You have never rested upon the Atonement which He has made! You have never trusted in His living power to save! Ah, poor creatures that you are, how I pity you!

“Do not call us poor,” you say. “We are rich, we are increased in goods and have need of nothing.” So much the worse is your poverty because of your fancied wealth! It will be an awful thing to go from your well-spread table to the place where you will be denied a drop of water to cool your burning tongues! It will be a terrible thing if you go from the weakness and sickness of the dying bed at once to stand before your God—to be driven from the pangs of your last moments into that dread position of a culprit, unpardoned—to receive sentence from the great Judge of All. “Not My people,” and, “not beloved.” I cannot bear the thought of your doom, and I can say no more on that terrible theme.

II. But now, in the second place, I have to speak of THE NEW CONDITION OF GOD'S PFOPLE. Listen, and as you listen, may God make it to be *your* new condition! There are many in this world to whom my text has been proven to be true—“I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.”

Now see the change which God can make. It is God who makes it! The very same people of whom He said, “They are not My people,” He now calls His people! Yes, and in the very place where He said that they were not His people, He says they are the people of the living God. Now, what if tonight I have been saying of such and such that they are not God's people? But what if, before they leave this place, God should say to them, “You are My people”? Oh, what a blessed change would have taken place in them! Let me describe it.

If the Lord shall say to us, tonight, “You are My people, and you are My beloved,” then we shall know, first, that He thinks upon us, that His mind is toward us, that He has a kindly regard for us, that He takes delight in us, that His heart is set on doing us good! Oh, you who love the Lord and are His children, think of this—you have the thoughts of God running towards you in streams of ever-abounding tenderness, mercy, goodness and faithfulness!

And, as the Lord thinks of us, *He speaks to us*. Oh, to think that the Lord should speak to those who were once not His people, and speak to them so effectually as to make His sweet promises enter into their ears, yes, into their hearts! And should become familiar to them, for, “the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His Covenant”! Oh, how sweetly does God commune with His own children! How He does open up His very heart to them and make them to know Him, even as Jesus manifests Himself unto His chosen as He does not unto the world! It is a choice privilege of a child of God to be thought of and then to be spoken to by the Lord!

More than that, *God hears us speak*. When we are His people, and His beloved, then our accents become sweet in His ears. You know that your dear children often speak very poorly and badly, and other people do not much care to listen to their talk. But to a father's ear the sound of his own child's voice is always sweet! You have been away from home for some weeks. I know that you are longing to hear the dear prattlers once again. Well, like as a father loves the voice of his child, so does our heavenly Father love the voices of His beloved whom He calls His people—and He has regard to what they say—He hearkens to the voice of their cry.

Then, beloved, He not only hears us, but *He grants us our desire*. He will come to our deliverance in the time of trouble. He will bestow upon us all good things—“No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Oh, the privileges of those who are God's people! The theme is too vast for human language to compass!

One special mark of our new condition is that the Lord *forgives our sin*. Once we were loaded with sin, but now we have not a single sin left upon us. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanses us from all sin! Paul challenges the whole universe to lay anything to the charge of God's elect, for God has justified them. “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” Oh, the heaped-up blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! And that is true of all whom God calls His people, though they once were not His people!

And then, dear Friends, sin being forgiven, the Lord *works all things for our good*. Whether we are joyous or depressed, if we are the Lord's people, all is working for our good! “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” Our losses and our crosses, our bereavements and our bodily pains, as well as our rapturous joys and our highest delights, are all working out the best results for us!

More than this, when we are in trouble, *God pities us*, for, like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.” Yes, and *He sends us relief*, too, according to that word of David, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” What is better, still, God dwells in us, as He said, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” And the Holy Spirit has come, and taken up His abode in these mortal bodies—and He dwells there, our Teacher and our Comforter, our Guide and our Friend.

By-and-by, *the Lord Jesus will come, again, and receive us unto Himself*, that where He is, there we may also be. I wish I had the tongues of men and of angels that I might tell you the splendor of the position of those who are the Lord's own people, the Lord's own beloved! And who were these people once? I come back to my text. They were not God's people, and not beloved—“I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.” Now then, some of you, whom God cannot now look upon except with anger—why should He not look upon you with love, tonight, through Jesus Christ? He that believes in Christ Jesus may have the blessed assurance that the Lord loves him and that he is one of the Lord's people!

You may have come in here saying, “I belong to the devil. I am sure I do. I feel within my spirit that I am under his cruel sway. Alas! I have not a spark of Grace, or a thought of goodness. I am as far off from God, holiness and Heaven as I can ever be.” Then to you, may God say, “I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved”! Oh, the magnificence of this Grace that waits not for man,

neither tarries for the sons of men, but works according to the eternal purposes of God and accomplishes all His sovereign will!

III. This brings me, in the third place—going back to the text in Hosea—to notice THE GRAND RESULT OF THIS WONDERFUL CHANGE. “I will say to them which were not My people, you are My people; and they shall say, You are my God.” Here is a dialogue between the Lord and His people. God says something to them and they say something to Him.

Remember that there is no change in God—it is only a change in our relation to Him, because those who have become His people were really His people, in His everlasting purpose, from before the foundation of the world—though they were not actually so as to their own spiritual condition. But now, when this change comes to pass in their relations to God, see the grand result of it!

First, *the Lord says, “You are My people.”* Now I pray that the Lord may come, tonight, and speak to some who never made mention of His name before, some who never knew Him, who never trembled at His Word, never hoped in His mercy, never trusted in His Son, never, indeed, meant to be His people at all! I trust that the Lord will now say to some of them, “You are My people.” Oh, what a wonderful experience it is when the poor lost sinner finds out that he belongs to God, that he has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, that God means to save him, that He will not let His Son’s blood be shed for him in vain! I remember the shame and yet the joy that filled my soul when I first woke up to the consciousness of what Christ had done for me. I remember the confusion of face I felt because I had treated such a Savior so badly and yet I also felt intense delight in thinking that He loved me, notwithstanding all my sins. This is a text that comforted me— I pray the Lord to send it home to some other heart— “I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.” And this one, also, “I have called you by your name; you are Mine.” Oh, if the Holy Spirit would apply those Words with power to some sinner’s heart, tonight, what a running after God, what a seeking after Christ there would be!

“I will say to them which were not My people, You are My people.” The Lord does not always say that to His people with equal force. At first, they half hope that it is so. They indistinctly hear His voice saying it, but as faith increases, they hear Him say it more distinctly, “You are My people.” I feel that it is most gracious of God to call those His people that were not His people. You see that He gives them a new name and that overrides the old one. I think that I hear someone saying, “I have found the Savior!” “What? What?” says somebody who knows you. “*You?* Ha! We all know what *you* were.” Perhaps one says, “Ah, you know that you have been as bad as any of us!” Possibly in one case they might say, “You talk of being God’s child? You are a fallen woman,” or, “You have been a thief,” or, “You have been a liar,” or, “You have been a frequenter of places where God is forgotten, a lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God.”

Yes, but, Beloved, if the Lord says, “I have called you by your name; you are Mine,” you can say to yourself, “They may say what they please about me, and I must acknowledge the truth of it all, but this Word of the Lord, ‘You are Mine,’ overrides them all!”

What a blessed text this is for one who has lost his character, for one who has lost all repute! If you come to Christ, and believe in Him, here is a text that applies to you! God says, "Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable, and I have loved you." God can make "right honorables" out of those who are, in themselves, most dishonorable, and He can give them a name and a place among His people. Yet I can imagine God looking upon someone here, to-night, and saying of such an one, "How can I put Him among the children? What? Put such a sinner among My children?" I can fancy there is somebody here who is so extremely sinful that if I were to propose to God's people that he should be received among them, they would say, "We would not like to receive that man into the Church." Ah, but when our heavenly Father welcomes home His prodigal son, He will not have the older brother talk like that! He comes out and reasons with him, and says, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad, for this, your brother, was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found."

Jesus would have us receive the very chief of sinners, the jailbirds, the Hellbirds, the men who have gone farthest astray—the men who have lost all hope, the most forlorn and self-condemned, the most dejected, distressed, devil-haunted men and women out of Hell! These are just the people in whom the Grace of God triumphs over all sin! "I will call them My people, which were not My people; and her beloved, which was not beloved." "And I will say to them, which were not My people, you are My people."

When the Lord says this to any, their sin is put away! My Lord is a great Forgiver! My Lord, whom I preach to you tonight, who was once nailed to the Cross, is able to save all them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. "He delights in mercy"—it is His right-hand attribute, His last-born, His Benjamin! Never does He display His mercy more than when, like the mighty sea, His love rolls over the very tops of the mountains of iniquity and covers them!

I close by noticing what the Lord's people say to Him, "*They shall say, You are my God.*" That is the right saying for every one of the Lord's people, "You are my God." Poor Sinner, may God the Holy Spirit help you to begin to say that, "You are my God"! Here is a text that should help you to say it, even as it helped me in the hour of my conversion, "Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Will you look to God, Sinner? Will you say to the Lord, "You are my God"? "My God, I have long forgotten You, I have blasphemed You, I have rebelled against You, I have desecrated Your Sabbath, I have decried Your Gospel, I have ridiculed Your servants! But, behold, I look to You, for I have sinned. Have mercy upon me for Your dear Son's sake!"

That is a good beginning, but may you have Grace to advance beyond that experience, so that you may come and lay your hands on Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, saying, "This Savior is my Savior. I accept Him as my Substitute, to stand in my place"! When you have once rightly uttered this blessed sentence, "You are my God," God's Grace will help you to keep on saying it! There is no getting farther than this, "You are my God." That is the end of all good things. What more

does a man need? What more can a man desire? There is not a good thing anywhere out of Christ!

One of the old Puritans, in the days when nobody much liked going to sea, said, "When a man is in a ship and in his own little cabin, if he casts his eyes all around, and sees nothing but the wild waste of waters, without a sign of land anywhere—nothing but angry billows tossing the vessel up and down—and if anyone says to Him, 'Will you leave your little cabin? Will you leave your little ship?' 'No,' he says, 'where else can I go? There is nowhere else to go.'" That is just how I feel tonight about my Lord! My cabin, my ship, my Christ, my faith in Him, gives me rest and peace! I cannot see anywhere else that I can go except to destruction and despair—so my soul says over again, "You are my God, you are my God. Others may have what they will, but I will have my God. They may have what god they like, but You, Triune Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Spirit—You are my God and on You my soul does rest, seeking no other confidence."

Will you say that, tonight, my dear Hearers? I do not know your cases, but I know that if I need to get sheep into a fold, a good way is to set the gate open as widely as ever I can! And then another good way to entice the sheep in is to have rich pasture inside. Well, I have tried to set before you the rich, Free Grace of God to the very chief of sinners. And I have pointed to the opened Door that is wide enough to let the biggest sinner come through! Jesus said, "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

Now, if Noah's ark had a door that was big enough to let an elephant through, then it was big enough to let a dog through, or a fox, or a cat, or a mouse. You may come if you are the biggest sinner in the world, but I do not suppose that you are, for the biggest sinner died and went to Heaven long ago. Paul says that *he* was the biggest sinner, the chief of sinners—and I believe that he knew what sized sinner he was. If there was room for him to go through the gate of salvation, there is room for you! May God's Grace draw you this very night—and unto the God of all Grace shall be the praise forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON.
HOSEA 2:5-23.

In this chapter God compares Israel to a woman who had been unfaithful to her husband in the very worst and most wicked manner.

Verse 5. *For their mother has played the harlot: she that conceived them has done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.* She attributed to false gods the gifts which God had given to her. This was great ingratitude to God, and a high insult to His holy majesty.

6. *Therefore, behold, I will hedge up your way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.* That is what God does to sinners whom He means to save. He will not let them take their own course. He gives them thorny trials which hedge up their way. He puts an obstacle in their path—perhaps some sickness or poverty. When men are desperate in

wickedness, God has a way of stopping them. Even in their mad career, His mighty Grace comes in and says, "So far shall you go, but no further."

7. *And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them.* Thus sinners go after the pleasures of the world and the pleasures run away from them. They make one thing their god, and then another, and they put out all their strength to attain the object of their ambition, but God thwarts them. In Infinite Love, He baffles all their endeavors because He means to bring them to Himself!

7. *Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.* That is what He brings us to—worn out of the world, yes, worn out of life, itself—we get worn out in the ways of evil, and then we say, "I will go to God." What a blessed conclusion to come to! However terrible the whip with which He scourges us, it does us good. The fierce billow that washes the mariner upon the rock of safety is a blessing to him.

8, 9. *For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away My corn in the time thereof, and My wine in the season thereof, and will recover My wool and My flax given to cover her nakedness.* God claims the blessings of Providence as His own and when He sees His people misuse them, He says, "I will recover them. She is giving them to Baal, she is using them for an evil purpose—I will take them away."

10, 11. *And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of My hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.* When God deals with men, He uses no half measures! If they have been very happy in the ways of sin and He intends to save them from their evil courses, He will take away all their joy. They shall henceforth have none of the merriment in which they indulged. He will give them better happiness, by-and-by, but for the time being it shall be true, "I will cause all her mirth to cease."

12. *And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, of which she has said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.* Her most precious things shall be destroyed, or, if they are allowed to exist, they shall become a cause of fear and trouble. Oh, how often have I seen this verified in the experience of men and women whom God has saved by His almighty Grace!

13. *And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot Me, says the LORD.* They burnt no incense at Jerusalem. They refused to offer sacrifice there, but they went to this hill and to that, to worship the different images of Baal, and said, "These are our gods." Therefore, God says that He will make them sick of their idolatry! They shall grow tired of thus polluting His holy name and degrading themselves by worshipping things made of wood and stone.

14. *Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.* Oh, glorious verse! She that went so far astray, God will come and draw her back from the path of sin! He will get her alone. He will bring her into a place of grief and sorrow, a wilderness—and then He will come near and speak sweet words of comfort into her ear. “I will allure her, as the bird catchers whistle to the birds and draw them to the net, so will I allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, the place of loneliness, the place of need, and I will speak to her heart,” so the Hebrew has it, for God knows how to speak, not only into the ears, but into the heart.

15. *And I will give her her vineyards from there.* He will give back what He took away. He will seal with loving kindness the real kindness which made Him deal roughly with her at first.

15. *And the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.* Oh, Backslider, God can give you back your early joy, your early love, yes, and your early purity! And He can make you sing as at the beginning! Therefore, be of good comfort and come to your Lord—come even now, with all your sins about you—and He will receive you!

16. *And it shall be at that day, says the LORD, that you shall call Me Ishi; and shall call me no more Baali.* “Baali” means, “My Lord,” in the sense of *domination*. But God will not seem to us, anymore, like a domineering Governor, as we once thought Him. But we shall call Him, “Ishi,” “My Husband.” There shall be such nearness of love, such confidence of hope between the restored soul and her God, that she shall call Him no more Baali, but Ishi.

17. *For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.* Oh, the love of God! He does not want us to remember our old ways. I do not like to hear people talk about their old habits, except they do it very tenderly, with many a tear and many a sigh, and tell the story to the praise and glory of Divine Grace. God takes the old names out of our lips—we forget them, we have done with them, we bury the dead past—and we live in newness of life.

18. *And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of Heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground.* So that the insects should not devour the crops, the foxes should not spoil the vines and the birds should not steal the seed! So will God take care of His people! It does seem that, when we once get right with God, we get right with everything—when we are at peace with Him—then neither beast, nor fowl, nor creeping thing can do us harm.

18. *And I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.* They had been much troubled by war. It had killed their children, destroyed their homes and made them poor and wretched. Now God says, “I will break the bow and the sword and the battle.” How often God gives a heavenly calm to us when we are once washed in the blood of Christ and covered with His Righteousness! I remember how the storm within my heart was hushed into a deep calm as soon as I had seen my Lord and had yielded my heart to Him. Oh, you that are in storms tonight, I pray that God may bring you to

Himself and give you “peace, perfect peace!” And then what more will the Lord do?

19. *And I will betroth you unto Me forever.* What? This woman that had gone so far into evil? Can a man receive such an one back? No, but God can! He says there shall be a new betrothal, a new marriage—“I will betroth you unto Me forever.” Blessed word!

19, 20. *Yes, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth you unto Me in faithfulness: and you shall know the LORD.* You shall know Jehovah! You shall know that there is none like He, passing by iniquity, transgression, and sin—and faithful to His people even when they are unfaithful to Him! Is there any god like our God? Have you ever tasted His Grace? Do you know His pardoning love? Have you ever been brought back to Him? Have you been restored to His favor? Then I am sure you can say, “There is none like unto Jehovah.”

21, 22. *And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, says the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.* God would send rain when it was needed. He would be all ear to hear on behalf of His people. He would not only hear them, but hear the very earth they tilled, and the heavens above their heads, as if Nature, itself, began to pray when the child of God learned that holy art!

23. *And I will sow her unto Me in the earth.* He would make the people to be like the seed which He, Himself, would sow, and cause to spring up and abide.

23. *And I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy.* I would like to read that again. Somebody has, perhaps, come in here, tonight, who has never obtained mercy. Perhaps you have been seeking it and you have not found it. Hear God's promise, and lay hold upon it—“I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy.”

23. *And I will say to them which were not My people, You are My people; and they shall say, You are my God.* See, it is all in, “shalls,” and, “wills!” God is speaking! God Omnipotent, Omnipotent over men's hearts. He is not saying, “I will if they will,” but, “I will, and they shall,” for He has the key of free agency—and when He turns it in the lock, without violating the free will of man, He makes him willing in the day of His power to the praise of His Divine supremacy, for God is God when He saves as much as when He reigns! Yes, His reigning Grace is the very glory of His Nature, and this we love and adore. Grant us a taste of it! Amen.

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S. S.—OR, THE SINNER SAVED

NO. 1961

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 1, 1887,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“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, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense: and whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.”
Romans 9:30-33.

FOR several Sabbath mornings I have sought the comfort and edification of God's people, although I trust I have not, even in such discourses, overlooked the *unconverted*. How can we forget them while they are in such peril? At the same time, the main drift of the service has been for the people of God and it will not be wise to continue long in that line. We must not forget the lost sheep—it were better that we left the 99 than that we neglected the rambler. We must this morning, therefore, seek to go after that which is gone astray until we find it. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would make every word to be full of His power! He can fill each sentence with a celestial dynamite, an irresistible energy which will blast the rocks of self-righteousness and make a way for the Gospel of the Grace of God through the impenetrable barriers of sin! For that end I am anxious that while I *speaks* on God's behalf, the *prayers* of the faithful may bring down God's power and make the feeble voice of man to be the vehicle for the Omnipotence of God!

It is very necessary to go over the elements often—the foundation Truths of the Gospel. Schools may rise to the classics, but they can never dispense with the spelling book. All over the country there must be the repetition of the alphabet and words of one syllable—or there will be no scholarship. I feel that it is necessary to give line upon line, precept upon precept, as to the first principles of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Multitudes of persons are in bondage and will continue to be so until they hear a very clear and simple description of the way of salvation! This is the key of their liberty. You that know these first things must be willing to hear them often. Indeed, I find that you are the people that never grow tired of viewing that stone which God has laid in Zion for a foundation, for

it never becomes a rock of offense to you. To you the repetitions of Jesus are more acceptable than the novelties of human invention. The system and method of salvation, therefore, will come before you, again, this morning. Oh, that to some it may seem to be heard for the first time, though they may with the outward ear have heard “the old, old story” a thousand times! Oh, that they may now understand it, grasp it, find the blessing of it and so rejoice in God their Savior!

Paul had two facts before him. The first was that wherever he went preaching Jesus Christ, certain Gentiles believed the doctrine and straightway became justified persons, receiving forgiveness of sin and a change of heart at once. He had been in Ephesus and Thessalonica, in Corinth and in Rome—and at his preaching of the Word of Life, the heathen who were outside of the pale of true religious profession had believed in the Lord Jesus—and so had attained to righteousness and *proved that they had done so* by their righteous, pure, devout lives. On the other hand, there was the sad fact that whereas he had usually commenced his ministry in the synagogues and so had opened his commission by addressing the seed of Abraham to whom belonged the covenants of promise, yet they had almost *everywhere* rejected the Messiah and refused the Grace of the Gospel. At the same time, it was evident that they had missed the righteousness which they conceived they had obtained, for, as a nation, they were in bondage to superstitious prejudice and were fallen low, both as to morality and spirituality, insomuch that they were correctly described by the Prophet when he said, “Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom and been made like unto Gomorrah.”

There were these two facts before the Apostle’s mind—the Gentiles, who had been far off, had attained to righteousness. And the Israelites, on the border of it, yet perished there and did not attain to the law of righteousness. To this he calls our attention and I shall ask you to look, first of all, at *a wonder of Grace*—“The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness.” Secondly, I shall ask you to note *a marvel of folly*—“Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.” And when I have done that, I shall have to throw my whole strength into *a discourse of affectionate concern* about those of you who, as yet, have not attained unto the righteousness which is of faith. Oh that you may see yourselves and then see the Lord Jesus by the light of the Holy Spirit! Like the prodigal, may it be said of each one of you, “He came to himself,” and then, “he arose, and came to his Father.”

I. First, I crave your earnest attention to A WONDER OF GRACE. *Certain men had attained to righteousness.* They had, so to speak, “put their hand upon righteousness.” They had grasped the righteousness of faith which is the righteousness of God! They could say, “therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” These, without boasting, could declare that Jesus Christ was made of God unto them wisdom and righteousness. In them the righteousness of the Law of God was fulfilled. They were at peace, for the fruit of righteousness

is peace. They were grateful, earnest, devoted, zealous—and they yielded their members as instruments of righteousness unto God. The Lord had covered them with the righteousness of Christ and had imputed into them the righteousness of His indwelling Spirit. Sainly men and sainly women were produced among those who once had used “curious arts” and enchantments—in those in whom sin abounded, Grace reigned through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ!

There were people in the world whom God, the Judge of All, accepted as righteous. Now that, alone, is a great wonder, for we are all sinners by nature and by practice—and it is as great a marvel as the making of a world—that anyone of our race should attain to righteousness! Sit down, Christian, and rejoice in the righteousness which you have received by faith and you will be filled with amazement! The more you consider the righteousness which you have received in Christ Jesus by your faith in Him, the more you will cry out, “Oh the depths!” It is, indeed, a miracle of love that we, who by nature were under the curse, have now obtained the blessing of righteousness, as it is written, “For He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

The wonder grows when we consider that *these persons who had attained to righteousness had come to it under great disadvantages*, for they were Gentiles. The Gentiles were considered by the Jews to be off casts, outcasts and aliens from the commonwealth of Grace. They were given up to idolatry or to atheism—and the most degrading lusts were rife among them. They had gone very far from original righteousness. A true picture of the Gentile world in the days of Paul would have terribly dark colors in it—it would be injurious to morals to describe in public the details of the lives of the best of the heathen. If you speak of the manners of the common people, you must be prepared to hear of vices which crimson the cheek of modesty. There are virtues for which the heathen had no name and they practiced vices for which, thank God, you have no name! The Gentiles were filled with all unrighteousness and, therefore, they were ignorant of the requirements of the Law and of the holiness of God.

The light which shone upon the seed of Israel had not yet dawned on them. There may have been, here and there, a chosen few like Cornelius the centurion, and others, who followed the light which is found in nature and in the human conscience—and so welcomed all that they learned from Israel—but, taken in the bulk, John fitly described the Gentiles when he said, “The whole world lies in wickedness.” The strange thing is that such, originally, were those men who attained unto righteousness! The Gospel came into their streets and, at first, they heard it with opposition, saying, “What will this babbler say?” But their attention was attracted and they were willing to hear, again, the preacher concerning this matter! Conscience was awakened and soon they began to enquire, “What must we do to be saved? “Having no righteousness of their own and being convinced that they needed one, they fled at once to the righteousness which God has prepared in His dear Son for all who believe in Him—and multitudes believed and turned to God. Thus those who knew not the Lord be-

came His obedient worshippers—and those who were far off were made near by faith!

Are there not persons here whose condition is somewhat similar to that of the Gentiles? You are not religious. You are not members of godly families. Neither are you frequenters of our sanctuaries. But why shouldn't *you*, also, attain to righteousness by faith? Wonders of Grace are things which God delights in! Why should He not work such wonders in you? At any rate, while I preach, I am exercising faith concerning you, that you shall at once be brought to salvation and eternal life.

The marvel of Grace in the case of these Gentiles was all the greater because, as the Apostle says, "*They followed not after righteousness.*" They had originally felt no desire after righteousness before God. Some of them were thoughtful, just and generous towards men—but righteousness and holiness towards *God* was not a matter after which they labored. The Gentile mind ran more upon, "What shall we eat? What shall we drink?" than upon, "What is righteousness before God?" Gold or glory, power or pleasure were the objects for which they ran—they ran no race for the prize of holiness! They were ignorant of such matters as salvation, reconciliation with God, the inward life, sanctification and all the other mysteries and blessings of the Covenant and, therefore, they followed not after them. They were content, most of them, to live like the cattle that plowed their fields, or like the dogs that prowled through their streets—they followed the devices and desires of their own hearts. Yet when the Gospel burst in upon the midnight of their souls, they received its light with joy and accepted the good news from Heaven with much readiness of mind! They had not sought the Shepherd, but He had sought them and, laying them on His shoulders, He brought them to His fold. It was a wonderful thing that, though they did not follow after righteousness, yet they found it!

They are like that Indian who, passing up the mountain side pursuing game, grasped a shrub to prevent his slipping and, as its roots gave way, they uncovered masses of pure silver—and thus the richest silver mine was discovered by a happy circumstance by one who looked not for it! These Gentiles discovered in Christ the righteousness which they needed, but which they had never dreamed of finding. This reminds us of our Lord's own parable—a man was plowing with oxen and, all of a sudden, the plowshare struck upon an unusual obstacle. He stopped the plow, turned up the soil and, lo, he found a crock of gold! This "treasure hid in a field" at once won his heart and, for joy thereof, he sold all that he had and bought the field. Grace finds men who otherwise would never have found Grace! Oh, the glorious Grace of God which brings the righteousness of Christ full often to those who never sought it—to those who had no religiousness, nor even tendencies that way! Saul, the son of Kish, went to seek his father's donkeys and found the kingdom—and even thus have careless and worldly persons been made to know the Lord when it seemed highly improbable that they would ever do so! This is a great wonder for which all Heaven rings with hallelujahs to God!

Observe that *these unlikely persons did really believe and so attained to righteousness*. When the Gospel came to them, they heard it with deep at-

tention. There was a something about it which powerfully attracted them. You know who has said, "I, if I am lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." This Divine charm drew them to consider the doctrine and when they came to understand it, they perceived that it suited their need as a shoe fits a foot. It revealed their secret needs and wounds, but it also provided for them and so, having considered the thing, they accepted with joy the blessings brought to them in the Gospel. They at once believed in the Lord Jesus! The thing was done suddenly, but it was well done. Their first hearing of the Gospel saved them. We read of one of them, that he had shut up the preacher in the prison and had gone to bed. But in the middle of the night an earthquake shook the prison—and that night he not only became a Believer, but he was baptized—and all his household! These Gentiles did not need hammering at so long as some of *you* do. They did not require the preacher to rack his brains to find fresh illustrations and arguments—and then labor in vain year after year! At the *first* summons they surrendered! They no sooner saw the Light of God than they rejoiced in it! They rose in one leap from depths of sin to heights of righteousness! Those who had been ringleaders in the service of the devil became zealots in the service of Jesus Christ! The change was as complete as it was startling—"they attained unto righteousness"—they were accepted before God as righteous men.

The Apostle asks us, "What shall we say, then?" We say this—*here is seen the sovereign appointment of the Lord*. He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy! He will fulfill His promise to His Son, "Behold, You shall call a nation that You know not, and nations that knew not You shall run unto You because of the Lord, Your God, and for the Holy One of Israel: for He has glorified You." Here I see the Almighty Lord of all speaking to the darkness and saying, "Let there be light," and there is light! Here I see the Word of the Lord coming forth out of His mouth and accomplishing the thing whereto He sent it. The voice of the Lord which breaks the cedars of Lebanon also breaks the hard hearts of men—"the voice of the Lord which makes the hinds to calve"—creates new life in the minds of the ungodly! The Gospel is full of power and it works according to the eternal purpose of God. The calling of the Gentiles in Paul's day is only one illustration of the frequent action of Sovereign Grace.

This also is according to Divine prophecy. What said the Lord by His servant, Hosea? "I will call them My people, which were not My people and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, You are not My people, there shall they be called the children of the living God." Thus spoke the Prophet and so it must be. The Lord has many more such chosen ones to call forth from their death in sin. I expect as I stand here that God's infinite power is about to save certain of you. I do not know to whom this Grace will be vouchsafed, but I know that the Word of the Lord will not return unto Him void. He may bless the least likely of you. He may call the man who now says, "I do not believe a word of it." Friend, you do not know what you will believe before this day is over! I trust that God's power is going forth to bring you within the bounds of salvation. It may be that some persecuting

Saul of Tarsus will, at this hour, cry, “Lord what will You have me to do?” And, on the other hand, it may be that some young man who lacks only one thing will this day find it! So does God work in the majesty of His power, that persons who have not sought after righteousness, nevertheless are led to faith in Christ and by that faith they are immediately made righteous before God! This is what we have reason to expect, for many promises declare that it shall be so. Did not Isaiah boldly say, “I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me”?

This is, in fact, the Gospel of the Grace of God. That God smiles upon worthy people and rewards their goodness is *not the Gospel*. The Gospel is that God has mercy upon the guilty and undeserving! The Gospel gives us this “faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” It is not the Gospel that you will be saved who do your best and will, therefore, have some claim upon mercy. No, no! By such statements you sail upon quite another tack. The Gospel declares to you that though you have done your *worst*, the Lord will yet have mercy upon you if you believe in the Atonement of His dear Son! If you were turned upside down and shaken for a week, not even a dust of goodness would fall from some of you—and yet even *you* shall be made the children of God if you believe in Christ Jesus! Repent and be converted! Believe in Jesus and live!

That the most guilty may yet attain to righteousness is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God which it is my delight to preach! Behold, I set before you an open door of Grace and beseech you to enter in just as you are. We come not to mend the garments of those of you who are already clothed, but to present the naked with the robe of Christ’s righteousness! We come not here to search for your beauties, but to unveil your deformities, your wounds, bruises and putrefying sores—and then to point you to the Lord Jesus who can heal you—and cause the beauty of the Lord to rest upon you. We preach not merit, but mercy! Not human goodness, but Divine Grace! Not works of the Law, but wonders of love! This is the Gospel of which the salvation of the Gentiles was a blessed result.

II. We see, in the second place, A MARVEL OF FOLLY—“Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.” *Multitudes have never yet found true righteousness.* I fear that many of my present congregation are in the number. They are not righteous, though, perhaps they trust in themselves that they are. Their consciences are not at ease—they are conscious of serious shortcomings. They have not yet found a safe anchorage. I commend to their study the case of Israel.

In Paul’s day *these people were, first of all, very advantageously placed.* They were of the chosen race of Israel. They had been born, as it were, within the visible Church, circumcised and brought up to know the Law of Moses. And yet they had never attained to righteousness! Like Gideon’s fleece, they were dry while the floor around was wet. There are those present who were nursed in the lap of piety—from their babyhood they heard the name of Jesus! They have scarcely been absent a single Sabbath from

the courts of the Lord's House. They went from the Sunday school to the Bible class and it was hoped that they would go from there to the Church, but it has not proved so. Now that they have reached riper years, they are still hovering around the gates of mercy, but they have not entered upon the way of life. My Hearer, I am frightened for you and such as you. I tremble for you who are so good, so religious, so zealous and yet are not regenerate! You are the child of Nature finely dressed, but not the living child of Grace! You look somewhat like a Christian, but as you are not converted and have never become as a little child, you have not entered the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a misery of miseries that you should stand on such a vantage ground, as many of you do, and yet be lost! Shall it be so? Turn you, turn you, why will you die?

It was not merely that they had many advantages, but *these Israelites were earnest and zealous in following after the law of righteousness*. Alas, many who have never forgotten a single outward rite or ceremony of the church and are always zealous for taking the sacrament and regular attendance at their place of worship are, nevertheless, quite dead as to spiritual things! Some even kneel down every morning and night and repeat a prayer. They pay everybody they owe. They are always kind to their neighbors and they do not refuse their help to the subscription list! And yet they are quite out of the running. Some of you know that it is so! You dare not die as you are—in fact, you can hardly go on living as you now feel. Nobody could put a finger upon an open fault in you and yet you are like a rosy apple which is rotten at the core. You know it is so! At least you have a shrewd suspicion that all is not right between you and God. You have no peace, no joy—and when you hear others rejoicing in the Lord, you either think they are presumptuous, or else you envy them—as well you may!

Thousands of people in England are perishing in the light, even as the heathen perish in the dark! Many are wrapping themselves up in their own righteousness and are as sure to be lost as if the nakedness of their sin could be seen by all men! I pray you, take heed to yourselves, you that follow after the law of righteousness. It is concerning such as you that the Apostle Paul had great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart. Remember, you may be in the visible Church and yet may be strangers to the Grace of God! You may be earnestly seeking righteousness in the wrong way—and this is a terrible thing.

Notice that these people made a mistake at the very beginning—it may not seem a great one, but it was so in reality. *Israel did not follow after righteousness, but after "the law of righteousness."* They missed the spirit, which is righteousness, and followed after the mere letter of the Law. To *be* really righteous was not their aim, but to *do* righteousness was their utmost notion. They looked at, "You shall not kill," "You shall not commit adultery," "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" and so forth. But to love God with all their heart was not thought of and yet this is the essence of righteousness! They looked at the letter of the Law and were careful to pay tithe upon mint and anise and to attend to all sorts of small points and niceties—but to cleanse the heart and purify the motive did

not occur to them. They thought of what a man *does*, but they forgot the importance of what a man *is*. Love to God and likeness to God were forgotten in a servile attempt to observe the letter of the Law.

And so we see people everywhere, nowadays, consider what kind of dress a clergyman ought to wear on a certain day and which position he should occupy at the communion table! And what should be the decoration of the place of worship and what should be the proper music for the hymn and so forth. But to what purpose is all this? To be right in heart with God, to trust in His dear Son and to be renewed in His image is better than all rituals! Among ourselves there are certain people who are nothing if they are not orthodox—they make a man an offender for a word—and are never so happy as when they are up to their necks in controversy! In each case the external and the letter are preferred to the inward and the spiritual. O my dear Hearers, escape from this error! Be not so eager for the shell as to lose the kernel, so zealous for the form of godliness as to deny the power thereof!

What was the reason why these zealous Israelites did not attain to righteousness? *They went upon a wrong principle.* The principle of these Israelites was that of *works*. They said within themselves, “We must keep the Law of God and in that way we shall be saved.” In this way no man was ever saved, nor ever will be! Listen diligently to what I now say. The principle of salvation by our own works *exalts man* and you may be sure that it must be an error for that reason. On that principle you are your own Savior! Everything hinges upon what *you* do and what *you* feel—and Jesus Christ is nowhere. If you were to get to Heaven by this road, you would sing to your own praise and glory. This system puffs you up and makes you feel what an important person you are to deserve so much of God. It smells of that pride which the Lord abhors!

While it thus lifts man up, *it altogether ignores the great fact that you have already sinned.* Are you going to be saved by your works? What about the past? If I am going to pay my way for the *future*, this will not discharge my *old debts*. What have you to say for your former sins and follies? Do you imagine that you can make up for wasted years by using the rest of life as you ought to do? If you do your best in the *future*, you will do no more than you are bound to do! This will not remove your old sins! Why, if you could start afresh as a new-born babe and keep God’s Law perfectly throughout all time, yet the faults of the past would remain like indelible blots. Sin is sin and God will punish it! And all your future obedience can be no atonement for it.

Note again that this principle of salvation by works, while it makes much of man, *makes nothing of God.* It shuts out both His justice and His mercy. Do you really know what you are? You think you are somebody and can merit something of God, but this is a delusion! I will tell you where you are. You are already convicted of rebellion! You are “condemned already.” *Nothing* that you can do can reverse that condemnation which is already passed upon you! Your only hope lies in the royal prerogative of God, who can grant a free pardon if He pleases to do so. You can never *deserve* pardon—it must be an act of pure Grace! Nothing but

the long-suffering of God at this moment keeps you out of Hell. Yes, I mean you who think so much of yourselves! I mean you who set yourselves down among the naturally good. I would gladly strip you of your finery and throw away the false jewelry with which you have decorated yourselves—for a self-righteous man's religion is nothing but a painted pageantry to go to Hell in! Oh, how I loathe to see the plumes and feathers of self-confidence which are an awful mockery—the lying ensigns of a false hope—flaunted by a soul that is on its way to sure damnation! O presuming souls, may God in His mercy make you see where you are! Let your cry be, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Until you have taken the sinner's place, you are in a false position and God will treat you as one of those liars who shall not tarry in His sight.

Moreover, dear Friends, the system of salvation by works is *impossible to you*. You cannot perfectly keep the Law of God, for you are sold under sin. I remember when I resolved never to sin again. I sinned before I had finished my breakfast! It was all over for that day, so I thought I would begin the next day—and I did, but my failure was repeated. Who can get clean water from a polluted spring? You will never keep the Commandment without spot—it is so pure and you are so impure—it is so spiritual and you are so earthly. "There is not a just man upon earth that does good and sins not."

But suppose you could outwardly keep the Law of God out of a sense of obligation to do so, yet the work is not done unless you, yourself, are made right with God. Your heart must love God as well as your hands serve Him. If you only obey Him from fear of Hell and hope of Heaven, what are you? Nothing but a mere hireling! This is not the filial nature of a child, whose service is all for love. As for myself, I serve God this day with my whole heart, but it is not from fear of Hell. My sins are forgiven me and there is no Hell for me. Neither do I serve the Lord because I hope for Heaven by doing so, but because I love Him who loved me and gave Himself for me. There is *evidence* of righteousness in this, but no *claim* of any. Mere obedience to the Lord, if there were no heart in it, would be a poor affair.

We have many servants who regard their work as drudgery and though they do their duties, they do them with no regard for our interests. But the old-fashioned servants were of another kind. If you have any such, you will prize one of such above a thousand others! They love their master and they identify themselves with his interests. Old John did not need orders—he was a law to himself—he served from love. When his master spoke one day about their parting, he wanted to know where his master was going, for he had no idea of going, himself! He was part and parcel of the household and was worth his weight in diamonds. You may well say, "I would give my eyes to get such a servant as that." I dare say you would! Our Lord Jesus gave Himself that He might make such servants out of *us*. Mere work-mongering will never do this—it still leaves the man a *self-seeker*, a slave working under fear of the lash with no delight either in his master or in his work. O my Hearers, "you must be born again," or you cannot attain to righteousness! And there is no being born again on the

principle of the works of the Law—that must be a *gift* of Grace—and it can only be given into that hand of faith which receives Christ Jesus the Lord!

Once more, *the full development of the unrighteousness of these zealous Israelites came when they stumbled at Christ.* “They stumbled at that stumbling stone.” Jesus Christ came among them and became to them a rock of offense. They seemed to stand upright until then—but when He came among them, down they went into actual rebellion against the Lord and His Anointed! Yes, your moralists are the great enemies of the Cross. They do not need an atonement—they can hardly endure the doctrine. “Washed in the blood?” They cannot bear the sound of the word—they need no washing. They have kept the Law of God and what do they lack? Jesus came to proclaim salvation by Grace, but these men spurn the idea of Grace. When Jesus told them of a certain creditor who frankly forgave those debtors who had nothing to pay, such parables were worthless to them, for they were not in debt to God, but quite the reverse!

The reception of returning prodigals might make a pretty picture, but it had no relation to them. They were not sinners like the publican and they did not need to be taught, like the Samaritan woman, to look to Jesus for the living water. “He that believes on Me has everlasting life” was not a doctrine that they cared to hear. They could see and needed not to have their eyes opened! They were born free and were never in bondage to any man! In fact, they were the whole who had no need of a physician. They regarded the mission of Christ as an insult to their virtues and, therefore, they crucified Him. Self-righteousness is the enemy of the Cross—it does despite to the blood of Jesus. It sets itself up in rivalry with the Divine Sacrifice and, therefore, it rejects the Gospel and rails at imputed righteousness. “They followed after the law of righteousness,” but Christ, who was Righteousness itself, they would have nothing to do with. Their proud self-conceit thought itself above all need of Him!

III. In the last place, I am to come to close-hand fighting. I must deliver A DISCOURSE OF AFFECTION. As I love you, I would have you saved at once. It is the first day of May. Londoners in the olden time used to go into the country on the First of May to wash their faces in the dew. Oh, that God would make His heavenly dew to wash your hearts this May morning! Oh, that you may enjoy the perfume of the Plant of renown at this hour! Some Gentiles have attained to righteousness by faith, why should not you? Believe in Jesus—and His righteousness is yours—to you, God imputes righteousness without works (Rom 4:6). Why do you not trust my Lord, my bleeding Lord, my risen Lord, my interceding Lord? There is no conceivable reason for doubting Him! Come and rely upon Him and righteousness is yours!

Did I hear you say, “But___”? Away with your buts! Others have been just where you now are and they have believed in Jesus and have attained to righteousness—why should not you? Try it. Believe, I pray you, and God’s righteousness is yours! Why should you not believe? Do I hear you say, “I cannot feel”? Did I say anything about *feeling*? Salvation by feelings is only another form of salvation by works and it is not to be thought of! Salvation is by Jesus Christ and it is received by faith, alone! It is be-

stowed as a free gift and it must be received as a free gift, or not at all. Trust Jesus to save you and you are saved! Believe Him and be happy. Take to yourself what is freely presented to you in the Gospel. If you can believe, you are saved! I cannot help quoting my Brother Hill's expression the other day—"He that believes on Me has everlasting life" (John 6:47). You know how he put it—"H.A. S. spells *got it*." So it does, it is a curious but a perfectly correct way of spelling it! If you take Christ to yourself, He will never be taken from you. Breathe the air and the air is yours! Receive Christ and Christ is yours and you have attained to righteousness!

Next, see why it is that you have failed, up to now, to find rest. You have been earnest and sincere for a great many years and you have kept on hearing and reading and, after a fashion, you have even kept on praying. But all the while you have been on the wrong road! Suppose yonder young man should start with his bicycle to go to Brighton and he should travel due north? He will never get there. The faster he travels, the further he will go from the place! If you follow after righteousness by the works of the Law, the more you do, the further off you will be from the righteousness of God! It must be so.

Hear a parable. Yonder is a river, deep and broad. You imagine that the proper way to cross it is to wade or swim through it. You will not hear of any other way. The king has built a bridge. It is open, free and without toll—the passage is as safe as it is plain. You refuse to be beholden to His Majesty. You mean to get across by your own exertions. Already you are wet and cold, but you mean to persevere. You are nearly up to your neck in the stream and the current is too strong for you. Come back, O foolish man, come back and cross the river by the bridge! The way of faith is so safe, so simple, so blessed—do try it! Have you not had enough of self-saving? After years of struggling, you are still standing still and have no more comfort—quit the struggle and rest in the Lord Jesus! Give up your self-confiding folly and confide in the Son of God, the bleeding Substitute for guilty men. May the blessed Spirit now sweetly help you to receive Jesus!

Do you not see, my Friend, that in all your selfish trusting you are really fighting against your God? Jesus says, "Trust Me, I will save you." And you reply, "I prefer my own doings." Is not that a great insult to Jesus? Have you not attacked the great Father upon a tender point? May He not appoint His own way of saving you? He has chosen the way of Grace through *faith*. What arrogance to refuse that way! God gives without money and without price—why do you provoke Him with your fancied merits? You are flying in the face of the great God and, therefore, your very religion is a sin! Let me justify so strong a charge. Your very good works are evil works because you are doing them to set aside the gift of God by Jesus Christ! The Lord appoints Jesus to be your righteousness and you laboriously endeavor to manufacture a righteousness of your own! You reject the Sacrifice of Calvary in whom you are bid to trust! You virtually say that for you it is a needless thing, for you can reach Heaven by your own doings and feelings.

O Sirs, if you could be saved by your own works and your proud hopes could be fulfilled, then the death of our Lord would be proved to be a gross mistake! What need of the Great Sacrifice if you can save yourself? The Cross is a superfluity if human merit can suffice. There was no need for the Father to put His Son to grief if, after all, men can work out a righteousness of their own. If works can save you, why did Jesus die? Do you see what you are driving at? Do you mean to trample under foot the blood of Jesus? I beseech you, abhor all notion of self-justification! Dash down the idol which would rival your Lord—

**“Cast your deadly ‘doing’ down,
Down, at Jesus’ feet!
Stand in Him, in Him alone,
Gloriously complete!”**

“Well,” says one, “you seem to know the ins and outs of a soul aiming at self-salvation.” I do, for I long labored to climb up to Heaven upon the treadmill of my own works! At length I grew weary and gave myself up to Jesus, that He might bear me there in His arms. Will you not do the same?

Now, my Hearer, it will be an awful thing for you to understand this way of Grace and yet to neglect it. How long am I to preach to some of you? How long am I to wear my heart out in crying, “Come to Jesus! Believe in Jesus!?” If anybody had said 20 years ago that yonder seat-holder would still remain an unconverted man, he would have replied, “Impossible! I am near to the Kingdom; I am almost persuaded and before long I shall decide.” Yes, you are persuaded on Sundays, but you forget all about it on Mondays—and all because faith is not exercised! You believe in faith, but you do not believe in Jesus! You know that Jesus could save you if you trusted Him, but you do not trust Him. Oh that this moment you would end this delay!

To trust in Jesus is described in Scripture as *looking*. As the man bitten by the serpent looked to the serpent of brass hung high upon the pole—and as he looked, healing and life came to him—so if you look to Jesus, now, you will be saved! I see God’s only-begotten Son, who has deigned to become Man for our sakes and to die in our place—and from the Cross I entreat Him to speak to you. Speak, O my Master! He does speak and these are His words—“Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” Look, I pray you! Look and live!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 9.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—416, 554, 552.**

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UNBELIEVERS STUMBLING— BELIEVERS REJOICING NO. 571

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 22, 1864,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

***“As it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense:
and whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.”
Romans 9:33.***

OUR Apostle was inspired of God and yet he was moved to quote passages out of the Old Testament. The Spirit of God might have dictated new words to him. He might have shown him how to confirm the Truth by other arguments, but He is not pleased to do so. He moves His servant to establish the present Truth by Truths formerly revealed and thus He sets us an example of *searching the Scriptures* and prizing the ancient Oracles of God. The passage before us appears to be composed of two Scriptures woven into one, a method not very infrequent with the Apostles. A part of the text before us is found in Isaiah 28:16.

The Apostle does not quote verbatim, but gives us rather the sense than the words—“Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: he that believes shall not make haste.” But the Apostle inlays this word of Prophecy with another, selecting this time from Isaiah 8:14—“And He shall be for a sanctuary. But for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel.” I cannot help making an observation or two upon these passages before I come to the text before us.

In Isaiah 8:14 you will perceive a striking proof of Christ’s Divinity. Observe the thirteenth verse—“Sanctify the Lord of Hosts Himself. And let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread. And He,” that is the Lord of Hosts, “shall be for a sanctuary” to Believers, “but a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel.” Isaiah utters a prophecy of the Lord of hosts. Paul quotes it in reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, plainly intending us to infer that the Lord Jesus Christ is no other than Jehovah Himself!

We learn from the other passage another Truth of God which serves more closely to illustrate our text. In Isaiah 28:16, we read, “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone.” The Apostle has omitted the words “for a foundation,” and has inserted the words of the other passage, “a stumbling stone, a rock of offense.” But the original prophecy in Isaiah serves to show us that God’s real object in laying Christ in Zion was not that men might stumble at Him, but that He might be a foundation for their hopes. The real object of God was that Christ might be the cornerstone of human confidence.

But the result has been that to one set of men, renewed by Almighty Grace, Christ has become a sanctuary of refuge and a stone of dependence. And to others left to their own depravity He has become a rock of offense and a stumbling stone—thus the remarks upon the primitive Scriptures which Paul quotes. And now let us come to the verse itself. Our text tells us that many persons stumble at Christ. And, then, secondly, it assures us that those who receive Christ and believe in Him, shall have no cause to be ashamed.

I. The first declaration needs no proof, for observation itself teaches us that MANY STUMBLE AT CHRIST. No sooner was God manifest in the flesh, than mortals began to stumble at Him. “Is not this the carpenter’s son?” was the question of those who looked for worldly pomp and imperial grandeur. “His father and His mother we know, and His brothers and His sisters, are they not all with us?” was the whispered objection of His own townsmen. In His own country the greatest of all Prophets had no honor. Our Lord was rejected by all sorts of men. They looked at Him from different quarters, but all with the same scornful eye.

The Pharisee stumbled at Him because He was not superstitious and ostentatious. Indeed, He did not wash His hands before He ate! Nor did He pray at the corner of the streets! Why, He entered into the company of publicans and sinners! He did not make broad His phylactery. He healed the sick upon the Sunday! He had no respect for traditions and therefore every righteous Pharisee abhorred Him. The Sadducee, on the other hand, much as He hated Pharisaic superstition, despised Christ equally as much. His objections were shot from quite another quarter. To him Christ was *too* superstitious, for the Sadducee would not believe in angels or spirits, or the resurrection of the dead—all which beliefs the Prophet of Nazareth openly avowed.

Philosophical skepticism detested Jesus because His teaching had in it very much of the supernatural element. All His life long, in the high courts of Herod or of Pilate, or in the lowest rank of the mob of Judea, Christ was despised and rejected of men. They had long ago persecuted all the Prophets whom the Lord had sent and it was little marvel that they now assailed the Master Himself. “We have piped unto you and you have not danced. We have mourned unto you and you have not lamented,” might all the Prophets of God say, for Israel received neither the lonely man, whose meat was locusts and wild honey, nor the more genial Spirit who came eating and drinking.

They put all God’s Prophets away and would have none of their rebukes. And when the Son Himself had come, they said, “This is the Heir, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours.” The Jews, with one voice rejected Him, save only the remnant, according to the election of Grace. But the Jew is not alone in his offense at the Cross. We know that when the Gospel was carried afterwards to the Gentiles, Christ Crucified was a stumbling stone to them. The polished Greeks, with their various systems of philosophy, expected in the Messiah deep thinking and classic taste. But when they heard Paul preach the resurrection of the dead, they

saw nothing flattering to their philosophy and therefore they openly mocked him.

While the Jew gathered up his broad-bordered garment and called Christ a stumbling block, the Greek marched off to his classic temple or to his scientific academe and cried, "Foolishness! The men who talk thus must be mad!" In every age, even to the present time, wherever Jesus Christ is preached, the human heart at once has been stirred with wrath against Him. God's ambassador has found men unwilling to receive the peace which he proclaims. God's dear Son, who came with no words but those of mercy and of tenderness, has been abhorred and rejected by the very men whom He came to bless. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

However, we have very little to do with these past ages—we have far more to do with the present and with ourselves. And it is a sad thing to know that among this assembly, though I suppose we all call ourselves Christians, there are many who still find Christ Jesus to be a stumbling stone to them and a rock of offense. It is a lamentable fact that there are hundreds of thousands in London to whom the Gospel of Christ is as little known as to Hindus or Tartars. Christ is not a stumbling block to these—they are unaware of Him and therefore they have not the guilt which some of *you* have—of having heard of Him and having rejected Him.

Among the present assembly there are some who stumble at Christ because of His holiness. He is too strict for them. They would be Christians but they cannot renounce their sensual pleasures. They would be washed in His blood, but they desire still to roll in the mire of sin. Willing enough, the mass of men would be to receive Christ, if, after receiving Him, they might continue in their drunkenness, their wantonness and self-indulgence. But Christ lays the axe at the root of the tree—He tells them that these things must be given up—"because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience," and, "without holiness no man can see the Lord."

Human nature kicks at this. "What? May I not enjoy one darling lust? May I not indulge myself at least now and then in these things? Must I altogether forsake my old habits and my old ways? Must I be made a new creature in Christ Jesus?" These are terms too hard, conditions too severe, and so the human heart goes back to the flesh pots of Egypt and clings to the garlic and the onions of the old estate of bondage and will not be set free even though a greater than Moses lifts up the rod to part the sea and promises to give to them a Canaan flowing with milk and honey. Christ offends men because His Gospel is intolerant of sin.

Others stumble at our blessed Lord because they do not like the plan of being saved altogether and alone through *faith*. Have I any such here? I suppose I have. They say, "What? Are our good works to go for nothing? Is there nothing that *we* can do to *assist* in our salvation? You tell us that it is trusting in Christ alone without anything else which justifies the soul. Then we do not understand it, or if we understand it we do not like it." This is too humbling, too simple, too easy. "Why," says the man who has

always been to his parish Church or to his Meeting House, who owes nobody anything and is kind to the poor—"Why, then I am no better off than the harlot who walks the pavement at midnight! Or the thief who is spending his month at the treadmill."

You are no better off, my Hearer, as to your eternal salvation if you refuse to believe in Christ! The damnation of the openly ungodly is sure, but so is yours, if, after having heard the plan of salvation you turn upon your heels and despise it because you prefer your own righteousness to the righteousness of God! Ah, how many are shipwrecked upon this rock, swallowed up in this quicksand? They would be saved but they will not bow the knee. They are not content to take God's salvation by faith in Christ Jesus and so they perish through their willful pride.

I have known others who stumble at Christ because of the doctrine which He preaches, more especially the Doctrines of Grace. There will come into this House, some who, if we preach a sermon upon Christian virtue, will say, "I enjoyed that discourse." But if we preach Christ and begin to talk about the deep doctrines which lie underneath the Gospel, such as election, effectual calling, and eternal and immutable love, straightway they are angry almost to the gnashing of their teeth. They would have Christ, they say, but they cannot accept these doctrines. "What? God saves whom He wills and not so much as ask the creature's permission? Shall He do just as He pleases with us as a potter does with lumps of clay? Are we to be told to our face that it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy? We cannot endure this—we will betake ourselves to some place where man is made more of and where God is not set so high above our heads!"

Ah, but my Friend, Jesus Christ will not shape His doctrine to please you, nor tone down the Truth of Scripture to suit your carnal taste. Mark you, it is in the ninth of Romans that my text is found, and in that ninth of Romans you have the most plain and bold declaration anywhere on record concerning the Sovereignty of Divine Grace and if you choose to make that Sovereignty a reason for not believing in Christ you will perish for your pains. And, perish deservedly, too, because you will quarrel with God's Word and damn your own soul to be avenged on God's Sovereignty.

But indeed, my dear Friends, when sinners are resolved to object to Christ, it is the easiest thing in the world to find something to object to. I have met with some who stumble at Christ's people. They will say, "Well, I would believe in Christ, but look at professors! See how inconsistent they are! See many Church members, in what an unholy way they walk and even some ministers," and then they will begin to quote various faults of some of God's eminent servants and they think this is an excuse for going to Hell themselves, because others do not walk straight in the way to Heaven!

O, will you send your soul to Hell because another man is not all he should be? What if David falls and David is restored, is this any reason why you should fall and never be restored? What if some pilgrims to Heaven do turn into By-path Meadow and have to come limping back into

the road—is this a reason why you should follow the road to the City of Destruction? I think, Man, that this should only make you the more diligent to make your calling and election sure! The shipwrecks of others should make you sail more carefully. The bankruptcies of other men should make you trade with greater diligence and humility. To quote the defects of others as a reason why you should continue in the error of your ways is a fool's method of reasoning! Take heed, lest you find out your folly in the flames of Hell!

The real objection of the natural man is not, however, to God's people, nor to the plan of salvation itself, so much as to Christ. The rock of offense is Christ—to the Person of Christ. You will not have this Man to reign over you! You are not willing that He should wear the crown and have all the honor of your salvation. You had rather perish in your sin than that Jesus Christ should be magnified in your salvation. This is a severe charge, you will tell me. If it is not true, I pray you prove it false by believing in Jesus! If you have no objection to Christ, accept Him! Sinner, I charge you, if you say you do not stumble at Christ, then lay hold upon Him! If He is not obnoxious to you, clasp Him in your arms now!

Why, Man, if you are in your senses, since Christ can save you with an eternal salvation, you will certainly grasp Him, unless there is some objection in the way. And because you do not lay hold of Him, I tell you there is some hindrance in your sinful heart—an offense at Christ which will be your ruin unless God delivers you from it. Now may God help me to reason a few minutes with those who are not believers in Christ, who have made Him a stumbling stone and a rock of offense.

Dear Friend, let me come close to you and take your hand and talk with you. Have you ever considered how much you insult God the Father by rejecting Christ? If you were invited to a man's feast and you should come to the table and dash down every dish and throw them on the ground and trample on them, would not this be an insult? If you were a poor beggar at the door and a rich man had bid you into his feast out of pure charity, what do you think you would deserve if you had treated his provisions in this way? And yet this is just your case. God owes you *nothing*. You are a poor sinner without any claim upon Him and yet He has been pleased to prepare a table for you. His oxen and His fatlings have been killed and now you will not come!

No! You do worse! You raise objections to the feast! You despise the pleasant land and the goodly provision of God! Just think at what an expense the provision of salvation has been made! The eternal Father gave His Son. Hark you—His Well-Beloved, the Darling of His heart, His only Son—He gave Him to DIE, and do you despise such a Gift as this? What do you think? Would it not bring the blood into your face if you should give your only son to fight for your country and they to whom he was given should despise you and your gift? If out of some superhuman patriotism for your country's good you should even slay your son, would it not cut you to the quick if men should laugh at you and scoff the deed?

And yet such you do to the eternal Father, who for the love of men has rent His Darling from His bosom, nailed Him to the tree and filled Him with unutterable pains. You despise the unspeakable gift, the richest deed of bounty which even the infinite heart of God could have imagined, or the infinite hand of God could have performed! You despise all this! You touch God, let me tell you, in the apple of His eye. You do now wound Him in the most tender part! You might better have run upon the edge of His sword or dashed yourself upon the bosses of His buckler than to despise and reject His Only-Begotten Son, slaughtered for human guilt!

Think again, what a proof is here of your sinfulness and how readily will you be condemned at the last when this sin is written on your forehead. Why, Man, there will be no reason to bring up any other sins against you! The book in which your faults have been recorded scarcely need be opened, for this, alone, will be enough! You have made Christ a stumbling block, you have objected to God's dear Son—why need we any other witness? Out of this one mouth you shall be condemned—"You did abhor the Prince of Glory. You did refuse Him your heart"—take him back to the place from where he came. What if he has never been an adulterer or a whoremonger, yet is not this enough? Does not this show the blackness of the traitor's heart and the vileness of his character? He would not have Christ! He made the foundation which God laid in Zion, "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." What do you think of this, my Hearer?

Moreover, as this will be a swift witness to condemn you, how will this increase your misery? Do you think God will be tender over you when you have not been tender with His Son? When He shall cast you into Hell, will He make the flames less hot? Do you think His vengeance will be cool towards the man who stumbled at His Son? No! But this shall whet the edge of His sword. "This traitor did do despite unto the blood of Christ." He will pour oil upon the flames. "This man made My Only-Begotten Son to be a stumbling stone. And now will I prove to him that whoever stumbles upon this stone shall be broken and upon whomever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder."

Do you think that a king would be any the more inclined to be merciful towards a traitor if he knew that that traitor had despised his son? No. I think the sentence would be the more severe. Ah, Sinner! If all other sinners escape, you who have heard the Gospel shall not. If God's arrows miss other sinners, they shall strike you! You shall be the special object of almighty vengeance because you were disobedient, stumbling at this stumbling stone. Think again, Man, will not this seat the eternity of your woe? How can you escape if you neglect so great a salvation? You have broken down the only bridge which could have led you into safety! You have pulled down the only refuge which could have protected you from Divine wrath—"There remains no more sacrifice for sin."

How can there be? Do you think when you are in Hell that Christ will come a second time to die for you? Will He pour out His blood again to bring you from the place of torment? Man, do you have so vain an imagination as to dream that there will be a second ransom offered for those

who have not escaped the wrath to come, and that God the Holy Spirit will again come and strive with sinners who aforesaid willfully rejected Him? No, inasmuch as even your Savior is objected to and you put eternal life from you and the foundation itself is a stumbling stone, there can remain nothing for you but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation.

And now one other word with you. Does not this view of the case make your heart tremble? Is it not enough to have broken God's Law? Why do you go the length of despising His Son? O my eyes! If you could weep forever you could never weep tears enough, because once you refused to look to Him who is now your daily joy. Is not this one of the worst sins we shall have to confess? And O Sinner, will not you confess it now? Will not this thought break your heart—that you have up to now despised the altogether lovely and loving One? May the Spirit of God drive that home as a nail in a sure place, and I think you will turn to the Redeemer and say, "My Lord and my God, forgive me that I have dealt so unkindly with You. Accept me, receive me to Your bosom. Wash me in Your blood. Take me to be Your servant and save me with a great salvation."

Happy is the man who has been brought by Divine Grace thus to confess his fault and stumble no longer. After all, what is there to stumble at? O my Hearer, why should you reject Christ? He is not a hard taskmaster—"His yoke is easy and His burden is light." Why should you refuse your own mercy? To be saved—is that a misfortune? To be cleansed from sin—is this a calamity? To be made a child of God—is that a disadvantage? To escape from Hell and fly to Heaven—is not this the most desirable of all mercies? Why, then, despise Christ? It is unreasonable! God deliver you from this unreasonable sin and bring you now to accept Christ with a perfect heart and He shall be praised for it forever.

II. I shall now try, by the help of God's Spirit, to explain the second part—the more comforting part of the text, "WHOEVER BELIEVES ON HIM SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED." He shall be ashamed to think he did not believe before—he shall be ashamed to think he does not believe more firmly now—he shall often feel shame and confusion of face on account of his ingratitude and his sinfulness and his wandering of heart. But the text means he shall not be ashamed of having *trusted* Christ. He that believes on Christ shall never have any cause to be ashamed of so doing.

1. In handling this I shall first of all notice when those who trust Christ might be ashamed of having trusted Him. Well might they be ashamed if Christ should ever leave them. If it should ever come to this, that He who is the husband of my heart, should desert me and leave me a lone widow in the world. If, after having said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you," He should after all take Himself away and never indulge His servant with one smile from His face, I should then, indeed, have reason to be ashamed of having put my trust in such a fickle Savior.

The Arminian's christ is one whom they have good reason to be ashamed of because he redeems men with his precious blood and yet they go to Hell. The Arminian's christ loves today but hates tomorrow. He saves

by grace, but that grace is dependent upon man's use of grace. He does bring men out of a state of condemnation and he does justify them—but, after all, he lets them go back into a state of condemnation and they still perish! But the Christian's Christ is a very different Person, whom once He loves He never leaves, but loves them to the end. Where He has begun a good work He carries it on and perfects it.

The Christian's Christ can say, "I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands." Until the Christian finds that the Grace of God is clean gone, that Christ's love has ceased, he shall never have any cause to be ashamed. Again, the Christian would have cause to doubt if Christ were to fail him, either as to Providence or Grace, in his times of trial and temptation. When in the midst of the rivers, if the Lord does not sustain me, I shall have cause to blush for my hope. If, walking through the fires the flames do kindle upon me and I do not find the Lord to be my present help in the time of trouble, then I am put to shame.

O Beloved, when will this happen? In six troubles He has been with you and in seven no evil has touched you. You have been brought very low! You could not have been much lower unless you had been in your grave. You have been very poor, scarcely having bread to eat, or raiment to put on! Everything in which you trusted has been cut from under you. You are left orphans in the world, with the exception of your Father which is in Heaven. But still, for all that, has not your bread been given you? Have not your waters been sure? And today must not your testimony be concerning God that He has been a Friend who sticks closer than a brother? Well, then, you never need be ashamed, because there never shall come a time when He shall leave you to perish through stress of trials or suffer you to be destroyed by the force of temptations.

Again, a Christian would have cause to be ashamed if Christ's promises were not fulfilled. They are very rich and very full and there are very many of them—and if I take these promises and act upon God's Word and then, after all, find the promise to be mere waste paper—if the Lord breaks His own Oath, then I should be ashamed to have believed in an unfaithful God! But when will that be? Christian, has the time come with you yet? You have had promises applied with power to your heart and you have taken them to God in prayer. Let me appeal to your experience! Have they not been fulfilled beyond your expectation or your faith? Has not God done for you exceedingly abundantly above what you can ask or think?

And yet this morning, perhaps, you are afraid His promise will not be kept! You have come here in lowness of spirit, you have had so many troubles during the week that you really begin to be ashamed of having trusted in God. Be ashamed of yourself for being ashamed! And depend on it, your confidence is not a thing to blush over. But O my Brothers and Sisters, how ashamed would the Christian be if when he came to die he should find no support, no kind angels near his bed, no Savior to bear his head up amidst the billows! But have you ever heard of a Christian who was ashamed in his dying hour? Is it not rather the sure witness of all the

departed that their last moments have been gilded with the sunlight of Heaven?

Have not they snug on their dying beds, with David, “Yes, though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff they comfort me”? If, indeed, we could wake up in the resurrection and find ourselves without a Savior. If we could stand at the judgment bar of God and find that Christ’s blood had not made us clean. If, after all our faith in Him, we should hear Him say, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire,” then might we be ashamed! But our text assures us that we never shall have to suffer this. Let us then roll ourselves upon this sweet comfort—having believed in Christ we shall never in this life, nor in the life to come—need to be ashamed of our hope.

2. Having noticed when the Christian might be ashamed, let us notice why he might be ashamed if such things were to come. I have sometimes thought, dear Friends, that in some respects, if the Bible were proven to be false, I should never be ashamed of having believed it. If there should be no Savior, I think that when I stand before God’s Throne I shall not be ashamed of having believed the Gospel because, I think, I could dare to say even to the eternal God, “Great God, I believed of You that which reflected the highest honor upon Your Character. I believed You capable of a great deed of kindness, the giving of Your own Son. I believed You to be so just that You would not forgive without a punishment and yet so gracious that You would sooner give Your Son than not have mercy upon men.

“I believed of You higher things than either Jew, or Muslim, or Hea-then—and my soul did love You for it. I did preach what I thought would honor Your name and now that it turns out to be a mistake, I am not ashamed of having believed it, for it was such a thing as should have been true—Your Nature and your Character made it likely to be true and I mourn to think it is not, but I am not ashamed! I wish it had been. It would make You, great God, even more glorious than You are.”

Beloved, we are under no apprehension that it shall turn out to be so, for we know whom we have believed and we are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed to Him. Why would a Christian be ashamed if the Gospel were untrue? We should be ashamed, first of all, because we have ventured our all upon its Truth. We have ventured our all upon Christ. The world says you should never put all your eggs in one basket. And when a man speculates in some one thing and it all comes down, wise people hold up their hands and say, “Ah, very imprudent, very imprudent! Better have three or four strings to your bow! You must not be depending on any one thing.”

The world is quite right in human things. But here are we—we are depending everything upon one Man—my soul has not a shadow of a hope anywhere else but in Christ and I know that your spirits have not even the ghost of a shadow of dependence anywhere but in the blood and righteousness of that Divine Redeemer who has completed our salvation and ascended up on high. If He can fail us, then all our hopes are gone! We are, of all men, most miserable. If our hope should turn out to be a delu-

sion, we should be foolish, indeed, and have reason to be ashamed of our hope.

We should be ashamed, again, because we have given up this life for the next—believing in the world to come, we have said, “This is not our rest, we have no abiding city here.” The world’s proverb is, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” But we, on the other hand, have said that the bird in the hand is nothing at all—that the bird in the bush is everything. Our soul says, “Joy! We do not expect it *here*, it is *there* that joy is to be found.” “Wealth? No man is rich on earth, riches are in Heaven, the true treasure is in Glory.” “Love does not find a fit object here—our affection is set upon things above, where Christ dwells at the right hand of God.”

Now if things should turn out wrong and we have believed in vain, then we shall be ashamed of our hope, but not till then! Not till then, Beloved! And that shall be never! We know whom we have believed and we are confident that in giving up this earth we have only given up a handful of ashes that we may enjoy riches and Glory *forever*. Again, if Christ should fail us, we should be ashamed because we began boasting before we had ended the battle. “My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.”

I hope you can say, dear Friends, that though you have not entered Heaven and have not yet seen Christ face to face, yet you have learned to bask in the Cross of Christ and no man has been able to stop you in your glory. You have boasted in Christ! You have said that He is a sure Foundation, that He is a precious Husband, that He is All in All to you and worthy of your best love! But if He should fail you, why then, you would be in the position of a man who boasted before the time. But we shall never be ashamed! We do right to boast with a full mouth! Let us glory in the Lord. But oh, if He should fail us—which He never can—then were we ashamed, indeed!

Besides, we have done more than boast! You and I have actually divided the spoil! And oh, if the battle should be lost, then we should be ashamed! We are told that in one of the great battles on the continent in the olden times, the French, before the battle began, commenced selling the English captives to one another and calculated how much each man would have of the spoil. But then, fortunately, they never gained the victory. But you and I have already entered into our rest—we have had the earnest of our inheritance—we have begun, even on earth, to eat the clusters of Eshcol. And if it should be a delusion we should be ashamed, but not till then. Courage, dear Friends! We may go boldly on dividing the spoil! For while Christ is true and God is faithful, there shall be no reason for being ashamed.

I have known some ashamed when they have made a bad speculation because they have induced others to enter into it. They have been more ashamed to face their friends who have lost money than they have been to acknowledge that they lost themselves. You and I have been inducing others to embark in this great venture. We have taught others to believe in Christ. And some of us scarcely spend a day without winning some souls

to confidence in Christ. Oh, sweet Assurance! We have not preached cunningly devised fables and shall never be ashamed!

3. I must crave your patience just a moment while I now pass on to notice who are they who shall never be ashamed? The answer is general and special. The text says, “Whoever believes”—that is, any man who ever lived, or ever shall live, who believes in Christ shall never be ashamed. Whether he has been a gross sinner or a moralist. Whether he is learned or illiterate. Whether he is a prince or a beggar, it matters not—“Whoever believes in Christ shall never be ashamed.” You, Man, over yonder, though you may very seldom come to the House of God, yet if you believe in Christ today you shall never be ashamed of Him. You who have sat in God’s House for years and feel yourselves guilty of having rejected Christ, yet if now you trust Him you shall not be ashamed.

But there is a specialty, it is “Whoever *believes*.” Others shall be ashamed. There must be a real and hearty believing. There must be a simple confidence in the Person and work of Jesus—wherever this is there shall be no shame. “Ah,” says one, “but I have such a little faith. I am afraid I shall be confounded.” No, you come in under the “*Whoever*”—“Whoever believes,” though his faith is ever so little, shall never be ashamed. “Ah,” says another, “but I have so many doubts.” Still, dear Heart, since you believe you shall not be ashamed. All your doubts and your fears shall never damn you, for your faith will prevail.

“Oh, but,” says another, “my corruption is so strong! I have come this morning lamenting because of my imperfections. They have obtained the mastery of my faith and I have fallen during the week.” Yes, Soul, all fallen as you are, yet if you believe you shall never be ashamed. Does sin stare you in the face? Do you feel very heavy under a sense of your own unworthiness? Dare to believe in Christ just as you are—sins and all—venture on Him without any other confidence. When frames are dark and graces dead, when evidences are black, when everything gives you a frown and a curse, yet dare to believe in Him!

Now take Him to be your Friend when you have no other! Now flee to this Refuge when every other door is shut! Now that winter has frozen every brook, now come and drink of this Brook which flows on forever! This Well of Bethlehem which is within the gate can never fail you! And you need not to put your life in jeopardy to get it, it is free to you this moment! Stoop and drink confidently! Stoop and drink and you shall thirst no more, for, “Whoever believes in Him shall never be ashamed.”

4. To conclude, the text means more than it says, for whereas it says they shall not be ashamed, it means that they shall be glorified and full of honor! If you trust Christ today, it will bring you shame from men, it will ensure you trials and troubles—but it will also ensure you honor in the sight of God’s holy angels and Glory at the last in the sight of the assembled universe! Where is the man who trusts Christ today? There he stands in the pillory and men say, “Aha! Aha! The fool! The fool! The fool! He trusts a God whom he cannot see! He believes in a Christ whom we have

heard of but whom we never heard! He trusts in the blood of a crucified Galilean!

The worldling cries, “We are too wise for that! We will believe geological theories, spiritualism, or metaphysics! We will believe the devil himself sooner than we will believe in Christ!” So they scoff at the man who trusts Christ. The scene is changed, the generation of the living has passed away and the world has become one great burial field. There they lay. Innumerable hillocks mark where the bodies of men are sleeping. The trumpet sounds, it rings clear through earth and Heaven and up from the graves rise bodies which have once been worm’s meat and souls come back into those frames—and now where is the man who trusted Christ?

The trumpet has startled them all from their tombs and they awake together—“Where is the man who trusted in Christ?” Who is it that inquires for him? The King Himself upon the Throne has asked the question! King Jesus, sitting on His judgment seat, searches for His friends—“Where is the man who trusted in Me? Bring him here.” See the change, no hooting and yelling and laughter and slander now! A triumphant squadron of bright spirits carry up the Believer to the right hand of Jesus and there he sits enthroned like Christ, sitting with Him to judge men and angels, reigning upon Christ’s Throne in all Christ’s splendor!

“Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the King delights to honor,” thus shall it be done to the man who puts his trust in Christ! Come, Christian, whatever may be your state today, however the world’s mockery may ring in your ears, think of that unwilling honor which the crowd of sinners will have to give you at the Last Great Day! Think of how your fame and reputation shall rise with your bones! And as worms cannot devour your body to prevent your rising, so shall not slander and rebuke devour your character to prevent its rising, too! Glory shall be yours—everlasting Glory—while your enemies shall be clothed with shame and eternal contempt!

Well, what do you say, dear Hearers? On which side are you this morning? Is Christ a stumbling block to you? Will you go on stumbling at Him and objecting to Him? Do you say rather, “No, we will have Christ and trust Him.” Oh, if the Lord has brought you to this, I will clap my hands for joy! And you, you Angels, strike your harps! You Seraphs! Tune your lyres anew, for there is joy in Heaven as there is joy on earth when a soul comes to put its trust in Christ! The Lord bring every one of us, for His name’s sake. Amen. Amen.

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ZEALOUS, BUT WRONG

NO. 1899

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

***“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.”
Romans 10:1, 2, 3.***

WE ought to have an intense longing for the salvation of all sorts of men and especially for those, if there are any, that treat us badly. We should never wish them ill, not for a moment, but in proportion to their malice should be our intense desire for their good. Israel had persecuted Paul everywhere with the most bitter imaginable hate. When he addressed them in their synagogues, they rushed upon him in their fury. When he left them alone and preached quietly to the Gentiles, they made a mob, dragged him before the magistrates, charged him with causing a tumult and either stoned him or beat him with rods. He was “an Israelite, indeed,” but his people regarded him as a turncoat, indeed, because he had become a Christian! Mad as they were against all Christians, they had a special spite and fury against the apostate Pharisee. Paul’s only reply to all their infuriated malice is this gentle assertion—“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.”

Brethren, let us pray for men that they may be saved! Simple as the statement is, I feel sure that we shall see more conversions when more people pray for conversions. If, as we went about the streets, we made a rule that whenever we heard a man swear, we would pray that he might be saved, might we not hope to see a great many more saved? If, whenever we saw a case of special sin, or read of it in the newspaper, we were to make it a habit always to offer our heart’s desire and prayer for such offenders that they might be saved, I cannot tell what countless blessings would come from God’s right hand.

I would bring before you one peculiar class of persons whose conversion some of us should very earnestly pray for. They are the kind of people who are here described by the Apostle—Israelites—religious people, intensely religious in their way, although that way is not the way of the Truth of God. They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They are righteous people—self-righteous people—people that have done no ill, but, on the contrary, have labored to do a great deal of good. They are running and running well, but they are not running on the right road.

They are laboring and laboring hard, but they are not laboring in the right style. And so they will miss their reward. Many of these people are around us and very admirable people they are in many ways, but their condition causes us the utmost anxiety. There are a few such persons in this present congregation—and though they are not so numerous among us as in many other quarters, yet they have a peculiar place in our affectionate regard. We esteem them so highly that we would be shocked and grieved that one single person of their character should perish. I say most solemnly, “My heart’s desire and prayer for such is that they might be saved; for I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”

Bear with me at this time while I talk about these people. If you do not belong to this order of minds yourselves, I am glad of it. Pray for them if you, yourselves, are saved. If you know any such, keep on mentioning them to God in prayer, while I am preaching. Use the next half-hour as a time of quiet pleading with God about individuals of whom you will be reminded while I am talking. Say, “Lord, bless her,” or, “Lord, bless him.” If you are not one of those at whom I shall be specially aiming, then help me with your prayers that this sermon may be clothed with power by the Holy Spirit!

I. And first, why ARE WE SPECIALLY CONCERNED FOR THESE PEOPLE? The answer is, “Because *they are so zealous.*” They have a zeal of God. I feel right glad to meet with a zealous man, nowadays, for zeal for God has become a rare quality in our land. You see plenty of zeal where politics are concerned. Fashion, art, society and literature—each one evokes zeal of a certain kind, but we are not overdone with those who are zealous in the matter of religion! We seem to be pretty nearly gone to sleep as to essentials of creed and worship. Who is zealous? Who burns with holy ardor? Who is consumed with sacred enthusiasm? If anybody comes to be a little zealous above others, he is straightway condemned. The man of fervent spirit is laughed at as “a hot Gospeller.” He is called a fanatic and great efforts are made to put him down. I fear that both the wise and the foolish virgins are going to sleep at this present time. There is a dullness in the religious world, as if we had passed into a dull, thick, autumn fog. We need a great and general revival.

Meanwhile, when we do meet with people who are zealous, we take an interest in them. Zealous at Church, zealous in their ceremonies, zealous in their belief of what they believe—however mistaken their zeal may be, there is something interesting about it. We like to associate with people who have hearts—not dry leather bottles out of which all the juice has gone—but those who have heart, soul, life, fire and go. I love to meet with those who believe in something and who work under the pressure of their belief—and give their strength to the carrying out of what they believe to be the will of God. It does seem a very great pity that any zeal should be wasted and that anyone full of zeal should yet miss his way. We fear that there are some who will do so. If you want to go to York, you may ride very fast, due south, but you will not get to York with all your speed! Unless you turn your rein towards the *north*, you may ride a thousand horses to

death and never see the gates of the old city! It is of no use to be zealous if you are zealous in a wrong cause. But when we meet with any who are such, I say that they become peculiarly the object of a Christian's prayers. Pray for the zealous with all your hearts, for it is such a pity that one of them should go astray.

Again, they should be especially the subject of our prayers because *they may go so very wrong and may do much mischief to others*. Those who have no life nor energy may easily ruin themselves, but they are not likely to harm others. Whereas a mistaken zealot is like a madman with a fire-brand in his hand! Persons who are zealous and are under a mistake may do a great deal of mischief! What did those Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's day do? They were very zealous and, under the pressure of their zeal, they crucified the Lord of Glory! What did Saul do in his time? He was very zealous and, under the influence of his zeal, he dragged men and women to prison and compelled them to blaspheme. And when they were put to death he gave his voice against them. I do not doubt that many who burned the martyrs were quite as sincere in their faith as those whom they burned. In fact it must have taken an awful amount of sincerity in the case of some to have been able to believe that the cruelties which they practiced were really pleasing to God. We cannot doubt that they had such sincerity.

Did not our Lord, Himself, say, "Yes, the time comes, that whoever kills you will think that he does God service"? Documents, written by men who stained their hands with the blood of Protestants prove that some of them had a right heart towards God. In their mistaken zeal for God, truth and church unity, they believed that they were crushing out a very deadly error and that the persons whom they sent to prison and to death were criminals that ought to be exterminated because they were destroyers of the souls of men.

Take heed that none of you fall into a persecuting spirit through your zeal for the Gospel! A good woman may be intensely zealous and for that reason she may say, "I will not have a servant in my house who does not go to my place of worship." I have known landlords, wonderfully zealous for the faith, who have, therefore, turned every Dissenter out of their cottages and have refused to let one of their farms to a Nonconformist. I do not wonder at their conduct—if they are zealous and, at the same time, blind, they will naturally take to exterminating the children of God! Of course, in their zeal they feel as if they must root out error and schism. They will not have Nonconformity near them and so they get to work and, in their zeal, they hack right and left. They say strong things and bitter things—and then proceed to do cruel things—very cruel things—verily believing that, in all that they do, they are doing God a service, not thinking that they are violating the crown rights of God who alone is Lord of the consciences of men!

They would not oppose the will of God if they knew it and yet they are doing so. They would not willingly grieve the hearts of those whom God loves and yet they do so when they are browbeating the humble cottager for his faith. They look upon the poor people who differ a little from them

as being atrociously wrong and they consider it to be their duty to set their faces against them and so, under the influence of the zeal that moves them, which, in itself, is a good thing, they are led to do that which is sinful and unjust! Hence the Apostle, after he had felt the weight of the stones from the hands of the Jews, prayed that they might be saved, for if they were *not* saved, their zeal for God would continue to make murderers of them!

Another reason why we long to see the zealous converted is this—because *they would be so useful*. The man that is desperately earnest in a wrong way, if you can but show him his error and teach him what is right, will be just as earnest in the right way! Oh, what splendid Christians some would make who are now such devotees of superstition! Despite their superstition, I look upon many High Churchmen with admiration. Up in the morning early, or at night late, ready to practice all kinds of mortifications—to give their very bodies to be burned and all their substance in alms, ready to offer prayers without number and to be obedient to rites without end—what more could external religion demand of mortal men? Oh, if we could get these to sit at Jesus' feet and leave the phylacteries and the broad-bordered garments—and worship God in spirit—and have no confidence in the flesh—what grand people they would make!

See what Paul himself was, when, counting all he had valued so dear to be but dung, he left it and began to preach salvation by Grace alone. While he flew over the world like a lightning flash and preached the Gospel as with a peal of thunder, he loved, he lived, he died for the Nazarene whom once, in his zeal, he had counted to be an impostor! Brethren, pray with all your might for zealous but mistaken persons who have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

Once more, we are bound to make these people the subject of specially earnest prayer because *it is so difficult to convert them*. It requires the power of God to convert *anybody*, really, but there seems to be a double manifestation of power in the conversion of a downright bigot when his bigotry is associated with dense ignorance and gross error. "Oh," he says, "I do that which is right. I am strict in my religion. My righteousness will save me." You cannot get him out of that. It is easier to get a sinner out of his sin than a self-righteous man out of his self-righteousness! Conceit of our own righteousness sticks to us as the skin to the flesh. Sooner may the leopard lose his spots than the proud man his self-righteousness. Oh, that righteousness of ours! We are so fond of it. Our pride hugs it. We do so like to think that we are good, that we are upright, that we are true, that we are right in the sight of God by nature!

And though we are beaten out of it with many stripes, yet our tendency is always to return to it. Self-righteousness is bound up in the heart of a man as folly in the heart of a child. Though you crush a fool into a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet his self-righteous folly will not depart from him! He will still stick to it because, after all, he is a good fellow and *deserves* to be saved. We must, therefore, in a very special manner pray for such, seeing that self-righteousness is a deep ditch and it is hard to draw him out who has once fallen into it. Prejudice, of all other opponents, is

one of the worst to overcome. The door is locked. You may knock as long as you like, but the man will not open it. He *cannot*! It is locked and he has thrown away the key! You may tell him, "You are wrong, good Friend," but he is so comfortably assured that he is right, that all your telling will only make him more angry at you for attempting to disturb his peace. O God! who but You can draw a man out of this miry clay of self-righteousness? Therefore do we cry to You, of Your great Grace, to do it!

For these and many other reasons those who have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, must have a chief place in our importunate prayers.

II. And secondly, WHAT IS IT THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE, ACCORDING TO OUR TEXT? These people will not like the text, nor yet like *me* for honestly explaining it. According to our text, it is very clear that these good people are *ignorant*. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, go about to establish their own righteousness." Ah, you may be brought up under the shadow of a church. You may sit all your life in a meeting house. You may hear the Gospel till you know every term and phrase by heart and yet you may be ignorant of the righteousness of God! This is not a very complimentary statement, but as it is made upon Inspiration, it behoves us to give earnest heed to it.

Listen! There are many who are quite ignorant as to the natural righteousness of God's Character. They do not know how intensely He hates sin, how His anger burns against injustice and untruth. They have never conceived an idea of how pure He is, how infinitely holy. They have never been in sympathy with the angel's adoration so as to know what is meant by the celestial chant, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth." "You think," says God, "that I am altogether such a one as yourself—that if you are pleased with your righteousness, I must be pleased with it, too. And if your poor pride and stupefied conscience is satisfied, therefore your God must be satisfied, also." Those who are satisfied with their own holiness are ignorant of God's attribute of righteousness!

Again, they are ignorant of the righteousness of the Law of God. Indeed, there is awful ignorance about that. You may hear the Ten Commandments read every Sabbath and I think that it is a good thing to have them read and a good thing to have them posted up where they can be read, but you will not know anything about them by merely *reading* them. There is a depth of meaning in those Commandments, of which self-righteous persons are ignorant. For instance, when they read, "You shall not commit adultery," does it strike most men's minds that even a lascivious *look* breaks that Commandment? Do they reflect that not only acts of fornication and uncleanness, but indecent words, thoughts and looks are forbidden by that Command? A man reads, "You shall not kill," and he thinks to himself, "I never committed a murder. I can shake hands with that Commandment and sing a merry song under the gallows." But Christ says, "He that is angry with his brother, without a cause, is a murderer"—and ill-will is murder at bottom. Murder is but hate ripened into deed and, therefore, the least degree of hate is a violation of the Commandment, "You shall not kill."

Who among us has ever measured the full compass of the great Law of God? Let me stretch out the line before you for a moment. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Who among us has ever done that? The man who says, "I have kept the Law" is simply ignorant of the righteousness which the Law of God sets before us as the Divine requirement! Could we behold the Law in all its full-orbed majesty, we would as soon expect to hold the sun in the hollow of our right hand as to fulfill the Law in all its length and breadth!

Further than this, dear Friends, a man that is self-righteous and hopes to get to Heaven by his works and his religion, is ignorant of God's righteous requirements with regard to his own heart. God requires not only that you should do that which is right, but that you should *think* that which is right, that you should *love* that which is right, yes, and that you should *be* that which is right! He desires His Truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part He would have us to know wisdom. If I could entirely govern my tongue, yet I might be guilty before God, even with that tongue, for there is such a thing as idle silence as well as idle speech! If it were possible to keep the hands right in all things, yet the heart might, all the while, be willing and anxious to move the hands wrong and, after all, it is the way of the heart which is the true gauge of the man's life. Unless you are clean through and through in your very inwards, in the core and center of your being, you have not reached to the righteous requirements of God. What do you say to this? Are not many grossly ignorant of this?

And then, again, all persons who are self-righteous must surely be ignorant of God's righteousness in another sense, namely, they are ignorant that God has prepared a better righteousness for us. The Lord God has prepared for man a *perfect and Divine righteousness*, by which He justifies the ungodly! He has sent His own Son into the world, pure in heart and pure in life, to work out that righteousness! That Son of His has kept the Law in every point and, what is more, He has honored the Law by His death, whereby He vindicated its tarnished honor and gave Glory to the Law-Giver! God now says, "Sinner, I can make you righteous through Christ—righteous by imputation. I will impute to you what Jesus did for you. I will accept you on account of what He is and of what He did. He shall be your righteousness! He shall be made of God unto you, your righteousness."

Now surely, if you say, "No, but I will have a righteousness of my own," why, Man, you must be ignorant of God's righteousness! Would God have taken the trouble to make another righteousness if you could have made one of your own? Is not Calvary, with all its griefs, a superfluity of naughtiness if men could be saved without it! The death of Christ upon the tree was an extravagance—a needless extravagance—if men can be saved without it! And if any man can be saved without Christ—saved by his own works and saved by the principle of the Law—then for him Christ died in vain! There was no need, in the first place, that Christ should have died for such a man—and to such a man Christ has died for nothing. If you are righteous, you have nothing to do with Christ, for He is a Savior of sin-

ners. If you have a righteousness of your own, you are a rival to Christ! You are holding up your two-penny garment of rags and saying, “*This is as good as the Divine robe of Christ’s righteousness.*”

Man, you are stitching together your poor fig leaves and you are saying, “*This is garment enough for me. I need not to wear the livery of God, the garment of Christ.*” But those leaves will wither before the sun goes down and leave you, to your shame, naked! You are in opposition to Christ, you are an Antichrist—and your sin in setting up such a righteousness is, perhaps, greater than if you had lived in open sin! You are, at any rate, casting as much dishonor upon Christ and doing as much displeasure to God by this vain-glorious attempt to set up your own righteousness, as if you had gone about, like Pharaoh, to ask, “*Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?*” It is only another form of the same pride! In the Egyptian king it takes one shape and in you it takes another. Therefore, beware!

Brothers and Sisters, are you praying for these zealous but ignorant and vain-glorious people? Go on with your prayers. Now, in silence, cry, “*Lord, of Your great mercy, be pleased to deliver them from their head-strong zeal! Give them light, that they may quit their ignorance and be no longer enemies to the Cross and Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!*”

III. That brings me to my third point which is this—I have shown you why they should be prayed for. I have shown you that they are ignorant. Now I am going to show you **WHAT THEY DO**. According to the text they are going about to establish their own righteousness. I do not know whether I can give you the idea which this language suggests to my mind, but it is this—here is a kind of stuffed image, or, if you like, a statue, and they have set it up and they want it to stand. But it is so badly constructed that it tumbles down. So they set it up again and over it goes! In other words, they use all manner of plots and schemes to set up their righteousness upon its legs, but it repeatedly topples over.

Another figure which may illustrate the expression is this. They have bad foundations for a house—and bad materials, bad mortar and they, themselves, are by no means good workmen. They have built up quite a height of wall to make a shelter for themselves, but it tumbles down. Never mind—they are very industrious—and so they set to work to put it up again. They are perseveringly determined, somehow or other, to build up a righteousness of their own. That is the meaning of this text. They go about to set up, to establish, to make it stand—their own righteousness—and it is such a crazy thing that it falls down of its own weight! And whenever it tumbles down, they set it up again.

They go about to do it, that is, they invent all sorts of ways. They go to the ends of the earth to find another bit of stone that will just wedge in and help to settle the cornerstone. All their industry is spent in trying to set up this thing which is not worth a button when it is set up! Alas, that folly should be so desperately entrenched in the heart of man, that he will spend his whole life in a persevering attempt to insult his Maker by preparing a righteousness of his own, when his Maker has already worked out and brought in a righteousness perfect in every respect!

While I am preaching about this, I am thinking of myself and smiling and yet mourning to think how, in the days of my ignorance, I, myself, tried this ridiculous pastime. The pictures which I shall paint will be drawn from my own personal experience. At first the man says, "I shall be saved, for I have kept the Law of God. What do I yet lack?" Now a very small hole will let enough light into the man's heart to force him to see that this pretence will not answer. No one of us has kept the Law of God! What says the Scripture? "They are all going out of the way. They are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no not one." You have only to read the Law over by the light of conscience and you must say to yourself, "I see that I cannot be saved by the perfect keeping of the Law, since I have already broken that Law."

When driven from this foolish hope, the man readily sets up another. If he cannot work, then a man tries to *feel*—and I know I tried to feel. Or else he cries, "I must join a bit of religion to my pure morals. I do not quite understand how the combination is to be made, but we have to maintain a *reputation* for righteousness and we must do it by hook or by crook. It is true that I have not kept the Law. Well, then, I will pray every morning and pray every night very regularly—and take a good long time over it, too—when I do not go to sleep, or when I do not wake up too late! And I will read so much of the Bible every day—surely that is a grand thing! And if I can get through the Bible in a certain time, that will score one, will it not? Then I shall regularly attend a place of worship and then, I think—well, I must be baptized, perhaps, or at any rate, confirmed, or I must go to the sacrament! And when I have done all this, do you not think it will come pretty square?"

If a man's conscience is awake, it will *not* come square! Or, to go back to the old figure, the image will not stand upright—it will tumble over! After appearing to stand firm for a while, our poor wretched righteousness grows top-heavy, again, and over it goes. The man says, "No, I do not feel righteous after all! There is something wrong."

Conscience begins to call out, "It will not do." Perhaps, the man is taken ill. He thinks that he is going to die and he says, "Alas, I could not die with so poor a hope as this! This boat would never carry me across the river Jordan. I can see that it leaks very terribly. There are a hundred points in which my hope utterly fails me. What shall I do?" Well, then, he must keep his wretched presence afloat, somehow, and so he cries, "At length I must go in for something really good. I will give a lot of money away!"

If he is a rich man, he says, "I will endow an almshouse. You see I need not give the money till I die. That will do very well. I had better keep it while I am alive and then leave it when I cannot keep it. Won't it be a splendid thing? And if I put a painted window in a church, surely that will go a long way! Or I will give a lump sum to a hospital." To build a bridge, or mend the common roads used to be the way in which a man who wanted to bid high for Heaven made his offers in olden times. Or else the monks and friars promised to sing him into Glory for the small consideration of 10,000 a year. And so men go into that line and seek salvation by

purchase. And they hear about saints who fast. Well, then, they say, "Oh, I shall fast!" Then they say, "I have not prayed long enough. I must pray twice as long."

According to the church to which he belongs, the zealous person becomes a determined partisan of his sect. Remember how Mr. Bunyan said that when he was a godless man, he could have kissed the earth on which the clergy walked and he thought that every nail in the church door was sacred? Among Dissenters, the man who is trying to save himself usually thinks that every practice of the little community with which he is united is infallibly correct. He has no real love to Christ and has no trust in Christ's righteousness, but how he will work at his favorite self-salvation! And you will have to work at it, Sirs, if you are going to Heaven by your works! To work your fingers to the bones is nothing! You might as well try to climb to the stars on a treadmill as to get to Heaven by your good works and, certainly, you might more easily sail from Liverpool to America on a sere leaf than ever get to Heaven by works and doings of your own! There is more needed than will ever come of yourself. You need a Savior! You must be born again from above. You need a salvation that shall be a gift of infinite charity, a blessing of the boundless mercy of the eternal God—NOTHING else will save you!

But, oh, men will go about to set up their own righteousness—and I will tell you what some of them will do to-night! "Ah!" they will say, "quite right, Mr. Spurgeon. Quite right! I cannot bear that work-mongering and self-justification, but I hope that I shall be saved because I feel so deeply my sinnership and I groan so heavily under a sense of guilt!" You trust to that, do you? It is only another form of trusting to your own works! I must rout you out of your feelings, as well as out of your works. You may just as well trust in the one thing that comes of you, as in the other thing that comes of you. Your salvation lies absolutely outside of yourself, in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and not in what *you do*, but in what *He is*. If you add to that foundation one stick or stone of your own—thought, feeling, or work of your own—by way of trusting in it you have spoiled the salvation of Christ! It shall never be "Christ and Company." Therefore be sure that if Jesus is to save you, you must let Him do it and you must stand out of the way.

"What? Am I not to work?" Oh, yes! Work as hard as you like, if He has saved you! But as to the salvation, itself, that is with Him. "But we are to work out our own salvation." Certainly you are, *after* He has worked it *in* you to will and to do of *His* own good pleasure! But you cannot work out of yourself what is not *in* yourself—and you cannot put it into yourself—the Lord Jesus must put it there for you and then you must, with diligence, work it out in your life and conversation. The inner and spiritual work is all *His doing, from first to last*.

I know that you do not like this doctrine, Sir. You are sitting very uneasily and looking towards the door. I thought I saw you seize your cane just now. Have patience a few minutes longer. Suppose that you were to get to Heaven in your way, what would happen? I am afraid that sacred place would become more than a little mixed up. Whenever I get to

Heaven, I will sing to the praise of the Glory of His Grace to whom I shall owe it all! When *you* get there, you cannot sing with me. You must have a new tune. You will throw up your cap and say, "I have managed it, after all!" This will lead to a very speedy contest and quarrel. You will glorify *yourself* and, depend upon it, sinners saved by Grace will glorify Christ! Our jealousy for His Glory will not allow us to tolerate you in the realms of the blessed! Our Lord is not going to have any discord in Heaven—we shall all sing His praises there, or never sing at all! There will be no divided praise and the strain shall be set to the tune of Salvation all of Grace. "Salvation to our God that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

IV. Lastly, dear people of God, are you praying about these zealous, mistaken people all this while? Let me entreat you to renew your supplications. Shall we stop a minute while you do? Remember that you, also, were once in the dark and that you foolishly hoped to be saved in the same proud and selfish manner which has such charms for them. Pray about them that the Lord will fetch them out of their self-righteousness—"O Lord, in Your infinite mercy, bring to Yourself and to Your dear Son, those earnest persons who have a zeal for You, but not according to knowledge! O You, who do great marvels, enlighten the darkness of those who are prejudiced against the day!"

The fourth thing is, WHAT THEY WILL NOT DO. "Going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

"They have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Why, there are some that have not submitted even to *hear it!* Possibly, I address, tonight, one who never came here before and has always said, "No, I would not *think* of going to such a place." You are only one of a numerous band of people of that character. Our law does not judge any man before it hears him, but these people both judge and condemn the Gospel without giving it an hour's attention! If you speak to them about it, they are wrapped up in an idea of their own righteous perfectness and they really cannot endure to hear themselves talked to as if they were common sinners. Are they not good enough of themselves? What can you tell them better than they already know? They do not want to hear the Gospel! I think that I would recommend they, at any rate, *hear* what it is, because the next time they speak against it, they will speak with more knowledge. It is always a pity not to know even that which we most despise!

Even contempt should have a rational foundation. It will not hurt you, Friend, to know. And yet there is such prejudice in the mind of some that they refuse to acquaint themselves with the Truths which God has revealed. "Sinners saved by Grace?" they say, "Salvation by faith? It is all very well for the commonalty, but it does not do for ladies and gentlemen like us. We were always so good." Very well, then. If that is really the case, you know there is a Heaven for the commonalty and, it is highly probable that you ladies and gentlemen are too good to go there! Where will you go? There is but one way to Heaven and that way is closed against the proud.

And if you choose to be so proud, you will close it against yourself and we cannot help you.

But we will pray—pray God that your prejudice may yield and that, tonight, and at other times, those who have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, may, at least be willing to hear what the Gospel is. How many have been brought to Christ in the old times by reading Martin Luther upon the Galatians? That is a book in a rough enough style. What sledge-hammer words Martin uses! Only the other day I met a man who came to me like one of the old Puritans and he said to me that he had traversed the line of the two covenants. He began to converse with me in that antique, majestic style which comes of Puritan theology. I thought—Bless the man! He has risen from the dead! He is one of Oliver Cromwell's gray Ironsides! He will be able to tell me of Naseby and Marston Moor!

So I said to him, "Covenant and Law, where did you pick that up, Friend?" "Not at any church or chapel," he said. "There are none round about where I live who know anything at all about it. They are all in the dark together—dumb dogs that cannot bark." "How did you stumble on the true light?" I asked. The man replied, "In the good Providence of God I met with Master Martin Luther on the Galatians. I bought it for six-pence out of a box in front of a bookseller's shop." Oh, it was a good find for that man! Six-penny worth of salvation according to the judgment of men, but infinite riches according to the judgment of God! He had, indeed, found a jewel when he learned the truth of Salvation by Grace through faith! I recommend persons, whether they will read Martin Luther or any other author, to be especially careful to read the Epistle to the Galatians, itself. Paul hammers, there, against all hope of salvation by the Law and puts salvation on the basis of Grace, and Grace alone, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Still there are many who will not incline their ears and come to Christ—they will not even hear that their souls may live! Do not they deserve to die who are too proud to hearken to the Way of Life?

And then there are others who, when they hear it, will not admit that they need it. "What, Sir? Must I go down on my knees? Must I confess that I am a sinner, a *real* sinner? Must I come before God as if I had been a *criminal*? Must I stand in the dock and plead guilty?" Yes, you must, or else you will never be saved. "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." Off with that helmet of obstinacy! Down with the plumes of pride! You must come to God on your bended knees, with a rope about your neck—as one who is only fit to die and be cast into Hell—for He will never save you on any other terms! He must extend to you the scepter of His absolutely Sovereign Grace and save you as an undeserving, ill-deserving, Hell-deserving sinner—or else you can never be saved at all! What do you say to this? Do you reply, "I will never submit to such a humiliation"? God will never alter His terms to please you. Some will not submit to accept salvation. It is freely offered, without money and without price, but men would like to pay for it at least with *something* and they turn upon their heels. They will not have it as a free gift!

Again, there are others who will not submit to the spirit of it—to the influence of it, for you must know that the spirit of Free Grace is this—if

God saves me for nothing, then I belong to Him forever and ever. If He forgives me every sin simply because I believe in Jesus, then I will hate every sin and flee from it. If He grants me forgiveness on no ground but that of His own absolute mercy and good pleasure—as He has put it, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion”—then I will love Him with all my heart, soul and strength till time shall be no more. Now, for the love I bear Him, I will lead a holy life. I will serve Him with every power of my being. The virtue I aimed at before, in my own strength, I will now ask for from His Holy Spirit. The goodness that I thought I had, but never had, I will seek to have as a gift of His Grace worked in me and I, because of His great goodness to me, will live to Him and will not, from this day on, serve myself or serve sin, but will serve Him who has bought me with His precious blood!

Many will not submit to that, yet they can never be saved from sin unless they yield themselves as the blood-bought servants of Christ. Christ comes to save His people from their sins and from their sins He will save them! They shall no longer be in bondage to the powers of evil. The Lord Jesus accomplishes this salvation by freely forgiving them and then moving their hearts to such a love of Him that they become in love with everything that is pure and holy—and are filled with hatred of everything that is unjust, wrong and wicked—and their life becomes totally changed! What the principle of Law talked about *doing*, but never did, the principle of Grace actually does! It puts a new mainspring into the man and when the works within are right, then the hands outside soon move according to right rules.

I most earnestly pray that many of you may submit to the righteousness of Christ. Yield yourselves up! Trust in Christ! Believe in Him who died for sinners! Take Him to be your Savior right now! Do not go to sleep till this is done, lest you wake up in the bottomless Pit!

With my whole soul I offer the prayer of my text this night. And you, also, dear Friends, keep on praying! I ask all of you Christian people to insert a special petition into all your prayers and to keep it there—“O Lord, save by Your Grace those who have a zeal for You which is not according to knowledge! Grant that they may not go about to establish their own righteousness, but may submit themselves unto the righteousness of God!” Amen and Amen!

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BARRIERS BROKEN DOWN

NO. 2214

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 26, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“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.”
Romans 10:3.***

You that have your Bibles open, kindly follow me from the first verse of the chapter. It begins, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.” If you really desire that men should be saved, pray for them! It is an empty wish, a mere formality, if you do not turn it into prayer. Every loving desire for any man or woman should, by the Believer, be taken before God in prayer. We cannot expect that God will save men unless His people pray for it. There must be travail before the birth and there must be travail in prayer with God before we can expect that many will be born, again, into the Church of God. Oh, for more prayer! Let us cry to God in secret, in the family and in all our assemblies, that God would save the sons of men!

But prayer, if it is sincere, is always attended with effort. Therefore the Apostle begins to teach as well as to pray. He prays that Israel might be saved and then he explains the difficulties in the way and tries to remove them. You pray, dear Friend, do you? But you never speak to the individual for *whom you pray*. Is your prayer sincere? I will not question it. But your prayer has hardly reached that pitch of passionate earnestness which will secure an answer, for if you were in downright earnest, you would go to the person for whom you pray and explain the way of salvation! You want your boy to be a scholar. Then you send him to school. You want your girl to learn a certain trade. You put her apprentice to it, do you not? In the things of common life, that which you desire you use *means* to obtain. Oh, that in all our Churches we might feel that while effort without prayer is presumption and prayer without effort is hypocrisy, the holy blending of prayer and labor will produce, for certain, a grand result!

If we labor for souls, we must not be content unless souls are really saved, for the Apostle says, “For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God.” Well, does not that satisfy you, Paul? They are zealous for God! They are red-hot! “No,” he says, “not unless it is in the right way. They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” We feel very thankful when we see tears stream down the cheeks, but, you know, people cry

at the theater and there is not much in it. Pray God it may not end in a shower of tears, but that the heart may bleed as well as the eyes weep! It may happen that we have induced our Hearers to give up some outward sins. So far, so good. But it is written, "You must be born again." And if this vital change is not experienced, all outward reformation will land them short of Heaven! Beloved, the Apostle's love for souls led him to pray and led him to labor—but it led him to be very concerned that none should stop short of real living faith in Christ—and justification by His blood and righteousness.

When we are in the throes of a revival and we think men are turning to Christ, let us be happy and let us not throw any cold water upon anybody—but let us see that it is really the work of Grace in the hearts of our Hearers. Let us take care that the plowshare goes down deep. Some soil needs even cross-plowing and scarifying. Let us do the work thoroughly, for it is only those that are really converted that will stand. We do not need a lot of people that will run in at one door of the Church and out at the other—we want saving work and our prayer should be—"Lord, quicken the people into Divine Life by Divine Truth, through the Divine Spirit!"

Now observe that the Apostle, being thus earnest about souls, endeavors to be especially clear about the doctrine of Justification by Faith. If we want men to be truly converted, we must set before them the plan of salvation very clearly and distinctly. I meet with hundreds of persons who have had some kind of work upon their hearts, but they tell me that they walk in a mist. They have not quite understood it. They feel that they are on the Rock, but they were not quite sure what the Rock really is. It is a good thing that our zeal for God should be according to *knowledge*, that we know *what* we believe and *why* we believe it. That we *know* that we are saved, *how* we are saved and *why* we are saved, for if there is a mistake here, it may be fatal!

Martin Luther, who, as we all know, continually preached the doctrine of Justification by Faith, said, one day, that he felt half inclined to take the Bible and bang it about the people's heads, for they seemed as if they would not get a hold of the doctrine that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ and by Him, alone! I suspect that knocking people's heads about with the Bible would not effect any very great result—but that was Martin Luther's way of putting it. Keep hammering away on that nail—"Believe, believe, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." Well, now, that was the particular battleground of Luther's day, so that he said, "The doctrine of Justification by Faith is the article of a standing or a falling church." If a Church holds and preaches that, it is a Church of Christ, notwithstanding many blunders. But, whatever it may preach, if it does not preach *that*, it is to be questioned whether it is not a fallen church, a church that has lost its true position.

The fight today is the same as in Luther's day. The words have changed and men make other pretenses, but the fight all along the line is still this—Are we saved by our own merits, or by the merits of another? Are we

righteous through what we *do*, or are we righteous through what Christ has done? Is sin put away by tears and repentances, or is sin washed away by the precious blood of Christ and by that alone? Beloved, I trust that our pulpit will never give an uncertain sound upon this matter!

In our discourse we shall endeavor to show you that while there are two righteousnesses, our own righteousness and the righteousness of God, there will always be, as there has always been, a conflict between the two. Men will choose their own righteousness and they will not submit themselves to the righteousness of God.

You that are fellow workers for Christ will be especially interested in this text, for it sets forth three difficulties in the way of a man's salvation. The first is *ignorance*—"They, being ignorant of God's righteousness." The next is *self-will*—"And going about to establish their own righteousness." And the third is *flat rebellion*—"Have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

I. Well, now, our first difficulty is with IGNORANCE. "Ignorance is the mother of devotion," according to the Church of Rome. "Ignorance is the mother of error," according to the Word of God. We love the spread of knowledge, although there is a knowledge which it were better not to know, as there is a philosophy that is nothing but vain deceit and not true wisdom. What we want our fellow men to possess is *spiritual* knowledge. Especially do we desire that they may have, first and chiefly, knowledge with regard to God's righteousness, for the difficulty is that *men do not know what that righteousness is which God requires*.

Do you want to be saved by your own righteousness? Do you know what kind of righteousness it must be? To be accepted, it must be *perfect*. That is to say, if you have committed but *one* sin, you have stained your character in the sight of God and your hope of perfect righteousness is gone. God's Law requires obedience from the first moment that the creature understands that Law, as long as that creature lives. Mark what it requires of you—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind." Have you done that? "And your neighbor as yourself." Have you done *that*? Why, there is not one of us who has done it! If we had kept the Law of God completely, from the first command to the last, from the first day until now—even that would not save us, for, if there were to be one sinful word or deed during the *rest* of life, it would spoil the whole—and God could not accept our righteousness.

When a man commits one sin, he is guilty of disobedience to all the commands of God, for, "he that offends in one point is guilty of all." Here is a chain containing 20 links. If I break one of them, I have broken the chain. True, there are 19 perfect links, but if number 10 is snapped, down goes the cage over the mouth of the mine and the miners are killed! Suppose that I should be required to produce a perfect vase of alabaster, or clear crystal, as a present to the Queen? But my maid has chipped it just a little. What is to be done? I may possibly find somebody to use some patent cement and fasten the little pieces in their places, but when all is

done, it is chipped—it is not perfect—and if it must be perfect before royalty can accept it, I must get another vase, for this one will not do.

Now, dear Friend, while I am talking to you about a chip, here, and a chip, there, in your life, I am sure you must be saying, “Do not talk so, Sir. Why, some of us have not only got chipped, but we are smashed right up! And as to broken links, why, we have fairly melted the chain—there is not a link left. We have nothing, absolutely nothing, that we can bring before God.” I am glad to hear it! If you are lost, you are the very ones Christ came to save. And if you have no righteousness of your own, you have got to the halfway house of salvation! When you strip a man, you are partly on the way to clothing him. When a man is changing his old clothes for better, he must first get the old ones off. Oh, how glad I am to meet with a real sinner! There are many sham sinners about. I saw, one day, in Italy, a fellow sticking out his arm with an awful sore and he begged of me. As I suspected that he had manufactured that sore with a little sulfuric acid, or by some such process, I did not feel the least pity for him. We have lots of people who come confessing their sins—“Oh, yes, we are sinners! We are sinners!” They do not mean it—they are only sham sinners. A real sinner, one who feels his guilt, is a “sacred thing,” as Hart says, “the Holy Spirit has made him so.” He is an empty vessel that God is going to fill! He is a broken heart that God is going to make new! But our trouble is that the mass of people are not aware how perfect and how complete any righteousness must be before God can accept it.

The next difficulty is that *men do not know that God has provided a righteousness* for all Believers. For every soul born of Adam who will believe in Christ, there is a perfect righteousness! Not ours, but God’s. God came here in human form not bound to be obedient, but, “being found in fashion as a man, He became obedient”—obedient to His own Law and fulfilled every jot and tittle of it. He was “obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” And His obedience is *ours* if we believe! God looks at us as if we had done what His Son has done! Christ died and rose again—and God regards *us* as having died in Him and reckons that we are risen with Him and now live in Him! Our righteousness is the righteousness of Another, even of the Son of God—a *perfect* righteousness, a Divine righteousness, an everlasting righteousness! In the Book of Daniel it is written that Messiah, the Prince, should “finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness.” He was “made sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

Alas, how many there are who do not know that God justifies the ungodly—that sinners can be regarded as just through what Christ has done and suffered and, that, believing in the precious Christ whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation, the vilest are fair to look upon in God’s esteem and the far-off ones are made near by the blood of Christ! Oh, I wish that men knew it! I have sometimes thought that if they did but know it, if they did but really hear the Gospel, they must believe it. You that preach Christ in the streets, go on preaching Him! I saw a man preaching, the

other day, with no creature but one dog to listen to him and I really thought that he might as well have gone home. But I met with a story yesterday which I know to be true and it showed me that I was making a mistake. There was a woman who, for years, had been in such dreadful despair that she would not even listen to the Gospel.

She came to be very ill and she said to one that called upon her, "You sent a man to preach under my window three months ago and I got a blessing." "No," the friend said, "I never sent anybody to preach under your window." "Oh," she said, "I think you did, for he came and preached and my maid said that there was nobody listening to him. I did not want to hear him, but as he made so much noise, my maid shut the window and I lay down in bed. But the man shouted so, that I was obliged to hear him, and I thank God I did, for I heard the Gospel and I found Christ! Did you not send him?" "No," said the good man, "I did not." "Well," she said, "then God did! There was nobody in the street listening to him, but I heard the Gospel—and I got out of my despair and I found the Savior—and I am prepared to die."

Fire away, Brothers! You do not know where your shot will strike, but, "there's a billet for every bullet." I believe that there is some soul whom God means to bless whenever we preach the Gospel, depending upon His Grace. But the mass of mankind are ignorant of the righteousness which God requires and ignorant of the righteousness which God has provided.

Many *are ignorant as to how they are to receive this righteousness*. If there is such a righteousness, they say, how are we to get it? The current notion is, "I must *pray* so much. I must *weep* so much. I must *feel* so much." Ah, this is the common ignorance, whereas men should know that—

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One."

"Why, *everybody* preaches this," says someone. I know they do, but people do not understand it, although you keep on preaching it, for until God the Holy Spirit makes men to know the meaning of what you say, they will but nod their heads and pass on. Though I heard the Gospel from my childhood and was brought up upon the very knee of piety, I did not understand what I must do to be saved till I heard that text preached from—"Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth." I do not believe that my ignorance was the fault of the preacher. It was certainly not the fault of my father, or my mother—and not the fault of the Bible which I had read through, again and again—it was the fault of these dim eyes that I could not see! Go on! Go on, you preachers of the Word! Spread abroad the knowledge of this great fact, that, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life."

The worst of this terrible ignorance is that the mass of mankind *do not know HIM who is our Righteousness*. Who is the Righteousness of God? Who is the Blessed One? God's only-begotten Son! God, the Word made flesh, born at Bethlehem, nurtured in the carpenter's shop, toiling here below and wearing His life away for the souls of men—extending His arms upon the Cross. Giving His side to be pierced, His soul to be breathed out,

His body to be laid in the tomb that men might be saved! O Jesus, in Your wounds is our salvation, but men do not know it! O Jesus, Your death is the death of sin, Your life is our life unto God—but men do not know it! Alas, alas, men still go on in their blindness and ignorance! Still is the Lord of Life despised and rejected of men and still His servants cry, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”

You see our great difficulty is human ignorance—ignorance, dear Friends, even of the *facts* of the Truth of God. You do not know how near to this place, in the very midst and heart of London, there are tens of thousands who do not know the name of Christ! You think it incredible, but I know that it is so. There are multitudes that have never read a chapter in the Word of God since they went to Sunday school as children. And they never darken the threshold of God’s House. There are streets, in neighborhoods not far from here, where, if one man goes to a place of worship, he is marked by all his neighbors as a strange character. Let me turn aside for a moment and ask you how, in this city of London, are we to get the Gospel to the working men—to a great number of them? How does it get to some of them?

How? Oh, little Mary sings it on father’s knee on Sunday night. He has not been out to a place of worship, but his little girl has been to the Sunday school. Or his son Jack has been to the mission and comes home and tells his father what the preacher said. He will listen to his own children when he will listen to no one else! The way to increase the number of those who are not ignorant is for us so to see the things of Christ that others who have never seen them may have, from us, an intimation of what *we* have seen! Oh, it must be very painful to a blind man for another to say to him, “Now I am looking over a delightful landscape. Over there I can see a beautiful piece of water and beyond the hills I see the sea. There is a ship going along.” “Oh,” the man says, “I wish I had eyes that I could see, too!” The Holy Spirit makes us see, so that, as we tell the story, we may set others longing to also see.

I think I reminded you once before, that when the prodigal came back, his father said, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.” But, you will notice, he never fed him. The father does not say anything about that. He says, “Bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let *us* eat, and be merry.” Well, it is the servants and all the rest of the household that are to eat. There is nothing said about killing the fatted calf for the prodigal. No, no, you see he had lost his appetite, and others must begin to eat, first, and then, when they began to eat, he was sure to join in with them. There is no surer way of begetting an appetite than seeing other people eating. Let us enjoy the things of Christ so much that poor sinners’ mouths will water and they will begin to ask, “What is your Beloved more than any other beloved? What is this righteousness of which you speak? What is this wonderful thing?” We have need to tell others what we know, for ignorance, even of the simple facts of the Gospel, is extremely common.

Others are in great ignorance as to the *excellence* of the Gospel. They do not know the peace, the joy, the rest it brings—

**“His worth if all the nations knew,
Sure the whole world would love Him too.”**

But they think that it is all mere talk—a something all very well for parsons and for some few other people to get a hold of—but nothing for the working man, nothing for the man of business, nothing for your noble gentleman who has his heaven at Newmarket and his bliss at Epsom. Ah, dear Friends, I would to God they knew the Pearl of Great Price, the incomparable value of salvation by blood—for then would they reckon the highest glory of this present world as unworthy to be compared with the least delight of the Kingdom of God!

With many, this ignorance is *willful*. Nobody is so blind as the man that does not want to see! Nobody so deaf as the man that does not wish to hear! Many are like the hogs in harvest—very deaf when they are told to get out of the corn-field. And so, when sinners run riot in their sins, they are very deaf, indeed, when they are told to quit them and fly to Christ for refuge! Some of you, perhaps, do not want to know too much. When you come to that part of the Bible that begins to touch your conscience, you say, “Shut that up.” You will go on somewhere else. You do not want to know! Willful ignorance will bring terrible damnation. If there is salvation and you do not want to know it, then you deserve to be cast away.

There are some who are ignorant *despairingly* and I pity them, poor souls! They sigh and cry, “Oh, I cannot be saved, I am so guilty. My heart is so hard!” The devil tells men, first, that they can be saved any day they like, so they may put it off. Then, immediately afterwards, he says, “Salvation is not for such as you. You never had enough sense of sin. You never will have enough faith. God will never save *you*.” Ah, my dear Friend, I wish I could make you understand that whoever comes to Christ, He will in no wise cast out, for He, Himself, has said, “He that believes on Me has”—has *now*—“everlasting life.” He shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck him out of Christ’s hands. Some of us will give Christ great glory when we get to Heaven. I think that some people will meet us at the gate and say, “What? And have *you* got here?”

I should not wonder if it was some elder brother. That elder brother was a good fellow. He was a real child and he was always with his father and all his father had was his. Yet he was surprised to see the prodigal come home after wasting his father’s living. Ah, but it is those that cost the Lord so much in whom His infinite Grace will be displayed! They will glorify Him most. O you despairing ones, if you must faint, faint away on to the bosom of Christ! Swoon away into the arms of the almighty Savior and then it will be well to have swooned and you will find, in Him, your strength!

II. There is another thing that stands in our way that is worse than ignorance and that is SELF-WILL. Men, ignorant of God’s righteousness, are said to be “going about to establish their own righteousness.” In other words, to set up the *poor idol* of their own righteousness. Man sees God’s

righteousness and, instead of accepting it, he says, "I think I could match that. I will set up my own righteousness!" There is a treasure of gold and the man says, "No, I will not have that. I think that I could make a sovereign at home out of a bit of brass." Fool that he is! How shall he mimic God? If I were at Heaven's wide-open gate and a voice should say, "Enter freely," and I replied, "No, I think I prefer the Surrey Hills, or a place down by the seaside," what a fool I would be! But, even then, not so great a fool as when forsaking the righteousness of God, I want to set up my own! A human thing at best—how shall that match the Divine righteousness? An imperfect thing at best—how shall I compare that with the perfect righteousness of Christ? A fading, floating thing, always apt to be damaged by the next moment's temptation—how can I be so foolish? A ridiculous thing, an ignominious thing, a filthy thing.

Paul said that his righteousness, which was of the Law, was "blameless"—and yet he counted it dung—that he might win Christ! Dung, the most filthy thing! Here, scavenger, take it away! Have any of you any righteousness of your own? I do not believe that even the dustman would take it! He would say, "No, the carts are not for carting away man's righteousness—we have no place bad enough to shoot it into." Shoot it into the bottomless pit! No, even there they have not any righteousness, for they know their true condition. Human righteousness is a great lie—it is filthy rags. Away with it from off the face of the earth!

What do men try to do? In what *vain efforts* are they spending their time and strength? According to the text, they go about "to establish their own righteousness." I think you will better understand it, if I read it, "They go about to *set up* their own righteousness." You see it is a dead thing. "See here," they say, "we will make it stand." If I had a corpse here—I am glad that I have not—well, I set it up and it tumbles down. Nevertheless, I will put its legs out a little wider and see whether it will stand. Down it goes! Now I will prop it up. Surely, I can make this dead thing stand. But, no, it has a tendency to fall—down it goes! Have I not seen a sinner try to set up the corpse of his own righteousness and make it stand? At last he has been obliged to say what the fool said in the old classic, "It needs something inside." And so it does, for until there is life within, it will not stand! Even so, our righteousness has no true vitality, no life within and it will not stand.

Or, to use another illustration, it is like a man trying to patch up an old house. You find such in country villages—a place which nobody has ever repaired for 50 years! I do not know if there is any landlord, but if there is, he would like to forgot that he has such property! The main beam is nearly cracked through. The lath and plaster have gone, long ago, and the birds go in and out the best parlor, whenever they like—the whole thing is tumbling down. A man buys it and he says, "Now, you know, it is a pity to pull this house down. I think I will repair it." So he puts in a beam there, just under the roof, and he puts a strut here and another timber there and, by the time he has spent as much as would have built a new house, he has got a very handsome ruin left, but nothing more.

I think it was Charles the First who used to swear, "God mend me." Somebody said it would be an easier job to make a new one of him and I believe it! When men say, "God mend me," they had better say, "God make me new." So, as to your righteousness, if you have a lot of it and it is very good. If you have been christened, or baptized, if you like, and confirmed and have always gone to your place of worship—and are so good that you wonder you can live in such a wicked world as this—if you have all that righteousness, the best thing to do with it is to get rid of it, for it will ruin your soul! But this is what men do—they try "to set up" their own righteousness.

And then the text says that they "go about" to do this—"Going about to establish their own righteousness." That is to say, they set about it with great zeal. Some of you who know the Lord can remember how you thought you would do it. Why, at first, when you started as a young man, you were never going to do any wrong! You were going to have a perfect righteousness of your own. You had an ugly temper, however, and it broke out, indeed. "Well," you said, "I shall never do it again." You came down to breakfast and you were as bad-tempered as ever, so you said, "Never mind, I will set it up now. I will be a teetotaler. That will be a grand thing." So it was, but, somehow or other, down tumbled your righteousness again!

Then you went to a place of worship. You said, "I will always be here." You began to think that you would grow into a saint, but you did not. Down tumbled your righteousness! Always it went and you, all the while, tried zealously to set it up. "Going about" implies great earnestness. When a man says, "I am going about a thing," he means that he is going to take his coat off—going to work in his shirtsleeves. He is going to toil at it for many hours. I remember how I set to work in my shirtsleeves to make a righteousness of my own! And I did very nicely, indeed, while it was dark. But when a little light from the Cross broke in, I began to see the filthiness of it. And you, my Friend, think yourself very beautiful when you cannot see yourself! But let the mirror be held before you, you would begin to see the spots of filth that defile the very best of your righteousness. Ah me, how foul the righteousness of men is—and yet they go about to set up their own righteousness.

To "go about" to establish a righteousness means, in the next place, that men have varied ways of doing it. Shall I tell you what I frequently meet with? I have talked with a person and said, "Can you trust in your own works?" "Oh, no, Sir, I can never do that." "Well, can you come to Christ and take the righteousness of God?" "Well, Sir, no. I do not feel enough my own emptiness." Look! This man is going to bring his own emptiness to help him! He actually thinks that if he has not any righteousness, his own emptiness is good for something and, if he can get to feel *that*, he will come and bring his feelings of emptiness to commend him to Christ! Did you ever hear of such a thing? You go to him and you say, "My dear Man, salvation is not on account of your *feelings*." Each time

you drive him out of his refuge of lies, he hastens back to the old ground again—something of himself.

Suppose there is a ship out at sea and the people on board feel that they are safe. One of them says, “I know that we shall not drift far out of our course.” “Why?” “Because we have such a big anchor on board.” You say, “Ah, he is a cockney. He must be a fool who believes in an anchor *on board*.” Why, it is no good to anybody! It is when you “let go” the anchor and lose sight of it—and the anchor gets an unseen grip down below, that it is good for something. But while the anchor is on board, it is only so much dead weight for the ship. You want to have your anchor on board, do you? You do not like it to “enter into that which is within the veil”—that is too mysterious. You want to *feel* something, to have something of your own. O pride! O self-will! God will have salvation to be all of Grace and man will have it of debt!

God gives the promise of His Grace and man puts his penny down to *pay* for it! Men’s pennies and God’s promises do not go together very well to buy Heaven. He says, like a king, “You may have it for nothing,” and we say, “Lord, we think we could make up a little something to buy it.” Well, then, you will never have it! His terms are free, rich, Sovereign Grace—a sinner with nothing—receiving everything from God! He may have it. He may have it *now*. None can say no to him. But he stands chaffering, trying to pay his penny, as if God kept a shop! Has God come down to stand in your market and cry to you, “Here, bring your gold and your silver to purchase My favor”? You know not who He is, for all things are His! If He were hungry, He would not tell you, for the cattle on a thousand hills belong to Him. Will you have salvation freely? If so, take it freely. But if you will *buy* it, you and God can never agree.

Let me just close this point about human will, by saying that the efforts of men for their own salvation are *deadly efforts*. God will save them one way, but they want to be saved by another! God says, “Here is medicine. Take it; drink it.” Man says, “No, I will grow my own drugs in my own garden and I will compound my own medicine.” And he goes and takes his own dose. And can he ever get well in such a way as that? God says, “I will forgive.” Man says, “I will try and *deserve* to be forgiven,” as if that could be possible. I have heard that the Romanists say that venial sins are a kind of sins that *deserve* to be forgiven. What sort of sin must that be? Yet some men seem to think that somehow or other they can deserve to be forgiven! That would not be forgiveness at all! Come, come, you vilest of the vile, you lost and utterly undone! Come, come, you that have no righteousness, or the ghost of a shade of a shadow of a pretense of any! Come as you are! There is everything you need in Christ. Come and have Him and you shall not be refused! But reject His terms and salvation can *never* be yours.

III. Now, very briefly, I want to speak upon the third difficulty, which is a gross evil, namely, FLAT REBELLION.

Observe my text, dear Friend, if you forget everything else. I say, remember what the Lord says—“They have not submitted themselves unto

the righteousness of God.” This is a *strange word*. “Have not submitted themselves.” Do you not wonder that such a word is used? Here is a criminal who will not submit to be pardoned! Here is a sick man who will not submit to be made well! Here is a man with a broken leg who will not submit to have it healed! Here is a poor beggar in the street who will not submit to be made into a gentleman! Why, the word seems quite out of place, does it not? It shows you the monstrous absurdity of self-righteousness, that men will not submit themselves to that which is the greatest blessing that Heaven, itself, can bestow! It is a matter of *submission*.

While it is a strange word, it is a very *searching word*. Is it so, that, the reason why I am not saved is that I will not submit? Do I stick out? Have I an iron sinew in my neck? Am I such a self-willed fool that I will not submit before my Maker—will not yield, even, to have salvation for *nothing*? Am I so proud that I scorn to be a pauper before God? That is just it. That is the reason why many have not peace. If they were bankrupts, if they were cleaned right out, they would have perfect rest of soul, but still they stand out and, in their self-righteousness, fight against God!

It is a very *true word*. I am sure that there is many a sinner who has not anything to be proud of and yet he is as proud as Lucifer. Why, there are harlots that are proud of their own righteousness! There are drunks proud of their own righteousness! I do not know where they get it, but they are proud of it. I have heard say that a dustman can be as proud as my Lord Mayor. And so the vilest sinner can be proud of his own righteousness. “Why,” you say, “he has nothing to be proud of!” No more have you—I mean you good, moral persons—you who never do anything wrong, as you think. You have not any more righteousness than he has, if it comes really to be measured up and tested by the Word of God. Still, it is so—the worse the man, the harder he is to bow before the righteousness of God.

It is a very *suggestive word*. “They have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” They will not acknowledge that God is King. They quarrel with His Sovereignty. How can the rebel be forgiven when he begins to question whether the king is king? When he begins to deny the rights of the magistrate to condemn him, how can he be pardoned? You must yield, my Friend! Submit to the fact that God is God, or else you will not submit to God’s righteousness! Man thinks that God is hard, austere, demanding too much—and while God puts before him everything for nothing—yet still he says that the price is too high! It is *his heart* that is too high, his *proud looks* that need bringing down. Oh, that God would bring them down! The man will not submit to the power of God. He will not yield himself up to God to work with him, and in him and for him. He wants to do all himself and then, if he got to Heaven, he would throw his cap up and want to share the glory! But it will not do. It is all of Grace from first to last—and the sinner must consent that it shall be so or else the gate of Heaven will never give him admittance!

Lastly, it is a very *cheering word*. “They have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.” You ask, “And is that all that I have to do—to submit myself? Is that all?” There is a feather in the cap of your pride. Take it out! You have a weapon of rebellion by your side. Throw it down! Just submit yourself, with folded hands, with the rope around your neck. Say, “Lord, if my soul is sent to Hell, I deserve it. I submit and I plead for mercy. I plead the precious blood. I not only submit to take that plea, but I delight to take it. I am happy to believe that—

***‘You have promised to forgive
All who on Your Son believe.
Lord, I know You cannot lie—
Give me Christ, or else I die.’***

Beloved Friend, may the Holy Spirit lead you to submit! You have been kicking and struggling—now submit. You have been despairing and talking about its being presumptuous to believe. Submit! Give all that up. No more of your talk! Come to faith! When a man submits to God, that man has the victory. When God is King, you are safe. When you take Christ to be everything and you are nothing—then neither death nor Hell shall ever divide you from the heart of God! When you are not your own, you are Christ’s, but so long as you are dependent upon self, you do not know the Lord and you *cannot* know Him.

May God bless this simple testimony to each and all, and to His name be praise! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 9.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—554, 556, 538.**

MR. SPURGEON UPDATE:

It is very difficult to know what report to give, week by week, concerning MR. SPURGEON’S illness. Before last week’s sermon had reached country readers, he had apparently become much worse and the gravest apprehensions were entertained. Then came an improvement which made everyone full of thanksgiving—but this, again, was followed by a return of the terrible delirium which has been such a trying portion of the present illness. One thing we can say, MR. SPURGEON is in the Lord’s hands and He will do with him what is right.

When friends read that there is an abatement of the most serious symptoms, let them not slacken their supplications, but, “continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.” On the other hand, if all hope of recovery appears to be gone, let them still plead with the Lord, if it is His gracious will, to raise up His dear servant and strengthen him for future service.

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

CHRIST THE END OF THE LAW

NO. 1325

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOV. 19, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness
to everyone that believes.”
Romans 10:4.*

YOU remember we spoke last Sunday morning of “the days of the Son of Man.” Oh that every Sunday might be a day of that kind in the most spiritual sense! I hope that we shall endeavor to make each Lord’s Day, as it comes round, a day of the Lord, by thinking much of Jesus, by rejoicing much in Him, by laboring for Him and by our growingly importunate prayer that to Him may the gathering of the people be. We may not have very many Sabbaths together—death may soon part us—but while we are able to meet as a Christian assembly, let us never forget that Christ’s Presence is our main necessity. And let us pray for it and entreat the Lord to grant that Presence always in displays of light, life and love!

I become increasingly earnest that every preaching time should be a soul-saving time. I can deeply sympathize with Paul when he said, “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.” We have had so much preaching, but, comparatively speaking, so little believing in Jesus. And if there is no believing in Him, neither the Law nor the Gospel has answered its end and our labor has been utterly in vain. Some of you have heard, and heard, and heard again, but you have not believed in Jesus!

If the Gospel had not come to your hearing, you could not have been guilty of refusing it. “Have they not heard?” says the Apostle. “Yes, verily,” but still, “they have not all obeyed the Gospel.” Up to this very moment there has been no hearing with the inner ear and no work of faith in the heart in the case of many whom we love. Dear Friends, is it always to be so? How long is it to be so? Shall there not, soon, come an end of this reception of the outward means and rejection of the inward Grace? Will not your soul, soon, close in with Christ for present salvation? Break! Break, O heavenly day, upon the benighted ones, for our hearts are breaking over them! The reason why many do not come to Christ is not because they are not earnest, after a fashion, and thoughtful and desirous to be saved, but because they cannot stand God’s way of salvation!

“They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” We get them by our exhortation so far on the way that they become desirous to obtain eternal life, but, “they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.” Mark, “submitted themselves,” for it needs submission! Proud man wants to save *himself*! He believes he can do it and he will not

give over the task till he finds out his own helplessness by unhappy failures. Salvation by Grace, to be sued for in *forma pauperis*—to be asked for as an undeserved blessing from free, unmerited Grace—this it is which the carnal mind will not come to as long as it can help it!

I beseech the Lord so to work that some of you may not be able to help it. And oh, I have been praying that, while this morning I am trying to set forth Christ as the end of the Law, God may bless it to some hearts that they may see what *Christ* did, and may perceive it to be a great deal better than anything *they* can do! May they see what Christ finished and become weary of what they, themselves, have labored at so long and have not well commenced at this day. Perhaps it may please the Lord to enchant them with the perfection of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. As Bunyan would say, “It may, perhaps, set their mouths a watering after it,” and when a sacred appetite begins, it will not be long before the feast is enjoyed!

It may be that when they see the raiment of worked gold which Jesus so freely bestows on naked souls, they will throw away their filthy rags which now they hug so closely. I am going to speak about two things, this morning, as the Spirit of God shall help me. The first is, *Christ in connection with the Law*—He is “the end of the Law for righteousness.” And secondly, *ourselves in connection with Christ*—to everyone that believes Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness.”

I. First, then, CHRIST IN CONNECTION WITH THE LAW. The Law is that which, as sinners, we have, above all things, cause to dread, for the sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the Law. Towards us the Law darts forth devouring flames, for it condemns us and in solemn terms appoints us a place among the accursed, as it is written, “Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.” Yet, strange infatuation! Like the fascination which attracts the gnat to the candle which burns its wings, men, by nature, fly to the Law for salvation and cannot be driven from it!

The Law can do nothing else but reveal sin and pronounce condemnation upon the sinner. And yet we cannot get men away from it, even though we show them how sweetly Jesus stands between them and it. They are so enamored of legal hope that they cling to it when there is nothing to cling to—they prefer Sinai to Calvary, though Sinai has nothing for them but thunder and trumpet warnings of coming judgment! O that for awhile you would listen anxiously while I set forth Jesus, my Lord, that you may see the Law in Him!

Now, what has our Lord to do with the Law? He has *everything* to do with it, for He is its end for the noblest object, namely, for righteousness! He is the “end of the Law.” What does this mean? I think it signifies three things. First, that Christ is *the purpose and object of the Law*. Secondly, that He is *the fulfillment of it*, and, thirdly, He is *the termination of it*. First, then, *our Lord Jesus Christ is the purpose and object of the Law*. It was given to lead us to Him. The Law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, or rather our attendant to conduct us to the school of Jesus. The

Law is the great net in which the fish are enclosed that they may be drawn out of the element of sin.

The Law is the stormy wind which drives souls into the harbor of refuge. The Law is the sheriff's officer to shut men up in prison for their sin, concluding them all under condemnation in order that they may look to the free Grace of God, alone, for deliverance! This is the object of the Law—it empties, that Grace may fill—and wounds that Mercy may heal. It has never been God's intention towards us, as fallen men, that the Law should be regarded as a way to salvation for us, for a way of salvation it can never be. Had man never fallen. Had His nature remained as God made it, the Law would have been most helpful to Him to show Him the way in which He should walk. And by keeping it He would have lived, for, "He that does these things shall live in them."

But ever since man has fallen, the Lord has not proposed to him a way of salvation by works, for He knows it to be impossible to a sinful creature. The Law is already broken and whatever man can do, he cannot repair the damage he has already done. Therefore he is out of court as to the hope of merit. The Law demands perfection, but man has already fallen short of it and, therefore, let him do his best, he cannot accomplish what is absolutely essential. The Law is meant to lead the sinner to faith in Christ by showing the *impossibility* of any other way! It is the black dog to fetch the sheep to the shepherd. It is the burning heat which drives the traveler to the shadow of the great rock in a weary land.

Look how the Law is adapted to this, for, first of all, it shows man his sin. Read the Ten Commandments and tremble as you read them! Who can lay his own character down, side by side, with the two tablets of Divine Precepts without at once being convinced that he has fallen far short of the standard? When the Law comes home to the soul, it is like light in a dark room revealing the dust and the dirt which otherwise had been unperceived. It is the test which detects the presence of the poison of sin in the soul. "I was alive without the Law, once," said the Apostle, "but when the Commandments came, sin revived and I died."

Our comeliness utterly fades away when the Law blows upon it. Look at the Commandments, I say, and remember how sweeping they are, how spiritual, how far-reaching! They do not merely touch the outward acts, but dive into the inner motives and deal with the heart, the mind, the soul! There is a deeper meaning in the Commandments than appears upon their surface. Gaze into their depths and see how terrible is the holiness which they require! As you understand what the Law demands, you will perceive how far you are from fulfilling it and how sin abounds where you thought there was little or none of it. You thought yourself rich and increased in goods and in no need of anything, but when the broken Law visits you, your spiritual bankruptcy and utter penury stare you in the face. A true balance discovers short weight and such is the first effect of the Law upon the conscience of man.

The law also shows *the result and mischief of sin*. Look at the types of the old Mosaic dispensation and see how they were intended to lead men

to Christ by making them see their unclean condition and their need of such cleansing as only He can give. Every type pointed to our Lord Jesus Christ! If men were set apart because of disease or uncleanness, they were made to see how sin separated them from God and from His people. And when they were brought back and purified with mystic rites in which were scarlet wool and hyssop and the like, they were made to see how they could only be restored by Jesus Christ, the great High Priest.

When the bird was killed that the leper might be clean, the need of purification by the sacrifice of a life was set forth. Every morning and evening a lamb died to tell of daily need of pardon, if God is to dwell with us. We sometimes have been accused of speaking too much about the *blood*, yet under the Old Testament, the blood seemed to be everything and was not only spoken of, but actually *presented* to the eyes. What does the Apostle tell us in Hebrews? "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, scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the Book and all the people, saying, this is the blood of the Testament which God has 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."

The blood was on the veil and on the altar, on the hangings and on the floor of the tabernacle! No one could avoid seeing it. I resolve to make my ministry of the same character and more and more sprinkle it with the blood of Atonement. Now the abundance of the blood of old was meant to show clearly that sin has so polluted us that without an Atonement, God is not to be approached. We must come by the way of Sacrifice or not at all. We are so unacceptable in ourselves, that unless the Lord sees us with the blood of Jesus upon us He must put us away. The old Law, with its emblems and figures, set forth many truths as to men's selves and the coming Savior, intending, by all of them, to preach Christ. If any stopped short of Him, they missed the intent and design of the Law. Moses leads up to Joshua and the Law ends at Jesus.

Turning our thoughts back to the moral, rather than the ceremonial, Law, it was intended to teach men *their utter helplessness*. It shows them how they fall short of what they ought to be and it also shows them, when they look at it carefully, how utterly impossible it is for them to come up to the standard. Such holiness as the Law demands no man can reach of himself. "Your Commandments are exceedingly broad." If a man says that he can keep the Law, it is because he does not know what the Law is. If he fancies that he can ever climb to Heaven up the quivering sides of Sinai, surely He can never have seen that burning mountain at all.

Keep the Law? Ah, my Brethren, while we are yet talking about it, we are breaking it! While we are pretending that we can fulfill its letter, we are violating its spirit, for pride as much breaks the Law as lust or murder. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" No, Soul, you cannot help yourself

in this thing, for since only by perfection you can live by the Law, and since that perfection is impossible, you cannot find help in the Covenant of Works. In Grace there is hope, but as a matter of debt there is none, for we do not *merit* anything but wrath! The Law tells us this and the sooner we know it to be so, the better, for the sooner, then, we shall fly to Christ.

The Law also shows us *our great need*—our need of cleansing, cleansing with the water and with the blood. It shows us our filthiness and this, naturally, leads us to feel that we must be washed from it if we are ever to draw near to God. So the Law drives us to accept Christ as the only Person who can cleanse us and make us fit to stand within the veil in the Presence of the Most High. The Law is the surgeon's knife which cuts out the proud flesh so that the wound may heal. The Law, by itself, only sweeps and raises the dust—but the Gospel sprinkles clean water upon the dust—and all is well in the chamber of the soul. The Law kills, the Gospel makes alive! The Law strips and then Jesus Christ comes in and robes the soul in beauty and glory. All the Commandments and all the types direct us to Christ, if we will but heed their evident intent. They wean us from self. They put us off from the false basis of self-righteousness and bring us to know that only in Christ can our help be found. So, first of all, Christ is the end of the Law, in that He is its great purpose.

And now, secondly, He is *the Law's fulfillment*. It is impossible for any of us to be saved without righteousness. The God of Heaven and earth, by immutable necessity, demands righteousness of all His creatures. Now, Christ has come to give to us the righteousness which the Law demands, but which it never bestows. In the chapter before us we read of "the righteousness which is of faith," which is also called, "God's righteousness." And we read of those who "shall not be ashamed" because they are righteous by believing, "for with the heart man believes unto righteousness." What the Law could not do Jesus has done! He provides the righteousness which the Law asks for, but cannot produce!

What an amazing righteousness it must be which is as broad and deep and long and high as the Law itself! The Commandments are exceedingly broad, but the righteousness of Christ is as broad as the Commandments and goes to the end of them. Christ did not come to make the Law milder, or to render it possible for our cracked and battered obedience to be accepted as a sort of compromise. The Law is not compelled to lower its terms, as though it had originally asked too much. It is holy, just and good—and ought not to be altered in one jot or tittle—nor can it be.

Our Lord gives the Law all it requires, not a part—for that would be an admission that it might justly have been content with less at first. The Law claims complete obedience without one spot or speck, failure, or flaw. And Christ has brought in such a righteousness as that, and gives it to His people. The Law demands that the righteousness should be without omission of duty and without commission of sin—and the righteousness which Christ has brought in is just such an one that for its sake the great

God accepts His people and counts them to be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

The Law will not be content without spiritual obedience—mere outward compliances will not satisfy. But our Lord's obedience was as deep as it was broad, for His zeal to do the will of Him that sent Him consumed Him. He says Himself, "I delight to do Your will, O My God, yes, Your Law is within My heart." Such righteousness He puts upon all Believers. "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Righteous to the fullest—perfect in Christ! We rejoice to wear the costly robe of fair white linen which Jesus has prepared and we feel that we may stand arrayed in it before the majesty of Heaven without a trembling thought! This is something to dwell upon, dear Friends. Only as righteous ones can we be saved, but Jesus Christ makes us righteous and, therefore, we are saved!

He is righteous who believes on Him, even as Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," because they are made righteous in Christ. Yes, the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Paul challenges all men, angels and devils, to lay anything to the charge of God's elect, since Christ has died. O Law, when you demand of me a perfect righteousness, I, being a Believer, present it to you. For through Christ Jesus, faith is accounted unto me for righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is mine, for I am one with Him by faith and this is the name with which He shall be called—"The Lord our Righteousness."

Jesus has thus fulfilled the original demands of the Law, but you know, Brothers and Sisters, that since we have broken the Law there are other demands. For the remission of past sins something more is asked, now, than present and future obedience. Upon us, on account of our sins, the curse has been pronounced and a penalty has been incurred. It is written that He, "will by no means clear the guilty," but every transgression and iniquity shall have its just punishment and reward. Here, then, let us admire that the Lord Jesus Christ is the end of the Law as to penalty! That curse and penalty are awful things to think about, but Christ has ended all their evil and thus discharged us from all the consequences of sin!

As far as every Believer is concerned, the Law demands no penalty and utters no curse. The Believer can point to the Great Surety on the tree of Calvary, and say, "See there, oh Law, *there* is the vindication of Divine Justice which I offer to you! Jesus pouring out His heart's blood from His wounds and dying on my behalf is my answer to your claims! And I know that I shall be delivered from wrath through Him." The claims of the Law, both as broken and unbroken, Christ has met—both the positive and the penal demands are satisfied in Him. This was a labor worthy of a God and lo, the Incarnate God has achieved it! He has finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity and brought in everlasting righteousness! All glory be to His name!

Moreover, not only has the penalty been paid, but Christ has put great and special honor upon the Law in so doing. I venture to say that if the whole human race had kept the Law of God and not one of them had vio-

lated it, the Law would not stand in so splendid a position of honor as it does today when the Man, Christ Jesus, who is also the Son of God, has paid obeisance to it. God, Himself, Incarnate, has in His life and yet more in His death, revealed the supremacy of the Law—He has shown that not even Love nor Sovereignty can set aside Justice. Who shall say a word against the Law to which the Lawgiver, Himself, submits? Who shall now say that it is too severe when He who made it submits Himself to its penalties?

Because He was found in fashion as a Man and was our Representative, the Lord demanded from His own Son perfect obedience to the Law, and the Son voluntarily bowed Himself to it without a single word, taking no exception to His task. “Yes, Your Law is My delight,” He said, and He proved it to be so by paying homage to it even to the fullest! Oh wondrous Law under which even Emmanuel serves! Oh matchless Law whose yoke even the Son of God does not disdain to bear, but being resolved to save His chosen, was made under the Law, lived under it and died under it, “obedient to death, even the death of the Cross!”

The Law’s stability has also been secured by Christ. That, alone, can remain which is proved to be just, and Jesus has proved the Law to be so, magnifying it and making it honorable. He says, “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 is fulfilled.” I shall have to show you how He has made an *end* of the Law in another sense, but as to the settlement of the eternal principles of right and wrong, Christ’s life and death have achieved this forever. “Yes, we establish the Law,” said Paul, “we do not make void the Law through faith.” The Law is proved to be holy and just by the very Gospel of faith, for the Gospel which faith believes in does not alter or lower the Law, but teaches us how it was to be fulfilled the uttermost!

Now the Law shall stand fast forever and ever, since even to save elect man, God will not alter it. He had a people, chosen, beloved and ordained to life—yet He would not save them at the expense of one principle of right! They were sinful and how could they be justified unless the Law was suspended or changed? Was, then, the Law changed? It seemed as if it must be so if man was to be saved, but Jesus Christ came and showed us how the Law could stand firm as a rock and yet the redeemed could be justly saved by infinite Mercy! In Christ we see both Mercy and Justice shining full orbed, and yet neither of them in any degree eclipsing the other. The Law has all it ever asked, as it ought to have—and yet the Father of all mercies sees all His chosen saved as He determined they should be through the death of His Son!

Thus I have tried to show you how Christ is the fulfillment of the Law to its utmost end. May the Holy Spirit bless the teaching. And now, thirdly, He is the end of the Law in the sense that He is *the termination of it*. He has terminated it in two senses. First of all, His people are not under it as a covenant of life. “We are not under the Law, but under Grace.” The old

Covenant, as it stood with father Adam was, “This do and you shall live.” Its command he did not keep and, consequently, he did not live, nor do we live in him, since in Adam all died. The old Covenant was broken and we became condemned, but now, having suffered death in Christ, we are no more under it, but are dead to it.

Brothers and Sisters, at this present moment, although we rejoice to do good works, we are not seeking life through them! We are not hoping to obtain Divine favor by our own goodness, nor even to keep ourselves in the love of God by any merit of our own. Chosen, not for our works, but according “to the eternal will and good pleasure of God,” we are called, not of works, but by the Spirit of God. We desire to continue in this Grace and return no more to the bondage of the old Covenant. Since we have put our trust in an Atonement provided and applied by Grace through Christ Jesus, we are no longer slaves but children, not working to be saved, but saved already, and working *because we are saved!*

Neither that which we do, nor even that which the Spirit of God works in us, is, to us, the ground and basis of the love of God toward us since He loved us from the first because He would love us, unworthy though we were. And He loves us, still, in Christ and looks upon us not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in Him, washed in His blood and covered in His righteousness. You are not under the Law, Christ has taken you from the servile bondage of a condemning Covenant and made you to receive the adoption of children, so that now you cry, Abba, Father.

Again, Christ is the terminator of the Law, for we are no longer under its curse. The Law cannot curse a Believer, it does not know how to do it. It blesses him, yes, and he shall be blessed, for as the Law demands righteousness and looks at the Believer in Christ—and sees that Jesus has given him all the righteousness it demands—the Law is bound to pronounce him blessed. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” Oh, the joy of being redeemed from the curse of the Law by Christ, who was “made a curse for us,” as it is written, “Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.”

Do you, my Brothers and Sisters, understand the sweet mystery of salvation? Have you ever seen Jesus standing in your place that you may stand in His place? Christ accused and Christ condemned! Christ led out to die and Christ smitten of the Father, even to the death! And then *you* cleared, justified, delivered from the curse because the curse has spent itself on your Redeemer! You are admitted to enjoy the blessing because the righteousness which was His is now transferred to you that you may be blessed of the Lord, world without end! Let us triumph and rejoice in this forevermore! Why shouldn't we? And yet some of God's people get under the Law as to their feelings and begin to fear that because they are conscious of sin they are not saved, whereas it is written, “He justifies the ungodly.”

For myself, I love to live near a sinner's Savior. If my standing before the Lord depended upon what I am in myself and what good works and

righteousness I could bring, surely I would have to condemn myself a thousand times a day! But to get away from that and to say, "I have believed in Jesus Christ and therefore righteousness is mine," this is peace, rest, joy and the beginning of Heaven! When one attains to this experience, His love to Jesus Christ begins to flame up and he feels that if the Redeemer has delivered him from the curse of the Law, he will not continue in sin, but he will endeavor to live in newness of life! We are not our own, we are bought with a price and we would, therefore, glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are the Lord's. Thus much upon Christ in connection with the Law.

II. Now, secondly, OURSELVES IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST—for, "Christ is the end of the Law to everyone that believes." Now see the point—"to everyone that believes"—there the stress lies. Come, Man, Woman, do you believe? No weightier question can be asked under Heaven! "Do you believe on the Son of God?" And what is it to believe? It is not merely to accept a set of doctrines and to say that such-and-such a creed is yours and then and there to put it on the shelf and forget it. To believe is to trust, to confide, to depend upon, to rest upon, to rest in.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead? Do you believe that He stood in the sinner's place and suffered, the Just for the unjust? Do you believe that He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him? And do you, therefore, lay the whole weight and stress of your soul's salvation upon Him, yes, upon Him alone? Ah then, Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to you and you are righteous! In the righteousness of God you are clothed if you believe! It is of no use to bring forward anything else if you are not believing, for nothing will do.

If faith is absent, the essential thing is lacking—sacraments, prayers, Bible reading, hearing of the Gospel—you may heap them together as high as the stars, into a mountain as high Olympus, but they are all mere chaff if faith is not there! It is your *believing* or *not* believing which must settle the matter! Do you look away from yourself to Jesus for righteousness? If you do, He is the end of the Law to you. Now observe that there is no question raised about your previous character, for it is written, "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes."

But, Lord, this man, before He believed, was a persecutor and injurious! He raged and raved against the saints and hauled them to prison and sought their blood! Yes, beloved Friend, and that is the very man who wrote these words by the Holy Spirit, "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes." So if I address one here, this morning, whose life has been defiled with every sin and stained with every transgression we can conceive of, yet I say unto such, remember, "all manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men."

If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, your iniquities are blotted out, for the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanses us from *all sin*! This is the glory of the Gospel, that it is a sinner's Gospel—good news of blessing, not for those without sin, but for those who confess and forsake it! Jesus came into the world, not to reward the sinless, but to seek and to

save that which was lost. And he, being lost and being far from God, who comes near to God by Christ and believes in Him, will find that He is able to bestow righteousness upon the guilty.

He is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes and, therefore, to the poor harlot that believes, to the drunk of many years standing that believes, to the thief, the liar and the scoffer who believes! Jesus is the end of the Law to those who have, before, rioted in sin but now turn from it to trust in Him. But I do not know that I need mention such cases as these. To me the most wonderful fact is that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to *me*, for I believe in Him. I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day.

Another thought arises from the text, and that is that there is nothing said by way of qualification as to the strength of the faith. Jesus is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes, whether He is Little Faith or Greatheart. Jesus protects the rear rank as well as the vanguard. There is no difference between one Believer and another as to justification. So long as there is a connection between you and Christ, the righteousness of God is yours! The link may be like a film, a spider's line of trembling faith, but, if it runs all the way from the heart to Christ, Divine Grace can and will flow along the most slender thread!

It is marvelous how fine the wire may be that will carry the electric flash. We may need a cable to carry a message across the sea, but that is for the protection of the wire. The wire which actually carries the message is a slender thing. If your faith is of the mustard-seed kind—if it is only such as tremblingly touches the hem of the Savior's garment. If you can only say, "Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief." If it is but the faith of sinking Peter, or weeping Mary, yet if it is faith in *Christ*, He will be the end of the Law for righteousness to you as well as to the chief of the Apostles! If this is so, then, beloved Friends, all of us who believe are righteous.

Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have obtained the righteousness which those who follow the works of the Law know nothing of. We are not completely sanctified—would God we were! We are not rid of sin in our members, though we hate it, but still, for all that, in the sight of God, we are truly righteous! And being qualified by faith, we have peace with God. Come, look up, you Believers that are burdened with a sense of sin! While you chasten yourselves and mourn your sin, do not doubt your Savior, nor question His righteousness! You are black, but do not stop there, go on to say as the spouse did, "I am black, but comely."—

***"Though in ourselves deformed we are,
And black as Kedar's tents appear,
Yet, when we put Your beauties on,
Fair as the courts of Solomon."***

Now, mark that the connection of our text assures us that being righteous we are saved, for what does it say here? "If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be *saved*." He who is justified is

saved, or what were the benefit of justification? Over you, Believer, God has pronounced the verdict, “saved,” and none shall reverse it! You are saved from sin and death and Hell—you are saved even now, with a present salvation—“He has saved us and called us with a holy calling.” Feel the beauty of it at this hour. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God!”

And now I have done when I have said just this. If anyone here thinks He can save himself and that his own righteousness will suffice before God, I would affectionately beg him not to insult his Savior. If your righteousness suffices, why did Christ come here to work one out? Will you, for a moment, compare *your* righteousness with the righteousness of Jesus Christ? What likeness is there between you and Him? As much as between an ant and an archangel! No, not so much as that—as much as between night and day, Hell and Heaven! Oh, if I had a righteousness of my own that no one could find fault with, I would voluntarily fling it away to have the righteousness of Christ! But as I have none of my own, I rejoice the more to have my Lord’s.

When Mr. Whitefield first preached at Kingswood, near Bristol, to the coal miners, he could see when their hearts began to be touched by the gutters of white made by the tears as they ran down their black cheeks. He saw they were receiving the Gospel and he wrote in his diary, “as these poor men had no righteousness of their own, they, therefore, gloried in Him who came to save publicans and sinners.” Well, Mr. Whitefield, that is true of the coal miners, but it is equally true of many of us, here, who may not have had black faces, but we had black hearts! We can truly say that we, also, rejoice to cast away our own righteousness and count it dross and dung that we may win Christ and be found in Him! In Him is our sole hope and only trust!

Last of all, for any of you to reject the righteousness of Christ must be to perish everlastingly, because it cannot be that God will accept you or your pretended righteousness when you have refused the real and Divine Righteousness which He sets before you in His Son! If you could go up to the gates of Heaven and an angel were to say to you, “What title have you to entrance here?” And if you were to reply, “I have a righteousness of my own,” then for you to be admitted would be to decide that your righteousness was on a par with that of Immanuel, Himself! Can that ever be? Do you think that God will ever allow such a lie to be sanctioned? Will He let a poor wretched sinner’s counterfeit righteousness pass current, side by side with the fine gold of Christ’s perfection?

Why was the fountain filled with blood if you need no washing? Is Christ a superfluity? Oh, it cannot be! You must have Christ’s righteousness or be unrighteous—and being unrighteous you will be unsaved—and being unsaved you must remain lost forever and ever! “What? Has it all come to this, then, that I am to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and to be made just through faith?” Yes, that is it! That is the whole of it. “What? Trust Christ, alone, and then live as I like?” You cannot live in sin after you have trusted Jesus, for the act of faith brings with

it a change of nature and a renewal of your soul. The Spirit of God, who leads you to believe, will also change your heart.

You spoke of, “living as you like.” You will like to live very differently from what you do now. The things you loved before your conversion, you will hate when you believe—and the things you hated you will love. Now you are trying to be good and you have great failures because your heart is alienated from God. But when once you have received salvation through the blood of Christ, your heart will love God—and then you will keep His Commandments and they will be no longer grievous to you. A change of heart is what you need but you will never get it except through the Covenant of Grace. There is not a word about conversion in the Old Covenant—we must look to the New Covenant for that!

And here it is—“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean. From all your filthiness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. A new heart, also, will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments, and do them.” This is one of the greatest Covenant promises—and the Holy Spirit performs it in the chosen!

Oh, that the Lord would sweetly persuade you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—and that promise and all the other Covenant engagements shall be fulfilled to your soul! The Lord bless you! Spirit of God, send Your blessing on these poor words of mine for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 10.
HYMNS FROM “OWN HYMN BOOK”—231, 535, 647.**

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MOUTH AND HEART

NO. 1898

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, APRIL 25, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus
and shall believe in your heart that God has raised
Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”
Romans 10:9.***

PAUL'S great work was saving souls. Whatever else he might be doing, he never forgot, “by all means to save some.” Whatever else he aimed at in his Epistles, he always took care to write that men might, by his teaching, be led to the Lord Jesus. He sought to speak so that troubled consciences might come to peace through Jesus Christ his Lord, whom he loved so well. This is one of the reasons why he so often gives us weighty condensations of the Gospel, packing the Truths of God together very closely. He knew that these are very useful and so he prepared them for his Brothers and Sisters, as one provides portable meats or condensed milk for travelers. When the reader finds a compact sentence of this sort, he has met with a little Bible, a miniature Body of Divinity. Behold the whole story of redeeming love told out in a line or two, easy to be understood, likely to be remembered, calculated to impress! He who composes short and striking summaries of Gospel Truth may be working as effectively for the salvation of men as another who delivers earnest, pleading discourses. In this chapter Paul several times puts the Gospel in a remarkably plain, simple and brief manner. He is the master of condensation and our text is a specimen of his power! He here gives the plan of salvation in a line or so—“If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”

I wish to preach in the same spirit in which Paul wrote, aiming from my first word to my last at the conversion of any of you who have not yet known the Lord. I pray that we may all mean business at this time and may get at it in downright earnest. May you be determined to come to the point and no longer hesitate! How glad I should be if any would say to themselves, “I will run in the way, if I can but see it. I will lay hold of that which is put before me, if I may but grasp it. I will hesitate and trifle no longer, but I will deal solemnly with solemn matters, so that this day I may find peace with God!”

I am not going to enter into any profound exposition of the deep things of God, but I shall keep to those simple matters through which salvation

comes to plain men and women. Oh that the Spirit of God may bless my words to the immediate conversion of my hearers!

I. I shall need you to notice in our text, first, that the Gospel, as Paul here sets it forth, is a Gospel of faith. And THIS GOSPEL OF FAITH IS EVIDENTLY INTENDED FOR LOST MEN. Observe, he says, "If you shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead *you shall be saved.*" When Moses wrote the Law, he spoke upon obedience to the command as securing *life*, for, he says, "This do, and you shall live." It was presupposed by the Law that those to whom the Law came already possessed life and the fulfilling of the Law did but *preserve* them in the life which they already possessed. We read in the fifth verse of this chapter, "For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the Law, that the man which does those things shall live by them." You see, the Law *continues* life to those who have already life enough to do good works. The Gospel comes to us under quite another aspect—it does not regard us as having life, but as *needing* that life. The Gospel comes to us not as to servants who need to be told how they are to continue to live, but as to *dead sinners* who need to be made to live and then to be kept alive and preserved in happy and holy being! The Gospel says not only that we shall live by it, but that we shall be *saved* by it, which promise goes much lower and further. When it is said that we shall "be saved," it implies that we have fallen into a lost, ruined and undone condition—and out of this the Gospel is to rescue us.

It is well to start fairly in preaching the Gospel, by declaring plainly to whom this Gospel is sent. It is sent to you that need it—it is sent, therefore, to you who are lost, because if you are not lost, you do not need saving. If you have not fallen, you do not need restoring. If you have not sinned you do not need forgiving. If you are not far off from the Lord, you do not require to be brought near by the blood of Christ. The Gospel of salvation is sent to those who are under the curse of the Law and condemned to pay its penalties. What a joyous note this is! Hear it, you broken-hearted, and be encouraged! To you we proclaim the free gift of God!

Some fancy that we are to preach to you a milder kind of Law, a more easy way of works, an amended dispensation. But, on the contrary, we preach to you not demands but *gifts*, not Law but *love*. Our Gospel is, in very deed, good news! We have come to tell men not what *they* are to do for God, but what God has done for them! We speak not of what men are to bring to Jesus, but of what Jesus has brought to them and has freely and graciously put forward for their acceptance! Listen, then, you who need saving—this Book is for you—the Christ whom this Book reveals is for you! The Spirit of God who bears witness to Christ is for you! Ah, you guilty, you self-condemned, you utterly disheartened, it is to such as *you* that the risen Savior is preached today!

Jesus comes to bring *salvation*. What a great word that is! The text says the Believer shall "be saved"—saved is a little word for letters, but it is a great word for meaning! What is it to be saved? It means to be saved from *the punishment* of all your sins, saved from going down into the Pit, saved

from the blackness of darkness forever, saved from the everlasting wrath of the Most High, saved from the second death whose terror is the Hell of Hell. Whoever confesses the Lord Jesus and believes that God has raised Him from the dead, shall be saved from the penal consequences of his guilt.

Better still, you shall be saved from *sin itself*. The criminality and guilt of it shall be removed—from its stain you shall be washed whiter than snow. The sin itself, that black cloud, as well as the tempest with which it is charged, shall be removed, even as it is written, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, your transgressions, and, as a cloud, your sins.” We preach not only deliverance from *the punishment*, but deliverance from *the crime*, itself—deliverance from the charge and accusation which otherwise would lie against the transgressor. The sin shall be blotted out in the case of the Believer and he shall be forgiven and justified—justified from all things from which the Law could never clear him. Righteousness shall be imputed to him, even the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, who is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes. If you confess with the mouth and believe with the heart, the Lord Jesus shall be made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption! The confessing Believer shall be delivered from the guilt of his sin and he shall stand accepted before the Judgement Seat of God!

What is still more, you shall not only be delivered from the punishment of sin and the guilt of sin, but from *the power* of sin. Oh, to be saved from sinning! This is our chief desire. If the guilt of sin could possibly be put away and we could still be left as much the slaves of sin as before, very little would have been done for us. It would be a doubtful blessing. If the children of Israel in Egypt had been screened from serving with rigor, had been fed to the fullest and made content in their slavery, would it have been a real blessing to them? Would it not have riveted the chains of their bondage? The Lord did not send them relief in the form of bread, meat and garments, with which to be comfortable in Egypt, but He brought them *out of Egypt* with a high hand and an outstretched arm. To be made happy in sin would be dangerous to us and unworthy of God!

The Lord Jesus Christ has come to save His people from their sins, to break the chains of evil habit, to subdue sinful influences which now dominate us and to put within us a new heart and a right spirit. He, by the infusion of a new life, makes us sigh and pant after holiness! He answers to that sighing and works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. He subdues our iniquities and makes the power of evil in us to wax weaker and weaker while Grace grows stronger and stronger. At last He will present us faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy. We preach emancipation for the slaves of sin! You that are worried and wearied with temptation shall be saved from yielding to it! You that cry out by reason of indwelling sin shall receive salvation from the power of evil! The living and holy seed within you cannot sin because it is born of God and its growing force shall, at last, hold your every thought in captivity to Christ!

It is a blessed salvation—an all-round salvation for the past, for the present and for the future. This is what we are sent to testify! We could not have a more full or a more Divine message! We could not have a grander blessing to present to the sons of men than that of being saved! In the grand completeness of it, it comprehends Heaven itself and all its bliss. “You shall be saved” reaches from the gates of Hell to God’s own Throne and lifts the sinner up from between the jaws of death to the white-robed orchestra of the New Jerusalem! Though now an heir of wrath even as others, the believing sinner shall be made like unto the First-Born, even to the Lord Jesus Christ who is bringing many sons unto Glory.

I begin, then, with the proclamation of salvation for the lost. Hear it, you unworthy ones! Hear it, you who cannot say a good word on your own account! Hear it and catch at this hope. If God the Spirit will bless the Word, according to His gracious habit, you mourning and heavy laden ones will joyfully cry, “There is a message for us in this text!” Then you will lean forward lest you should lose a word of the discourse and your minds will lean forward as well as your bodies. Your hearts will lie open like plowed land ready for the seed, ready for the showers. You will be responsive to the voice of mercy, even as the echo to the horn. By repentance and faith you will answer to the call of Divine Love!

II. I now advance to my second point, which is this—SAVING FAITH CONCERNS ITSELF ONLY ABOUT JESUS, HIMSELF. I will read to you the connection of my text. “But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your 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 says it? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead you shall be saved.”

True faith, the faith which saves, concerns itself wholly about the glorious Person and gracious work of Him whom God raised from the dead! Within the compass of Bethlehem, Gethsemane and the right hand of the Father lies the sphere of the sinner’s faith. Faith is where Jesus is and she asks no wider range. Unbelief is speculative, but faith deals with facts. Unbelief says, “Who shall ascend into Heaven? Who shall descend into the abyss?” Unbelief is always starting questions—she is so dissatisfied with the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ that she demands another Savior, or no Savior, or 50 Saviors! She does not know what she wants! Her cry is, “Who will show us any good? Who in the heavens, who in the depths, who anywhere?”

Unbelief has a very attentive ear to every new notion. This man has a novel doctrine, another has just ferreted out a fresh idea and unbelief goes helter-skelter this way and that. She hears voices crying, “Lo here, and lo there!” and, like a silly bird, she is lured and snared! She flies away to the hills, or plunges into the abyss to find the promised good. At one

time she is aloft in delusion, at another she is beneath in despair—pessimism, or optimism, or some other “ism” will charm her—but she will not keep to the Truth of God.

Faith is of another mind—she takes her stand where Christ is and she says, “If salvation is anywhere it is in Him. Is it not written, ‘Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else?’” She bows before Jesus at Bethlehem and sees hope in His Incarnation. She traverses the fields of Judea with Jesus and sees hope in the holy, tender-hearted Lover of souls. She goes with Him to Gethsemane and views Him covered with the bloody sweat and begins to read her pardon there. She sees Him die upon the accursed tree and she says, “My life is here. If ever I am saved, I must be saved here.” She sees Jesus in the tomb. She watches and beholds Him rise again—and as He rises, she claps her hands with delight, for she sees hope and immortality in Him! She looks up yonder to the Throne of the Most High—she sees Jesus interceding for transgressors that the Lord God may dwell among them! She understands that He is carrying on a noble enterprise which will soon be brought forth to victory and she glories in her Lord—her All—

***“All our immortal hopes are laid
In You, our Surety and our Head!
Your Cross, Your Cradle and Your Throne,
Are big with glories yet unknown.”***

Faith’s resolve is to look only to Jesus, her God, for she is persuaded that beside Him there is none else. You are saved, my dear Friend, when you come to that point! When Jesus is all your salvation and all your desire, the work of Grace has begun in you. Jesus is your Boaz and you have come to the right conclusion about Him when you are resolved never to glean in any other field! You will be satisfied, now that you have determined to drink waters only from His fountain and to be satisfied only from His table.

The faith which saves is not dreamy. Do you not notice how unbelief, here, dreams of skies and seas, and all immeasurable things? “Who shall ascend into Heaven?” What a picture! Imagination is at work—she beholds her mighty merits scaling the everlasting ramparts—she dotes upon her dream! If she hears a discourse, she only cares for the oratory of it. “What a sermon that man preached! How full of poetry!” She must have something high and lofty—nothing common will suit her. At another time, when she is heavy, her dream is of a wretched diver into the deep seas of anguish plunging down into the abyss to find the pearl of peace. Imagination raises in the soul despondency, despair, frenzy and madness—and many foolish ones hope to find a ransom in these. Faith has done with these Arabian nights, for she has done with Sinai. She dreams no more, for perfectly healthy men have done away with dreams! With open eyes, faith reads facts. She dwells on what Jesus did and suffered. She reflects that He died, He rose again and is gone into Glory. Facts, not fiction, are her solace. She accepts matters of history, not figments of imagination. Something actually done, something really accomplished, faith requires

and accepts. The weight of sin is not to be borne by theories—the enormous load of human guilt is not to be sustained by speculations. Only actual transactions can meet our dire necessity! And these we find in Jesus Christ, the Revelation of God.

I know that I am talking to some of you who are as full of fancies as an egg is full of meat and I wish I could get you out of them. All sorts of whims and notions please your idle brains. You have followed after them as a dog follows a false scent, but you have come upon nothing yet—and you never will come upon anything till you accept those sure, well-witnessed facts which make up the life of the Lord Jesus—especially His Resurrection, which is the best assured *fact* in human history! We this day, in the name of God Most High, the Spirit of God being with us, proclaim salvation by a risen Savior and we beseech you to believe the Truth of what we say, that you may thereby live!

Unbelief really puts a sad slur upon Christ. She talks about going up to Heaven, but supposes it is needed that somebody should ascend to Heaven—that would imply that Jesus had never come down from there to reveal the Father! She talks of descending into the abyss, as if Christ had never come up from the dead! The fact is, all that can be done *has* been done! Why do you need to do what is already done? All that can be felt *has* been felt—why do you need to feel it? “It is finished,” said Christ—why do you strive to do it over again? Look how that fable of the church of Rome concerning her unbloody sacrifice of the “mass” insults the one great sacrifice of Calvary and sets it on one side! And, even so, all those works, feelings, preparations and so forth which you would add to the finished work of Christ really push Christ out!

You need to feel—are not *His* feelings enough? You need to work—are not *His* works enough? Trust in self is a disloyal attempt upon the crown rights of the Redeemer! All those doings, willings and feelings are a setting up of *self salvation*. It is all a mistake! Oh that you would give up those mistakes and hear that your soul may live, believing what you hear and accepting it in your very soul! I will not, however, stay longer to describe this faith by contrast, but we will penetrate a stage further into the center of the text.

III. The third point of our discourse is that SAVING FAITH HAS A CONFESSION TO MAKE—“If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Observe here, that *this confession is put first*. I suppose it is because Paul was quoting from the 30th Chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy and he had, of course, to place the words as Moses arranged them in the passage quoted. Yet there must be other reasons. Possibly the confession of the Lord Jesus unto salvation is put first because it is most likely to be forgotten. We have plenty of preaching of, “Believe and live,” and I do not condemn it. But still, strictly speaking, it is incomplete. When our Lord bade His servants go forth and preach, He said—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”

Now *Baptism is the confession of our faith*. Constantly in Scripture the faith to which salvation is promised is a faith which makes a confession of itself. It is never a dumb faith—it is a faith that speaks, a faith which acknowledges its existence—yes, a faith which acknowledges the Lord in the teeth of adversaries! We must confess Christ before men, or we may not believe that we have the faith of God’s elect. The Apostle mentions it first, here, because it is so often put into the background and this is a great cause of stumbling. He mentions it first, also, because it is first as far as our fellow creatures are concerned. How can I know what you believe in your heart? I must first *hear* what you confess with your mouth! An inquirer comes to me to join the Church, or to be acknowledged as a Christian. I cannot begin with his heart—I have no means of reading his thoughts. I say to him, “Speak, that I may see you.” If he confesses with his mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, he has done what, in the order of practical religion, must lead the way towards friend and foe.

Let me add that, in a certain sense, confession with the mouth is actually first in the man. Many persons never receive in their hearts the comfort of Christ’s Resurrection because they have never, with their mouth, confessed the Lord Jesus as their Savior and Master. The Lord will not give to you the warmth of faith which cheers the heart unless you are willing to yield to Him the obedience of faith by taking up your cross and coming out and confessing Him! There are numbers of Christians—Christians, I mean, in the judgment of charity—who never enter into the joy of their Lord because they have never obeyed His rule, nor acknowledged His name before men. The Spirit of God, as a Comforter, has not borne His witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God, because they have never borne their witness to the Lord Jesus. The comfort of believing with the heart is hindered by the absence of confession with the mouth!

Will you listen to this, some of you who cry, “We desire to be saved?” I dare not preach to you a backstairs Gospel for cowards—a secret greenlane of salvation which winds about through the woods so that you can travel it without being seen! No—at my Lord’s bidding, I preach to you an open King’s Highway which the fearful and the unbelieving refuse to go! And yet there is only this one way to the Kingdom! We must not attempt to be moonlighters. Let us follow Jesus in broad daylight. Jesus says, “He that confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in Heaven; but he that denies Me”—which, in that connection, means he that does not confess Him—“he that denies Me before men, him will I deny before My Father which is in Heaven.” Hear, I pray you, the text—“If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”

Notice *what it is that is to be confessed*—“The Lord Jesus.” By which I gather that it is essential to salvation that a man confess the Deity of Christ. I would not be uncharitable to anybody, but I never can, as a believer in the Word of God, expect to see a man saved who denies the Godhead of his Savior! He puts himself out of court. He rejects that part of the

Redeemer's Character which is essential to His being a Savior! If any man would be saved, he *must believe that Jesus Christ is both Lord and God.*

Again, you must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, that is, Ruler and Master. You must cheerfully become His disciple, follower, and servant. You must confess—"He is my Master, He is my Lord, I intend to be a soldier under Him. He shall be to me Leader and Commander. God has made Him such and I accept Him as such."

We are to confess the Lord Jesus, too. That means the Savior, who has come to save His people from their sins. If you would be saved by Him, you must acknowledge Him as the Messiah, sent of God, to lead His people out of their ruin into eternal salvation. The Lord commands you to confess Him in that Character and promises to such a believing confessor that he shall be saved! Without such open confession there is no promise.

Note how very definite is the confession. Somebody says, "Well, I will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and I will try and act up to my faith." Do so, by all means! But this will not fulfill the demand of the text. It is true, your *life* is a confession and the more pure it is, the more excellent it is as a profession. Still, the doing of one duty does not exempt us from another! The confession required by the text is expressly said to be "*with your mouth.*" I dare not alter the Scripture. Do not blame *me*—I did not write the words! There they are—"If you shall with your mouth confess the Lord Jesus." You are vocally to acknowledge Jesus. You are definitely and distinctly to say with your tongue, your mouth, your lips that He is your Lord and Savior. It is *not* to be an inference drawn in silence from your life, but a declared statement of the mouth. What other meaning can my text have but that? If the Apostle meant that we were to obey the Lord Jesus Christ and might render no other confession, he would have said so. Why did he say, "with your mouth," if he did not require a *spoken confession*? The mode of confession to which the promise of salvation is given is clearly set forth in these words, "you shall confess with your mouth."

Why is this? asks one. Well, first, because I believe that confession with the mouth is a sort of breaking away from the world. When a man says with his mouth, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," it is as good as saying to the world, "I have done with you." Those round about will conclude that the man has broken loose from his old habits and has come right away from the unbelieving world. When the man with the withered arm was in the synagogue, our Lord did not take him into the corner and heal him, but He said, "Stand forth." He stood right out in the middle of the congregation and when he stood forth, then the Lord said, "Stretch forth your hand"—and he did so. Dear Seeker, you must stand out! You must come away from your old companions and sinful connections and say, "I am for Christ. He is my Savior and I am His follower." He requires this confession of you that you may thus be cut loose from the world which lies in the Wicked One.

This confession is also a way of forming a visible union with the Lord Jesus. When a man, with his mouth, confesses Christ, he does, as it were, take sides with Jesus and His cause on the earth—and this is a very im-

portant thing. Besides, this confession is of much use to the outside world as a witness reproofing their ungodliness and inviting them to a better mind. The confessions of the saved are often the means of saving others. We are not fully saved till we earnestly wish to save others. If any man says, "If I can get to Heaven all by myself I shall be satisfied," he has not taken the first step to Heaven—assuredly he has not a *germ* of Heaven within him! The first thing that must be slain within us, if we are to dwell with God, is our selfishness! Even our concern for our own salvation must yet be overridden by a concern for the spread of the Redeemer's Kingdom and a desire for the salvation of others. No man is truly sanctified till it is so. Therefore you must confess your Lord with your mouth, to prove your sacrifice of *self*.

Ah, my Friends! This is a hard saying to some of you. You have good points about you, but you do not let your light shine before men as your Lord commands you. Your candle is under a bushel—it cannot burn well in so confined a space! It is apt to make smoke and blackness. Bring it out at once! If it is God's own fire and you put it under a bed to hide it, it will soon set the bed on a blaze! Mischief comes of suppressed Truth. It can never be right to hide away the Light of God. Come out, you cowards! Come out, you tremblers! My Master bids me act as enlisting sergeant—I set up the banner and invite you to rally to it! If you love Christ, confess Him! If you would have the salvation of Christ, take up the Cross of Christ and follow Him wherever He goes. Have I gone an inch beyond my text? I am sure I have not.

IV. Time would fail me if I were to dwell longer on this point, important as it is. Let us now notice, in the fourth place, that FAITH HAS A GREAT COMFORT TO ENJOY. She has truth of which she must speak with her mouth, but she has also *facts* which she ponders in her heart. The text says, "With your heart believe that God has raised Him from the dead." This does not only mean that you believe the fact that the Lord Jesus has been raised from the dead—I suppose everybody here believes in our Lord's Resurrection—but we must so believe it that it warms and comforts our heart.

Why, my dear Brothers and Sisters, is salvation promised here especially to a belief with the heart that God has raised Christ from the dead? Is not our faith to be fixed upon the *death* of Christ rather than upon the Resurrection of Christ? I answer, it is probably here stated because *in the Resurrection of our Lord all the rest of His history is implied and included*. If He was raised from the dead, then He must have died. If He died, then He must have been a Man and have been born into the world. In mentioning that God raised our Lord from the dead, the Apostle has really mentioned all the great redeeming work of Jesus, since all the other items are involved in it.

Moreover, the raising from the dead is not only inclusive of the rest, but *confirmatory of the whole*. By raising Him from the dead, the Father gave confirmation of the mission of His Son. He set His seal upon His Person as Divine, upon His office as commissioned of God to be the Messiah, upon

His life as well-pleasing and upon His death as being accepted of God for full atonement. Therefore the Most High raised Him from the dead that He might be declared to be the Son of God with power and that, in and through Him, Believers might be justified. We would not have had firm ground for our faith in Jesus if the seal of Resurrection had not been set to His work. But now, when we believe in the seal, we believe, also, in that which is sealed. His Resurrection is the seal of all that our Lord is and does—and believing in this with our heart, we believe in that which brings salvation!

Moreover, the Resurrection of Christ from the dead is one of the chief of those Truths of God which are to be believed in the heart, because *it is the source of the heart's best comfort*. "Look," says the Believer, "I am, by nature, a poor lost sinner, but I shall not be destroyed forever, for Jesus my Savior and Surety has been raised from the dead! My salvation lies in Him. I am delivered from the dead in Him. I see my justification in His Resurrection. Because Jesus lives, I have an unfailing Friend to whom I fly. Because God raised Him from the dead and so bore witness that He accepted Him, therefore I know that I am accepted in Him. If I lay hold upon that righteousness which God has accepted, I am accepted in it."

O dear Friends, when a sinner knows that his salvation does not lie in *himself* at all, but wholly in Christ, then he discovers the great secret! The point is to see Jesus dying for our sins and to see ourselves dead in Him. To see Jesus risen from the grave and ourselves risen in Him. To see Jesus accepted of God and ourselves, therefore, accepted in Him. The Lord Jesus is the object of our trust—not ourselves. We are in Him and as He is, so are we. We shall rise to Glory because He rose to Glory and we shall dwell in Heaven because He dwells in Heaven! Union to Christ is the foundation of hope. Oh, to live in Christ!

The difficulty is to wrench you away from yourselves—this needs a miracle of Grace. I know where you are—you are saying, "I do not *feel*; I cannot *do*," etc. Sirs, this is not the point! The ground of salvation is in Jesus and not in the sinner! To see salvation, we must mark what Christ accomplished and especially we must mark in our heart that the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead—and there we shall be comforted because the Resurrection of the Savior is the assurance of the completion of His atoning work. He who would have sure hope must fix his faith upon Jesus living, Jesus crucified, Jesus risen, Jesus ascended, Jesus soon to come! If we believe and trust in these facts, we shall be saved—so says the text. Put the two things together—you confess Jesus to be Lord and Christ and you, also, with all your heart, trust in Jesus as risen from the dead—well, then, you shall be saved!

How this ought to cheer those of you who are near despair! How it should encourage those who lie at death's door! You groan out, "I never can be saved." Why not? If Christ died and rose again, what then? If this is the ground of salvation and you believe it to be the fact, hold on to it and never let it go! Never let your heart doubt the well-witnessed fact that God has raised Jesus from the dead! Plead the promise of our text in life

and, in the dying hour! Cry, "O Lord, You have said that if with my mouth I confess the Lord Jesus, and with my heart believe that You have raised Him from the dead, I shall be saved. Lord, I make the confession and my heart also believes! I beseech You, therefore, to do as You have said and save me." This plea can never fail!

V. So now I finish with the truth that FAITH HAS A SURE PROMISE TO REST UPON. "If you believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

"YOU"—Who is that? This is yourself! It is the man who, with his mouth, confesses and with his heart believes. Dear Friend, it means you! John, Thomas, Sarah, Jane, where are you? Did I hear you cry, "I have no merits of my own! I have no good feelings! I have nothing of my own that I can rejoice in! I feel myself to be utterly lost!"? Listen! "If *you* shall, with your mouth, confess the Lord Jesus and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, *you* shall be saved." The singular pronoun, "you," sets its mark upon you! Put your ear to this telephone—a voice speaks to you. God out of Heaven is speaking straight down the telephone into your ear—"you shall be saved."

"But I am almost damned." If you confess and believe, "you shall be saved." "Alas! I must give up in despair." Yet the promise is to the contrary. "But I am the blackest sinner out of Hell." Still the promise is to you—"If *you* shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, *you shall be saved.*" I cannot come down from my pulpit and run round to all the pews, but, oh, I wish I could look each one of you in the face and press your hand and say, "Dear Friend, the text says, '*you.*'" Brother, Sister, it speaks to you! Youth, child, or gray-headed old man—whoever you may be—the text says that if you believe, "you shall be saved."

Observe the total absence of, "ifs," and, "buts." It is not "you *may* be saved," but, "you *shall* be saved." When God the Holy Spirit says, "shall," there is solidity in it! But you say, "I am afraid." Afraid of what? Dare you question the truthfulness of God? When God says, "shall," what can you be afraid of? If I were to say, "shall," you would receive it as a proof of my fixed intent, but you would know that there is only my poor puny arm to carry it out. But when God says, "shall," Omnipotence is engaged! He that made Heaven and earth and shakes them with His nod—He who creates and destroys—HE says, "shall," and who can stand against His will? Devils in Hell go howling back to their dens when they hear even the whisper of a, "shall," from God!

There is a sort of passiveness about the expression, "be saved." The text does not speak about what you are going to do, but about something that is to be done *to* you—"You shall be saved." "I cannot save myself"—who said you could? Who asked you to? You can, with your mouth, confess the Lord Jesus—do that straight away. You can believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead. If you are the man I am looking for, you are doing so now. You say, "Oh yes, I believe it with all my heart; my hope lies in Jesus." Then you shall be saved! The power that is needed to deliver

you from your sinfulness, the Grace that is needed to wash you from your guilt, the blood that is needed to cleanse you from your filthiness is all ready—and out of Glory the Lord Jesus declares, “you shall be saved.”

There never was, and there never will be a man who, with his mouth confessed the Lord Jesus and with his heart believed that God raised Him from the dead, who was not saved. Among all the multitudes that sink to Hell, there is no confessing Believer and no believing confessor! I dare not part the confession and the faith, for God has joined them together. The mouth and the heart are equally necessary to a living body and a living soul. Open confession and secret belief—these together make up the casting of yourself upon the Lord Jesus! The full surrender to the Savior—that is the great saving act. Do you cast yourself, sink or swim, on what Jesus has done? Then you shall be saved, otherwise I am a liar and, what is far worse, this Holy Book is a liar, too! And the Spirit of God has borne false witness. This can never be! I have no hope, this morning, but what is compassed in this verse. With my mouth I do again confess the Lord Jesus, for I believe Him to be very God of very God, my Master, my All. Moreover, in my heart I do verily and assuredly believe that God raised Him from the dead and I am glad of it! It comforts and joys me—

“He lives, the great Redeemer lives!

What joy the blessed assurance gives!”

I shall be saved, I know I shall! I dare not doubt it because God’s Word plainly says so!

I have the same confidence concerning the poorest old woman in this house as I have about myself. If she confesses and believes, she is saved as I am. The most wicked ruffians and most wanton harlots, if they will do as the text directs, shall also be saved. This Gospel is not denied to the vilest of the vile. O my Friend, it is not denied to you! This is the ship which has carried thousands to Heaven. We who go on board shall get to Heaven by it. If it could go down, we should all sink together, but as it floats safely, we will all sail together to the Fair Havens. There is no second vessel on this line and there is no other line! This one chartered boat of salvation by a confessing faith now lies at the wharf. Come on board! Come on board at once! God help you to come on board at this very moment, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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FAITH FIRST, CONFESSION FOLLOWING NO. 3011

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1906.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 4, 1867.**

***“For with the heart, man believes unto righteousness,
and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.”
Romans 10:10.***

[For two other sermons on this text, see Numbers 519 and 520, Volume 9—BELIEVING WITH THE HEART and CONFESSION WITH THE MOUTH—

Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

IN speaking of this important matter—confessing with the mouth what we have believed with the heart, I call your attention, first of all, to the order of the two things. Believing with the heart must come first. Confession with the mouth must and should come afterwards. To confess with the mouth what I do not believe with the heart would be hypocrisy instead of being an acceptable sacrifice. It would be an abomination in the sight of God. How dare I profess to have faith if I do not possess it? How dare I assume a form of godliness unless I have proven its power in my spirit? So first comes the heart’s believing and then follows the mouth’s confession. Do not reverse the Scriptural order, but take care that you do all things in their due course. Among the last words of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples are these, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Note the order—not Baptism first and believing afterwards—but he who first believes and then is baptized upon profession of his faith, is the servant of Christ who obeys his Master’s commands in their right order—and he it is who “shall be saved.”

Having noted the order of faith and its confession, next, note the connection between them. Confessing with the mouth is to follow believing with the heart just as effect follows causes. We are to confess with the mouth *because* we believe with the heart. The heart’s belief is to be so potent and energetic a thing that it constrains us to confess openly what we have received inwardly—no confession is worth anything unless it is the outcome of the Grace by which we have received the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior!

There is a due order for faith and confession—and there is a clear connection between faith and confession.

Notice, also, *the result of the two put together*—“With the heart, man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made

unto salvation.” The result of faith and confession is salvation. I do not doubt that a man who truly believes in Jesus is saved even before he makes a confession of his faith, but it is very remarkable that the blessing of salvation is constantly connected with these two things rather than with either one of them alone—and we must not put asunder what God has joined together. The same Truth of God is taught in the memorable sentence which I quoted to you just now—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” There is no saving efficacy in Baptism, yet belief and Baptism are joined together by our Lord Jesus Christ and again I say, “What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” I would not like to attend to one duty and neglect another when I found my Master laying both upon me. The path of obedience is always the path of happiness and if any God-given command should ever seem to your imperfect apprehension to be less important than another, remember the wise words of the mother of Jesus to the servants at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, “Whatever HE says unto you, do it”—and do it conscientiously, gladly, promptly, because He commanded it, even though you cannot see any other reason for doing it. [For two other sermons upon this subject, see Number 2275, Volume 38—BLIEF, BAPTISM, BLESSING—and Number 2339, Volume 39—BAPTISM ESSENTIAL TO OBEDIENCE—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

We have, on this occasion, to consider the lesser duty of the two, which is, nevertheless, most certainly enjoined upon all Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. In talking of it, I still have to speak of four things. First, *what it is that we are to confess?* Secondly, *when are we to confess it?* Thirdly, *why we should confess it?* And, fourthly, *how and in what spirit should we confess it?*

I. First, then, as BELIEVERS IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHAT IS IT THAT WE ARE TO CONFESS?

It is clear, from the text, that we are to confess with the mouth that which we believe with the heart. The same things which, through our faith in them, are the basis of our salvation, become the subject of our confession before God. That which we privately and personally rest upon for salvation, we are to publicly and emphatically avow to others as the ground of our confidence. And you know whom that is, Beloved. It is neither more nor less than the Person, work, Character and offices of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We build for eternity upon Him. He is the foundation and the chief cornerstone of the invisible, yet most substantial structure upon which all our confidence rests! And if any Believer should ask, “What am I to confess?” the answer is plain enough—confess JESUS CHRIST!

First, we are to confess that *we believe Him to be the appointed Savior of sinners*—that we look upon Him as being the long-promised Seed of the woman who came into this world to bruise the old serpent’s head and to recover His chosen people from among the terrible ruins of the Fall. We believe Him to be the Son of God, equal with the Father and the ever-blessed Spirit. And we accept Him and confess Him as our Savior, in

whom alone we have confidence, upon whose unique Sacrifice we rely for pardon of all our sins and upon whose constant intercession we depend for our preservation unto the end. We confess Christ before men as King of kings and Lord of lords, as “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession,” the Messiah by whom alone can be fulfilled Gabriel’s prophecy to Daniel, “to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” We must confess Christ in all His offices and Characters—and if we lay stress upon any part of His life, or any attribute of His Character, it must be upon that which is most attacked in the age in which we live. The great point of controversy in Paul’s day was the Resurrection of Jesus and, therefore, wherever he went, he preached the Resurrection. He knew that this Truth of God would excite the ridicule of the philosopher and bring down upon him the fierce opposition of the Jews, but, nevertheless, this was always a prominent point in his preaching and writing, “Christ is risen from the dead.”

Sometimes it has been the duty of Christians to make most prominent the Deity of Christ because that Truth has been the one most attacked just then. Some years ago, many insults were cast upon the Godhead of our Lord and then every genuine Christian was bound to expound and defend that master Doctrine that Jesus Christ “is over all, God blessed forever.” Whatever may be the point in the Character of our Lord which is most debated and controverted, it is the duty of His true disciples to bear witness upon that point with special distinctness and frequency. To confess Christ is to say of Him, “I have received Him into my soul as my Savior and He is my sole hope for time and for eternity. I honor Him as the Son of God and I submit to His Laws as those of the great King who is worthy to rule as He pleases. Let others set up what lords they will and be governed by what laws they choose, as for me, the crucified Man of Nazareth—who is none other than the ever-blessed Son of God, co-equal with the Father and the Spirit—shall have the absolute control of all my powers and faculties. This, I take it, is the way in which “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

But, in confessing Christ, *we must take care that we confess all His words as well as Himself.* You recollect that solemn declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Whoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him, also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the Glory of His Father with the holy angels.” A Scriptural confession of Christ involves our profession of faith in that form of Doctrine which is revealed in the Divinely-Inspired Scriptures, our union with that body of Believers who most clearly comply with the requirements of our Master’s Words, our willing subjection to whatever we perceive to be according to the mind and will of Christ. And we are not altogether faithful to our conscience unless, in every point, as far as we receive the Light of God, when we know our

Master's will, we do it! Oh, that all Christians would look upon this kind of confession as being one of the most important parts of the Christian's business here below! Instead of that, it seems to be the view of some that you are to keep a great many Truths in the background just because they happen to be inconvenient either to yourselves or to other people! But, Brothers and Sisters in Christ, the true ideal of a New Testament Christian Church is that of a company of Believers witnessing to the whole of Christ's Truth, counting every fragment of the Word to be so precious that if the entire Christian community should go to martyrdom in defense of just one Truth of God, that priceless Truth of Revelation would be saved at a cheap rate even by so great a sacrifice! To stand firmly by God's Word in everything, to conform to our Master's will even to the jots and tittles, to savor the things that are of God and not those that are of men—this it is what every Christian should seek to do by the aid of the ever-blessed Spirit!

Further, dear Friends, *it is the duty of each Christian to confess his clear faith in Christ.* You should avow before your fellow men that you have believed in Jesus. I think the Scriptures teach us that this ought to be done early in our Christian career. We should not live as secret Christians, for years, as some do, as though they were ashamed of Jesus and saying nothing to show that they have believed in Him. Confess that unless you are dreadfully deceived, you are saved by Christ, and are resting in Him! Then confess what Christ has done for you and do not be ashamed to confess the details of your case. Paul told Timothy that "before he was a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious." But he adds, "However, for this cause I attained mercy, that in me, first, Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." Do not be ashamed to confess that there is a change in you, that you are not now what you once were! Tell the story of your spiritual experience. Is it not written, concerning God's deliverance of His people, "It shall be to the Lord for a name?" Do not rob God of the great name of Deliverer, to which He is so fully entitled! It is due to a physician, when he has been the means of curing some extraordinary disease, that you should tell of what he has done, so, tell to others what the Great Physician has done for you!

If you have been, spiritually, raised from the dead by the Lord Jesus Christ, never cease to publish abroad what He has done for you! And as you grow older and your experience increases, confess with your mouth the deeper Truths of God that have been revealed to you. Tell to the young people around you what the Lord did for you in your times of trouble. Speak well of your Master—imitate the holy resolution of David—"I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad." And when the time comes for you to die, mind that you bear a closing testimony to Christ, then, if it is possible. Let those around your bed hear you tell, in your last moments, how real and

true you find Christ to be to you when all else in the world seems like a dream and your life melts away like a shadow.

This appears to me to be an accurate, though brief, summary of a Christian's confession of faith—what Christ is in himself and what Christ has been to him and been for him. You can yourselves supply any deficiency that there may be in my summary, for the flight of time prevents me from dealing further with this part of the subject.

II. Now, secondly, let us enquire WHEN SHOULD ONE WHO BELIEVES WITH THE HEART, MAKE CONFESSION WITH THE MOUTH?

Should he not make it *as soon as he is converted*? Is it not the most fitting time for making his first confession when he comes forward to unite himself with a Christian Church? Many churches, nowadays, have given up the old-fashioned custom which once prevailed in Baptist churches, of candidates coming before the Church and making a public avowal of their faith before their fellow Believers and, through the abandonment of that Scriptural method, they have bred a race of cowardly good-for-nothings who hardly dare to say that their souls are their own, who never know what their religious convictions are, but are turned this way and that with every wind that blows, like so many weather-cocks! But you, my Brothers and Sisters, though some of you once thought it a great ordeal and trial, have all testified before the Church, "Yes, we do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." Some of you said it with very trembling lips, but still, you all said, personally and individually, as your turn came, "Yes, we are on the Lord's side." It seems to me that this is an Apostolic custom which ought never to be given up and I scarcely count that to be a church which receives its members without any testimony of their faith being verbally given! We know that Paul, himself, when he went up to Jerusalem, "essayed to join himself to the disciples," but they were afraid to receive him until they had heard how he had been converted to God, "and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." Then they gladly received him, "and he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem." Why is it that good Christian people are so frightened over the little matter of saying to their fellow Christians, "We believe in Jesus," utterly amazes me! If you have been, as Jeremiah says, wearied by running with the footmen, how can you contend with horses? And if, in these little billows of trouble through making your open avowal of faith to your own Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you get so frightened, what will you do in the dwellings of Jordan? You are afraid of going to see your minister about joining the church, are you? Yet you have to meet the devil, foot to foot, as Bunyan's Christian had to meet Apollyon! Are you afraid of meeting a few of your fellow Christians? Why, you have to meet DEATH! You have to face a scorning, scoffing, frowning, jeering, persecuting world! If you are afraid of a company of Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are only too glad to hear you say that you are on the Lord's side if it is really true, and

who will cheer and comfort, and help you as far they possibly can—if you are afraid of us, surely you cannot have the courage which ought to be the possession of all good soldiers of Jesus Christ!

Then, next, *the two ordinances of the Christian religion are, both of them, confessions of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.* It seems to me that the Baptism of Believers is a most impressive and instructive mode of confessing with the mouth what we have believed with the heart. Coming to the open pool, the Believer says to you who look on, “I believe that Jesus Christ died and was buried, and rose again on my behalf, in testimony to which I, also, am about to be buried in this liquid and out of which I shall rise, as He rose from the grave. I believe that this flesh of mine is past improvement and must die—I look for no perfection in my body, for I know that the perfection I am to receive is spiritual. As Paul wrote to the Romans, “If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” And I give up this body of mine to be buried—the body of my flesh, these old corruptions, to be buried once and for all. I openly confess, this day, that I am dead to the world, that my life is hid with Christ in God, and that the life which I henceforth live shall be a resurrection-life, a life in the power of the Holy Spirit who has quickened me, and raised me up from among the dead to live with Jesus Christ in newness of life!” I cannot conceive a more impressive and instructive form of confession with the mouth than that which our Master Himself has enjoined upon us, not only by precept, but also by example when He told John to baptize Him in the river Jordan, and said to him, “Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.”

And then, when we gather around the Table of Communion in obedience to our Master’s command, “This do in remembrance of Me,” we, “do show the Lord’s death till He comes.” And there, in the breaking and eating of the bread, and the pouring out and drinking of the wine, we make another confession with the mouth that we have trusted in Jesus as our Savior, that He is “the Living Bread which came down from Heaven,” upon which we live and, “the wine on the lees, well refined,” which is the choicest cordial our quickened spirits can enjoy.

So you see that both the ordinances are God’s own methods by which we are to confess our confidence in His Son, Jesus Christ.

More than this, *every Christian is bound to acknowledge his faith in Christ at all times when it is possible.* We are not merely Christians on some special occasions, we are always Christians and Christians forever if we are Christians at all! We are not only Believers in Jesus when we meet each other at the Communion Table, or at a Prayer Meeting, but we are Believers in Jesus out of doors, at our work, in our business, or our daily occupation, whatever it may be. I utterly abhor that so-called, “piety,” which belongs only to places and to dates! Your “holy” places, and your “holy” dates, and your “holy” water, and so on are all alike anti-Christian and Popish! To the Christian, every day is alike holy, every place alike holy and everything alike holy! He is a sanctified man and all

things that are around him are sanctified to God's service and to his fellow creatures' good and, to that end, he confesses Christ with his mouth at all times.

Still, there are certain special occasions when we should do this. For instance, it is our duty to confess Christ with the mouth when enquirers ask us for information about Him. There are many persons in the world with a sufficiently candid spirit to want to know what Christianity really is. So, as the Apostle Peter says, "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Do not let such enquirers go away unsatisfied, even though it may be a very long and difficult matter to satisfy their enquiries.

Mind, also, that you are always ready to make confession of your faith to objectors, even though they should only ask questions and raise objections just for the sake of opposition. When a controversy is started and someone else speaks on the wrong side, do not hesitate to put in a word for that which is right and true! I have heard of some people who are of so gentle a spirit that if they hear others engaged in controversy, they always walk away. Well, have you ever heard of the soldier who was so gentle-spirited that whenever there was any fighting to be done, he always hid away in a corner, or some other safe place? That was not very creditable on his part and when he was discovered, he was shot! And that mode of skulking, which some people adopt whenever a religious controversy is on, is about as honorable to them! If you can say a word that will really help a good cause, do not keep it back, for, sometimes, even the simplest observation may come in just at the right time and may overthrow the adversary of the Truth of God. So, bear your personal testimony for the Truth in times of controversy. And take care that you always confess Christ when you are likely to be ridiculed for doing so. This, indeed, will be a test of your sincerity! To confess Christ in summer weather when religion, as it were, walks in silver slippers, is what a hypocrite might do—but to take your place beside Christ when He stands in the pillory and every man's hands are full of mud and filth to throw at Him—this is what only a genuine Christian can do! Confess Christ when His followers are in rags! Acknowledge Him when His disciples are oppressed and persecuted! Remember what Paul mentions to the praise of Onesiphorus—"he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chains." Do not any of you Christians be ashamed of Christ's chains, but count it your highest honor and glory, as Paul says, to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," "for His body's sake, which is the Church."

Let me, having thus given you sufficient opportunity for making your confession of faith, urge upon those present who have believed in Jesus, but have never yet confessed their faith, the duty of doing so at once! Be no longer backward, but say, "I, also, am on the Lord's side." I pray you,

if you have never done so, take the first opportunity you have of doing it and, in some way, but especially in your Lord and Master's own way, come forward and say, "He is my Savior, my King, my All-in-All, and I hereby avow Him in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation."

III. Now, thirdly, let us ask, WHY SHOULD WE CONFESS OUR FAITH IN CHRIST?

I shall not spend many minutes on this point, for it seems to me that every true Christian's heart can supply him with many reasons for acting thus. To confess God in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, *is a part of true religious homage which is naturally due to the Most High.* Our prayers and praises are rightly due to the great Being who created us and who still preserves and provides for us—and our confession of Christ, if we have truly believed in Him, is due to the One who has redeemed us from destruction with His own most-precious blood!

We should confess Christ with the mouth *because He claims this from us.* I repeat the solemn words I quoted to you a little while ago—"Whoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him, also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the Glory of His Father with the holy angels." Tremble, lest you should incur the doom of those who are ashamed of Christ! There is another terrible passage in the 21st Chapter of the Revelation and the 8th verse—"But, the fearful, and unbelieving...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." "The fearful"—that is, those who are afraid to confess Christ—not those who are fearful concerning their own salvation! Not the Little-Faiths and the Much-Afraid—*but those cowards who are afraid to suffer for Christ's sake and who, therefore, take the side of the world for the sake of their present ease and comfort—these are they who shall be shut out of Heaven and have their everlasting portion with idolaters and liars in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone!* I implore you to tremble lest that should be your lot.

We should openly acknowledge Jesus Christ, my Brothers and Sisters, *if only for our own sakes,* for really, it does a Christian great good to say openly, "I love the Lord." It gives happiness, comfort, satisfaction, rest of heart and lasting joy to confess Christ before men! I have not the time to tell you of all the blessings that I personally received through publicly acknowledging that Christ was my Savior. One thing I may say, however, I believe that up to that time I was one of the most timid persons in the world! I never spoke to anybody and never ventured to give an opinion upon anything without tears coming into my eyes. But, from that happy day when I walked into the water at Isleham Ferry to be baptized into the name of Christ, I have never been afraid of any man in the world, nor of the devil, either, while engaged in the pursuit of the things of God! My Baptism was a sort of crossing of the Rubicon for me. I had burnt my boats, drawn my sword and thrown away the scabbard—so there was no possibility of going back—and I never wished to do so. And I believe that

others who are always timorous, trembling and afraid, would derive perpetual benefit from once and for all boldly and openly acknowledging themselves to be on the Lord's side!

And, Brothers and Sisters, *we ought also to do this for the sake of others.* Who knows what good you may do in your family by confessing Christ with the mouth if you have believed on Him with your heart? There is another poor trembler in your home—if you come out for Christ, that other one will soon come out, too. Frequently, it is my happy lot to see a daughter come to join the Church and when I ask her if her parents are godly people, she says, “Oh, yes, I hope so, Sir!” “Do they attend the Tabernacle?” “Oh yes, Sir!” “Then how is it that they have not joined us?” “Well, Sir, I think it is because they are so timid.” And then, often, in about a month afterwards, the father and mother both come—they cannot let their daughter be in the Church without them, so they also come and openly acknowledge their faith in Christ. It is not the right order, you know, for the child to come first, but it is often so—and when one comes, others soon follow. I have known many a time, the youngsters of the family to be the boldest in acknowledging Christ as their Lord and Master and then, when they have broken the ice, the other Believers in the household have followed them and made the heroic plunge. Confess Christ, therefore, because of the good you may do to others by so doing!

Further, by giving such public testimony to your faith—that is, if you live up to it—*you help to let the world know that the old faith has not died out.* And though they may hate you for doing it, you will have borne your personal witness that there is a God, that there is a Savior and the wicked world will not be able to sleep so soundly as it did before! Your confession will touch its guilty conscience and cause it to have disquieting dreams. It may be that you will help to awaken it and so be the means of bringing some out of it whom Christ has bought with His precious blood who will also boldly come out on the Lord's side!

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, *if you will look through the history of the Church of Christ, you will find abundant reasons why every Christian should publicly acknowledge his Master.* Look at those days of diabolical persecution under Diocletian and the other Roman emperors. Look all down the blood-red path of the noble army of martyrs. Where would the confessors of Christ have been if all Christians had left the knowledge of their faith to themselves? Where would the Church of Christ, itself, have been if every Believer had done as some do now—namely choke the good Seed within their own hearts by never giving expression to the faith that is in them? Why, when the fires of persecution were the hottest, Christians were the bravest—and multitudes of men and boys, matrons and maidens, were not ashamed to come to the Roman and other tribunals and say, “We are followers of Christ, we acknowledge the Man of Nazareth as our Lord and Savior.”

They did not hide themselves away—many of them even seemed to court grim Death, though he came dressed in his most terrifying garb! Torture, flaying alive, breaking on the wheel, dragging at the heels of wild horses, rotting in foul dungeons, burning at the stake—none of these things could quench their courage! They knew whom they had believed and were persuaded that He was able to keep that which they had committed unto Him and, therefore, they marched bravely to prison and to death! What then? Shall others fight to win the prize and shall you, as a coward, abide by the stuff? God forbid! Instead thereof, the Lord help you to confess Christ in the day of His rejection that you may be honored with Him in the day of His exaltation! God help you to take His part in the midst of the sinners of the world, that you may be with Him when the acclamations of cherubim and seraphim, and the innumerable host redeemed by His blood shall make all Heaven ring and ring again with the music of His matchless name!

IV. And now, lastly, IN WHAT SPIRIT SHOULD WE CONFESS CHRIST?

We should confess Christ, first, *with due self-examination*. As it is with the Lord's Supper, so it is with this important matter of confessing Christ with the mouth. "Let a man examine himself," says the Apostle, and so say we, for, remember that confession with the mouth will be very dangerous unless you are sure that you have believed in Christ with your *heart*. I am greatly afraid for those of you who are not converted, but who have united yourselves with some Christian Church. After the exercise of the best judgment on the part of Church officers, such a calamity will occasionally occur, but if, my Friends, this is your case, you are in a most perilous position! You are now not very likely to be converted, for the preacher's message to the sinner will pass on to somebody else when it should be received by you. The fact of your being in the Church may be very much to your spiritual injury. Therefore do not confess with the mouth what you have not believed with the heart!

But, *when you have believed with the heart, take care that you promptly and quickly confess Christ with the mouth*. Do not need to be pressed to do it. Do not need that mother, or father, or friends should urge you to do it. Christ did not need any pressing to give Himself to die for you, so you should not need any pressing to live for Him. The best wine flows most freely from the grape and the sweetest honey is that which drops freely from the comb. Let your soul freely drop with love to Christ like the droppings of the honeycomb. "Freely we have received, freely give" to Him who freely gave His all for you.

Take care, too, that you also *came forward very boldly*. Do not be ashamed to confess Christ with the mouth in His own appointed way. What you are about to do has no shame connected with it. If you sincerely believe in Jesus, you have no more need to blush at being baptized than a king has when he comes forward to be crowned, or a knight when he kneels to receive the accolades from his sovereign. There

is no sin in being a disciple of the Son of God and no shame in confessing that you am His!—

***“Ashamed of Jesus? That dear Friend
On whom my hopes of Heaven depend?
No, when I blush, to this my shame,
That I not more revere His name.”***

Further, *confess Christ with the mouth very plainly*. Do not acknowledge Him in a mystical sort of way which nobody can understand, but bear your testimony by plain words and by still plainer actions. Remember that “actions speak louder than words” and, therefore, make your confession most of all by the consistent Christian character of your daily life. “Let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ.”

Then, *constantly make your confession with the mouth*. Do not retract at home what you say abroad and, on the other hand, do not disown abroad what you acknowledge to be true at home! Do not be one thing in the Church and another thing in the world. Remember that you are always a Christian if you are ever a Christian! Stand fast in the faith, therefore, at all times. Nail your colors to the mast if you have entered the service of the Lord High Admiral of the Galilean Lake!

Above all things, *confess the Lord Jesus Christ sincerely*. Let there be no hypocrisy about your confession in any way. Do not repeat some other Christian’s experience which is not your own. Do not borrow your confession of faith from the biography of some eminent Christian. Let your own experience be what you profess. Say, with the Apostle John, “that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.”

Also, *make your confession modestly*—not as though you had anything to boast of in being a Christian—not as though your Christianity was the result of any good thing in you. Take care to ascribe it all to Sovereign Grace. Do not blush at being a Christian, but, at the same time, do not boast about it. As Paul wrote to the Philippians, “Rejoice in Christ Jesus,” but, “have no confidence in the flesh.”

Further, *make your confession of Christ wisely*—not doing it so as to unnecessarily irritate others—being willing to suffer for Christ if necessary, but not making a martyr of yourself when there is no occasion for doing so. Boldly speak out for Christ whenever you can, but always blend the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove.

Finally, *confess Christ out of love to Him because you cannot help doing so*. Let holy zeal blaze and burn within you till the sparks fly out of your soul in the form of a burning confession of Christ. Let your feet be dipped in the holy oil of complete consecration to Christ, that you may leave a sacred unction behind you wherever you walk. That will be the best confession of your faith that you can make. Still, do not dissociate the word of confession from the action, for it is to be confession with the mouth. Do say and say it unmistakably, “I am a Christian.” If Christians have any other nickname beside that of Christians—for so it was given to

them at the first—do not be ashamed of that nickname. Do not be ashamed of the denomination to which you belong, even though some may denounce you as a sectarian. Remember that the genuine Christian is and must be a sectarian—that is to say, he is one who firmly holds the whole Truth of God which he has learned from the Scriptures through the teaching of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, he is what the world calls “a sectarian.” But as for latitudinarianism, which believes nothing and counts no truth to be worth anything—the modern Diana of the Ephesians—I pray you, make no shrines for that hideous idol and pay no reverence to it, but, like honest men and women, read your Bibles, find out what is the revealed Word of God and stand to it at all costs. If it brings an ugly name upon you and you are called a sectarian, be willing to bear that name for Christ’s sake! Only take care that in bearing it you have not the horrible spirit of some sectarians who denounce all others because they do not see eye to eye with them—and who have no fellowship with them because they cannot say, “Shibboleth,” exactly as the sectarians say it. Love the whole family of God but do not be ashamed of those distinctive Truths of God which give you a name which makes you a separatist from the ungodly and from those who do not follow the whole counsel of God. Stand out boldly for Christ and for His Truth, so that when He comes again, He may say to you, “Well done, you good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter you into the joy of your Lord.”

You who have not yet believed on Jesus with the heart, must make no confession with the mouth. But I pray that you may be, even now, led to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The way of salvation is simply this—Trust Jesus Christ—that is believing with the heart. Depend upon His merits, rely upon His all-sufficient atoning Sacrifice, rest in His perfect righteousness. If you do that, you are saved! And then, being saved, come forward and openly acknowledge your faith and God bless you in so doing, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

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

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

BELIEVING WITH THE HEART

NO. 519

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 12, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For with the heart man believes unto righteousness. And with
the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
Romans 10:10.***

EVERY star in Heaven yields its ray of light to cheer the mariner upon the watery waste. But there are *leaders* among that sparkling host—stars of the first magnitude—whose golden lamps are so dexterously hung, and trimmed with such excessive care that they offer way-marks to the wanderer by which he may be able to steer his vessel to the desired haven. So all the promises of Scripture are full of comfort. In their sphere, they glow and glisten with the warmth and light of love. But there are “bright particular stars,” even among these—promises, conspicuous as Orion, brilliant as the Pleiades, fixed as Arcturus with his sons.

Brethren, you know those soul-saving texts to which I refer, which are radiant with comfort, and have in them such a blessed combination of simple words, and comforting sentences that they guide multitudes of sinners to the port of peace in Jesus Christ. My text, I think, is one of these. At least, the doctrine which it teaches—that of salvation by faith—is the very polestar of the Gospel. And he who steers by it shall find the heavenly shore. Be not at all displeased that such a Truth of God should again be proclaimed in your hearing. The physician who is about to go abroad and knows that he shall not be able to procure more drugs, lays in a store of all the valued medicines in pharmacy—but he buys the largest stock of remedies for the more common diseases of the body.

And so, my Brothers and Sisters, we are bound in our ministry to preach upon all sorts of subjects. We ought not to bring out things *old* and old, but things new and old. Yet the preacher must dwell most upon that doctrine which is the most required and is most likely to heal the sin-sick soul. We believe that for every one converted under another doctrine, there have been ten brought to Christ by the simple preaching of salvation by faith. Although every Truth in Scripture is like a mesh of the great Gospel net, the great Truth of justification by faith makes up so many meshes that it constitutes the major part of the net and holds within its influence great multitudes of fishes.

God help us to cast this net today on the right side of the ship. While I let down the great dragnet, you take your share in the Gospel fishery, and

pray that God may send the fishes into it. And may His name be praised this day both in Heaven and on earth. The text very simply divides itself into two parts. *Faith* and *confession*. The two are joined together, let no man put them asunder. “With the heart man believes unto righteousness. And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Three things on each of these topics. First, upon *faith*. We have here set before us, either in the text, or in the context, the *Object of faith*, the *nature of faith*, and *its result*.

I. THE OBJECT OF FAITH is clearly mentioned in the context. The preceding verse runs thus—“That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” It is evident, then, that Jesus Christ, dead and risen, is the foundation of faith.

The *Object of faith* is probably the most important subject of our contemplation. I believe there are many who think too much of their faith and too little of the object of it. For many a weary month they are questioning whether they have the right sort of faith—whereas they would do a great deal better if they looked to see whether their faith rested upon a right foundation. For after all, while faith is important, the foundation of that faith is all-important, and we must look most to that.

Now, soul-saving faith rests, according to a thousand places in Scripture, upon Christ—upon Christ in all His Characters, works, and offices. Faith, first of all, rests upon Christ, as *incarnate*. What was sung by angels becomes the song of the poor depressed spirit. Jesus, the Son of God, was born in Bethlehem’s manger—God was made flesh and dwelt among us. Faith believes this great mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh—believes that He, by whom the heavens were framed, and without whom was not anything made that was made, did for us men and for our salvation, come down from Heaven to tabernacle in the virgin’s womb.

Faith so believes this as to draw comfort from it. For, says Faith, “If God thus became Man that He might come into nearness with our nature, this deed of love attracts me, gives me confidence toward God, and bids me approach the Lord with boldness, inasmuch as God comes to me.”—

**“Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find.
The holy, just and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.
But if Immanuel’s face appears,
My hope, my joy, begins—
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His Grace removes my sins.”**

Faith next sees Christ in His life. She perceives that He is perfect. In obedience, sanctified wholly to His work, and although, “tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” Faith delights to admire and adore

Him in His complete obedience to the Law of God. And she perceives with rapture, that in every jot and tittle He has fulfilled it, magnified it, and made it honorable. Faith, with holy boldness, cries, "This righteousness shall be mine. Christ has kept the Law for me. Evidently He was under no necessity to do this of Himself. But being found in fashion as a Man for my salvation, He with the same end and object kept that Law."

Faith looks to that righteousness of Christ and, like the Apostle, she learns to say, "Yes 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 my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." But, chiefly, Faith looks to Christ as offering up Himself upon the tree. She stands at the foot of the Cross, watching that mysterious, that matchless spectacle—God made flesh—bleeding, dying.

The Son of God wasted with pangs, rent with agonies and throes unutterable—obedient, even unto death. She watches Him with the expectancy of hope and the emotion of gratitude, both of which bring the tears streaming down her cheeks. She hears the expiring Sin-Bearer cry with a loud voice, "It is finished!" She adds a glad Amen, "It is finished!" My soul believes that there is enough in those wounds to wash away my sins—enough to avert the thunders of an angry God—enough in that righteousness to cover me from head to foot, and win for me the smile of infinite justice. O blessed Jesus, You are the one pillar of our consolation! Faith builds her all on this chief cornerstone.

But Beloved, Faith has never done with Jesus. Where He goes she follows hard after Him. Her eye tracks the body of the Savior to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. She beholds that Body, on the third day, instinct with life, rolling away the stone and bursting its cerements. "Jesus lives," says Faith—and inasmuch as Christ was put into the prison of the tomb as a hostage and bail for His people, Faith knows that He never could have come out again if God had not been completely satisfied with His substitutionary work—

***"If Jesus never had paid the debt,
He never had been at freedom set."***

Faith, therefore, perceives that if Christ is risen, the soul is justified. God has accepted Christ on my behalf—His resurrection proves it. And I stand accepted in the Beloved, because Jesus Christ has risen.

If you believe this, sincerely, in your heart—that God raised Him from the dead—you shall be saved. Borne aloft as on eagle's wings, Faith is not afraid to pursue her Redeemer up to His Father's Throne. Her illuminated eye beholds Him in His session at the right hand of God. She sees Him pleading as the great High Priest before the mighty Father's Throne. And

expecting until His enemies are made His footstool, Faith builds upon His intercession and dominion, as well as upon His death and resurrection. He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.

Mark, my dear Brothers and Sisters, the whole foundation upon which Faith rests is Christ *living* in the flesh, Christ *dying* in that flesh, Christ *rising* from the dead, Christ *pleading* in Glory on behalf of sinners. Not so much as a hair's breadth of Faith's foundation is to be found *out* of Christ Jesus. Faith does not build on its *own* experience. It rests on no Graces, raptures, meltings, communings, fights, or prayings. Its chief cornerstone is Christ Jesus. Faith never builds on any knowledge which it has obtained by research—on no merit which it fancies it has procured by long and ardent service. It looks altogether beyond self, and out of self. Christ Jesus and Christ Jesus alone, is the Object of its confidence.

Sinner, what do you say to this? There is nothing in you, but there needs be nothing. Can you trust Jesus? Jesus, the Son of God, becomes your Brother, bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh. Can you not trust His love? Jesus, the Son of God, dies on the Cross. Can you not trust that blood, that agony, that death? Look, Sinner! From head, and hands, and feet, the blood is streaming. It is a Divine Being who thus suffers! It is none other than God over all, blessed forever, who is nailed to that tree! Can you not believe that there is merit enough in agonies like these to stand in the place of your sufferings in Hell?

Do you not believe that Justice gets an ampler recompense from the wounds of Christ than it ever could find in all *your* wounds, even if you had been beaten from the soles of your feet to the crown of your head, until you had been nothing but wounds and putrefying sores? Methinks you will reply, "I believe that upon Calvary, God received a greater glorification of His Law than in all the agonies of all the damned in Hell, though they suffer eternally the infinite anger of God." I ask you, Sinner, can you not believe that Christ's perfect righteousness is enough for you? Can you see a flaw in it? Is it not fair white linen? Is there a spot? Is it not made of such precious material, the Divine work of a Divine Savior, that nothing can match it?

If you had it, Sinner, do you not think you would stand before God without so much as a spot or wrinkle? And I ask you, Sinner, do you not believe that if Jesus pleads for you, you will be saved? Can He stretch out His hands and say, "Father, save that sinner," and will God refuse to hear His prayer? If you give Him your cause to plead, do you think He will be an unsuccessful Advocate? Why, Man, with all the unbelief that is in your heart, I hope you will believe that if Jesus, who was the very heart of God, shall espouse your cause, He cannot plead in vain!

I think I hear you answer, "Oh, yes, we believe all this. We believe that this is ground for the fullest confidence to saints, but may *we* rest upon it? Are we to understand that if we trust in Jesus Christ, because He was a Man, and because He lived, and died, and rose again, and pleads, we are saved?" Soul, this is just what I would have you understand. If you have no good thoughts or feelings. If up to now you have been the most damnable of rebels against God. If up to this moment your hard and impenitent heart has been at enmity against God and against Christ. Yet if now, this very day, you will believe Christ incarnate, Christ died, Christ risen, Christ pleading can save you—and if you will rest your soul upon that fact—you shall be saved.

God, the infinitely loving Father, is willing to receive you just as you are. He asks nothing of you. O Prodigal, you may come back in your rags and filthiness, notwithstanding that you have spent your living with harlots. Notwithstanding that the swine have been your companions and you would gladly have filled your belly with their husks. You may come back without upbraiding, or so much as a word of anger, because your Father's only begotten Son has stood in your place. And in your place has suffered all that your many sins deserved.

If you will now trust in Jesus, the Lord, who loved you with unspeakable love, you shall be this very day received into joy and peace with a Father's arms about your neck, accepted and beloved. With your rags stripped from off you, clothed in the best robe—with the ring upon your finger, and the shoes upon your feet, listening to music and dancing—because your soul, which was lost is found, your heart which was dead has been made alive. This, then, is the Object of faith—our one and only Savior, doing all, for all who trust Him.

II. Next, we have in the text, the NATURE OF FAITH. This is obvious. We are told that, "*with the heart* man believes unto righteousness." This is not introduced by way of making a subtle distinction. Sometimes ministers make so many distinctions about faith that true seekers are much perplexed. I am very jealous of myself this morning, lest I should do the same. I have read sermons upon natural faith, and upon spiritual faith. And I have been persuaded that what the preacher called natural faith, was as much spiritual as that which he distinguished as the faith of God's elect.

The less distinction we try to make here, I think, the better, when Jesus Christ has broadly put it, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Where He makes few distinctions, but openly puts it, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved," we ought not to be making and multiplying theological points of differences. Still, dear Brothers and Sisters, the text does say, "*With the heart* man believes." And this is somewhat strange, because we generally attribute the act of faith to the

mind, to the *understanding*. The understanding believes certain facts, which appear to it to be worthy of credence. But our text puts saving faith upon the *heart*, and makes it to be a work of the affections rather than of the understanding.

I take it this is done for this reason—first, in order merely to state that faith—saving faith—*must be sincere*. We must not merely say, “I see the thing is so,” but we must heartily believe it. It must not be a *notional* faith which a man professes, because his mother was of the same persuasion, or because living in a Christian land he would be somewhat singular if he were to set up to be an infidel. Our faith must be a hearty, honest, sincere persuasion of the Truths of God which we profess to believe. If I say to myself, “Well, I have no doubt the Christian religion is true. I dare say it is”—but if I do not in my *heart* feel and know it to be true, then my faith will not save me.

Doubtless, the word, “heart,” is put in here to make a distinction between doctrinal faith and the faith which accepts Christ. Why, I have the misfortune to know scores who are well read in divinity. They can get on excellently in all the scholastic parts of theology. They are orthodox—yes, orthodox to the last turn of the scale—and they fight like lions and tigers for but one hair of the head of a creed. And yet, they will never be saved by *their* faith, because their belief is merely a belief of certain abstract propositions which never affected their nature. A faith, which, to speak honestly, they do not believe, after all.

Those dogmas which they accept as truths have no relationship to them. Their unregenerate hearts cannot perceive the true bearing of those doctrines upon themselves, consequently they receive them as lies. If you put a truth out of its proper place, you make it either marvelously *like* a lie, or else *really* a lie. And if I hold certain doctrines merely as having respect to some particular persons, but not as having any reference to *me*—and if I hold them so that they do not in any degree influence my character and touch my heart—then I hold them falsely. I turn the Truth of God into a lie, and my faith can never save my soul. True religion is more than notion—something must be known and felt. And faith is something more than acceptance of a sound creed—it is believing *with the heart*.

But now, I hope I shall not darken counsel by words without knowledge. Let me try, if I can, to explain what I think believing with the heart is. Beloved, you know very well that the first work of God, the Holy Spirit, in man, is not to teach him doctrines, but to make him feel a great hungering and thirsting—a great emptiness within himself. He is vexed with an uneasiness, a perpetual pining and longing and groaning after a something, he scarcely knows what. Now, that is his *heart* set in motion by the Spirit. His heart, like the needle, touched with the magnet, cannot rest,

because it has not found its pole. It has been touched mysteriously. It does not know how or why.

But this it knows—it has a restlessness in it—and trembles after a settled and abiding peace. It is the heart, you know, which is thus sorely troubled. Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ is set forth in our hearing as being a perfect and complete Savior, able at this very moment to pardon all sins, and to give a perfect righteousness—to give us this day a salvation which is complete—and which will be complete when time shall be no more, then the heart says, “Why, that is just what I have been wanting.” Just as the flowers which have been shut up all night, as soon as ever the sun is up, open their cups as if they felt—“There! That is what we were wanting! Hail, glorious sun!”

So the breaking, yearning, longing, thirsting *heart*, says, “Ah, that is what I need. You, O Christ, are all I want—more than all in You I find.” Then, that heart says, “Come to me, Jesus, come to me. Be mine, I would entertain You. If You would but come under my roof, I should have my poor humble heart made happy as the gates of Heaven.” The heart stretches out its arms to Christ, and Christ comes into that heart. And the heart presses Him close to itself. *That* is believing with the *heart*. It is the heart’s own conviction that Jesus Christ is just what it wants.

Many of you have a true faith in Christ and yet you have never read “Paley’s Evidences,” nor “Butler’s Analogy.” It would not hurt you if you did. But you never did study such books, and perhaps you never will. You hardly know upon what ground the Bible is accepted as true, and therefore, cunning infidels give you a good shaking when they get hold of you upon that point. But there is one thing upon which you can never be shaken—you feel the Gospel *must* be true, because it just suits the wants of your heart. If any man should say to you when you are thirsty, “Water is not good,” you would say, “Give me more of it. I have a thirst in *here* that makes me desire it.”

By an irresistible process stronger than logic, you can prove to yourself that water is good because it quenches your thirst. Just so with bread—when you are hungry, if you come to the table and a philosopher should say to you, “You do not understand the ground upon which bread nourishes the human frame. You do not know anything about the process of digestion, and the method of assimilation, and how the bones are nourished by the phosphorus, and by the lime, and by the silica contained in the flour!” You would say, “I do not know. I do not particularly care to know. But one thing I know, I am sure bread is good to eat if I am hungry and I will show you.” And you seize the loaf and begin to cut and eat. So it is with the believing heart. The heart is hungry, therefore the heart feeds upon Jesus. The heart is thirsty, therefore the heart drinks the Living Water. And so the heart believes unto righteousness.

Again, there is another explanation. Is it not, dear Friends, man's heart renewed by Divine Grace which is led to perceive the difficulty of reconciling the apparently discordant attributes of God? Do you not remember well that day when your heart said, "God is just. It is right He should be"? And your heart seemed as if it would kiss the hilt of the sharp sword Justice. You said, "Lord, though it is my own damnation, yet I would adore You, because You are holy, holy, holy." Your heart said, "Lord, I know You are merciful, for You have told me so. I see in the lovely works of Your hands, in the bountiful cornfields laden with the yellow grain, in this fair sunshine ripening all the fruits—I see proof that You are a good and gracious God.

"But, Lord, I cannot understand how You can be gracious, and yet be just. For if You are just, You are sworn to punish. And if You are gracious, then you will forgive! How can You do both? How can you punish and yet forgive? How can You smite and yet receive with tokens of affection?" You came up to the sanctuary one day when your heart was just in that state—in a quandary. Your heart was like the city of Shushan, it was perplexed. But you heard the preacher show clearly that Christ became the Substitute for man and paid to the last drachma all that mighty debt which man owed to God. You saw the wounds of Jesus, and you understood how an angry God had all His justice satisfied in the agonies of His beloved Son.

And your *heart* said, "There, that is the very answer I have been wanting. I perplexed myself, vexed myself. I had a jealousy for the justice of God—my conscience made me jealous for it. I had a longing toward the mercy of God, my heart made me long for it. Now, I see how righteousness and peace have kissed each other, how Justice and Mercy fall about each other's neck, and are reconciled forever." And your heart says, "This is the thing! Here is the master key which unlocks all the doors of doubt. The Divine finger which draws back the bolts." Oh, the joy and gladness with which your heart laid hold upon a crucified Redeemer, saying, "It is enough. I am satisfied, I am content. My trouble is removed." So you see it is not difficult to understand how the belief can be a belief of the heart.

But I want you to notice yet further, that believing with the heart implies a love to the *plan* of salvation. I will suppose that one of you, today, troubled with thoughts of sin, shall go home and you shall reach your chamber and sit down and think over the great plan of salvation. You see God choosing His people from before the foundation of the world, and choosing them though He knew that they would be lost in the Fall of Adam. You see the Son entering upon a Covenant relationship towards them and engaging to be their Surety to redeem them from wrath. You see Jesus Christ in the fullness of time coming forth as that Surety and fulfilling all His engagements.

You see the Spirit of God working to teach man his need, influencing him to accept the plan of salvation. You see the sinner washed and cleansed. You mark him kept and preserved, and sanctified and perfected—and at last brought home to Glory. While you are thinking over this work of the Lord, you say to yourself, “Well, I do not know that I have any interest in it. But what a blessed plan it is! How sublime! How condescending! How admirably suited to the wants of man! And how excellently adapted to bring out and glorify every attribute of God!” As you are thinking it over, there is a tear in your eye, and something whispers, “Why, such a plan as that must be true.”

Then, the sweet promise flashes across your mind, “Whosoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.” And your heart says, “Then, I will believe on Him. That plan is worthy of my credence. That system, so magnificent in its liberality, is worthy of my loving acceptance.” You go down upon your knees and say, “Lord, by Your Grace I have seen the beauty of Your great work of Grace, and my soul is in love with it. I have no quarrel against it. I submit myself to it. Let me be a partaker in it. Jesus, let the virtue of Your precious blood stream on me. Let the power of the cleansing water, which flowed with the blood, come and kill the power of sin within me. ‘Lord, I believe! Help You my unbelief!’ ” That is believing with the *heart*. It is believing because the heart is led to see that this must be true. And therefore, by a process of logic that is more subtle and more mighty in its magic influence than the logic of the brain, the soul, the whole mind, the whole powers of the man are compelled, blessedly compelled by the Grace of God, to yield obedience to it.

What is true, dear Friends, of us when we commence our spiritual career, is true all our lives long. Soul-saving faith is always the belief of the *heart*, as well in the full grown Christian, as in the new-born babe. Let me appeal to some of you who have been years in Christ. What, my dear Brothers and Sisters, is your testimony today to the truth as it is in Jesus? Does your heart believe it? I think I see some gray-headed man rise up, and leaning upon his staff, he says, “In my young days I gave my heart to Christ, and I had a peace and joy such as I had never known before, though I had tried the pomp and vanities, the pleasures and allurements of sin. My heart can bear its witness to the peace and pleasantness which I found in religion’s ways.

“Since that time, this brow has been furrowed with many cares, and as you see, this head has become bleached with many winter’s snows. But the Lord has been my heart’s stay and confidence. I have rested on Christ and He has never failed me. When trouble has come in upon me, I have never been bowed down under it. By God’s Grace, I have been able to sustain it. I have had bereavements.” And he points to the many graves he has left behind him in the wilderness. “But I have been helped to bury

wife and children, and faith has enabled me to say with bursting heart, 'the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.' I have had many conflicts, but I have always overcome through the blood of the Lamb.

"I have been slandered, as all men must be, but I have taken *that* with all my other crosses upon my shoulders—and I have found it light when I have carried it by faith. I can say that such is the hallowed serenity and calm which the religion of Jesus gives to my heart at all times and all seasons, that I do believe it, not as a matter of head, but as a matter of *heart*. My heart is itself experimentally convicted that this cannot but be the religion of God, seeing that it works such wonders for me."

Remember, dearly Beloved, this is the right way to believe in Jesus, because this is the way in which you can believe in Him when you come to die. You have heard of the renowned bishop, a true servant of our Lord and Master. On his dying bed, memory reeled. He had grown old and forgotten everything. His friends said to him, "Do you not know us?" There was a shake of the head. He had taken sweet counsel with them, walked to the House of God in their company, but he had forgotten them all. Next, the children clustered round the hoary father, and they begged him to remember them. But he shakes his head, he had forgotten them all.

Last came his wife, and she thought, was it possible that she should be forgotten? Yes, he had forgotten her, and shook his head again. At last, one said in his ear, "Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" The response was instantaneous. That charming name, Lord, brought back consciousness from its innermost retreat to the more outward temple of the mind. "Know Him?" said he, "yes, He is all my salvation and all my desire." You see it was the *heart* that knew Jesus. And though the heart may know the wife and the child, yet never can the heart know the dearest earthly object as it knows Christ. The letters of earthly names may be larger than the name of Christ, but the name of Christ is cut deeper.

All other names may be cut deep through many skins of the soul, if I may use so strange a metaphor, but *that* name is cut into the core, right into the core of the soul! He that believes with his heart, has Christ in him, not *on* him. Christ in him, the hope of Glory. My dear Hearers, you who have not believed in Jesus, I have tried not to puzzle you with refinements, but to talk in simple style. I do think it is a very blessed thing that the text says, "*With the heart* man believes," because some of you might say, "I have not *head* enough to be a Christian." If you had not any head at all, if you had a loving *heart* you could believe in Jesus. You may say, "Why, I never had any very great natural parts." No great natural parts are wanted. You may say, "I never had any education," and by the way, I do like to see smock frocks here, I would to God that more would come—"I

never had any education. I went to a national school and they taught me many things. But I do not remember them.”

Well, suppose you do not remember them. You have a heart, and some of you have bigger hearts than many who have let their brains swell while their hearts have shriveled. You can believe with your *heart*. Your heart can see that Christ is such a Christ as you want—that pardon and mercy are just what you require. And your heart can say, and may God the Holy Spirit *make* it say, “I accept Christ. I trust in Christ. I take Christ to be my All in All.” This precious word, “With the heart man believes,” sets the gate of Heaven wide open to those who are of the least capacity, who seem to be on the very verge of idiocy, if there should be such persons here. Even those who write themselves down as being the biggest fools that ever lived, such fools as these may still believe. “The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.”

III. Now I must conclude, intending to take the second half of the text next Sunday morning, if God spares our lives. I take the most necessary first. You may go to Heaven without confessing—you cannot go to Heaven without *believing*. So we have the believing first, and the other can come next. I have to close by noticing THE RESULT of faith. “With the heart man believes UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

The text means that the man who believes in Christ is righteous—he is righteous at once, in a moment. He is righteous in the germ. When God makes up the account, He has two books. The one is the black book in which He writes down the name of the ungodly, the unrighteous. You may look all through that and though that man has been a thief, a whore-monger and adulterer. Though he has been the biggest sinner that ever defiled society and polluted God’s air, you may look that book through, if that man has been led to believe with his heart—his name is not there among the unrighteous. You cannot find it there, it is not in that book.

You must get the other. You look into the Book of Life, and there is the name of Noah, Daniel and Ezekiel, John the Baptist and so on. You say, “You do not expect to find that man’s name there, do you?” I do. If that man believed in Jesus Christ with his *heart*, he has believed unto righteousness, and his name is there among the righteous men. For he is righteous, first of all, in the germ. God has put into him an unquenchable spark of righteousness. He has dropped into that man’s heart a vitalizing force which never, by any possibility, can die. It has made him righteous in part, already, and which will go on until it has sanctified him, spirit, soul, and body—and made him *completely* righteous—in the real sense of the term righteous—righteous in the sense of holiness through the sanctification of the Spirit.

But there is another sense. The moment the man believes in Jesus Christ, he is in the righteousness of Christ—*perfectly* righteous. He has

put upon him the Savior's garments. You heard Mr. Weaver say on this platform—I thought it was a good illustration—that one day he met with a very poor man who was in rags. This man, being a Christian, he wished to befriend him. He told him if he would go home with him, he would give him a suit of clothes. "So," said Richard, "I went upstairs and took off my second best, and put on my Sunday best, for I did not want to give him my best. I sent the man upstairs and told him he would find a suit which he could put on, it was my second best.

"So after he had put on the clothes and left his rags behind, he came down and said, 'Well, Mr. Weaver, what do you think of me?' 'Well,' I said, 'I think you look very respectable.' 'Oh, yes, but, Mr. Weaver, it is not me. I am not respectable, it is *your clothes* that are respectable.' And so," added Mr. Weaver, "so is it with the Lord Jesus Christ. He meets us covered with the rags and filth of sin, and He tells us to go and put on not His second best, but the best robe of His perfect righteousness. And when we come down with that on, we say, 'Lord, what do You think of me?' And He says, 'Why, you are all fair, My love. There is no spot in you.' We answer, 'No, it is not I, it is Your righteousness. I am comely because You are comely. I am beautiful because You are beautiful.'"

So we may conclude by saying with Watts—

***"Strangely, my soul, are you arrayed
By the great saved Three!
In sweetest harmony of praise
Let all your powers agree."***

All this is by *believing*—nothing but *believing*. After believing will come the confessing and the doing. But the saving—the righteousness—rests in the *believing* and in nothing else—

***"Nothing, sinner, do,
Nothing great or small;
Jesus did it all,
Long, long ago."***

Come to Him as He is! Take Him as your complete righteousness, and you will have believed with your heart unto righteousness. God add His own blessing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Next Sunday, Mr. SPURGEON hopes to take up the second sentence of the text.]

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CONFESSION WITH THE MOUTH

NO. 520

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 19, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“With the heart man believes unto righteousness. And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
Romans 10:10.

THIS morning, according to my promise, I discourse upon the second part of this verse—“With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” I feel a measure of regret that all my hearers of this morning were not present last Sunday, since you may wrongly imagine that I exaggerate the importance of outward confession. Whereas had you been present when we were considering the first sentence, you would have seen that I magnified the “believing with the heart.” I declared it to be the all-important, the essential thing without which confession with the mouth would be a sin, a falsehood, and a grievous insult to the Most High. One circumstance greatly mitigates my fears—you may all read both sermons at your leisure, and so see for yourselves how earnestly I have labored to put the two duties in their proper place, not unduly exalting the less, nor depreciating the greater.

“With the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” There must be no confession with the mouth where there is not a believing with the heart. To profess a faith which you have not is to make yourself a deceptive trader who pretends to be carrying on a very large business, while he has no stock, no capital, and is only obtaining credit on false pretences, and so, is a thief. To make a profession, without having a possession, is to be a cloud without rain—a riverbed choked up with dry stones—utterly without water. It is to be a mere play-actor, strutting about for an hour with the name and garments of a king, to be exchanged, behind the scenes, for the garb of poverty and the character of shame.

Without believing with the heart, confession is as a rotten tree, green on the outside, but inwardly, as John Bunyan pithily puts it, “only fit to be tinder for the devil’s tinder box.” Be you warned against fair pretensions where there is nothing to back them up. Above all things, avoid hypocrisy! Stand aside from all mere pretense. Profess not to be what you are not, lest in that day when God comes to search the secrets of all hearts you shall be condemned as reprobate silver and consumed like dross.

True faith, wherever it exists, produces *works*. And, among the best works, a bold, constant, consistent confession of Christ. That man has no faith at all who is not led to confess with his mouth unto salvation, in the sense intended in the text. Faith without works is a dead root, sending forth no bud and yielding no fruit. It is a well yielding no water, but filled with deadly vapor. It is a tree twice dead, plucked up by the roots—like some of those forest monsters which block up the navigation of the Mississippi and form dangerous snags—upon which many a goodly vessel has been wrecked.

Faith without works is one of the most damnable things out of Hell. Flee from it, for remember if you profess to have a faith in Christ, and your conduct is not holy, you bring disgrace upon the Church of Christ! You crucify the Lord of Glory afresh. You turn the Truth of God into a lie. And you do, as far as lies in your power, make God the panderer to your lusts. As you are to flee from profession without faith, so equally flee from a faith which does not bring forth a good profession which may be manifested before many witnesses.

I believe that the confession mentioned in the text embraces the whole of Christian life. I do not think it means the mere saying, "I am a disciple of Christ," or submission to the God-ordained rite of Baptism. The Apostle includes, under the term, confession with the mouth, the whole life of the Christian—which is, in fact, the working *out* of that which God has worked *in*. It is the confession, both by act, deed and word, of that Divine Grace which God, by His Holy Spirit, has put into the soul. We say, in a common proverb, that, "One swallow does not make a summer." So the merely confessing Christ once with the mouth does not make the confession here intended. One tree is not a forest, and one avowal of Christ is not the confession of Christ unto salvation. There is something more intended than one act, however distinct, or however excellent it may be considered in itself.

I shall endeavor this morning, if God shall help me, to illustrate *the meaning of confessing with the mouth unto salvation*. And then I shall occupy a few minutes in *enforcing this confession*—urging those who love the Lord and have believed with their heart, to see to it that they confess with their mouths.

I. TO CONFESS CHRIST WITH THE MOUTH, I have said, embraces the whole lifework of the Christian. I think you will see this before I have done. Different cases demand of men different forms of confession. Some may have to confess the Lord in one way—some in another. Every Christian is called upon to confess Him with his mouth according to that way which his own state, abilities, and position in Providence may demand at his hands.

1. First, then, one of the simplest and earliest forms of confessing Christ with the mouth is to be found in *uniting in acts of public worship*. Early—as soon as the two distinct parties of the seed of the woman and of the serpent were discernible, we read, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." Those who feared not God went away to their various occupations—while the righteous—on the seventh day, gathered themselves together for prayer and praise and sacrifice. Anyone joining the ranks of the men who called upon the name of the Lord would at once be discovered, by that act, to be a servant of the Most High.

Throughout the whole stream of history we find the righteous identified by assembling themselves together, unitedly, to send up their prayers and thanksgivings to the Most High. Public worship became an acceptable form of confession when the seed of the serpent was able to persecute in the times when Jeroboam set up the calves at Bethel. When any Israelite wended his weary way to Jerusalem under fear of being persecuted by his king, then the act of standing with the multitude that kept holyday around the courts of the temple, was at once a distinct confession of his allegiance to Jehovah and his abhorrence of all idols.

In the Apostolic times those who believed were constant in the Apostle's doctrine, in breaking of bread, and in prayer. Where two or three were met together and especially where the greater numbers gathered to listen to the preaching of the Word, or for the purpose of breaking bread, the admission of any person to that assembly became a confession of his faith in the Lord Jesus, in whose name they were assembled.

In the early Christian days you may see a picture something like this, if I know how to paint it—there is a low arch—it is foul and dark, like the opening of a sewer. Over it grows the briar, and from its base springs up the nettle and the deadly nightshade. Yonder comes a maiden, and creeping low, she stoops beneath the arch. In the thick darkness she gropes her way for several yards. No one has noticed her entrance. Did you observe how she looked around, lest any sentinel might perceive her? She hears a voice in the distant passages. That voice guides her. She emerges into a vault. It is one of the catacombs beneath the city of Rome.

A torch renders darkness visible. No sooner does she approach the assembly than some watchful Brother observes her. He asks for the password. It is one of Caesar's household, a noble maiden who has heard the Gospel from her Jewish slave who waited upon her, and she has come to join in those secret rites which are performed by Believers in dens and caves of the earth. Her being there proves her a Christian. She would not have been there to worship God among those hunted ones, whom the upper earth and the pure air might not receive, if she had not loved the Lord.

She would not, thus, have degraded herself, to mingle with these pariahs of society—those only fit to be like beasts of prey for the bloodhounds of Nero—if she had not loved the Lord. Her coming there to join that simple hymn to one *Christus*, to bow her knee solemnly in that silent prayer to Jehovah and to His adorable Son—she had not been in that assembly—if she had not loved the Lord.

Very much so was it in later times. If a man went to hear Luther, you might have hope of him that he was a Christian. And especially in England, when the Lollard preached to the handful in some remote farmhouse, with a watcher outside, lest the monks should come. You might have been pretty clear that those who worshipped thus, when death was the penalty, were true disciples of the Lord. Again, in the days of the glorious Covenant, when Cargill and Campbell opened the Bible and read by the lightning's flash, while the dragoons of Claverhouse were scenting out their prey, you might be sure, whether it was yonder shepherd with his dog, or yonder heritor leaning upon his gun, or yonder ladies sitting on the grass and listening with tearful eye to the fiery words of the Covenanting leader—you might be sure that they were for the Lord of hosts, and for His Covenant, and for the Truth as it is in Jesus, or else they had not met there among the saints of the living God at peril of their lives.

Today it is so to a very few. There are some who, perhaps, have come into this house this morning whose husband's last words were, "If you go there, you will never enter my house again." Or, perhaps, it was the brother's word, as he cursed his sister for a love of the Truth of God. Or the father's deep, damning curse upon his child for venturing to believe in Christ. *Your* being here today is a distinct confession with your mouth of the Lord Jesus. But it is not so with most of you. It is not so with nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand. Many come because it is the

custom and more, I hope, because being Christians it is their delight always to come.

They do not recognize any distinct profession of religion in the mere act of being here. For we mingle together, saint and sinner, godly and ungodly. And if this were the only profession of religion that we have made, it would not fulfill the intention of my text. In persecuting times it would—in the dark, black, bloody days it would. But not today, for now it is little or no confession to most of us to sit comfortably in our seats and listen to the preacher, and then walk down the stone steps and go our way.

2. The confession of Christ which is here intended is still better to be carried out by *a dutiful attention to those two ordinances which are intended by Christ to be the distinctive badge of Believers*. Under the old Mosaic dispensation, ordinances were only for Israelites. Circumcision and the Passover were not for Philistines, nor for Egyptians—but for the seed of Abraham, and for the seed of Abraham and proselytes alone. It is even so under the Christian dispensation. We have no ordinances for aliens—we have no ordinances for strangers and foreigners. They are both intended for the commonwealth of Israel.

You will remember how very carefully the ancient Believers kept up these ordinances. You will find that the Ethiopian eunuch traveled all the way from the realm of Candace in order that he might be present at the temple worship—because that was the distinctive worship of the Jew, and of the proselyte to the Jewish faith. He would not be away. You remember how carefully and anxiously the heads of the Jewish householders saw to it that they, and all their children were present at the celebration of the Passover. Not one of them would neglect that which was distinctive of themselves as a separated people.

Now Baptism is the mark of distinction between the Church and the world. It very beautifully sets forth the death of the baptized person to the world. Professedly, he is no longer of the world. He is buried to it, and he rises again to a new life. No symbol could be more significant! In the immersion of Believers there seems to me to be a wondrous setting forth of the burial of the Believer to all the world in the burial of Christ Jesus. It is the crossing of the Rubicon. If Caesar crossed the Rubicon, there would never be peace between him and the senate again. He draws his sword and he throws away his scabbard. Such is the act of Baptism to the Believer. It is the crossing of the Rubicon—it is as much as to say, “I cannot come back again to you. I am dead to you. And to prove I am, I am absolutely buried to you. I have nothing more to do with the world. I am Christ’s and Christ’s forever.”

Then, the Lord’s Supper—how beautifully that ordinance sets forth the distinction of the Believer from the world in his life, and that by which his life is nourished. He eats the flesh of Christ, and drinks His blood. I marvel at some of you who love my Lord that you should keep away from His Table. It is His dying will—“This do you in remembrance of Me.” It is so kind of Him to institute such an ordinance at all. To let us, who were as the dogs, sit at the children’s table and eat bread such as angels never knew! I understand not, my dear Brother, my dear Sister, what sort of love yours can be if you hear Jesus say, “If you love Me, keep My commandments,” and yet you neglect His ordinances.

You will say they are non-essential. And I will reply to you, most true, they are non-essential for your *salvation*, but they are not non-essential for your *comfort*. Nor are they non-essential for your *obedience*. It is for a child to do what his parent bids him. If, my loving Friend, my dear Redeemer had bid me do something hurtful to myself, I would do it out of love to Him! How much more, then, when He says to me, "This do in *remembrance* of Me."

Both these ordinances bring a cross with them to some degree, especially the first. I was noting, when reading yesterday, the life of good Andrew Fuller. After he had been baptized, some of the young men in the village were custom to mock him, asking him how he liked being dipped—and such like questions which are common enough nowadays. I could but notice that the scoff of a hundred years ago is still the scoff of today. But, Brothers and Sisters, you are not afraid, I trust, to be pointed at as a baptized Believer? You believe that these are His commands. I charge you, therefore, before God, and the elect angels before whom you shall be judged at the last great day—if you, with your hearts have believed, with your mouths make the confession which these ordinances imply—and God shall surely give you a sweet reward therein.

3. In order to confess Christ with the mouth aright, there should be *an association with the Lord's people*. It was so in the olden times. Moses is an Israelite, but he may, if he wills, live in the court of Pharaoh, in the midst of luxury and ease. What is his choice? He goes forth to his Brothers and Sisters and he looks upon their burdens. He espouses their cause, counting the reproaches of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Moses, the reputed son of Pharaoh's daughter, associates with the poor despised slaves who make bricks for the king!

What a very touching picture we have of following the people of God, in the history of Ruth. One is charmed to hear that godly woman saying to her mother-in-law, "Where you go, I will go. And where you lodge, I will lodge: your people shall be my people and your God my God." There was a confession of the God of Israel, when Ruth clave unto Naomi, with all her heart. Now, we find in the early times of the Christian Church, that as soon as a man became a Christian, he went to his own company. He associated with the saints. When you asked, "Where are the Believers?" they were found together.

You may find other creatures wandering separately on the mountains, but sheep love to be in flocks. Paul was not content with being baptized, but after his Baptism he proceeded to join himself unto the Church. And we find that wherever there were people of God, they were always formed into a Church—whether it was at Philippi, or at Ephesus, or Pergamos, or Thyatira—or Rome itself, Paul everywhere formed Churches. And as he went from place to place, it was upon the Church that he looked as the pillar and ground of the Truth of God.

I very greatly delight in the preaching in the theatres. You know how heartily I rejoice in the preaching of Christ anywhere. But there is a lack in all this labor. The corn is sown, but there is nobody to see to it afterwards, nobody to gather it in. The way in which all this ought to be carried on is not by our Associations, but by the Church. The Church of God is the true mother of converts. It is from her womb that they must be born, and at her breast they must suck, and on her knees must they be

pampered. Those who go about and speak lightly of Church fellowship, and would have all Christians maintain themselves in separateness from the Churches, do mischief and are unwittingly the agents of evil. For the Church is, under God, a great blessing to the world. And union with the Church is intended to be a method of confession which is not to be neglected.

Suppose for a moment, Brothers and Sisters, instead of the compact body of Believers of this one Church, we were broken into individual Christians and had no association with one another. I do not hesitate to say that some of the warmest-hearted among you would grow cold, for your associating with one another promotes your zeal and kindles your enthusiasm. The little ones among us would be subjected to I know not what of dangerous heresy and of false doctrine. Even the strongest Brother or Sister here would feel it to be a most solemn bereavement if they had to lose association with the Brothers and Sisters in Christ who now comfort and strengthen them.

4. To some, confession with the mouth will involve the *taking up of the cross in the family*. I know of no form in which this confession is more delightful to God, and at the same time more arduous to men—to take up the cross in the family. It may be you are the first one converted in it, and you frequent the House of God while the rest take their pleasure on God's Day. You pray—the moment you kneel down in that chamber there is a ringing laugh within the walls. You talk of Christ and things Divine, and father and mother open their eyes and brothers and sisters all have some jest and jeer for you.

You ask me, what are you to do? Persevere! Stand fast! Be steadfast! For now it is that you are to make confession with your mouth unto salvation. I will not believe that your faith can save you unless you do now unhesitatingly, at all costs, though it were at the risk of losing father's love and mother's care, at once say, "I cannot help it—I am sorry to give you any vexation, but I cannot love father or mother more than Christ, least I should not be worthy of Him." You must be willing to give up all that is near and dear to you, whoever it may be—though loved as your own self and precious as your own life—you must give all up if these stand in the way of your following Christ Jesus the Lord.

"Ah, well," says one, "this is hard!" Yes, but remember for whom you do it! It is your Redeemer—who left His Father's court and became flesh—that He might be one with you. It is He who stretched His hands on the Cross and gave His side to the spear. Surely, all you can give up is but a trifle compared with what *He* gave up for you. Do it cheerfully—do it at once!

Young Man, be not frightened and alarmed at the family trials you have to endure! Ask God to make you like one of the ironclad vessels, so that though they shoot their fiercest bolts, and hurl them with the most tremendous force, yet still they will only fly off from you, not hurting you because you are ironclad with invincible courage and determined faith. The kingdom of Heaven is to you like the old city which had been long besieged, and there was no hope of relieving the inhabitants of the town unless some ship should enter the harbor. But there was a great chain stretched across the harbor!

You remember how the captain, when the wind was fair and the tide was high, dashed against the boom, broke it and sailed into port. You must break the chain which threatens to keep you out of Heaven. Pray to God to give you much Divine Grace—that shall be like the flood tide. Much of the Holy Spirit—that shall be like a fair wind. And if you dash against the chain, it will break before your courage and determination. Family trials are hard to bear. A living cross is often more severe to carry than a dead one, but you *must* do it, for, “with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

5. This confession will be very acceptable if it is made in the *time of temptation*. Young Joseph has his garment seized by his wanton mistress—his answer is, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” The woman might have answered, “God? What do I know of Him? I know Isis. I understand the golden calf, but I know nothing of Jehovah—who is He?” Here was a bold, distinct confession of Joseph’s allegiance to Jehovah as a reason why he could not sin. The case of Nehemiah is equally to the point. When they invite him to a secret conference in the temple, he says, “Can such a man as I flee?” He avows his confidence in his God as a reason why he cannot for a moment act dishonorably.

Now Christian, here it is that you are to make confession with the mouth. Some dirty trick in business, which have become so common that nobody thinks any harm of it, comes in your way. Now, play the man and say, “I would rather starve than do it. I cannot, and I will not live by robbery, even though it should be half legalized by society.” Now is your opportunity, young Man. When the Sunday morning comes round and you are pulled by the sleeve by a dozen to go with them to waste its holy hours, you can say, “No,” and give the reason, “I cannot do it. I am a Christian.”

Or, it may be you have come up from the country and your friend—ah, your *friend* proposes to take you to a den of infamy, just to show you life. Tell him he does not understand how to cater to your appetite, for you are a Christian. For some ends I would prefer the declaration of one’s faith in Jesus in the time of temptation to any other form of confession, since there surely can be no hypocrisy in it. Take care, Brothers and Sisters, that you never fail to acknowledge your Lord in the time of temptation.

“Ah,” says one, “I know I never shall.” Do not talk too positively. Peter denied his Lord before a silly maid—mind you do not fall in like manner. It is easy to say, “I am a good sailor,” when you are on shore. You walk the quarter-deck all right enough when the ship is in dock. You do not know what the storm is, how the ship rocks and the waves wash her decks. You had better hold your boasting till you have been to sea. Boast not yourself of anything *you* will do, but rather say, “Hold *You* me up and I shall be safe.”

6. Confession with the mouth should be carried out with double earnestness whenever *we are called into trial for Christ’s sake*—when the avowing of Christ will bring loss upon us, or when the denial of His name may secure us temporary prosperity. You know in the olden time, how the three holy children refused to bow to the image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They could die, but they could not *deny* their God. They could *burn*, but they could not *turn*. And so, into the furnace they were cast, because they could not cast away their trust in God.

Look at Daniel, yonder, with his open window, seven times a day worshipping towards Jerusalem, as he had done aforetime. It is bravely done. It was a bold answer of Peter and John, when the Scribes and Pharisees bade them speak no more in that name, "Whether it is right to obey God rather than man, you judge." I have noticed that whenever persecution rages, and men are likely to lose anything for Christ, that the most timid persons who are sincere, generally come out at that time. There is Joseph of Arimathea. You do not hear of him while Jesus lives.

But when Jesus Christ's body is on the Cross, who shall go into the lion's den? Who shall see Pilate? Joseph of Arimathea begs the body of Jesus. He finds the sepulcher. And who shall help to wrap Him in spices? Why, Nicodemus, that came to Jesus Christ by night—another coward. They both advance and are cowardly no longer when it comes to the pinch. The stag takes to its heels and flies before the hounds, but when it comes to bay, fights with the bravery of desperation. So those who are timid, trembling Christians in ordinary times—when it comes to the point, come out—and are as bold as the most heroic of Believers.

I would give nothing for your religion if it does not come out in persecution. Some of you would hide your heads if it came to persecution, burning, and death. Erasmus used to say he was not made of the right stuff to be a martyr. So, I believe, the Papists picture Erasmus as hanging somewhere between Heaven and Hell. And the Protestants need not quarrel with the portrait. He had some sort of knowledge of the Truth of God, but he had not the courage to openly acknowledge it. And he stood shivering while his friend Luther went straight forward and smote the triple crown upon the Pope's brow.

Never let us be like Erasmus. "If the Lord is God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." If the world and sin are worth living for, live for them with all your heart and soul and strength—but if God is God, do not stand questioning and halting between two opinions. But decidedly, boldly, positively, say, "I am on the Lord's side." There is no time like the time of loss and trial for the making of this confession.

7. I believe, my Brothers and Sisters, that a Christian can hardly carry out this confession with his mouth, unless he goes a little out of his way at times *to bear testimony*. "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me," said Moses, when he came down from the mountain and broke the golden calf. "And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor."

Every now and then we shall not be able to confess Christ unless we do something which shall seem harsh and strange—but which *must* be done for God and for the Truth's sake. Surely, God's Elijahs cannot be silent! While thousands of Baal's priests are kindling their fires, and calling to Baal, they must stand forth. "Are not you servants of Baal, and I the servant of the living God?" We shall find it needful to intrude upon the dainties of etiquette and trample under our feet the formalities which dignified society would set up. And like the Prophet who came to Bethel, we shall have to cry against altars at which others pay their vows.

I have admired—and here I take up my cross with a good Brother—I have greatly admired a testimony lately borne in the assembly of the Free Kirk of Scotland, by my Brother, Candlish, against the inscription that has been placed upon the memorial erected in memory of the excellent Prince Albert. I have admired him for his boldness in stating what he thought and felt. I believe instead of a howl of indignation, he should have received a gift of honor. Little cares he whether he is praised or censured, but justice ought to be done to his courage and fidelity. He has pointed out the popish character of the inscription, of which I will venture to say that the Prince himself would abhor, could his peaceful spirit visit the memorial.

If I remember rightly, Mr. Baptist Noel told us that the Prince exclaimed on his dying bed—

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

He died a Christian, humbly clinging to the Cross of Jesus. Why is his monument to be dishonored by an inscription fitted for a popish saint, but not for one who loved the Lord Jesus Christ? There is no disloyalty in our expressing our opinion frankly—nor do we intend to intrude upon the liberty of others. A large license should be given to affection, and sorrow should have its own choice of words. But it is a mistake, if not a sin, to obtrude a papist eulogy where a Christian epitaph had been far more in keeping.

I take up my cross with Candlish. And I were not true to God if I did not, for I believe that he who confesses Christ sometimes against the popular run and the popular current, is the only man who can expect to receive a reward from his Master for having acted faithfully in all things. Sometimes you will have to do this, but not always—perhaps not often. Go not out of your way to testify, but when the burden of the Lord is upon you, testify—and let none make you afraid.

8. Again, to confess Christ with the mouth is not possible unless we are willing to *use our position as a method of confession*. Joshua is the head of a household. He uses that position—“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” I will not believe in your faith if you do not see to it that in your household God is recognized. Let the family altar be reared. Let the sacrifice smoke upon it. If it cannot be twice, let it be once in the day. But see to it that you pay your vows unto the Most High in that position, or else you have not made a confession unto salvation.

Or it may be you have influence where you can help Christ’s Church. Mind that you do it. Esther is the queen of Ahasuerus. If she refuses to declare herself a Jewess—if she does not make the quarrel of Israel against Haman, her own quarrel—then she shall be safe. She has come to the kingdom for such a time as this. Some of you are large employers, or you may happen to be members of Parliament, or you are in spheres where you have power very much to influence the minds of other men. See that you do it for God. For all that influence is so much money given to you to put out to interest for your Lord and Master. And if you bury it in a napkin, or only use it for yourself, in the last great day he will say to you, “You wicked and slothful servant, you shall be cast away to the tormentors.”

9. Once more. There are some men who never will confess the Lord Jesus with their mouths as they ought to do unless they *become preachers*. David said he had preached the Word before the great congregation. And he makes it his boast that he had not shunned to declare it before kings. Now there are some of you who have ability to speak, but you never do. All the whole length of London streets await you as a pulpit. The whole population of London is ready to be your audience. Why do you not begin to speak? You can talk on politics. The other evening, at the literary institution, I understand you read a capital paper upon some astronomical subject.

If you love the Lord Jesus, are you going to give all your attention to these inferior themes? No, at least *sometimes* give it to Him who bought you with His blood. "You are not your own, for you are bought with a price." Mind, then, that your speech be as much Christ's as any other thing which you possess. Speak for your Lord and Master. You tell me you are nervous. Never mind your nervousness. Try once. If you break down half a dozen times, try again. You shall find your talents increase. It is wonderful how those breakdowns do more good than our keeping on. Just deliver your soul of what is in it. Get your heart red hot, and then like some volcano that is heaving in its inner heart, let the hot lava of your speech run streaming down.

You need not care for the graces of oratory, nor for the refinements of eloquence, but speak what you know. Show them your Savior's wounds—bid His sorrow speak to them—and it shall be marvelous how your stammering tongue shall be all the better an instrument because it does stammer! For God "has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are."

You see, Brothers and Sisters, this confession of Christ with the mouth is a lifework. The Christian man is to be something like a physician. You know we call a physician a professional man. Well, how does he profess? There is a large brass plate on his door, and a big bell, and everybody knows what the brass plate and the bell mean. That is part of his profession. What else? How does he profess to be a physician? He goes into company and his dress is like anybody else's. You do not see a box of lancets hanging at his side. You do not observe that he is dressed in any peculiar costume. He is a physician and he is always a physician, but his profession is carried on by his *practice*.

This is how a Christian's profession is to be carried on—by his practice. The man is a physician, professionally, because he really does heal people and write prescriptions, and attend to their wants. I am to be a Christian in my actions, my deeds, my thoughts, my words. Therefore, if anybody wants a Christian, I should be known by my words and my acts.

When we used to go to school we would draw houses, and horses, and trees on our slates, and we remember how we used to write "house" under the house, and "horse" under the horse, for some persons might have thought the horse was a house. So there are some people who need to wear a label round their necks to show that they are Christians at all, or else we might mistake them for sinners, their actions are so alike.

Avoid that. Let your profession be manifest by your practice. Be so clearly a piece of Divine painting that the moment a man puts his eye upon you, he says, "Yes, that is the work of God. That is a Christian, the noble work of God."

II. I have only one or two minutes to give a few words of exhortation. Dear Friends, see that you confess Christ with your mouth. Do not make excuses, for NO EXCUSE YOU CAN MAKE WILL BE VALID. You will lose your business, you say! Lose it and gain your soul. You will be unfashionable! What is it to be *fashionable*? You will be despised by those who love you! Do you love husband or wife more than Christ? If so, you are not worthy of Him. But you are so timid! Mind you are not so timid as to be lost at last, for the fearful and unbelieving shall have their portion in the lake that burns—not those who fear and sometimes doubt their interest in Christ—but those who are afraid to confess Christ before men.

You know that in the silence of the sick or dying hour, no excuse, however specious it may appear today, will answer your conscience. And if it will not answer your conscience, depend upon it, it will not satisfy God. In the next place, remember *how dishonorable* it is in you to say you believe with the heart and yet not to make confession. You are like a rat behind the paneling, coming out just now and then when nobody is looking, and then running behind again.

"What a degrading metaphor," you say. I *meant* to degrade you by it, so as to drive you out of your cowardice. What? Is Christ to be treated like this, as if the name of Christ were a thing to be avowed in skulking holes and corners? No, in the face of the sun let it be said, "I love Jesus, who gave Himself for me." It is not a thing to be said alone, nor to be hidden from the ears of men. He died in the face of the sun, with mockers round about Him. And with mockers round about us let us declare our faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord!

How *honorable*, on the other hand, will the confession be to you. If I had to join an army and I found on the muster roll a list of ragamuffins and the scrapings of the street, I do not think I should like to be a soldier. But if, on the other hand, I found my colonel a great conqueror, and that I had for compeers and comrades men who had some glorious names upon their banners, I should feel honored by being allowed to be a drummer boy in such a regiment. So when I read the list and find Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, Isaiah—Jesus Christ Himself—the Apostles, Luther, Calvin and men whose names have become household words in every Christian family, I count it an honor if my name shall be found written with theirs, as the most humble and feeblest soldier in the whole army.

It is an honorable thing. Therefore, cast in your lot with us and be prepared to be despised as a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. I urge this upon you, because it will make you *useful*. What is the good of a secret Christian? He is a candle under a bushel. He is a light shut up in a dark lantern. Let your light shine. What is the good of a secret Christian? He is salt without savor. And what is he fit for but to be trampled under foot of men? Come, let the savor of your salt be felt throughout the world. *Grace is sufficient*. That is another argument for you. You think you will have fresh responsibilities and dangers if you make a confession. Grace is sufficient.

If Divine Grace puts you upon a pinnacle of the temple, depend upon it, Divine Grace will keep you there. If you get off the pinnacle and come down on the hard ground, you will be unsafe there. But if God puts you on the pinnacle, let all the devils in Hell come to push you down, you shall stand fast. Be not disobedient and choose your own way—take God's way and you are safe in it.

Lastly, *the reward* is splendid. "He that confesses Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in Heaven." There was a Prince of right royal blood who once upon a time left his Father's palace and journeyed into a distant part of the king's dominions where he was little known and cared for. He was a true Prince, and he had about his face those princely marks—that strange divinity which does hedge a king, that might have made the onlooker know that he was right royal. But when he came into the place, the people said, "This is the heir to the throne. Let us insult him, let us hoot him!"

Others said he was no heir at all. And they agreed to set him in the pillory. As he stood there, every man did pelt him with all kinds of filth and used all manner of hard words towards him. And they said, "*Who dares acknowledge him for a Prince? Who dares stand by him?*" There stood up one from the crowd and said, "I dare!" They set *him* up in the pillory side by side with the Prince. And when they threw their filth on the Prince, it fell on him. And when they spoke hard words of the Prince they spoke hard words of him. He stood there, smiling and received it all.

Now and then a tear stole down his cheek. But that was for them, that they should thus ill-treat their sovereign. Years went by. The king came into those dominions and subdued them. And there came a day of triumph over the conquered city—streamers hung from every window and the streets were strewn with roses. There came the king's troops dressed in burnished armor of gold, with plumes upon their glittering helmets. The music rang right sweetly, for all the trumpets of glory sounded. It was from Heaven they had come!

The Prince rode through the streets in his glorious chariot. And when he came to the gates of the city, there were the traitors all bound in chains. They stood before him trembling. He singled out from among the crowd one man, only, who stood free and unfettered, and he said to the traitors, "Know you this man? He stood with me in that day when you treated me with scorn and indignation. He shall stand with me in the day of my glory. Come up here!" said he. And amidst the sounding of trumpets and the voice of acclamation, the poor, despised and rejected citizen of that rebellious city rode through the streets in triumph, side by side with his King, who clothed him in purple and set a crown of pure gold upon his head.

There is the parable! By the Grace of God, live it out! Amen.

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SCRIPTURAL SALVATION

NO. 2145

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 18, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For the Scripture says, Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.”
Romans 10:11.***

THE shepherd on the hill is most of all anxious about his sheep—he cares for his cottage, he trains the woodbine around his porch, sows flowers before his door and digs his little plot of garden ground—but, since he is a shepherd, his chief thought follows his flock and especially any of the sheep that are wandering, or the lambs that are tender. Even so I feel that my main business is the saving of souls. I may fitly preach to you upon any Scriptural subject and I may minister to the delight of the family of the redeemed. I may lead them into the deep things of God—but my principal business must always be watching for souls. This one thing I do.

When a city is to be stored for a siege it will be well for those who attend to the commissariat to lay in a proportion of everything that is necessary for human comfort and even a measure of certain luxuries—but it will be of first importance to bring in great quantities of corn. The necessities of life must be the chief provision. These we place in storehouses by the tons, whereas in other articles *pounds* may suffice. If there is a failure of bread, what will the people do? For this reason, I feel I must preach over and over again the plain Gospel of salvation by Divine Grace through faith in Christ Jesus!

While I would withhold nothing that may minister to edification, to comfort, to growth or to the perfecting of the saints, yet, first and foremost in abundance, even to overflowing, I must gather for you the Bread of Life and set forth Christ Crucified as the sinner's only hope. Faith must be urged upon you, for without it there is no salvation. Paul, in this case, was acting upon this safe principle as he always did, for he is speaking of salvation in the plainest terms. His heart's desire and prayer for Israel was that they might be saved and he proved the truth of that desire by setting forth that which would save them—he keeps to *faith in Christ*—and hammers upon that nail to fasten it securely.

I. I shall begin my sermon this morning by reminding you that **HERE IS AN OLD-FASHIONED WAY OF PROOF**—“The Scripture says.” In this enlightened age little is made of Scripture. The tendency is to undermine men's faith in the Bible and persuade them to rest on something else. It is not so with us, as it certainly was not so with Paul. He enforced and substantiated his teaching by declaring, “The Scripture says.” *In this he follows the manner of Christ Jesus, our Lord.* Though quite able to speak of Himself, our Lord continually referred to Holy Scripture.

His first public sermon was based upon the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. All along to the very end He was always quoting the Old Testament. So did His Apostles. One is struck with their continual reference to Moses and the Prophets. While they set the Truth of God in a fresh light, they fell back continually upon the old Revelation. "As says the Scripture," "According to the Scriptures"—these are phrases constantly repeated. Paul declared that he spent his life "witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come."

Evidently *they regarded the statements of Scripture as conclusive*. They took counsel of the Scriptures and so they ended the matter. "It is written," was to them proof positive and indisputable. "Thus says the Lord," was the final word—enough for their mind and heart—enough for their conscience and understanding. To go beyond Scripture did not occur to the first teachers of our faith. They heard the Oracle of Divine Testimony and bowed their heads in reverence. So it ought to be with us! We have erred from the faith and we shall pierce ourselves through with many sorrows unless we feel that if the Scripture says it, it is even so. "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," and therefore they spoke not erroneously, nor even dubiously.

In the passage before us we have an instance of *Inspiration endorsing Inspiration and building thereon*. Paul wrote by the direction of the Holy Spirit. He was himself a fully inspired man and he had no lack of original speech—yet he falls back upon the Scripture. He calls the Old Testament to bear witness to the doctrine of the New and in the same act expresses the agreement of the New with the Old. How far have they diverged from the Christian spirit, who begin to question the authenticity and authority of the books of Moses and the Prophets!

Brothers and Sisters, had Paul been without Inspiration, he was so great a saint and so eminent a confessor that his reverence for the Old Testament would have been a lesson to us! But since we believe this Epistle to have been Inspired of the Holy Spirit we are bound, as by Divine Law, to treat the ancient Scriptures as the great Apostle treated them, namely, with absolute deference, regarding them as the sure Word of the Lord. To us it matters not what critics may say to shake faith in Holy Writ—their efforts will be all in vain if we are intimate with the Author of these books and by His Holy Spirit possess a personal sense of His truth, His wisdom and His faithfulness.

After God has spoken, it little concerns us what the wise men of the world may have to say. They have always spoken against the Word of the Lord—and they have always spoken in vain—and so will they speak even to the world's end. Paul, in saying here, "For the Scripture says," is referring, I think, to the general sense of Scripture rather than to any one passage. There are several texts from which it may be gathered that Believers shall not be put to shame, such as, "They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed." But if the Apostle is refer-

ring to any *one* passage of the Old Testament, he is not quoting it verbatim but he is expounding it and giving its general sense.

Assuming that he refers to *Isaiah 28:16*, I am glad of the lesson which he affords us in a kind of instructive criticism. When the Spirit of God Himself deals with Scripture, we can gather from His example how we may deal with it. It is best, as far as possible, to quote the very *words* of Scripture, lest we should err, but we have, here, a permit to quote the clear and evident *sense*—and we are allowed to regard that sense as equally authoritative with the exact words. Paul quotes, if he quotes at all, from the Septuagint translation rather than from the Hebrew, thus sanctioning a *translation*.

Let us read the words in *Isaiah 28:16*. “Therefore thus says the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believes shall not make haste.” You see at once the difference between the text as Paul gives it to us and the original Hebrew. Observe, first, that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, *Paul reads the passage in its largest sense*. The original text is, “He that believes,” but Paul makes it, “Whoever believes.” That is the true meaning. “He that believes,” means any “he” that believes. And to make this fact clear, Paul says, “Whoever believes.”

We ought to take the promises of Holy Scripture in their widest possible application. When we meet with a passage distinctly referring to one person only, we are allowed to remember that no Scripture is exhausted by one fulfillment. You, being like that person and in similar circumstances to him, may quote the promise as made to *you*—for it is intended for the whole class of persons of whom that one person is the representative. “He that believes,” is, in Paul’s judgment—no, in the judgment of the Holy Spirit—tantamount to, “Whoever believes.” A promise made by man will legally be interpreted in its narrowest sense—but a promise made by *God* may always be taken in its major sense, since God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts and His ways than our ways. Everything it will honestly bear, you may pile upon the back of a Divine promise! God loves to see faith taking Him at His word and He will do for it exceeding abundantly above what we ask or even think.

Next, note that *Paul reads the verse with the context*. In the Hebrew it is, “He that believes,” but Paul reads it, “Whoever believes on Him.” Did he do right to supply the, “on Him”? Certainly, since he thus gives the sense of the quotation as it stands in the Prophet. I said before that Paul is not quoting *verbatim et literatim*—he aims at giving the *sense* of the passage and, therefore, *paraphrases* it so as to remind you of its connection. “On Him” is necessary to a perfect quotation of the passage as it stands. Let us read again: “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believes”—evidently it is, “He that believes” in this *foundation*—“shall not make haste.”

That foundation is not an “it,” but an “Him,” for it refers to Christ. Expressions separated from that which comes before them and follows after them, may not express the writer’s mind and, therefore, when we quote

from Holy Scripture we should endeavor not merely to give the words which are actually in the text, but to add such words as duly set forth the context. This lesson is worth learning.

Once more, *the Apostle gives us the true and plain meaning* of the text. He leaves the figure which was suitable for Isaiah, but might have been misunderstood by the Romans, and he gives the sense intended by Isaiah in plainer language. The Prophet said, "He that believes shall not make haste." That "making haste," means being fluttered and alarmed and so being led to *run from the* foundation. Such a person fled in haste because he was ashamed of his hope. Paul puts aside the drapery of the metaphor to let the uncovered sense stand out boldly! He expounds the Scripture under Infallible guidance and gives its meaning to us in this form, "Whoever believes on Him shall not *be ashamed*." The true sense of the passage our Apostle uses by way of argument—he enforces the promise of the Gospel by the teaching of the Prophet.

Dear Friend, when you go to win souls, go with a clear understanding of the Scriptures and then quote those Scriptures frequently if you would have power over the minds of men. Do not think to convince sinners by your own fine phrases, but use the words which the Holy Spirit teaches. If you want to bring souls to faith in Christ, remember that faith is begotten by the Word—"faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." The more of the true sense of the Word of God we can compress into our exhortations, the more likely shall we be to succeed in our gracious design. This is Paul's mode of argument, "the Scripture says"—and we know no better.

II. And now, secondly, we have before us A SIMPLE STATEMENT OF THE WAY OF SALVATION—"The Scripture says, Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed." The way of salvation is to believe on Christ, whom God has laid in Zion for a foundation. What is believing on Him? It is *trusting* in Him. The language is not "Believe Him"—such belief is a part of faith but not the whole. We believe everything which the Lord Jesus has taught, but we must go a step further and *trust* Him.

It is not even enough to believe in Him as being the Son of God and the Anointed of the Lord—we must believe *on* Him, just as in the building (for that is the figure used by Isaiah) the builder takes his stone and lays it *on* the foundation. There it rests with all its weight—there it abides. The faith that saves is not believing certain Truths of God nor even believing that Jesus is a Savior—but it is resting on Him, depending on Him, lying with all your weight on Christ as the foundation of your hope. Believe that He can save you! Believe that He *will* save you! At any rate, leave the whole matter of your salvation with Him in unquestioning confidence. Depend upon Him without fear as to your present and eternal salvation. This is the faith which saves the soul.

Notice, next, that this faith is *believing on a Person*—"He that believes on—*it*"? No! On, "Him." Our faith is not based on a doctrine, or a ceremony, or an experience—but on "Him!" Our Lord Jesus Christ is God. He is also Man—He is the appointed and anointed Savior. In His death He is

the Propitiation for sin. In His Resurrection He is the justification of His people. And in His intercession He is the eternal guarantee of their preservation. Believe “on Him.” Our faith fixes herself upon the Person of the Lord Jesus as seen in His sufferings, His offices and His achievements. “Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.”

The text refers to *the truth of the trusting*. The Apostle does not say, “Whoever believes on Him with full assurance, or with a high degree of confidence shall not be ashamed.” No, it is not the *measure* of our faith, but the *sincerity* of our faith which is the great question! If we believe on Him at all we shall not be ashamed. Our faith may be very trembling and this will cause us sorrow—but a trembling faith will save. The greater your faith, the more comfortable for you. But if your faith is small as a grain of mustard seed, it will save you. If your faith can only touch the hem of the Savior’s garment behind Him, it will heal your soul, for, “*Whoever* believes on Him shall not be ashamed.” Is there not blessed comfort about this assurance?

Observe, again, that all depends upon *the presence of this trusting* and not upon the age of it. “He that believes on Him”—this relates to the immediate present. Perhaps the truster has only believed on Jesus during the last five minutes. Very well, he does believe on Him and he shall not be ashamed! Some of us are glad to remember that we were built on the sure Foundation more than 40 years ago. But the length of years during which we have believed does not enter into the essence of the matter—Believers are saved whether their faith has lasted through half a century or half an hour. “Whoever believes on Him,” takes in the convert of this morning as well as the hero of a thousand fights. My newly-believing Friend, I am sorry you have put off faith so long but, still, I am greatly glad that you have believed at all—for your faith shall not be put to shame!

One other remark needs to be made before I leave this point. Note the *Object of faith*. “Whoever believes *on Him*.” Nothing else is mentioned in connection with the Lord Jesus, who is the sole Foundation. It is not written, “He that believes on Jesus nine parts out of ten and on himself for the other tenth.” No! “Whoever believes *on Him*”—on Him *alone*. Jesus will never be a part Savior! We must not rest in part upon what we hope to do in the future, nor in part upon the efficacy of an outward ceremony. No! The faith must be “on Him.” Both feet must be on the Rock of Ages. The whole stone must rest on the Foundation. Take Christ to be the sole Savior of your soul!

I saw written at the foot of a cross in France, “SPES UNICA”—“Jesus is the lone hope of men.” There is but one star in your sky, Sinner, and that star is the Star of Bethlehem! There is but one light for the tempest-tossed mariner on the stormy sea of conviction of sin—and that Light is the Pharos of the Cross. Look there! Look there! Only there—“For the Scripture says, Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.” Now if any soul here perishes, it will not be *my* fault. However feebly I may preach this morning, I shall go home satisfied that I have set before you enough for

your salvation, if you are willing and obedient. I have most plainly set before you the way of salvation.

What more can I do? I can bring the horse to water but I cannot make him drink! I can set the Water of Life before you, but I can do no more if you turn away from Him. If you accept the Lord Jesus and believe on Him you shall not be ashamed—but if you put Him far from you, you will die in your sins—and your blood will be upon your own heads!

III. So I pass on to the third point—THE GLORIOUS PROMISE TO THOSE WHO OBEY THE GOSPEL. “The Scripture says, Whoever believes on Him *shall not be ashamed.*” Take the Hebrew form of it first—“*shall not make haste.*” When a man builds his hope upon the Lord Christ he is not driven into worry and hurry. He quietly walks with God and does not hasten through fear.

They say that the floods are out, that the winds are howling, that the rains are descending—he that trusts in a refuge of lies may well make haste to flee—but he that has built his house upon the rock, quietly answers, “The flood is coming. I supposed it would. The rains are falling. I expected that they would. The winds are blowing. I was forewarned of the tempest and I am prepared for it by being on the rock!” His house will stand. He will never be ashamed of its foundation. In patience he possesses his soul—

**“Calm ‘mid the bewildering cry;
Confident of victory.”**

The Holy Spirit’s reading of the Holy Spirit’s Word in the Old Testament is, “He shall not be ashamed,” and this means that *he shall not be ashamed at any time by discovering that he has been deluded.* Men are ashamed when their hopes fail. If a man has an expectation of eternal life and all of a sudden he sees his hope dashed to shivers, is he not ashamed? If on his dying bed his confidence should turn out to be based on a falsehood, how ashamed he will be! He will then say, “I am ashamed to think I did not take more care. I am ashamed that I followed my own judgment instead of God’s Word.” They shall lie down in sorrow who find their hope to be as a spider’s web. It will be an awful thing in our last moments, when we most need comfort, to be driven to despair by the wreck of our confidence!

If any of you are trusting in your gold, it will turn out to be a poor confidence when you are called upon to leave all earthly things. I have heard of one, who, on his deathbed laid bags of money to his heart—but he was forced to lay them away and cry, “These will not do! These will not do!” It will be a sorry business if we have been trusting in our good temper, our charity, our patriotism, our courage, or our honesty and when we come to die shall be made to feel that these cannot satisfy the claims of Divine Justice or give us a passport to the skies! How sad to see robes turn to rags and comeliness into corruption! How wretched to regard one’s self as covered with a garment fit for Christ’s great wedding feast and then to wake out of a dream and find one’s self naked!

You will never have this vexation of spirit if you take Christ Jesus to be your confidence. So far from being ashamed, you will boast in the cruci-

fied Savior! Yes, you will vow with Paul, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Furthermore, dear Friends, he that believes on Christ *shall not be ashamed to admit his faith*. This is a sharp saying and it cuts as a razor. I wish it would make a great gash in cowardly spirits. “Whoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.” Some think they believe on Christ and yet they are ashamed to admit their faith in the Lord’s appointed way or, indeed, in *any* way.

If they are in ungodly company, they do with their faith as they do with their dog when a friend comes in—they say, “Lie down, Sir.” Because it is inconvenient to be known to be a Believer they treat the Lord Christ as they would treat a dog. Some of you have never made a confession of your Lord—what will become of you? “Oh,” you say, “do not say hard things!” I do not say them out of my own head—let me read the passage to you from verse ten—“For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, Whoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.”

What is the meaning of the whole passage? I cannot shut my eyes to the Truth of God—that it speaks of *confessing* Christ—and declares that he who really believes on him will not be ashamed of it. If you, my Hearer, are ashamed of your Lord, your faith is not real! Or, to say the least of it, you have cause to suspect that it is not. If you are ashamed, you are an unbeliever for, “Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.” The Christian’s song is—

***“I’m not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend His cause;
Maintain the honor of His Word,
The glory of His Cross.”***

For my own part, I have often said and I cannot help repeating it yet again—

***“Ever since by faith I saw the stream
His flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.”***

I am not ashamed of my hope! I love to state it, to glory in it and to make it widely known.

I heard of a “modern-thought” minister of some repute, that a person asked him, “Sir, what is your theory of the Atonement?” He replied, “My dear Sir, I have never told that to any living person, although I have been a preacher for years. And I am not going to commit myself now.” He seemed to think that this was rather a wise thing. My course runs in the opposite direction—I believe in the vicarious Sacrifice of Christ and I am not ashamed of the old-fashioned doctrine. “He loved me and gave Himself for me”—why should I be ashamed to admit it? I will not believe anything that I dare not preach! I have a grave suspicion that it will go ill at last with the man who has one faith for the public and another for himself! We should be ashamed at being ashamed of Christ and His Truth!

Still, this is not all the meaning of our text—*the Believer shall have no cause to be ashamed*. Let me try to illustrate this assertion. We shall not

be ashamed because our faith is proved to be unreasonable. When a man is convicted of believing an absurdity, he is ashamed. But there is nothing unreasonable in the Truth that, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." I will *not* say that *reason* teaches this grand fact—for reason could not reach so high! This Truth of God is above reason, but it is not contrary to reason. When you get some idea of the Infinite goodness and justice of God, it will not seem unreasonable that He should be willing to forgive sinners, nor unreasonable that He should devise a way by which He can do this without injury to His moral government.

There is a sweet reasonableness in the provision of a Substitute for guilty men and a still sweeter reasonableness in the salvation of those who believe in the Lamb of God. In fact the Gospel system is so blessedly reasonable that when it comes home to the enlightened understanding it carries the mind by storm! I have seen love at first sight with many a man who, for the first time, has heard how God is "just, and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus." It has seemed so Godlike a method that the man has accepted it at once! It bore its proof on its face.

Next, we are not ashamed because our faith has been disproved, for it has never been disproved. No man has been able to prove that the Son of God was not here on earth and that He did not die on the Cross, the "Just for the unjust, to bring us to God." The Resurrection has never been disproved, nor the Ascension, nor the descent of the Holy Spirit. Nothing has overthrown Apostolic testimony! To quibble at a statement is not to disprove it. To make it a matter of coarse jest is not to disprove it.

The Apostles and their companions bore public witness and died because of their solemn conviction of the truth of their testimony! They were simple men who could not have invented the Gospel story if they could—and they were good men who would not have invented it if they could. Until men can prove that there was no Christ and no propitiation for sin, we shall not be ashamed to believe on Him. We shall never be ashamed of believing on Jesus, because by experience we shall find it to be unsatisfactory to our conscience. No, no! We are more than content with the ground of our trust in this respect.

Well do I remember when I first gripped the thought that Jesus suffered in my place and that I, looking to Him, was saved. I felt a peace like a river, ever flowing, ever deepening, ever widening. My former trouble had arisen from the question—how could God, as a righteous Judge, pass by my violation of His holy Law? Sin is not to be viewed as a personal offense to God, as a Being, but a rebellion against His Laws as the Judge of all the earth, who must do right. How could He wink at sin? How could He treat the guilty as the innocent? When I saw that He did *not* wink at sin, but that Jesus came to vindicate the Divine Law by suffering in our place, I rested with all confidence on that blessed fact! My heart said, "It is enough," and today it still cries, "It is enough."

My conscience has never raised a question about the security furnished by the ransom of the Lord Jesus. My heart remains perfectly at ease now

she knows that “He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” If the Nature of God had not required an atonement for sin, the conscience of the sinner might have needed it! The righteous apprehension of conscience as to wrath to come demands a vindication of the Law. Because we have this vindication in Christ we are not ashamed. We are not ashamed of the Gospel of salvation by faith in Christ because it proves in-operative upon our lives.

I remember the witty clergyman Sidney Smith who managed to come into collision with the Methodists—he charged them with so much preaching faith that good works were at a discount! Surely he never heard Mr. Wesley! I venture to say that the Methodists produced more good works than Mr. Smith’s preaching ever did! If any say to us, “This faith of yours takes you off from trusting in works,” we answer, “It does—but it does not take us off from *practicing* them.” Faith is the mother of holiness and the nurse of virtue. The lives of the Puritans who taught the Gospel of faith in Christ were infinitely preferable to the lives of those Cavaliers who believed in human merit. The fact is that men who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ have even been ridiculed for being too *righteous* and rated for a sort of moroseness of morality! But history has never afforded the least support to the charge that they were indifferent to morality.

Indifferent to morality? We never knew what holiness was until we believed in Jesus! We had no aspirations after purity till we were saved by Him! The spiritual effect of faith in Jesus is of the noblest. Oh that we could display more of it! We are not ashamed to challenge investigation as to the philanthropic effect of faith in the Gospel. If anyone should sneer and say, “You Believers think yourselves saved and so you are comfortably unconcerned as to what becomes of others.” I should answer, “What a lie!” We love the souls of men and we have proved it in our ministry and in our incessant efforts to save them! We have gone with breaking heart and bowed head because certain of our hearers remain in unbelief!

I can appeal to you all, that my ministry has been full of earnest exhortations, affectionate appeals and tearful entreaties. God is our witness how truly we can say our heart’s desire and prayer to God for others is that they may be saved! We are not ashamed to say that the ministry of those who believe alone in Christ and who know assuredly that they are saved by Divine Grace, has about it, as a rule, a greater power to win souls than the ministry of those who preach other gospels. We say no more, lest we become fools in glorying. We are not ashamed of our hope on this ground.

We are never ashamed of it, again, as to its operation upon others. When I look back through my life, having preached nothing in this place but faith in Christ as the way of salvation, I can, without any effort of memory, remember many drunkards made sober, harlots made chaste, lovers of pleasure made lovers of God! Many have been reclaimed from among the poorest and most degraded and some from the rich and vicious. We have seen what faith in God has done by lifting them from the level of selfishness to the heights of Divine Grace. If we had to go down

into the worst slum of London we would not wish for anything better than to preach Christ Crucified—and if we had to visit the wildest hells of the West End, we would not wish for any theme more powerful than the Cross of our Lord Jesus! “Believe and live” is still a charm most potent.

We have no cause to be ashamed of what the Truth of God has done in ages past and is doing even at this day. I will tell you when we should be ashamed of our hope and that would be if we saw it repudiated by dying saints. It is all very well to be a Believer when you are young, in health and can go about your business—but how will it fare with men and women when they are called to go upstairs and suffer—and never to come down again till carried to their long home? How does the Gospel serve them when they know that they cannot live another week? What is the condition of Believers on the brink of the grave? Those who believe in Jesus are calm and happy! Frequently they are exultant and the bed can scarcely hold them because of their supreme joy in the prospect of being with their Lord! I am not telling you idle tales, Brothers and Sisters. Many of you know that I speak the truth—for it is of your own relatives that I am speaking of now. Our people die well. We have no occasion to be ashamed. Tested by the dying of our fellow Believers, we are not ashamed of the Gospel!

We might be ashamed, once more, if we could be outbid in our prospects by some other system. What form of religion offers more to the Believer than the system of Grace and simple faith in Jesus? Nowhere in the world, that I know of, is there any other system of religion which promises sure salvation to its followers. The Roman Catholic system does not at all provide for present and everlasting salvation. What does it provide for? For your getting out of “purgatory” in due time and no more. When I was in the Church of St. John Lateran, at Rome, I read a request for prayer for the repose of the soul of his Eminence, Cardinal Wiseman. Now Cardinal Wiseman was a great man, a prince of the church, but yet he is somewhere in the other world where he is not in repose—so this request indicates. That must mean a very poor outlook for an *ordinary* Catholic!

For my part I would give up so cheerless a hope and become a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ and go to Heaven! “Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.” When the best Catholic finds himself in “purgatory” he will be ashamed and will say, “Oh, that I had taken to the way of trust in the all-sufficient merit of the Lord Jesus, for then I should have been covered with His righteousness and should have been with Him where He is.” Beloved Friends, our rivals do not outbid us! Our Gospel brings immediate pardon for every sin, a gracious change of Nature, the regeneration of the heart and the preservation of the soul to Christ’s eternal kingdom and glory. Hallelujah!

IV. I have done, when I say to you, lastly, that in my text we see A WIDE DOOR OF HOPE FOR THE SEEKER. Read that word, “whoever,” whoever, *whoever*. I must keep on ringing that silver bell! It rings in the 13th verse—“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” It rings in the text—“Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.” No

secret decree has ever been made to shut out any soul that believes on Him! God has not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth and said, "Such a man may believe in Christ and yet he shall be lost." Do not be afraid of this, for it is impossible!

No measure of sin in your past life can deprive you of this promise. "Whoever believes on Him," though he had been a murderer, or a thief, or a drunkard, or an adulterer, or a liar, or a blasphemer—he shall find his faith removing his sins through the blood of Jesus and renewing his heart by the Holy Spirit. "*Whoever* believes on Him shall not be ashamed." Says one, "I shall always be ashamed that I have so greatly transgressed." Yes, I know, but still you shall be so perfectly pardoned that your sin shall be blotted out and you shall not remember the shame of your youth. "But I do not feel as I ought," says one. You shall feel aright if you will believe on Him.

You shall not be shut out of the promise through any lack of sensitiveness. It is not said, "Whoever believes on Him and is sensitive to a high degree shall be saved." No—"Whoever believes on Him." You ought to be sensitive. You ought to be tender. You ought to be grieved for sin and you *shall* be if you believe on Him. If you believe on Jesus, He will give you true repentance and deep self-abhorrence—but you must come to Jesus for these things and not try to find them in your own depraved hearts. Nothing limits this "whoever"! "Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed." "Alas," cries one, "I have a strong besetting sin, I have a hot temper, or fierce lusts, or a desperate thirst for drink."

Yes, I know. But if you believe on Him you shall not be ashamed, for these shall be conquered and destroyed. You shall be helped to fight against them until you get a complete victory and so you shall never be ashamed. "Ah," says one, "but I once made a profession and I have gone back." Yes, but, "whoever" does not shut out the wanderer! Backsliding is a great and bitter evil but he that believes is justified from every sin. "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Come, then, with your heaped-up sins and be unburdened! Come, though seven devils dwell within you! Come to have them driven out and yourself made white in the blood of the Lamb! Come, for you shall not be ashamed! Let no man stand back and say, "I dare not come." Remember the word of the Savior, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." "In no wise." That is, for no possible reason. "Oh, but my birth was shameful." I may be speaking to one who is illegitimate. This is no barrier, for children of shame may be made heirs of Glory! The Lord rejects *none*, however uneducated, coarse or dull they may be. Neither does race offer hindrance. Be you an Englishman or a Chinaman, there is no difference. White, black, brown, red, or blue—still does the promise stand—"Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed." There is no distinction as to rank, name, class, or reputation.

"Oh, but look at my occupation!" I am sorry if it is an evil profession—get out of it and do something honest—but whatever you may be by trade,

come to Jesus and believe on Him, for, "Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed." "Alas, I am too old!" says another. What are you? Two hundred? "No, not so old as *that*." Then you are still under age! Never mind how old you are—"Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed." If you have one foot in the grave, faith may put both feet on the Rock of Ages! You are yet on praying ground and pleading terms with God, therefore come to Jesus, for He has said, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." Come with your little faith, your trembling hope and believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall not be ashamed!

Lastly, in that day when the earth and Heaven shall melt and nothing shall be seen but Christ upon the Throne, judging all the earth, *those who have not believed in Him will be ashamed*. They will have no excuse to offer—they have none even now! They will be ashamed, then, that they did not take the counsel of their godly friends and heed the pleadings of their minister. They will be ashamed to think how they put off thoughts of Christ and lingered until they found themselves in Hell! The face of the Lord Jesus will be terrible to unbelievers to the last degree! One young person, in great trouble of soul, said to me the other day, "When I am lost, I shall always see your face—it will accuse and condemn me."

She will not be lost, dear girl—I trust she will soon find peace with God through Jesus Christ. It will be terrible, for those who refuse the Gospel, even to remember the preacher of it—but infinitely more so to see the face of Him who bled and died and loved unto the uttermost. Oh, to think, "I would not have Him! I would not be saved by Him! I preferred to trust to *myself* or not to think at all—and now here I am." Assuredly, the flames of Hell will be more tolerable than a sight of His face!

The bitterest wail of Tophet is this—"Hide us from the face of Him that sits upon the Throne!" You sinners seek His face, whose wrath you cannot bear. God help you to seek it now! Before you leave this house may you seek it and find it! He says, "Seek you My face." May God the Holy Spirit lead you to obey the call. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 10.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—907, 118, 531.**

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A SIMPLE SERMON FOR SEEKING SOULS NO. 140

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 12, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
Romans 10:13.***

IT has been said by an eminent Divine that many of us in preaching the Word suppose too great knowledge in our hearers. “Very often,” says this Divine, “there are in the congregation persons who are totally unacquainted with the great science of Divinity. They are entire strangers to the whole system of Grace and salvation.” It is proper, then, that the preacher should sometimes address himself to his hearers as if they were totally ignorant of his message and tell it to them as a new thing, going over the whole of it as if he believed them to be ignorant of it. “For,” says this good man, “it is better to suppose too little knowledge and so to explain the thing clearly, to the mean comprehension, than to suppose too much and thus to let the ignorant escape without a word of instruction.”

Now, I think I shall not this morning err in his point of view. I shall assume that some of my congregation, at least, are totally unacquainted with the great plan of salvation. And you that know it well and have tried its preciousness will bear with me, I am sure, while I try in the simplest words that human lips can put together to tell the story of how men are lost and how men are saved according to the words of my text by calling upon the name of the Lord.

Well then, we must begin at the beginning. And we must first tell our hearers that inasmuch as our text talks of men being saved, it implies that men *need saving*. And we tell them that if men had been as God created them, they would have needed no saving. Adam in the Garden needed no salvation. He was perfect, pure, clean, holy and acceptable before God. He was our representative. He stood as the representative for all the race and when he touched the forbidden fruit and ate of the tree of which God had said, “You shall not eat thereof, or you shall surely die”—when he so transgressed against God, he needed a Savior and we, his offspring through his sin, are born into this world, *each of us* needing a Savior! We who are now present must not, however, throw blame on Adam. No man was ever yet damned for Adam’s sin alone. Children dying in infancy are, without doubt, saved by Sovereign Grace through the Atonement which is in Christ Jesus. No sooner do they close their eyes on earth, being innocent of any actual sin, than they at once open them in the bliss of Heaven! But you and I are not children. We need not talk,

just now, of Adam's sins. We have our own to account for and God knows they are enough. Holy Scripture tells us that we have all sinned and come short of the Glory of God and conscience bears witness to this same Truth of God. We have all broken the great commandments of God and in consequence, thereof, the just God is bound in justice to punish us for the sins we have committed. Now, my Brothers and Sisters, it is because you and I have broken the Divine Law and are subject to the Divine Wrath that we stand in need of mercy. Every one of us, therefore—every one of us if we would be happy, if we would dwell in Heaven forever with God—must be saved!

But there is great confusion in the minds of men as to what being saved is. Allow me, then, to say that salvation means two things. It means in the first place, our escaping from the punishment of sins committed. And it means in the next place, the escaping from the *habit* of sin, so that in the future we shall not live as we have lived. The way in which God saves you is twofold—He finds man a sinner breaking His Law. He says, "I forgive you, I will not punish you. I have punished Christ instead of you—you shall be saved." But that is only half the work. He says in the next place—"Man, I will not let you go on sinning as you have been likely to do. I will give you a new heart which shall subdue your evil habits. So that whereas you have been the slave of sin, you shall be free to serve Me. Come away, you are not going to serve that black master of yours any more. You must leave that demon—I will have you to be My child, My servant. You say, 'I cannot do it.' Come, I will give you Divine Grace to do it. I give you Grace to break off drunkenness, Grace to renounce your swearing, Grace to give up Sabbath-breaking. I give you Grace to run in the ways of My Commandments and to find them to be a delightful road." Salvation, then, I say, consists of two things—*deliverance* on the one hand from the habit of *living in enmity with God*. And, on the other hand, *deliverance from the punishment* annexed to transgression.

The great subject of this morning, which I shall attempt to dwell upon in very plain language, attempting no flights of oratory whatever—is how men may be saved. That is the one great question. Let them remember what to be saved is. It is to be made Christians to have new thoughts, new minds, new hearts and then, it is to have a new home forever at God's right hand in bliss! How may they be saved? "What must I do to be saved?" is a cry springing from many lips here this morning. The answer of my text is this—"Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." I shall first try to explain the text a little—*explanation*. Secondly, I shall try to clear the text from some errors about salvation which are very popular—that will be *refutation*. And then, thirdly, I shall press the usefulness of my text upon your minds—that will be *exhortation*. *Explanation, refutation, exhortation*—you will remember the points and may God impress them upon your minds!

I. First, then, EXPLANATION—What is here meant by calling upon the name of the Lord? And I tremble at this very moment when I try to explain my text, for I feel it is very easy to darken words without knowledge. Full many a time has a preacher rendered Scripture dark by his explanations instead of making it brighter! Many a preacher has been like a painted window, shutting out the light instead of admitting it. There is nothing whatever puzzles me more and tries my mind more than the answer to that simple question, What is faith? What is believing? What is calling upon the name of the Lord? In order to get the true sense of this, I turned to my concordance and looked up the passages where the same word is employed. And as far as I can judge, I may state from the authority of Scripture that the word, “call,” signifies *worship*. So I might translate it thus—“Whoever *worships* God shall be saved.” But you must let me explain that word, “worship,” according to the Scriptural meaning of it in order to explain the word, “call.”

To call upon the name of the Lord, in the first place, signifies to *worship* God. You will find in the Book of Genesis that, “when men began to multiply upon the face of the earth, then began men to *call* upon the name of the Lord.” That is they began to *worship* God. They built altars in His name. They certified their belief in the Sacrifice that was to come by offering a typical sacrifice upon the altar they had built. They bowed their knee in prayer. They lifted their voices in sacred song and cried, “Great is Jehovah, Creator, Preserver, let Him be praised, world without end!” Therefore—whoever he may be in the whole wide world who is enabled by Grace to worship God, in God’s way, shall be saved! If you worship Him by a Mediator, having faith in the Atonement of the Cross. If you worship Him by humble prayer and hearty praise, your worship is a proof that you shall be saved. You could not thus worship unless you had Grace within your heart—and your faith and Grace are proof that you shall have glory! Whoever, then, in lowly devotion, on the green sward, beneath the wide-spreading branches of a tree, beneath the vault of God’s Heaven, or in God’s House, or out of it—whoever shall fervently worship God with a pure heart, looking for acceptance through the Atonement of Christ and meekly casting himself upon the mercy of God, shall be saved! So stands the promise.

But lest any man should run away with a mistaken idea of what worship is, we must just explain a little further. The word, “call,” in holy Scripture signifies *prayer*. You remember the case of Elijah—when the prophets of Baal try to get rain from the false god, he said, “I will *call* upon God”—that is to say, “I will pray to God that He may send the rain.” Now, prayer is a sure sign of Divine life within. Whoever prays to God with sincere prayer through Christ, shall be saved. Oh, I can remember how this text cheered me once. I felt the weight of sin but I did not know the Savior. I thought God would blast me with His wrath and smite me with His hot displeasure! From Chapel to Chapel I went to hear the Word

preached but never a Gospel sentence did I hear. But this one text preserved me from what I believe I would have been driven to—the commission of suicide through grief and sorrow. It was this sweet Word—“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Well, I thought, I cannot believe on Christ as I could wish. I cannot find pardon, but I know I may call upon His name. I know I pray. Yes, and pray with groans and tears and sighs day and night. And if I am ever lost, I will plead that promise—“Oh God, You said he who calls upon Your name shall be saved. I did call. Will you cast me away? I did plead Your promise. I did lift up my heart in prayer. Can You be just and yet damn the man who did really pray?” Mark that sweet thought—*prayer* is the certain forerunner of salvation! Sinner, you cannot pray and perish! Prayer and perishing are two things that never go together. I ask you not what your prayer is. It may be a groan, it may be a tear, a wordless prayer, or a prayer in broken English, ungrammatical and harsh to the ear—but if it is a prayer from the inmost heart, you shall be saved! Or else this promise is a lie. As surely as you pray—whoever you may be—whatever your past life—whatever the transgressions in which you have indulged—though they are the foulest which pollute mankind, yet if from your heart you have learned to pray—

**“Prayer is the breath of God in man
Returning from where it came.”**

And you cannot perish with God’s breath in you. “Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!”

But the word, “call,” signifies a little more—it signifies *trust*. A man cannot call upon the name of the Lord unless he trusts in that name. We must have reliance upon the name of Christ or else we have not called aright. Hear me, then, poor tried Sinner! You have come here this morning sensible of your guilt, awakened to your danger. Here is your remedy—Christ Jesus, the Son of God, became a Man! He was “born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried.” He did this to save sinners such as you! Will you believe this? Will you *trust* your soul to it? Will you say, “Sink or swim, Christ Jesus is my hope and if I perish, I will perish with my arms around His Cross, crying—

**‘Nothing in my hands I bring
Simply to the Cross I cling’?”**

Poor Soul, if you can do that, you will be saved! Come, now, no good works of your own are needed—no sacraments. All that is asked of you is this—and that *He gives you!* You are nothing. Will you take Christ to be everything? Come, you are black in sin, will you be washed? Will you get down on your knees and cry, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner—not for anything I have done, or can do—but for His dear sake, whose blood streamed from His hands and feet, in whom alone I trust”? Why Sinner, the solid pillars of the universe shall totter rather than you should pe-

rish! Yes, Heaven should weep a vacant throne and an extinguished Godhead rather than the promise should be violated in any case in the world! He that trusts in Christ, calling on His name, shall be saved!

But once more and then I think I shall have given you the whole Scripture meaning of this. Calling on the name of the Lord signifies *professing His name*. You remember what Ananias said to Saul, afterwards called Paul, “arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling upon the name of the Lord.” Now Sinner, if you would be obedient to Christ’s Word, Christ’s Word says, “He who believes and is *immersed*, shall be saved.” Mark, I have translated the word! King James would not have it translated. I dare not be unfaithful to my knowledge of God’s Word. If it means sprinkle, let our Brothers translate it, “sprinkle.” But they dare not do that—they know they have nothing in all classical language that would ever justify them in doing that and they have not the impudence to attempt it! But I dare translate it—“He that believes and is *immersed*, shall be saved.” And though immersion is nothing, yet God requires of men who believe that they should be immersed, in order to make a *profession* of their belief. *Immersion is nothing!* I repeat, in salvation, it is only the *profession* of salvation! But God requires that every man who puts his trust in the Savior should be immersed, as the Savior was, in order to the fulfillment of righteousness. Jesus went meekly down from Jordan’s shore to be immersed beneath the waves. And so let every Believer be thus baptized in His name! Now some of you draw back from the thought of making a profession. “No,” you say, “we will believe and be secret Christians.” Hear you this, then—“If any man is ashamed of Me and of My Words in this generation, of him will I be ashamed, when I shall come in the Glory of My Father, with all His holy angels.” I will repeat a truism. Not one of you in your lives ever knew a secret Christian and I will prove it to you. If you knew a man to be a Christian, it could not be a secret, for if it had been a secret, how came you to know it? Then, as you never knew a secret Christian, you are not justified in believing there is such a one! You must come out and make a profession. What would Her Majesty think of her soldiers, if they should swear they were loyal and true, and were to say—“Your Majesty, we prefer not to wear these uniforms. Let us wear the dress of civilians! We are right honest men and upright, but we do not care to stand in your ranks, acknowledged as your soldiers. We had rather slink into the enemy’s camp and into your camps, too, and not wear anything that would mark us as being your soldiers!”

Ah, some of you do the same with Christ! You are going to be secret Christians, are you, and slink into the devil’s camp and into Christ’s camp, but acknowledged by none? Well, you must take the risk of it, if you will be so. But I should not like to risk it. It is a solemn threat—“of him will I be ashamed when I come in the Glory of My Father and all His holy angels with Me”! It is a solemn thing, I say, when Christ says, “Except a man take up his cross and follow Me, he cannot be My disciple.”

Now, then, I claim of every sinner here whom God has awakened to feel his need of a Savior *obedience* to the command of Christ, in this point, as well as in every other! Hear the way of salvation—worship, prayer, faith, *profession*. And the profession, if men would be obedient, if they would follow the Bible, must be done in Christ's way by a Baptism in water, in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. God requires this. And though men are saved without Baptism and multitudes fly to Heaven who are never washed in the stream—*though Baptism is not saving*—yet if men would be saved, they must not be disobedient! And inasmuch as God gives a command, it is mine to enforce it. Jesus said, "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature—he that believes and is immersed, shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned."

Here, then, is the explanation of my text. No Churchman [member of State Church] here can object to my interpretation. The Church of England holds dipping. It only says if children are weak they are to be sprinkled. And it is marvelous what a many weakly children there have been born lately! I am astonished to find any of you alive, after finding that so much weakness has everywhere existed! The dear little ones are so tender that a few drops suffice instead of the dipping which their own Church enforces. I would that all Churchmen were better Churchmen. If they would be more consistent with their own articles of faith, they would be more consistent with Scripture. And if they were a little more consistent with some of the rubrics of their own church, they would be a little more consistent with themselves. If your children are weak, you can let them be sprinkled. But if you are good Churchmen, you will immerse them, if they can bear it.

II. But now, the second point is REFUTATION. There are some popular errors with regard to salvation which need to be cured by refutation. My text says, "whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now one idea which conflicts with my text is this, *that a priest or a minister is absolutely necessary to assist men in salvation*. That idea is current in other places besides the Roman Catholic Church. There are many, alas, too many who make a Dissenting minister as much their priest as the Catholic makes his priest his helper. There are many who imagine that salvation cannot be accomplished except in some indefinable and mysterious way—and the minister and the priest are mixed up with it. Hear, then—if you have never seen a minister in your lives, if you have never heard the voice of the bishop of the church, or an elder thereof—yet if you did call on the name of the Lord, your salvation would be quite as sure without one as with one! Men cannot call upon a God they do not know! The necessity of a preacher lies in *telling* what the way of salvation *is*, for how can they hear without a preacher and how can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? But the preacher's office goes no further than just the *telling* of the message and after we have told it, God, the Holy Spirit must apply it! For further we cannot go. Oh,

take care of priestcraft, take care of man-craft, of minister-craft, of clergy-craft! All God's people are clergy—we are all God's *cleros*, all His clergy if we have been anointed with the Holy Spirit and are saved! There never ought to have been a distinction between clergy and laity. We are all clergy who love the Lord Jesus Christ and you are as much fit to preach the Gospel, if God has given you the ability and called you to the work by His Spirit, as any man alive! No priestly hand, no hand of Presbyterian—which means priest written large—no ordination of men is necessary! We stand upon the rights of manhood to speak what we believe and next to that we stand upon the call of God's Spirit in the heart bidding us testify His Truth. But, Brothers and Sisters, neither Paul, nor an angel from Heaven, nor Apollos, nor Cephas can help you in *salvation*. It is not of man, neither *by* men. And neither Pope, nor Archbishop, nor Bishop, nor priest, nor minister, nor anyone else has any Grace to give to others! We must, each of us, go ourselves to the fountainhead, pleading this promise—"Whoever calls on the name of the Lord Jesus, shall be saved."

If I were shut up in the mines of Siberia where I could never hear the Gospel—if I did call upon the name of Christ, the road is just as straight without the minister as with him! And the path to Heaven is just as clear from the wilds of Africa and from the dens of the prison and the dungeon, as it is from the sanctuary of God! Nevertheless, for *edification* all Christians should love the ministry, though not for *salvation*. The Word of God is sweet to them and "beautiful on the mountains are the feet of them who bring glad tidings of peace."

Another very common error is that a good dream is a most splendid thing in order to save people. Some of you do not know the extent to which this error prevails. I happen to know it. It is believed among many persons that if you dream that you see the Lord in the night, you will be saved. And if you can see Him on the Cross, or if you think you see some angels, or if you dream that God says to you, "You are forgiven," all is well. But if you do not have a very nice dream you cannot be saved. So some people think. Now, if it is so, the sooner we all begin to eat opium the better! Because there is nothing that makes people dream as much as that—and the best advice I could give would be—let every minister distribute opium very largely and then his people would all dream themselves into Heaven! But away with that rubbish! There is nothing in it! Dreams are the disordered fabrics of a wild imagination. They are often the tottering of the fair pillars of a grand conception—how can they be the means of salvation? You know Rowland Hill's good answer. I must quote it, in default of a better. When a woman pleaded that she was saved because she dreamed, he said, "Well, my good woman, it is very nice to have good dreams when you are asleep. But I want to see how you act when you are awake. For if your conduct is not consistent in religion, when you are awake, I will not give a snap of the finger for your dreams." Ah, I do marvel that ever any person should go to such a depth

of ignorance as to tell me the stories that I have heard myself about dreams! Poor dear creatures, when they were sound asleep they saw the gates of Heaven opened and a white angel came and washed their sins away and then they saw that they were pardoned. And since then they have never had a doubt or a fear! It is time that you should begin to doubt, then, very good time that you should, for if that is all the hope you have, it is a poor one! Remember, it is, “whoever *calls* upon the name of God,” not whoever *dreams* about Him! Dreams may do good—sometimes people have been frightened out of their senses in them. And they were better out of their senses than they were in, for they did more mischief when they were in their senses than they did when they were out! Some people, too, have become alarmed by dreams. But to trust to them is to trust to a shadow, to build your hopes on bubbles, scarcely needing a puff of wind to burst them into nothingness! Oh, remember, you need no vision, no marvelous appearance! If you have had a vision or a dream, you need not despise it. It may have benefited you—but do not *trust* in it! And if you have had none, remember that it is the mere calling upon God’s name to which the promise is appended.

And now, once again, there are others, very good sorts of people, too, who have been laughing while I was talking about dreams. And now it is our turn to laugh at them. There are some people who think they must have some very wonderful kind of *feelings*, or else they cannot be saved. Some most extraordinary thoughts such as they never had before, or else they cannot be saved! A woman once applied to me for admission to Church membership. I asked her whether she had ever had a change of heart. She said, “Oh yes Sir, such a change as you know,” she said, “I felt it across the chest so singular, Sir. And when I was a praying one day, I felt as if I did not know what was the matter with me, I felt so different. And when I went to the Chapel, Sir, one night, I came away and felt so different from what I felt before, so light.” “Yes,” I said, “light-headed, my dear Soul, that is what you felt but nothing more, I am afraid.” The good woman was sincere enough. She thought it was all right with her, because something had affected her lungs, or in some way stirred her physical frame. “No,” I hear some of you say, “people cannot be as stupid as that!” I assure you that if you could read the hearts of this present congregation, you would find there are hundreds here who have no better hope of Heaven than that—for I am dealing with a very popular objection just now. “I thought,” said one addressing me one day, “I thought when I was in the garden, surely Christ could take my sins away, just as easily as He could move the clouds. Do you know, Sir, in a moment or two the clouds were all gone and the sun was shining. Thought I to myself, the Lord is blotting out my sin.” Such a ridiculous thought as that, you say, cannot occur often. I tell you, it does, very frequently, indeed! People get to supposing that the veriest nonsense in all the earth is a manifestation of Divine Grace in their hearts! Now, the only feeling I ever want to have

is just this—I want to feel that I am a sinner and that Christ is my Savior! You may keep your visions and ecstasies and raptures and dancing to yourselves. The only feeling that I desire to have is deep repentance and humble faith. And if, poor Sinner, you have got *that*, you are saved! Why, some of you believe that before you can be saved there must be a kind of electric shock, some very wonderful thing that is to go all through you from head to foot! Now hear this, “The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. If you do with your heart believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and with your mouth do confess, you shall be saved.” What do you want with all this nonsense of dreams and thoughts? All that is needed is that as a guilty sinner I should come and cast myself on Christ! That done, the soul is safe—and all the visions in the universe could not make it safer!

And now, I have one more error to try to rectify. Among very poor people—and I have visited some of them and know what I say to be true. And there are some here and I will speak to them—among the very poor and uneducated, there is a very current idea that somehow or other salvation is connected with learning to read and write. You smile, perhaps, but I know it is true. Often has a poor woman said, “Oh, Sir, this is no good to poor ignorant creatures like us. There is no hope for me, Sir. I cannot read! Do you know, Sir, I don’t know a letter? I think if I could read a bit, I might be saved. But, ignorant as I am, I do not know how I can—for I have got no understanding, Sir.” I have found this in the country districts, too, among people who might learn to read if they liked. And there are none but can, unless they are lazy. And yet they sit down in cold indifference about salvation under the notion that the *parson* could be saved, for he reads a chapter so nicely. That the *clerk* could be saved, for he said, “Amen,” so well. That the *squire* could be saved, for he knew a great deal and had a vast many books in his library. But that *they* could not be saved, for they did not know anything and that, therefore, it was impossible. Now, have I one such poor creature here? I will speak plainly to you. My poor Friend, you do not need to know much to go to Heaven. I would advise you to know as much as ever you can—do not be backward in trying to learn. But in regard to going to Heaven, the way is so plain that, “the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.” Do you feel that you have been guilty, that you have broken God’s Commandments? Do you feel that you have not kept His Sabbath, that you have taken His name in vain? That you have not loved your neighbor as yourself, nor your God with all your heart? Well, if you feel it, Christ died for such as you! He died upon the Cross and was punished in *your* place and He tells you to believe it. If you want to hear more about it, come to the House of God and listen and we will try to lead you to something else. But remember, all you need to know to get to Heaven is the two things that begin with S—Sin and Savior! Do you feel your *sin*? Christ is your *Savior*. Trust to Him. Pray to Him. And as sure as you are here and I am

talking to you, you will one day be in Heaven! I will tell you two prayers to pray. First, pray this prayer—"Lord, show me myself." That is an easy one for you. Lord, show me *myself*, show me my *heart*, show me my *guilt*, show me my *danger*. Lord, show me *myself*. And when you have prayed that prayer and God has answered it, (and remember, He hears prayer)—when He has answered it and shown you, yourself, here is another prayer for you—"Lord, show me *Yourself*—Show me *Your* work, *Your* love, *Your* mercy, *Your* Cross, *Your* Grace." Pray that and those are about the only prayers you need to pray to get to Heaven with—"Lord, show me myself." "Lord, show me Yourself." You do not need to know much, then. You need not spell to get to Heaven! You need not be able to speak English to get to Heaven! The ignorant and rude are welcome to the Cross of Christ and salvation!

Excuse my thus answering these popular errors. I answer them because they *are* popular and popular among some who are present. O men and women, hear the Word of God once more! "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Man of eighty, child of eight, young man and maiden, rich, poor, literate, illiterate—to you is this preached in all its fullness and freeness—yes, to every creature under Heaven—"whoever" (and that shuts out none)—"whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

III. And now I have nothing to do except to finish with EXHORTATION. My exhortation is I entreat you by the name of God to believe the message which this day I declare from God's Word. Do not turn away from me because the message is simply delivered. Do not reject it because I have chosen to preach it simply and plainly to the poor. Hear again—"Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." I beseech you believe this! Does it seem hard to believe? Nothing is too hard for the Most High. Do you say, "I have been so guilty, I cannot think God will save me"? Hear Jehovah speak—"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways. As high as the Heavens are above the earth, so high are My thoughts above your thoughts, My ways above your ways." Do you say, "I am excluded. Surely, you cannot mean that He would save me"? LISTEN—it says—"Whoever"—"whoever" is a great wide door and lets in big sinners! Oh, surely, if it says, "whoever," you are not excluded if you call—that is the point.

And now I must plead with you and I will use a few reasons to induce you to believe this Truth. They shall be Scripture reasons. May God bless them to you, Sinner. If you call on Christ's name, you will be saved. I will tell you first, you will be saved because *you are elect*. No man ever called on Christ's name who was not elect. That Doctrine of Election which puzzles many and frightens more, never need do so. If you believe, you are elect. If you call on the name of Christ you are elect. If you feel yourself to be a sinner and put your trust in Christ, you are elect. Now, the elect are saved, for them there is no perdition. God has predestinated

them unto eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of Christ's hands! God does not choose men and then cast them away. He does not elect them and then cast them into the pit of Hell. Now, you are elect—you could not have called on the name of Christ if you had not been elect. Your Election is the cause of your calling and inasmuch as you have called and do call upon the name of God, you are God's elect. And from His Book not death nor Hell can ever erase your name! 'Tis an Omnipotent decree. Jehovah's will be done! His chosen must be saved, though earth and Hell oppose! His strong hand shall break their ranks and lead His people through. You are one of these people. You shall at last stand before His Throne and see His smiling face in everlasting Glory because you are elect!

Now, another reason. If you call upon the name of the Lord, you shall be saved because you are *redeemed*. Christ has *bought* you and *paid* for you—poured out the hottest of His heart's blood to buy your ransom—split His heart and shattered it to splinters to buy your soul from wrath! You are a bought one, you know it not, but I see the blood-mark on your brow. If you call on His name, though you have as yet no comfort, yet Christ has called you His own. Ever since that day when He said, "It is finished"—Christ has said, "My delight is in him, for I have bought him with My blood." And because you are bought, you shall never perish. Not one of Jesus' blood-bought ones was ever lost yet! Howl, howl, O Hell, but howl you cannot over the damnation of a redeemed soul! Out with the horrid doctrine that men are bought with blood and yet are damned—it is too diabolical for me to believe! I know that what the Savior did, He did, and if He redeemed, He redeemed and those redeemed by Him are positively redeemed from death and Hell and wrath! I can never bring my mind to the unrighteous idea that Christ was punished for a man and that such a man will be punished again. I never could see how Christ could stand in a man's place and be punished for him and yet that man be punished again! No, inasmuch as you call on God's name, there is proof that Christ is your Ransom. Come, rejoice! If He was punished, God's justice cannot demand a double vengeance—first at the bleeding Surety's hands—and then again at yours! Come, Soul, put your hand upon the Savior's head and say, "Blessed Jesus, You were punished for me." Oh God, I am not afraid of Your vengeance. When my hand is on the Atonement, You must smite me through Your Son! Smite if You will, but You cannot—for You have smitten Him and surely You will not smite again for the same offense? What? Did Christ at one tremendous draught of love, drink my damnation dry and shall I be damned after that? God forbid! What? Shall God be unrighteous—forget the Redeemer's work for us and let the Savior's blood be shed in vain? Not Hell, itself, has ever indulged the thought which has only been worthy of the men who are traitors to God's Truth! Yes, Brothers and Sisters, if you *call*

on Christ, if you *pray*, if you *believe*—you may be quite sure of salvation—for you are redeemed and the redeemed will not perish!

Shall I tell you one more reason? Believe this Truth of God—it must be true—for you call upon the name of God. In My Father’s house,” says Christ, “there are many mansions,” and there is one there for you. Christ has prepared a house and a crown, from before the foundation of the world, for all them who believe! Come! Do you think Christ will prepare a house and not carry the inhabitants there? Will He make crowns and then lose the heads that are to wear them? God forbid! Turn your eyes towards Heaven. There is a seat there that must be filled and must be filled by *you!* There is a crown there that must be worn and must be worn by *you.* Oh, be of good cheer—Heaven’s preparation shall not be too abundant—He shall make room for those who believe and because He has made that room, those who believe shall come there! Oh, would to God I might know that some soul here could lay hold on this promise! Where are you? Are you standing away among the crowd, there, or sitting here in the body of the hall or in the topmost gallery? Are you feeling your sins? Do you shed tears in secret on account of them? Do you lament your iniquities? Oh, take His promise—“Whoever (sweet whoever!)—whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” The devil says it is of no use for you to call. You have been a drunk. Tell him it says, “Whoever.” “No,” says the evil spirit, “it is of no use for *you*, you have never been to hear a sermon, or been in the House of God these last 10 years.” Tell him it says, “Whoever.” “No,” says Satan, “remember the sins of last night and how you have come up to the MUSIC HALL stained with lust?” Tell the devil it says, “Whoever,” and that it is a foul lie of his that you can call on God and yet be lost! No, tell him that—

***“If all the sins that men have done
In thought, or word, or deed,
Since worlds were made or time begun,
Could meet on one poor head,
The blood of Jesus Christ alone
For all this guilt could well atone.”***

Oh lay this to your heart! May God’s Spirit do it! “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

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

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

THE WHOLE MACHINERY OF SALVATION NO. 2327

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1893.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 18, 1889.

***“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 are 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!”
Romans 10:14, 15.***

PLEASE notice, dear Friends, that in the 13th verse we have the way of salvation set before us in the plainest terms—“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” I remember well when I lived on that verse for many months. I longed for salvation. I could not see that there was any way of hope for me. I thought that I must be left out, that I was too sinful, or too hard, or too something or other, so that others might be saved, but I could not be. But when I read this verse, I did what I ask you to do, I caught at it—it seemed like a life-line thrown to a sinking man! I clung to it and it became a life buoy to me—“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” “Ah,” I thought, “I do call on that blessed name. I will call on that glorious name! If I perish, I will never cease to invoke that sacred name.” An invocation of the name of God, a trusting in God and a consequent calling upon God and acknowledgment of God—this it is that saves the soul!

But I must get you to notice these words a little more in detail. There is here, first, a *wide word*, a *very wide word*—“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. “Whoever.” I have heard that, when a person is making his will, if he wishes to leave all he has to one person, say to his wife, if he just says so, that is the best thing he can do. But he had better not go into details and begin making a list of what he is leaving because he will probably leave something or other out! Now, in order to make this will of God very distinct, He does not go into any detail, but He just says, “Whoever.” That means the black man, the red man, the brown man, the yellow man and the white man. It means the rich man, the poor man and the man who is not a man! It means everybody of every sort and those who are of no sort at all—or of all sorts put together. “Whoever.” That includes me, I am sure. But I am equally certain that it includes you, you in the aisles who were never here, before. You who are quite unknown in London. You who are a stranger and a foreigner—whoever you may be!

It is much better to have it put so, without going into detail, because otherwise somebody might be left out.

I have often thought that if I had read in Scripture, "If Charles Haddon Spurgeon shall call upon the name of the Lord, he shall be saved," I would not have felt half as sure of salvation as I do now, because I would have concluded that there might have been somebody else of that name! And it is very likely there is and I would have said, "Surely it did not mean *me*." But when the Lord says, "Whoever," I cannot get out of that circle! It is a big net that seems to entangle all men in its meshes. "Whoever." If I call upon the name of the Lord, if *you* call upon the name of the Lord, if the man who lies upstairs dying calls upon the name of the Lord, we shall be saved! What a wide word that, "whoever," is!

And then, next, *what an easy word* we have here! "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord." Anybody can call upon the name of the Lord! Everybody understands what it is to call—"Hi there!" Have you not often used such a call as that? And if you have been in distress or danger, have you never called, "Help, help, help"? Very well, he who can thus call, let him call upon God, invoke His help, clamor for His mercy, crave His pity! If he does that in a believing way, as we shall have to show you, trusting that God will hear him, he shall be saved! So there is no difficulty here that needs a doctor of divinity to explain—the Truth of God is put mainly in monosyllabic words—"Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." It is as plain as a pikestaff! Oh, that you might see it and begin to call upon the name of the Lord by earnest prayer!

But here is another word, *a sure word*—"Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." There is no, "if," here! No, "maybe," here! But a glorious, "shall!" Our shalls and wills are poor, puny things, but God's "shall" is firm as the eternal mountains. "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," as surely as there is a God. The Lord has made no mistake—He will not revoke his declaration by changing His mind—"Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Oh, that many would call upon His name, tonight, and find immediate salvation which will last them throughout life and throughout eternity, for, "shall be saved," reaches a very long way—even throughout the eternal ages that are yet to come!

Now here, you see, Friends, we have a wonderful remedy for the disease of sin, very simple and very abundant. But the difficulty is to get it to the people who need it! I am going to talk about that matter in very plain language because I want to be very practical—and I pray that God's Spirit may make my whole discourse to be so.

In our text there are four necessities upon which Paul insists. Praying to God, calling upon His name, will save a man. But first, *there is no praying aright without believing*. "How, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" But, secondly, *there is no believing without hearing*. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" Thirdly, *there is no hearing without a preacher*. "How shall they hear without a preacher?" And fourthly, and lastly, *there is no effective preaching without being sent*. "How shall they preach except they are sent?"

I. First, then, THERE IS NO PRAYING ARIGHT WITHOUT BELIEVING, from which I gather this moral—then let us believe. Since we must pray and only by prayer can find salvation—and there is no praying without believing—may the Lord help us to believe, for how shall we pray aright unless we believe?

I think that I have persons here, tonight, who have commenced to pray, who have begun pleading with God. I hope, dear Friends, no, I feel *sure* of it, that if that prayer is sincere, there is a measure of faith in it, for would you ask God to save you if you did not believe that *you needed to be saved*? There is a measure of faith in that. Would you ask God to save you if you did not think *that there is a way of salvation by which He can save you*? There is a measure of faith in believing that. I think that you believe that *there is a Savior*. There is a measure of faith in that and, I hope, a measure of *saving faith*, too, in your believing that, notwithstanding all your sins and sinfulness, there is a Savior provided who is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. You may not have much faith, but you must have some faith if you are really praying to God from your heart and entreating Him to save you!

I think, too, that you must have a little faith that *the Savior will save you*. You have been praying to Him to do it. Would you have expressed that desire and have come to Him in prayer about it unless there was some kind of sediment of faith in your heart? I want to put it very gently to you, yet very plainly. Remember, faith is not measured by the quantity, but by the quality. A man of strong faith is happier, but he is not more truly saved than a man of weak faith, so long as he has any faith at all. If yours is only feeble faith, the Lord will say to you, “Your faith has saved you. go in peace.” The faith that comes behind Christ and touches the hem of His garment is a saving faith! And I think that is what you are doing when you say, “Lord Jesus, save me.” If this is a real prayer and not a sham one. If it comes from your heart there is, at any rate, a tint, a shade, if not an actual color of faith already upon your soul! How could you call on Him in whom you have not believed? Would we call for help from a person who we did not think would help us or could help us? No! The mere fact of calling upon anyone for help proves that we have some measure of confidence in that person, that he can and will help us. Well, if you believe as much as that concerning Christ, and if you will cast yourself upon Him, believing that you shall be saved, I would that you had more faith, but even *that little faith will bear you into Heaven*.

You believe, also, that Christ *can and does hear you*. Ah, you would not have been upstairs, alone, this afternoon, crying for mercy, if you had thought that there was nobody to hear you! Rational beings do not go and ask of nobody. You believe that Christ is able to hear you and you have some faith that He *does* hear you, for which I am very thankful, indeed.

I think that I may add that *you are measurably trusting to Christ*. Certainly, you are not trusting to anybody else. The fact that you often pray to Him for mercy, for the pardon of sin, for the renewal of your nature, proves that you have some degree, at least—some faint measure of faith in Him. Now, let me exhort you, while you keep on praying, to mix more faith

with your praying. "With all your offerings you shall offer salt," and with all your praying you shall offer faith. When you ask anything of God, *believe*, and you shall receive. When you appeal to His mercy, believe in the mercy! When you are pleading for His help, believe in the help, for there is much power in faith. "According to your faith, be it unto you."

You all know, surely, what believing is. You say, "I shall go home to pray." No, no, no! *Believe* and pray as much as you like—and a believing prayer will save you. Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved but, "how, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" Faith comes first. Believe, then, before you do anything else. May God, in His great mercy, enable some poor sinner to have done with doings and with feelings—and to trust—just to trust Jesus! There you are, hanging up there in a tree. You are afraid of falling down, so you cling with all your might. Suppose that a strong man comes underneath and says, "Here, drop into my arms. I will catch you. I am able to bear your weight." If you trust him, you will drop into his arms. That is what you have to do with Christ, tonight—trust Him and let go of every other confidence! Just drop into His arms and you shall be saved! Remember, then, this first lesson, that there is no praying aright without *believing*.

II. Now we go another step and come to the second necessity. THERE IS NO BELIEVING WITHOUT HEARING—"How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?"

The word, "heard," is to be understood in a wide sense. Reading is a kind of hearing. It is not merely listening with the ear, but *you must, by some means or other, come to a knowledge of the Truth of God*, and you cannot know what you do not hear, or read, or learn. The Truth must come under your notice so that you are *aware* of it, or else there can be no faith in you concerning it. I hope that none of you ever believe with the faith of the man who, when he was asked what he believed, said that he believed what the church believed. "Well," asks one, "what does the church believe?" "Oh," he replied, "the church believes what I believe." "Well, then, please tell me, what do you and the church believe?" "We both believe the same thing," he answered. And he would explain no farther.

Now, there is no faith in that at all—it is simple ignorance and nothing more. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" Why, to believe a thing is to know the ins and outs of it! To get at it by reading it or hearing it, are only different forms of the same thing. Well, now, if any man here desires faith, what should he do to obtain it? Sit still and say, "I will try to believe"? Certainly not! Suppose that I were to announce to you, tonight, that the Czar of all the Russias is dead and you said that you wished to believe it? You could not believe it by an effort of your mind—you would enquire for evidence of the truth of my statement, or you would wait till you saw the telegrams tomorrow—and so you would learn whether it was true or not. It is not a distinct act of the will, alone, that brings faith—"Faith comes by hearing."

Listen, then! *The more often you hear the Gospel, the better*—I mean you who have not yet believed it. As you are hearing it, you may come to believe it. It may insensibly, as it were, steal over you. Having heard it, and

heard it, and heard it, again and again, you may, at last, find yourself believing that Jesus suffered on the Cross for you! I recommend all seekers after Christ to hear the Word often.

Take another piece of advice. *Hear better.* Hear with both your ears at once. Listen as you would listen if the preacher were telling you how you could make a fortune in ten minutes! How everybody would listen—how everyone would want to have a front seat so as to make no mistake! How the pencils would go to work to take down the instructions! Hear that way, for *there is more at stake than a fortune*—even your immortal soul! Heaven and Hell hang upon the hearing or not hearing of the Word. Hear often and hear well.

But so hear *as to try to understand it* and if you cannot meet with the preacher who seems to proclaim an all-round Gospel, do what is better, go to the Bible, itself! Read this blessed Book through, studiously, with such helps as good men can give you. Yes, try and understand the Truth of God and prove it by experience. Come to this Book and come to the House of Prayer with this thought on your mind, “There is a something that I have to believe and I am going to know what it is. I am going to know the top of it and the bottom of it, the head and the front and the heart of it and, at any rate, I will, if I can, know what it is and what are the grounds and reasons for it.” Hearing thus, you will believe it.

There let me leave that point, then. Hear the Gospel, only mind that what you hear is the Gospel. You can hear some very smart sermons and very clever sermons and, as a rule, I may say that the cleverer they are, the worse they are! Where you see so much of the man, you will see very little of his Master. When everything seems yielded up to the turning of the phrases, putting the thing very grandly and carrying you away with wonderful eloquence, the Gospel, itself, gets put out of sight. Let the eloquent men have a shop for themselves on a Monday, but let us have the Lord’s-Day given up to plain dealing with the souls of men! We want none of this word-daubing! Men are going to Heaven or to Hell and it is time that we came to close grips with them about this all-important matter. God help us to do so! Hear that which is really aimed at your heart and conscience! Hear that which tells of Christ, Heaven and the way there! Hearing that, you are on the way to believing it!

III. Thirdly, THERE IS NO HEARING WITHOUT A PREACHER—“And how shall they hear without a preacher?” Therefore, let us preach.

Someone must make the Truths of God known to men. They will not find out about the Savior unless they are told of Him. The Gospel will not be revealed to men by any supernatural agency—we must go with it. They cannot learn it without being taught it. No man will know the Gospel unless somebody shall tell it to Him, by word of mouth, or by the gift of a book or a tract, or by a letter, or by the open preaching of the Word. Somebody must make it known to the man, for how can he believe in Him of whom he has not heard, and how can he hear without a preacher?

Who ought to preach, then? *Everyone who can preach should do so.* The *gift* of preaching is the *responsibility* for preaching. I often wonder at some Christian men who can fire away so grandly on the platform, but who

never speak for Christ—they will have to account for those prostituted tongues! If a man can speak upon the temperance question, he can speak upon the salvation question—let him take care that he does so. I do not wish him to be silent on the one, but I do earnestly entreat him not to be silent on the other! There are a great many persons who ought to preach the Gospel, but who do not. Every man who knows the Gospel ought to make it known. “Let him that hears say, Come.” When you hear the Gospel, tell it to somebody else—you Christian people are all bound, in proportion to your gifts and your opportunity—to make the Gospel known. “Why,” says one, “I thought that work was for priests.” Just so, it is only for priests! But then, *all Believers are priests*. By His mighty Grace, our Lord Jesus Christ has made us kings and priests unto God! And it is our duty, as well as our privilege, to exercise this blessed priestly function of telling to the sons of men the way whereby they may be saved. Each man, then, in this place, who knows Christ, and each woman and each young person, too, are bound to tell of Christ in some way or other to all who are round about them.

For this work, *a high degree of gifts is not required*. It does not say, “How shall they hear without a doctor of divinity?” It does not say, “How shall they hear without a popular preacher?” Oh, dear, some of us would have been lost if we could not have been saved without hearing a man of great abilities! I thank God that I owe my conversion to Christ to an unknown person who certainly was no minister in the ordinary acceptance of the term, but who could say this much—“Look unto Christ, and be saved, all you ends of the earth.” I learned my theology, from which I have never swerved, from an old woman who was a cook in the house where I was an usher. She could talk about the deep things of God and as I sat and heard what she had to say, as an aged Christian, of what the Lord had done for her, I learned more from her instruction than from anybody I have ever met with since! It does not require a college training to enable you to tell about Christ—some of the best workers in this Church have little enough of education, but they bring many to Christ. Go on, my dear Brothers and Sisters, telling of Christ’s love to you, even if you have very few gifts.

Remember that *when you have told out the story of the Cross to men, you are rid of one responsibility*. At any rate, if they perish, it will not be because they did not know. And if they perish through ignorance, it will not be that their ignorance was through your neglect in teaching them. Now, tonight, I wish that I could stir up everyone here to become a preacher, women and all—not that I care much for women preaching, but I want them to preach in the sense in which I have laid the matter down—that is, to make known to somebody the wondrous story of the Cross! Speak to an individual, if you can. If you cannot do that, write. If you cannot write, send a sermon, or give a tract. Only keep on making Christ known! I suppose that there are two or three thousand Believers here, tonight, out of these 6,000 people. If every one of you Christians would, every day, make Christ known to *somebody*, what a missionary organization we should be! How can they hear without a preacher? Now, let every

one of you become, in the sense in which the text means it, a preacher, by telling out, in some form or other, and making known in some way or other, the wondrous doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ!

It is pitiable that anybody should live and die without knowing the Gospel. You can have no idea, unless you go into the houses in many of our streets, what absolute ignorance there is in this city of London about the simple elements of the Gospel of Christ. City missionaries have often told me stories that have amazed and appalled me. You think, because so many come to some of our Houses of Prayer, that the people of London go into the House of God. There is at least a million people and, perhaps, two million, who never attend any place of worship at all. There could be three million, I suppose, out of our five million, who only occasionally go to any place of worship at all. Why speak of "heathendom?" We have it at our doors!

The more earnest a man is to win souls, the more he is shocked, amazed and appalled by the necessity there is to keep on making known the Gospel of Christ. And now they are starting new theologies, inventing falsehoods. Up with you, men and Christians! Publish Christ again! The only way to put this false fire out is with the old fire of the Gospel—men fear *that* fire! Put down the new heresy with the old orthodoxy! Bring out Christ Crucified! Cry again, with Luther's earnestness, "Believe and live!" Cry again, with Calvinistic determination, "Salvation is all of Grace, of Grace, alone, through faith in Jesus Christ!" I would to God that we might all preach that. If we had but all our Church members resolved to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God, then would we see men hearing! Then would we find men believing! And men believing are men saved!

IV. So I come to the fourth necessity, with which I shall close. THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE PRAEACHING WITHOUT BEING SENT—"And how shall they preach, except they are sent?"

"Ah!" says one, "now we have you in a corner. We must not all go and preach if we are not sent." If you are not sent, do not go! But what does it mean, "How shall they preach, except they are sent?" A man who goes to tell others about Christ must feel that he is sent to do it, or he will never do it properly and effectively.

The man who is sent, first of all, *has a message given to him.* You do not say to your servant, "You go north, south, east, west and that is all." No, if you send him, you give him a message—"Go and say to Mr. So-and-So, this and that." Or you write it down and you say, "Deliver this letter to such a person." You do not leave him to go and say whatever he likes—"John, I want you to call on Mr. So-and-So, tomorrow morning, and to say whatever first comes into your head." You do not act like that, do you? Yet that is the notion some people have, nowadays, of what a preacher is—he is a man who makes his message up as he goes along! He is a "thinker." He excogitates the Gospel out of his own brains. I have heard of a German who is said to have constructed a camel out of his own consciousness. Very likely. But I am sure that nobody will construct the Gospel that way! He must receive it by the Revelation of God. The other plan is not Paul's notion, for he asks, "How shall they preach, except they are sent?" First,

then, *get* your message. Be determined to know nothing among men but what the Lord, Himself, has revealed to you in His Word, by the teaching of His Spirit. Get it well into you. Say to yourself, "What I am going to say is nothing of my own, otherwise it would fall flat and powerless. But I am going with, 'Thus says the Lord.' This is God's message." Then, if you are sent, you will preach and you will so preach that men will hear—and they will so hear that they will believe! And they will so believe that they will be saved! But you must go as a God-sent man, having received your message from the mouth of your Master.

Next, I think that, even if we get a message from God, we need something more than that—*there must be an impulse felt within* that shall compel us to speak of Christ. If you merely go and flippantly talk about Jesus Christ to people, you may as well talk about anything else. But if you pity them, if you love them, if you feel that they must not be lost, that you cannot bear the thought of it—if it is in your mind so that you cannot sleep while you are thinking of such an one because he is going down to Hell—if it gets such a burden that it oppresses you and weighs you down so that you must speak to somebody about his soul, ah, *then* you will speak, for you will feel that you are sent! Now, my impression is that if we are in a right state of heart, we shall always feel like that. If a Christian man were in a right condition of *heart*, whether he found himself on a train, or along a country road, or at the railway station, or in the police court, or waiting in the lobby of a house, or anywhere, he would begin at once to deal with the person with whom he came into contact, about his soul. I wish that it were your habit to be always looking out for souls. Up, then, you Christian men, and seek as God shall help you, by every means in your power, to make Christ known to the dying all around you! But you will not do it unless you are sent, driven, impelled, forced—you will not win souls for Christ till the Gospel is like a fire in your bones and you feel that woe is unto you if you do not preach it!

Well now, before you go to try to do that, there is one thing more. You cannot do it effectively unless you are sent—and to be sent means *to have power given you with which to do the work*. Can that power be had? If you feel impelled to cry to God to give you the power to preach, the *spiritual* power, the *power of the Holy Spirit*. If you are impelled to teach in the Sunday school—and it is not worth doing unless you feel that you are impelled to it and sent to it—then pray for the power to win the souls of those dear children for Christ! If you feel called upon to write a letter to a friend, tomorrow, about his soul or her soul, do it because you feel called to do it—but pray to God to show you *how* to do it. Pray to Him to put the power into the words that you utter, that you may say the right words and put even the right tone into those words. There is a good deal, even, in the tone of the preacher. "How shall they preach, except they are sent?" They must be clothed with Divine Power! And the Lord can clothe even a child with that power—He has often done it! He can clothe a humble Christian woman who never spoke in public, with the power to win souls! He has often done it. And you, Brother, who have been quite satisfied to be a Church member and to do *nothing* for Christ—a most unsatisfactory state

of things, indeed—should begin to be doing something for Him who has done so much for you! First tarry at Jerusalem till you are endued with power from on high and then go forth as Christ's witnesses—for how shall you preach, except you are sent? But the power being obtained, you must go forth and tell out the message that your Lord has given you.

But you have not done it all till you have *given a report to your Master*. If you have been sent, you will go back to your Lord after you have delivered His message and you will tell Him what they have to say about it. Every man who is sent on an errand gives an answer, by-and-by, as to the reply of the person to whom he was sent. I am afraid that some teachers and preachers forget this. We ought to go, like Isaiah, back to the Master and say, "Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" You have tried hard with Mary to bring her to Christ—did you ever tell the Master about Mary? Mother, you have tried hard with your boy to bring him to the Savior—have you ever told Jesus about your boy?

Last Tuesday night there were a mother and father who had a son about whom they had once been very hopeful, but he had left home and gone away for weeks, though he promised to return. He had gone off and they had not heard a word about him. They came to a company of Christian people, last Tuesday night, broken-hearted. They had done their best to find their son, but they could not find him. It was to Haddon Hall that they came—and the people of God, there, prayed for his father and mother. The father, himself, prayed and broke down with emotion about his lost son. He went home and there was a letter from his son to say that the Savior had found him! He had given up the drink and he hoped to be a comfort to his father and mother all the rest of their days. He was many miles away and knew nothing of his father's prayer. Often, when you do not get on with people, go and tell the Lord Jesus Christ about it! Say, "Lord, I have preached to them, I have prayed for them, I have talked to them, I have wept over them, I bear them on my heart as a burden. Their very name seems to burn itself with letters of fire into my soul. Lord, save them! Lord, save them and they will be saved!" That is the way to win souls. If God works, He first of all makes us travail in birth for the souls of others—and then are they born into the Kingdom!

The rest of the text is a kind of vision. The Prophet sees persons coming down the mountain side. He looks at them and perceives that they are not men of war, otherwise the armor upon their legs would be terrible to the peaceful inhabitants of the plain. Yet here they come, a great company from the mountain tops, descending into the valleys. Who are they? As he looks, he says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things!" They are coming bearing the white flag, servants of the great King with whom you have been at war. They bear the banner that speaks of peace with God!

We, to whom the text alludes, who are the preachers of this Gospel of peace, say to you, tonight, "Sinner, throw down your weapons of rebellion! Guilty one, fight no longer against God! Come and be at peace with Him.

His peace is proclaimed to you through Jesus Christ. He will freely forgive your every transgression and iniquity. He is ready to forget and blot it all out! God invites you to be reconciled to Him, to have done with warring against Him. We preach peace to you and, if you hear us, we then tell you glad tidings of good things, full pardon for all the past, a change of heart to be given to you to make you a new creature in Christ Jesus—yes, to be given you, tonight, before you leave the Tabernacle—help for the future to strive against sin, strength to conquer and tread the dragon beneath your feet, power to become a child of God, to become an heir of Heaven, to be taken under the guardian wing of Providence, to be directed by the infinite wisdom of the Holy Spirit!”

These glad tidings of good things are published to all of you, even you that are farthest off from Christ and hope, and peace! Believe in Jesus! Trust Him! Trust God in human flesh, trust Him who bled to death upon the Cross and paid down the ransom for your soul and trust Him, *now!* He will do all for you that you need to have done for you—and He will save you and bring you to His right hand in Glory!

Now I have talked all in vain unless the Lord shall apply the Truth to you and you believe it. Do not wait for somebody to believe for you! Trust Christ for yourself! Believe in Jesus even now! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 10.

Verse 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 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 everyone that believes.* 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 of God, we get by faith in Christ Jesus.

5. *For Moses describes 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 does 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. *Speaks 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 your 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 says it? The Word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart, that is, the Word of faith which we preach, that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.* God’s way of salvation, then, is, “Believe and live.” Believe in Christ—Christ dying, Christ raised from the dead. If you so believe, you are saved! You need not mount to Heaven in rapture, nor dive to Hell in remorse. As you are, believe and live. This is the way of the righteousness of God!

10. *For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* True faith must be accompanied by an open confession. Come forward and outwardly acknowledge what you inwardly believe. Remember those words of the Lord Jesus, “He that believes 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 says, Whoever believes 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 whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* That is a 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 are 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* a 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 Divine 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 Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report?* So few were the obedient that he asked where they were!

17, 18. *So then faith comes 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 says, 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 Isaiah is very bold and says, 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 says, 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 you! O, then, careless child of pious parents! O, 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.

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DISOBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL NO. 2804

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 14, 1877.

*“But they have not all obeyed the Gospel.”
Romans 10:16.*

EVEN concerning those who have heard the Gospel, it can still be said, “They have not all obeyed the Gospel.” And this, dear Friends, is one of the plainest proofs of the deep depravity of human nature. We might have expected that if God, in the exercise of His marvelous mercy, should stay His hand and not at once execute the sentence of justice upon the guilty—if in His surprising Grace, He should devise a way by which He could be just and yet could justify the ungodly—I say, we might have supposed that the moment men heard that good news, they would immediately believe it! Seeing that they had offended God and so had brought themselves into a state of condemnation, we might have thought that as soon as ever the God of Grace mentioned the possibility of forgiveness, they would have sought it at His hand! It could never have been imagined—apart from the utter ruin of man’s nature by the Fall—that we should have needed so many ministers, so much pleading, so many years of long-suffering on God’s part and, above all, that we should have needed the display of the almighty power of the Spirit of God, Himself, before sinners would be willing to obey the Gospel! Yet so it is and nothing that I know of beneath high Heaven, so clearly proves that man’s heart is absolutely estranged from all that is good—and that the sinner has really become demented through his sin—as that man rejects the Gospel of Grace, refuses Divine Mercy and often stops his ears to the voice of God’s messengers and, in every case, except where the Holy Spirit graciously renews the nature—tramples underfoot the very blood of the Son of God! O Man, you who were at first like the sons of the morning—no, more than that, you who were made in the likeness of God—you whose place was in Eden, the garden of the Lord—how low have you fallen and into what a sad state of estrangement to your God have you come through your sin!

That, however, is not my subject at this time. I want, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to have a time of earnest pleading with those who have not obeyed the Gospel. It is true of many who meet with us, in this House of Prayer, as it is of those who assemble elsewhere, that though

they have often heard the Gospel, yet “they have not all obeyed the Gospel.” Perhaps some of those who up to now have been disobedient, will now obey it. May the Spirit of God make it to be so!

I. My first observation upon the text will be this. THE GOSPEL COMES TO MEN WITH THE FORCE OF A COMMAND. “They have not all *obeyed* the Gospel.” But you cannot speak of obeying anything which has not the authority of a command—it is clear, therefore, that the Gospel comes to men in the form of a command and that it has the force of a command!

I shall not stay to quote the large number of texts which I might easily bring to your recollection and all of which, unless they are wrested from their true meaning in order to suit a certain form of theological teaching, prove that the Gospel comes to men as a command. I will mention just one such passage—“The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now *commands* all men everywhere to repent.” So it is not optional to you whether you will accept the Gospel or not—it is not said to you, “You may, if you will, accept it, or you may, if you please, reject it.” You cannot reject it without incurring the guilt of disobedience to a Divine command! The Gospel does not come to you as an ordinary thing which is of little or no importance to you. It is true that you may reject it, but not without frightful peril to your soul. It does not humbly crave an entrance into your heart—it *demand*s it—claims it as a right! It comes not as a message from one of your fellow men, but, with Divine authority, it comes to you from the mouth of God, Himself, directly through His Word, or indirectly through the faithful preaching of His servants. Therefore, if you reject it, you are disobedient to God, Himself, like those of old to whom He said, “All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” To reject the Gospel of Christ is to incur great sin. He Himself said, concerning the Holy Spirit, “He will reprove (or convince) the world of sin.” And then, almost immediately, He added, “of sin, because they believe not on Me”—as though it were the very head and front of sin—the flower and crown of sin—its virus—its quintessence of guilt—that men believe not on Christ!

And, further, the command to men to believe the Gospel has the death penalty attached to disobedience. Let me remind you of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ upon this point—“He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Remember, too, the solemn utterance of our Lord concerning the universal ministration of His Word—“Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” So, you see, the Gospel is given to us as a command—and disobedience to it involves a direful penalty.

Now, Beloved, possibly you will say to me, “How is it that the Gospel—God’s glad tidings to guilty man, the Gospel which is full of Grace, which

is, indeed, all of Grace from top to bottom—comes in the shape of a *command*? Does it not tend to make your preaching *legal*?” My answer to that question is that if it did have that effect, I could not help it! I am bound to preach what I find in God’s Word. Whatever may be the consequences, I must not alter the form of my Master’s message!

But it strikes me that the Gospel is put in the form of a command, first of all, *to encourage poor seekers when they are coming to Christ*. Their question generally is, “May we come?” As a rule, they ask, “May we really believe in Jesus Christ? May we *dare* to do so?” Now, if there is a bare invitation, or if that invitation is limited to persons of a certain character, the eyes of the sinner would be fixed upon that character and he would look to see whether he was one of those invited. We do not want him to turn his eyes toward himself, yet that is exactly what he usually does—and this keeps him from fixing his eyes upon Christ, alone, where salvation is to be found. This, I think, is one reason why the Lord has put the Gospel message into the form of a command. You certainly may do what you are commanded by God to do! Even despair, itself, cannot raise a question about that matter. If I am *commanded* to keep the Sabbath holy, then I am, certainly, *permitted* to do so. And if I am *commanded* to worship God, I am, certainly, *permitted* to worship Him. So, then, if I, as a sinner, am commanded to put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, I need not stop to look at *what I am, or who I am*, or to search for any goodness or preparation in myself—and I may be assured that I may believe in Jesus because I am commanded to do so!

I have sometimes tried to illustrate this Truth of God by supposing that Queen Victoria were to send an order to some poor man, in the lowest slums of London, to go down to see her at Windsor Castle. Just imagine that this were possible, that the message ran somewhat to this effect—“that So-and-So, of such-and-such a place, is hereby commanded to come to the royal palace at Windsor, and he will stay away at his peril.” Well, now, that man would probably feel that such a summons could hardly be true. He would turn it over and look at the signature and the seal—and if it proved to be genuine—I fancy I see him starting off to get to Windsor as quickly as possible! If he spoke about his errand and said, “I am going to see Her Majesty,” everybody in the third-class carriage would laugh. “Ridiculous,” they would say, “how can you be such a fool? It is absurd!” “But,” he would say, “I am commanded by the Queen to go! Look, here are my orders in her own handwriting. What I am to do—such a poor, uneducated man as I am, I do not know, but, you see, it says, ‘he will stay away at his peril,’ so I dare not stay away.”

You see, the very sternness of the expression—the strong form in which it was put—had in his eyes the force of law and so really became an *encouragement* to him to go—and gave strength to him in going. In a similar manner, when the Gospel commands the sinner to repent, it does, in effect, say to him, “Let your reasoning, your questions, your doubts and your fears all be put to death by this sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, the Lord’s own command being quite a suffi-

cient warrant for you to come to Him.” As He bids you come, you certainly may come. “Preach the Gospel to every creature,” is our Lord’s command—you are a creature, so we preach it to you and tell you, in Christ’s name, that “he that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” It is put in that shape to encourage you, even by driving you to come to Christ and trust in Him to save you.

I have no doubt, also, that the Gospel is given to us in the form of a command, *in order to embolden the proclaimer of it*. I have often, when I have finished preaching, said to myself, “I have told the people the Gospel and I have pleaded with them to come to Christ, but I wonder whether I have done it as my Master would have me do it.” You know that true preaching is done in the name of Jesus and with His authority. It is a sort of miracle-working for we have to tell the dead to live—a most absurd thing to do except that God having told us to do it, we do it, and the dead live! We say, “Hear, you deaf and see, you blind”—things which look, to human reason, out of all order. Yet, since we are bid to do so, we do it, and God blesses it—and the deaf hear and the blind see—and the dead are raised to life! Well, I have said to myself, “Have I, by Divine authority, spoken to my hearers like that? Having this treasure in an earthen vessel—has the excellency of the power of God really shone forth?” Now, Sinners, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who is shortly to come again to judge the quick and the dead, I deliver to you these commands in His name—“Repent and be baptized, every one of you.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” These are no dogmas of the church—they are the plain Truths of God that I find in the Scriptures and, in the name of Jesus, I charge you to obey them! O Spirit of the living God, make the people obedient in this, the day of Your power! So this is another reason why the Gospel is put in this shape—that the minister of Christ may speak with confidence, commanding men, in his Master’s name, to repent and believe in Jesus!

But, dear Friends, there is a further reason, and that is *to secure the honor of God*. The Gospel is not an offer from an equal to an equal. When the Gospel says, “Believe, and you shall live,” it is not the voice of a man speaking to another man. I charge every sinner who is trifling with the Gospel, to beware what he is doing, for it is God, his Maker, who also will be the Judge of the ungodly, who sends out the invitations to the great Gospel wedding feast. If you refuse them, you are not refusing the invitations of a man, but the invitations of *God*, your Creator and your Judge! You are really rejecting Him who will shortly come, in the clouds of Heaven, with great power and Glory, to punish the disobedient by banishing them forever from His Presence! So it is most fitting that the Gospel should not come like a common invitation, but that it should come with all the force at its back which a Divine command can have!

Again, remember that although the blessings of the Gospel are all gifts of Divine Grace wherever they are found, they are, nevertheless—I think I may say every one of them—*things which the Law of God, itself, demands of men*. For instance, the Gospel comes to you in order that you may

have new hearts, yet the ancient Prophet proclaimed God's promise, "A new heart, also, will I *give* you." The Gospel comes to you in order that you may be pure, but you ought to be pure apart from any Gospel—you have no right to be impure. The Gospel comes to you in order that it may put away your sin, but you have no *right* to have any sin! That sin of yours, you have committed against God willfully and wickedly, and the guilt of it lies at your door. The Gospel comes to you in order that you may be reconciled to God, but you ought never to have been His enemies and, as long as you continue in enmity against God, you are sinning every moment! The Gospel truly brings you the gifts of God's Grace, but, at the same time, it brings you, to a large extent, that which should have been yours—and would have been yours if you had not sinned against the righteous God and broken His most holy Law.

Moreover, *the demands of the Gospel upon you are, after all, only the duties which rightly devolve upon you*, for, to believe God is the absolute duty of everyone of those whom He has created for His praise, since, not to believe Him is to make Him a liar! Sometimes, when I am talking to persons privately about their souls, I have peculiar power given to me by God the Holy Spirit in charging this great sin home upon their conscience. Very likely, the good Sister is here who, last week, came a second time and asked me to pray for her—and I told her that I would do nothing of the kind. And then I added, "I have set the Gospel plainly before you. I have told you that if you trust Christ, you shall be saved. What am I to pray for? Am I to ask God to make another Gospel to suit your fancy, or to save you in some way apart from faith in His Son? I cannot and I will not do it! If you say that you cannot trust Christ, you practically make God a liar—and if you are determined to commit that crowning act of guilt, your blood will be upon your own head." It startled her when I set the Truth of God before her in such a fashion as that—and then, when I again explained that this simple matter of trusting in Jesus Christ and Him crucified was the great stipulation of the Gospel, I was delighted to find that the Lord led her at once to do it! And while she confessed her faith in Christ, then and there, light and liberty came to her soul which had been so long in darkness and bondage!

It seems to me to be the most awful thing in the world for a man to say, "I cannot believe God." Many a time, when such a remark has been made to me, I have said, "Now, if you say to me, 'I cannot believe *you*,' I shall feel hurt by your lack of confidence—but you may say it a thousand times to me rather than say it once concerning God, who cannot lie." O dear Souls, you who are not yet believers in Christ, remember that it is nothing but God's right that He should be believed and nothing but Christ's right that He should be trusted—and that both in saint and in sinner, distrust of God is a sin that is not to be excused for a moment—and that if it is not repented of and forsaken, it will have to be dealt with by the great Judge of All at the last dread assize!

Then, with regard to repentance, when a man has done wrong, surely it is his bounden duty to repent of that wrong—and though he will never

do so until the Spirit of God leads him—and all true repentance is, in every case, a spiritual gift, yet is it equally true that in so far as a man is in the wrong, he ought at once, with all his heart and soul, to seek to get right—to make such recompense as he can, or, if none can be made, certainly to confess his fault and humbly to seek pardon for it! It seems to me that our own conscience tells us that this is true and so confirms what we find plainly recorded in the Word of God.

As you all know, the Gospel is set forth under the figure of a feast, and those who would not come to it were punished for not coming. It is also described as the prodigal's return to his father's house. The parable of the prodigal son does not mention everything connected with a sinner's repentance. For instance, there is nothing said in it about the Spirit of God leading the prodigal to resolve to go back. It looks as if he came of his own accord—but Christ did not attempt to teach all theology in that one parable. It must have been true that the prodigal was brought back by the secret working of the Spirit of God upon his heart. At the same time, it was always the prodigal's duty to come back, because he never ought to have gone away—and there never was a moment, from the time that he “took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living,” that he was not wrong in so doing. There never was a moment, while he was feeding the swine, that he was not wrong in being there at all. And if he had acted rightly—only that sinful heart of his would not let him act rightly—he would long before have said, “I will arise and go to my father.”

So I think I have plainly proved to you that the Gospel comes to men with the force of a command.

II. Now, in the second place, let us enquire—WHAT, THEN, ARE THE CLAIMS OF THE GOSPEL TO OBEDIENCE!

Any unconverted person here may say to me, “You tell me, Sir, that I cannot hear the Gospel preached and then go away and reject it, at my pleasure, without being guilty of a great sin.” I *do* tell you that—and the reason is that there is *the authority of God, Himself, at the back of the Gospel message*. When we lift up Christ in our preaching, as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent upon the pole, and cry to our hearers, “Look and live,” we are not speaking our own words—we are uttering the Words of God! To reject our words would be a small matter, but to reject the testimony of God is guilt of the deepest dye! My dear Friend, give me your hand and, as I press it, let me look you in the face and say, “When God Himself sets forth Christ as the only propitiation for sin, will you turn your back upon Him and reject so great salvation?” God grant that you may no longer do so if you have done so until now! The Gospel claims our obedience because it has the authority of God at the back of it!

Then, next, to disobey the Gospel is, evidently, *to slight the motive, the wonderful love of the God who sends it to us*. Oh, what wondrous love is displayed by God in the Gospel—the love which made Him give up His only-begotten Son to bleed and die—the love which allowed our Lord Jesus to be nailed to the Cross by His own voluntary act, that He might

suffer in our place! Oh, the amazing love of God, that He should proclaim a complete amnesty and oblivion for all our past transgressions—that He should say to us, “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool”—that He should even entreat men to repent and send to them such a message as this through His servant, Isaiah, “Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” That God should do all this and yet that man, with his proud heart, should throw it all aside as worthless, is to insult the love of God! And it seems to me to be a cruel thing—a monstrous thing—for sinful men and women to do!

And, further, not to obey the Gospel is to perpetrate a high affront to our Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of God Himself died upon the Cross at Calvary—for me to say that I do not need His death—that I regard it as a superfluity, for I am righteous enough without Him, or else that even if I *am* sinful, yet I care not that I am, and I will run the risk of Divine anger and I will not have this wondrous Christ to be my Savior—this would, indeed, be awful! If ever angels could shiver with horror and be astounded at the enormity of human guilt, it would be when they heard a man say, concerning Christ, by his actions, if not in so many words, “I will have nothing to do with Him! Neither do I care anything for Him.” Dear Friends, again I wish I could get near to each one of you instead of addressing you in a crowd at this long distance—if you have not obeyed the Gospel, I should like to put to you this question, “Can you, will you still refuse to obey it when your disobedience is really a rejection of the dying Son of God and an insult to the almighty love of His Father?”

Disobedience to the Gospel is, also, *an act that contains the concentrated essence of rebellion against God*. Suppose a king promulgates a certain law and one of his subjects violates every command of that law. The king summons the law-breaker into his presence and says, “Friend, do you really mean not to obey my law? Do you regard it as harsh and severe?” The man replies that the law is harsh and severe, “but,” he adds, “that is not the main matter. I do not acknowledge your authority over me and I hate you.” I can suppose it to be just possible that this gracious king might say to his rebellious subject, “Listen, Friend. I am going to ask you to do something which is wholly for your own good—not for my benefit, but for yours. I hear that you are in debt to the amount of £10,000 and I am willing to give you that sum of money so that your debt may be discharged—will you accept it?” “No,” he says, “I will not! I would rather go to prison and die there.” Do you not see at once what is the venom of this man’s animosity against the king? Yet, alas, his conduct is constantly being imitated by rebellious sinners. Here is a man who positively says, by his actions, “I would sooner be damned than obey God’s Gospel! I would rather lie in Hell forever than accept His Son as my

Savior. I will not obey His Law, but, to show my desperate hatred to Him and everything that is His, I will not obey His Gospel either.”

“Oh,” you say, “I do not mean *that*.” Perhaps you do not, but that is the meaning that lies in the very center of your disobedience—just as a worm is sometimes hidden in the center of certain fruit. You have not perceived it, yet, but it is there. “But,” says another, “I have not definitely said that I would never obey the Gospel.” No, but you have definitely continued to disobey it up to this very moment, for you are still an unbeliever! “Oh,” you say, “but I am no skeptic! I believe that what all the Bible says is true.” That admission only makes your case all the worse, for, if it is the truth, why do you not believe it? If Christ is, indeed, true, why do you not believe on Him? This is most monstrous conduct and it shows that you have made up your mind that you will not have the great King of Kings to reign over you! I wish, however, that you would look that fact clearly in the face, for I hope that when you have done so, the Spirit of God will convince you of the sin in which you are living—for that would go a long way towards leading you to seek cleansing from that sin through the precious blood of Jesus.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, pray that God will bless the message I am trying to deliver, in deep solemnity of soul, to poor sinners. Ask Him to send it home to their hearts by the effectual working of His Holy Spirit. Do you know, my dear unsaved Hearer, what God’s estimate of the Gospel is? Do you not know that it has been the chief subject of His thoughts and acts from all eternity? He looks upon it as the grandest of all His works—that marvelous scheme of redemption by the blood of His only-begotten Son—that wonderful way of salvation by the sinner ceasing to trust in himself and believing in Jesus Christ, God’s Son! You cannot imagine that He has sent this Gospel into the world to be a football for you to play with—that you may give it a kick, as Felix did when he said to Paul, “Go your way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for you.” You surely cannot believe that God sent His Gospel into the world for you to make a toy of it and to say, as Agrippa said to Paul, “You have almost persuaded me to be a Christian,” and then put away all thought of it out of your souls! You cannot even speak of it irreverently without committing a great sin. In my own heart, I often feel that I dare not think of that wondrous monument of Infinite Love—the Gospel provided for guilty sinners—without, like Moses, taking off my shoes, because the place whereon I stand is holy ground. Do not, I pray you, make merry over the rejected Gospel, for its blood will be required at your hands!

I appeal to your own consciences, if they are not drugged. Do you feel right—you who have been my hearers for so many years? Do you feel right in remaining as you are—hearers only, and not doers of the Word? Do you feel that if Christ were to come at this moment, you could justify your position before Him? If, instead of this pulpit being before you, the Great White Throne were set, and the books were opened, do you suppose that you could stand up and say, “God, I am doing right in hearing

the Gospel, yet not believing it. I am doing right in sitting in this pew impenitent"? You know that you could not talk like that! You would then be speechless like the man without the wedding garment! You know, too, that there is nobody to blame but yourself for your impenitence. I am clear of your blood, for I have faithfully warned you. Your own conscience will confirm what I say. Suppose you turn to any of the people of God now present and ask them what they think of their unbelief in the days before they came to Christ. Ask them whether they consider that it was sinful—they will tell you that when God the Holy Spirit quickened and awakened them, and brought them to trust in Jesus, they felt as if they could never forgive themselves for having so long refused the invitations of the Gospel and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ! They wept, mourned and sighed as they remembered how they had resisted the Spirit of God and grieved Him in a thousand ways—checked conscience, stifled conviction, rushed into sin after sin in order to escape from the Gospel if they could. They feel that all this was gross sin and they are good judges in such matters, for the Lord has taught them, by His Spirit, and you may depend upon it that it is, indeed, sinful!

And God Himself still says, as He did of old, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate!" If you do, think what the consequences must be. Does not everybody know that suicide is a terrible sin? Yet the suicide does, as it were, but kill his body—but what guilt must be his who sends his soul to Hell by disobeying the Gospel! To be a suicide, a man need not use a knife or a rope—he can starve himself to death if he pleases. And as for him who willfully refuses to eat the Bread of Heaven and damns his soul by a suicidal rejection of Christ—who shall pity him? Who among the angels, who among redeemed men in Glory can pity the man who chose his own delusions and follies and would rather eternally perish than obey the simple command of the Gospel, "Believe and live"? I pray you to lay these solemn Truths of God to heart.

III. I come now to my third point, which is this—WHAT IS THE OBEDIENCE WHICH IS SPOKEN OF IN OUR TEXT? "They have not all obeyed the Gospel."

Do you ask, "What must we do to obey the Gospel?" I will put the answer briefly and compactly. First, *you are to hear it*. God said of old, "Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live." And the reason for that command is that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." But, Beloved, you must take heed *how* you hear as well as *what* you hear. You must not listen to the Gospel as you would to a story or a song. "Hearken diligently unto Me," says the Lord, "and eat you that which is good." There must be, in your listening, a deep, earnest desire to know the Truth of God and to know the whole of the Truth of God, especially that part which condemns you and humbles you in the very dust! That is what you must especially seek to hear. O Sinner, do not wish to be flattered with lies! I have no doubt that you would like it, but that is the very worst thing possible for you to hear. Avoid a sugared Gospel as you would shun sugar of lead! Seek that Gospel which

rips up, tears, cuts, wounds, hacks and even kills—for that is the Gospel that makes alive again! And when you have found it, give good heed to it. Let it enter into your inmost being. As the rain soaks into the ground, so pray the Lord to let His Gospel soak into your soul. Open the windows of your heart—God help you to do so by devout attention and prayerful meditation—that the blessed, perfumed Gospel may come floating through and penetrate into the deepest recesses of your soul!

But hearing the Gospel is not enough; the plain command is, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.*” Now, to believe is to trust—it is the practical proof that we have rightly heard the Gospel if we believe it. This is the Gospel in brief. Christ died for sinners. He stood as the Substitute for all who trust Him. I trust Him and so I know Him to be my Substitute. God has punished Him instead of me and, therefore, He cannot also punish me, for that would be punishing the same offense twice, which the righteous God will never do. Christ has paid all the debts of all Believers. Whoever trusts Christ is a Believer, so his debts are paid, he is free from liability on account of them and, therefore, he may well rejoice. The essence of obedience to the Gospel lies in giving up all self-confidence, all attempts to save yourself by your own merit and a simple reliance upon Jesus Christ to save you. When you go to your banker, you take your gold and give it into his charge—and he takes care of it for you. You do not go to him, five minutes afterwards and say, “If you please, Sir, I should like to see my money, to make sure that it is safe.” If you did so, the banker would advise you to take it away and not bother him anymore! But you do not act so foolishly, for you have confidence that the banker will keep your money safely. And so you must act in the same way with your soul. Come, now, may the Spirit of God help you to do so—and make Christ your Banker! Deposit your soul with Him and then say, with the Apostle Paul, “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.” That act, which is a continuous one throughout the entire life, is the act that saves the soul!

“Ah,” says one, “but then repentance is also required.” Just so, and *he who trusts his soul with Christ is sure to repent*, for true repentance makes a man talk thus—“Has Christ really saved my soul? Has He been so loving and gracious to me as to make me His, forever? Oh, then, I am ashamed that I did not love Him before! My mind is changed towards Him now, yet, oh, how I wish that I had not acted as I have done! I grieve to think how I have sinned against God. And now He has forgiven me. I pray Him to help me henceforth to be His faithful servant, to do His will and not my own.” Genuine repentance is a complete change of mind towards all things through knowing the love of God shed abroad in the heart by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Remember, next, that the Lord Jesus Christ requires that, henceforth, you should *acknowledge Him as your Master, your Teacher, your King, your Leader, your All-in-All*. You are to come forward and confess that you belong to Him and that you have given yourself up wholly to Him. You

are to declare He has ordained the way in which He would have you do it outwardly that others may see, namely, by being buried with Him in Baptism unto death—not that this will save you, for you have no right to observe this ordinance till you are saved—but when you have believed in Jesus, you are to make the Scriptural confession of your faith, avowing that you are Christ's by being dead, buried and then raised up again in the very significant type and symbol which our Lord has ordained. You are to be obedient to what Christ has commanded and to follow the example He has set before you. And I, for my part, will never, while this tongue can speak, leave out any part of my Master's Gospel, for, though I have sometimes almost wished that there were no outward ordinances, because, in these days, they are so grossly perverted, put out of their proper place and order, and exaggerated—yet, God forbid that we should ever attempt to alter His Word! It is written in the Scriptures, "With the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Our Lord Jesus said, as I have often reminded you, "Whoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven." So, then, it seems to me that Christ requires of you a wholehearted faith which will make you give yourself up to Him to be His forever and to be obedient to each one of His commands as the Spirit of God shall enlighten you concerning them.

Now, young man, here I stand, as a recruiting sergeant, and I would to God that I could enlist you beneath the banner of the Lord Jesus Christ! I cannot come and ask you, each one, personally, whether you will enlist or not, but I trust that my Master's power is going with His Word and that He will compel you to enroll yourself among His followers. But again I remind you that it is not a matter of option with you—you are bound to do it—you ought to do it. "Well," says one, "I am willing to enlist. How am I to do it?" How does any soldier enlist? He takes the shilling, does he not? This is the way to become a Christian—take Christ! You have not to *give* anything, you have to *take*—and to take Christ as soon as ever—by that act of faith, you have received Christ, you are a soldier of the Cross! The soldiers of God, however, are not "short-service men." They are in for life and for eternity! When we take Christ, we take Him as the husband takes his wife, for better or worse, for richer or poorer, for life or for death. Yes, but our union to Christ goes further than that. Death comes in and breaks the marriage tie, but, with us—

***"Once in Christ, in Christ forever!
Nothing from His love can sever."***

"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."

I hope that there are some here who are saying, "I see what the Gospel commands and I am willing to obey—but I have not the strength that is required." My dear Friend, if you had any strength, it would be a hindrance to you! It is your *weakness* that Christ wants, not your strength! "But, Sir, I am not fit to come to Christ," cries another. You are the very

man He wants—your fitness would be in the way! It is your unfitness that Christ wants—not your fitness. “Oh, but I have nothing good about me!” You are another man whom Christ wants—your goodness would stand in His way! It is your sin He died to put away—that is what He wants you to believe. So, without any goodness, without any fitness, all unholy and vile as you are, I pray you to follow these lines which I will repeat, and see if you can truly say them to Christ from your heart—

***“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Your kind arms I fall;
Be You my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my All.”***

Can you say that? Can you also say, “I trust myself wholly to Him and desire Him to save me from sin and make me holy. I wish to be His faithful servant and subject as long as I live. Only let Him save me and I will love Him forever and ever”? If your heart has really said that, you are a saved man, as surely as you live! Sister, if you also said that, go in peace—your sins, which are many, are all forgiven! If you did say that, my son, then, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you! Take up your bed and walk, you poor lame soul—this night have you found salvation! Free, full, irreversible, eternal salvation is yours, for you have obeyed the command of the Gospel which has come, I trust, with power into your heart!

O Brothers and Sisters, be true to Christ! Begin at once to confess Him and never be backward to acknowledge Him as your Lord! If He has saved you, tell it out! It is a shame for any Christian soldier not to wear his regimentals. Christ is such a Lord that He is worth living for, worth dying for—yes, if our whole lives could be spent in the fires of martyrdom, Christ deserves that none of us should flinch from such a trial for His dear sake! Be an out-and-out Christian, young man, young woman, if you are a Christian at all! God help you to do so, giving your whole self up to Christ to be His forever and ever! So may God grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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

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

HOW CAN I OBTAIN FAITH? NO. 1031

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 21, 1872
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”
Romans 10:17.***

IT is difficult to make men understand that the salvation of the Gospel is not by works but entirely by Grace—that it is not presented to men as the *reward* of their own endeavors—but is given to them freely upon their accepting it by an act of simple faith or trust in Jesus Christ. However plainly we may preach this Truth of God, there will always be some who will misunderstand us and as many more who will raise objections against it—as if it were their part to give an opinion and not to do as they are bid by the Lord! But when men are brought under the teaching of the Word to see that the pardon of their sins, and the acceptance of their souls does not lie with any merit of their own, or any doings of their own, another difficulty generally presents itself.

They will say, “What is this faith of which you speak?” And when we assure them that it is a simple trust or confidence in the finished work of Christ, then straightway they say, “How can we get this faith? How can we obtain this confidence?” To us who have faith this question is very easy to answer, for when we heard the gladsome news of a finished salvation for lost sinners, complete forgiveness for the guilty and acceptance for the ungodly—simply upon believing in Jesus—we came to Jesus and we trusted in Him, and we continue still to trust, and we have joy and peace through believing! We see far more reasons for belief than for doubt. Yet, nevertheless, there are hundreds and thousands who are awakened and seriously enquiring to whom this is a great difficulty—“How can I get the faith which gives me possession of Christ Jesus and brings me salvation?”

Our text is the ready answer, practically a *complete* answer—not doctrinally or theologically complete—but practically perfect. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” “But faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, is it not?” Certainly. “And it is given by the Spirit to God’s own chosen?” Assuredly. Yet, nevertheless, it was not necessary for the Apostle to mention those facts *here*. Some persons are always for having a whole system of theology in every sermon but it is not necessary that they should be gratified. Paul is clear enough about the work of the Spirit in other places and it is not necessary that he should introduce that subject into every line he writes. It was practically unnecessary for him to mention that subject in the present instance, and therefore, he did not do so. It would sometimes puzzle rather than instruct an enquirer if we were to go into the full details of a matter.

For instance, if I am thirsty, how shall I quench my thirst? By a drink of water. But in what way can I obtain water? It quite suffices, for practical purposes, for you to tell me to go to the tap or the fountain.

There is no need to explain to me before I drink that the water is supplied by a company and forced to the fountain by sundry machines, having been first extracted from the great fountains beneath by artesian wells, or drawn from the river at Thames Ditton. Nor would it be necessary, in answer to my question, to trace the river to the clouds, and to treat upon the formation of vapor by the skill and wisdom of God. Practically, to the thirsty man all you need to say is, "There's the water, drink."

I will add another illustration. A man is hungry, and he asks you, "How can I get bread?" "Go to the baker's," you say. The answer is complete enough for him. It meets the case at once. If he wants a larger declaration of how bread is obtained, we can give it to him at another time when he is no longer hungry! We will tell him how the corn is sown in the furrow of the earth, and how by mysterious processes of Nature it germinates, grows, and ripens. We will trace it from the reaper to the thresher, and from the thresher to the mill. And we will also show that daily bread is as much a gift from Heaven as the manna which dropped down upon the hungry people in the wilderness.

But, it is not necessary for the feeding of the hungry that we should, on every occasion, go into all those details although we hold very sound views upon them. And when you are dealing with an anxious person it will suffice to say to him, "Faith comes by hearing." Further information can be supplied under happier circumstances. I mean to keep to our text this morning and if any shall charge me with an omission of the work of the Spirit, or a failure to trace all saving faith to the electing Grace of God, I shall bear the charge without murmuring, only saying that my soul rejoices as much as that of any man living in the work of the Spirit of God! I will also affirm that the electing love of God and His determinate purposes are precious Truths of God to me.

But if the text was sufficient for Paul, it will, I trust, be sufficient for you. May the Spirit of God assist us while we meditate upon the way by which faith comes. This shall be followed by a brief indication of certain obstructions which often lie in that way. And then we will conclude by dwelling upon the importance that faith should come to us by that appointed road.

I. First, then, THE WAY BY WHICH FAITH COMES TO MEN. "Faith comes by hearing." It may help to set the truth more clearly, if we say, negatively, that it does *not* come by any other process *than by hearing*—not by any mysterious and strange method but in the most simple and natural mode conceivable, namely—by the hearing of the Word of God. Some imagine that faith comes by hereditary descent and they act upon the supposition. Therefore, in certain Churches, birthright membership is thought to be a proper practice and the child of a Christian is thought to be a Christian.

In some other Churches, though, the theory would not be stated in so many words, yet it is practically accepted, and children of pious parents are regarded as scarcely needing conversion. The text is forgotten which says that the heirs of salvation are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." The typical covenant secured outward privileges to the children born after the flesh, but under the Covenant of Grace the

blessing is secured to the *spiritual* and not to the natural seed. "He who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise" (Gal. 4:23). That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and nothing more—the new-born nature is not transmissible from father to son like a natural temperament or a cast of countenance.

I know the answer will be that, "the promise is to us and to our children," but it will be well for the objector to reply to himself by completing the quotation—"even to as many as the Lord your God shall call." The fact is that nothing spiritual is inherited by carnal generation. Our children, even if we are far advanced in Grace, will still be "shaped in iniquity." No matter how high the sainthood of the professing Christian, his child (when capable of understanding) must, for himself, become a personal Believer in Jesus.

It appears, also, to be thought possible to infuse Grace by sacraments. There are persons yet alive who teach that a babe may be regenerated by certain aqueous processes and be thereby placed in "a state of salvation." But is not faith a perpetual requirement of regeneration? And what is that regeneration worth which leaves a person an *unbeliever*, and, consequently, "condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God?" Rest assured, that as faith does not come by descent, neither can it be produced by any rite which recognizes that descent! It comes in one way, and in one way only in every case, and that is by the hearing of the Word of God! To every person, whoever he may be, though nursed in the bosom of the Church and introduced to that Church by the most solemn ritual, we are bound to say, you must hear as well as others, and you must believe as the result of that hearing as well as others, or else you will remain short of saving Grace.

Faith is not a mystery juggled into us by the postures, genuflections, and mumblings of priests. We have heard a great deal about sacramental efficacy, but I think a man must have extraordinary hardihood who would say that either baptism, or the so-called Eucharist, are the sure creators of faith. I see not what saving service these forms can render to unbelieving men if they leave them in an unbelieving condition, and, consequently, in a state of condemnation. Seeing that without faith it is impossible to please God, the Divine Grace supposed to be conveyed by the mere participation in sacraments is of small value—it cannot give the cardinal requisite for acceptance before God.

Faith cannot be washed into us by immersion, nor sprinkled upon us in christening. It is not to be poured into us from a chalice, nor generated in us by a consecrated piece of bread. There is no magic about it! It comes by hearing the Word of God, and by that way only. These are superstitions, you tell me, and scarcely need to be mentioned here. Very well, then, we will have done with them, and treat of superstitions which linger in our own congregations. There are some who fancy that faith comes by *feeling*. If they could feel emotions either of horror or of exquisite delight, they would then, they think, be the possessors of faith! Others say till they have felt what they have heard described in certain biographies of undoubtedly good men, they cannot believe, or even if they have a measure of faith, they cannot hope that it is true faith.

Faith does not come by feeling, but through faith arises much of *holy* feeling, and the more a man lives in the walk of faith, as a rule, the more will he feel and enjoy the light of God's Countenance. Faith has something firmer to stand upon than those ever-changing frames and feelings which, like the weather of our own sunless land, is fickle and frail, and changes speedily from brightness into gloom. You may get feeling from faith, and the best of it, but you will be long before you will find any faith that is worth the having if you try to evoke it from frames and feelings—

***“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' name,
On Christ the solid Tock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”***

Some, also, have supposed that true faith will come to men by dreams and visions. It is surprising how a belief in these things lingers, still, in what is called this age of light! The notion is still current that if you dream of seeing Jesus, or fancy you have seen Him while awake, or if a passage of Scripture strikes you, or if you hear or imagine that you hear a voice speaking to you, you are then a Believer! Now, faith in Christ is like faith in anyone else—it comes to us by the same kind of mental processes and is based upon simple principles and plain matters of fact—it needs no vision of the night. Though you should see all the angels in Heaven, it would not prove that you would go to Heaven any more than my having seen the Pope's body guard would be a proof that I shall be made a Cardinal! Things which are seen of the eye save not, for the things which are seen are *temporal* and cannot work eternal salvation.

Moreover, men saw Christ and yet pierced Him and blasphemed Him. Visions have been seen by heathens like Nebuchadnezzar, and angels have appeared to bad men like Balaam, who, though he sighed out, “Let me die the death of the righteous,” yet perished fighting against the God of Israel. True faith has a more solid basis for its fabric than the fleeting fancies of the mind. I beg you to notice, too, that it does not say in the text that faith comes through the eloquence, earnestness, or any other good quality of the preacher! Faith comes by *hearing*, and hearing by the Word of God, not of man, but of God.

The Word of God is the substance of faith-creating preaching! It is by the *hearing* of God's Word, and not by any other hearing that saving faith comes to the soul. I may hear a man descant upon the Gospel with all the eloquence that can be commanded by the most fluent tongue—yet if my faith comes to me because the man spoke pathetically, or poetically, or argumentatively, or rhetorically—it is a poor miserable faith being of the power of the flesh! It will die, and so prove itself unlike the faith which springs from the incorruptible Word of God, that lives and abides forever. On the other hand, I may hope for faith if I am listening to the true Gospel, the very Word of God, though the man who speaks it may be of stammering lips and his voice may be disagreeable to my ears and there may be much about his manner that does not commend itself to me.

If he preaches the Truth of God it is by hearing not *him*, the man, but by hearing the Word of God that I shall come to faith. I desire always, as a

preacher, to feel that it is not my word but God's Word that saves souls! We are to explain it and expound it, but we are not to add to it, take from or conceive that we can improve it. We must not go into the pulpit and say, "I have been working out a subject from my own mind, and I am going to give you the result of my thoughts." We had better keep our own thoughts for some other place, and give the people the revealed Truth of God. The theory now-a-days is that all preachers worth hearing by this refined generation must be profound thinkers and inventors of improved theologies.

Brethren, let man's thoughts perish forever! The thoughts of God and not the thoughts of man will save souls! The Truth of God should be spoken simply, with as little as possible of the embellishments of metaphysics and philosophy and high culture and all that stuff. I say the Word of God delivered as we find it is that which, when heard, brings faith to the souls of men. I counsel you, my occasional hearers, you who, perhaps, have come freshly to this city, or who reside where you have a choice of ministries, seek not that which tickles your ears, but that which your conscience approves as consistent with the Word of God—and though we, or an angel from Heaven should preach to you that which is not God's Word—do not listen to us, for it will be mischievous to you.

Hear what the Lord God speaks and hear nothing else! What though He shall sound forth His Word through a ram's horn, if it is God's Spirit that gives forth a certain sound, it shall be more profitable to your soul than though the silver trumpet should be set to the mouth of falsehood and the sweetest music should regale your ear. The *matter* of a discourse is far more important than the manner. Saving faith never comes from hearing falsehood, but from the Word of God alone. I ought, perhaps, to add that the expression, "by hearing," though of course, literally must be confined to the hearing of words vocally uttered, is meant to include in its spirit the *reading* of the Word of God—for reading is a sort of hearing with the eyes—and faith has often come and will often come to men while they are reading the Word of God for themselves.

We must not kill the spirit of the text by excessive regard to the mere letter of it, and we would do so if we excluded reading, which is a quiet hearing of the still small voice of the printed page. Faith comes by the Word of God reaching our minds, and our knowing and understanding it. The entrance of God's Word gives light. "Incline your ear and come unto Me. Hear, and your soul shall live." Thus we have spoken of it negatively.

Now, positively—"Faith comes by hearing." Sometimes faith has come into men's minds by hearing the simple statement of the Gospel. They have longed to be saved and they have been told that Jesus, the Son of God, condescended to come into this world and to take upon Himself the form of Man, and as Man to be partaker of our infirmities and to offer Himself as a Sacrifice in the place of sinners. They have, moreover, been told that whoever trusts in this Substitutionary Sacrifice shall be saved, and straightway they have believed! All they have needed has been merely to be *informed* of the way of salvation. God's Spirit has so prepared them that they have believed almost as soon as they have heard the saving Truth of God.

In many cases the only difficulty in the way of salvation has been a need of understanding the Word of God. I know in my own case I would have given all I had if I might but have been informed what I must do to be saved. Though I frequented places where the Gospel was preached, I did not catch the meaning of *believing*—it puzzled me much. I do not remember to have heard the simple declaration that to trust in Jesus Christ would save my soul, or, possibly I did hear it with my outward ears, but I must have been strangely infatuated for I did not understand the sense. I have often thought if I could have heard the way of faith simply stated, my soul would have leaped into liberty long before.

I will not so say, but I am persuaded that faith often comes by hearing the simple declaration that God accepts sinners—not for what they are in themselves but for what Christ is—and that when sinners believe in Jesus they are saved then and there, and are acceptable with God through Jesus Christ His dear Son. The mere statement of this has brought, by the operation of the Spirit of God, faith into the soul! “How is this?” asks one. Well, it is because the Gospel commends itself to some hearts as true upon the very first blush of it. It strikes them as being undoubtedly the Gospel of God. It is the same in other matters—you sometimes hear a story about which you say, “Well, I do not know. It may be correct, but I shall have to look a little into that before I am certain.” But you often hear statements which you accept at once because they commend themselves to your understanding, and you feel that they must be true.

There are minds which God has so prepared that the moment they hear the Gospel they respond to it. I think I hear the seeker after the Truth of God exclaim, when he heard the Gospel, “True? Why, how could it be otherwise? It is so divinely grand, so harmonious, so good, so gracious, so unexpected—nobody could have thought of it but God Himself—it must be the Truth of God!” Having long sought goodly pearls of Truth, the illuminated eye catches the gleam of the Gospel and discerns it to be a priceless gem! Those are blessed, indeed, who are thus at once brought unto faith by the statement of the Gospel.

To some others the convincing point has been the suitability of the Gospel to their case, for while they have heard it preached as a Gospel for sinners, they have felt that they were certainly among that class. When the preacher has gone on to describe the misery of the Fall, the utter ruin of human nature, its deceitfulness, feebleness, fickleness and folly, the hearer has said, “Is the Gospel sent to those who are thus lost, guilty, and impotent? Why, I am precisely in that condition!” And, then, when its great command is stated, namely, simple trust in Jesus, the soul perceives the suitability of the way of Grace! We do not go to Heaven to bring Christ down, or dive into the deeps to bring Him up from the dead. We can neither keep the Law nor find an atonement for our transgressions—but this simple trust—oh how suitable it is to undone sinners! Nothing to do—I can do nothing! Nothing to bring—I have nothing to bring! It suits my case. Glory be to God for devising a plan so adapted to our needs!

From the suitability of the Gospel to the sinner, many have been, by God’s Spirit, led to saving faith in Jesus, and so faith has come by

hearing. In many, I do not doubt, faith has come through hearing of the condescending pity and the melting love of Jesus. Oh, that we dwelt more on this—that He loved His enemies! That He died for the ungodly! That His heart yearns over the lost sheep! That He is willing to receive prodigal sons, for He is full of Grace and Truth—

***“His heart is made of tenderness,
His heart melts with love.”***

When such texts as the following have been preached on—“This man receives sinners.” “Come unto Me all you that labor.” “Ho, everyone that thirsts,” etc. “All manner of sin and transgression shall be forgiven unto men.” “Whoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.” “Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” That melting strain has touched the heart and led the most hardened to believe in a Savior so kind to the undeserving.

Men have found it impossible *not* to believe in a Friend so self-sacrificing, a Redeemer so altogether lovely! The sweet love of Jesus has an Omnipotence in it to win souls. They yield, “by mighty love subdued,” unable to resist its charms! And, as if they could hold out no longer they throw themselves by an act of faith into the Savior’s arms. I can well understand their singing, “I do believe, I must believe in such a Friend as this.” Faith comes by hearing of the free forgiveness procured by the agony, the stripes, the wounds, the death of Jesus—the lover of our souls!

At other times, faith has come not so much through hearing the statement of the Gospel as from hearing of its authority. I may believe a statement because it looks like it is true. I may, on the other hand, accept it not because I have, myself, perceived the apparent truth of it—but because of the person who tells it to me. And this is a very right and acceptable kind of faith. What has God said about my salvation? Before I hear it I am prepared to believe it on the testimony of God. He says it and that is enough for me. I believe this Bible to be His Book. I hear what it says and whatever the Lord God has said I must and will receive, whether it appears plain or not.

There are persons who, when they have heard the Gospel preached, have not at first believed it. But if it has pleased the Spirit of God to lead the minister to show that the Gospel is of Divine appointment, that the way proclaimed is ordained by God Himself, and that God has set the sanction of His promise upon it—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved”—and has also set upon it the second sanction of His *threat*—“He that believes not shall be damned”—then they have yielded and given over all further question. God bids them trust in Jesus, and they do so through His Grace. Without canvassing the statement itself they receive what God teaches—and since He has set forth Christ to be a Propitiation for sin they receive Him as such. Since He has said, “Look unto Me and be saved,” they look because God bids them look, and they are saved. To believe in Jesus is a command from God’s own mouth, and is, therefore, to be obeyed! And the more so because, “He that believes not God has made Him a liar, because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son; and this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.”

In some cases, too, the coming of faith has been helped by hearing and perceiving the veracity of the subordinate testifiers of the Gospel—I mean the writers of the sacred Book, the Prophets, and chiefly the Apostles. These men are worthy of credit—they were honest, unsophisticated men—and they certainly gained nothing by testifying that Christ was the Messiah and that He died and rose again from the dead. One of them, the Apostle Paul, lost his position, which was one of great eminence, and spent his whole life in toil, suffering and reproach. He ended with a bloody death because of what he preached, and thus he proved that he was a sincere, honest, upright man. If Paul or any other of the Apostles were in the witness box, nobody could object to their evidence. Whatever they said we should believe, because the men were truthful witnesses. So, sometimes persons have been led into faith in Christ by feeling that those whom He sent to be testifiers to His Person, death, and Resurrection were evidently true to the core, and, therefore, their word was worthy of all acceptance.

I believe, dear Friends, that faith has come by hearing in another way, too. Perhaps the preacher has not so much stated the Gospel and brought forward its authority, as *explained* it. And so faith has come. If we spent our time in nothing else but just explaining the text, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” we might achieve a blessed life-work and perhaps might see greater results than when our ministry takes a wider range. The preacher must take up, one by one, the soul difficulties which prevent man from seeing what faith is—that which keeps him away from looking to Christ. And he must show that all the hope of the sinner lies out of himself, none of it in *himself*—that all his help for salvation is laid upon One that is mighty, even Jesus Christ the Son of God.

When the preacher explains that he must look away from his own feelings, and prayers, and doings, and even away from his own believing as any ground of confidence and must rest simply and alone upon the one sacrifice of Jesus—it has often happened that faith has come through the hearing of such an explanatory word! In some cases, too, faith has come when the word has possessed a peculiar soul-revealing point in it to the hearer’s particular case. Remember the Samaritan woman? Our Lord Jesus Christ explained to her the Gospel, but she does not appear to have been enlightened by His explanations! It was that home stroke of His—“Go, call your husband and come here,” which won her to faith!

Such revealing of the thoughts and intents of the heart will occur in any God-sent preaching of the Gospel because the Word pierces to the dividing of soul and spirit, and lays bare the secrets of the soul. Then it is that hearers cry, “Come, see a Man that told me all things that I ever did! Is not this the Christ?” Thus, by the guidance of the Spirit, the Word of God finds out the man, and faith comes by hearing. Faith, also comes to many by hearing when we detail the experience of those who have tasted and handled the good Word of Life. When the preacher or teacher tells how he trusted in Jesus, and found pardon, peace, and Eternal Life!

When he is able to point to others who have felt the same—some, perhaps, who were even greater offenders than the person addressed—then conviction and faith are worked in the mind. We bid you see what

Jesus has done for us in the hope that you will trust and try Him for yourselves. Jesus prayed for those who shall believe on Him through our word, and we hope you will be among the number. To set the whole matter clearly, we will suppose that you are laboring under a very serious disease and a physician professes to heal you. You are quite willing to believe in *him*, but you cannot blindly follow *any* man, for there are thousands of quacks and impostors. You naturally need to know something about him.

Now, in what way would you go to work to get faith in him? How would faith be likely to come to you? It would come by *hearing*. You hear him speak and you perceive that he understands your case, for he describes exactly all your symptoms, even those which none know but yourself and a skillful physician. You feel already some confidence in him. He next describes to you as much of the method of cure as you can comprehend, and it seems to you to be very reasonable and suitable to the requirements of your case. His proposal commends itself to your best judgment and you are already a step nearer submission to his mode of operation.

Then you enquire as to the man's character. You find that he is no mere pretender, but an authorized, skillful, long-established practitioner well known for truthfulness, uprightness and every good quality. Moreover, suppose in addition to this he charges you nothing whatever, but does everything free, having evidently no motive of gain but being altogether disinterested, moved only by real pity for you and a kind desire to remove your pain and save your life? Can you any longer refuse to believe and submit? But what if, in addition to all this, he allows you his case-book and bids you read case after case similar to your own in which he has effected a perfect cure? And if some of these are your own acquaintances—persons whom you know and esteem—why, Sir, you will not insult him by saying, "I wish I could believe you"!

You will be unable to help trusting him unless you are unwilling to be cured. Faith, in such a case, does not depend upon the will at all—you are convinced by hearing, and you become a believer! In the same way faith comes by hearing. You are unreasonable if you sit still and say, "I cannot make myself believe." Of course you cannot! But you hear, do you not, of how Christ heals sinners? You hear that He is backed by Divine authority! You see that He really does save those who trust Him! What more of evidence do you need? O Soul, it seems to me a harder thing *not* to believe in Jesus than to believe in Him if you are, indeed, willing to be made whole!

When one has heard these things, and understands them, surely the mind, if it is not willfully blinded, must receive the Savior! May God forgive your long perverseness, and by His Spirit open your eyes to see the simplicity of that faith which comes by hearing the Word of God!

II. My time, however, flies much too rapidly this morning, and I must be brief on the second very important head, namely, OBSTRUCTIONS WHICH OFTEN BLOCK UP THIS WAY. One is a need of intention, by which I mean that many persons come to hear, but they have no wish to be led into faith. Like the butterflies which flit from flower to flower, they

extract no honey because they come not for such a purpose—while the bees dive into the cups and bells of the flowers and come up loaded with their luscious food. Oh, if men *came* to hear, praying to be endowed with faith in Jesus, faith would surely come to them by hearing!

Many persons, in hearing a sermon, are like children looking at a cornfield—it is full of yellow garlic, or perhaps of scarlet poppies, and they cry, “What a lovely field!” But the farmer doesn’t think so—he is looking for the corn. Many a hearer watches for pretty speeches and flowery metaphors, and cries, “How well he puts it! What a well-turned sentence! How sweetly he quotes poetry!” and so on. Bah! Is that what you come to God’s House for? O Fools, and slow of heart! Is this your end in hearing the life-giving Gospel of the bleeding Lamb? I assure you it is not this that we are aiming at in preaching to you! If you came to look after the good corn, you would care little for the gaudy poppies of a flaunting eloquence so much regarded by the men of these days.

Come with the intent to find faith in Jesus! Cry to God to make His Word effectual to your salvation, and then hearing will be quite another business with you! Alas, I fear you will perish, let us preach as we may, while we are regarded by you as mere orators to be criticized and not as witnesses whose testimony is to be weighed. Some do not hear aright for need of attention. Sleepy hearers are not likely to be led to faith. Eutychus may fall from the third loft and be taken up for dead, but he is not likely to become a Believer by sleeping, even though Paul should be the preacher. We need attention in order to the real reception of the Word of God. Oh how pleasant it is to preach to earnest hearers who lean forward to catch every syllable, anxious to know how they can be saved! Wandering hearts lose the benefit of the Truth of God and vain minds trifle away the privilege of a Gospel ministry. Take heed how you hear, otherwise you may remain hearers only, and so perish in unbelief!

With many, a need of candor is another reason why faith does not come by hearing. If a man hears with a prejudiced heart, making up his mind beforehand what he will believe, he is not likely to be convinced. He puts himself as far as he can out of the reach of benefit. When the heart rebels against the Word of God—when it says, “If this is true I am living a bad life, and I shall have to give up my pleasures, therefore I will not accept it”—well then, faith does not come and cannot come by such hearing! Faith comes by hearing when a man does, as it were, give himself up to the Word of God, like a person who is badly wounded and surrenders himself to the surgeon’s hand. Oh, if I had a gangrened limb and it must be taken off, I think I would pray for patience enough to say, “O Sir, if you can but spare my life, cut to the very bone.”

When it is the soul that is concerned, I would say to the preacher, “Sir, do not flatter me. Do not tell me that which will please but delude me. I do not need your flattery. I do not need your fine words. Sir, tell me what I am, and where I am in the sight of God and how I can be saved—for it will little satisfy me to wake up in Hell and remember that I used to hear a fine orator! I need to be saved in deed and of a truth.” “Ah,” says one, “but some preachers are not only bold, but rough in their expression.” Yes, but suppose you were nearly drowned and a strong swimmer plunged into the

stream and plucked you out just as you were sinking for the last time. If he dislocated your arm would you grumble? No, you would say, "The bone can be set at another time, but my life could not have been restored." And so with the preacher, though he is rough—if it is the Truth of God which he speaks—only pray that it may save your soul and be content to put up with the man's infirmity if by any means you may attain salvation by Jesus Christ!

With some, however, hearing does not bring faith because they hear without any meditation after. There is a great trial going on, as you know, in the Tichborne case. Every jurymen, I doubt not, wants to judge righteously. I am sure the sleepy one is not likely to do so, and I am pretty clear that the jurymen who is most likely to get at the truth will be the man who, when he gets away from the court, having heard attentively all the time, takes home the notes of the evidence, weighs them, and makes comparisons, and endeavors to sift out the truth. So I would say to you when you hear us preach, sift the sermon afterwards—turn our sermons over, pick holes in them if you like, and find out our mistakes—but oh, do search into the Truth of God and be not content till you find it!

If you need to find Christ, the Wisdom of God, you should seek for Him as for silver. You are likely to believe the Truth when your mind turns it over and over. Here is a bag and I am willing to make a man rich, and, therefore, I drop into it pound after pound. But I find that the bag is just as empty as before! The reason is plain—there are holes in the bag and the money drops through. Too many hearers are as a bag full of holes—and golden sermons will not bless them because they willfully forget all. They will never come to faith because they do but look at their face in the glass of the Word and go their way and forget what manner of men they are. Oh for hearers who only need to know the Gospel, and the evidence of it, and then consent thereto, saying, "It is the Truth of God, I cannot quarrel with it! I joyfully receive it." Such are saved souls!

III. But, now, I am sorry to be so brief, but I must conclude by speaking of THE IMPORTANCE THAT FAITH SHOULD COME TO US BY HEARING. I will let my words drop rapidly without any ornament and remind you, dear Friends, that if you have been a hearer and faith has not come to you, you are, this moment, in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity! You believe not in Christ and you make God a liar because you have not believed in His only-begotten Son! The wrath of God abides on you! You are dead while you live! You are without God, without Christ, and strangers to the Covenant of promise.

My soul pities you—will you not pity yourselves? Hearers only! Faithless, graceless, Christless! Christ died but you have no part in His death. His blood cleanses from sin but your sin remains upon you. Christ has risen and He pleads before the Throne of God—you have no part in that intercession! He is preparing a place for His people, but that place is not for you! Oh unhappy soul! Oh wretched soul! You are out of favor with God, at enmity with Eternal Love, destitute of Eternal Life! Truly, if Jesus were here He would weep over you as He did over Jerusalem, and say, "How often would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not." Ah, remember, though your present

state is terrible it is not all. You will soon die and you will die without faith! Remember that word of Christ—it is one of the most terrible I know of, “if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins.”

To die in a ditch, to die in a prison, to die on the gallows—none of us would desire it—but to die in your sins! O God, it is Hell! It is eternal damnation! May the great Lord save you! But to perish forever will be your lot as surely as you live unless you believe in Jesus, and that speedily, for soon you will be out of the reach of all hearing. No more sermons, no more invitations of Grace. Oh, what would you give to have the Gospel once more when you are cast away from it! No more the preacher’s voice, saying, “Turn you, turn you, why will you die!” No more the pitiful accents of one who loves your souls and gladly would snatch you as firebrands from the flame!

Around you all will be dark, and hard, and the only message for you will be this—“He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.”—

***“There are no acts of pardon passed,
In that cold grave to which we hasten.
But darkness, death, and long despair,
Reign in eternal silence there.”***

Ah, then it will be no relief of your miseries that you once heard the Gospel—it will rather increase your torment! Conscience will cry aloud—“I heard the Gospel of Grace, and I heard the arguments which proved it true but I rejected a Gospel which God Himself proclaimed! A Gospel which was genuine on the face of it! A Gospel full of such love as ought to have melted a rock! A Gospel that was brought to me without money and without price! A Gospel that was pressed upon me from my infancy to my gray hairs—I rejected it, I willfully rejected it—not because it was not true, but because I would believe a lie and would not believe the living God.”

Eternal Father, You who are mighty to save, let not one among us go down into the Pit with a lie in his right hand, refusing to accept the Gospel of Your blessed Son! The Lord save you all, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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FAITH'S WAY OF APPROACH

NO. 3259

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 20, 1911.

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

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”
Romans 10:17.

[Another Sermon by C. H. Spurgeon upon the same text is #1031, Volume 18—
HOW CAN I OBTAIN FAITH?—
read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .]

ACCORDING to the Christian religion, faith is the great essential thing. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Whatever we may do or may be, we cannot be acceptable with the Most High unless we believe in Him. Even prayer can only be a mockery if it is not the prayer of faith. “He that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him,” or else he does not really pray. The Lord Jesus Christ has died to save men, but it is certain that no man will be saved without faith. Even the blood of Jesus Christ does not save any except those who believe in it. “God so loved the world” is a very wide expression, but we must not make it wider than Scripture makes it, for remember how the verse goes on, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever *believes in Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Without *faith* Christ is not ours. His blood cannot cleanse us, His life cannot quicken us. We must have faith to get at the blessings of salvation.

Suppose we could be brought into touch with Christ without faith for a while, yet, if we had not continuous faith, we would not have a continued connection with the Savior and, consequently, would not abide in eternal life, for it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” They not only *begin* to live by faith, but *continue* to live in the same manner. In our holy religion, everything is by faith—faith for life and faith for death. Even the first tears of repentance must be salted with faith—and the last song on earth shall be full of faith. You must have faith or you will perish. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned,” is the declaration of Jesus Christ, the Savior, Himself!

I. So, first, LET US DISCOVER WHAT FAITH IS.

We have seen that it is essential. It is very important to understand its nature. Well, faith with regard to God is the same as faith with regard to anything else. It is the same act of the mind, though it differs as to its object. When I believe in God, it is the same kind of mental act as when I

believe in my friend. I believe with the same mind. 'Tis true that all saving faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, but be it always remembered that we, ourselves, believe, and that the Holy Spirit does not believe for us! What has the Holy Spirit to believe about? It is not written that He is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. No, but we are to believe in Him! He leads us to faith, but the faith is our own act and deed—and if there could be supposed to be a faith which was not our own act and deed, it could not possibly be the faith which saves the soul! If I understand aright the faith which saves is just this—God has revealed such-and-such a Truth. I believe it to be true and I so believe it to be true that I act upon it. God has said that He has laid sin upon Christ—I believe He has done so. He tells me that if I trust Christ, I may be assured that *my* sin was laid upon Christ. I trust Christ, that is, I rely upon Him—and the reliance which springs out of belief is the essence of faith.

When a man believes a bank to be safe, he will put his money into it if he has need to do so. When a man believes in the honesty of another, the practical issue of it is he takes his word and trusts him. I believe in the truthfulness of God, in the truthfulness of certain narratives given by the four Evangelists. I believe that Christ was born at Bethlehem, that He was the Son of God, and that He lived and died as the Savior of men. I believe that His sufferings were expiatory, that He suffered in the place of sinners to make recompense to the Justice of God for our sins and, believing that, I trust my soul upon His Sacrifice. I rest on it and that faith saves me!

Now, mark, if I do readily rest in Christ I shall do what Christ bids me. *Faith must lead to obedience.* He bids me forsake sin—and I shall do it by His help. He bids me follow Him—and I shall do it if I really believe in Him. A doctor says, “Now, trust me, my man, and I will cure you.” Very good. I trust him. He sends me medicine and I take it. But suppose I do not take the medicine? Well, then, I never trusted him! My neglect proves that I cannot have done so.

The only trust that saves the soul is that practical trust which obeys Jesus Christ. Faith that does not obey is dead faith—nominal faith. It is the outside of faith, the husk of faith, but it has not the vital corn of faith in it. Sinner, if you will be saved, you must give yourself up to Jesus Christ to be His servant and to do all that He bids you! You must rely alone upon Him! Trust not in fiction, but in reality—not by mere profession, but with your whole heart—and you must continue to lean, rest and lie upon Him, trusting alone in Him! This is what saving faith is.

Now, there are some who say they wish they could get this faith. They declare that they would do anything to get it. They earnestly long to believe, but somehow they cannot get a grip of faith, cannot quite make out what it is or, if they know what it is, they are still puzzled—they cannot exercise it.

Albeit faith is the gift of God, it is always the act of man—while faith is a privilege, it is always a natural *duty*! Men are bid to believe in Jesus

and are sinful if they do not believe in Jesus. Where faith does exist, it is the gift of God, but where it does not exist, it is because men will not believe in Him, but shut their eyes to His Light. If they would but see it, that Light of God would convince them!

II. LET US, THEREFORE, CLEAR AWAY SOME DIFFICULTIES WITH REFERENCE TO FAITH.

You want faith, you say. You are not a skeptic—you accept the Word of God. You are not one of those who are unsound about the Deity of Christ, you receive that. Still, you cannot, you say, get at faith in Jesus Christ. Listen, then, to these observations.

First, remember that it will be your wisdom not to think so much about faith as about the Objective of faith. If I want to believe a thing that is in the newspaper, it is no use my sitting down and reading it over and saying, "I should like to believe it and I will try to believe it." My proper way is to begin to look into the matter—not into my faith, but into the matter, itself! And when I have looked into the matter itself, I shall see whether it is reasonable—whether it looks true and, by-and-by, perceiving the truthfulness of it, faith will come to me as a matter of course.

You are to believe in Jesus. Now, forget the believing and think only of Jesus. If I wanted to love a person, it would be useless for me to sit in my chamber and say, "I shall try to love So-and-So." You cannot pump love up out of your heart in that way. But suppose that person is exceedingly beautiful, has a delightful character and has lived a charming life? Well, I gaze upon that person's face. I hear the story of his life and I feel that what I could not *make* myself do, I do without attempting to make myself do it! Love comes of itself. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly despised." So it is with faith. Speaking naturally, it comes of itself through the work of the Spirit of God, from the force of the evidence which is presented to the mind. "Faith comes by hearing." Look then, more at *what* is to be believed than at the mere act of believing!

And next, be solemnly persuaded that what you want is faith and that you must have it. *Do not, therefore, begin confusing faith with something else.* Some of you want an *impression!* You want a *Revelation!* You want a *feeling!* You want a *sensation!* Now that is not faith—it has nothing to do with faith! It is feeling, it is being, but it is not believing! What you really need is to believe in God—and if you do that—you shall be saved! But instead of that, you begin to cry, "Oh, that I felt as Mr. Bunyan felt on such an occasion!" That is not the matter in hand, and you are but turning aside from the point you should aim at when you look to those things instead of faith. All other good things will follow faith, but for you who are unsaved, the first, the *only* matter is faith in Jesus Christ!

Many persons are anxious to be saved, which is a good thing, but they have mapped out the way in which they want God to save them—which is a bad thing! They have read the biographies of eminent Christians and

they have discovered that some of them, before they found Christ, were sorely tried by horrible thoughts, doubts and fears, temptations to blasphemy and so on. Possibly they have read Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* and have noted that he went through a very terrible season of distress before he found peace with God. Perhaps some of you, my dear Friends, have fallen into the idea that if ever you are to be saved, you must feel just as John Bunyan did. And although you have been told, over and over again, that simple faith in Jesus Christ will save you, and save you just as you are, yet you still think it cannot be so but that you must have a deep law work and most dreadful feelings before you can come to the Savior!

I would exhort you earnestly to pray for help in this matter of believing. Ask the Lord to give you faith, but I ask you to *remember that prayer without faith will not save you* and that the Gospel is not, "He that prays shall be saved," but, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life." Some have unbelievably made a kind of Savior of their prayers and their tears—but that will not do. Away with your prayers if they stand in the place of Christ! It is not what you ask for, or feel, or do—it is what Christ suffered on the Cross that is to save you! And the way you are to appropriate the merit of Christ is by faith! So keep to that. Know what it is you need and press forward to get it.

Now we come more closely to the text. Faith is the thing we need. We shall get it according to God's order, and God's order is this—"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." *Faith does not come by sacraments*. Nobody ever got faith through a sacrament! It does not say, "Faith comes by seeing." Those processions are very pretty, very pretty, indeed! And very fine are those banners and very sweet the smoke of that incense—but faith does not come that way! Eyegate is closed—through Eargate eternal life comes into the soul of man! "Faith comes by hearing."

The religion of Jesus Christ is not a religion of performances. It has its ordinances which belong to Believers, but it never attempts to change the moral nature by mechanical acts. Eating and drinking and washing cannot possibly be the means by which men are reconciled to God and taught to love the Redeemer. There is a moral means needed—a spiritual means, and the moral and spiritual means are as simple as possible—"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

The text suggests two things, then, as to faith's way of approach. If I want to get faith I must hear, but I must mind *what* I hear. And I must mind *how* I hear.

III. LET US REMEMBER, THEN, THAT FAITH COMES THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD.

Soul, would you have faith? Then mind what it is you hear, for the hearing must be "by the Word of God." Faith comes by hearing, but not by hearing anything and everything! The hearing is "by the Word of God" and only as the preaching is according to the Word of God will God bless

it. God never blessed a lie to the creation of a newborn spirit. The Truth of God has vitality in it—only the Word of God is the living Seed in the soul!

“Well,” you say, “how am I to hear the Word of God, then?” I reply, first, hear the Word of God as you have it in the Bible. Reading is tantamount to hearing! Be sure, then, if you would find faith, to study much this priceless, matchless Book. Study it all! But if you would find Christ, dwell most on those four inestimably precious Books which tell us most about Him. Read the story of His life and His death as given by the four Evangelists—and if you would have a comment upon them—read the Epistles and study them.

Remember, the point about the Word of God is this—that God has spoken to men through this Book. Men wrote it, but they wrote as they were Inspired and moved by the Holy Spirit. Especially about the Lord Jesus Christ has God spoken to us by chosen witnesses. There were first the Apostles who have written a considerable part of the New Testament. These men saw Christ. John says, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory.” There were many of them and they saw the miracles of Christ, so that they were sure He was Divine. They saw His holy, guileless life. They saw Him in His death and, what is best of all, and most to be remembered is that they saw Him risen again, they watched Him at intervals during forty days and they saw Him till a cloud received Him out of their sight!

They were simple-minded men who could not have invented the story. They were mostly unlettered men and they and hundreds of others so believed it that they died for preaching what they believed! They gained nothing by the statement except scorn and shame. If there is a fact in human history which is verified beyond a doubt, it is the death and resurrection of the Son of God!

Does not that help you believe? “Ah,” you say, “I do believe these facts.” Well, if you do believe them in very deed and truth, what follows from your belief? Why, that you must hate God in your heart, or else you would be saved because this glorious One of whom they speak came here to save men and will save all that trust Him! You perceive Him to be a Divine Person—can you not trust Him? If not, it must be because you have some hatred to Him and prefer to be damned rather than acknowledge your salvation by the free Grace of God!

Let it not be so! But rather, I pray you, hear His Word by attentively reading it, until at last, as you read it, the Glory of the Inspired Truth which shines in the pages shall flame into your soul and you shall say, “I do believe it! How could I have rejected it? It speaks for itself—the Deity is in the Word!”

Next to that, however, *hear the preachers of God's Word*, for though they are not Inspired, yet they can do something for you. We can bear witness to what we have known and felt of the work of Jesus Christ in

men's hearts and this will supplement the witness of the Inspired men and may help you to believe! As one has well said, "If you question a convert, you will generally find that he owes his conversion to a text of Scripture." It is God's Word, not man's comment on God's Word, that generally saves souls. If you long to be saved, go, therefore, to those that keep to the Gospel, that keep to the *real* Gospel and have nothing else to say. That is what you need!

Seek also to hear the preacher who preaches experimentally, one who can tell you that he knows he is a sinner, but that he has believed in Jesus and is saved and knows he is saved! For your healing, you need to have not a surgeon who has never seen a case like yours before, but one who knows about it! And if he has gone through a similar experience, himself, then he is the man for you. If a man has not had anything done for his soul, he cannot tell you of anything that has been done. If he has never seen himself to be a sinner and has never passed from death unto life. If he has never known the bitter pangs of soul trouble and has never looked to the precious Savior on the Cross and leaped to find himself set free, why, what is the good of him as a preacher? Let him go and bake bread, or break stones on the road—what has he to do with preaching a Gospel of which he knows nothing? Therefore I say again to you—if you would get faith, hear that Gospel that speaks to your soul because he who preaches it speaks from his soul about something that he knows for himself!

And if you have your choice, hear one who speaks earnestly, for to hear a cold preacher is the surest way of getting cold, yourself! He that trifles with his ministry will make men trifle with their souls! If I am speaking to any who preach the Gospel, I would say that if we do not preach earnestly, people will conclude at once that there is nothing in what we preach—and their blood will lie at our door! We have a weighty theme and we must speak with all our heart and soul. Does not that help you to believe?

To you, Sinner, I would also say hear the preacher who speaks pointedly. Do not feel vexed with one who exposes your faults! What do you go to a place of worship for but to have your heart laid bare? A doctor who never makes an examination of his patient, or who, knowing that there is an evil somewhere, is too delicate to allude to it, is a disgrace to his profession! The man who desires to heal men will be plain and honest with them and will not at all attempt to deny an evil thing.

Take heed what you hear, for if you hear the Word of God preached in the power of the Spirit of God, then faith comes by such hearing!

IV. LET US BE ASSURED THAT FAITH WILL COME BY HEARING.

If we would get faith, we must take care how we hear, as well as what we hear. The hearing is, itself, almost as important as the preaching. Faith does not come by every sort of hearing. There have been persons who have heard the Gospel for many years, but they have really heard

nothing, for it has gone in one ear and out the other. Faith does not come by such hearing!

Brothers and Sisters, if we really seek faith, *we ought to hear the Gospel aiming at the sense of it first*. It is *what* a preacher says, not *how* he says it, that is the vital thing. I am certain, however, that nine-tenths of our hearers are more taken up with *how* we say it than with *what* we say! Of course, we all hear a thing the better if it is put well, but woe to the man who cares only about delicacy of diction and lets his hearers go down to Hell! Woe unto him in the great Day of Account! If, however, the preacher preaches Christ, yet he does not preach Him as you would like to hear Him preached, but somewhat uncouthly, yet listen to him, whoever he may be, for it is the Truth of God that he declares! Do not regard his *manner* so much as his *matter*—and pray that it may be blessed.

You who have not believed, *hear every sermon with the desire to get faith through the sermon*. I believe that our hearers generally get what they come for. If a man goes fishing, he will generally catch fish according to his bait. Some come expecting to get something to find fault with. Well, they are sure to find it! But when a man comes with this design—"I want to find Jesus! I need to get good for my soul. I need to be saved"—then if the preacher is what he should be, the man or woman cannot go away disappointed! If the minister does not preach at all, but only reads part of a Chapter of the Word of God, there will be a blessing. If it is only a hymn that is sung, the seeking soul will lay hold of Christ in a hymn—especially if it is such a hymn as, "Just as I am, without one plea," or, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," or, "Jesus, Lover of my soul." If you want faith, you need not be long wanting it if you really come anxiously desiring to obtain it!

Dear Friends, *the kind of hearing that brings faith is attentive hearing*. I have heard of a child who used to always lean forward to catch every word the preacher said. And his mother asked him why he did so. He replied, "Because, Mother, I heard the preacher say that if there was anything in the sermon by which God meant to bless us, the devil would try to draw our attention some other way when it was being said. And I was so afraid that some good thing that would have blessed me might escape me if I was inattentive." It is a great joy to preach to a house full of people like that—people who are praying as the preacher speaks, "Oh for a blessing, Lord! Oh that the Word might come with power to my soul!"

Then, take care to hear retentively. Lay hold upon the Word! Keep it, treasure it. Perhaps you say, "I have a bad memory." Well, the very best thing to do when you have a bad memory is to do as the man did who never could remember what he owed—he took care to always pay as he went! If you cannot remember, go and do at once what you are bid to do and then you will not forget it! "Be you doers of the Word, and not hearers only!" If you get the substance, never mind the words. If you have a bad habit and it is preached against, never mind the sermon—go and

break off the evil habit! If you have been neglectful of prayer, never mind the sermon, pray more! And if Jesus Christ is lifted up before you and you cannot remember what the preacher said—never mind—look to Jesus! There is Christ upon the Cross and if you look to Him at this moment, you shall live forever! What memory is needed if you look to Him now? Now, poor Sinner, turn your eyes and you shall have heard the Gospel in a most retentive manner, indeed!—

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

Lastly, *hear the Gospel with deep reverence and earnest prayer.* It is no small matter that God should deal with your soul at all, but that He should condescend to speak to you on terms of love is a wonderful thing! That His own Son should bleed and die for sinners—is not this a miracle of mercy? With such great themes under discussion in the pulpit, you ought to be greatly reverent during the hearing of the Word. You should be, indeed, like the earth in the dry weather that opens wide its mouth, chapped and parched as it is, to suck in every drop of rain that falls! If you are sitting under the sound of the Gospel thus parched and dry, but opening your soul to receive it and saying, “Drop from above, O sacred dew! Come out of Heaven, O showers of Grace, and fall on me,” it will not be long that you will have to wait!

Your chief business is to believe! And my business is to ask you, in the name of the Eternal God, whether you will believe Him or whether you will make Him a liar? One of the two it must be! He that makes God a liar involves himself in awful guilt! But he that believes in Him has glorified Him. God accepts the act of believing in Him as one of the noblest acts of man—so great an act that He sees His own Spirit's work in it wherever He perceives it! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” Believe Him now! Our witness is that He does save—He saves from the guilt of sin, He saves from the dread and wrath of Hell, He saves from the anger of God, He saves from despair, He saves at once! He saves all who come to Him. Come you to Him!

Now we are going our several ways—what report am I to carry back to my Master, whose message I have been trying to deliver—

***“Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by,
To you is it nothing that Jesus should die?”***

Young Man yonder, is it nothing to you that Jesus should die? I ask your heart, young Woman, for my dear Lord and Master. And you, old Friend, your life is drawing to its close—it would have been better if you had given Christ the morning of your days—yet He will accept you even now if you will come to Him! May He give you the Divine Grace to rest upon Him, now, to trust Him this very hour! Then, where He is, there shall you be, also, through the efficacy of His great atoning Sacrifice! God grant it, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
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!

Verse 1. *Now faith*—That is, belief, trust in God—

1. *Is the substance of things hoped for.* It gets a grip of them and holds them fast!

1. *The evidence of things not seen.* The sight 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 of God 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 speaks.* 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 comes 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 is 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 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 where 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 has 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 from one and him as good us 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 where they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for He has 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 your 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 a 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 which he also received him in a figurative sense. The Doctrine of the Resurrection is a precious jewel that Faith wears as a ring on her right hand. "God can raise the dead," says Faith, and that is a most comforting Truth of God! O you bereaved ones, wear that ring! [See Sermons #107, Volume 3—FAITH; #2100, Volume 35—FAITH ESSENTIAL TO PLEASING GOD; #2513, Volume 43—HOW TO PLEASE GOD; #2740, Volume 47—WHAT IS ESSENTIAL IN COMING TO GOD? and #2147, Volume 46—NOAH'S FAITH, FEAR, OBEDIENCE AND SALVATION—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] 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 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 by 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 first-born should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians attempting 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 more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and [See Sermons #1401, Volume 24—JACOB WORSHIPPING ON HIS STAFF; #966, Volume 16—JOSEPH'S BONES; #1421, Volume 24—THE HIDING OF MOSES BY FAITH; #163, Volume 18—MOSES' DECISION and #2030, Volume 34—MOSES—HIS FAITH AND DECISION—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] of Jephthae, of David also, and Samuel, and of the Prophets who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked 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 Abednego, and remember how the fierceness of Nebuchadnezzar's fire was quenched for them!*

34-36. *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”—*

30-38. *Received the dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trials of cruel mocking and scourging, yes, 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 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 honored 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!

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

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

SOVEREIGN GRACE AND MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY NO. 207

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 1, 1858,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

*“But Isaiah is very bold and says, I was found of them that sought Me not. I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me. But to Israel He says, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”
Romans 10:20-21.*

DOUBTLESS these words primarily refer to the casting away of the Jews and to the choosing of the Gentiles. The Gentiles were a people who sought not after God, but lived in idolatry. Nevertheless, Jehovah was pleased in these latter times to send the Gospel of His grace to them—while the Jews who had long enjoyed the privileges of the Word of God—on account of their disobedience and rebellion were cast away. I believe, however, that while this is the primary object of the words of our text, yet, as Calvin says, the Truth taught in the text is a type of a universal fact. As God did choose the people who knew Him not, so has He chosen, in the abundance of His grace, to manifest His salvation to men who are out of the way, while, on the other hand, the men who are lost, after having heard the Word, are lost because of their willful sin. For God does all the day long “stretch forth His hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”

The system of Truth is not one straight line, but two. No man will ever get a right view of the Gospel until he knows how to look at the two lines at once. I am taught in one book to believe that what I sow, I shall reap. I am taught in another place that, “it is not of him that wills nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.” I see in one place God presiding over all in Providence. And yet I see and I cannot help seeing, that man acts as he pleases and that God has, in a great measure, left his actions to his own will. Now, if I were to declare that man was so free to act that there was no Providence of God over his actions, I should be driven very near to Atheism. And if, on the other hand, I declare that God so overrules all things, as that man is not free enough to be responsible, I am driven at once into Antinomianism or fatalism.

That God predestines and that man is responsible, are two things that few can see. They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory. But they are not. It is the fault of our own weak judgment. Two Truth of God cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is fore-ordained, that is true. And if I find in another place that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true. And it is my folly

that leads me to imagine that two Truth of God can ever contradict each other. These two Truths, I do not believe, can ever be welded into one upon any human anvil, but one they shall be in eternity. They are two lines that are so nearly parallel that the mind that shall pursue them farthest will never discover that they converge. But they do converge and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the Throne of God, from where all Truth does spring.

Now, this morning I am about to consider the two doctrines. In the 20th verse, we have taught us *the doctrines of Sovereign Grace*—"But Isaiah is very bold and says, I was found of them that sought me not. I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." In the next verse, we have *the doctrine of man's guilt in rejecting God*. "To Israel He says, all day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

I. First, then, DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AS EXEMPLIFIED IN SALVATION. If any man is saved, he is saved by Divine Grace and by Divine Grace alone. And the reason of his salvation is not to be found in him, but in God. We are not saved as the result of anything that we do or that we will. But we will and do as the result of God's good pleasure and the work of His grace in our hearts. No sinner can prevent God, that is, he cannot go before Him, cannot anticipate Him. God is always first in the matter of salvation. He is before our convictions, before our desires, before our fears, before our hopes. All that is good or ever will be good in us is preceded by the grace of God and is the effect of a Divine cause within.

Now in speaking of God's gracious acts of salvation this morning, I notice first, that they are entirely *unmerited*. You will see that the people here mentioned certainly did not merit God's grace. They found Him, but they never sought Him. He was made manifest to them, but they never asked for Him. There never was a man saved yet who merited it. Ask all the saints of God and they will tell you that their former life was spent in the lusts of the flesh—that in the days of their ignorance they revolted against God and turned back from His ways—that when they were invited to come to Him they despised the invitation and, when warned, cast the warning behind their back.

They will tell you that their being drawn by God was not the result of any merit before conversion, for some of them, so far from having any merit, were the very vilest of the vile. They plunged into the very kennel of sin. They were not ashamed of all the things of which it would be a shame for us to speak. They were ringleaders in crime—very princes in the ranks of the enemy. And yet Sovereign Grace came to them and they were brought to know the Lord.

They will tell you that it was not the result of anything good in their disposition, for although they trust that there is now something excellent implanted in them, yet in the days of their flesh they could see not one quality which was not perverted to the service of Satan. Ask them whether they think they were chosen of God because of their courage, they will tell you, no. If they had courage it was defaced, for they were courageous to do evil. Question them whether they were chosen of God because of their

talent, they will tell you, no—they had talent, but they prostituted it to the service of Satan.

Question them whether they were chosen because of the openness and generosity of their disposition. They will tell you that that very openness of temper and that very generosity of disposition led them to plunge deeper into the depths of sin, than they otherwise would have done, for they were “hail fellow, well met,” with every evil man and ready to drink and join every jovial party which should come in their way. There was in them no reason whatever why God should have mercy upon them and the wonder to them is that He did not cut them down in the midst of their sins, blot out their names from the Book of Life and sweep them into the gulf where the fire burns that shall devour the wicked.

But some have said that God chooses His people because He foresees that after He chooses them they will do this, that and the other, which shall be meritorious and excellent. Refer again to the people of God and they will tell you that since their conversion they have had much to weep over. Although they can rejoice that God has begun the good work in them, they often tremble lest it should not be God's work at all. They will tell you that if they are abundant in faith yet there are times when they are superabundant in unbelief. If sometimes they are full of works of holiness, yet there are times when they weep many tears to think that those very acts of holiness were stained with sin. The Christian will tell you that he weeps over his very tears. He feels that there is filth even in the best of desires, that he has to pray to God to forgive his prayers, for there is sin in the midst of his supplications and that he has to sprinkle even his best offerings with the atoning blood, for he never can bring an offering without spot or blemish.

You shall appeal to the brightest saint, to the man whose presence in the midst of society is like the presence of an angel and he will tell you that he is still ashamed of himself. “Ah,” he will say, “you may praise me, but I cannot praise myself. You speak well of me, you applaud me, but if you knew my heart you would see abundant reason to think of me as a poor sinner saved by grace, who has nothing whereof to glory and must bow his head and confess his iniquities in the sight of God.” Grace, then, is entirely unmerited.

Again, the grace of God is *sovereign*. By that word we mean that God has the absolute right to give that grace where He chooses and to withhold it when He pleases. He is not bound to give it to any man, much less to all men and if He chooses to give it to one man and not to another, His answer is, “Is your eye evil because My eye is good? Can I not do as I will with My own? I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.” Now, I want you to notice the sovereignty of Divine Grace as illustrated in the text: “I was found of them that sought Me not, I was made manifest to them that asked not after Me.”

You would imagine that if God gave His grace to any He would wait until He found them earnestly seeking Him. You would imagine that God in the highest heavens would say, “I have mercies, but I will leave men alone

and when they feel their need of these mercies and seek Me diligently with their whole heart, day and night, with tears and vows and supplications—then will I bless them—but not before.” But Beloved, God says no such thing. It is true He does bless them that cry unto Him but He blesses them before they cry, for their cries are not their own cries, but cries He has put into their lips. Their desires are not of their own growth, but desires which He has cast like good seed into the soil of their hearts. God saves the men that do not seek Him.

Oh, wonder of wonders! It is mercy indeed when God saves a seeker, but how much greater mercy when He seeks the lost Himself? Mark the parable of Jesus Christ concerning the lost sheep. It does not run thus: “A certain man had a hundred sheep and one of them did go astray. And he tarried at home and lo, the sheep came back and he received it joyfully and said to his friends, rejoice, for the sheep that I have lost is come back.”

No. He *went after* the sheep—it never would have come after him. It would have wandered farther and farther away. *He* went after *it*. Over hills of difficulty, down valleys of despondency he pursued its wandering feet and at last he laid hold of it. He did not drive it before him, he did not lead it, but he carried it himself all the way and when he brought it home he did not say, “the sheep is come back,” but, “I have *found* the sheep which was lost.” Men do not seek God *first*—God seeks *them* first. And if any of you are seeking Him today it is because He has first sought you.

If you are desiring Him, He desired you first and your good desires and earnest seeking will not be the cause of your salvation, but the *effects* of previous grace given to you. “Well,” says another, “I should have thought that although the Savior might not require an earnest seeking and sighing and groaning and a continuous searching after Him, yet certainly He would have desired and demanded that every man, before He had grace, should *ask* for it.”

That, indeed, Beloved, seems natural, and God *will* give grace to them that ask for it. But mark, the text says that He was manifested “*to them* that *asked not* for Him.” That is to say, *before* we ask, God gives us grace. The only reason why any man ever begins to pray is because God has put previous grace in his heart which leads him to pray. I remember, when I was converted to God, I was an Arminian thoroughly. I thought *I* had begun the good work myself and I used sometimes to sit down and think, “Well, I sought the Lord four years before I found Him,” and I think I began to compliment myself upon the fact that I had perseveringly entreated of Him in the midst of much discouragement.

But one day the thought struck me, “How was it you came to seek God?” and in an instant the answer came from my soul, “Why, because *He led me* to do it. He must first have shown me my need of Him, or else I should never have sought Him. He must have shown me His preciousness, or I never should have thought Him worth seeking.” And at once I saw the doctrines of grace as clear as possible. God must begin.

Nature can never rise above itself. You put water into a reservoir and it will rise as high as that, but no higher, if let alone. Now, it is not in human nature to seek the Lord. Human nature is depraved and therefore there must be the extraordinary pressure of the Holy Spirit put upon the heart to lead us first to ask for mercy. But mark, we do not know anything about that while the Spirit is operating. We find that out afterwards. We ask as much as if we were asking all of ourselves. Our business is to seek the Lord as if there were no Holy Spirit at all. But although we do not know it, there must always be a previous motion of the Spirit in our heart before there will be a motion of our heart towards Him—

***“No sinner can be beforehand with You,
Your grace is most sovereign, most rich and most free.”***

Let me give you an illustration. You see that man on his horse surrounded by a body of troopers. How proud he is, how he reins up his horse with conscious dignity. Sir, what have you got there? What are those dispatches you treasure up with so much care? “Oh, Sir, I have that in my hand that will vex the church of God in Damascus. I have dragged the fellows into the synagogue, both men and women. I have scourged them and compelled them to blaspheme. And I have this commission from the high priest to drag them to Jerusalem that I may put them to death.”

“Saul! Saul! Have you no love for Christ?” “Love for Him? No. When they stoned Stephen, I took care of the witnesses’ clothes and I rejoiced to do it. I wish I had had the crucifying of their Master, for I hate them with perfect hatred and I breathe out threats and slaughter against them.” What do you say of this man? If he is saved, will you not grant that it must be some Divine Sovereignty that converts him?

Look at poor Pilate, how much there was that was hopeful in him. He was willing to save the Master, but he feared and trembled. If we had had our choice, we should have said, “Lord, save Pilate, he does not want to kill Christ, he labors to let Him escape. But slay the bloodthirsty Saul, he is the very chief of sinners.” “No,” says God, “I will do as I will with My own.” The heavens open and the brightness of glory descends—brighter than the noonday sun. Stunned with the light, Saul falls to the ground, and a voice is heard addressing him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.”

He rises up. God appears to him—“Lo, I have made you a chosen vessel to bear My name among the Gentiles.” Is not that sovereignty—Sovereign Grace—without any previous seeking? God was found of him that sought not Him. He manifested Himself to one that asked Him not. Some will say that was a miracle. But it is one that is repeated every day in the week. I knew a man once who had not been to the House of God for a long time. And one Sunday morning, having been to market to buy a pair of ducks for his Sunday dinner, he happened to see a House of God opened as he was passing by.

“Well” he thought, “I will hear what these fellows are up to.” He went inside. The hymn that was being sung struck his attention. He listened to the sermon, forgot his ducks, discovered his own character, went home

and threw himself upon his knees before God and after a short time it pleased God to give him joy and peace in believing. That man had nothing in him to begin with, nothing that could have led you to imagine he ever would be saved. But simply because God would have it so, He struck the effectual blow of grace and the man was brought to Jesus Christ. But we are, each of us who are saved, the very people who are the best illustrations of the matter. To this day, my wonder is that ever the Lord should have chosen me. I cannot understand it. And my only answer to the question is, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight."

I have now, I think, stated the doctrine pretty plainly. Let me only say a few words about it. Some people are very much afraid of this Truth of God. They say, "It is true, I dare say, but still you ought not to preach it before a mixed assembly. It is very well for the comfort of God's people, but it is to be very carefully handled and not to be publicly preached upon." Very well, Sir, I leave you to settle that matter with my Master. He gave me this great Book to preach from and I cannot preach from anything else. If He has put anything in it you think is not fit, go and complain to Him and not to me. I am simply His servant and if His message that I am to tell is objectionable, I cannot help it.

If I send my servant to the door with a message and he delivers it faithfully, *he* does not deserve to be scolded. Let *me* have the blame, not the servant. So I say, blame my Master and not me, for I do but proclaim His message. "No," says one, "It is not to be *preached*." But it is to be preached. Every word of God is given by inspiration and it is profitable for some good end. Does not the Bible say so? Let me tell you, the reason many of our Churches are declining is just because this doctrine has not been preached.

Wherever this doctrine has been upheld, it has always been, "Down with Popery." The first Reformers held this doctrine and preached it. Well said a Church of England divine to some who railed at him, "Look at your own Luther. Do you not consider him to be the teacher of the Church of England? What Calvin and the other Reformers taught is to be found in his book upon the freedom of the will." Besides, we can point you to a string of ministers from the beginning even until now. Talk of Apostolic succession! The man who preaches the doctrines of grace has an Apostolic succession, indeed. Can we not trace our pedigree through a whole line of men like Newton and Whitfield and Owen and Bunyan, straight on till we come to Calvin, Luther and Zwingli?

And then we can go back from them to Savonarola, to Jerome of Prague, to Huss and then back to Augustine, the mighty preacher of Christianity. And from St. Augustine to Paul is but one step. We need not be ashamed of our pedigree. Although Calvinists are now considered to be heterodox, we are and ever must be orthodox. It is the old doctrine. Go and buy any Puritanical book and see if you can find Arminianism in it. Search all the book stalls over and see if you can find one large folio book of olden times that has anything in it but the doctrine of the Free Grace of God. Let this once be brought to bear upon the minds of men and away go

the doctrines of penance and confession—away goes paying for the pardon of your sin.

If grace is free and sovereign in the hand of God, down goes the doctrine of priestcraft! Away go buying and selling indulgences and such like things. They are swept to the four winds of Heaven and the efficacy of good works is dashed in pieces like Dagon before the ark of the Lord. "Well," says one, "I like the doctrine. Still there are very few that preach it and those that do are very high." Very likely. But I care little what anybody calls me. It signifies very little what men call you. Suppose they call you a "hyper"—that does not make you anything wicked, does it? Suppose they call you an Antinomian—that will not make you one. I must confess, however, that there are some men who preach this doctrine who are doing ten thousand times more harm than good because they don't preach the next doctrine I am going to proclaim, which is just as true.

They have this to be the sail, but they have not the other to be the ballast. They can preach one side, but not the other. They can go along with the high doctrine but they will not preach the whole of the Word. Such men caricature the Word of God. And just let me say here, that it is the custom of a certain body of Ultra-Calvinists, to call those of us who teach that it is the duty of man to repent and believe, "Mongrel Calvinists." If you hear any of them say so, give them my most respectful compliments and ask them whether they ever read Calvin's works in their lives.

Not that I care what Calvin said or did not say, but ask them whether they ever *read his works*. And if they say "No," as they must say, for there are forty-eight large volumes—you can tell them that the man whom they call "a Mongrel Calvinist," though he has not read them all, has read a very good share of them and knows their spirit. And he knows that he preaches substantially what Calvin preached—that every doctrine he preaches may be found in Calvin's Commentaries on some part of Scripture or other.

We are TRUE Calvinists, however. Calvin is nobody to us. Jesus Christ and Him crucified and the old fashioned Bible are *our* standards. Beloved, let us take God's Word as it stands. If we find high doctrine there, let it be high. If we find low doctrine, let it be low. Let us set up no other standard than the Bible affords.

II. Now then for the second point. "There now," says my ultra friend, "he is going to contradict himself." No, my Friend, I am not. I am only going to contradict *you*. The second point is MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY. "But to Israel He says, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Now, these people whom God had cast away had been wooed, had been sought, had been entreated to be saved. But they would not and inasmuch as they were not saved it was the effect of their disobedience and their gainsaying. That lies clearly enough in the text.

When God sent the Prophets to Israel and stretched forth His hands, what was it for? What did He wish them to come to Him for? Why, to be saved. "No," says one, "it was for temporal mercies." Not so, my Friend.

The verse before is concerning spiritual mercies and so is this one, for they refer to the same thing. Now, was God sincere in His offer? God forgive the man that dares to say He was not. God is undoubtedly sincere in every act He did. He sent His Prophets, He entreated the people of Israel to lay hold on spiritual things, but they would not. And though He stretched out His hands all the day long, yet they were “a disobedient and gainsaying people,” and would not have His love. And on their head rests their blood.

Now let me notice the wooing of God and of what sort it is. First, it was the most *affectionate* wooing in the world. Lost sinners who sit under the sound of the Gospel are not lost for the want of the most affectionate invitation. God says He stretched out His hands. You know what that means. You have seen the child who is disobedient and will not come to his father. The father puts out his hands and says, “Come, my child, come, I am ready to forgive you.” The tear is in his eye and his heart moves with compassion and he says, “Come, come.”

God says this is what *He* did—“*He* stretched out His hands.” That is what He has done to some of you. You that are not saved today are without excuse for God stretched out His hands to you and He said, “Come, come.” Long have you sat beneath the sound of the ministry and it has been a faithful one I trust, and a weeping one. Your minister has not forgotten to pray for your souls in secret or to weep over you when no eye saw him and he has endeavored to persuade you as an ambassador from God. God is my witness, I have sometimes stood in this pulpit and I could not have pleaded harder for my own life than I have pleaded with you.

In Christ's name I have cried, “Come unto Me all you that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.” I have wept over you as the Savior did and used His words on His behalf, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings and you would not.” And you know that your conscience has often been touched. You have often been moved—you could not resist it. God was so kind to you, He invited you so affectionately by the Word. He dealt so gently with you by His Providence, His hands were stretched out and you could hear His voice speaking in your ears, “Come unto Me, come. Come now, let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool, though they are red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow.”

You have heard Him cry, “Everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters.” You have heard Him say with all the affection of a father's heart, “let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him turn unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him and unto our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Oh, God does plead with men that they would be saved and this day He says to every one of you, “Repent and be converted for the remission of your sins. Turn you unto Me. Thus says the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways.” And with love Divine He woos you as a father woos his child, putting out His hands and crying, “Come unto Me, come unto Me.”

“No,” says one strong-doctrine man, “God never invites *all* men to Himself. He invites none but certain characters.” Stop, Sir, that is all you know about it. Did you ever read that parable where it is said, “My oxen and my fatlings are killed and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.” And they that were bid *would not come*. And did you never read that they all began to make excuse and that they were punished because they did not accept the invitations?

Now, if the invitation is not to be made to anybody but to the man who will accept it, how can that parable be true? The fact is the oxen and fatlings are killed, the wedding feast is ready and the trumpet sounds, “Everyone that thirsts, come and eat, come and drink.” Here are the provisions spread, here is an all-sufficiency, the invitation is free—it is a great invitation without limitation. “*Whosoever will* let him come and take of the water of life freely.” And that invitation is couched in tender words, “Come to Me, My child, come to Me.” “All day long I have stretched forth My hands.”

And note again, this invitation was very *frequent*. The words, “all the day long,” may be translated “daily.” “Daily have I stretched forth My hands.” Sinner, God has not called you once to come and then let you alone but *every day* has He been at you. Every day has conscience spoken to you. Every day has Providence warned you and every Sabbath has the Word of God wooed you. Oh, how much some of you will have to account for at God's great bar! I cannot now read your characters, but I know there are some of you who will have a terrible account at last. All the day long has God been wooing you. From the first dawn of your life, He wooed you through your mother and she used to put your little hands together and teach you to say—

**“Gentle Jesus meek and mild,
Look upon a little child,
Pity my simplicity;
Suffer me to come to You.”**

And in your boyhood, God was still stretching out His hands after you. How your Sunday-School teacher endeavored to bring you to the Savior! How often your youthful heart was affected. But you put all that away and you are still untouched by it. How often did your mother speak to you and your father warn you. And you have forgotten the prayer in that bedroom when you were sick, when your mother kissed your burning forehead, knelt down and prayed to God to spare your life and then added that prayer, “Lord, save my boy's soul!”

And you remember the Bible she gave you when you first went out to apprentice and the prayer she wrote on that yellow front leaf. When she gave it, you did not perhaps know, but you may *now*—how earnestly she longed after you, that you might be formed anew in Christ Jesus. How she followed you with her prayers and how she entreated with her God for you. And you have not yet surely forgotten how many Sabbaths you have spent and how many times you have been warned. Why you have had wagon-loads of sermons wasted on you. A hundred and four sermons you

have heard every year and some of you, more, and yet you are still just what you were.

But Sinners, sermon-hearing is an awful thing unless it is blessed to our souls. If God has kept on stretching out His hands every day and all the day, it will be a hard thing for you when you shall be justly condemned not only for your breaches of the Law, but for your willful rejection of the Gospel. It is probable that God will keep on stretching out His hands to you until your hairs grow gray, still continually inviting you—and perhaps when you are nearing death He will still say, “Come unto Me, come unto Me.”

But if you still persist in hardening your heart, if you still reject Christ, I beseech you let nothing make you imagine that you shall go unpunished. Oh, I do tremble sometimes when I think of that class of ministers who tell sinners that they are not guilty if they do not seek the Savior. How they shall be found innocent at God's Great Day I do not know. It seems to be a fearful thing that they should be lulling poor souls into sleep by telling them it is not their duty to seek Christ and repent. But that they may do as they like about that and that when they perish they will be none the more guilty for having heard the Word. My Master did not say that. Remember how He said, “And you, Capernaum, which are exalted unto Heaven, shall be brought down to Hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in you, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you. That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.”

Jesus did not talk thus when He spoke to Chorazin and Bethsaida—He said, “Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.”

It was not the way Paul preached. He did not tell sinners that there was no guilt in despising the Cross. Hear the Apostle's words once more—“For if the Word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, *how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation*, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?”

Sinner, at the Great Day of God you must give an account for every warning you have ever had, for every time you have read your Bible, yes, and for every time you have neglected to read it. For every Sunday when the House of God was open and you did neglect to avail yourself of the opportunity of hearing the Word and for every time you did hear it and did not listen.

You who are careless hearers, are tying fire wood for your own burning forever. You that hear and straightaway forget, or hear with levity, are digging for yourselves a pit into which you must be cast. Remember, no one will be responsible for your damnation but yourself at the last Great Day. God will not be responsible for it. “As I live says the Lord”—and that

is a great oath—"I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies. But had rather that he should turn unto Me and live." God has done much for you. He sent you His Gospel. You are not born in a heathen land. He has given you the Book of Books. He has given you an enlightened conscience. And if you perish under the sound of the ministry, you perish more fearfully and terribly than if you had perished anywhere else.

This doctrine is as much God's Word as the other. You ask me to reconcile the two. I answer, they do not want any reconciliation. I never tried to reconcile them to myself because I could never see a discrepancy. If you begin to put fifty or sixty quibbles to me, I cannot give any answer. Both are true. No two Truths can be inconsistent with each other and what you have to do is to believe them both. With the first one, the *saint* has most to do. Let him praise the free and Sovereign Grace of God and bless His name. With the second, the *sinner* has the most to do. O Sinner, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God! Think how often He has shown His love to you by bidding you come to Himself. Think how often you have spurned His Word and refused His mercy. Think how you have turned a deaf ear to every invitation and have gone your way to rebel against a God of love. Think how often you have violated the commands of Him that loved you.

And now how shall I conclude? My first exhortation shall be to Christian people. My dear Friends, I beseech you do not in any way give yourselves up to any system of faith apart from the Word of God. The Bible and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants. I am the successor of the great and venerated Dr. Gill, whose theology is almost universally received among the stronger Calvinistic Churches. But although I venerate his memory and believe his teachings, yet he is not my Rabbi. What you find in God's Word is for you to believe and to receive.

Never be frightened at a doctrine. And above all, never be frightened at a name. Someone said to me the other day that he thought the Truth of God lay somewhere *between* the two extremes. He meant right, but I think he was wrong. I do not think the Truth of God lies between the two extremes, but in them both. I believe the higher a man goes the better when he is preaching the matter of salvation. The reason why a man is saved is grace, grace, grace. And you may go as high as you like there. But when you come to the question as to why men are damned, then the Arminian is far more right than the Antinomian. I care not for any denomination or party, I am as high as Huntingdon upon the matter of *salvation*, but question me about damnation and you will get a very different answer. By the grace of God I ask no man's applause. I preach the Bible as I find it. Where we get wrong is where the Calvinist begins to meddle with the question of damnation and interferes with the justice of God—or when the Arminian denies the doctrine of grace.

My second exhortation is—Sinners, I beseech every one of you who are unconverted and ungodly this morning to put away every form and fashion of excuse that the devil would have you make concerning your being unconverted. Remember that all the teaching in the world can never ex-

cuse you for being enemies to God by wicked works. When we beseech you to be reconciled to Him, it is because we know you will never be in your proper place until you are reconciled. God has made you. Can it be right that you should disobey Him? God feeds you every day. Can it be right that you should still live in disobedience to Him? Remember, when the heavens shall be on a blaze, when Christ shall come to judge the earth in righteousness and His people with equity, there will not be one excuse that you can make which will be valid at the last Great Day.

If you should attempt to say, "Lord, I have never heard the Word." His answer would be, "You did hear it. You heard it plainly." "But Lord, I had an evil will." "Out of your own mouth will I condemn you. You had that evil will and I condemn you for it. This is the condemnation—that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." "But Lord" some will say, "I was not predestinated." "What had you to do with that? You did do according to your own will when you did rebel. You would not come unto Me and now I destroy you forever. You have broken My Law—on your own head is the guilt."

If a sinner could say at the Great Day, "Lord I could not be saved anyhow," his torment in Hell would be mitigated by that thought. But this shall be the very edge of the sword and the very burning of the fire—"You knew your duty and you did it not. You trampled on everything that was holy. You neglected the Savior and how shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation?"

Now, with regard to myself—you may some of you go away and say that I was Antinomian in the first part of the sermon and Arminian at the end. I care not. I beg of you to search the Bible for yourselves. To the Law and to the Testimony. If I speak not according to His Word, it is because there is no light in me. I am willing to come to that test. Have nothing to do with me where I have nothing to do with Christ. Where I separate from the Truth of God, cast my words away. But if what I say is God's teaching, I charge you, by Him that sent me, give these things your thoughts and turn unto the Lord with all your hearts.

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A MONUMENT FOR THE DEAD—AND A VOICE TO THE LIVING NO. 1700

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 7, 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the Law, That the man which does those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your 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 Christ up, again, from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”
Romans 10:59.*

YOU see by this mourning that our Church has been bereaved. I have lost a friend, (*William Higgs, Esq., for many years a beloved deacon of the Church in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, fell asleep on January 3rd, 1883, in his 59th year*), tender and true to me, and my heart is too full for utterance. I scarcely knew what to preach from this morning, but at last I settled in my mind that I would raise a memorial to my departed friend by preaching a sermon which should be connected with himself. Therefore I cast about me and I considered what subject he would wish me to preach from if he were sitting behind me this morning as he was last Lord's-day.

I had no difficulty in answering that question. His life and death pointed in one direction. He was a man of rare common sense, straightforward, downright in his aims and most pithy in his speech. He had such a mixture of mother-wit that he might have been taken for John Plowman's brother, as, indeed, he was. He cared nothing for oratory, which I have heard him call, “a flash in the pan.” He delighted in the plain, solid Gospel of Jesus Christ. I know that he would have said to me—“Give them Christ Crucified and salvation by Grace through faith, as plainly as ever you can,” for when he was sorely sick and in the very agony of death, he repeated as his dying creed—

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

And, in his own quaint way, he added, “They may talk as much as ever they like, but the whole of it lies in Jack the Huckster's verse—

***‘I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.’***

You will find that story in the first volume of my sermons. [See No. 47, “Christ’s Prayer for His People.”] In Park Street, early in my ministry, I told the story and it did my friend good and helped to rest his soul all those years ago, so that he remembered it and repeated it at the last. For his sake let me tell it again. This huckster, Jack, was a poor, wicked fellow, who had gone about from village to village, swearing, drinking, huckstering and, perhaps, pilfering. Some thought him half-witted, but the story will show his mind to be sound enough. He heard a poor woman sing somewhere—

***“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.”***

He remembered the words, and what was better, he felt their sense. And he kept on humming them to himself till God’s good Spirit engraved them on his heart! There they were recorded and Jack was a new man and a saved man!

So he essayed to join himself to the Church, but the Brethren looked suspiciously at him and enquired, “What is your experience?” He said he had no experience but this—

***“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.”***

The good elders very properly asked, “Are you converted? Have you been born again?” and Jack replied, “I do not know much about these things, but this I do know and am sure of—

***‘I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.’***

They put him back for awhile, to see if he would grow in his knowledge, but he never went an inch beyond the first standard. He knew what he knew and to that he held fast—

***“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.”***

Well, they must take him into the Church. They could not well refuse a man with such a confession of faith! And when he was in the Church, walking with the Brothers and Sisters, he was happier than the rest of them, at which they greatly marveled, and one said to him, “Brother Jack, don’t you sometimes feel doubts and fears? “Doubts,” he said, “what do you mean? I never doubt that—

‘I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all,’

for I have daily proofs of it. And why should I doubt that—

‘Jesus Christ is my All in All?’

for He says He is and I must believe Him.” “Ah, well,” said one, “sometimes I enjoy good frames and feelings, and feel very happy, and then I lose them, and sink in spirit.” Jack answered, “I never get lower than I am, for I am down at the bottom—

‘A poor sinner, and nothing at all.’

I cannot get lower than that, can I? But I am also at the top—

‘for Jesus Christ is my All in All,’

and I cannot get higher than that, can I?”

They tried him many ways with their blessed experience, of which you and I have got cartloads, perhaps wagon-loads, but he could not be drawn out of his one firm position. They tried him with their various attain-

ments, depressions, anxieties, quibbles and questions! But still the huckster would not budge. He had bought the Truth of God and would not sell it, and so he stuck to—

***“I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all;
But Jesus Christ is my All in All.”***

The conies are a feeble folk, yet they have their habitations among the rocks—they are safe, but they keep to their hiding place. Of course our new Perfection brethren, spick and span saints as they are, are not like Jack, they are not “poor sinners, and nothing at all,” and I am afraid lest some of them should find out that Jesus Christ is not their All in All. But if you and I are as he was, “poor sinners, and nothing at all,” we may, with firm and resolute grip, lay hold upon the other line, “But Jesus Christ is my All in All.”

Christ’s fullness is meant for our emptiness. Christ’s righteousness is meant for our sin. His salvation is for the lost. When you and I are no longer sinners, Christ is no longer our Savior! When you and I no more need Him, then we shall not have Him! Our *need* is our warrant and if that is gone, all is gone! Jesus did not bleed and die to be a superfluity to us—He came to meet a grim necessity. As long as we are nothing, Christ is our All in All, we may be sure of that and that is the Gospel in a nutshell! I want to preach that same Gospel, this morning, in the hope that in later days this Word of God may be scattered far and wide—and some Jack the Huckster, or some other like he—may find himself to be utterly empty and undone! And may he then know that Christ is ordained to be his salvation.

Jesus came into the world to save real sinners, not sham sinners, for He is a real—not a pretended Savior. He saves those who are always confessors of sin, always needy in themselves and, therefore, always glad of Him. Even in their best estate, the saved ones need their Lord. Even if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, and have fellowship with Him, we still sin and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, still cleanses us from all sin!

I now plunge into my text. Notice, first, what Moses said. Moses said, “That the man which does those things shall live by them.” Next, what the Gospel says— “But the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise,” and so on. Thirdly, we shall consider what the Scripture says— “Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.” Then, fourthly, we will hear what experience says, for we may bring in the experience of Believers to back up the declarations of God.

I. I invite your earnest attention to the first point—WHAT MOSES SAYS—“Moses describes the righteousness which is of the Law, That the man which does those things shall live by them.” This is a clear statement. There is no mystery or obscurity about it. You need not go to the universities and earn a degree of Doctor of Divinity in order to understand this declaration—it is as plain as words can make it. If you wish to be saved by the Law, you must do its commands and you shall live. The Law is written in the Ten Commandments. You know them and if you desire to live by them, you must keep them.

It will not suffice for you to learn those Commandments by heart, or to write them up in your Churches, or to read them over and say, “Lord, have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this Law”—all that may be well enough, but it is not to the point. If you are to be saved by the Commandments, you must *keep* them! That is clear. Moses does not allow any person to dream that under the Law he can be saved in any other way than by perfect obedience to them. “For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified.” Whatever it is that God has commanded, you must do. Whatever He forbids, you must avoid—and only by such obedience can you live.

Mark you, Moses does not tone down the Law to suit our fallen state, or talk of our doing our best and God’s being satisfied with our imperfect obedience. No, he says only, “He that does those things shall live by them.” He demands perfect and entire obedience if life is to come of it! He does not say that if you have broken the Law, you may still live by some other means. No, if the Law is *once* broken, it is all over with you as to salvation—one single fault takes away the possibility of your ever being justified by the Law! “He that does those things,” that is, always, without exception, with all his heart and soul and strength—“He shall live by them”—but nobody else. Be he Jew or be he Gentile, his only righteousness by Law must come through the doing of the Law!

Moses says nothing about wearing phylacteries, or washing hands, or offering incense, or performing ceremonies in order to righteousness. No! Clear, straight, cutting like a sharp razor, he puts before us the single sentence, “He that does those things shall live by them.” Judge whether any of us has fulfilled the whole Law! To my mind this word of Moses is conclusive that none of us can possibly live by the works of the Law. We cannot keep the Law now, for we have already broken it—the vase is fractured and to talk of keeping it in its entirety is nonsense! But even if it were *not* already broken, should we get through tomorrow with its temptations—bearing such a heart as we have within us—without breaking that perfect and spotless law? I am sure we would not!

You that hope to be saved by your works are indulging a forlorn hope! Whatever you may do or be in the future, the past has already ruined you! The way to Heaven up the steep sides of Sinai is inaccessible to trembling feet like ours! If you were to be saved by the Law, you should have *begun* without sin, *continued* without sin and then it would be necessary to *end* without sin! There would not be a moment of your life in which you could be at peace, for there would always be the fear that in some unguarded instant you would transgress and lose all! But why do I talk so? It is no longer in our power to dream of a perfect, life-long obedience! We went astray from the womb, speaking lies! We were rebellious to our parents in our childhood and wayward in our youth!

In our early manhood we were carried about with this passion and with that. And since then all kinds of evils have led us astray. We are as full of evil as an egg is full of meat and our heart is like a cage of unclean birds! I can say no less. The hope of salvation by works is black despair—yet we have a set of men on the face of the earth who are always wanting us to

preach up this hopeless hope and urging us to lay this heavy burden upon the shoulders of dying men! They would have us proclaim salvation by the works of the Law! This, they say, would at least make men moral and keep them sober, whereas even in this, they err against the Light of God, for it has been proved by history that such preaching makes men worse and worse!

The idea of salvation by works sits like an awful incubus upon the breast of humanity and presses out of the soul all hope, thus robbing man of strength to attempt true holiness. When a man has lost all hope, he throws the reins upon his neck and runs into all manner of iniquity, judging that he may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb. Clear, then, as possible, it must be to every man among us who will *think*, that if the only way of salvation is by the works of the Law, it is by the *keeping* of the Law in its *entirety*—then that road is closed against us and the sooner we have done with it, the better! This is what Moses says—hear it and be humbled.

So, then, we shall turn our thoughts in the right direction and travel on the way which the Lord, in great mercy, has prepared for us.

II. Now I ask you to listen to WHAT THE GOSPEL SAYS. “The righteousness which is of faith,” or *believing*, “speaks on this wise, Say not in your 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 does it say? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.”

Now observe, first, that the Gospel claims to be like the Law in its clearness. Moses claimed for the Law, which God had given to the people through him, that it was clear and within the range of their knowledge and understanding. I will read his exact words to you. Turn to Deuteronomy 30:11. “For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that you should say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.”

Now Paul, here, very skillfully takes these words out of the mouth of Moses, alters them somewhat, and as good as says, “It was the boast of the Law that it was clear, known and accessible to the people; but much more is this the glory of the Gospel.” Did I not show you, just now, that when Moses spoke, he did not mystify the matter, but put it plainly, “The man that does those things shall live by them”? So also the Gospel, by no means involves itself in obscurity, but says, *Believe* and live, quite as distinctly as Moses said, “*Do* and live.” Here you have it, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.”

Moses’ utterance was single and by itself. He did not say, “Do and you shall live, but yet there is another way.” No! Under the Law it was nothing

but, “Do and live; leave undone and die.” So the Gospel does not propose a second way and suggest, “a larger hope,” but it declares with solemn decision, “He that believes not is condemned already, because He has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” It is just as clear as ever the Law was and quite as sharply distinct. Herein is no mystery—Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Wrapping everything up into one, the Gospel says, “Trust you in the Lord Jesus Christ, and your sins shall be forgiven you, and you shall be saved.” This believing, or *trusting*, is the whole of the matter, and neither Heaven above nor the abyss beneath will ever reveal another salvation! I want to call your special attention to the fact that Paul borrows the words of Moses, for his intent was the ending of all fears. No man among us doubts that if he had performed the Law of God, the Lord would give him life. But it is equally certain that if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have eternal life. No trembling sinner doubts but that by the breaking of the Law we are condemned—be equally sure of it—by *not believing* you are condemned!

As no keeper of the Law would have been lost on any ground whatever, so no Believer in Christ shall be lost on any ground whatever! As no breaker of the Law could escape punishment, so no unbeliever in Christ can be saved! The Gospel states its message as clearly as the Law. As positively as the Law utters its promises and threats, so positively and unalterably does the Gospel deliver its decrees. The Believer in Jesus shall be saved because He is a Believer, and Christ’s veracity is staked on it—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me has everlasting life.” Oh, but this is a very blessed thing to have to say to you! I do not come, today, with a Gospel veiled in mystery and shrouded in doubt! I do not bring a message which you cannot understand or receive! Neither do I come with “ifs” and “buts” and “perhapses,” but with this—“Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” “Whoever believes in Him has everlasting life.” This is as certain and clear as the utterance of that dreadful roll of thunder which has just now left on your minds the thought, “He that does these things shall live by them.”

Let us go a little further. What says the Gospel? Why, next, it forbids the questions of despair. “The righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, Say not in your heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven? Or, Who shall descend into the deep?” When a man is, at last, awakened to a sense of sin, he cries, “I long to be saved! All that I have and all that I am I would give to escape from the righteous wrath of God. Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Surely it would need that I mount to Heaven to acknowledge my sin, or dive to Hell to bear its punishment! I need a righteousness which would need as much labor to produce as a climb to Heaven would need! And I require an expiation for sin as great as though a man were plunged into the abyss, itself, and there were made to suffer the Divine anger! How is it possible that I can be saved?”

This wail of despair takes many forms. One man puts it, thus, “What things can I *perform* by which I can be saved?—

**‘Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone.’”**

Another, despairing of deliverance by his doings, runs upon his feelings and cries, “If I am to be saved, surely I shall need to experience joys like those which are felt by spirits before the Throne of God! If I had a sense of sin as deep as that of lost souls in Hell, I could hope that I could be saved.” Thus the second man looks to excitement and feelings just as the first looked to works and self-denials. Now, the Gospel forbids us to dream in this fashion! Talk not thus! Say not even in your heart that by these works or feelings you can be saved!

Perhaps you would be ashamed to say it with your lips, but do not say it at all. Do not say that the way to Heaven is hard, or mysterious, or in any degree apart from the *simple* act of *believing*! Do not suppose that anything is needed as to works or feelings in order to complete the righteousness which is worked out by the Lord Jesus and imputed by God to the Believer. Ah, then the heart foolishly cries, “I must *know* a great deal! As much as if I had been to Heaven and seen for myself, or as if I had dived into the depths and made discoveries there.” No, you must not! The Gospel is simple! Salvation is as plain as a pikestaff; familiar and home-spun; easy as the A B C of your childhood! Say not in your heart that you must be educated, trained and made into a scholar. No, confess yourself a *sinner*—trust in the sinner’s Savior—and you are saved!

“Ah, well,” says one, “I know I must undergo a singular experience—either I must be carried right away to Heaven with delirious delight, or be plunged into the waves of Hell in frightful despair.” No, my dear Friend, do not say that even in your thoughts! The righteousness of faith lies not in dreams and visions, delusions or depressions—it lies only in reliance upon the work of Jesus Christ, finished for you! Go not to the loom to weave a righteousness. The garment is woven already! Put it on—Christ gives it to you. Dig not into the heart of the earth to find the gold of salvation! Christ holds it out to you—take it freely and be rich forever! So one of the first works of the Gospel is silencing the questions of our unbelief.

Next, this precious Gospel translates these questions and then answers them. Listen. A voice cries, “Who shall ascend into Heaven?” The Gospel replies, if you did ascend to Heaven what would you do there, without Christ, the anointed Savior? You say, “Who shall descend into the deep?” Listen, man! If you were to descend there, what would you do without Him whom God has anointed to save? If you find Him, it will not much matter where you find Him, in Heaven or in the deep, for He must be almighty everywhere. Now listen. You say, “Who shall ascend into Heaven?” the top and bottom of such an ascent must be, “to bring Christ down.” Hear this! Jesus *has* come down—years ago He left the glories of His Father.

Have you not heard the tale? Being pure, blazing, glorious Godhead, “Light of lights, very God of very God,” on a sudden they found Him in a stable hanging on a woman’s breast! Angels saw Him and wondered. He

came down, indeed, when He was born and, being down so low as that, He descended to the carpenter's shop, to the weariness of the well's brink and to a thirst which made Him say, "Give Me to drink." Lower than that, He descended to being "despised and rejected of men." He was Lord of Heaven and earth and yet they called Him, Beelzebub, and talked of Him as a drunk and a wine-bibber. Having descended all that length, He went lower, still.

Listen—angels, you will not weary while I tell the story over again—He went into Gethsemane where He put on the crimson garment of His own bloody sweat! And then to Pilate's Hall, where they did falsely accuse Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and make a jest of Him! And then to that Cross where they nailed Him in His nakedness, so that He hung in agony, to die in fever and in thirst, till He cried, "It is finished!" He descended into the grave, so that He dwelt among the dead! We know not how low He went, but we are told that, "He descended into the lower parts of the earth." Oh, my Hearer, our salvation lies in this! Not in *our* descending, but in Christ's descending our hope is to be found!

Listen to it, lost ones! You need not climb to Heaven—Christ has come down from Heaven to you! And if you lie among the spiritually dead, today, or think you do, He has come down to *you* and you need not enquire how you can go up to Him. No prayers, or tears are needed to bring Him down! He has already come and is near at hand. You asked, "Who shall descend into the deep?" Now listen. Here is your answer. You need not "bring up Christ, again, from the dead," for the Lord has risen, indeed! His soul scarcely descended among the shades before it quit them forever! That day He died, He was in Paradise, and the thief was with Him there as a trophy!

Up, also, His body rose on the light of the third day and He sojourned for 40 days among His disciples. At the close of that period He rose into the air, ascending on high. As they watched Him rising higher and yet higher, at last a cloud received Him—He has gone up to the Father's Throne, as the sinner's Savior—at the throne He stands today to intercede for sinners and from that Throne He bends to comfort those who come to Him. Now, your hope lies wholly in what this Son of God did in His descent and ascent! God has brought Him, again, from the dead and exalted Him at His own right hand! And this is not for Himself, but for all those who trust in Him! His death is instead of the death of our souls! His life is the life of our spirits!

Now, Soul, you have nothing to do with asking vain questions. You have to accept the result of the Savior's actual performances. The saving work is done, done by Him who was anointed of the Lord to do it! Look to Him and salvation is yours! Your salvation rests in Jesus—rest you in Jesus! Throw yourself upon Him right now, even as a babe casts itself upon its mother's breast. Have done with every other confidence! What can you need more than to rely upon the Anointed of the Lord? Now, Paul declares, or rather the Gospel, speaking for itself, declares, this Word of life by *faith* in the risen Christ to be near us, that is, to be accessible to us! As your next door neighbor's house is not hard to get to, so neither is salva-

tion by the Gospel. It is near you! It is near you now! It will never be nearer than it is at this moment!

You may now believe in Christ and live eternally. There is no difficulty—only believe and you are saved! It is not a mystical, obscure thing—it is near and familiar. Believe in Christ as you would believe in your friend—believe that He died for sinners—and trust in Him for salvation. If God has made you feel yourself a sinner, then Christ is such a Savior as you need and you may have Him at once! The *only* difficulty lies in the way being so easy that you can hardly think it can be so! Have done with doings, and feelings—just trust yourself with Christ! “The word is near you.” It is simple, indeed—so simple that people try to obscure it in order to understand it. It is such milk for babes that I have known people refuse such plain Truths of God because they were not willing to be treated like little children.

Just as I lean all my weight upon this rail, so do I lean my soul wholly upon Christ! If what Christ has done will not save a sinner, I am damned, for I have nothing else to depend upon! But if it will save, and I am sure that it will, I am saved as surely as Christ has risen from the dead! This is the substance of the matter—Christ saves and we trust. This is what that word of faith says, even the Gospel which we preach! I am afraid we say a great deal, at times, which rather lumbers and cumpers the Gospel than makes it clear. Perhaps I am doing the same this morning, but I do not mean to do it. I mean to let it stand out simply before you, that the Incarnation, the life, the death, and the Resurrection of Christ are the one foundation upon which we must depend for eternal salvation, and upon that, alone! And if we so depend, we shall most assuredly be saved.

Yet note that Paul opens this up into two things. He says, “If you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” So there must be confession with the mouth. Do not leave that out! Do not suppose that you can be a Believer and conceal your faith. As I said the other day, do not behave like a rat behind the wainscot, only daring to come out in the dark. That is not Christ’s way! If you trust in Him with your heart, trust Him openly and confess Him with your mouth, acknowledging that He is your Lord and your Savior.

He has put the two things together—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” The believing and the confession of that believing in God’s own way are never to be separated, for, “With the heart man believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” See you well to this.

III. Thirdly, let us consider, WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS—“Whoever believes on Him shall not be ashamed.” “Whoever.” Whatever man in all the world, throughout all the ages, shall come and trust himself on Christ shall never be ashamed of having done so! You, dear Friend, down the aisle there, if you trust in Christ, you shall never be ashamed of your hope! You up there in the gallery, however guilty you may have been, or however moral you may have been, it matters not—if your *one* hope is in

what *Christ* has done—you shall never turn round on your dying bed, and cry, “I made a mistake in trusting Christ.”

You know what Cardinal Bellarmine [Robert Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621)] said—he was a great antagonist of Luther—and thought that we might trust in our works. But, looking it all over, he admitted that inasmuch as no man could be quite sure that he had done enough good works, it was, perhaps, best on the whole and safest, to trust altogether to the blood and merits of Jesus Christ. I have always felt obliged to the Cardinal for that admission because the best is good enough for me! And since trusting in Jesus is the safest, I intend to stick to it even to the end! There is really no other hope, for if you get a little bit of your own works put into the building of your hope, you have just so much rotten timber in the fabric—and that rot will plague the whole house—and turn it into dust at the last. No man that rested in Christ, and Christ alone, was ever ashamed of his hope, and none ever shall be. There is sure ground here! The Rock of Ages never fails!

What else does the Scripture say? It says that no man is forbidden to believe, “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.” There never was a sinner yet to whom God said, “You must not trust My Son”! On the contrary, it is written, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” What about the doctrine of election? I need not speak about it this morning—I believe it and rejoice in it—but it is not at all contrary to this precious Truth of God. Read this verse, “All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me; and Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” Whoever will in the whole world believe in Christ may do so! He is neither too old or too young, or too rich, or too poor, or too wicked, or too moral—if he will but trust Christ, he shall be saved—and he is fully allowed and permitted, yes, *commanded* to believe and live!

Once, again, though your faith should only be strong enough to lead you to pray, yet it shall save you, for, “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Suppose your faith cannot work miracles? Never mind about miracles! Suppose you cannot walk on the sea, like Peter? Never mind! You are not called to do it. Can your faith pray? Can it cry? Then call upon the Lord and you shall be saved! Poor dear Heart, if you can but trust Christ, even though the feeblest possible manifestation of it should be the only thing visible, namely, your calling upon God in prayer, it must and shall save you!

IV. Now, I hope I have put it plainly. I have tried my best and so I close by bidding you hear WHAT EXPERIENCE SAYS. What does experience say about believing in Christ! Experience says and we are, some of us, here, to say it, that it is the grandest way of living in the world! I assure you that I daily find the value of living by faith. In hours of dire distress and great heaviness of spirit, of which I know enough, I prove the power of faith in Jesus! Ah, my Lord, what should I do, then, if I could not as, “a poor sinner, and nothing at all,” find You to be my “All in All?”

Fair-weather sailors, who go out in their little painted perfection boats, are people who have had small temptation and little soul-trouble. They are

generally gentlemen in good health, with regular incomes and sweet tempers—and so they soon reach their imaginary sinlessness—vain creatures that they are! But you never get any of that among the poor, suffering, tried people of God. In stormy weather our beauty and glory soon turn pale when the devil meets us face to face, he cracks up our tinsel perfection with a blow! He laughs at all our comeliness. He knows that it is a hollow cheat, a vile sham. In the moments when the soul is in the lowest depths, faith is the only way to live. That mode of living which will do for the depths is safe for the heights.

How blessed it is when a child of God has actually fallen into sin—God keep us so that we never may—but if guilt is on the soul, what is a poor creature to do? He can do nothing unless he has learned this precious Truth of God, that he is nothing at all and Jesus Christ is his All in All! Then he knows that Jesus will blot out his transgressions and create in him a clean heart, and restore him to Himself, again, though now, like David, his sin is ever before him. Yes, and I find a self-denying, Christ-exalting faith to be good in times of jubilation and success! The only way to keep right and humble is to be *nothing* and let Jesus be All in All. If God has blessed your ministry or other holy work, the devil whispers, “You are a pretty fellow—you have done wonders”—and up you will go if you are not steadied by the firm conviction that you may not glory, since you are nothing at all in yourself, and your only help is in Jesus your Lord. When God gives you growth in Grace and fruitfulness in good works, it will be your safety to be as little as ever you were and to trust in nothing but the work of the Lord. This blessed faith keeps men down when they are apt to go up—and up when otherwise they would be apt to go down. It is a holy balancing pole! We can walk the narrowest line with this in our hands and fear no fall. Ourselves, *nothing*, Christ *everything*—that is it! Keep to it.

Now, as to the test of death. Does this sort of faith enable men to face death with courage? I have had almost 30 years among you and God has been very gracious to us, so that we have lost very few by death. But now, many are going Home. And, according to the course of Nature, many of our honored Brothers and Sisters will soon follow. As to those who have been called Home, how have they died? I have the deep satisfaction of saying that when our dear Brothers and Sisters fall asleep, they reflect honor upon the Gospel which we have preached. Ask those who have seen them die! These dear ones, at this hour, look back upon me and say, “Go on: preach the same Gospel to others; for we found it blessed truth to die upon.”

Look at our dear, departed Brother, Mr. Higgs, the last who has crossed the stream. His sons and daughters will tell you that his death was sad to them, but not to him! He suffered agonizing pain, but his peace was as deep as the sea. He had no uncertainty. He was as sure of his safety as if it had been a matter of calculation by the rules of arithmetic! He knew whom he had believed and knew what the Lord had done for him—and he could not see a weak point in it all! He spent the whole night in trying to cheer and comfort others—he had no trembling thought about himself. He

did not say, “Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my Friends, for the hand of the Lord has touched me.” No. He knew that Christ was the Resurrection and the Life, and he was ready to depart.

He wished his beloved ones to go to their beds, but since they would stay with him, he desired them to sing.” “What shall we sing?” “Sing,” he said—

**“Forever with the Lord,
Amen, so let it be.”**

It is hard singing when your father is dying, but it was not hard to him! He bade them read that chapter, “Let not your hearts be troubled” and, as they read it, he did not take the verses and apply them to himself. No, he directed the comfort to his dear wife, for she had greater need of it than he had. His faith was firm. It was for her he cared, and for those about him. As for himself, all was rest. One said, somewhat roughly to him a fortnight before, “Don’t be down-hearted; you may get better yet.” “Stop a minute,” he said. “What do you mean? I have never been down-hearted at anything in my life; certainly not at the thought of dying! If it was the Lord’s will that I should die in the street at this moment, I would cheerfully go.” He never said a word more than he felt—that was the style of the man. God send us more like he!—men to whom religion is for *home* consumption. Not a pretty toy for Sundays, but food to *live* upon—a common-sense hope—a blunt man’s religion that he can carry into business!

One reported to me, the other day, a word which cheered me much. An Italian gentleman, who has known me since I have been at Mentone, was asked, “Are you a Catholic?” “No, I am not.” “Are you a Protestant?” I am not sure, for I know little about it.” “What are you?” “I am of Mr. Spurgeon’s religion which makes people happy and causes them to do good to others.” I thank God he could say that of my religion—it did this for my dear friend—it made him a happy man, whose pleasure it was to please others—and now he has passed away in full sunlight into a still brighter noon! Amen, so let it be!

The top and bottom of the matter is, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Be *nothing!* Be *nobody* and trust Jesus! Do not believe in yourself, but believe in Jesus! Have as many good works as you can cram into your life, but never tell anybody about them, or think anything of them. The best of them are but filthy rags—stow them all away in the coal cellar and look to the merits of your Lord for salvation! Go to Jesus for everything. He says, “I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed.” Take His counsel!

As he whom we sorrow for today could die peacefully, and even merrily, so shall you and I if we rely on the same Savior! When our time comes to depart, we shall just step aside and say, “Good-bye, dear Friends, for a while—we will meet again in the home of the blessed.” I hear him say so at this moment. And I answer him, “Dear Brother, we will be with you speedily.”

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LAUS DEO

NO. 572

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 29, 1864,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“For of Him and through Him and to Him, are all things:
to whom be glory forever. Amen.”
Romans 11:36.*

MY text consists almost entirely of monosyllables, but it contains the loftiest of sublimities. Such a tremendous weight of meaning is concentrated here that an archangel’s eloquence would fail to convey its teaching in all its glory to any finite minds, even if seraphs were his hearers. I will affirm that there is no man living who can preach from my text a sermon worthy of it. No, among all the sacred orators and the eloquent pleaders for God, there never did live and never will live a man capable of reaching the height of the great argument contained in these few simple words. I utterly despair of success and will not, therefore, make an attempt to work out the infinite Glory of this sentence.

Our great God alone can expound this verse for He only knows Himself and He only can worthily set forth His own perfections. Yet I am comforted by this reflection that maybe, in answer to our prayers, God Himself may preach from this text this morning in our hearts. If not through the words of the speaker, yet by that still small voice to which the Believer’s ear is so well accustomed. If thus He shall condescend to favor us, our hearts shall be lifted up in His ways.

There are two things before us, the one worthy of our observation and the second of our imitation. You have in the text, first of all, doctrine and then devotion, The doctrine is high doctrine—“Of Him and through Him and to Him, are all things.” The devotion is lofty devotion—“To whom be glory forever. Amen.”

I. Let us consider THE DOCTRINE. It is laid down by the Apostle Paul as a general principle that all things come of God—they are of Him as their source. They are through Him as their means. They are to Him as their end. They are of Him in the plan, through Him in the working and to Him in the Glory which they produce. Taking this general principle, you will find it applies to all things and it is ours to mark those in which it is most manifestly the case. May the Lord, by His Holy Spirit, open His treasures to us at this moment that we may be enriched in spiritual knowledge and understanding.

Meditate, dear Friends, upon the whole range of God’s works in Creation and Providence. There was a period when God dwelt alone and creatures were not. In that time before all time, when there was no day but, “The Ancient of Days”—when matter and created mind were alike unborn and even space was not—God, the great I Am, was as perfect, glorious and

blessed as He is now. There was no sun and yet Jehovah dwelt in light ineffable. There was no earth and yet His Throne stood fast and firm. There were no heavens and yet His Glory was unbounded.

God inhabited eternity in the infinite majesty and happiness of His self-contained greatness. If the Lord, thus abiding in awful solitude, should choose to create anything, the first thought and idea must come of Him, for there was no other to think or suggest. All things must be of Him in design. With whom can He take counsel? Who shall instruct Him? There existed not another to come into the council chamber, even if such an assistance could be supposed with the Most High.

In the beginning of His way before His works of old, eternal Wisdom brought forth from its own mind the perfect plan of future creations and every line and mark therein must clearly have been of the Lord alone. He ordained the pathway of every planet and the abode of every fixed star. He poured forth the sweet influences of the Pleiades and girt Orion with His hands. He appointed the bounds of the sea and settled the course of the winds. As to the earth, the Lord alone planned its foundations and stretched His line upon it. He formed in His own mind the mold of all His creatures and found for them a dwelling and a service.

He appointed the degree of strength with which He would endow each creature, settled its months of life, its hour of death, its coming and its going. Divine Wisdom mapped this earth—its flowing rivers and foaming seas—the towering mountains and the laughing valleys. The Divine Architect fixed the gates of the morning and the doors of the shadow of death. Nothing could have been suggested by any other, for there was no other to suggest. It was in His power to have made a universe very different from this if He had so pleased. And that He has made it what it is must have been merely because, in His Wisdom and prudence, He saw fit to do so.

There cannot be any reason why He should not have created a world from which sin should have been forever excluded. And that He suffered sin to enter into His creation must again be ascribed to His own infinite Sovereignty. Had He not known that He would be master over sin and out of evil evolve the noblest display of His own Glory, He had not permitted it to enter into the world—but, in sketching the whole history of the universe which He was about to create, He permitted even that black spot to defile His work—because He foreknew what songs of everlasting triumph would rise to Himself when, in streams of His own blood, Incarnate Deity should wash out the stain. It cannot be doubted that whatever may be the whole drama of history in Creation and Providence, there is a high and mysterious sense in which it is all of God.

The sin is not God's, but the temporary permission of its existence formed part of the foreknown scheme and to our faith the intervention of moral evil and the purity of the Divine Character do neither of them diminish the force of our belief that the whole scope of history is of God in the fullest sense. When the plan was all laid down and the Almighty had ordered His purpose, this was not enough—mere arrangement would not create. "Through Him," as well as "of Him," must all things be. There was

no raw material ready to the Creator's hand. He must create the universe out of *nothing*. He calls not for aid—He needs it not and besides, there is none to help Him. There is no rough matter which He may fashion between His palms and launch forth as stars.

He did not need a mine of unquarried matter which He might melt and purify in the furnace of His power and then hammer out upon the anvil of His skill—no, there was nothing to begin with in that day of Jehovah's work—from the womb of Omnipotence all things must be born. He speaks and the heavens leap into existence! He speaks again and worlds are begotten with all the varied forms of life so fraught with Divine Wisdom and matchless skill. "Let there be light and there was light," was not the only time when God had spoken and when things that were not, were, for aforetime had He spoken and this rolling earth and yon blue heavens had blossomed out of nothingness.

Through Him were all things—from the high archangel who sings His praises in celestial notes—down to the cricket chirping on the hearth. The same finger paints the rainbow and the wing of the butterfly. He who dyes the garments of evening in all the colors of Heaven has covered the king-cup with gold and lit up the glowworm's lamp. From yonder ponderous mountain piercing the clouds down to that minute grain of dust in the summer's threshing floor—all things are through Him. Let but God withdraw the emanations of His Divine power and everything would melt away as the foam upon the sea melts into the wave which bore it!

Nothing could stand an instant if the Divine foundation were removed. If He should shake the pillars of the world the whole temple of Creation falls to ruin and its very dust is blown away. A dreary waste, a silent emptiness, a voiceless wilderness is all which remains if God withdraws His power. No, even so much as this were not if His power should be withheld. That nature that is as it is, is through the energy of the present God. If the sun rises every morning and the moon walks in her brightness at night, it is through Him. Away with those men who think that God has wound up the world as though it were a clock and has gone away—leaving it to work for itself apart from His present hand!

God is present everywhere—not merely present when we tremble because His thunder shakes the solid earth and sets the heavens in a blaze with lightning—but just as much so in the calm summer's eve when the air so gently fans the flowers and gnats dance up and down in the last gleams of sunlight. Men try to forget the Divine Presence by calling its energy by strange names. They speak of the power of gravitation. But what is the power of gravitation? We know what it does, but what *is* it? Gravitation is God's own power!

They tell us of mysterious laws of electricity and I know not what. We know the laws, and let them wear the names they have. But laws cannot operate without *power*. What is the *force* of nature? It is a constant emanation from the great Fountain of power, the constant out-flowing of God Himself—the perpetual going forth of beams of light from Him who is "the great Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow."

Tread softly, be reverent, for God is here, O Mortal, as truly as He is in Heaven! Wherever you are and whatever you look upon, you are in God's workshop where every wheel is turned by His hands. Everything is not *God*, but God is *in* everything and nothing works, or even exists, except by His present power and might. "Of Him and through Him are all things."

Beloved, the great glory of all is that in the work of Creation everything is *to* Him. Everything will praise the Lord—He so designed it. God must have the highest motive and there can be no higher motive conceivable than His own Glory. When there was no creature but Himself and no being but Himself, God could not have taken as a motive a creature which did not exist. His motive must be Himself. His own Glory is His highest aim. The good of His creatures He considers carefully. But even the good of His creatures is but a means to the main end—the promotion of His Glory. All things, then, are for His pleasure and for His Glory they daily work.

Tell me that the world is marred by sin and I lament it. Tell me that the slime of the serpent is upon everything beautiful here and I sorrow for it. But yet, even yet shall everything speak of the Glory of God. To Him are all things and the day shall come when with eyes spiritually illuminated you and I shall see that even the introduction of the Fall and the curse did not, after all, mar the splendor of the majesty of the Most High. To Him shall all things be. His enemies shall bow their necks unwillingly but abjectly, while His people, redeemed from death and Hell, shall cheerfully extol Him.

The new heavens and the new earth shall ring with His praise and we who shall sit down to read the record of His creating wonders, shall say of them all, "In His temple does everyone speak of His Glory and even until now to Him have all things been." Courage then, Beloved! When you think that matters go against the cause of God, throw yourselves back upon this as a soft couch. When the enemy hisses in your ears this note—"God is overcome! His plans are spoiled. His Gospel is thrust back. The honor of His Son is stained," tell the enemy, "No, it is not so! To Him are all things."

God's defeats are victories. God's weakness is stronger than man and even the foolishness of the Most High is wiser than man's wisdom and at the last we shall see most clearly that it is so. Hallelujah! We shall see, dear Friends, one day in the clear light of Heaven, that every page in human history, however stained by human sin, has nevertheless something of God's Glory in it. And that the calamities of nations, the falling of dynasties, the devastations of pestilence, plagues, famines, wars and earthquakes have all worked out the eternal purpose and glorified the Most High!

From the first human prayer to the last mortal sigh! From the first note of finite praise onward to the everlasting hallelujah all things have worked together for the Glory of God and have served His purposes. All things are of Him and through Him and to Him. This great principle is most manifest in the grand work of Divine Grace. Here everything is of God and through

God and to God. The great plan of salvation was not drawn by human fingers. It is no concoction of priests, no elaboration of Divines. Grace first moved the heart of God and joined with Divine Sovereignty to ordain a plan of salvation.

This plan was the offspring of a Wisdom no less than Divine. None but God could have imagined a way of salvation such as that which the Gospel presents—a way so just to God—so safe to man. The thought of Divine Substitution and the Sacrifice of *God* on man's behalf could never have suggested itself to the most educated of all God's creatures. God Himself suggests it and the plan is "of Him." And as the great plan is of Him, so the fillings up of the details are of Him. God ordained the time when the first promise should be promulgated—who should receive that promise and who should deliver it. He ordained the hour when the great Promise-Keeper should come—when Jesus Christ should appear—of whom He should be born, by whom He should be betrayed, what death He should die, when He should rise and in what manner He should ascend.

What if I say more? He ordained those who should accept the Mediator, to whom the Gospel should be preached and who should be the favored individuals in whom *effectual calling* should make that preaching mighty for salvation! He settled in His own mind the name of every one of His chosen and the time when each elect vessel should be put upon the wheel to be fashioned according to His will. He ordained pangs of conviction should be felt when the time of faith should come! How much of holy light and enjoyment should be bestowed—all this was purposed from of old! He settled how long the chosen vessel should be glazing in the fire and when it should be taken up—made perfect by heavenly workmanship to adorn the palace of God Most High. Of the Lord's Wisdom every stitch in the noble tapestry of salvation most surely comes.

Nor must we stop here—through Him all these things come. Through His Spirit the promise came at last, for He moved the seers and holy men of old. Through Him the Son of God is born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through Him, sustained by that Spirit, the Son of God leads His thirty years of perfection. In the great redemption God alone is exalted. Jesus sweats in Gethsemane and bleeds on Calvary. None stood with our Savior there. He trod that winepress alone. His own arm worked salvation and His own arm upheld Him. Redemption work was through God alone! Not one soul was ever redeemed by human suffering! No spirit was emancipated by mortal penance. All is through Him.

And as through Him the Atonement, so through Him the application of the Atonement. By the power of the Spirit the Gospel is daily preached. Upheld by the Holy Spirit, pastors, teachers and elders still abide with the Church—still the energy of the Spirit goes forth with the Word to the hearts of the chosen. Still is "Christ crucified," the power of God and the wisdom of God because God is in the Word and through Him men are called, converted, saved. O my Brethren, beyond a doubt we must confess of this great plan of salvation that it is all to Him! We have not a note of praise to spare for another!

Silenced forever with everlasting confusion is the man who would retain a solitary word of praise for man or angel in the work of Grace. You fools! Who can be praised but God, for who but God determined to give His Son Jesus? You knaves! Will you rob Christ of His Glory? Will you steal the jewels out of His crown when He so dearly bought them with drops of His precious blood? O you who love darkness rather than light, will you glorify man's will above the energy of the Holy Spirit and sacrifice to your own dignity and freedom? God forgive you!

But as for His saints, they will always sing, "To God, to God alone be all the Glory! From the first to the last let Him who is the Alpha and the Omega have all the praise! Let His name be extolled, world without end." When the great plan of Grace shall be all developed and you and I shall stand upon the hilltops of Glory, what a wondrous scene will open up before us! We shall see more clearly then, than now, how all things sprang from the fountainhead of God's love. How they all flowed through the channel of the Savior's mediation and how they all worked together to the Glory of the same God from whom they came. The great plan of Grace, then, bears out this principle.

The word holds good, dear Friends, in the case of every individual Believer. Let this be a matter for personal enquiry. Why am I saved? Because of any goodness in me, or any superiority in my constitution? Of whom comes my salvation? My spirit cannot hesitate a single moment. How could a new heart come out of the old one? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one! How can the spirit come out of the flesh? That which is born of the flesh is flesh. If it is spirit it must be born of the Spirit. My Soul, you must be quite clear about this, that if there is in you any faith, hope, or spiritual life, it must have come of God!

Can any Christian here who possesses vital godliness differ from this statement? I am persuaded he cannot. And if any man should arrogate any honor to his own natural constitution, I must, with all charity, doubt whether he knows anything at all about the matter. But, my Soul, as your salvation must have come out of God—as He must have thought of it and planned it for you, and then bestowed it upon you—did it not also come to you through God? It came through faith, but where did that faith take its birth? Was it not of the operation of the Holy Spirit? And what did you believe in? Did you believe in your own strength, or in your own good resolution? No, but in Jesus, your Lord. Was not the first ray of light you ever had received in this way?

Did you not look entirely away from self to the Savior? And the Light which you now have, does it not always come to you in the same way, by having done once and for all with the creature, with the flesh, with human merit—and resting with childlike confidence upon the finished work and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is not, dear Hearer, is not your salvation, if you are, indeed, saved, entirely "through" your God, as well as "of" your God? Who is it that enables you to pray every day? Who keeps you from temptation? By what Grace are you led onward in spiritual

duty? Who upholds you when your foot would trip? Are you not conscious that there is a power other than your own?

For my part, Brethren, I am not taken to Heaven against my will, I know, but still so desperate is my nature and so prone to evil that I feel myself floated onward against the current of my nature. It seems as if all we could do were to kick and rebel against Sovereign Grace, while Sovereign Grace says, "I will save you. I will have you, whatever you may do. I will overcome your raging corruption. I will quicken you out of your lethargy and take you to Heaven in a fiery chariot of afflictions, if not by any other means. I will whip you to Paradise sooner than let you be lost."

Is not this your experience? Have you not found that if once the strong hand of God were taken from your soul, instead of going onward to Heaven you would go back again to Perdition? It is through God you are saved! And what do you say, Believer, to the last point? Is it not "to Him"? Will you take one single jewel out of His crown? Oh, there is not one of you who would wish to extol himself! There is no song we sing more sweetly in this House of Prayer than the song of Grace and there is no hymn which seems more in keeping with our own experience than this—

**"Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days.
It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."**

Let who will extol the dignity of the creature. Let who may boast in the power of free will—we cannot do it! We have found our nature to be a very depraved one and our will to be under bondage. We must, if other creatures do not, extol that unchangeable Omnipotent Grace which has made us what we are and will continue to keep us so till it brings us to the right hand of God in everlasting Glory! In each *individual*, then, this rule holds good.

Once more, in every *work* which the Christian is enabled to do, he should bear in mind the rule of the text. Some of you are privileged to work in the Sunday school and you have had many conversions in your class. Others of you are distributing tracts, going from house to house and trying to bring souls to Christ, not without success, by God's Grace. Some of us, too, have the honor of being sent to preach the Gospel in every place and we have sheaves of our harvest too many for our barns to hold. In the case of some of us, we seem to have received the promised blessing to its fullest extent. The Lord has spiritually made our children like the sand of the sea and the spiritual offspring of our heart like the gravel.

In all this it behooves us to remember that, "of Him and through Him and to Him," are all things. "Of Him." Who makes you to differ? What have you which you have not received? The burning heart, the tearful eye, the prayerful soul—all these qualifications for usefulness come of Him. The fluent mouth, the pleading tongue—these must have been educated and given by Him. From Him all the many gifts of the Spirit by which the Church is edified—from Him, I say, they all proceed. What is Paul? Who is

Apollos, or Cephas—who are all these but the messengers of God in whom the Spirit works, dividing to every man according as He wills?

When the preacher has achieved his usefulness, he knows that all his success comes through God. If a man shall suppose himself capable of stirring up a revival, or encouraging even one saint, or leading one sinner to repentance, he is a fool! As well might we attempt to move the stars, or shake the world, or grasp the lightning flash in the hollow of our hand as think to save a soul, or even to quicken saints out of their lethargy! Spiritual work must be done by the Spirit. Through God every good thing comes to us. The preacher may be a very Samson when God is with him—he shall be like Samson when God is *not* with him only in Samson's degradation and shame!

Beloved, there never was a man brought to God except through God and there never will be! Our nation shall never be stirred up again into the celestial heat of piety except by the Presence of the Holy Spirit anew. Would God we had more of the abiding sense of the Spirit's work among us! That we looked more to Him! That we rested less in machinery and men and more upon that Divine but Invisible Agent who works all good things in the hearts of men! Beloved, it is through GOD that every good thing comes. And I am sure it is to Him. We cannot take the honor of a single convert. We do look with thankfulness upon this growing Church, but we can give the Glory alone to Him! Give glory to the creature and it is all over with it! Honor yourselves as a Church and God will soon dishonor you!

Let us lay every sheaf upon His altar, bring every lamb of the fold to the feet of the Good Shepherd feeling that it is His. When we go abroad to fish for souls, let us think that we only fill the net because He taught us how to throw it on the right side of the Church. And when we take them they are His, not ours. Oh, what poor little things we are and yet we think we do so much! The pen might say, "I wrote Milton's *Paradise Lost*." Ah, poor Pen! You could not have made a dot to an "i," or a cross to a "t," if Milton's hand had not moved you! The preacher could do nothing if God had not helped him. The axe might cry, "I have felled forests! I have made the cedar bow its head and laid the stalwart oak in the dust." No, you did not—for if it had not been for the arm which wielded you, even a bramble would have been too much for you to cut down!

Shall the sword say, "I won the victory! I shed the blood of the mighty! I caused the shield to be cast away?" No, it was the *warrior*, who with his courage and might made you of service in the battle, and apart from this you are less than nothing. In all that God does by us let us continue to give Him the praise—so shall He continue His Presence with our efforts. Otherwise He will take from us His smile and so we shall be left as weak men. I have, perhaps, at too great length for your patience, tried to bring out this very simple but very useful principle. And now, before I go to the second part, I wish to apply it by this very practical remark.

Beloved, if this is true, that all things are through Him and to Him, do you not think that those doctrines are most likely to be correct and most

worthy to be held which are most in keeping with this Truth of God? Now, there are certain doctrines commonly called Calvinistic (but which ought never to have been called by such a name, for they are simply Christian doctrines), which I think commend themselves to the minds of all thoughtful persons. For this reason, mainly, that they do ascribe to God *everything*.

Here is the doctrine of election, for instance. Why is a man saved? Is it the result of his own will or God's will? Did he choose God, or did God choose him? The answer, "Man chose God," is manifestly untrue because it glorifies *man*. God's answer to it is, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." God has predestinated His people to salvation from before the foundation of the world. Ascribing the will, which is the hinge of the whole matter, and turns the balance—ascribing that to *God*—we feel we are speaking in keeping with the doctrine of our text.

Then take effectual calling. By what power is a man called? There are some who say that it is by the energy of his own will, or at least that while God gives him Grace, it depends upon him to make use of it. Some do not make use of the Grace and perish. Others make use of the Grace and are saved—saved by their own consenting to allow Grace to be effectual. We, on the other hand, say no—a man is not saved against his will—but he is *made willing* by the operation of the Holy Spirit. A mighty Grace which he does not wish to resist enters into the man, disarms him, makes a new creature of him and he is saved. We believe that the calling which saves the soul is a calling which owes nothing at all to man, but which comes from God. The creature being, then, passive, while God, like the potter, molds the man like a lump of clay. Clearly the calling, we think, must be through *God*—for so it coincides with this principle, "of Him and through Him and to Him are all things."

Then next, the question of particular redemption. Some insist upon it that men are redeemed not because Christ died, but because they are willing to give efficacy to the blood of Christ. He died for everybody according to their theory. Why, then, are not all men saved? Because all men will not believe? That is to say that *believing* is necessary in order to make the blood of Christ efficacious for redemption! Now we hold that to be a great lie! We believe the very contrary—namely, that the blood of Christ has in itself the power to redeem and that it does redeem and that faith does not give efficacy to the blood but is only the *proof* that the blood has redeemed *that man*. Hence we hold that Christ did not redeem every man, but only redeemed those men who will ultimately attain unto eternal life.

We do not believe that He redeemed the damned! We do not believe that He poured out His life blood for souls already in Hell! We never can imagine that Christ suffered in the place of all men and that then, afterwards, these same men have to suffer for themselves—that in fact Christ pays their debts—and then God makes them pay their debts over again! We think that the doctrine that men, by their wills, give efficacy to the blood of Christ is derogatory to the Lord Jesus and we rather hold to this that He laid down His life for His sheep and that His laying down His life for

His sheep involved and secured the salvation of every one of them. We believe this because we hold that, “of Him and through Him and to Him are all things.”

So, again, take the total depravity of the race and its original corruption—a doctrine much abhorred of those who lift up poor human nature—but is, nevertheless, true. We hold that man must be entirely lost and ruined, because if there is some good thing in him, then it cannot be said that, “of God and through God and to God, are all things,” for at least some things must be of man. If there are some relics of virtue and some remnants of power left in the race of man, then some things are of man and to man will some things be. But if of God are all things, then in man there must be nothing—man must be set down as ruined—hopelessly ruined—

“Bruised and mangled by the Fall,”

and his salvation must be described as being from the first to the last, in every jot and every tittle of that almighty Grace of God, which at first chose him, at length redeemed him, ultimately called him, constantly preserved him and perfectly shall present him before the Father’s Throne.

I put these doctrines before you, more especially today, because last Friday many Believers both in Geneva and London met together to celebrate the centenary of the death of that mighty servant of God, John Calvin. I honor Calvin, not as teaching these doctrines himself, but as one through whom God spoke and one who, next to the Apostle Paul, propounded the Truth of God more clearly than any other man that ever breathed. He knew more of Scripture and explained it more clearly than most. Luther may have as much courage, but Luther knows little of theology. Luther, like a bull, when he sees one Truth, shuts his eyes and dashes against the enemy, breaking down gates, bolts and bars, to clear away for the Word!

But Calvin, following in the opened pathway with clear eyes, searching Scripture, ever acknowledging that of God and through God and to God are all things, maps out the whole plan with a delightful clearness which could only have come of the Spirit of God. That man of God expounds the doctrines in so excellent and admirable a manner that we cannot too much bless the Lord who sent him, or too much pray that others like him may be honest and sincere in the work of the Lord. Thus much then, of doctrine, but one or two minutes by way of devotion.

II. The Apostle puts his pen back into the ink bottle, falls on his knees—he cannot help it—he must have a doxology. “To whom be glory forever. Amen.” Beloved, let us imitate this DEVOTION. I think that this sentence should be the prayer, the motto for every one of us—“To Him be glory forever. Amen.” I will be but very brief, for I would not weary you. “To Him be glory forever.” This should be the single desire of the Christian. I take it that he should not have twenty wishes, but only one. He may desire to see his family well brought up, but only that, “To God may be glory forever.”

He may wish for prosperity in his business, but only so far as it may help him to promote this—"To Him be glory forever." He may desire to attain more gifts and more graces, but it should only be that, "To Him may be glory forever." This one thing I know, Christian—you are not acting as you ought to do when you are moved by any other motive than the one motive of your Lord's Glory. As a Christian you are "of God and through God." I pray you be "to God." Let nothing ever set your heart beating but love to Him. Let this ambition fire your soul! Be this the foundation of every enterprise upon which you enter, and this your sustaining motive whenever your zeal would grow chill—only, only make God your object! Depend upon it, where *self* begins, *sorrow* begins. But if God is my supreme delight and only object—

***"To me 'tis equal whether love ordain
My life or death appoint me ease or pain."***

To me there shall be no choice, when my eyes singly look to God's Glory, whether I shall be torn in pieces by wild beasts or live in comfort—whether I shall be full of despondency or full of hope. If God is glorified in my mortal body, my soul shall rest content. Again, let it be our constant desire, "To Him be glory." When I wake up in the morning, O, let my soul salute her God with gratitude—

***"Wake and lift up yourself, my Heart,
And with the angels bear your part,
Who all night long unwearied sing
High praises to the eternal King."***

At my work behind the counter, or in the Exchange, let me be looking out to see how I may glorify Him. If I am walking in the fields, let my desire be that the trees may clap their hands in His praise. May the sun in his march shine out the Master's Glory and the stars at night reflect His praise.

It is yours, Brethren, to put a tongue into the mouth of this dumb world and make the silent beauties of creation praise their God. Never be silent when there are opportunities and you shall never be silent for want of opportunities. At night fall asleep praising your God! As you close your eyes let your last thought be, "How sweet to rest upon the Savior's bosom!" In afflictions praise Him—out of the fires let your song go up! On the sick-bed extol Him! Dying, let Him have your sweetest notes. Let your shouts of victory in the combat with the last great enemy be all for Him. And then, when you have burst the bondage of mortality and come into the freedom of immortal spirits—then, in a nobler, sweeter song—you shall sing unto His praise!

Be this, then, your constant thought—"To Him be glory forever." Let this be your earnest thought. Do not speak of God's Glory with cold words, nor think of it with a chilly heart, but feel, "I must praise Him. If I cannot praise Him where I am, I will break through these narrow bonds, and get where I can." Sometimes you will feel that you long to be disembodied—that you may praise Him as the immortal spirits do. I must praise Him! Bought by His precious blood, called by His Spirit I cannot hold my tongue! My Soul, can you be dumb and dead? I must praise Him! Stand

back, O Flesh! Away, you Fiends! Away, you Troubles! I must sing, for should I refuse to sing, surely the very stones would speak!

I hope, dear Friends, while thus earnest, your praise will also be growing. Let there be growing desire to praise Him of whom and through whom are all things. You blessed Him in your youth, do not be content with such praises as you gave Him then. Has God prospered you in business? Give Him more as He has given you more. Has God given you experience? O, praise Him by better faith than you exercised at first. Does your knowledge grow? Oh, then you can sing more sweetly! Do you have happier times than you once had? Have you been restored from sickness and has your sorrow been turned into peace and joy? Then give Him more music! Put more coals in your censer, more sweet frankincense, more of the sweet cane bought with money. Oh, to serve Him every day, lifting up my heart from Sunday to Sunday, till I reach the ever-ending Sunday! Reaching from sanctification to sanctification, from love to love, from strength to strength, till I appear before my God!

In closing, let me urge you to make this desire practical. If you really glorify God, take care to do it not with lip-service which dies away in the wind, but with solid homage of daily life. Praise Him by your patience in pain, by your perseverance in duty, by your generosity in His cause, by your boldness in testimony, by your consecration to His work. Praise Him, my dear Friends, not only this morning in what you do for Him in your offerings, but praise Him every day by doing something for God in all sorts of ways, according to the manner in which He has been pleased to bless you. I wish I could have spoken worthily on such a topic as this, but a dull, heavy headache sits upon me and I feel that a thick gloom overshadows my words, out of which I look with longing, but cannot rise.

For this I may well grieve, but nevertheless God the Holy Spirit can work the better through our weakness and if you will try and preach the sermon to yourselves, my Brethren, you will do it vastly better than I can. If you will meditate upon this text this afternoon, "Of Him and through Him and to Him, are all things," I am sure you will be led to fall on your knees with the Apostle and say, "To Him be glory forever," and then you will rise up and practically, in your life, give Him honor, putting the "Amen" to this doxology by your own individual service of your great and gracious Lord. May He give a blessing now and accept your thank offering through Christ Jesus. Amen.

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SERVING THE LORD

NO. 885

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

***“Serving the Lord.”
Romans 12:11.***

THE harmony of Scripture is admirable. Everything is proportionate and balanced. He who weighed the mountains in scales has had a clear eye to the adjustment of truth in His Word. Within these pages you find a sufficiency of doctrine, for it is the basis of practice. You read abundance of promise, for it is the support of perseverance. But, you meet, also, with frequency of precept, for it is the spur and guide of holiness. We could not afford to dispense with a verse of Holy Writ. The removal of a single text, like the erasure of a line of a great epic, would mar the completeness and connection of the whole. As well pluck a gem from the high priest's breastplate as erase a line of Revelation.

Absolutely perfect are the proportions of inspired Truth and it is noteworthy that *practical* Truth has the greatest prominence. It has been remarked by an able Divine that for every exhortation that we have in the New Testament to pray, we have five commands either to work or to give. While the doctrinal part of Scripture is exceedingly full, the practical part is not one whit less copious, and, indeed, the proportion which, in Christ's ministry, was given to instruction in practical godliness is vastly larger than the share allotted to it in most modern ministries.

God has given to us in Scripture something concerning every necessary thing, but most of all upon the most necessary, namely, holy living. As the Lord distributes, so must we receive. We are not to neglect the knowledge of the Doctrines of Grace. We are diligently to feed upon the promises, but we are also, with affection and reverence, to regard the precepts.

In the verse before us, this same harmony is noteworthy. “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” The ordinary duties of our calling we are not called upon to *forget*—we are not to neglect the shop for the sanctuary—or the counting house for the class meeting. The legs of a fool are not equal, but the holiness of a Believer should always be well arranged. Whatever our position in life may be we are so to order our conduct in it as to commend ourselves for diligence and uprightness both to the Church and to the world. The Christian is not to be a worse tradesman because of his religion, but a better! He is not to be a less skilled mechanic, but he is to be all the more careful in his work.

It were a pity, indeed, if Paul's tents were the worst in the store and Lydia's purple of the poorest dye. At the same time observe how the next clause calls our equal attention to the higher and more spiritual matter. “Fervent in spirit.” We must not neglect the *spiritual* because of the press-

ing demands of the temporal. Perhaps we are more likely to forget this precept than the former, therefore let us lay it the more to heart. We are to maintain the holy fire within our souls constantly burning, for that is the meaning of "*fervent*." Our love to God must not merely be there in a small degree, but it must exist as a vigorous flame. Our spirit must be kept warmly zealous, burningly affectionate. Our spiritual nature is to glow like coals of fire.

The keystone of the arch of life is to be a desire for God's Glory. At this point the public and the private, the bodily and the spiritual, are to be as one—both in business diligence and spiritual fervency we are to set the Lord always before us. Our everyday labor is to be consecrated into priestly sacrifice, our inward fervor is to be like temple incense and so, our bodies being temples of the Holy Spirit, we are ever to remain "serving the Lord." My aim in this sermon will be to call upon my believing Brothers and Sisters to fulfill in their lives the meaning of the words which we have now selected as our text, "Serving the Lord," or as it might be rendered, "doing the part of servants towards God." "Servantizing"—waiting as servants upon the Most High.

I. And first, I shall have to notice THE ESSENTIALS OF ALL TRUE SERVICE TO GOD. NO one will fail to see that the very first essential must be that *the man who would render service must beforehand be accepted as a servant*. If a stranger should, of his own accord, visit your farm and should commence driving the horses, milking the cows, reaping the wheat and so on—if you had never employed him he would be fulfilling the part of an *intruder* rather than the office of a servant.

Now, it is not every man who is fit to be a servant of God. In fact, in our fallen condition, none of us can be received into His household, even as hired servants. How should the thrice holy God be served by hands unwashed from sin? Lepers cannot stand at His altar, or the deformed dwell within His gates. Unregenerate man cannot serve God—their thoughts and ways are evil and defiled. Unto the wicked God says, "What have you to do to declare My statutes?" No form of homage rendered by the wicked can be acceptable. Until the person is justified, the work cannot be received.

Dear Friend, think of this! You must, first of all, be taken into the Lord's employment before you can render Him service! Let me ask you, then, are you in very deed and truth a servant of the Lord? Have you been bought with the great Master's money? In other words, have you been ransomed by the death of Jesus Christ? Have you been redeemed, not with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus? For only the redeemed ones are reckoned by the Lord as servants in His household. The ungodly are slaves to Satan and even in their attempts at religion they display their vassalage to the powers of evil. You must, first of all, be loosed from your natural bondage and set free with a price! And then, and then, only, can you be the servant of the Most High.

Answer this question to your heart and conscience, dear Hearer! He that is God's servant has been won by power as well as bought with price. How does this fact strike you? Has a strong hand snatched you from servitude to your former tyrant? Have you been compelled by Divine Grace to leave your sins and to commence another course of life? No man comes to Jesus except he is drawn of the Father. No man leaves the service of folly unconstrained by Divine Grace. Have you been so drawn?

Israel would forever have made bricks in Egypt if the Lord had not brought forth His people with a high hand and an outstretched arm. Do you know what the mighty working of His power means? Has Sovereign Grace subdued you? Have you in very deed been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son? If you know not these things, little avails it that you pretend to hear the Lord, for your profession is hollow and vain. True servants of God, again, are always such as are born in His house as well as bought with His money—"You must be born again." Preliminary to all holy service must be regeneration. The fruit of the wild olive will still be wild, water it as you may. That which comes from the crab will still be sour, plant the tree where you will.

Man's *nature* must be changed. A lion cannot plow as an ox, or carry a rider as a horse. A sinner is unsuitable for service till he is newly created. Have you received, then, from God, a change—a radical change which has affected your nature and made you a new man in Christ Jesus? If so, then you may not only *talk* of service, but joyously *enter* into it! But if not, to labor to perform holy works is to try to bear flowers without roots, to build a house without a foundation, to make a garment without cloth. You must begin with faith in Jesus. You must first experience a work done within you by God before you can go forward to work for the Lord.

Next to this, it is vitally necessary that in all our service we sincerely and simply render our obedience *to the Lord Himself*. Much that is done religiously is not done unto God. A sermon may be preached and contain excellent truth and the language in which the Truth of God is stated may be everything that could be desired and yet the service rendered may be to the *hearers*, or to the man's own self and not to God at all. You may go to your Sunday school class and with great perseverance you may instruct those little children, but yet you may have served your fellow teachers, or the general community rather than have served your God.

To whom do you look for a reward? Whose smile is it that gladdens you? Whose frown would depress you? Whose honor do you seek in all that you are doing? Remember that which is uppermost in your heart is your Master. If your deepest motive is to *seem* to be active, to *appear* to be diligent and to win commendation for taking your share in the Church's work, you have not served God—you have sacrificed unto others. O Beloved, this is a point which, though it is very simple to *speak* of, is very searching, indeed, if it is brought home to heart and conscience—for then much of that which glitters will be found not to be gold—and the glory of much apparently excellent serving will dissolve in smoke.

The Lord must be the *sole* object of your labor! The pursuit of His Glory must, like a clear crystal stream, run through the whole of your life, or you are not yet His servant. Sinister motives and selfish aims are the death of true godliness. Search and look lest these betray you unawares. Furthermore, in all true service of God it is essential that we serve Him in *the way of His appointment*. You would be grievously plagued if you had in your house a woman who was continually running up and down stairs, roaming into every room, opening every closet, moving this piece of furniture and dusting that and generally keeping up a perpetual stir and worry. You would not call this service, but *annoyance*.

All that is done contrary to orders is disobedience, not service. And if anything is done without orders, it may be excessive activity, but it certainly is not service. Alas, my Brothers and Sisters, how many think they are serving God when they have never looked to the Statute Book—they have not turned to the Commandments of the great King as we have them written in His Word—but have rendered to Him will-worship? They worship after their own fashion and fancy, thinking this to be good because it is artistic. Believing that to be proper because it is usual. Conceiving a third thing to be right because it is antique, but forgetting that the Word of God is the standard and *nothing* is service which is not commanded in Holy Scripture.

O that the Church, in all her activities, would look to this, for she cumber herself with much serving and for the most part the cumbering does not come from duties prescribed for her by her Lord, but from observances which she has invented for herself. Upon you, dear Friends, I press this point. How are your lives ordered? I ask you the question, for I desire to ask it of myself. Have you had an eye to your Master's mind in what you have done in religious matters? Has it occurred to you frequently, and does it occur to you constantly to see what the Lord would have you do? Otherwise I warn you that you may be borne along the rapid stream of Church activity in the channel of mere *tradition* and may never render acceptable homage to your Lord.

Or you may be restlessly busy on your own account and after your own will, but your exertions will not be service to God because you consulted not His will. As a disciple you must bow your neck to the yoke of Christ! As the eyes of handmaidens are to their mistress, so must your eyes be unto the Lord for direction and command. What the King bids you, you must do. What He does *not* bid you has no power over your conscience, even though pope and prelate decree it. Have you all had respect unto His Commandments? I will ask concerning one of them—have you, as Believers, been obedient to His *command* to be baptized? Have you given this answer of a good conscience towards God? “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”

As plainly as anything in Scripture, it seems, at least to us, that Believers' Baptism is commanded! Have you attended to it? No, some of you know your duty, but you do it not. I pray the Holy Spirit to convince you of your sinful neglect and to lead you into all the commandments of your

Lord. Our will must bow and our heart must obey, or otherwise we shall be strangers to “*serv*ing the Lord.” Furthermore, it is essential to all true and acceptable service that we serve God *in His strength*. Those who attempt to perfect holiness without waiting upon the Holy Spirit for power will be as foolish as the Apostles would have been if they had commenced preaching at once and had forgotten the Master’s exhortation, “Tarry at Jerusalem until power be given to you from on high.”

“You cannot serve the Lord,” said Joshua to Israel—they were very earnest, they were very intent upon it, but he knew the weakness of their nature and he said to them—“*You cannot serve the Lord.*” None of us can honor the Lord except as we daily derive strength from the Fountain of all power. My dear Hearer, are you accustomed to fall on your face before the living God, conscious of your weakness? And do you plead with Him to gird you with strength and then, in that God-given vigor, do you go forth to the field of labor? If not—if your work is done in the strength of the flesh—it shall be but fleshly work and shall wither as the green herb. You will be sure to give yourself the honor of your own doings and therefore God will not accept or confirm what your own strength has worked.

The last testing hour, which shall try *every* man’s work, of what sort it is, will be certain to consume all that came from carnal nature. Solemn thought! Nothing will last but that which was worked by Divine power. All the works of man shall be burnt up. No achievement of our own will appear on the record of celestial fame. Whatever we may have thought we had done, if it has been performed in the strength of the flesh, shall as certainly dissolve as the iceberg floating in the warm current of the gulf stream melts as it is borne along. O Holy Spirit, help us, that our works, being done in Your strength, may be established of God!

Once more, it is essential to the perfection of Christian service that *we stand continually ready to obey the Lord’s will in anything and everything without distinction*. We cannot serve the Lord if we pick and choose our duties. He who enlists in the army of the Most High surrenders his will to the discipline of the army and the bidding of the Captain. Whatever Christ bids any of us do in the future, we must unhesitatingly perform. It may be that His finger will point to distant lands—there we must go cheerfully. We must follow the pillar of cloud without repining. We may be called to posts of labor for which we feel ourselves to be inadequate. We may be bid to attempt work from which our spirit as yet recoils—but if we are called to it, it is not ours to ask the reason why—it is ours, if necessary, even to dare and die in serving the Lord.

What have you to do with finding strength? It is His to give it to you in your hour of need. What have you to do with likes or dislikes? Servants must like that which their masters bid them! Man, your will must be subdued! Your prejudices, instead of being pampered, must be destroyed! You must be as willing to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water as to be a prince and a standard-bearer. You must be as content to teach a little child his letters for Christ as to testify the Gospel before an audience of kings. To you it must be equal whether you shall sit on a throne for Christ

or rot in a dungeon for Christ! He only is a sincere servant who is intent upon doing the *whole* of his Lord's will, let that will be what it may.

I wish I could, in more attractive style, describe this service, but let this suffice—I am persuaded, Brethren, that serving the Lord is not a merely external and outward religion—it is a matter of the heart and of the soul. It is a matter of the conscience and of the affections. Serving the Lord is not a thing of fits and starts, spasms and excitements—it is a constant, thorough, practical, universal subservience to the mind of the Most High. Serving the Lord is not mere thought, scheme, plan, resolution—it is actually spending and being spent! It is the exercise of all the energies of nature and of all the energies of Divine Grace in the cause of Him from whom all energy is derived. May a life of holy diligence accurately expound in our case what it is to be “serving the Lord.”

II. I shall now mention, in the second place, for the help and guidance of earnest spirits, **SOME OF THE MODES IN WHICH WE MAY AT THIS DAY SERVE THE LORD.** It was an ordinance of king David that all the soldiers in the army should share in the spoil. Certain of the warriors did not go down to the fight, but guarded the supplies, as guards of the baggage. But these were accounted to be as true soldiers as those who joined in the actual conflict. Therefore I would say a word, first, to those of you who cannot serve the Lord in the direct activities which are required of the most of us—I mean those who are prevented by the Lord's own Providential act from fulfilling all that is incumbent upon others.

Dear Brothers and Sisters—if from sickness, lack of education, or from your position in life you have had no opportunities to preach the Word or even to teach it to a few—well, be it yours to remember that a quiet holy example is true service of God! If the tongue speaks not, yet if the *life* speaks, you shall have done God no small homage. If your actions are so guarded with holy care that your character in your station adorns the doctrine of God your Savior, though you shall scarcely be able to utter a sentence of actual Gospel Truth, yet your life shall ring in the ears of the unconverted! They shall take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus and your example shall be blessed to them!

If you cannot help the great cause of God in any other mode, at any rate there is open to you that of fervent prayer. How much may be done for the Master's kingdom by the “king's remembrancers,” who put Him in mind day by day of the agonies of His Son and of His Covenant and promise to give Him a widening dominion! I doubt not that many sick beds in England are doing more for Christ than our pulpits! Oh, what showers of blessings come down in answer to the prayers and tears of poor godly invalids whose weakness is their strength and whose sickness is their opportunity!

In all buildings there must be some unseen stones and are not these very often the most important of all? In the very foundation of a Church I should place those who are mighty in prayer! They are hidden, as it were, beneath the soil of obscurity where we cannot see them, but they are bearing up the entire structure. My dear afflicted Brothers and Sisters,

when at any time you are cut off from the active ministries which have been your delight, solace yourselves with this—that your sacred patience under suffering and your fervent prayers for the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom are a sacrifice of a sweet smell—holy and acceptable unto God!

But surely it will be possible in some way for the very weakest and those in the worst circumstances to add something to this! Can you not speak, at least now and then, a word for Christ? Opportunities must occur to those placed in the most difficult positions. Will you not seize them? I think once, every now and then, to the most ungodly husband, brother, or son, there must be an opportunity of saying a gracious word. At least sometimes to the friend visiting your sick bed there is an opportunity of dropping a word of consecrated admonition. I can conceive some of you who are servants to be so placed that it would be wrong for you to be attending many assemblies for worship, or to be spending much time in evangelizing others. You are never to offer to God one duty stained with the blood of another.

But I imagine that even under the worst conceivable circumstances there must be opportunities which I hope you do not find it in your heart to neglect. Dear Mother, with those babes around you, you have a field of labor among them. Their little hearts, tender as they are and so deeply susceptible to your influence—surely you can operate upon them! Nurse girls, governesses and household servants—you need not go abroad for sacred labor! You have your proper spheres at home and if you love God you can serve Him right well in your position. You whose occupations engross your time from the first hour of the morning till the last at night—I cannot imagine that God has given, even to you, a light which is covered with a bushel!

You must have at least some cranny, some little slit from which your light may shine upon a dark world! Look for it and remember that if your holy living and your prayers can only be accompanied with the smallest possible service—if it is all that is possible—you shall be as much accepted as those who do far more. They who give thousands to the cause of Christ do well—but they do no better than the widow who, having two mites, gave all. Take care that you give all, and giving all you have offered as much and more than some of us whose opportunities are ampler and whose responsibilities are greater.

But while we have thus made room for comfort for those who stay with the supplies, we do not desire to console the idle, and therefore we remind you that few now present are among the class so graciously excused the rougher conflict. We have here a goodly company who are quite able to go down to the battle—unto those I shall now speak. Brethren, the form of service our Master most desires of us is comprehensively this—that we *make known the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. It has been said that it is not our duty to convert nations, nor even to save a single soul. and I believe there is truth in the assertion. It is not our *duty* to do what we cannot by any possibility do, since only *God* Himself can convert or regenerate a soul!

Jesus did not command us to make men accept the Gospel, but He has bid us to make *known* the Gospel to every creature.

In this London of ours, there ought not to be a single man or woman ignorant of the letter of the Gospel. It is a sad proof of our idleness, our gross lack of zeal, that London is still so grossly ignorant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! In these British Isles there ought not to be a child that has attained the years of responsibility and yet is not instructed in the things of the kingdom—not one! For if Christians were but a tenth as numerous as they are, they would be sufficient for the evangelizing of the United Kingdom. Yes, Brethren, had the Church in the past been faithful and were the Church in the present faithful to God and to His Christ, there is no reason why there should remain a district upon the surface of the globe, that is accessible to trade, which should not speedily be enlightened by the clear shining of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are not responsible that the Hindu worships his idols. We are not responsible that the African adores his fetish. But we *are* responsible that the Hindu does not *know the Gospel* and that the African has not heard of the atoning sacrifice of Christ! We are to preach the Gospel, and whether it is a savor of death unto death, or of life unto life is left in God's hands. Whether men receive it or reject it is not with us—it is ours to *preach* to all men—to sow, though the wheat falls among tares, though it wastes on the highway, though it perish ultimately on the stony ground. To sow everywhere is our duty and the whole world is our field.

I ask, then, every Christian man here to listen to the voice of his risen Lord, and let His command appeal to his conscience. It is your bounden duty, every day of your life, to be making men to know the mystery which has been hid for ages, even the Gospel of Jesus Christ—the glorious fact that He came into the world to save sinners, even the chief! How much are you doing for Christ, my Brother? How much have you been doing for His cause today? How much are you going to do before the sun has set?

Now, under this and through this, if we would serve the Lord Christ, we should, every one of us, aim at *the conversion of sinners*. I said that to *convert* them was not our duty—but I append to that statement this other assertion—that to *aim* at their conversion *is* our duty and our privilege and we are not to be self-complacently content with having merely spoken the Truth of God—we are to look for signs following. I am to deliver the Gospel message come what may. But I may well suspect some fault in myself or in my testimony if the conversion of sinners does not follow upon it in *some* measure—for a true Gospel is a soul-saving thing. When it comes, though all men are not saved by it, yet some are! And a company whose hearts God has touched will surely be brought out where His Truth is honestly, earnestly, faithfully, prayerfully dispensed.

It is a Christian's duty to be seeking always the salvation of all who come in his way. But I think especially of certain individuals who are laid on His heart. I shall now put a question which I daresay has passed through your minds before, but which I would like to tarry there. How many, my dear Friend, were you ever the means of bringing to Jesus? You

believe that they must perish everlastingly unless they have faith in Christ. How many have you personally prayed for? How many did you ever break your heart about? You believe that they must love Christ or be damned. How many have you ever talked to concerning Him who is the only Savior? To how many have you borne your testimony of His kindness and His Divine Grace? Upon how many have you laid the tender hand to press them to follow after the Savior?

Ah, well, the questions sound so trite as I put them and perhaps as they come to your ears you are weary with them as being so commonplace. But by the great day of the appearing of our Lord, when He shall require of you an account of your stewardship, I implore you answer these enquiries, even if they humble you in the very dust! If the answer is painful, seek in the future that your course is mended, and as servants of Christ yearn over souls and long and sigh and cry until at last you shall be able to say, "If they perish I have done my best and their blood will not be required at my hands."

I think I hear the devil whispering to some of you, "But that is the *preacher's* business." No, Sirs, it is no business of mine to do *your* work. My work is stern enough. My responsibility is heavy enough—I cannot undertake yours. In the winning of souls no Christian can be proxy for another. The idea of supporting a missionary or supporting a minister to do my work for God is an idea that never ought to have crossed the Christian's mind! Jesus did not save you by proxy! He did not die for you in the person of another! He gave His own Person—body, soul and spirit—wholly for you. And by the love you bear Him, if, indeed, it is sincere, I pray you consecrate yourself this day anew to the bringing home of His banished ones, that Jesus may see of the travail of His soul.

A third form of usefulness must not be forgotten and it is this—it should be the aim of all Believers not merely to bring in the ungodly, but to endeavor *to reclaim backsliders*. Some backsliders, I fear, are apostates for having brought dishonor upon the Christian Church. They nevertheless are far from being humbled, but impertinently thrust themselves and their supposed claims to attention upon the Church whom they have grieved and injured. Their much-talked-of repentance appears to us to be more early than deep and to be more pretentious than true. But at the same time, if a man has fallen and even if the Church is obliged to put him away, we do not deliver such a one to Satan that he may *blaspheme*, but that he may learn *not* to blaspheme.

The object of Church discipline should always be the good of the person who has to endure it. There is no more Christ-like work anywhere than for elder Christians to be watching over the young ones, checking their first declensions, nipping the evil in the bud—no nobler work unless it is the restoration of those who have actually gone astray. Oh, as you would that others should seek you in a similar case, Beloved, seek the wandering sheep, remembering that there will be more joy in the presence of the angels of God over one restored wanderer than over 99 that went not astray!

Another mode of usefulness is for Christians *to seek the edification of one another*. It is as great a good to the State to maintain a citizen in health as to introduce a stranger into citizenship. How much might some of you do for the edification of younger Christians if you would but seek opportunities? Ah, Christian Man, I fear you accumulate experience and you gather knowledge—but the whole of it becomes unprofitable because you are not diligent in its use for the good of the Church! Furthermore, Brethren, some of you may not be able to accomplish these things to any large extent, but God entrusts you with wealth. Then make use of your substance for Him—and in truth, whatever the form of your gift, let your work correspond to it. According to the Grace given let the work rendered be. Let each pound yield its own interest.

As you are set in the body as a member, exercise the office of your peculiar membership and be not slack in it. Let there be no sluggishness, but let us all, in the name of Him who on yonder tree poured out His life, endeavor that from this day, with double zeal, we may be found “serving the Lord.”

III. So I shall pass on very briefly, indeed, to notice, in the third place, THE COMMENDATION which is due to this service. To serve the Lord is surely *the natural element of godliness*. Heavenly spirits enjoy unbroken rest, but they find their rest in serving God day and night. If you could restrict the Christian from the service of God, you would debar him from his highest joy. Surely it is as much the element of a Christian to do good as for a fish to swim, or a bird to fly, or a tree to yield her fruits. Oh, then, if you would let the new-born nature fully develop itself, you must be serving the Lord!

To serve the Lord is *the highest honor*. How men pride themselves on being attached to the train of great men! How proud they are of wearing the livery of princes! But what must it be to have God, the Eternal, for your Master? To have Jesus Christ as your gracious Helper? To have the Holy Spirit as your Divine Guide in all that you are called to do? To serve the Lord is to stand on a level with the angels—to worship the same Master as they do who are in the Presence of the Divine Majesty!

It is better to serve God than rule a kingdom! No, he is both a king and a priest who has thoroughly entered into the service of the Most High. To serve God is *to enjoy the highest pleasure*. I will guarantee you that the happiest members of any Church are the most diligent. Those who sit still easily imagine sorrows. Idlers are those who indulge in criticism of other people’s service and find themselves most happy when they can pull other men’s work to pieces. This bitter spirit dies in the atmosphere of hard work. Doubts and fears fly before sacred activity. There is a kind of spiritual indigestion which seizes on the great proportion of professors so that they never appear to enjoy life at all. It were a pity that they should—it were a pity that those should have happiness who will not render unto God the tribute of grateful labor.

The Prayer Meeting is neglected by them. They are not teaching children nor exhorting grown-up people. They are neither helping others to

work nor working themselves and yet they reckon that they are to have the rewards of Divine Grace. A whip for their shoulders is surely a portion far more suitable than a promise for their souls! God usually takes good care to give a man the file if he will not brighten himself by service. He that will not keep off the filth by the constant scour of activity shall find himself cast into the pungent lye of trouble—wherein he shall be fretted and consumed until the rust is removed.

If you would *educate your soul*, you must be active! No man grows to be a perfect Christian by lying on the bed of sloth. Our manhood is developed by *exercise*. The soldier grows into the veteran amidst the smoke of battle. Sailors learn not their craft on dry land and Christian men can never be educated so that the whole of their spiritual manhood can be developed by merely listening to sermons or witnessing the holy example of others. That strength which is to be increased must be used. That knowledge which is to be multiplied must be communicated. To be content with what you have done is to go backward! To use what you have is to make progress and to be enriched. Onward, then, for perfection lies *ahead* of you!

My dear Brothers and Sisters, there are 10,000 things that I might say with regard to Christian activity, all of which ought to excite your minds to present action. Are you patriots? You cannot serve your country better than by serving your Lord! Are you philanthropists? You cannot bless the human race more effectually than by seeking to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ in it! Do you sigh and cry over the woes of others? You cannot better redress them than by the Gospel, which is the universal remedy. Do you deplore the abundant ignorance around you? No light can scatter it like the knowledge of Christ's Gospel! Are you afraid of the future? Do you dread revolution and anarchy? Nothing can settle the pillars of order like the testimony of Christ Jesus! In fact, there is nothing you can do that is holier, more worthy of your best nature, more filled with blessing than "*serving the Lord*."

IV. And now, to close, I shall speak for a minute upon THE PRESENT NEED OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE. Brethren, there is always need to be serving the Lord for your own sake. You cannot be holy and happy. You cannot be what a Christian ought to be unless you are evermore engaged in Jehovah's cause. There is great need for you, my dear Brother, to serve God, because I fear so few professors are doing so. I would not judge harshly, but as I look down the roll and notice the number that have given their names to the Church, I cannot help fetching a sigh over one and another as I remember that the *name* is all that we at present can call our own, so far as we can judge.

Oh, if only the Christians in London who are joined in fellowship in our Churches were all zealous, I am sure we should see brighter and better days than we do now. Do not, however, be quick to accuse others, but seek to be aroused yourself. There is need enough of diligence in this wretched city. I was reading but the other day that thrilling book, "The Seven Curses of London," and any one of these seven curses is enough to give a man heartache if he will thoroughly understand it. That curse of

drink, especially—what is to be done with it? How few Christians take to heart the abominable intoxication which pollutes the masses of our population!

While again our social evil, the very mention of which is enough to make a man sick—are we forever to shut our eyes to it and talk as though we were dwelling in a Jerusalem—when this city is infinitely more like to Sodom? Why, the ignorance, the poverty, the misery, the iniquity of London reek and stink in the nostrils of Almighty God and yet we gather in a little quiet place by ourselves and we use the rose water of self-complacency and think that everything goes well. The devil is swallowing men wholesale! Hell enlarges herself! The Christian Church scarcely makes any progress at all—certainly no progress at all comparable to the advance of the population. Souls are not saved! Error is rampant! On all sides there are signs of great degeneration and if Christians do not arouse themselves now, we might almost say to them, “Awake, arise, or be forever fallen.”

If you could but stand by one deathbed where a soul is taking its leap in the dark. If for once in your lives you could hear the cries of a spirit as it enters into the thick darkness which is to be its everlasting abode. If you could but have painted before your eyes in truth the last tremendous day and the multitudes on the left hand! If you could but gaze for a moment at the Heaven which your own children, I fear, may miss through your indifference. Or if you could but look but for a second upon that Hell to which multitudes of your neighbors are descending every day, surely you would be down on your knees saying, “Forgive me, great God, for all my past neglect and from this hour cleanse me from the blood of souls by the blood of Jesus and help me to be instant in season and out of season in instructing my fellow men. Never from this day until I die may I neglect an opportunity of telling men how they may be saved.”

Ah, dear Friends, I had hoped to have spoken to you most earnestly, but I fear I have been to you, myself, only a model of that coldness which I have condemned. Woe is me that I, too, should be guilty! I chide the evil far more in myself than in you and pray to be saved from it. May we all, as pastors, deacons, elders, members, Sunday school teachers and workers of all sorts, be, indeed, from this good hour much more with God in prayer and much more zealous in our labors, that it may never have to be laid to our charge, again, that while we were not slothful in business we were unfervent in spirit and were not serving the Lord. God bless you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 12.

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*“Continuing instant in prayer.”
Romans 12:12.*

THIS is placed in connection with a large number of brief, but very weighty precepts. Prayer has a distinct relationship to all Christian duties and graces. It is not possible for us to carry out the holy commands of our Lord Jesus unless we are abundant in supplication. The Romans, at the time that Paul wrote to them, were subject to persecution and in this verse he mentions two remedies for impatience under such afflictions—remedies which are equally effective under *all* the trials of life. The old physicians tell us of two antidotes against poison, the hot and the cold—and they dilate upon the special excellence of each of these. In like manner, the Apostle Paul gives us, first, the warm antidote—“Rejoicing in hope,” and then he gives us the cool antidote, “Patient in tribulation.”

Either of these, or both together, will work wonderfully for the sustaining of the spirit in the hour of affliction, but it is to be observed that neither of these remedies can be taken into the soul unless they are mixed with a draught of prayer! Joy and patience are curative essences, but they must be dropped into a glass full of supplication and then they will be wonderfully efficient. How can we “rejoice in hope” if we know nothing about prayer to the God of Hope? Whenever your hope seems to fail you and your joy begins to sink—the shortest remedy is to take to your knees. By remembering the promise in prayer, hope will be sustained and then joy is sure to spring from it, for joy is the first-born child of hope.

As for “patience,” how can we be patient if we cannot pray? Have not holy men of old always sustained themselves in their worst times of grief and depression by betaking themselves to prayer? Mind that you do the same! Impatience will be sure to follow prayerlessness, but the endurance of the Divine will grows out of communion with God in prayer. I like that beautiful though sad picture of the Norwich martyr, Hudson, of whom Foxe tells us that when he stood at the stake with the chain about him to be burnt, he fell under a cloud. The Lord had withdrawn the light of His countenance from him and, therefore, this man of God slipped from under the chain to have a few minutes alone with God.

Some thought that he was about to recant and his fellow martyrs began exhorting him to be steadfast and to play the man. But this dear Believer knew what he was doing and when he had spoken with his God, he came back to the stake with a bright and beaming countenance, saying, “Now, I thank God! I am strong and fear not what man can do unto me,” and stood in his place with his fellow sufferers and there burned quick to the death without fear. Oh the power of prayer! If we do but know how to get

into contact with the Eternal and Omnipotent, we shall be joyful and patient in all tribulations and bravely endure even the keen edge of death!

Prayer is to be exercised in all things, for from its position in the present context we are taught that it is not without prayer that we proceed to “distribute to the necessities of the saints.” Because we have prayed for them, we are ready to befriend them by deeds of love. If we have not been accustomed to pray for the Brethren, we shall not be “given to hospitality,” much less shall we, “bless them which persecute us.” Prayer is the life-blood of duty, the secret sap of holiness, the fountain of obedience! Upon prayer as spoken of in the text may the Holy Spirit help us now to meditate.

Three things I shall speak upon which will be remembered the better by being linked with three words—*Instant, constant, expectant*.

I. First, then, INSTANT—“*Continuing instant in prayer.*” It may be proper at this stage to say that these words, though I shall dwell upon them in the English, are not identical with the Greek in which there is but one word. I do not know that a better translation could possibly be given and so I shall content myself with the very words of our own version. The word, “instant,” as used by our translators, meant pressing, urgent, importunate, earnest. The Greek word is said to have the signification of, “always applying strength in prayer,” or continuing with all your might in prayer. Our prayer is to be full of strength—“blessed is the man whose strength is in You.”

Master Brooks says that the word is a metaphor taken from hunting dogs which will never give up the game till they have got it. A hunting dog, when in pursuit of its victim, works itself into full motion, using every limb and muscle to follow as fast as possible. If you catch a glimpse of it, you will see that it throws itself forward with intense eagerness—the whole body and soul of the dog is in motion towards one objective—no portion of him lingers. Not so much as a *glance* is given to anything else. The whole creature is instant after the game which it pursues, urgently pressing—hot foot—as we say, to overtake the prey.

Now, this is the way in which we are to pray. Prayer as a mere form is but a mockery. Prayer in a languid, half-hearted manner may be more dishonoring to God than honoring to Him—we ourselves may be rather injured by lukewarm prayer than benefited by it. Prevalent prayer is frequently spoken of in Scripture as an agony—“striving together with me in your prayers.” We frequently speak of it as wrestling and, we do well, for so it is. In wrestling a man has all his mind as well as all his body occupied with the desire to overthrow his opponent. Now he bends and twists and then he strains and stretches—now he uses one foot and then another. He tries his arm and now his leg. He shifts his ground; he takes up another position and he keeps his eyes perpetually open lest he should be caught unaware. He has both his hands eager for a grip; his whole body ready for a throw—the *whole man* is in his wrestling.

After such a manner should you pray. The whole of your mind, your memory, your judgment, your affection, your hopes, your fears and even your imagination must be concentrated upon this labor of prayer. May the

Holy Spirit work in you this comprehensive ardor, this energy of the whole man! We must go with our whole soul to God or He will not accept us. It will be ill for us if we are half-hearted, for it is written, "Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty." "The kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force." We are exhorted to "knock" and, as our model, we are directed to him who at midnight awakened his slumbering friend.

We are exhorted to be importunate like the widow with the unjust judge. We are to pray as if all depended upon our praying, though after all, that praying is, in itself, an effect of a cause which has existed long before! We are to be as importunate as if God were unwilling and to plead as earnestly as if He did not already know far better than we do what things we need. Earnestness must be present in all our prayers or they will return to us unanswered—this is reasonable enough. Shall God be expected to give to us that which we do not value? If we do not value the blessing sufficiently to be eager in seeking it, is it not right that He should withhold it until we are in a better mind? Are we to worship God with a divided reverence? Are we to treat Him as though it were quite enough for Him if we gave Him a stray thought or a half-hearted desire, now and then, as a sort of compliment?

Can we expect that He will receive our sacrifice if we lay no fire under it? If we have no impetuous earnestness of spirit, can we expect that we shall be accepted? He loathes the lukewarm! Will He not loathe our prayers? See how we deal with our fellow men—if they ask a favor of us and we see that they care but little about it, we are in no great haste to put ourselves about to do them the turn. But if they are very pressing, we yield to their entreaties—and so does God, in His mercy, yield to the entreaties of His people. As one has very prettily said, the nurse, when she has her child in the cradle, though it begins to cry and whinny a little, she leaves it and continues at her housework. And when it cries a little more and a little more, she still listens, but she lets it be where it is. But when, at last, the baby takes to vehement crying, then straightway she presses it to her bosom with many a kiss and kindly word.

Children of God, you must cry mightily unto the Lord and pour out your hearts like water before Him—then will He have regard unto the voice of your cry—and it shall be unto you even according to your desire. Instancy in prayer is necessary. We must be fervent or burning or we shall not prevail. How are we to attain to this urgency? God's gracious Spirit must give it to us! But what are the methods by which, under His direction, we may become instant in prayer? I answer first, *let us study very thoroughly the value of the mercy which we are seeking at God's hand.* Seeker, take heed to do this. Whatever it is that you are asking for, it is no trifle. Look at it! If it is a thing about which you are not certain that it would be according to God's mind, lay it aside—you have no right to be very fervent about that which is of questionable necessity.

If this may or may not be good for you, gently put up your requests to the great Father, once or twice, and then lay them lightly in Jesus' hands. But when you are *certain* that the blessing sought for is a good and neces-

sary thing for your soul, then in order that your spirit may be strong in prayer, get a deep sense of its value, its goodness and its necessity! Examine it as a goldsmith inspects a jewel when he wishes to estimate its worth. A man's ardor in pursuit will be in proportion to his consciousness of the value of that which he pursues. Pray that you may feel what a precious thing *Grace* is; what it cost the Lord to bring it to you; what blessings it brings with it for time and for eternity. And when your heart sees that it seeks after an unspeakably precious gift, then will its desire be stirred up to pray with intense longings.

When you have done this, meditate much upon your necessities that you may *get a sense of your need of the mercy you are seeking*. Look at your soul's poverty and your own unworthiness. Look at what will happen to you unless this blessing comes. If it is some absolutely indispensable spiritual blessing, picture yourself where you will be if God should withhold it—what evils will spring of your continuing in need of it and what further needs may yet beset you. The more your need smites you, the more eagerly will you cry unto the Lord concerning it. Are you desirous of bread for your soul? Be hungry and let your hunger eat into your heart. Are you desirous of the Water of Life? Be thirsty and let your thirst burn you till you are dried up like a potsherd.

Let your necessities have liberty, by meditation, to seize you and to distress you with a sense of your emptiness and nothingness. Nothing sets a man more eagerly upon prayer than a deep sense of his need of that which he is seeking at the Lord's hands. He will eagerly seek for garments who shivers in his nakedness amid the winter's blast. He will earnestly long for home who feels himself lost upon a moor in the midst of a midnight fog. Get a consciousness of where and what you are apart from Christ and from the mercy of God and then, when you perceive well your need, this, with a sense of the greatness of the blessing, will much quicken you as to instancy in prayer.

Endeavor, also, to *get a distinct consciousness of the fact that God must give you this blessing or you will never have it*. It requires time to think over these things. Therefore set yourself apart, awhile, from all other occupations and think on these matters. Say to yourself—Here is such-and-such a spiritual mercy and I can never get it out of myself, for I am a dry well. Nothing can come out of nothing and I am nothing. I cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean and I am unclean. This spiritual blessing I cannot obtain from my fellow man. King nor priest can bring it to me. I cannot climb to Heaven after it, nor dive into the abyss to find it. Earth nor Heaven can yield it, nor can either time or eternity produce it. God alone must give it to me and He is a Sovereign—He has a right to give or to withhold. I cannot claim it of Him as a matter of right—He must give it to me of His mere mercy—it must be a gift of undeserved favor.

Oh, if you get that Truth of God well worked into your soul, you will pray earnestly and you will use the right arguments—"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness, according unto the multitude of Your tender mercies." God alone can help you and if He refuses, you are undone forever! Therefore cry mightily unto Him. Further to make

you instant in prayer *endeavor eagerly to desire the good thing*. Stand not before God, if you would win at His hands, as one who will be content whether or not you receive the blessing. Say not, "Give it or withhold it—it is all the same to me. I knock at Your door and if You open, I will be somewhat pleased. But if Your door is shut, I will be pleased, too."

Oh no! Such listlessness will never prevail with God! There are times when you must be brought to this condition that you will not be denied. There is a holy "impudency," as the Puritans were known to call it, to which we must be brought—in which we shall, with holy *boldness*, dare to say like Jacob, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." Such language would be blasphemy if it were not permitted! It would be presumption if it were not encouraged! But there is little fear of our being too bold, for in these times men are more inclined to keep at a distance than to come too near. We are permitted to use the liberty of obedient, loving children. We are allowed, in the holy confidence of faith, to resolve that we will seek until we find; we will ask until we receive; we will knock until the door is opened unto us. Our case is urgent and we must press it till our suit is gained.

Never was a man brought to such a pass by the Grace of God but what speedily the Lord was pleased to open the hand of His liberality and give him according to his desire. But this vehemence must be manifested. A certain person is mentioned in John Bunyan's, "Holy War," whose name is Mr. Desiresawake, a very capital fellow. Cultivate his acquaintance! Alas, there are some who live next door to Mr. Desiresasleep and their prayers are dormant like certain wild beasts in winter! Gladly would I stir them out of their dens! Wake up, Man! Be awake when you pray, for it is insulting to God to give Him sleepy worship! Dreaming at praying and playing at praying, as some do, are grievous sins. Prayer must be heart work, soul-work, spirit work! Prayer ought to be the sweat of the soul. It should sometimes be even as the bloody sweat of an agonizing heart crying mightily unto the Lord, as Jesus did in the garden. To such the Lord sends down His angel to strengthen them or in some way hears their pleas in that concerning which they were filled with anguish. Intensity of desire must be exhibited or else it may come to pass that the time of the bestowal is not yet close.

I will suppose, dear Brothers and Sisters, that you have followed these directions, so far, by the help of God's Spirit, and now you know your need of the mercy and something of the value of it. You see that God alone can give it to you and you are anxiously desirous to have it. Now comes the tug of war—you are to *plead with all your might*. Gather up all your faculties to see whether this thing is a matter of promise or not. Take down the Bible, your charter and your Father's will, and see if there is any part of the charter which promises this good thing to you. When you have found the promise, lay your finger on it! Better still, grasp it in your hands with your spirit and go before God with it.

If prayer is, as Luther called it, "bombards Christianorum," the Christian's great gun with which he does bombard Heaven, then surely the promise is the shot which he sends forth! Plead the promise by saying,

“Lord, do as You have said! Fulfill this Word unto Your servant upon which You have caused me to hope.” If you do not seem to prevail with one promise, seek out another and plead it! This, perhaps, will be more to the point—a promise which your very soul seems to suck in as though it were spoken newly and freshly to *you!* As if never another man had ever received it!

Spread this second promise before the Lord. Nothing pleases Him more than seeing His own Word pleaded by His children. Try this and if it is manifest that you have not succeeded, turn to yet another promise and another and another and another—and then plead, “For Your name’s sake! For Your Truth’s sake! For Your Covenant’s sake!” And then come in with the greatest plea of all—“For Jesus’ sake and in His name! For the blood’s sake, I plead with You, my God! O You that hear prayer, will You not keep touch with Your own Word and be true to Your own Son?” You have prevailed there! By that sign you have conquered! Again it shall be seen that the Lord has listened to the voice of a man!

Still there is one thing more needed and that is *strong faith*—not only that God is—but that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. You cannot be instant in prayer, no, you cannot offer an acceptable prayer at all except as you believe in the prayer-hearing God. The modern wise men assure us, with a patronizing air, that prayer is a pious exercise, exceedingly beneficial to ourselves but quite inoperative with God. They are kind enough to allow us to pray, only we must not suppose that it has the slightest effect!

And do they think that we are such idiots that we would stand and whistle to the wind and find good for our souls in such a stupid proceeding? They must have formed their notion of our mental condition from their own if they imagine that we should pray if we knew that God did not hear us and would not answer us! Prayer apart from the idea of a hearing God is *not* praying—it is soliloquizing, or, in plainer words, a silly talking to yourself such as one sees in half-witted old persons who have outlived what few senses they once possessed! You must believe that God is and that there is real commerce between your soul and God and that your pleading is a part of the Divine way of blessing you, or else you are not praying but maundering and chattering.

The Lord does really listen to the pleading of His people and though He does not alter His ordinance and His decree, yet in some way or other He makes the prayers of His people to be an efficient link in the machinery of His Providence and Grace so that He does not bless them without prayer—but with it He does bless them abundantly. Dear Friends, may the Lord the Holy Spirit stir us all up to be instant in mighty, energetic prayer!

II. Now, secondly, comes the word, CONSTANT—“*continuing* instant in prayer.” To go back to the hunting dog with which we set out. We saw him rushing like the wind after his game, but this will not be enough if it only lasts for a little while. He must continue running if he is to catch his prey. It matters not how fast the hound goes, if, after having kept the pace awhile he begins to slacken—the prey will escape from him. It is a sign of

failure in the iron trade when the furnaces are blown out—when business flourishes the fire blazes both day and night—and so will it be with prayer when the soul is in a flourishing state.

If prayer is the Christian's vital breath, how can he leave off praying? We must maintain the ardor of prayer. We must always be intense. Prayer is not to be a thing of yesterday, but of today and tomorrow until it changes into praise above! Perhaps prayer will continue even in Heaven. Certainly the souls under the altar cry, "How long?" And unfulfilled prophecies and promises yet big with future events will be pleaded even there. Praise, however, is the chief characteristic of the future state, as prayer is the characteristic of the present one. We are to get into a good pace—"instant in prayer," and then to keep it up—*continuing* instant in prayer. "That is difficult" says one. Who said it was not? All the processes of the Christian life are difficult! Indeed, they are *impossible* apart from the abiding help of the Divine Spirit—"the Spirit helps our infirmities."

Now then, Brothers and Sisters, that we may be helped to keep up our fervency in prayer, please notice that prayer must be continuous because *it is so singularly mixed up with the whole Gospel dispensation*. As the incense filled the Temple, so does prayer fill the Gospel economy. The blood was upon the Mercy Seat and upon the altar, the laver, the candlestick and the book. It was sprinkled everywhere in the Jewish Tabernacle and thus Atonement was the most conspicuous object in the prescribed worship by the Law of Moses. But next to this, prayer was most prominent in the continual calling upon God and in the smoke of the incense by which prayer was symbolized. It is the high privilege of those who are Believers in Jesus to draw near unto God with their petitions perpetually!

The whole Church, like the 12 tribes, is instantly serving God day and night in prayer, hoping for the fulfillment of the promise of the glorious appearing. "Behold, he prays," is the very mark of the individual Christian—and the unity, the life and the spirituality of the Church are best seen in prayer—

***"Nor prayer is made on earth alone.
The Holy Spirit pleads
And Jesus, on the eternal Throne,
For sinners intercedes."***

Prayer was dear to Jesus when He was the Man of Nazareth upon the mountain's lonely side and prayer is dear to Him now that, as the Son of God, He intercedes in Glory. Even to Him the Covenant has this condition of prayer appended, "Ask of Me, and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession."

Prayer is the atmosphere which surrounds Emanuel's land—as the clouds hang on the mountains, so does prayer linger over every great mercy of God. *Prayer is connected with every Covenant blessing*. Why, Beloved, it is to him that calls upon the name of the Lord that the promise of salvation is given! Our heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him! Justification was given to the publican rather than to the Pharisee because he had offered humble, believing, acceptable prayer—whereas the Pharisee asked nothing, but only glorified himself! Adoption begets prayer, for it brings us the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Fa-

ther. From election right onward to perfection in Christ there is no blessing of the Covenant but what is understood, received, enjoyed, fed upon and practically used in the way of prayer! Those who would safely navigate the sea of life must pray their passage to Heaven.

Moreover, Beloved, *prayer has been connected with every living spiritual experience you have ever had.* Will you kindly look back to the hour when you were under the fig tree and Jesus saw you? Were you not at prayer? When you first arose to go to your Father, was not your first step a prayer? When you received the assurance of salvation, was it not in answer to prayer? When His banner over you has been love, have you not felt it sweet to pray? When you have feasted at His table and He has revealed Himself to you as He does not to the world, have you not, then, been in the spirit of prayer? The hill Mizar and the Hermonites—places you never can forget, those choicest of spots which seem, as you look back along the vista of life to be gleaming with a supernatural splendor—has not prayer been connected with them all? There has been nothing grandly great or good in your spiritual life but Jabbok has flowed near it and the top of Carmel has been near to view where you have wrestled with God and prevailed!

Now, Beloved, we are commanded to be constant in our instancy. Is not this right? Is *there any time when we can afford to slacken prayer?* Would you kindly put your finger on the map of the Way and tell me where a Christian man may leave off praying? Is it when he prospers? No, for then he needs Grace to carry a full cup with a steady hand! Is it when he is in distress? Does not Nature itself teach us that in the time of affliction we should especially draw near to God in prayer? When should he pray, no, when should he *not* pray? Where may he pray? The answer is he may pray *everywhere*, for as one has well said, a man who carries his temple about with him is always in a place where he may pray! And know you not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit?

Wherever you go, you carry your temples with you and in every place you may pray and *should* pray and *need* to pray and, therefore, be sure that you *do* pray! If you are on the housetop with Peter, pray there. And if waiting at table with Nehemiah, pray there. If in the field with Isaac or on the mountain with the Lord, or in the sea with Jonah, or in a prison with Joseph, or in the article of death with Stephen, pray there—

***“Long as they live should Christians pray,
For only while they pray they live.”***

When they are under the wings of the cherubim crying unto God at His Mercy Seat then are they in the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High and then shall they abide under the shadow of the Almighty!

But specially we ought to be constant in prayer, because *such remarkable gifts are vouchsafed to importunity.* God often gives liberally to prayer when it speaks but once, but frequent pleading begets abundant answers! That is the most soul-enriching prayer which is long in winning its way with God. When prayers, like great ships, have been long on the voyage, you may hope that they have gone far and have gathered rich cargo and will come home freighted with all the best merchandise! If you can but

quietly hope and patiently wait, all will be well. The very choicest blessings of Heaven are reserved for the Elijahs who can say, "Go again seven times," for the men who come again and again and again never faint. Wait then upon the Lord with holy importunity of prayer and your reward shall more than repay you. It is good for us to be compelled to pray like this. It exercises the faculties of the soul; it makes men of us; it brings us up from spiritual childhood to perfect manhood. Therefore be constant in prayer and gather strength for importunate pleading.

No reason can be given why we should not continue in instant prayer. I can suppose one Brother saying, "I feel I cannot pray." When you feel you cannot pray, you can be sure that you are more in need of prayer than ever. Is not a disinclination to prayer one of the saddest marks of your soul's condition—one of those reasons which ought, above all others, drive you to the Mercy Seat? "Would you say the same, Sir, if I tell you that I *can* pray?" Precisely the same, for now, when the wind is favorable, you should hoist all sails! If you cannot make progress now, when will you? Therefore pray when you can pray and pray when you *cannot* pray!

"Alas, Sir I cannot get beyond a groan." Brother, be not distressed, for the best praying in all the world consists of "groans that cannot be uttered." We may sometimes have a doubt whether the Spirit of God helps us to pray in cheerful prayers, though I do not say that there is any need for the *doubt*—but we cannot have a question about our sad prayers for it is expressly said He, "makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered." Do you think that the chief end of a Christian's life is to be comfortable? It is often more good for us to mourn like doves than to sing like nightingales! Sometimes there may be more prayer in a sigh than in a long oration! Often do I personally look back upon times of bondage when I cried to God with all my soul and thought I did not pray—and I wish that I prayed *now* as I did *then*!

Therefore, always pray. Whether you feel in a mind for prayer or not, still pray. The fishermen at Mentone keep on fishing with their great nets—yes, by the score these fishermen take it out and haul it in again—and frequently they get no more than one little sardine for their pains. Many and many a time I have seen no more than they could hold in their hand as the produce of a net which covered acres of the sea! So why do they go on? Because they are *fishermen* and cannot do anything else! You and I are praying men and there is nothing else we can do but wait upon the Lord! So if, after many a throw of the net, we get but one small answer, we will try again, for this is all we can do. "Lord, to whom should we go but unto You?"

Continue in prayer because *the continuance of our instancy in prayer is the test of the reality of our devotion*. Men that are in business and are in earnest cannot afford to open the shop, do a little occasional trade and then put up a notice, "The proprietor of this shop has gone out for an excursion and will resume his business when he feels inclined to." This would be trifling—not trading! And so it is in prayer—a little bit of praying and then a stretch of neglect will prove a delusion and a snare. A poor simpleton who had never been to sea before, when he was going to Aus-

tralia, asked a friend on board the vessel what the sailors did with the vessel at night. "Do at night?" was the reply, "Why, sail as fast as they can go." "I did not know," he said, "they worked in the night, I thought they stopped the ship." He must have thought he was out on some pleasure excursion along the coast and that the yacht would anchor when the sun went down—but he was in an ocean clipper which was out for work and not for play. The man who means business must sail whether it is dark or light.

And so in prayer we must serve God constantly, both day and night. Real prayers are constant prayers. There is a fish, you know, that sometimes attempts to fly, but it is no bird for all that. It only takes a little flight and then it is in the water again—a true bird keeps on the wing, especially if it is such a bird as the eagle whose untiring wings bear it above the clouds. Beware of prayers which leap up like a grasshopper and are soon down again! Let your prayers have the wings of a dove! Let them fly away from earth and rest in God. Hypocrites pray by fits and starts—the genuine Christian "prays without ceasing."

Beware of judging yourselves by certain spasms of prayer. When I put my lamp out last night, as I thought, it flashed up, then went down again and yet again flashed up! It did so many times, as I stood waiting, but I knew it must go out before long. Some have a way of flashing a prayer or two, but their piety is only a dying light—it will all be over soon. Continue instant in prayer—it shall be the test of whether your prayer is a lamp of the Lord or a dying light of your own kindling. Beloved, we *must* continue in prayer, but the Holy Spirit, alone, can enable us to do it. We may, however, be much helped in it by occasionally setting apart a special time.

Days of prayer and hours of prayer and set seasons of prayer are very helpful. We ought to have our appointed seasons each day, but special times over and above our regular custom may stir the fire and enable it to burn more brightly. To unite with other Christians in prayer is often very helpful. Private prayer is more important than public prayer under many aspects and is a better test of a Christian, but still, public prayer often reacts upon private devotion and when two or three are together and are agreed as touching the Kingdom, their supplications will often be helpful to each other and obtain the thing which they desire.

III. Our last word is EXPECTANT. It is not in the text verbally, but it must be there because there will be no such thing as instancy or constancy unless there is an expectation and a belief that God can and will give that which we seek! Let us go back to our dog again—the dog would not run at so great a rate if he did not expect to seize his prey! Look how every limb is stretched with intensity and he goes over hedge and ditch after his game because he has almost seized it! And though it flies before him with all its might, yet he is close upon it. There is no praying with any fervor unless there is faith that God will hear you—at least if instancy can be felt for a while, constancy cannot be kept up long without it.

Expectancy is the very *reason* for prayer. Some prefer to pray because it is their duty and their custom, but *real* prayer usually springs from the expectancy that God will hear. I was awakened at about four o'clock this

morning by a sharp, shrill sound. I thought it was a swallow screaming by the window and I fell asleep again. But I was soon awakened by the repetition of the same sharp sound. A young bird had found its way into my room and was crying for liberty! I left my bed and opened the window to let the captive free. It did not seem to know its way and so I caught it and gently placed it at the window. And in a moment it flew to the oak tree close by and sat itself down.

I watched its movements. The moment it had perched itself comfortably, it began to utter sharp cries and it turned its little head round on all sides as if looking for someone. It was crying for its mother, and why? *Because it expected to be fed.* And why did it expect to be fed? *Because it had been fed before.* If it had been a full-grown bird, it would not have called for food, but would have helped itself. But this poor little creature had been nourished by its parents and it was looking round to be supplied again. This is why we pray!

O Lord, You have supplied our needs so long and so often in answer to prayer that we are in the way of it! And now we pray not only because we ought to do so, but because it has become natural to us to pray—and we expect You to hear us. When You hear us we bless You, but we are not *surprised* as though it were a strange thing! Your Truth causes great admiration but no astonishment, for it is like You to keep Your Word. We are poor dependent children and You a wise and tender Father. You have never left us and you will never leave us and so we continue instant in prayer because we are expectant of Your Grace.

Some professors seldom exercise expectancy in prayer, but the soul of prayer is gone when you have no expectation. God will hear the cry of your desire, but the hand into which He will put the mercy is the hand of your expectation. You must believe that you have the blessing, or you will not have it unless it is by some extraordinary mercy beyond what is promised. His usual way is to raise our expectations so that we look for the favor and then He sends it. If some people looked for answers to prayer, they might soon have them, for their prayers would be answered by themselves! I was reminded of that by a little boy whose father prayed with the family that the Lord would visit the poor and relieve their needs. When he had finished, his little boy said, “Father, I wish I had your money.” “Why so?” “Because,” he said, “I would answer your prayers for you.” “Which prayers, John?” “Why, father, you prayed that the poor might be helped and you could do it very well with your own money.”

I like better, still, that story of the good man at the Prayer Meeting who, reading the list of prayers, found one for a poor widow, that her distress might be relieved. So he began to read it, but stopped and added, “we won’t trouble the Lord with that. By His Grace I will attend to that myself.” Numbers of prayers are of that kind—we are praying God to do what *we* ought to do ourselves and that is sheer impertinence. If we really prayed in earnest, expecting to be heard, our answer would often come in this very way—by our being stirred up to see that the Lord had heard us! The Lord might well say to us, “You say, ‘Your kingdom come.’ Arise and

help to make My kingdom come! You ask that My name may be hallowed. Go, yourself, and hallow My name.”

Oh, that we had the expectancy which would teach us practical action so that we should find the answer to our prayers given before we asked, according to the promise, “Before they call I will answer them, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.” I had many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now, for the time has passed. I shall close by recommending to all of you one simple but very comprehensive prayer. It was offered by a poor man in Fife and it was copied out by the Duchess of Gordon and found among her papers when she died.

“O Lord, give me Grace to feel my need of Your Grace! Give me Grace to ask for Your Grace! Give me Grace to receive your Grace! And when in Your Grace You have given me Grace, give me Grace to use Your Grace!” Can you see what scope there is for prayer? You will never need to leave off pleading for lack of subjects! Continue, therefore, to be instant in it.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 12.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—30, 981, 978.**

GIRLS’ ORPHANAGE—We have purchased “The Hawthorns,” near the Boys’ Orphanage, for £4,000, in order to commence an institution for fatherless girls. We earnestly desire to pay the money when it is due, namely, on the 15th of July next. This will need not only liberal help, but help given *speedily*, for the time is very limited. Up to this moment, in all our movements, we have paid our way with ready money and it would rejoice our heart if we should be enabled to do so now. About £1,200 has been given or promised.

C. H. SPURGEON

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SYMPATHY AND SONG

NO. 3517

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY JUNE 22, 1916.

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“Rejoice with them who rejoice.”
Romans 12:15.

SYMPATHY is a duty of manhood. We are all brethren sprung from the same stock and that which is a good to any man ought to be a joy to me. That any man should be sick or sorry should, in a measure, make me sad, but that any man should rejoice with a worthy joy—worthy of a creature made by God—should make other men thankful! But what is thus a natural duty is elevated into a yet higher duty and a more sacred privilege among the regenerate among the family of God, for over and above the ties of manhood in the first Adam, there are the ties of our new manhood in the Second Adam—and there are bonds which arise out of our being quickened by the same life! We have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” We are members of one body, having only one Head—and one life throbs through all the members of that body. Hence, for us to strive with one another in joy and in sorrow would be to act contrary to the sacred instincts which arise out of Christian unity! If, indeed, we are one with Christ, we are also one with each other, and we must participate in the common joys and common sorrows of all the elect family. This, again, gathers yet higher force when the joys in question shall be spiritual joys. I am bound as a Christian to be thankful when my Brother prospers in business, but I may not be quite sure that that will be a real blessing to him. But if I know that his *soul* prospers, then I may safely rejoice to the very fullest, for that must be a blessing to him and will bring honor to God! If I hear that any community prospers, I am bound to be glad of it, yet I cannot be sure, if the prosperity deals with wealth, that it is, on the whole, the best thing in the world. But when I hear that a Church is growing, that its zeal abounds, that the Spirit of God is at work in it, that God is glorified there, then I am bound to rejoice, for this is a joy which no man takes away—a joy about which there can be no question—a joy which brings glory to God and, therefore, must bring happiness to all those who find happiness in God's Glory!

Now I desire at this time to talk to you, beloved Friends at home, about a joy which God has recently given to us. If all those shall be

present tonight who are to receive the right hand of fellowship, they will make up no less than 118 that God has added to our number! Some of them are friends who have joined us from other Churches. Some few are those who have long known the Savior—but the great majority are those who have lately been brought out of the world—lately been made to taste the new life! They have, we trust, washed their robes in the blood of Christ and are come here to say, “We belong to the people of God.” Now if this was not a joy to us, it ought to be! And my objective tonight is to make you merry—to make Believers’ hearts merry with it—merry after the good old Gospel sort of which we read just now. “They began to be merry,” because the lost ones were found, the wanderers were restored. May God grant that a feeling of holy joy may go through the midst of this room! And if there are any in sorrow who cannot rejoice in their own joy, yet at least may their hearts be large enough to joy in other people’s joy! And if tonight they would be bowed down if they only looked within, may they rejoice in the prosperity of Zion and be glad in the glory which is brought to God! Keeping entirely to this one point, we shall begin by saying, “Rejoice with them who rejoice”—that is, rejoice with those who are the converts—who have themselves been brought to Jesus! If there are any persons in the world who must of necessity be happy, they are those who have newly found “peace through believing.” They may forget some of that happiness, by-and-by—all that arises from novelty will certainly depart—but now the love of their espousals is upon them, their heart rejoices in a new-found Savior! All their spirits are alive towards Him, their faith is in active exercise, their love is plain and, therefore, they are happy men and women! Find me those who have discovered Christ today, and I am certain I shall not find eyes full of tears, unless they are tears of joy! In looking back, I cannot remember any day in my whole life that was at all comparable to the day in which I looked to Him and was lightened. There have been joys since then—joys of all sorts have fallen to our lot, in a measure, but ah, that one day is still the great bright star in the skies, the red-letter day of all, the spiritual birthday, the day in which the soul came out of bondage and entered into its liberty! All those today, then, who are new converts and have come to cast in their lot among us—rejoice! And, my Brothers and Sisters, rejoice with them! You can enter into their joy, for you have tasted the same! Let the old memories be awakened, and the old love, and the old ardor. As you see them, think of the time when Jesus called you, and when you answered to His voice, sweetly compelled by His Divine Spirit. Let us now ponder together—

I. THE REASONS FOR OUR SYMPATHIZING JOY.

In the case of some who will be added to us tonight, their joy is the greater, and ours with them, *because their convictions of sin were painful*. It was my lot in some cases to see them when the hand of the Lord was

heavy upon them—when their sin haunted them day and night and they found no rest. And I thank God I had the privilege in some cases of speaking the word that God had ordained should turn their darkness into day—and I saw the change, the strange and marvelous change—which indicated itself upon their countenances when they said, “We understand it now. We trust the Savior, and our hearts are glad.” Oh, you that ever felt the shackles and fetters of sin and Satan, do you remember how you leaped when they fell to the ground? Oh, participate, then, in the joy of those who have gained deliverance from their cruel sin and from the bondage of their many fears!

In some cases, too, some of those converted to God have, since their conversion, *been partakers of very remarkable peace*. I now have in my memory the stories of one or two of them of the exceeding joy they have felt. They have not lost it, I trust, but it was, indeed, a peace of God which passed all understanding which filled their hearts and minds! Now you who have drunk of that sweet cup may sip this honey dropping from the comb! You cannot but rejoice when you think that they should be so full of joy! There were some aged ones, and they thanked God that in the sere and yellow leaf they found Him—that though 50 and even 60 years had been spent in the service of sin and Satan, yet they were delivered from going down into the Pit! Rejoice with them! Some were young, very, very young—and I may say of some children to whom I spoke, their conversion and their testimony was as clear—indeed, it was *more clear* than the testimony of many who were in middle life! And what a blessing when the young heart is wedded to the Savior, when the dawn of the morning has the dew of Grace upon it—when the soul comes into the bosom of the Savior while yet it is a lamb! Oh, bless God for the young and for the old, that they have come to Jesus and are resting in Him!

Think, dear Friends, in the case of some whom God has converted here—and I may say in the case of some who will be added to us tonight—we joy when *we remember what they were*. I will not enlarge, but some here present could tell their own story of what Grace has done. Sitting here tonight, but a few months ago the ale-bench would have suited them far better! Singing songs of Zion, now, but unchaste music once would have suited their lips far better! But they are washed! They are pardoned, sanctified and changed! And as they rejoice in the change they feel, we cannot but rejoice with them!

And then think of *what they would have still been if Grace had not interposed*, yes, and of what every one of us would have been today, and will be, unless the Grace of God shall keep its hold upon us, as, glory be to God, we believe it will, for every soul that is saved by Grace, if it had not been for that salvation, would have been cast away forever from the Presence of God—another firebrand in the everlasting flame—another soul that would have gnawed its fire-tormented tongue in vain, and

asked for a drop of water—but to receive no answer of mercy! O Sirs, if you do not praise God for souls snatched from the jaws of Hell and, by Divine Grace, taught to walk in the way of Heaven, what will you praise Him for? If Heaven itself is glad, you who hope to go to Heaven, will you not participate in the joy? Otherwise, indeed, you seem to be unfit for that hallowed place and not to have the capacity which is necessary to enter into the joy of your Lord. They are glad. I would like you to have heard some of them at the Church Meeting here—how they gladly told of what the Lord had done for them! If there were but one, I would be glad. When God gives us scores we will be glad, and glad, and yet glad again! I went home very weary one day with seeing so many. The second day there were still more and I was more weary! I would like to die with such weariness, for it is such blessed work—this work of bringing in souls that are of the Lord’s planting, and of the Lord’s ripening, to the garner of His Church. Rejoice, then! Rejoice again! Rejoice with the converts!

I hear here and there a faint voice saying, “Ah, I wish I could! I am glad they are converted, but I wish I were.” Oh, Soul, I am glad to hear you say that, for when a heart longs for Christ, it will soon have Him! If you desire Him, He is free to you! Oh, when you say, “I would I were His. I would bow my neck to His gentle yoke. Oh, that He would forgive me and have mercy on me”—come and welcome! Come and welcome! You have but to trust and the work is done! You are saved! God grant that you may do it tonight!

But now advancing a step tonight, dear Friends, *we ought to rejoice with the friends of the converts*, for when souls are saved they do not have the joy all to themselves. There are others concerned in it. There are parents and, in some cases, they have brought up their children with much anxiety and godly fear—and they have trembled lest the son and daughter of their love should depart with an evil heart of unbelief from the living God! And there are cases here in which parents have seen all their children coming forward and saying, “We are on the Lord’s side.” I do not think any joy—there may be a greater joy, but I do not think any is sweeter than the joy of parents who see their children walking in the Truth of God! O you who have the same anxieties, enter into the joy of those whose anxieties are turned to confidence! In some cases it was not the parent, alone, but other friends—brothers and sisters—in some cases a husband—in more cases, still, a godly wife—in some a Christian nurse. Such have had anxieties and turned them into prayers and the prayers grew into an agony of soul—and they have seen the persons that they prayed for saved! They have heard those who once denied the Savior, confess Him. They have seen the proud sinew broken and the stout heart bowed down in repentance, and they are glad, very glad, tonight. Oh, let us sympathize with them, then, and enter into their joy! I think I hear one say, “So I would, but ah, it seems to send a pang into my soul to

think I have not been saved.” Well, I will not forbid the pang—it is natural, it is gracious—but at the same time will you not be glad that another has that which you do so covet? Be not envious! You may be—it is natural you should—but prevent the envy by entering in holy sympathy into the joy. It may be that if you can rejoice with their parents and with all other friends, when you have so done, you will be driven with greater anxiety to the Savior and, in answer to a more earnest prayer, the benediction will come to your household, too! Oh, they are glad houses in London where husband and wife walk together in the faith! They are not always the rich. They are not always the healthy. But they are always the happy who unite themselves in the bands of the Covenant of Grace with each other to the Lord, and walk hand in hand so! We will rejoice tonight with those who rejoice!

I can only stay a minute where there is plenty of room to enlarge, and notice, in the next place, that we ought to *rejoice with those who were the means of bringing those who are added to us* to a knowledge of the Savior. I would not arrogate any honor to myself whatever. Still, I have a joy, a joy which no man takes from me, that there have been many, many, many souls who have been brought to see the Savior and put their trust in Him by a simple testimony of the Word. Sometimes I know, indeed, that I could reckon up more than ten thousand souls that profess to have found the Savior through the hearing of the Word of God. And the world may say what it will, men may condemn as they will, but while God will seal the Word, we will bate no jot nor tittle of it, but still preach as we have received commission from the Lord of Hosts. But I am very thankful to have to add that in the cases of all the conversions that are worked here, there is a very large number that are brought to Christ not through the ministry from the platform, but through the ministry of many of my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ who are here working for the Master with heart and soul! How rich has God made us—ah, some of our dear Brothers and Sisters especially—in the leading of young minds to the Savior. You will thank God for it who have brought hundreds to Christ! The Sabbath school has not been without a blessing. And in your tract distributing we have had cases of conversions! And from obscure and unknown individuals, occupying these pews tonight—from them there has been fruit! There are quiet, gracious women here who have brought in one or two to Jesus by their pious conversation. I am pleased when I hear such a story as this—“We never went to the House of God, Sir, but such-and-such a member of your Church became a servant-girl with us, and she was a quiet spirit and seemed so happy that we asked where she went—and we came, too—and we have come to join the Church of which she is a member, because of that.” That has happened again and again!

Yet, alas, there are other members of the Church whose conduct would not be the means of the conversion of anybody, but the very reverse! Yet I thank God for not a few whose lives and whose testimonies have, to my knowledge, brought many to the Savior. None know your names, Beloved! None can sound the trumpet before you, but you have been faithful servants in a few things! You will, in your turn, be made rulers over many things and you shall enter into the joy of your Lord! Oh, believe me, my heart is full when I think of sinners saved by simply telling the story of the Cross! This is a joy that the miser does not know of when he gloats over his treasure—a joy which the warrior knows not of, even when he rides in triumph through the streets—a joy which earth could not produce—from all her mines and all her fountains—the joy of bringing souls to Jesus Christ, their Savior! Rejoice, then, tonight with them that do rejoice.” “Oh,” says one, “I would, but I never was the means of the conversion of a soul.” Do you remember our Brother’s prayer last night, that every member of this Church might, during the year, be the means of the salvation of one soul? As he said, it was not a very large prayer—but if it were answered, there would be 4,500 more souls called by your instrumentality in that way! I know I said, “Amen,” to it, and I do say, “Amen,” to it! And I do pray that there may not be one barren one among you, but that the Lord may grant Grace to everyone to bring at least one to the Savior in 12 months! God grant it, for His name’s sake! Well, if that is so, then you will be among those who will rejoice—and now you may rejoice in the anticipation of it! I am sure if you have not been useful, yourself, you cannot but be thankful to God that others have been—and you will rejoice with them that do rejoice!

Again, we must pass on, but this time our joy must take a higher range—our thought must take a higher sweep! We have spoken of those who are converted, and of their kinsfolk and acquaintances, and of those who were the instruments of their conversion—but there are others who are rejoicing besides those on earth. *The angels rejoice*. Did we not read just now, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents”? Angels have more to do with us than we know of. They are next akin to us, and they have a holy sympathy with us. They watch us when we go astray and when they perceive us hearing the Word, I do not doubt they hover over us to observe, as best as they can, how far the Word operates upon our mind! We read in Scripture—and that is the reason why the woman’s head is covered, that she is to have a covering over her head because of the angels—but some read it because they observe the decorum and propriety of the assembly and even if we do not, they do. Angels, then, we believe, are in the midst of the congregations of the faithful, and when they see a sinner hearing the Word, I doubt not they watch with such anxiety as may be possible to spirits that cannot be unhappy! And when they follow home the Hearer, and they mark the ex-

pression, and they note the beginning of the prayer, I should not wonder but they whisper it as news in all the golden streets, "Behold, he prays!" And when they see the tear of repentance, that first ensign of the Grace of God, which, like the snowflake that comes in spring to be the prophet of the cooling summer—when they see this tear of penitence which foretells this change of heart and is the token of its having come—then they speed their way and tell their fellows up yonder and they strike their harps anew! There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents—

"And shall not we take up the strain?"

They who are not of our race rejoice when any of our race are saved—and shall we be so flinty-hearted as not to be glad? No! You spirits, though we see you not, we hear—and what is done above is done here below! Your joy is participated in tonight.

But now we must go much farther. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice." There is one (His name be ever blessed!)—*the Eternal Father* (who is so represented by His own dear Son) *is rejoicing* and, therefore, though it is speaking after the manner of men, it is also speaking after the manner of the Man, Christ Jesus, and we cannot err! We find that the father, when the prodigal returned, was the chief in all the joy. He called others to rejoice with him, but it was thus, "Rejoice with me, for this, my son, which was dead, is alive again; he was lost, but he is found." In all the festival of that glad day there was joy with the neighbors and joy in the poor penitent son! But the greatest joy of all was in the glowing heart of the father who had loved his son, when his son loved him not—had seen his son when his son was afar off, and had run to meet his son when he was returning. Have you ever thought, and will you think, tonight, of the joy of God over recovered sinners? The joy of God! He is ever blessed! Infinitely blessed, but still He condescends to allow us to describe Him as being in this respect of like passions with ourselves—a Father rejoicing over a returning son! Beloved, enter into Jehovah's joy! Is God joyous—joyous over sinners saved? Let the sacred flame come on your soul. Have sympathy with your Father. Play not the part, the unworthy part, of the elder bother. As you yourselves were prodigals, and could not say, "These many years do I serve You," rejoice with your Father, who, in pressing others to His bosom, is only doing in their case what He has done to you—

***"With joy the Father does approve
The fruit of His eternal love."***

He always loved the soul that He saves—loved it before it was created, loved it in the purpose of predestination, loved it when it fell, loved it when He ordained it to eternal life and gave it to His Son—loved it when it hated Him. Is it not written, "His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins"? And that great love

makes Him infinitely rejoice when He sees it recovered from its misery and danger and brought into a state of reconciliation and love to Himself. Share you, then, the Father's joy!

But now forget not the joy of Another, never to be forgotten by us who are named by His name—the joy of the Shepherd who has found His sheep, that Great Shepherd of the sheep who laid down His life that He might save souls! *Jesus is infinitely glad* when a sinner repents! Measure, if you can, His joy. I have given you a task which you can never fulfill. I will give you two plumb lines, but they, like the deep you would measure, are themselves immeasurable! These two plumb lines are, first, the pangs He suffered for those souls and secondly, the love He bore and bears those souls. His joy in their salvation is proportionate, first, to the pangs He bore. So much the price, so much the value that He puts upon the purchase. By so much as the travail was bitter, by just so much the fruits of—that travail are sweet to Him. “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied”—only satisfied because He had the travail to obtain it, and He has obtained it. Had not the grief been deep, been Infinite, the joy had not been great enough to satisfy—to fill to the brim His soul with joy! I know Jesus was very sad when on earth, but yet I have sometimes thought that of all the men that ever lived, Jesus was the happiest Man, even in His sorrows, for it is not possible for a heart to be so full of love to others—to be so benevolent—and not to be happy! To love makes even suffering, in a certain sense, sweets for the object of loves. “The joy that was set before Him” made our Savior “endure the Cross,” but not with a common endurance. He so endured it that He “despised the shame” and though it was shame, and it broke His health, yet it was shame on which, in the majesty of His love, He trampled with a sacred joy. Now today—

**“All His work and warfare done,
He into His Heaven is gone!
Now before His Father's Throne,
There is pleading for His own.”**

And as His own come to Him, one by one, and as they come sometimes in larger companies, the Savior does rejoice! Measure, I say, His joy by His pangs.

Measure it by His love, too, His great love, His boundless love, love which many waters could not quench and which the flood could not drown. Now I say to every godly heart, Can you refuse to be glad when Jesus is glad? If He rejoices over saved souls, will you not rejoice with Him? Is there not a sacred infection in that heavenly heart? Do you not catch light from those beaming eyes? If you see Him glad, you forget your little sorrows. You think them great, yet you forget them. I pray God you may know the meaning of that verse here, “Enter you into the joy of your Lord.” May you have His joy, Beloved, in you, so that your joy may be

full, and so that you may rejoice with Christ who does rejoice. One other word—*there is One other who rejoices—*

***“The Spirit takes delight to view
The holy soul He fires anew.”***

Do we ever honor the Holy Spirit as we should? I fear we greatly grieve Him by our forgetfulness of Him. Think you a moment, Beloved. The Incarnation of Christ among the sons of men was a very, very great marvel of condescension! But I do not know whether the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in men is not, if possible, even a greater mystery of condescending love! Christ took on Him, flesh, but it was pure. No sin lives in His body. But the Holy Spirit dwells in sinful men. These bodies are His temples, but they are impure—and the Holy Spirit dwelling in us is constantly made to see the depravity of our hearts! Now Jesus Christ walked among the sons of men and saw sin, it is true, and His holy soul was grieved, but in a certain sense He was separate from sinners. But here is the Holy Spirit, Infinitely pure, tender, jealous for holiness, and yet He comes to dwell in our spirits! In our spirits He dwells and, perhaps, by the week together we do not even recognize His presence! And every day we rebel against His government. He sees us unholy and He is grieved at it, for our sakes and for His holiness' sake. He works Divine Graces in us and then we permit Satan to come in and spoil those very Graces! He instructs us and then we forget it. He leads us and then we start aside—and all the while the dear faithful, gentle, dove-like Spirit does not leave us! He abides with us and in us continually! He hides Himself, sometimes, and withdraws His condescension, but God does not utterly take His Spirit from us.

Now in the case of every soul converted there have been strivings of the Holy Spirit. There have been resistances of the Holy Spirit. There have been grievings of the Holy Spirit. There have been sins against the Holy Spirit of many sorts and in many forms, but at last He has brought to bear Omnipotent persuasions upon the heart! At last He has put in His hand through the hole of the door and the soul has opened to the touch! At last He sees Jesus installed in the heart—Jesus, whom the Holy Spirit delights to honor, for it is His work and office to reveal Christ to the soul! And surely there is as much of joy in the Holy Spirit, Himself, as there is in the heart of Jesus, or in the heart of the Eternal Father when at last a soul is saved! The triune God is glad! He rests in His love! He rejoices over the converts with singing!

Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us, too, rejoice! Forget your own troubles a while! Forget, I pray, everything that might hamper and hinder, and let us come to the Table with our Brothers and Sisters, many of them who come here for the first time tonight! Let us feel that the fatted calf is killed and that the dancing and the music are with us, and let each be merry, rejoicing with the joy of our Lord, and with the joy which

He has given to His saved ones! Oh, what joy it would be if all this congregation were saved! May we meet in Heaven, Beloved, every one of us!

Now suppose the preacher should receive a message tonight that every soul here would be saved except one, and suppose it were revealed to him who that one would be and he was expected, now, to point out that one! Oh, dreadful message! With what trembling would you all sit, each one afraid lest it should be yourself to be left unsaved. I have no such message, thank God! And yet, yet if I could hope that all here would be saved but one, I must confess my heart would be lighter than it is, for unless some of you repent, forsake your sins, and fly to Christ, the lost will not be one, but many! Dear Hearer, let it not be you! While Mercy, still with silken accents speaks and cries, "Return, return!" While Love with bleeding hands beckons and cries with the wounded side of Christ, "Oh, believe and come! Whoever believes on Him shall be saved, for he that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not shall be damned!" May God help you to trust in Christ and live! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 12:1-16.**

Verse 1. *I beseech you, therefore, brethren*—Paul is a calm reasoner. He is a bold stater of Truth of God, 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, and say, "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, brethren, by the mercies of God."

1. *By the mercies of God, that you 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 to 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 you transformed*—It is not enough to be nonconformists. Be transformed ones, altogether changed into another form!

2. *By the reviewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* It is by holy living, by conse-

crated 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 has dealt to every man the measure of faith.* Humility is sober thinking. Pride is drunken thinking. He who thinks more of himself than he should, is 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 everyone 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 had only 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 necessary! So do not compare yourselves among yourselves, for if you are in the body of Christ, you are, each one, necessary, and the peculiarity which you possess, and the peculiarity which your Brothers and Sisters possess have their place in the corporate body, 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 our faith. Or ministry, let us use it in our ministering: or he that teaches, in teaching. Or he who exhorts in 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 gives, let him do it with simplicity; he that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation.* Do not pretend to a love that you have not. Do not lard your speech with, “dear” this, and “dear” that, when there is no love in your heart! And even if your heart is 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 affectionate, one to another, with brotherly love.* Hear this, you members of the Church. Endeavor to carry it out by a kindly courtesy and a real sympathy one with another—“Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love.”

10. *In honor 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 the saints.* When you have told your own needs to God, then help the necessities of those who come to you.

13, 14. *Given to hospitality. Bless them who persecute you: bless, and curse not.* A Christian 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 who 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 who weep.* Sympathize with mourners. Take a share of their burden. I really believe that it is easier to weep with them who weep than it is to rejoice with them who 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 who rejoice. Weep with them who 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!

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

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

OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD

NO. 1317

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 8, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”
Romans 12:21.***

THIS is a very meaty verse and the form of it greatly assists the memory. It is worthy to be called a Christian Proverb. I would recommend every Christian to learn it by heart and have it ready for use, for there are a great many Proverbs which convey a very different sense and these are often quoted to give the weight of authority to unchristian principles. Here is an Inspired Proverb—carry it with you and use it as a weapon with which to parry the thrusts of the world's wisdom. “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Observe that the text appears to give us a choice between two things and bids us choose the better one. You must either be overcome of evil, or you must, yourself, overcome evil—one of the two.

You cannot let evil alone and evil will not let you alone. You must fight. And in the battle you must either conquer or be conquered. The words before us remind me of the saying of the Scot officer of the Highland regiment when he brought them up in front of the enemy and said, “Lads, there they are: if you dinna kill them they'll kill you.” So does Paul marshal us in front of evil and, like a wise general, he puts us on our mettle by saying, “Overcome, or be overcome.” There is no avoiding the conflict, no making truce or holding parley, no suspension of hostilities after a brief skirmish. The battle must be fought through to the end and can only close with a decided victory to one or the other side.

Soldier of Christ, do you need to debate which of the two to choose, victory or defeat? To be utterly overcome of evil would be a very dreadful thing! I shall say but little about it, because I trust we shall, by Divine Grace, be upheld so as never to know by experience what it is to be overcome of evil! May we be “more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” May we be happily ignorant of what it is to be vanquished by the powers of evil and remain like the British drummer boy who did not know how to beat a retreat, for he had never had any use for such a thing! May we not know the dishonor and misery of being overcome of evil because Divine Grace continually gives us the victory!

When we are overcome of evil, even for a moment, it discovers the sad weakness of our spiritual life. We must be babes in Grace and sadly carnal, still, if sin is allowed to master us. If we were stronger in the Lord and in the power of His might, we should overcome the world, itself, by faith! Did not John write unto young men and say, “You are strong and have overcome the Wicked One”? If we are overcome of evil, even for a moment,

it will cause us great sorrow if we are in our right mind. A tender conscience will be greatly vexed as soon as defeat is sustained and, in looking back upon our fall, if fall we do, it will be a daily grief to us that we suffered ourselves to be overcome by evil at all.

To be overcome of evil is dishonoring to our Lord and opens the mouths of adversaries. Those who watch for our falling will be sure to make much of it. "Report it, report it," they shout, and they *do* report it through the length and breadth of the land—that a servant of Christ has been overcome of evil. And if to be overcome of evil were not occasional but were continuous—if it could be said of our whole life that we were overcome of evil—it would prove that we were none of Christ's, for he that is born of God overcomes the world. Our Lord Jesus said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," and He makes all His *true disciples* partakers of this victory!

Only to *conquerors* are the great promises of the Book of Revelation given—"To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna." "Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the house of My God." "To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me on My Throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father on His Throne." To be defeated in the battle of life would prove that we did not belong to that conquering seed which, if its heel is bruised, shall, nevertheless, break the foeman's head. Fix it, then, in your minds, that evil is to be overcome! It is a matter of necessity that we wage this war and succeed in it. We must triumph over the powers of darkness!

Few are the words, but weighty is the meaning of our text. In one terse sentence the conflict is set before us and the sword of the battle is put into our hands. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil *with good*." Good is the *only* weapon which, in this dread conflict, we are permitted to use! And we may rest assured it will be sufficient and effectual. To use any other weapon is not only unlawful but altogether impossible, for he who wields the sword of evil is no longer Christ's soldier at all! The reference in the text is to *personal injuries* and, therefore, we shall confine ourselves to that one point, though the principle is capable of very great extension.

In fighting with sin and error, our weapons must be holiness and truth, and these alone. It is a wide subject and I will not venture upon it. That personal injury is referred to in my text is clear from the preceding verses, "Dearly Beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine: I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him drink: for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head." With regard to the evil of personal injury, *the common method is to overcome evil with evil*—let us talk about it. Secondly, *the Divine method is to overcome evil with good*—let us speak of that and this will, no doubt, exhaust our time.

As this is a very practical subject, let us entreat the Holy Spirit to teach us the will of Christ and then to enable us to obey it in all things. I shall be much disappointed if the subject does not humble as well as instruct us! And if it does this, it will be well for us to fly at once to the blood of the

Atonement, that we may be purged from former faults and cleansed for future holiness.

I. THE COMMON METHOD OF OVERCOMING INJURIES IS OVERCOMING EVIL WITH EVIL. “Give him a Roland for his Oliver.” “Give him as good as he sends.” “Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.” “Be six to his half dozen.” I might go on with a score of proverbs, all inculcating the sentiment of revenge, or at least of meeting evil with evil. I have to observe that the overcoming of evil with evil is, in the first place, *a most natural procedure*. It suggests itself to any fool to overcome evil with evil! A lunatic or idiot could do that! You need not train your children to do it, it will be suggested in their infancy and they will strike the floor upon which they fall, and beat the post against which they stumble—to punish it for their hurt.

It is natural, very sadly natural. A sort of instinct suggests it—the instinct of the worm which turns if it is stepped on. This instinct says, “Surely we are not to suffer evil without resenting it and what can we do better than to treat others as they treat us?” It must be admitted, also, that there is a *show of justice* about such a method of combating evil. Why should not a man be made to suffer who makes me suffer? And if he does me wrong, why should I not defend myself and make him smart for making me smart? I freely admit that this is exceedingly natural and has a show of justice about it.

But to which part of us is it natural? Think for a minute. Is it natural to the new-created spirit which dwells in Believers, or is it natural to us because there is a part of us which is animal? Is it the new man in us which suggests revenge? Or is it the flesh, the mere animal in us which strikes out to avenge itself? A moment’s reflection will let you see that the returning of evil for evil is natural to the *animal* nature, but that it is not, and never can be, natural to the new-created spirit whose nature is like the God from which it came, namely love, gentleness and kindness. “Good for evil is God-like. Good for good is man-like. Evil for good is devil-like. Evil for evil—” What is it? I quote it to prove my point. It is beast-like! It is like the beast which kicks because it is kicked, gores because it is gored and bites because it is bitten!

Surely we cannot allow the lower part of our triple nature to dictate to our Heaven-born Spirit. We cannot let the servant be the master! We will be natural, but the nature which we will follow shall be that which we received in our *regeneration* when we were made partakers of the Divine Nature and enabled to escape the corruptions of the world. That returning evil for evil looks like rough and ready justice, I have confessed, but then is any man prepared to follow out for himself and in his own case this rule of justice? Is he prepared to stand before God and receive evil for his evil? “He shall have justice without mercy that shows no mercy.”

Is he willing to stand before God on the same terms as he would have the offending one stand before himself? No, our best and, indeed, our *only* hope must lie in the mercy of God who freely forgives offenses! We must look up to Infinite Love and entreat the Lord to have mercy upon us according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses and, therefore, we must

render mercy to others. To recompense evil for evil is natural, but may God deliver us from the nature which makes it natural! It is just, no doubt, after a fashion, but from that sort of justice may our Redeemer rescue us! Again, it is admitted that the art of returning evil for evil is very, *very easy*. If, my dear Friend, you make it a rule that nobody shall ever insult you without having to pay for it, nor treat you with disrespect without meeting his match, you need not pray to God, in the morning, to help you to carry out your resolve.

There will be no need to wrestle in prayer that you may be graciously enabled to take vengeance on your adversaries and stand up for your rights! You can do that decidedly better by trusting to yourself than by looking to God! Indeed, you dare not look to God about it at all. The devil will help you—and between your own passion and the Evil One, the thing may be very easily managed. There will be no reason for watchfulness. You need not be on your guard or keep your self in check. On the contrary, you may give to the very worst part of your nature the greatest possible license and go a-head according to the rage of your passionate spirit.

Prayer and humility of mind will, of course, be quite out of the question. Nor will there be any need for faith—you will not commit your case unto God and leave it there—you will fight your own battles, wipe off old scores as you go, and place your dependence on fierce speeches, on mighty fists, or on the law and the policeman. Christian Graces will be too much in your way for you to think of them! Gentleness, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness—you will bid good-bye to these and cultivate the virtues of a savage or of a bulldog. All this is wonderfully easy, though it may be that before long it will turn out to be difficult.

Now, I put it to Christians whether that which is so very easy to the very worst of men can ever be the right procedure for those who ought to be the best of men? If the Divine plan of love is difficult and requires great Grace to enable you to follow it, and I freely admit that it does—if it is very difficult to maintain it and will require much prayer, much watchfulness and much conquest of yourself—is it not, therefore, the more sure to be right? As for that which is so easy, let that be left to publicans and sinners! But as for you who have received more mercy of God than other men, should you not render more? You believe yourselves to be twice born, you have received a new and heavenly life—what do you do, more than others? Ought you not to show that there is more in you than in others by letting more come out of you than comes out of others?

Much more is expected of us than of the unregenerate—naturally and rightly, expectation runs high in reference to men who make such high professions—and if the professed Christian is no better in his daily conversation than the ungodly, depend upon it, he is no Christian at all! We possess a higher life and we are lifted to a nobler platform than the common sons of men and, therefore, we must lead a nobler life and be guided by more sublime principles. Let the children of darkness meet evil with evil and carry on their wars and fights, their strifes and their envy, their malice and their revenge! But as for you, O Believers, you are the children of the God of Love and love must be your life! You have been renewed in

the spirit of your minds and you must not be conformed to this world, but be transformed into the likeness of Christ, your Master. Evil for evil should be a principle *detested* by you and such should be your loving spirit that it ought to be no longer easy to recompense evil with evil, but difficult, yes, *impossible* to bring you to do anything of the kind! Revenge and fury should be as alien to the spirit of a child of God as they would be to an angel before the Throne of God!

By many, to return evil for evil has been judged to be the *more manly course*. Years ago if a gentleman imagined himself to be insulted, it was necessary, according to the code of honor then in vogue, for him either to shed the blood of the offending person, or at least to expose himself to the like peril of his life. Thank God that murderous custom is now almost entirely gone from the face of the earth! The spirit of Christianity, has, by degrees, overcome this evil. But there still abides in the world the idea that to stand up for yourself, to just let people know what you are, never to knuckle down to anybody, but to defend your own cause and vindicate your honor has something extremely manly about it. And to yield, to submit, to be patient, to be meek, to be gentle is considered to be unworthy of a man of spirit. They call it showing the white feather and being cowardly, though to my mind, he is the bravest man who can bear the most.

Now, Christian, who is your model of a man? You do not hesitate for a second, I am sure. There is but one model of a Christian and that is the Man, Christ Jesus. Will you then remember that whatever is Christly is manly and whatever you think to be manly which is not Christ-like, is really unmanly, as judged by the highest style of man? The Lord Jesus draws near to a Samaritan village and they will not receive Him, though He was always kind to Samaritans. Good John, gentle John, becomes highly indignant, and cries, "Lord, will You that we command fire to come down from Heaven and consume them?" Jesus meekly answers, "You know not what manner of spirit you are of: for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

See Him on another occasion. Your Master has risen from His knees, with the bloody sweat still on His face, and Judas comes and betrays Him. And they begin to handle Him very roughly and, therefore, being highly provoked, brave Peter draws out his sword. And just to flash it a little, he cuts off the ear of Malchus. Hear how gently Jesus says, "Put up again your sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." And so He heals that ear at once. Was that manly, do you think? Was it manly to refuse to call fire from Heaven and to touch and heal the wounded ear? To me it seems superlatively manly! And may such be my manliness and yours!

Look at our Lord, again, before the High Priest, when an officer of the court, incensed by His gentle answers, smites Him on the cheek. What does Jesus say? Observe the difference between Christ and Paul. Paul says, "God shall smite you, you white wall." Bravo, Paul! That is speaking up for yourself! We cannot blame you, for who are we to censure an Apostle? But look at Paul's Master and hear *His* words, "If I have spoken evil

bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you smite Me?" Is not the example of Jesus the more noble, the more God-like? No man, for a moment, can put the two side by side without feeling that the Lord's conduct is by far the more sublime. It is not for us to imitate the servant of Christ when Christ, Himself, excels him! Here is victory when a man so overcomes himself that he replies to evil language with good and wise answers, not with fierce and reviling words!

O Christians, look to Christ, your Lord, who all His life endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself! Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, but submitted Himself to Him that judges righteously. And who, even on the cruel tree, when He was mocked by those around Him, had nothing to say but this—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." O Man of men, be You the criterion from now on of all the manliness at which we aim! And if others count the opposite to be manly, let them count it as they will—we are not of their mind! Dear Friends, we are now bold to affirm concerning the old, easy, natural method of returning evil for evil that it does not succeed! Nobody ever overcame evil by confronting it with evil!

Such a course *increases* the evil. When the great fire was blazing at London Bridge it would have been a strange way of putting it out or keeping it under if our firemen had lit another fire close to it, or had pumped petroleum upon it! Yet I have known some try to overcome the evil of a passionate temper in a man by becoming passionate themselves—rolling up another tar barrel to his fire and so making it burn more furiously than ever. That is not conquering evil, nor is evil ever to be so conquered till water drowns the sea! A soft answer turns away wrath, but anger excites more anger and more sin. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles, when it comes to be heaped up with fuel and blown upon by furious winds!

What is worse, *when we assail evil with evil we are already, ourselves, overcome*—we have fallen into the very wrong which we complain of. As long as we can be calm and quiet, we are victorious. But our breaking loose into an ill temper is our own defeat—and being overcome, how can we overcome others? Brothers and Sisters, the desire to return evil for evil does not succeed because it injures us much more than it injures the person whom we seek to overcome! It has been said that the worst peace is better than the best war—and I believe almost anything is better than becoming angry. Scarcely any injury which we can ever sustain will so injure us as the injury which must arise to us from becoming angry and revengeful. Our enemies are not worth putting ourselves out about, after all, and ten minutes of a palpitating heart and of a disturbed circulation causes us greater real damage in body than an enemy could inflict in seven years.

Ten minutes of a fiery deluge overflowing the whole soul is a serious catastrophe! Ten minutes in which you could not look Jesus in the face, ten minutes in which you would be ashamed to think of the Master's being near, ten minutes of broken fellowship—why this is a very serious self-torture! Let us not suffer it to please our foes. Alas, I have known profes-

sors keep up this wrath for days and weeks! How it must hurt a man to have his soul broiling all that time! To have his heart roasting in the fire of wrath! I feel it to be too painful to bear, even for a brief season. It is bad for us in every sense, it hurts the mind permanently. Evil for evil is a sharp-edged tool which cuts the man who uses it—a kind of cannon which is most dangerous to those who fire it, both in its discharge and in its recoil.

If you wished to destroy your enemy, it would be wise to make him a present of this dangerous gun and allow him to have the entire monopoly of it. I may truly say that when we oppose evil with evil, the evil which comes from us does us far more injury than any evil which we experience from others. Again, the method of overcoming evil with evil does not bear inspection. It does not bear to be pondered and meditated on. Let any renewed man sit down for a minute, after he has fallen into this practice, and ask himself as a Christian, how he feels about it. He has usurped the place of God, for vengeance belongs only to the Judge of all the earth—how does he feel while acting as an usurper? Who am I that I should clamber to the Throne of God and seize His sword and attempt to make myself judge and executioner among mankind?

Will this bear consideration? Can a child of God thus see himself guilty of high treason against his King? How does a man feel when he is on his knees and remembers what he has done? How does he say, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us”? Do not his eyes fill with tears and is not his heart heavy with regret? How will your hard speeches and fierce actions appear when viewed from your dying bed? Will railing, fighting and lawsuits be sweet memories there? Can such a thing as repaying evil with evil be the subject of our praise to God? Can we ever thank the God of Love for enabling us to avenge ourselves? If we cannot pray about it, or praise about it, let us let it alone!

Is there *anything* about it which we could whisper in the ear of Christ? Is there *anything* in it that will help us to nearer fellowship with Him? Is there *anything* in anger and wrath which will prepare us for the business of earth or for the bliss of Heaven? It is bad, bad altogether! The best that I can say of it is that there may be rare occasions in which the provocation may be so great as to present others from condemning us, but then I must add that at such times we had better, even then, make no excuse for ourselves. The mind of Christ is that when smitten on one cheek we turn the other and, that in *no case* we render unto any man evil for evil.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you by the mercies of God that you refrain from, forever, the method of seeking to overcome evil with evil, and that you follow the example of your Lord, taking His yoke upon you and learning of Him, for He is meek and lowly in mind.

II. Let us now consider THE DIVINE METHOD OF OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD. And here I freely admit, to commence with, that this is a *very elevated mode of procedure*. “Overcome evil with good! Ridiculous!” says one. “Utopian,” cries another. “It might do for Plato’s republic,” says a third, “but it will never do for ordinary, everyday life.” Well, I shall not blush to admit that this is a very high course of conduct and one which

the mere worldling cannot be expected to follow—but of Christians we expect higher things! You have a high calling of God in Christ Jesus and you are, therefore, called to a high style of character by your glorious Leader, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Brothers and Sisters, if it is difficult, I commend it to you because it is so! What is there which is good which is not, also, difficult? Soldiers of Christ love those virtues most which cost them most. If it is hard to obtain, the jewel is all the more precious. Since there is sufficient Grace to enable us to become like our Lord, we will labor after this virtue, also, and obtain the great Grace which its cultivation requires. Notice that this text inculcates not merely *passive* non-resistance, though that is going a good way, but it teaches us *active* benevolence to enemies. “Overcome evil with good,” with direct and overt acts of kindness. That is, if any man has done you a wrong, do not only forgive it, but avenge it by doing him a favor!

Dr. Cotton Mather was never content till he had bestowed a benefit on every man who had, in any way, done him an injury. If anybody has slandered you, or treated you unkindly in any way, go out of your way to serve him. “If your enemy is hungry, feed him.” You might say, “Well, I am sorry for him, but really, he is such a vagabond! I could not *think* of relieving him.” Yet according to this Scripture, he is the very man you are bound to feed! If he is thirsty, do not say, “I hope somebody will relieve him. I feel no animosity to the man, but I am not going out of my way to give him a drink.” According to your Lord’s command, he is the man to whom you *must* give drink! Go straightway to the well and fill your pitcher—and hasten to give him a drink at once, and without stint. You have not merely to forgive and forget, but you are bid to inflict upon the malicious mind the blessed sin-killing wound of your hearty and practical goodwill!

Give a blessing for a curse, a kiss for a blow, a favor for a wrong. “Oh,” you say, “this is *high*. I cannot attain unto it.” God is able to give you strength equal to this, also. “It is hard,” you say. Ah, but if you take Christ to be your Master, you must do what He tells you and, instead of shrinking because His command seems difficult to flesh and blood, you must cry, “Lord, increase my faith and give me more of Your Spirit.” To forgive to 70 times seven would not be hard to Christ, for He did it all His life. And it will not be hard for you if the same mind is in you which was also in Christ Jesus. It is to this that you are called! It is a sublime temper and it is exceedingly difficult and needs Divine Grace, needs watchfulness, needs living near to God—but for these reasons it is all the more worthy of a follower of Jesus and, therefore, we should aim at it with our whole heart.

The benefit of the method of returning good for evil is that *it preserves the man from evil*. If evil assails you and you only fight it with good, it cannot hurt you, you are invulnerable. If any man curses you and you answer him with a blessing, it is clear that the curse has not hurt you. It has not made you full of curses, or else one would come out of you. If a man has slandered you, but you never return him a reproachful word, he has not hurt your real character—the dirt which he has thrown has missed you—for you have none to throw back upon him. If, when much

provoked, your temper still remains calm and quiet, the provocation has not touched you, the arrow has passed harmlessly by. The very thing your enemy wants is to make you descend to his level of anger and malice, but, as long as having much provocation you remain unprovoked, you vanquish him.

Believe me, you are provoking your adversary terribly if you are quite calm, yourself! You are disappointing him, he cannot insert his poisoned darts, for you are clad in armor of proof. He tries to injure you, but he cannot. He fails to make you sin and so he misses his mark. Do you not see what a wonderful armor it is? If God preserve you, so that you have nothing but good wishes and goodwill towards the man who hates you and seeks your ruin, then you are a conqueror, indeed! While this conduct protects you, *it is the very best weapon of offense against the opposer*. William Ladd had a farm in one of the states of America and his neighbor, Pulsifer, was a great trouble to him, for he kept a breed of gaunt, long-legged sheep, as active as spaniels, which would spring over almost any sort of fence.

These sheep were very fond of a fine field of grain belonging to Mr. Ladd and were in it continually. Complaints were of no use, for Pulsifer evidently cared nothing for his neighbor's losses. One morning Ladd said to his men, "Set the dogs on those sheep and if that won't keep them out, shoot them." After he had said that, he thought to himself, "This will not do. I had better try the peace principle." So he sent for his men, countermanded the order, and rode over to see his neighbor about those troublesome sheep.

"Good morning," he said, but he received no answer. So he tried again, and got nothing but a sort of grunt. "Neighbor," he said, "I have come to see you about those sheep." "Yes," Pulsifer replied, "I know. You are a pretty neighbor to tell your men to kill my sheep! You, a rich man, too, and going to shoot a poor man's sheep!" Then followed some very strong language, but Ladd replied, "I was wrong, Neighbor, and I am sorry for it. Think no more about it. But, Neighbor, we may as well agree. It seems I have got to keep your sheep and it won't do to let them eat all that grain, so I came over to say that I will take them into my homestead pasture and I will keep them all season. And if any is missing you shall have the pick of mine."

Pulsifer looked ashamed and then stammered out, "Now, Squire, are you in earnest?" When he found that Ladd really meant to stand to the offer, Pulsifer stood still a moment and then said, "The sheep shan't trouble you anymore. When you talk about shooting I can shoot as well as you. And when you speak in that kind and neighborly way, I can be kind too." The sheep never trespassed into Ladd's lot again. That is the way to kill a bad spirit! That is overcoming evil with good! If one had begun shooting and the other had followed suit, they certainly would have been both losers, and both been overcome. But when the offended one made kindness his only return, the battle was over!

I remember, years ago—though I only quote it, not for my own praise, but as an illustration—a certain person, a very good man, too, did not

admire a course of action that I felt bound to take. He was very angry and called upon me to express his objections. At last he said, "If you do that I shall expose you in a pamphlet." I was in a gracious mood at that time and was not to be ruffled in temper, nor yet turned from my course. I said to him quietly, "What do you think the pamphlet would cost?" "Oh," he said, "I don't know, but whatever it costs I shall do it." I answered, "Well, if you feel you ought to do it, I should be sorry to see you go into debt and, therefore, I will pay the printer's bill. I will trust you to give a truthful account of the matter and I am not at all ashamed to have my course of action made as public as possible. Indeed, I had rather it should be."

He said he should not like to take any money from me. "Well," I replied, "perhaps you think that there might be some profits upon the sale. You shall be quite welcome to them. Your own friends can print for you. I will find the money and you shall have the profit." I never heard anymore of that pamphlet—and he is an exceedingly good friend of mine at the present moment—and will, I hope, always remain so. To remain quiet is generally the way to baffle an adversary. Indeed, there is no weapon with which he can wound you. If you will not yield so as to give railing for railing, what is to be done with you?

It is much the same as when a certain duke proclaimed war against a peaceful neighbor who was resolved not to fight. The troops came riding to the town and found the gates open as on ordinary occasions. The children were playing in the streets and the blacksmith was at his forge. The shopkeepers were at their counters and so, pulling up their horses, the soldiers enquired, "Where is the enemy?" "We don't know. We are friends." What was to be done under the circumstances but to ride home? So it is in life—if you only meet evil with good, the bad man's occupation is gone! It has sometimes happened that *evil men have been converted into good men* and conquered, thus, in the very best possible way by seeing the patient Christian, by the Grace of God, return good for evil.

Some years ago a wicked, reprobate sailor was engaged in tarring a vessel. And while he was at his work there came along an old man well known in the district as a Christian. One of the sailor's mates standing by, said to him, "Jack, you cannot provoke *that* man! He is such a gentle-spirited man you cannot put him out of temper." Jack was quite sure he could and it became the subject of a wager. The wicked fellow took his bucket of tar with which he was tarring the keel, and dared to throw it right over the good old man. It was a most shameful assault and the fellow deserved the utmost penalty of the law. The old man turned round and calmly said to him, "The Lord Jesus Christ has said that he who offends one of His little ones will find that it were better for him that a millstone had been tied about his neck, and that he were cast into the sea. Now, if I am one of Christ's little ones, it will be very bad for you."

Jack slunk back, dreadfully ashamed of himself. What was more, the old man's quiet face haunted him. Night after night he woke up and in his dreams he saw that old man. And those tremendous words, "that it were better for him that a millstone were about his neck," broke him down be-

fore the Mercy Seat of God. He asked and found pardon. He sought out the old man, confessed his fault, and received forgiveness. Who would not have a bucketful of tar thrown over him if it would save a soul?

Now, suppose the old man had turned round on him and uttered some fiery language, or struck at him—who could have blamed him? But then there would have been no triumph of Grace in the Christian and no conversion in the sinner! God has often made use of a gentle, meek, quiet, forbearing spirit to be the power with which He subdues the lion-like rebel and turns the course of ill-disposed and ungodly men. He makes them see how awful goodness is, how strong is gentleness, how Omnipotent is love! Returning good for evil, again, *reflects great honor upon Christ*. I do not know of anything which makes the blind world see so much of the Glory of Christ as this.

When one of the martyrs was being tortured and tormented in a horrible way, the tyrant who had caused his sufferings said to him, “And what has your Christ ever done for you that you should bear this?” He replied, “He has done this for me, that in the midst of all my pain, I do nothing else but pray for you.” Ah, Lord Jesus, You have taught us how to conquer, for You have conquered! There are many mighty names on the battle roll of earth, but Your name is not there—there is another conflict, sterner and nobler, and You stand at the head of the heroes who are engaged in it! Read the name, my Brothers and Sisters, it is written in His own blood, “Jesus of Nazareth, the Crucified, the chief of those who overcome evil with good.”

Who among you will say, “Write down *my* name, Sir, beneath my Lord the Lamb, for in that battle I would have a share, and on those lines I would fight the foe”? Remember you must do it or you cannot be like He, and if you are not like He, you have not His Spirit, and, “if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” I will not explain how this principle can be carried into other things, for there is no time, but I will close by noticing that *everything that is admirable may be said of this method of overcoming evil with good*. It is so noble. It is so becoming one whom God has lifted up to be His child, that I commend it to every person of sanctified feeling. A Christian man is the noblest work of God and one of the noblest features of a Christian is his readiness to forgive and the cheerfulness with which he seeks to recompense good for evil.

The Emperor Adrian, before he reached the throne, had been grievously insulted. When he had attained the imperial purple he met the man who had insulted him. The guilty person was, of course, dreadfully afraid of his mighty foe. He knew that it only needed a wish from the Emperor and his life would be taken away. Adrian cried out, “Approach. You have nothing to fear. I am an Emperor!” Did this heathen feel that his dignity lifted him above the meanness of revenge? Then, my Brothers and Sisters, let those whom Christ has made kings unto God scorn to render evil for evil! Let us say, “I am a Christian, and my resentments are over. What can I do to *serve* you? I could have fought you to the death before, but now I am dead, myself, and born-again! And having commenced a new life, behold, Christ has made all things new. My animosities are buried in His tomb!

My revenges are lost in the abyss into which He has cast my sins! And now, as a new man in Christ Jesus, my life shall be love, for He has said, '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 you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven: for He makes His sun to rise upon the evil and on the good.'"

Good for evil is nobly congruous with the spirit of the Gospel. Were we not saved because the Lord rendered to us good for evil? The spirit of the Law is, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," but the spirit of the Gospel is, "freely I forgive you: your many iniquities and vast transgressions are all blotted out for Christ's name's sake, therefore be pitiful towards others." Forgiveness is one fruit of the Gospel and doing good in return for evil is another. Should not the spirit of every Christian be one of unconquerable love? For by unconquerable love he is saved!

And, Beloved, this spirit of forgiveness is the Spirit of God, and he that has it becomes like God. If you would rise to the highest style of being, rise to the condition of a being who can be injured and yet forgive! To be just is something. Scarcely for a righteous man would one die. But to be *merciful* and *kind* is much more, since for a good man some would even dare to die—such is the enthusiasm which a loving spirit will kindle! Rise above mere righteousness into the Divine atmosphere of love!

And whether men love *you* or not is a small matter. Whether you conquer *them* or not is also a little matter. But that you should conquer *evil*, that you should be victorious over *sin*, that you should receive from your Lord, at the last, the "Well done, good and faithful servant," and that you should be like God in your *nature*—this is of the utmost importance to you, for this is Heaven! Heaven is to have self dethroned. Heaven is to be purged of all anger—to be delivered from all pride. Heaven is, in fact, to be God-like! May we be made so through Jesus Christ our Savior, by the work of His Holy Spirit. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 12.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—175, 706, 262.**

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WAKE UP! WAKE UP!

NO. 1445

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

***“That, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep:
for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”
Romans 13:11.***

THIS exhortation, as you will readily perceive, is not addressed to the ungodly. These words are not spoken to those who are dead in sin, but to those who are alive unto God, though somewhat given to slumber. There are many expostulations and admonitions which appeal to the willful and wicked, to the indifferent and unbelieving, to those who err and are out of the way, but this is not one of them. Here we have a special charge to disciples of Jesus who know the time and also know that their salvation draws near. They are represented as being asleep and needing to awake from their present sluggishness. But they are not described as those who had ceased to be Christians, or whose salvation was in jeopardy. Though it is admitted that it is high time for them to awake out of sleep, their salvation is never questioned, but on the contrary they are reminded that now it is nearer than when they believed.

The tone and tenor of this call to circumspection suggest to us that when we address the Lord's people and find occasion to rebuke and reprove them, we should never insinuate that they are likely to be banished from the household of faith, or to be cast away from the Presence of God, or to be treated as reprobates. Even if we feel convinced that they are asleep and that they must be awakened, we ought not to denounce them with railing accusations or threaten them with the wailings of the lost and the doom of unquenchable fire. You would not be pleased if anyone should touch your child with a horsewhip—nor will the Lord allow us to strike His chosen with the rod of the wicked. Legal thunders are not intended for justified saints—

***“The terrors of Law and of God
With us can have nothing to do.
Our Savior's obedience and blood
Hide all our transgressions from view.”***

Even if the saints' hearts are dull, their eyes heavy and they are evidently fast asleep, we are not warranted in raising a false alarm. It is not for us to tell the heirs of salvation to awake because they are in danger of the wrath to come, for they are in no such danger—that is past and gone. Rather let us remind them that their salvation is nearer than when they believed and so stir them up to watchfulness and activity by appropriate motives. The whip is for the slave, not for the child. The dread of punishment is for the condemned, not for the justified. The fear of wrath is not for those who are “accepted in the Beloved,” but for those who reject the Savior and put from them the eternal mercy of God.

While, then, I endeavor to speak frankly and faithfully to the Lord's people, I shall try to avoid anything like a legal tone. I would gladly talk to God's children as their Father in Heaven would have them talked to, somewhat sharply, perhaps, but still without a trace of the threats which belongs to the ungodly, but not to those who are saved in the Lord. From the connection it appears to me that Paul had in his mind's-eye a kind of sleepy state into which God's people may fall with regard to others—and upon that state of slumber we shall speak tonight.

I. Looking at the text in its true bearings, this is the lesson—SOME PROFESSING CHRISTIANS SEEM TO BE ALTOGETHER IN A DEAD SLEEP WITH REGARD TO OTHERS. It is all very well to take a passage of Scripture, isolate it from the context, and use it as the slogan of a sermon. But it is evidently not the natural and fair way of treating the Word of God. You may do so, for the most part, with tolerable safety, for God's Truth, even when it is broken up into little pieces, still retains its purity and perfection like certain crystals, which, however much they may be subdivided, always bear the same crystalline form. So true in every particle and detail is the Revelation of God that though you should take it up and dash it to pieces, yet every little fragment will bear the original impression.

But this is no excuse for treating the Scriptures in an unjustifiable manner instead of expounding them according to the rules of common sense. Texts ought always to be handled with a reverential deference to the mind of the Divine Spirit who wrote them. When we attempt to rivet your attention on a verse or the fraction of a verse of the Bible, we desire you, also, to be scrupulously attentive to the affinities in which it stands. If any of my published sermons should in any instance appear to violate this rule, you will bear me witness that it has been my constant habit throughout all my ministry among you to read and open up, as best I could, the whole chapter from which I have selected a few words as the emphasis of my discourse. I have honestly endeavored to give you the special mind of the Spirit either in the exposition or in the sermon.

Now, you will see that the connection here is this. Paul has been bidding us to pay attention to relative duties. As citizens, he bids us render honor to magistrates, to those who are in authority and to pay all lawful dues and customs, and the like, telling us that we are to owe no man anything except to "love one another." And then he shows us that the Law of Love is the abstract and the essence of that great table of the Law which concerns a man's relation to His neighbors. He goes on to exhort us to keep that Law of Love, to manifest love more and more and, when he has done so, he interjects this sentence, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep."

Now, I gather that he means that many Christians are in a sleepy state with reference to the Law of Love with reference to their obligations to others. Beloved Friends, true godliness makes a man look to himself. It commences by convincing him of his own sin and by leading him, personally, to lay hold on Christ, by faith, that in *His* blood he may find salvation. It then makes the man feel his personal obligations and his

individual responsibilities. It sets him free from many of the yokes with which his fellow men would load him and bids him obey his own conscience before his God, to be a law unto himself and to stand and walk as before the Most High, judging righteous judgment as to the Lord's will and not basely bending to evil at the advice and persuasion of other men.

I would to God we could get some Christians, some *professed* Christians, to be a little more independent! But so many of them are like the rotten houses of which we have not a few in this neighborhood—they could not stand alone—they must keep together, for they prop one another up! If you were to pull down one of the houses in some of our streets, they would all fall! And so there are sets of Christian professors that lean one, upon another, upon the custom of their set and sect, and Church and community. They have never dared to study Scripture for themselves and follow it, nor have they ever tried to form their own personal conscientious convictions!

One of the first works of the Holy Spirit is to make a man look at home and to consider the condition of his own soul. When the Spirit of God has made a man thus to stand on his own footing before God and to feel his personality, there springs up a danger that such a man may say, "I shall henceforth keep myself to myself. My chief business will be indoor work, to see after the rightness of my own spirit and to keep myself prospering before the Lord. Other people must see to themselves and I must see to myself." The principle of individuality might be thus pushed to an extreme till what, at first, was necessary grit in the spiritual constitution, making the man truly a man, may be so unduly increased that he becomes, at last, an unkind, ungenerous, cruel, selfish thing deprived of the best part of his humanity.

Thus, we are brought back to this, that albeit every man must give an account of himself before God and must personally be born again and personally be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, yet, "no man lives to himself," nor was he ever meant to do so. No man can compass the ends of life by drawing a little line around himself upon the ground. No man can fulfill his calling as a Christian by seeking the welfare of his wife and family only, for these are only a sort of greater self. There are outgoing lines of life that bind us not only with some men, but, in fact, with all humanity, so that if we did but know it, the thought of one brain, the utterance of one mouth, the movement of one pair of hands does, in its measure, influence the whole human race to some degree and will do so till time shall be no more. We are placed, therefore, in a most solemn position and it is with regard to this that it is high time that we should awake out of sleep.

Into what a deep slumber some professing Christians have fallen! How utterly insensible they are to the sins and sorrows of those around them. They believe God has a people and they are very glad He has, as far as they are capable of being glad of anything that does not concern themselves. But, "the world lies in the Wicked One," and multitudes are perishing! They are sorry it is so, that is to say, they go the length of *saying* they are sorry. It does not cause them any sleepless nights; it does

not disturb their digestion; it in no way interferes with their comfort, for they do not seem to think that it has anything to do with *them*.

I know some that are in such a sleep who drug themselves with almost as much regularity as they feed themselves! They take that great and precious Truth of God of the Divine Sovereignty and turn it to a most detestable use—for they say, “What is to be will be and the Lord’s purpose will be fulfilled. There will be some saved and others lost.” All this is said as coolly as if they were talking of a wasp’s nest! As for those that are lost, they dare not injure their logic by indulging a little mournful emotion. Were their minister to weep over the lost, as Jesus wept over Jerusalem, they would say he was unsound—a duty-faith man, certainly and, probably, an Arminian! And they would straightway quit him and think that he could not have really received the mind of the Spirit of God.

Yet, in the judgment of all who think aright, one of the finest traits in a Christian’s character is the deep sorrow which he feels over souls that are being lost and the great longing of his own soul that men would turn unto God and find peace through Jesus Christ. O Sirs, I fear there are many professors in a deep sleep as to whether others are going to Heaven or to Hell! They look upon, as a matter of course, the drunkenness that is around them! The blasphemy which greets their ears does not chill their blood—they say it is very usual and very shocking! The Sabbath-breaking they take to be a kind of necessary evil! The rejection of Christ by men, they look upon as no sin at all and they even quarrel and quibble with those who think that sinners are blameworthy in rejecting the Son of God, the Savior of sinners!

I trust that many of these are God’s people and, if they are, it is high time that they should awake out of such a sleep as that—so unlike Christ, so alien to the spirit of love, so contrary to the mind—which God would have His Spirit work in all His people. Alas, that they should have sunk into so dead a sleep! There are others, dear Friends, who are prone to be overtaken with an oft-recurring sleep. I know a Brother who often takes forty winks in the daytime—you may nudge him and he will wake and listen to you, but he goes to sleep again in a few minutes if you leave him alone. He will attend to you with much pleasure if you pull his coat again, but he soon returns to his dozing.

Who can blame the sleeper when it is a question of infirmity or sheer exhaustion? I never like to blame people too hastily when they go to sleep in a place of worship, for I remember thinking rather harshly of a Brother who went to sleep one Sunday morning under my sermon—when I found that he had been sitting up two nights with a sick wife and had been doing a full day’s work besides, then I was sorry enough to have thought a harsh thought of a worthy man. I rather wondered, when I understood the case, whether *I* should have been able to come to worship at all. Well, without blaming any of you, then, for the weakness of the flesh, I take this sleepy habit to be a fit illustration of the state in which some Christians are to be found. They go to sleep and then they wake up for a little. They have fits and starts of wakefulness and then off to sleep again they drop.

Does this describe you, dear Friend? At that missionary meeting you woke up when you heard the cry of the perishing heathen. You wanted to get out into the street at once and tell poor sinners about Christ—and you emptied your pockets into the plate before you left the building! Have you cared much about China or India since then, though you know that there are millions of people—millions dying for lack of knowledge? They have not troubled you much, have they, since that missionary meeting? Perhaps tonight I shall pull your coattail a little and you will be awake, again, and you will be very much concerned. Perhaps you will pray earnestly for your neighbors and your ungodly friends. But, I fear, you will soon go to sleep again.

You have gone back to your slumbers so many times before that now it is “sleeping made easy.” Could not your ministers lodge a grievous complaint against you for this? You get on fire with love for souls when the discourse is specially arousing, but then, after the sermon is over and the week of special services has ended, you go to sleep again! There are many Sunday school teachers of that kind. They sometimes talk to their children about their souls with tears in their eyes and then, again, their ardor evaporates and they get through their duties in little better form than merely reading the Scriptures and explaining them in a dry, dull fashion.

My slumbering Brothers, you *could* be awake! You *might* be awake! For sometimes you are! There are times when your whole soul seems on fire! If anybody had spoken of you, then, they would have said, “What a fine man that is! What love he has for Christ! What concern for the souls of men! He ought to be sent forth as a missionary at once.” Wait till you see him asleep! He can sleep very soundly! In fact, he is as great at sleeping as at waking! He can descend into depths of stupidity and indifference as naturally as he just now rose into heights of fervor and enthusiasm! Yes, there are many such, and I would say to any Brothers and Sisters who are conscious of a propensity in that direction—is it not high time that you, that *I*, that any, that ALL OF US should awake out of sleep?

There are those, again, who fall into a kind of somnambulistic state. They are doing a good deal for their Lord and Master, but they are asleep. If judged by their outward actions, we should think they were wide awake and they do what they do very well. But have you ever seen a person who has a habit of walking in his sleep? It is a strange sight! Persons have been known to walk along giddy heights safely enough when they have been fast asleep where they would not have thought of venturing if they had been wide awake! And we have known, sometimes, professors going on very safely, carefully, exactly in positions where others have fallen—and we have admired their prudence and discretion and attributed it to the Grace of God—whereas in part it has been attributable to the fact that they were spiritually asleep all the time!

It is very possible to walk long and far and yet remain asleep! It is very possible to appear very devout when, indeed, you are very sleepy! It is very possible to sing hymns when you are not awake to the sense! Yes, and it is very probable that you will betray your absence of mind by sitting down

at the last verse, although there is going to be a chorus afterwards. You know it is coming, but your part of the worship is performed so mechanically that you dropped down in your pews as a mere matter of habit—and then were all in a flurry to be up again! I have detected many of you doing it. I have felt convinced that you were virtually asleep at the time—not really drinking in the spirit of the hymn, or else it would not have happened. It is very easy to hear sermons and to be asleep all the while—at least with one ear open and one eye—but the major part of the faculties of the soul still steeped in slumber.

And you can keep on teaching in the Sunday school, pay your religious contributions punctually, maintain the habit of family prayer and even your private devotions may not be wholly neglected, and yet you may be walking in your sleep! All these duties may be done with a sort of sleep-walking life and action and not at all with the life of a thoroughly wakeful man. Oh, I would like to hear a man speak about Heaven who was altogether awake to it! I would like to hear a man preach about Hell who was awakened to the true pitch! It would make your very hair stand on end as you should hear how he told of the terrors of the wrath to come! It would make every drop of blood dance in your veins to hear a man speak of Christ who is all on fire with Divine love and all awake with Divine delight in Him!

But that slumber is apt to come over the most lively minister. Who will not confess it? Oh, if you have ever read a chapter of the Bible when your soul has been all awake, how the promises have glowed and burned! How bright have they been like “the terrible crystal.” But too often we have nodded over the Bible; nodded over the promises; nodded over the precepts till there seemed neither life nor power in them. The life was there, but we were asleep!

Well, dear Friends, I must add and then I shall have said enough about sleep, that a very large number of us are half asleep. Whether there is one man alive that is spiritually awake all over, I do not know. Such a man as Rutherford, who loved his Lord so that he scarcely ever thought of anything but Jesus—that was a man all awake! Such a man as Mr. Whitefield—preaching his very heart out morning, noon and night with a seraphic eloquence—that was a man wide awake! There have been many such; I trust there is a remnant of such now. But the most of us are painfully conscious that we are waking and need greatly to be more awake still.

O God, make us feel the solemn weight of those eternal things in which we believe! You have saved us—make us awake to feel from what You have saved us and by Whom You have saved us! Awaken us to realize to *what* you have saved us and what the privileges are which belong to us now that we are saved! Oh, when I think how trivial are the things of time and how all-important are the unseen realities of eternity, I cannot but again conclude that most of us are nothing more than about half awake as to the things of God! And if it is so, it is high time that we awake out of sleep!

II. Now, in the second place, I want to occupy a few minutes by saying that whereas many Believers are asleep IT IS HIGH TIME THAT THEY SHOULD AWAKE. And why high time that they should be awake? Why, first, because what right have we who are Believers to be asleep at all? The Lord has saved us—saved us from death—saved us from the sleep which is the first cousin to death. He has saved us from indifference, from unbelief, from hardheartedness. He has saved us from carelessness. Well, now, if the Lord has done this for us, what business have we to be in a sleepy state?

When the five wise virgins went out to meet the bridegroom and took their lamps with them, what right had they to be asleep? I can very well understand those sleeping who had no oil in the vessels with their lamps, because when their lamps went out they would be in the dark and darkness suggests sleep. But those who had their lamps well trimmed, should they go asleep in the light? Those that had the oil, should they go to sleep while the oil was illuminating them? They needed to be awake to put the oil into the lamp. Besides, they had come out to meet the bridegroom! Could they meet him asleep? When he should come, would it be fit that he should find those who attended his wedding all asleep in a row, insulting his dignity and treating his glory with scorn?

Child of God, you are expecting *Christ* to come soon? He may come tonight, or He may, if He pleases, delay His coming, but why, oh why, do you think of sleeping? What is there congruous to your character—what is there suitable to your expectations—in your sleep? If, then, you have caught yourself having a sinful nap, bestir yourself and ask the Holy Spirit to awaken you, for since you have no right to sleep at all, it is high time that you should awake out of sleep! It is high time because a great many opportunities have already slipped away! I address myself to some of you who have been converted, say these 10 years. And what have you done for Christ? You are saved—we are not going to question that—and your glorious salvation is nearer than when you believed.

But what have you done during these many years? You have been eating the fat and drinking the sweet, but have you fed the hungry? Have you brought in the wandering? You have enjoyed the means of Grace, you tell me. And is this all you were created for—to *enjoy*, yes, even to enjoy good things? Have you not asked yourself the question, “What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” Dear Friend, if you have been saved a *week* and you have done nothing for Christ during that week, you have already wasted more than enough time in having lived through seven fruitless days! Let the time past suffice you to have suffered opportunities to pass before your door unwelcomed.

But some professors are growing old; gray hairs are upon them! How long have you been a Christian? Have you loved the Lord these 30 years and done so little? Or what, if though you are an old man and yet only a baby in Grace? That is worse still, is it not? As to all the past, is your account grievously unprofitable?—A wilderness where there might have been a garden—a desert where there might have been a fruitful field? Can you endure the painful retrospect? Oh, when I look back, one of the joys

of my life is to have been converted to God while yet a child and to have begun to preach the name of Jesus when still a youth! And yet though that is a subject for joy, I find abundant reason for accusing myself of wasting opportunities of service!

If it is so with me, though for years I have lived unto the Lord—I am sure it must be so with many of my Master's servants. So let me say to them, by all those wasted opportunities it must be high time for you to awake out of sleep! Time is hastening on, my Brothers and Sisters! Each flying moment holds another by the heel. Life rushes on as a rapid stream! It bears us along swiftly and silently. If you are going to do something, it must be done very soon, young man! You are not a child now. Your sun has not quite reached its zenith, but it is rising high. It may go down before it is noon. If something is to be accomplished before you die, get at it, Man, get at it, or your life will be a failure!

And you of middle life. Well, you are in the very strength and prime of your days. If God is to be glorified by you and souls brought to Christ by you, I urge you, in the name of all that is reasonable, get at it and lay to, for if you do not work now, when will you? When the days of weakness come and those that look out of the windows are darkened, you will say, "I am too old." Oh, now, let the prime of your days be the Lord's! Or, has the evening of life descended upon you? Are the shadows lengthening and does strength fail? Brother, Sister, you are saved! You would not like to go to Heaven, would you, without glorifying Christ here below? Then do it now! All hand, all heart, all mind, all thought must be given to the present pressing duty. You have such a little while before you—so scanty an evening is left you—surely it should be all spent with the utmost diligence in the Master's service. "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep."

Do you not see that it is high time to awake out of sleep because there were so many people that had a claim upon us who are beyond our power, now, even if we do wake? Have you ever felt the sadness of neglecting to visit a person who was ill until you heard that he was dead? You said to yourself, "Why did I not go and speak at least one word of warning before that soul was gone into eternity?" Death is sweeping away multitudes of our neighbors and friends! And it is high time that we were diligent in seeking those that remain, if we are to do them any good, for when that knell is tolling and that grave is closing, our regrets will be useless to the departed and, at the same time, very bitter to ourselves.

Many are passing away from us and from the sphere of our influence in the common course of Providence. Your children, for instance. They were little. Some of you still have little children. Well, they will not be little long! Already, Mother, that boy is beginning to show a good deal of independence of spirit! He will not even listen to you now as he once did and you feel a little grieved at it. It will be more so soon! If you do not bend the twig when it is a twig, you will not do much with it when it gets to be a tree! We let our children slip from under our fingers while they are plastic. We forget to mold them and then they get into manhood and become less amenable to our counsels and our cautions—and we grieve

that we did not do something more to train them up in the way they should go.

Now is your time, Mother, God helping you. Now is your time, Father! Parents, avail yourselves of your opportunities and remember that good is done by constant watching and by small degrees. And your servants, too. Cannot you remember some servants that lived with you and you always meant to talk to them about their souls and to pray with them? But they left you and they were gone before you had commenced to bless them. They are very worldly now. Perhaps if you were to trace them out, you would find they were Christless and you would hear them say that they once lived with a religious mistress, with a pious master and they hoped they would never do so again, for it was the most miserable time they ever had—"and whatever religion Master might have had, he kept it all pretty well to himself, for we never heard much of it." "Oh," you say, "I hope they do not say *that!*" I hope so, too, but I have known such things said. And it is very possible that men and women may be so asleep about the souls of those round them that opportunities which were in their way may be sliding away never to return.

I believe that if we were awake we might often avail ourselves of opportunities to speak to men who otherwise hold themselves aloof from any religious conversation. There is a time with almost every man, when conscience is awake. Perhaps he is saddened by affliction or cowed by adversity—then he will respect as friendly what he might otherwise resent as insulting. The most hardened, at some season or other, become amenable to reproof, or exhortation, or direction. If you are ready, take a shot at him and you will have him. But, if not at that moment, you may never have another occasion of getting the Truth of God where the man will feel it! We ought to be ready in a minute. Those who would shoot the running deer have to be very, very clever in taking sight and seizing the moment while it is running by. And those that would take running souls—and the most of our fellow countrymen are just such—must be sharp-sighted and quick-witted. They run by us and we must have them in a minute or else they will have gone beyond our reach. We cannot do this unless we are awakened out of our sleep. God grant we may be so awakened!

Meanwhile, dear Friends, there is this reason why we should be awake—we have plenty of enemies that are awake if we are not. You may sleep, but you cannot induce the devil to close *his* eyes. Protestantism may slumber, but I will guarantee you Catholicism never does! You may see evangelicals asleep, but you will not find ritualists slumbering. The Prince of the power of the air keeps his servants well up to their work. Is it not a strange thing that the servants of Satan serve him so enthusiastically while the servants of the Lord often serve Him at a poor, cold, dead-alive rate? Oh, may the Lord quicken us! If we could, with a glance, see the activities of the servants of Satan, we should be astonished at our own sluggishness! It is while men sleep that the enemy comes and sows tares among the wheat and it is *because* men sleep that the tares are

sown in the Lord's field. If we were more awake, the adversary would not have the opportunity of scattering his evil grain.

It is high time that we awake out of sleep, for it is daylight. The sun has risen! Will you sleep *now*? We are getting far into the Gospel dispensation. Can you still sleep? It is time that we were awake, for our Lord was awake! What wakefulness He exhibited! How did His eyes stream with tears over perishing Jerusalem! He was all heart. The zeal of God's house consumed Him. Ought it not to consume us? We ought to be awake, for our own day may be over within an hour or two! The preacher may be delivering his last sermon. You may go home tonight to offer the last prayer at the family altar which you will ever utter on earth! You may open shop, tomorrow morning, for the last time. Should not these possibilities bestir you? How near, how very near, is the ultimatum of every man here present! Have you fixed upon a grand purpose, Brother? Fulfill it! You have scarcely time to get through it, therefore waste not an hour.

Have you been planning? Leave off *planning* and get to executing your work! You have been speaking about being generous. Be generous! You have been talking about being spiritually minded. Leave off talk and get at it, man! You have intended to be consecrated to God. Come, do not squabble about consecration and about perfectionism, but be *consecrated* and be *perfect*. Go in for the highest possible form of devotion and service! We have lived long enough at this poor half-and-half rate. If there is any higher platform, may the Lord lift us up to it! If there is a way of living—spirit, soul and body—wholly, unreservedly devoted every moment to the Lord, oh may His Spirit conduct us into such a state!

This is our ambition! We aspire to this! We dare not say, as some do, that we have *gained* it, for if we did we believe that we should give evidence that we knew not what it was, or else we should not talk so loftily. But Brothers and Sisters, while the Master's personal coming may be so near and while His coming to us by death may be nearer, still, it is high time that we awoke out of our sleep!

III. I close with a third remark. IT IS WORTH WHILE WAKING, FOR THERE IS SOMETHING WORTH WAKING FOR. Paul says that it is high time that we wake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. As I already remarked, he does not say, "for if you do not wake you will be lost." Neither does he say, "You Christian people, if you remain in this dull state, will perish without hope." No, that is the threat of the *Law* and suits the tongue of Moses, but Jesus does not talk so. No, no! He sets His servant speaking to us in a Gospel tone, "Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed."

Undoubtedly, dear Brothers and Sisters, it is nearer in order of *time*. How long is it since you believed? Ten years? You are 10 years nearer Heaven, then. Your salvation, that is, your ultimate, *complete* salvation—the display and manifestation of your complete deliverance from evil, from sin, from death, from Hell—is nearer by so many years than when you believed. Some of us are 25 years nearer Heaven than we were. Ought we not to be more awake? The farther we are off from Heaven, the less we may feel its influence—but we are getting so much nearer that we ought to

be increasingly sensitive to its mysterious spell. Oh, to feel more of its power!

We shall soon be in Heaven, Brothers! We shall soon be there, Sisters! Do not let us go to sleep, now, with the golden gate right before us and Jesus waiting to admit us! Nearer Glory! Is it not a good argument for being more alive unto God? Some of you are 60 years nearer to Heaven than you were! You have been in Christ now more than half a century. Well, well, Brothers and Sisters, are you not glad of it? Would you like to live those 60 years over again? Would you like to go back and tread that weary road a second time, clambering again Hill Difficulty and sliding, down again, into the Valley of Humiliation? Would you wish to march a second time through the Valley of the Shadow of Death and into Giant Despair's castle?

"No," you say, and you need not fear the return journey, for you shall not go back again! Rejoice that you are so much nearer Heaven in the matter of time. Therefore, stay wide awake and looking out for it. When little children have been taken from their inland homes to the sea, they have been very eager to see the ocean and yet they have been ready to go to sleep as they approached the end of the journey. They have never seen the sea before, and Mother says, "Wake up, children, you are coming near the sea." Soul, Soul, Soul, we have never seen Heaven but we are getting nearer! Let us stay awake! Jerusalem, my happy home, shall I enter your sacred precincts *sleeping*? Shall I come to the last hill, from which I am to take a view of your glittering lanes and golden streets, and shall I be half asleep within view of them? Come, my heart! No, no, no! Wake up, my heart! Heart, wake up! You are getting nearer Home. "A day's march nearer Home" you have come even this day—be ashamed to slumber!

And, if we are getting nearer in point of *time*, I hope we are getting nearer in point of *preparation*. Christ is preparing Heaven for us and His Spirit is preparing us for Heaven! Well, then, if we are getting more ready for Heaven, we ought to be more awake, for sleepiness is not the state of heavenly spirits! Heaven is the home of *activity*, not the dormitory of unconsciousness! When our bodies shall have been raised from the dead, they shall enjoy life and energy and be forever free from fatigue and sluggishness. Let us, as we are getting ready for celestial company, be fuller of life and fuller of energy! More ready for Heaven, then reap, reap, reap with stronger arms. Do another man's work, if you can, as well as your own!

You have nearly accomplished your life's labor, therefore throw all your strength into that little which remains. So near Heaven? Then pluck another brand out of the burning! If you are more fit for Heaven, you have more love, more Grace, more pity—then reach out both hands to bring another poor soul to Christ! If the golden gate shall soon be open to you and you shall be shut in forever in the blest place of rest, be sure to show others the way to that gate, that you enter not alone! Your salvation is nearer than when you believed, therefore do something more to prove that you are ready for it.

And, lastly, as your salvation is nearer than when you believed, let us hope your realization of it is more clear. Have you tried to realize the Glory to be revealed? Within a short time you will be with Jesus!—

***“Far from this world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”***

Your head will wear a crown, your hand shall grasp the palm of victory! You, even you, shall walk the golden streets and see that Face which is brighter than the sun! It may be that tonight you will be made free in the New Jerusalem—tonight you may leave that narrow room and that hard bed, the abode of poverty and care—and you may be away up where they keep eternal Sabbaths and the congregations never break up. You will be there, Brother and Sister, even you! There is a crown in Glory which no head can wear but yours. You will be there!

Well, now, it seems to me that if I can realize that in so short a time my eternal salvation shall be consummated and I, even I, shall be among the blood-washed throng and see my Savior’s face, I cannot any longer neglect a single opportunity of serving Him! I cannot any longer let poor souls go down to Hell without endeavoring to save them! I cannot any longer neglect prayer—neglect opportunities of usefulness—or live otherwise than as a man should live who has his foot upon the doorstep of Heaven and his finger on the latch! What manner of persons ought you to be to whom Heaven is guaranteed by promise and to whom it has been sealed by blood to be your special heritage—the portion of a people whom every moment brings nearer to eternal joy? What manner of persons ought you to be? May the Spirit of God make you to be just that, now, and He shall have praise forever. Amen.

I have said nothing to the unconverted because I have been admonishing you Believers to say something to them. If you will catch the spirit of my text, you will, each one, feel for them and begin to speak. But if I were to wrench the text from its connection and apply it to the unconverted, what a sledge hammer it would be! Shall I read the text as I should have to read it if it spoke to the unregenerate? It runs to the Christian, “Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed.” But oh, you unconverted men and women, must I read the text as it would have to run if it were written to *you*?

“It is high time that you should awake out of sleep, for now is your *damnation* nearer than when you first heard the Gospel and rejected it.” Take heed, take heed! God grant you Grace to take heed and to believe in Christ. Amen and Amen!

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

TIMELY REFLECTIONS

NO. 857

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, DECEMBER 27, 1868,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”
Romans 13:11.

BUT what “salvation” is this? The question is important because we very commonly speak of “salvation” as that state of Divine Grace into which everyone that believes in Jesus is introduced when he passes from death unto life, being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. This sweet assurance we celebrate in our hymns of praise—

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

Salvation, so far as the forgiveness of sin, the imputation of righteousness, and the eternal safety of the soul are concerned, is given to us the *moment* that we are brought to trust in Jesus. But the term, “salvation,” here and in some other parts of Scripture signifies that *complete* deliverance from sin, that glorious perfection which will not be attained by us until the day of the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Salvation here signifies entire deliverance from indwelling sin, perfect sanctification, and, as I take it, includes the resurrection of the body and the glorification of body and soul with Christ Jesus in the world to come. Salvation here means what many think it always implies, namely, eternal Glory. At this hour our perfect salvation is nearer than when we believed. Observe the date from which the Apostle begins to reckon. He does not say our salvation is nearer than when we were *christened*—that is a ceremony of which the Apostle never dreamed—a tradition and invention of men which had never crossed his mind!

He does not say your salvation is nearer than when you were *confirmed*—that also was a thing quite unknown to him. He does not reckon even from our Baptism, as if he were to say, now is your salvation nearer than when you put on Christ openly in Baptism. But he strikes at the vital point—he specifies the true indication of spiritual life, namely, “believe.” What could ever come of all that is before *believing*? It is all death! It is not worth reckoning! No matter how studied the ceremony or how

garnished with profession, up to the moment a man *believes* he has no spiritual life—he comes not into the happiness of the living—neither has the Apostle anything to say to him except that he is dead in trespasses and sins!

The moment of faith is the moment from which he dates his spiritual career. It is when we look to Jesus hanging upon the Cross, our Substitute, that life comes to us. As we look we live! We look and are forgiven! We look and are saved—and from that time forward with our faces Zionward we start upon the celestial pilgrimage towards that glorious City whose Builder and Maker is God. Thus it was, then, that the Apostle measured from one fixed point to another fixed point. If you have two shifting points you cannot say that now you are nearer this or that. If the time of our believing was not a fixed and definite moment, but a thing which may be put here or there, we could not reckon from that. And if the time of our emancipation from this body and our complete salvation were unsettled, precarious—a point that moves, a sort of planetary star—we could not say we are getting any nearer to it.

But the Apostle takes a fixed point. There is a man saved. He has believed in Christ. That day he believed in Christ, yes, that very *minute*, he may not know *which* minute, but God knows, that very *second*—at that tick of the clock in which he trusted in Christ he became a new man—old things were passed away and all things became new. Therefore that is a fixed and definite point in that man's history from which to date. And there is another point, settled by God in the Divine decree, never to be removed, neither to be ante-dated nor post-dated—a moment when those that believe shall be with Christ where He is and shall be like He and shall behold His Glory forever!

Now, between these two points you and I, if we have believed, are sailing! And this evening at the close of the year it seemed meet for me to haul up the log and just to note where we are on the sea that rolls between these two blessed points and to congratulate my fellow Believers that now—tonight—we are nearer the eternal port by the space of many years than when we first slipped our cable, hauled up the anchor and began to sail towards the haven of everlasting rest. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

I have been told—I have not been on the voyage—but I have been told that in going to Australia it has frequently been the custom to toast “Friends behind,” till they get half-way. And then it changes to, “Friends ahead.” “Here's to the helm, friends behind,” and then near to the port, “Friends ahead.” Well, I am going to say something tonight about *things behind*, and then we shall congratulate you as we talk of *things ahead*. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”

I. THE THINGS THAT ARE BEHIND. I want you to look back a little, all of you who have started from the point of believing. Recollect—and it will do you good to recollect it—when you did believe. Oh, that blessed day! Of all the days we have ever seen, that was, in some respects, the brightest of all! Not to be compared with the day of our natural birth, for that was a day of our first weeping. But in the day of our new birth, we wept tears of sacred joy! We were thrust from death into life, from condemnation to acceptance, from everlasting peril into eternal safety—

***“Happy day, happy day!
When Jesus washed my sins away!”***

That was the day, we may say, when we left the first shore—and you all know those who are going round the world to dwell on the other side, always look back with great satisfaction at the day when they left. When the vessel was first tugged out of dock and safely towed down to the Nore and began to try the deep sea wave, what congratulations there were of friends—and many tears, no doubt, and waving of handkerchiefs and hurrahing, as the vessel left the port. Well, now, in our case we remember how our friends and kinsfolk in Christ rejoiced over us—how glad they were to hear us tell the tale of saving Grace! They prized us as a new-born child is prized in the household. No, not only friends below, but the angels looking down from Heaven rejoiced over us as repenting sinners! And surely, if it were worth their while to rejoice when we *believed*, we need not blush to go back to that period.

It is not very long with some of you—well, be grateful. It is a long time with some of you. Some of us can, no doubt, count 20 years since we first knew the Lord! Happy years they have been, too! And happy was that day when we became first enlisted in His service—when we first left the shores of earth to try and find the new country, the better land. Yes, “when we believed.” We will dwell upon that time and let our souls ring the sweet silver bells of gratitude as we bless the Lord that we were not left to perish in our natural unbelief, but that we have believed in Christ Jesus.

Since then—now turn to your logs—since then we have had a good number of storms. I remember that first storm we had in that Bay of Biscay—for there is generally such a bay as that soon after the mariner gets off from shore. What a tempest it was. We had not long rejoiced before all our rejoicing was gone. We had not long found Christ before we thought that Satan himself had found us! We fancied it was all a delusion. We were ready to give up our confidence! We had thought at first that the moment we believed there would be an end of conflicts, but we discovered that it was then the conflict began! And perhaps one of the severest storms our vessel has ever had was just at the first.

You remember it. And we have had many since then, when the waves of unbelief have made us stand and tremble. You have seen one washed overboard that you thought very dear. You have yourselves suffered loss and endured great peril. You were glad to get some of your treasures. "But there," you said, "let the ingots go." Now the ship rights! Happy were you if you might, by losing earthly substances and carnal joys, find peace and safety in Christ. You remember, too, when you had to sail very slowly in the thick fog and keep the whistle always sounding, and the look-out you had to keep at the bows for fear you should run into something and come to mischief.

And you remember when you had almost gone too far and you just caught sight of the red lights, for if you had but gone a little further your soul would have been wrecked, cast away forever. But Mercy interposed at the precise moment, when there was time yet to tack about and save the vessel and rescued us in the hour of temptation, saved us as by fire. Well, now, why do I call these things to your remembrance, but to make you bless the name of your God? You have been nearly shipwrecked, but you are not wrecked. The storm has been very furious, but above all the billows Jehovah's power has kept and preserved you! Your feet had almost gone. Your steps had well near slipped, but the Divine power interposed in everlasting Grace and to this day—a wonder unto many, but especially a wonder to yourself—you are still on the road towards the Celestial City and you are nearer to it than when you first believed.

But I would not have your recollection of what is behind be altogether saddened. Remember, Beloved, you have had a great deal of fair weather, too, since you left the port of believing. Oh, there have been happy days with us! Blessed days, as the days of Heaven upon earth! We have sailed along with a favoring breeze. All has been happy within our spirits, and peace, like a river, has abounded in our souls. Let us praise the name of God for this! Life is not the dreary thing that some men say it is. It has its sorrows, for what rose has not its thorns? Thistles spring up in it, but after all, who would not expect the thistles to grow here and there in the midst of a harvest field? But we bear our testimony that we have not had such a bad time of it after all—

***"The men of Grace have found Glory begun below,
Celestial fruit on earthly ground,
From faith and hope may grow."***

So that behind us, since the hour we first believed, there are the storms from which we have escaped, but there are also the mercies, the loving kindnesses which we dare not and will not forget. Behind us, too, dear Brethren—and this will be a mingled thought—behind us, how many opportunities of service have we left? When we sailed ourselves, there

were with us many other little ships and some of these—ah, some of these, have been cast away and shipwrecked before our eyes! In that night of storm, when we ourselves were hard beset, a companion vessel that bade fair to make as good a voyage as our own, went to pieces and was never heard of again. A great professor foundered—his hypocrisy was discovered and his profession ruined forever.

Another, who seemed to be as ardent for the cause of Christ as we, passed away, stranded on simple pleasures, broken to pieces on the rocks of worldliness and lost—and we preserved! Blessed be God, we are preserved! But we have had many opportunities of seeking out the distressed, of bringing some of the shipwrecked ones to safety. Did we always do it? Well, I hope there are many of you who, during past years, have been the means of bringing some to Christ. I know many of you have, but I fear some of you have not. Just before this sermon commenced I saw one who wished to make a profession of her faith in Christ and she traced her conversion, she said, to the prayers of one of our members. I dare say you would know him if I were to mention his name—a humble brother—and I was so thankful to think that God should bless his prayer in the family to the conversion of one who had listened to him. May all of us be looking out for others and endeavoring to bring them to Christ.

But what a sad thing it is if we have to recollect that in our sailing we have rescued none from the storm. If we are compelled to say, “I saw the signals go up. I know they were firing minute-guns of distress, but I passed them by, I never sent aid there—and whether they were saved or lost I do not know. I had enough to do to look to myself. I never looked to them.” During this year hundreds have gone to their graves. Some of your own children, perhaps, or neighbors. Are you clear of their blood? Are you clear of their blood? It would be an awful piece of brutality if a boat full of poor shipwrecked mariners, far out at sea, saw a vessel in the offing and yet that vessel would not turn aside to help them.

And that is exactly the conduct of many professors of Christ. They see others perishing, but they will not tell them the way of salvation. They neither pray for them, nor labor for them—but they let them go down to Hell unwept, unpitied and uncared for. Where are your hearts of compassion, Professors, that you have done this? Perhaps you have done it. If so, do not merely *regret*, but earnestly *amend*. We ought to recollect, again, that since we left the fixed point of believing and began to voyage onward towards the point of Glory, we have had many opportunities of serving the Lord Jesus and, I may ask, have we always availed ourselves of them?

I wish we had sung as many hymns for Christ as He deserved. O that I could have put upon His head the crown which He deserves to have of His poor servant whom He has delivered out of bondage and made to rejoice

in liberty! O that I had always spoken up for His name! That I had poured a broadside into His enemies whenever I had an opportunity! We can sometimes sing—

***“Is there a lamb among the flock,
I would disdain to feed?
Is there a foe before whose face,
I fear Your cause to plead?”***

And though we sing it and mean it, yet I fear many of the lambs are not fed, and before many a foe we do not plead the cause of Christ. Golden opportunities of bringing glory to Christ are suffered to go by.

Alas for this! If we could weep in Heaven we might weep the loss of such opportunities! But instead of weeping, let us earnestly pray that for the future we may serve the Master with heart and soul and strength, so long as we have any being.

II. Thus much about things behind. And now, very briefly, indeed, ANTICIPATION OF THOSE WHO ARE AHEAD, AND OF THE THINGS THAT ARE AHEAD. Keeping our lookout, expecting to see other storms and soon to reach a fairer clime, what is there which we are expecting? I cannot fail to expect more storms between this and the fair haven. There shall be more blustering winds and tossing billows. It is not over yet. It was not all smooth behind—it cannot be all smooth ahead.

But there is this to be said—though there may be many more storms, they must be fewer in number than they were. There cannot be as many, for so many have already gone! As we are nearer Home, so the trials are fewer that we have to bear. You are getting through them, Christian. Every one, as you pass it, leaves one the less. Be comforted, then, be comforted! And how few storms must remain for some of you? “I am on the *better* side of seventy,” said one. “Why,” said another, “I thought you were seventy-seven.” “So I am,” said he, “and that is the right side of 70—it is the nearest side Home.”

Can you not trust God for the next half-dozen years? You will not have more than that, perhaps. You cannot expect to have twenty. He has helped you for 70—will He not help you for another ten? Will He change at the last? Has he up to now taught you to trust in His name and brought you so far to put you to shame? Has He finished the house all but the last course of bricks and will He not complete it in due course? Surely He will! Be of good courage! There are few storms, after all, that are ahead, to those that have passed through many already. The further we are on the road, the less there is of it to bear. Beloved, there will be fairer winds yet, thank God. We cannot suspect it will be *all* storms. But it would be folly to suppose there would be none! It would be greater folly, still, to suppose it would be all boisterous weather.

Before we reach the heavenly plains, or walk the golden streets, there is a land called Beulah, which John Bunyan pictures in his “Pilgrim’s Progress,” and surely it is no realm of fancy. In old age God’s people are often brought into a peaceable frame of mind where their confidences are always bright, their enjoyment of Christ always great—where they have not those molestations which afflicted them when they were young—they have come to perfect peace and rest. We can expect this and we will steer on towards it! There are calm days ahead!

Christ will be with us. Our communion with Him shall be sweet. Do you know, I look forward in days to come to the oft-recurring refreshment of our Sabbaths. If we are to be spared, there will always be these oases in the desert. Though we have, some of us, our hardest day’s work and often wish we could sit in a pew and hear somebody else, yet there is no day like the Sabbath, after all. Oh, what a blessed help it is to Heaven! If we had not those windows, the earth would be a blank, indeed. But with these sacred windows, that which would otherwise be a hard black wall, shutting out all light, becomes a very palace and we look through these windows up to the better palace, where the eternal Sabbath shall be our portion! Well, there are these Sabbaths ahead! There is the outpouring of the Spirit! There are Covenant blessings to be participated in and there is the safety which Providential Grace can bring, all lying ahead of us. Let us, then, be comforted and pass on.

And there will be more opportunities ahead. Now, you young people, especially, should be looking out. I spoke of occasions of serving God which we had wasted. Do not let us waste any more, but gird up the loins of our lives. Let this be our prayer, that we may snatch every opportunity by the wing—take time by the forelock—and, in the service of God, contend with might and main for the Truths of God. The wheels of eternity are sounding behind us—life must be short. To those to whom it is longest it is but brief. Work on, worker! You have scarcely time to finish your day’s work! Waste not a second! Throw not away these priceless hours. Speed! Speed! Speed! As with sevenfold wing it glides forward—swifter than the thunderbolt. Oh, pause not! Trifle not!

O Christian, if you would take your crowns up to your Lord and great sheaves from the harvest, “work while it is called today, for the night comes in which no man can work.” “It is high time,” says our Apostle, “to awake out of sleep.” Would that you would consider it! Be not as those who open their eyes in the morning only to close them again, like the sluggard with the reflection, “I need not bestir myself just yet.” But start, Man, from your slumbers as one who feels that he has slept too long and must now briskly cast off dull sloth, bestirring himself with eager haste to do his appointed task—to redeem the time, to reclaim the golden hours!

For, consider this, your calling is of God and the King's business requires haste.

But looking still further ahead, let us tonight, when we remember we are nearer our salvation than when we believed, begin to think of what that salvation will be. How near it may be to some of us it were not possible for us to tell. But 24 hours may take some of us there—yes, less time than that! What is the distance between earth and Heaven? It only takes a second of time—

***“One gentle sigh, the fetter breaks.
We scarcely can say, ‘They’re gone!’
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the Throne.”***

Now, what shall we see when we get there? Well, first we shall see Jesus. And the sight of Him, oh, say no more—think of it! The vision of the Man of Sorrows! Our Beloved, who gave Himself for us—once to see Him, once to fall at His feet and speechless there to lie—bursting with gratitude, which even there shall be inexpressible! Oh, what a Heaven to be with Him!

Then, next to Jesus, we shall be with all the bright spirits that have gone before us. Those that go to Australia begin forgetting father and mother that they left behind, because they are thinking of the brother and sister that went before. They will be at the landing place to meet them. Some of you have dear children that went Home in infancy. Some of you have a dear wife or a husband and they have been looking for you. I do not doubt they will know you. It will be one of the joys of Heaven to reunite these broken ties. I do not think Rowland Hill was at all foolish when he rode over from Cambridge, a distance of 13 miles, to see an old woman who was upon her dying bed. He said, “You are older than I am, but I am getting older and, even now, I sometimes think they have forgotten me. But in the meantime, as you are going first, take my love to the four great Johns—John who leaned on Jesus’ bosom and John Bunyan and John Calvin and John Knox. Take my love to them and tell them poor old Rowly will be coming by-and-by.”

I cannot doubt but that the message was delivered. I think there is such a connection between earth and Heaven that we shall see those who have gone before. How comfortable it must be to some aged ones when they think that though they are taken from that part of the family which remains on earth, they have a larger family circle probably in Heaven than here! It was so with a poor old man who accosted me the other day in a country lane and asked me for something. As I gave to him, I said, “How is it you are so poor?” “Ah,” he said, “everybody is dead that ever cared for me.” “But,” I said, “surely there is somebody left?” “No, Sir,” he said,

“there is nobody. I buried my poor old wife last year. We had two or three children and they all died. My brother had five or six and they died years ago. The people that were young in my time, they are all gone. I do not know anybody now, nobody cares for me.”

So, too, wrote one, who, if I am not mistaken, had been a votary of fashion in her gay circles—

***“The friends of youth, manhood and age,
At length are all laid in the ground.
An unit I stand on life’s stage,
With nothing but vanity round.
I wander bewildered and lost,
Without impulse or interest view.
And all hope of my heart is at most
To soon bid the desert adieu.
But this derelict state of man’s lot
That fate to the aged ordains,
Bids the heart turn the thoughts where it ought,
Nor seek worldly cure for its pains.
Thus I turn from the past and the lost,
Close the view my life’s picture supplies
And while penitent tears pay the cost,
Blot the follies of mirth from my eyes.”***

Well, but what a comfort to such a one if he could but feel that though there is nobody here, yet there are plenty there among those that are gone before to greet and love him!

So, let us salute those that are ahead. We cannot yet see the bright light at the harbor’s mouth, but we know we are on the right tack and that God’s Eternal Spirit is driving us on towards the harbor. O let us still think of them and sing as Wesley did—

***“Even now by faith we join our hands
With those that went before
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
On the eternal shore.”***

I shall not delay you, however, with these anticipations. There are some mournful reflections with which I will close.

The Lord Jesus, whose eyes of fire can read all hearts, knows this night that there are some of you who are not nearer your salvation than when you believed, because, first, you never did believe. And, secondly, that which you are nearer to is not salvation. Alas, Alas, alas, is it true that you have not believed? What does that mean? It means, with some of you that you have violated conscience. From your youth up you knew the beauties of godliness and the brightness of a holy life, but you have chosen evil in defiance of the inward monitor. You have elected to be an enemy of God! You have not believed and so have been a traitor to your own conscience.

And you have done it in the face of a hundred warnings—hundreds, did I say? No, hundreds of *thousands* of invitations! Are there not some of you who seem resolved to go to Hell over a mother's tears and prayers? You are pressing forward in the wrong way in defiance of the admonitions of a father who is now in Heaven. A godly education trained you for the sky but your own choice has doomed you to another fate. Alas, there are many in this congregation who have done violence to the Holy Spirit! There are many who have been accused, convicted, startled, made to pray—and yet tears have been brushed away—they have plunged into gaiety! They have returned to thoughtlessness! And so the hour of Divine Grace and the opportunity of mercy, they have flung to the winds.

If I knew the private history of a good many who have seats in this tabernacle, it would be a dreadful story of striving against every good principle, not for their own good, but for their own evil! You have fought not with devils, but with angels! You have fought with angels that you might be permitted to damn your own souls! You have contended with eternal mercy and not for the crown of your victory, but that you might ruin yourselves forever! If men were half as earnest to be *saved* as many seem to be to be *lost*, it were a blessed change. But, oh, the struggles of conscience, the murdering of godly thoughts, the putting of the bowstring about the neck of solemn conviction which has been committed by some who are here!

You have not believed—not believed! And here it is, the last Sunday night of 1868! Though three, four, five, six, or 10 years ago you were promising to mend and look hopeful, here you are just the same, with this label to be put upon you—*not believed, confirmed unbelievers, enemies to God*. Well now, there comes this horrible thought across my mind and I wish I did not feel compelled to utter it, but I must. Then, since you are not believing, your eternal *destruction* is nearer than ever it was. It must be so! Look at the vessel. The bows were in that direction. She is sailing that way. Cannot you see the trail she has left in the ocean? Do you not see everything indicates she is fast set towards that dreadful rock that shall grind her to pieces?

It is not merely that, the helm seems thus turned, but there is a current underneath the vessel which seems to be bearing it along swiftly. Apparently, the life of some of you is towards evil and towards Hell. Your whole tenor of life seems to bear you that way. Your inclinations, your companions, your very business seem to have acted like a gulf stream to bear you on towards ruin! Besides that, the wind is blowing that way—that wind that blew you into the theater last night, that blows you into carnal company, into the house of vice, that is drawing you fast, I say,

into fierce temptations, while you grow more and more reckless of the consequences.

What with the helm set and perpetually nailed fast so that it should not be moved, a current under the vessel and the wind filling her sails—great God, how is she speeding on towards her eternal fate! But, worst of all, there is the engine within throbbing, palpitating, helping the ship towards her ruin. Every thought, every desire you have, seems to be leading you away from Christ and onward towards mischief. See, there are others that have gone down during the past year! Others have been wrecked—wrecked on those rocks to which you are determinedly steering your soul. The wind is getting up, the tempest is howling fiercer than ever! With some of you, the sins you did *not* dare to do once have become *common* and the things that made you shudder and your blood run cold, and you said, “Is your servant a dog that he should do this thing?” you now do them!

But the wind is still getting up, howling and blowing strong upon you and driving you onward in that evil course which must end in your eternal destruction. The wind is getting up! If you look ahead you see the iron-bound coast before you. Iron-bound, I say, not a harbor or a creek—nothing to run to—not a crack or a crevice up which a man might climb! And you have no lifeboat along that coast to rescue you and no boats in your vessel that would prove seaworthy when the vessel strikes. O that God might preserve you from ever striking upon the rocks of destruction! Some of you are steering ahead fast for them. Hard aport! Turn the vessel round, for there is yet a chance! Stop her!

Now she is right in the wind’s teeth. Good mariner, hold fast to the helm and if you can, try to escape. It is too late for some of you! It is too late for all of you! Into those rocks you must drive and perish unless there shall come the ever-blessed Steersman of the Galilean Lake walking across the sea with pierced hands and feet and bid the winds to hush and turn right round and bid you believe in Him and then bid you steer to the port of Glory, where all shall be rest and peace! God grant that such mercy may come to you! Pray for it! Ask for it! Trust Jesus and you shall have it and to Him shall be the praise, world without end. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Psalm 49.*

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

DRESSING IN THE MORNING

NO. 1614

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 21, 1881,
 BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”
Romans 13:11-14.

THIS passage is a piece of holy teaching set forth under the parable of rising in the morning and preparing for the work of the day. May the Holy Spirit help me to place it before you in a clear light. It is a great mistake in a man's life when he does not know the times in which he lives and how to act in them—and when he does not know the time as to the day of his own life, so as to apply his heart unto wisdom. The Apostle speaks of his Roman brethren as “knowing the time.” What, then, is the time of day with the Christian? It is no longer the dead of the night with us, but, “the night is far spent, the day is at hand.” A little while ago the dense darkness of ignorance was about us, but the Gospel has made us light in the Lord. We were asleep in the gloom of sin—like a thick cloud it enveloped all our powers—but God has brought us out of darkness into His marvelous Light.

Some of us were plunged in despair, a night without a moon, without a star. We were without hope and feared that our future would be the “blackness of darkness forever.” That hopeless gloom is over and we have the Light of God and joy in Christ Jesus. The daystar is shining upon us, the Light of God that lightens the Gentiles cheers our path and we look for a perfect day though it is not, as yet, full day with us. Cloudless brightness is still a thing of desire and expectation. The sun has risen, but it is not noon as yet. For that we look when we shall see the Well-Beloved in His kingdom and wake up in His likeness. “The day is at hand,” says the Apostle, and that is a word of good cheer!

What, then, is “the time” which Paul would have us know? It is the early morning, it is the dawning of the eternal day. The sun has scattered the thick darkness of Nature's night. We are enjoying his first golden beams—the time of the singing of birds has come—the time of the dew of Grace and of the fresh breath of the Spirit. It is not full day yet but, still, the night has gone and the perfect day of our salvation, when body and soul, too, shall be delivered from every taint and trace of the work of Satan, is “nearer than when we believed.” The light and heat of day are strengthening. The darkness and chill of night are vanishing. We are get-

ting further off from the power of ignorance, sin and despair. We are getting more and more under the influence of knowledge, holiness and hope!

The Apostle would have us know for sure that the true Light of God now shines, even that which will grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day! Joy be to our souls, the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon us with healing beneath His wings! Of what value is the knowledge of the time of day? It lies here. Certain duties arise out of the hour. "Man goes forth unto his work and to his labor until the evening." From morning to evening and from evening to morning, again, there is a round of duty to be fulfilled and each work is pleasing if attended to in its own season. When the shadows of evening fall, the time has come for going home, where domestic joys await us at the hearth. It would not be right for the laboring man to go home in the morning, nor seemly for him to be going out at night.

Each duty has its own time of day and, therefore, the Apostle would have us know the hour and be assured that it is high time to awake out of sleep. He urges us to the duties which attend the hour of rising, the hour to which we have now come. As my Master helps me, I shall endeavor, first of all, to give the morning call. And then, secondly, to preach the morning Gospel.

I. First, LISTEN TO THE MORNING CALL. I have shown you that the hour of the day is that in which men should rise and begin their daily service. And its first seasonable duty is to awake—"It is high time to awake out of sleep." When day begins sleep should end. The bugle sounds in the camp, "Awake! Awake!" But are not all Christians awake? Yes, from the sleep of *death*, but not from other kinds of sleep. Many need rough shaking and loud calling before they will be thoroughly awakened. Beloved Brothers and Sisters, I speak to you upon whom the Light of God has arisen and who are now delivered from the power of darkness, for you will not deny that it is high time for you to shake off the bands of slumber.

You should rise from the sleep of inaction. Do not let your religion consist in receiving all and doing nothing! Work while it is called today and, as you wish to be faithful servants of your gracious Lord, be up at once. It is time for you to stir yourselves and see what can be done with the golden hours for the glory of your Redeemer's name! Go forth and see what herbs are to be planted, what weeds are to be rooted up, what part of the garden needs watering and which of the vines need pruning. Your Master's vineyard needs constant labor, for He, Himself, keeps it with unceasing care. Up, then, gird up your loins and yield your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God!

Leave, also, all lethargy behind you. At night a man may yawn and stretch himself as he likes, but when the morning comes, good Sir, have done with yawning and display energy! Look about you and be brisk, for the day will be none too long. Does not the song of the birds and the glitter of the dew bid you shake off your slumber and have done with listlessness? Oh, I hate to see some professing Christian people go about the Lord's work in such a languid way, as if it did not matter how their Lord was served. Ah me! If God were obeyed with half the activity with which the *devil* is served, we should soon see a change in Church life! Men are wide awake when they are serving themselves! Jingle a guinea seven miles

off and they will hear it! But if service is to be done for *Christ*, you must put the clarion to your mouth and blow a blast as loud as the judgment summons, before you can wake men up to hearty enthusiasm! It is high time that we woke out of half-heartedness!

Moreover, it is time to have done with dreaming. That is proper for the night, but not for the morning. An ungodly man's pursuits are mere dreams. He hunts after shadows; he feeds upon ashes; his weightiest business is a mere vision, a thing of nothing! You who are not of the night must not dote on the world's shadows, but look for heavenly substance. Live for *eternal* realities. Set about business that is real in God's sight, such business as you will think worthy of your heart when you come to die and when you stand before the Judgment Seat of God! Have done with daydreams as well as night dreams and come to stern matters of eternal fact. Trifle no longer! The time past may suffice you for that. Be earnest! Be all awake, put forth all your powers, awaken all your faculties. "It is high time to awake out of sleep."

When awake, what is the next duty? Is it not to cast off your night clothes? Our text says, "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness." The man who is just awakened and finds that it is morning light, must, first of all, take off the garments which covered him during the night. He quits his bed and, in so doing, shakes off his bed clothes and leaves them. Your friends do not come downstairs wrapped in the sheets which wrapped them at night—we should suppose they were seeking their graves if they did! The covers of night are not our covers by day. There must be a casting off in the morning before there can be a putting on—there is a measure of undressing before we commence to dress.

Simple and homely as the figure is, it conveys a lesson which I pray you to remember. Sins and follies are to be cast off when we put on the garments of the Light of God. I have known a man profess to be converted, but he has merely put religion over his old character. He has been a passionate man with bad companions and all he has done is to carry his bad temper into a Church meeting. He has been accustomed to drink more wine than is good for him and all the change is that he drinks it in respectable company or in secret. He has taken up the saint without casting off the sinner! The rags of his lust are rotting under the raiment of his profession!

This will never do! Christ has not come to save you *in* your sins but *from* your sins! Anger and drunkenness, and such like, must be gotten rid of! Christ never came that you might christen your anger by the name of warmth and your drunkenness with the name of liberty! I have heard of persons living unclean lives who have heard that faith in Jesus Christ would save them who have misunderstood this doctrine so grievously that they have thought of believing in Christ and continuing in their evil ways! That attempt will be their ruin. Rahab the harlot was saved by faith, but she was saved from being a harlot any longer. The rags of sin must come off if we put on the robe of Christ. There must be a taking away of the love of sin! There must be a renouncing of the practices and habits of sin, or else a man cannot be a Christian!

It will be an idle attempt to try and wear religion as a sort of celestial overall over the top of old sins. The King's daughter is all glorious within,

or she would never have received her clothing of worked gold. The vision of Zechariah teaches us the way of the Lord—when he saw Joshua clothed with filthy garments, the Lord did not put upon him a goodly vesture over these—but He first said, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” And then He added, “Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with change of raiment.” You must be cleansed in the blood of Jesus before you can be clothed in the white linen which is the righteousness of the saints! See to it that, being awakened out of your sleep, you cast off all the garments of the night!

What were they? We find a list of them in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians. “But now you also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.” Were we fond of the joys of the ungodly? Take them off! Did we speak things which are untrue? Cast them off! Could we sing a loose, lascivious song? Cast it off! Were we angry, morose, malicious? Put it off! Were we greedy, grasping, covetous? Cast it off! Alas, many professors are as greedy of gain as they ever were, but they wear religion over the top of their miserly rags and want you to call the churl generous, though he is as stingy as he can be! Whatever it is that is unworthy of the light of day, let us cast it off.

The Apostle says, “cast off.” Let the habits of “your sinful nature be from now on regarded as castoffs—cast them right away and say, “I have done with them! There will not be another night for me and, therefore, I shall not need them. Bury them, burn them—they are my castoffs.” Let us only remember our evil habits to weep over them! Let us only speak of them to warn others and to glorify the Grace of God! As to ever bringing out our ill habit and trying to put them on, occasionally, God forbid it should be so!

So far we have described our getting up—first, we awake and then we cast off the garments of darkness. Now we must put on our *morning* dress. The Believer should at once look to his toilet and array himself for the day—“Let us put on the armor of light.” “What?” says one, “armor? Why, I thought my danger was over! The darkness has departed and I am no longer afraid of thieves and robbers, for the daylight has come. Why, then, should I put on armor?” Is it not instructive that no sooner do we awake than we have to put on “the whole armor of God”? Does it not warn us that a day of battle is coming? Brothers and Sisters, you may as well expect a conflict, for it is sure to come, and it will be wise to put on your harness for the fight!

Dress according to what you will meet with during the day. You are not at Home yet—the land of peace is yet beyond you. Young converts think that they have got to Heaven, or very near it, but it is not so. You will get there one day, but the time is not yet. You are in an enemy’s country—put on the armor of the Light of God! Perhaps before you get down to breakfast, an arrow will be shot at you by the great enemy. Or you may come downstairs after your morning prayers feeling as safe as if you were among the angels—and yet you will not get through the first meal in the day without an assault from the archenemy, or an outburst of your own corruptions, or an attack from the world! Your foes may be found in your own household and they may wound you at your own table!

Before you leave your bed-chamber you had better put on girdle, helmet, breastplate, shield—you had better take the complete panoply! A Christian is never safe unless he is protected from head to foot by Divine Grace, for in such a world as this you know not behind what bush the assassin may be lurking, or from what corner the fatal bolt may fly. Go forth as a mailed knight to the war, for the battle rages on all sides and you need the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. The saint must be a man of war from his youth. He must pray that his hands may be taught to war and his fingers to fight.

The Greek word, however, may be understood to signify not only armor, but such garments as are fitted and suitable for the day's work. These should be put on at once and our soul should be dressed for service. Pray God to clothe you in such style that you may be ready for whatever comes. You are not a gentleman on the parade, but a workman in his workday clothes. Some people are too fine to do real service for the Lord. When the Duke of Wellington asked one of our soldiers how he would like to be dressed if he had to fight the battle of Waterloo again, he answered that he should like to be in his shirt sleeves. How I wish that Christians would get into their shirt sleeves, as if they meant to work for Jesus! I like to see the carpenter with his apron on bending down to his work and not sitting on the bench swinging his legs all day.

Alas, that some Christians should be usually seen in this latter posture! O Brothers and Sisters, it is morning with you and I beseech you by the mercies of God, array yourselves to do your Lord's bidding! What said God to Jeremiah? "Gird up your loins and arise." Brace your soul to action—there is work for you to do today which angels might well envy you! Go forth like a man ready for work. The Lord would have us live with our loins girt about, our lamps trimmed and our lights burning because we have come to an hour when idleness and inaction are out of place—earnest, watchful diligence is required of us! Let us put on the garments of the Light of God and let us work while it is day, for our Father works and Jesus works.

Now you are dressed, what next? It remains that we walk forth and behave as in the Light of God. The directions are explicit—"Let us walk honestly, as in the day," which means let our demeanor be such as becomes daylight. How should a child of light conduct himself? The word translated, "honestly," may mean, "decently"—with decorum and dignity. In the middle of the night, if you have to go about the house, you are not particular as to how you are dressed—there is no person to see you—and so you will slip from one room to another in casual dress. But when you rise in the morning and come down to your day's work, you choose to be somewhat neat. You do not go out to your business slip-shod and half-dressed, but you array yourself according to your station in an appropriate manner.

Let it be so with you *spiritually*—holiness is the highest decency, the most becoming apparel. You live in the daylight, Brothers and Sisters, therefore walk as one who is "compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." Yet more—walk as one who has the eyes of God upon him, which is infinitely more. "You God see me." King of kings, should I rush into Your court in casual dress? Should I ask you to walk with me while I

am all undressed, or wearing filthy rags which I ought long ago to have cast away? The soul's appearance should be a matter of great care. "Be you clean," says God. He will not walk with us unless we keep our garments unspotted from the world—He would have us observe that dignity of spirit and conduct which are becoming in the Temple of God.

Sleep in what garments you may, but when you walk abroad in the day, take heed, O princes of the blood royal of Heaven, that your raiment is according to your rank! "Walk honestly," says our translation, because that is the right thing for daylight. The thief breaks through and steals beneath the cover of darkness, but a child of the Light of God must be upright and just. I earnestly beg all professing Christians to be honest in heart and then they will be honest in word and deed. You ask me, "Do you mean that we should pay our debts?" Of course! I mean all that, but I mean far more—be honest when you speak *to* others and *of* others. Do not say of any man behind his back that which you would not utter to his face. Do not carry a mask about with you—it is a horrible instrument of torture to an honest man. Say what you mean, and mean what you say.

Many act upon quite another principle, practicing reserve and policy, if not duplicity. They bring themselves into a great deal of trouble by being cunning and, "playing their cards well," as they say. What has a Christian to do with such a deceitful piece of gaming? Walk honestly! Let all your actions be such as will bear the Light of God! A man that stands under a powerful electric light bearing right down on him would feel uncomfortable with everybody looking at him. At any rate, he would be careful what he did. Behold, the Light of eternity is shining full upon your soul! God Himself sees you! You stand in the blaze of the eternal day. O Christian, act with transparent honesty! Have nothing to conceal—come to the Light of God that your deeds may be made manifest that they are worked in God. Be clothed with the Light of God and walk in the Light as God is in the Light.

Our position in the light of the morning demands of us one more point of behavior—we must renounce the deeds of darkness. If we have been truly awakened and have put on the garments of the Light of God, it behooves us to have done with the things that belong to the night. I will not dwell upon them at any great length, but I may not pass them over, since the Apostle thought it necessary to mention three pairs of evils with which we must have done. He mentions them because even in Christian assemblies it is necessary to denounce these things. People exclaim against the preacher if he speaks plainly about the vices of the times. "Really, it is shocking," says one, "I do not like to hear such indelicate things referred to."

No, no, ladies and gentlemen who do such things cannot bear to hear of them by way of rebuke! I have noticed that none are more fantastically nice than the morally nasty; none are so ready to find fault when a spade is called a spade as those whose morals most need digging. They will commit the vice themselves, but they cannot bear to hear it mentioned—it shocks their marvelously delicate minds! The Apostle Paul felt none of the noxious daintiness which touches sin with a delicate hand—he speaks out plainly and he says that all Christian people, first, must have done with sensuality, which he describes as "rioting and drunkenness." If a drinking

bout is held, it is usually at night. Banquets generally begin in the evening—if they become scenes of gluttony and drunkenness they advance far into the night. But the sun rebukes such orgies and men usually give heed to the warning—“they that are drunk are drunk in the night.” Christian men have done with night and ought to have done with all excess in meat and drink. Alas, there are some who spend more over a single dinner for a few than would keep families of poor people a month! Gluttony is seldom mentioned as a possible fault, and yet I fear it is far from being an obsolete vice among professed followers of Jesus!

“Drunkenness.” Well, I need not say how shameful it is in any man, but he that professes to be a Christian man, how temperate, how abstinent should he be, for intoxication is a soul-destroying sin and no drunk can enter the Kingdom of God! These are night vices—let the children of night have them if they will—as for us, we desire to be filled with the Spirit and fed upon the Bread of Heaven, for we are the children of the day! We have nobler feasts than the banquets of revelers and more choice wines than the vintage of Sodom can yield! Take heed, Brothers and Sisters, of these works of darkness!

Then Paul denounces impurity by saying, “not in chambering and wantonness.” It is an awful thing when a man calls himself by the name of Christian and yet can be foul in language, unchaste in conversation, lascivious in spirit, wicked in life. If any man indulges in fornication and adultery and yet calls himself a Christian, he will surely come under the curse of God! We speak of such persons weeping, for they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ. Oh that you who are young might be kept from anything like looseness or effeminacy! Avoid glances, words and thoughts which tend that way. Do not go near the borders of that sin, for men and women sin not grossly all at once—they slide by degrees—as the vessel slides from the stocks into the sea at the time of its launching. It moves very little at first, but, by-and-by it gathers impetus and glides rapidly into the deep. God keep you from sins of the flesh, for they are a deep ditch and the abhorred of the Lord fall into them! They are base deeds of the night—does not Nature, itself, teach us so? Vice walks abroad beneath the moon—it is by night that our streets are defiled! O you who have reached the morning light, abhor these things and hate even the garment spotted by the flesh!

The next night deed is passion—passion taking the two shapes of “strife and envying.” Brawls are for the night. Fierce assaults disturb us in our sleep, but they are not usual in the day. So Christian men, being of the day, are not to strive. It is a great pity when strife comes into a family, when brother is divided from brother and father from son and when relatives cannot speak well of one another. These bitter things are for the night—you have reached the daylight and must have done with them! Envy is a thing of darkness and shame—that “green-eyed monster” comes out in the dark and finds fault with those who are better than itself. Sinners do not like good men because their excellence rebukes them and, therefore, they endeavor to mar their reputation. This evil is not of the day! Leave it, scorn it, dread it, abhor it! God deliver you from it! Away, then, from all deeds of darkness, and seek only that which may be set in the face of the sun and cause no man to blush.

II. Now, I have preached so long upon things required of you that you are beginning to say, "Ah me, how much there is for us to do! How shall we ever accomplish it? We have to wake, to cast off our night garments, to dress in suitable attire, to behave ourselves as children of the Light of God and to avoid the deeds of darkness. Alas, what shall we do?" Now listen, you anxious ones—here is something sweet and blessed for you—you shall be inclined and helped to obey in all things! Therefore listen diligently and hear, that your souls may live! I preach to you THE MORNING GOSPEL. Here it is—"Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ."

This verse has been rendered very famous in Church history, since that chief among the fathers, the mighty teacher, Augustine, found the Light of God through reading this verse. He had been leading an ungodly and, more or less, dissipated life, when he began, in a measure, to think upon his condition, and he thought he heard a voice saying to him, "Tolle, lege. Tolle, lege!" "Take up and read." So, taking up the New Testament which lay near, he began to read it and, as God would have it, he opened upon this very place, and he read—"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put you on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Here are his words, which I will read to you—"I would read no further, for I needed not; for when I had read to the end of this sentence, all the darkness of doubtfulness vanished away, as if some clear light of security were poured into my heart. It was as if it had been said, 'O man, acknowledge your misery, you are naked; cover your filthiness: put upon you Jesus Christ!' And forthwith I felt a fire within me. My heart was lightened, the scales fell from my eyes—I was able to see!" How earnestly do I desire that these words may strike some of you in the same powerful manner! Does anyone here desire to take off his old garments of sin and to dress in robes of holiness? And does he mourn over an empty wardrobe? Look, here is a robe for him—"Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Did I hear one cry, "You told us to put on armor, but we have neither shield nor breastplate! How can we put on the armor of light?" Here is the panoply—"Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ." Does a man cry, "I am afraid to go into the world undressed and I dare not put on the old garments of darkness! What can I do?" Here it is! Here is the death of sin and the life of holiness—"Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ." Oh, blessed, charming words! I wish I had the power to fully set forth its meaning before you. For, first, in the Lord Jesus Christ there is covering for your nakedness! The garment covers the man—he is hidden and his garments are seen. Come, then, poor Sinner, and take by faith the Lord Jesus Christ to be a covering for your soul! You are naked, but He will be your robe of righteousness!

There is in the Lord Jesus a complete and suitable apparel for your soul, by which every blemish and defilement shall be put out of sight according to the word, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." In Christ Jesus there is merit to cover our demerit, purity to cover our impurity, obedience to cover our disobedience, beauty to cover our deformity, perfection to cover our imperfection, acceptance to cover our provocation! We are comely with the comeliness which the Lord Jesus puts upon us. *He* is seen and *we* are hidden, or only seen in Him so

as to be accepted in the Beloved! We have nothing to do but to enter into Christ by faith, for, virtually, that is what a man has to do with his garments—he gets into them and so he who puts on Christ is in Christ! Christ is over him and round about him.

Did a poor naked, shivering soul ever hear more pleasant words than these—“Put on Christ”? You may do so, for the Lord *commands* it. Was there ever a sweeter message? You, poor Soul, just awakened out of sleep and startled into saying, “What must I do to be saved?” Here is Jesus set before you! He is perfect in righteousness, matchless in holiness, unrivalled in beauty and you may put Him on and stand clothed in that righteousness and beauty! I hear you say, “I see Him, but how is He to be mine?” He is yours by God’s free gift—put Him on! You have not to improve upon Him, or add to Him, or embellish Him, but to take Him as you take your coat and put Him on! There He is—He is a robe that delights to be worn! Myriads of souls have tried this garment and it has been exactly suitable to everyone out of all who have put it on! This is all you have to do—put it on—and that the Holy Spirit will help you to do!

You have not to make the garment, to decorate the garment, or in any way to add to it or to alter it, but only to put it on! Nakedness, poverty, or guilt need not prevent a man’s putting on a robe which is provided for him. Put it on! Put it on! This is a most vivid picture of what Faith does. She puts Christ about her and He covers all. Faith does not say, “I must clothe myself and *then* put on Christ.” No, no! Its cry is, “*Because* I am naked I cover myself with Christ!” The soul says, “I have nothing of my own that God can look upon with complacency, but I will put on Christ, for I know in Him God is well pleased.” The sufferings of Jesus will be set to my account, His merits shall avail for me and His righteousness shall be my righteousness! Oh it is a blessed, blessed word!

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and sing, “He has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness.” “But,” says one, “I need more than just to be covered. I must have a garment provided for my necessity, suitable for my everyday work.” My text points you to a full supply—“Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ”—as the most suitable dress for a saint at work, as well as for a sinner desiring justification before God! As we have already said, a first necessity is to awake, and truly none can lie and dream after they have once beheld His glorious robe—they are eager to obtain it!

Our next necessity is to cast off the old garments of the night and nothing helps us more than to put on Christ. Only look at this robe of righteousness as yours and you will loathe the filthy rags of sin at once! When a man perceives the perfection of the righteousness of Christ which is freely given to him by God, he abhors his sin, he loves his God and pines to be like He in holiness. There is no breeder of repentance like simple faith in Jesus Christ! Unbelieving philosophers tell us that if we preach salvation by faith in Christ alone, people will take license to sin—but in this they err from lack of observation. Now speak your own experience, Christian man—did you ever feel yourself moved to *sin* by the assurance of being justified by Christ’s righteousness? Never was there such a case in this world!

A man may hear about it and turn it into an excuse for sin, but he cannot, in his heart, believe it and do so. I know that when I most clearly see that I am saved by Christ alone, it is *then* that I most of all long to be holy. I never follow after personal righteousness so eagerly as when I know that my righteousness comes wholly from the Lord! The most grand motive power for the death of sin is the death of Christ and nothing makes us so eager to die unto sin as Christ's death for sin! Off goes the filthy raiment at the sight of the glorious, spotless righteousness which is freely presented to every needy sinner in Christ Jesus.

Yes, and it is not only repentance that is thus worked by Christ, but all the power to be holy, to be gracious, to be forgiving, to be heroic, to be enthusiastic in the service of God—all comes through Christ when we are in Him. If you desire to be holy in life, the short path to it is to have done with your own righteousness and put on Christ! If the man who has been a drunk resolves to be sober, let him put on Christ and in Jesus he will deny himself. If the man who has been unchaste would gladly be pure in life and heart, let him put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. There is such a matchless power about a simple faith in Christ, when it puts on Christ to be our righteousness, that it leads the Believer to such a walk as is decorous, dignified, honorable, holy. The man is moved to walk worthy of the noble garment in which he is arrayed and his whole life rises out of the common level into the excellence of Grace!

I would call attention to this garment very specially in a few words. The text says, "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ." What made him use the *three* names there? Because he meant to point out the three senses in which we clothe ourselves from head to foot with Christ. "Put you on the *Lord*"—become His servant, wear His livery, let Him be your Rabbi, your Master, your King, your Lord. Put you on "*Jesus*," the *Savior*—acknowledge yourself as a saved one, saved by Him whose name is called Jesus—"for He shall save His people from their sins." Put you on "*Christ*"—that is the *Anointed*—take an anointing from God the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ to whom He is given without measure. As Christ is anointed to be Prophet, Priest and King, put Him on in all these three offices and rejoice to do so. "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Do not put on Jesus only as your Savior, put Him on as your Commander! Do not only put Him on as your Master and Savior, but as your Christ, anointed for you! Take a *whole* Christ to yourself that you may be wholly in Him and so may be spiritual, gracious, holy. Therefore may those around you see nothing of you, but much of your Lord. May your outward character be so Christlike that men may see Christ displayed upon you as a new garment is displayed by the act of wearing it. May the spirit of Glory and of Christ rest upon you! May you be clothed with power! Our Lord said to His disciples "Tarry at Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high"—the word signifies, "clothed." If we are clothed with Christ, we shall be clothed with power from on high even as He has said, "the works that I do shall you do, also." Therefore put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Yes," but I hear another say, "I need not only raiment to cover my nakedness and supply my necessity, but I need apparel for my dignity. You

told us that we were to walk abroad in a worthy and honorable manner.” Ah, and so you will, if you put on Christ! Oh what a bright creature, in the sight of God, is the man who has put on Christ! God Himself asks no purer or more acceptable array. You never saw a seraph—bright like a flame of fire is each holy messenger of God—but if you could see a soul that is arrayed in Christ’s righteousness, you would think a seraph a dull, dim thing compared with it! A seraph wears nothing but created brightness, but a child of God clothed in Christ wears uncreated splendor! The perfection of God is upon the soul that has put on Christ! Yes, and while God thus sees us in Christ and is well pleased with us, our fellows are obliged to admire us, too. If you put on Christ, so that you become like Christ, your walk and conversation will be bright and lustrous before the eyes of those about you. They, perhaps, will not like it—they may even *hate* you for it—but they will not be able to do otherwise than acknowledge your excellence. He who lives in Christ lives a charming life, which, by its loveliness, commands the homage of onlookers. “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Oh, you that deck yourselves out with jewelry and ornaments, how much more lovely and dignified you would become if in all your carriage and conversation, by sacred gentleness and love, by holy zeal and unswerving decision for truth, you put on Christ! “Yes,” says another, “but you have forgotten part of your sermon. You said that now we were awake we were to put on *armor*.” I have not forgotten, for Christ is armor for our defense—therefore put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is a coat of mail for you. The man that does as Christ would do, thinks as Christ would think and lives as Christ would live makes Christ to be all in all to him and, therefore, armors himself with Christ. Thus he is made impervious to the shafts of the enemy and amid the darts of temptation or the arrows of slander he may abide unharmed! The Lord is our defense and the Holy One of Israel is our King.

“Yes,” says one, “but you told us that the day, when it was once up, would never again darken into night, but brighten into a perfect day.” It is even so and here is raiment provided for our expectancy. We may expect to meet with years of mingled conflict, service and suffering. “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ” and you will be prepared for all weathers, fair or foul, and for all conditions and requirements. This garment will never wax old—it will last you all through the desert and, what is more, it is suitable for Canaan and you shall keep it on forever and ever! We need a garment that we can wear in all the events which will happen in the awful future, the endless future. It is on this account that I press home the words of my text—“Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our Lord is a fit robe for life and death, for time and for eternity. I expect to battle till I die—here is my armor, the integrity and uprightness which I learn of Christ will preserve me. I expect in death to rise out of this lower life into a higher one and when I reach that higher life, that Glory life, I shall require a garment and I shall find it in my Lord. I cannot have a better garment than the Lord, Himself, and there is a wedding coming on! Every Believer expects to be married to his Lord. Then, dear Friend, you must certainly have a wedding garment! How can you go in unto the marriage feast not having on a wedding garment? And here you

have it—"Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ." When the King comes in to see His guests and He sees Jesus Christ covering them all, He will be well-pleased. He will see His dear Son reflected in them all and from them all—and His delight shall be in them, even as it is in His Son. If you put on the Lord Jesus Christ you will be fit for the inspection of the King; fit for all the royalties and pomps of the eternal marriage; fit to stand in the coronation of Christ, Himself, as one of the many brethren of the crowned First-Born!

Now I have done, but how I wish that some souls would be moved as Augustine was and, at once, put on Christ before they leave the place! I wish that some of you that came in here this morning with nothing on but your old ragged righteousness would at once pull it off and throw it under your feet! Here is Jesus Christ, Himself, waiting to become your righteousness! Will you not have Him? His is a perfect righteousness, for He magnified the Law and made it honorable! He made a perfect robe and then He dyed it in His own blood, that you might wear it as the imperial purple of the kingdom which He gives you.

"What is to be done with it?" Put it on! Did I hear you say, "I would like to take it home to think about it"? What? And do nothing? I pray you put it on at once! Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. "But I do not know that it will fit me." Put it on and try! "Oh, but I am not fit to wear anything so good." I know you aren't. Put it on and you will see how wonderful you will look when Jesus covers you! The fitness lies in the garment—not in you! Do you cry, "I am anything but what I ought to be"? Put it on and let *Christ* be seen! "Ah, but still, am I to be saved in a minute?" Put on Christ at once and see, for it is written, "He that believes in Him has everlasting life." Put it on, poor Soul—that is all—put it on!

"But I have nothing that I can bring." Do not bring anything—just put on Christ! There He is! Do not refuse Him! I beseech you, do not refuse Him, for he who will not put on Christ, when Christ is freely set before him, must not be amazed if, at the last, he stands shivering amidst the glare of the last lightning in front of the awful Judgment Seat, with the eyes of men and angels, and the eyes of the great Judge fixed upon Him!

Ah, then he tries to hide himself and cannot. And he shrieks to rocks and mountains, "Hide me, hide me from the face of Him that sits on the Throne!" He will have no one but himself to blame when it comes to that, if he will not put on Christ. May the Lord Jesus now be made unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Amen.

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CHRIST PUT ON NO. 2132

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 23, 1890.

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

***“But put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision
for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”
Romans 13:14.***

Christ must be *in* us before He can be *on* us. Divine Grace puts Christ within and enables us to put on Christ without. Christ must be in the heart by *faith* before He can be in the life by *holiness*. If you need light from a lantern, the first business is to light the candle inside it—and then, as a consequence—the light shines through to be seen of men. When Christ is formed in you, the hope of Glory—do not conceal your love to Him but put Him on in your conduct as the Glory of your hope! As you have Christ within as your Savior, the secret of your inner life, so put on Christ to be the beauty of your daily life. Let the external be brightened by the internal and this shall be to you that “armor of light” which all the soldiers of the Lord Jesus are privileged to wear.

As Christ is your Food, nourishing the inner man, so put Him on as your garments covering the outer man. “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.” It is a very wonderful expression. It is most condescending on our Lord’s part to allow such an exhortation. Paul speaks the mind of the Holy Spirit and the word is full of meaning. Oh, for Divine Grace to learn its teaching! It is full of very solemn warning to us, for we need a covering thus divinely perfect.

Oh, for Grace to practice the command to put it on! The Apostle does not so much say, “Take up the Lord Jesus Christ and bear Him with you,” but, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ” and thus *wear* Him as the garment of your life! A man takes up his staff for a journey or his sword for a battle—but he lays these down again after a while. You are to put on the Lord Jesus as you put on your garments and thus He is to cover you and to become part and parcel of your outward appearance, surrounding your very self as a visible part of your manifest personality.

“Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.” This we do when we believe in Him—then we put on the Lord Jesus Christ as our robe of righteousness. It is a very beautiful picture of what faith does. Faith finds our manhood naked to its shame—faith sees that Christ Jesus is the Robe of Righteousness provided for our need. And faith, at the command of the Gospel, appropriates Him and gets the benefit of Him for it. By faith the soul covers her weakness with His strength, her sin with His atonement, her folly with His wisdom, her failure with His triumphs, her death with His life, her wanderings with His constancy.

By faith, I say, the soul hides itself within Jesus till Jesus, only, is seen and the man is seen in Him. We take not only His righteousness as being

imputed to us, but we take Himself to be really ours. And so His righteousness becomes ours as a matter of fact. "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." His righteousness is set to our account and becomes ours because *He* is ours. I, though long unrighteous in myself, believe in the testimony of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ and I am accounted righteous, even as it is written, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

The riches of God in Christ Jesus become mine as I take the Lord Jesus Christ to be everything to me. But, you see, the text does not distinctly refer to this great matter for the Apostle is not referring to the imputed righteousness of Christ. The text stands in connection with precepts concerning matters of everyday practical life and to these it must refer. It is not justification, but sanctification that we have here. Moreover, we cannot be said to put on the imputed righteousness of Christ *after* we have believed, for that is upon us as soon as we believe and needs no more putting on!

The command before us is given to those who *have* the imputed righteousness of Christ—who are justified—who are accepted in Christ Jesus. "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ" is a word to you that are saved by Christ and justified by His righteousness! You are to put on Christ and keep putting Him on in the sanctifying of your lives unto your God. You are, everyday, to continually more and more wear as the garment of your lives the Character of your Lord.

I will handle this subject by answering questions. First, *Where are we to go for our daily garment?* "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ." Secondly, *What is this daily garment?* "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ." Thirdly, *How are we to act towards evil when we are thus clad?* "and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." And then I will finish with the consideration of the question, *Why should we hasten to put on this matchless garment?* For, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us put on the armor of light."

I. May the Holy Spirit help us while we, in the first place, answer the inquiry, WHERE ARE WE TO GO FOR OUR DAILY GARMENT? Beloved, there is but one answer to all questions as to our necessities. We go to the Lord Jesus Christ for everything! To us, "Christ is All." "He is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption."

When you have come to Christ for pardon and justification you are not to go elsewhere for the next thing. Having begun with Jesus you are to go on with Him, even to the end, "for you are complete in Him," perfectly stored in Christ, fully equipped in Him. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." Every necessity that can ever press upon you between this life in the wilderness and yonder sea of glass before the Throne of God will be found in Christ Jesus!

You ask, "What am I to do for a vesture which will befit the courts of the Lord? For armor that will protect me from the assaults of the foe? For a robe that will enable me to act as a priest and king unto God?" The one answer to the much-including question is, "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ." You have no further need. You need not look elsewhere for a thread or a shoe lace. So, dear Friends, I gather from this that if we seek

an example, we may not look elsewhere than to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not written, “Put you on this man or that,” but, “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The model for a saint is His Savior. We are very apt to select some eminently gracious or useful man to be a pattern for us. A measure of good may result from such a course, but a degree of evil may also come of it. There will always be some fault about the most excellent of our fellow mortals and as our tendency is to caricature virtues till we make them faults, so is it our greater folly to mistake faults for excellences and copy them with careful exactness and generally with abundant exaggeration! By this plan, with the best intentions, we may reach very sad results.

Follow Jesus in the way and you will not err. Let your feet go down exactly in His footprints and you can not slide. As His Grace enables us, let us make it true that, “as He was, so are we in this world.” You need not look beyond your Lord for an example under any circumstances. Of Him you may enquire as of an unfailing oracle. You need never enquire what is the general custom of those about you—the broad road of the many is no way for you. You may not ask, “What are the rulers of the people doing?” You follow not the fashion of the great, but the example of the Greatest of all!

“Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ” will apply to each one of us. If I am a tradesman, I am not to ask myself—On what principles do other traders conduct their business? Not so. What the world may do is no rule for *me*. If I am a student I should not enquire—How do others feel towards religion? Let others do as they will, it is for us to serve the Lord! In every relationship in the domestic circle, in the literary world, in the sphere of friendship, or in business connections, I am to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

If I am perplexed, I am bound to ask—“What would Jesus do?” And His example is to guide me. If I cannot conceive of His acting in a certain way, neither must I allow myself to do so—but if I perceive, from His precepts, His spirit or His actions, that He would follow such-and-such a course—to that line I must keep. I am not to put on the philosopher, the politician, the priest or the popularity hunter—I am to put on the Lord Jesus Christ by taking His life to be the model upon which I fashion my own life.

From our text I should also gather that we are to go to the Lord Jesus Christ for *stimulus*. We want not only an example, but a motive—an impulse and constraining power to keep us true to that example. We need to put on zeal as a cloak and to be covered with a holy influence which will urge us onward. Let us go to the Lord Jesus for motives. Some fly to Moses and would drive themselves to duty by the thunders of Sinai. Their design in service is to *earn* eternal life or prevent the loss of the favor of God. Thus they come under Law and forsake the true way of the Believer which is *faith*.

Not from dread of punishment or hope of reward do Believers serve the living God—we put on Christ and the love of Christ constrains us. Here is the spring of true holiness—“Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace.” A stronger force than Law has gripped you—you serve God, not as servants whose sole thought is

the wage—but as children, whose eye is on the Father and His love. Your motive is *gratitude* to Him by whose precious blood you are redeemed. He has put on *your* cause and therefore you would take up *His* cause. I pray you, go not to the steep sides of Sinai to find motives for holiness—but hasten to Calvary and there find those sweet herbs of love which shall be the medicine of your soul. “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Covered with a consciousness of His love and fired with love to Him in return, you will be strong to be, to do, or to suffer as the Lord God may appoint. Need I say never find a reason for doing right in a desire to win the approbation of your fellow men? Do not say, “I must do this or that in order to please my company.” That is poor life which is sustained by the breath of other men’s nostrils! Followers of Jesus will not wear the livery of custom or stand in awe of human censure. Love of commendation and fear of disapprobation are low and beggarly motives—they sway the feeble many—but they ought not to rule the man in Christ.

You must be moved by a far higher consideration—you serve the Lord Christ and must not, therefore, become the lackey of men. His Glory is to be your one aim! And for the joy of this you must treat all else as a light thing. Here we find our spur—“The love of Christ constrains us.” Beloved, the text means more than this! “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ,” that is, find in Jesus your *strength*. Although you are saved and are quickened by the Holy Spirit so as to be a living child of the living God, yet you have no strength for heavenly duty except as you receive it from above. Go to Jesus for power! I charge you, never say, “I shall do the right because I have resolved to do it. I am a man of strong mind. I am determined to resist this evil and I know I shall not yield. I have made up my mind and there is no fear of my turning aside.”

Brother, if you rely upon *yourself* in that way, you will soon prove to be a broken reed. Failure follows at the heel of self-confidence. “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.” I charge you, do not rely upon what you have acquired in the past. Say not in your heart, “I am a man of experience and therefore I can resist temptation which would crush the younger and greener folk. I have now spent so many years in persistent well-doing that I may reckon myself out of danger. Is it likely that I should ever be led astray?” O Sir, it is *more* than likely! It is a fact already! The moment that a man declares he cannot fall, he has already fallen from sobriety and humility!

Your head is turned, my Brother, or you would not talk of your inward perfection! And when the head turns, the feet are not very safe. Inward conceit is the mother of open sin. Make *Christ* your strength and not yourself—nor your acquirements or experiences. “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ” day by day and make not the rags of yesterday to be the raiment of the future. Get fresh Grace. Say with David, “All my fresh springs are in You.” Get all your power for holiness and usefulness from Jesus and from Him alone.

“Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” Rely not on resolves, pledges, methods, prayers. Lean on Jesus, only, as the strength of your life. “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is a wonderful word to me because it indicates that in the Lord Jesus we have *perfection*. I shall

in a moment or two show you some of the virtues and Graces which are resplendent in the Character of our Lord Jesus Christ. These may be likened to different parts of our armor or garments—the helmet, the shoes, the breast-plate. But the text does not say, “Put on this quality or virtue of the Lord Christ,” but, “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.” He Himself—as a whole—is to be our array!

Not this excellence or that, but Himself. He must be to us a sacred overall. I know not by what other means to bring out my meaning—He is to cover us from head to foot. We do not so much copy His humility, His gentleness, His love, His zeal, His prayerfulness as *Himself*. Endeavor to come into such communion with Jesus Himself that His Character is reproduced in you! Oh to be wrapped about with Jesus—feeling, desiring, acting as He felt, desired and acted! What a raiment for our spiritual nature is our Lord Jesus Christ! What an honorable robe for men to wear! Why, in that case our life would be hid in Christ and He would be seen of us in a life quickened by His Spirit, swayed by His motives, sweetened with His sympathy, pursuing His designs and following in His steps!

When we read, “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ,” it means, Receive the whole Character of Christ and let your whole character be conformed to His will. Cover your whole being with the whole of the Lord Jesus Christ! What a wonderful precept! Oh, for Grace to carry it out! May the Lord turn the command into an actual fact. Throughout the rest of our lives may we be more and more like Jesus that the purpose of God may be fulfilled wherein we are “predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son.”

Once more, observe the *specialty* which is seen in this garment. It is specially adapted to each individual Believer. Paul does not say merely to one person, “Put *you* on the Lord Jesus Christ,” but to *all* of us, “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Can all the saints put on Christ, whether babes, young men or fathers? You could not all of you wear my coat, I am quite certain—and I am equally certain that I could not wear the garments of many of the young people now present. But here is a matchless Garment which will be found suitable for every Believer—without expansion or contraction! Whoever puts on the Lord Jesus Christ has put on a robe which will be his glory and beauty! In every case the example of Jesus is admirably suited for copying.

Suppose a child of God should be a king—what better advice could I give to him, when about to rule a nation, than this—“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ”? Be such a king as Jesus would have been! No, copy His royal Character! Suppose, on the other hand, that the person before us is a poor woman from the workhouse—shall I say the same to her? Yes, and with equal propriety—for Jesus was very poor and is a most suitable Example for those who have no home of their own. O Worker, put on Christ and be full of zeal! O Sufferer, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and abound in patience! Yonder friend is going to the Sunday school this afternoon. Well, in order to win those dear children to the Savior, “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” who said, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.”

In His sacred raiment you will make a good teacher! Are you a preacher and about to address thousands of persons? How better can I advise you than that you put on Christ and preach the Gospel in His own loving, pleading, earnest style? The preacher's Model should be His Lord. This is our preaching gown, our praying surplice, our pastoral robe—the Character and Spirit of the Lord Jesus—and it admirably suits each form of service! No man's example will precisely fit his fellow man, but there is this strange virtue about the Character of Christ that you may all imitate it and yet be none of you mere imitators.

He is perfectly natural who is perfectly like Christ. There need be no affectation, no painful restraint, no straining. In a life thus fashioned there will be nothing grotesque or disproportionate, unmanly or romantic. So wonderfully is Jesus the Second Adam of the new-born race, that each member of that family may bear a likeness to Him and yet exhibit a clear individuality. A man advanced in years and wisdom may put Him on and so may the least instructed and the freshest comer among us! Please remember this—we may not choose examples—but each one is bound to copy the Lord Jesus Christ.

You, dear Friend, have a special personality—you are such a person that there is not another exactly like you and you are placed in circumstances so peculiar that no one else is tried exactly as you are—to you, then, is this exhortation sent, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." It is absolutely certain that for *you*, with your personal singularity and peculiar circumstances, there can be nothing better than that you array yourself in this more than royal robe. You, too, who live in ordinary circumstances and are only tried by common temptations—you are to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"—for He will also be suitable for you.

"Oh," cries one, "but the Lord Jesus never was exactly where I am!" You say this from lack of knowing better, or from lack of thought. He has been tempted in all points like as you are. There are certain relationships which the Lord Jesus could not literally occupy, but then He took their *spiritual* counterpart. For instance, Jesus could not be a husband after the flesh. Does anyone demand how He could be an example for husbands? Harken! "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it." He is your Model in relationship which, naturally, He never sustained but which, in very deed He has more than fulfilled. Wherever you may be, you find that the Lord Jesus has occupied the counterpart of your position, or else the position is sinful and ought to be stopped.

In any place, at any hour, under any circumstances, in any matter you may put on the Lord Jesus Christ and never fear that your array will be unsuitable. Here you have a summer and winter garment—good in prosperity as well as in adversity. Here you have a garment for the private chamber or the public forum, for sickness or for health, for honor or for reproach, for life or for death. "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ" and in this raiment of worked gold you may enter into the King's palace and stand among the spirits of just men made perfect!

II. Secondly, trusting to the Holy Spirit, let us enquire WHAT IS THIS DAILY GARMENT? The Lord Jesus Christ is to be put on. May the Spirit of

God help us to do so! We see how the sacred Garment is *here described* in three words. The sacred titles of the Son of God are spread out at length—"Put you on the Lord—Jesus—Christ." Put Him on as *Lord*. Call Him your Master and Lord and you will do well.

Be His servant in everything! Submit *every* faculty, *every* capacity, *every* talent, *every* possession to His government. Submit all that you have and are to Him and delight to own His superior right and His royal claim to you. Be Christ's man—His servant, under bonds to His service forever—finding therein life and liberty. Let the dominion of your Lord cover the kingdom of your nature. Then put on *Jesus*. Jesus means a Savior—in every part be covered by Him in that blessed capacity. You, a sinner, hide yourself in Jesus, your Savior who shall save you from your sins. He is your Sanctifier driving out sin and your Preserver keeping sin from returning.

Jesus is your Armor against sin. You overcome through His blood. In Him you are defended against every weapon of the enemy. He is your Shield, keeping you from all evil. He covers you all over like a complete suit of armor so that when arrows of temptation fly like a fiery shower, they may be quenched upon heavenly mail and you may stand unharmed amid a shower of deaths. Put on Jesus, and then put on *Christ*. You know that Christ signifies "anointed." Now, our Lord is anointed as Prophet, Priest and King, and as such we put Him on.

What a splendid thing it is to put on Christ as the anointed *Prophet* and to accept His teaching as our creed! I believe it. Why? Because He said it. This is argument enough for me. Mine not to argue, or doubt, or criticize—the Christ has said it and I, putting Him on, find in His authority the end of all strife. What Christ declares, I believe—discussion ends where Christ begins. Put Him on, also, as your *Priest*. Notwithstanding your sin, your unworthiness, your defilement, go to the altar of the Lord by Him who, as Priest, has taken away your sin, clothed you with His merit and made you acceptable to God! In our great High Priest we enter within the veil. We are in Him. By faith we realize this and so put Him on as our Priest and lose ourselves in His accepted Sacrifice.

Our Lord Jesus is also anointed to be *King*. Oh, put Him on in all His imperial majesty by yielding your every wish and thought to His sway! Set Him on the throne of your heart. As you have submitted your thoughts and understanding to His prophetic instructions, submit your action and your practical life to His kingly government. As you put on His priesthood and find Atonement in Him, so put on His royalty and find holiness in Him.

I now wish to show *the description given in Colossians 3*—from the 12th verse. I will take you to the wardrobe for a minute and ask you to look over the articles of our outfit. See here, "Put on therefore"—you see *everything* is to be put on—nothing is to be left on the pegs for the moths to eat, nor in the window to be idly stared at. You *put on* the whole armor of God. In true religion everything is designed for practical use. We keep no garments in the drawer—we have to put on all that is provided. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, tender mercies, kind-

ness.” Here are two choice things—mercy and kindness—silken robes, indeed!

Have you put them on? I am to be as merciful, as tender-hearted, as kind, as sympathetic, as loving to my fellow men as Christ Himself was. Have I reached this point? Have I ever aimed at it? Who among us has put on these royal robes? See what follows—these choice things come in pairs—“humbleness of mind, meekness.” These choice garments are not so much esteemed as they should be. The cloth of one called, “Proud-of-Heart,” is very fashionable and the trimmings of Mr. Masterful are much in request. It is a melancholy thing to see what great men some Christians are. Truly the footman is bigger than his master!

How some who would be thought saints can bluster and bully! Is this to put on the Lord Jesus Christ? Point me to a word of our Lord’s in which He scolded and tyrannized and overrode any man! He was meek and lowly, even He, the Lord of All—what ought we to be who are not worthy to loose the laces of His shoes? Permit me to say to any dear Brother or Sister who has not a very tender nature—who is naturally hard and rasping, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” my Brother, my Sister—and make not provision for that unfeeling nature of yours! Endeavor to be lowly in mind that you may be gentle in spirit.

See, next, we are to put on longsuffering and forbearance. Some men have no patience with others—how can they expect God to have patience with them? If everything is not done to their mind they are in a fine fury. Dear me! Whom have we here? Is this a servant of Mars, or of the Fire God? Surely this fighting man does not profess to be a worshipper of Christ! Do not tell me that the man lost his temper. It would be a mercy if he had lost it, so as never to find it again! He is selfish, petulant, exacting and easily provoked! Has this man the Spirit of Christ? If he is a Christian, he is a naked Christian and I would urge Him to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” that he may be fully clothed.

Our Lord was full of forbearance. “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you become wearied and faint in your minds.” Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and bear and forbear. Put up with a great deal that really ought not to be inflicted upon you—and be ready to bear still more rather than give or take offense. “Forgiving one another, if any man has a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.” Is not this heavenly teaching? Put it in practice! Put you on your Lord!

Have you fallen to loggerheads with one another, and did I hear one of you growling, “I’ll, I’ll, I’ll——”? Stop, Brother! What will you do? If you are true to the Lord Jesus Christ you will not avenge yourself but give place unto wrath. Put the Lord Jesus on your tongue and you will not talk so bitterly! Put Him on your heart and you will not feel so fiercely! Put Him on your whole character and you will readily forgive—not only this once, but unto 70 times seven! If you have been unjustly treated by one who should have been your friend, lay aside wrath and begin again—and perhaps your Brother will begin again, also, and both of you, by love, will overcome evil. “Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection.” Love is the belt which binds up the other garments and keeps all the other Graces well braced and in their right places. Put on love—what a golden belt! Are we all putting on love? We have been baptized into Christ and we profess to have put on Christ—but do we daily try to put on love? Our Baptism was not true if we are not buried to all old enmities. We may have a great many faults but God grant that we may be full of love to Jesus, to His people and to all mankind!

How much I wish that we could all put on, and keep on, the next article of this wardrobe! “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.” Oh, for a peaceful mind! Oh, to rest in the Lord! I recommend that last little word, “Be thankful,” to farmers and others whose interests are depressed. I might equally recommend it to certain trades people whose trade is quite as good as they could expect. “Things *are* a *little* better,” said one to me—and at that time he was heaping up riches. When things are extremely well, people say they are “middling,” or a “little better.” But when there is a slight falling off they cry out about, “nothing doing, stagnation, universal ruin.”

Thankfulness is a rare virtue—but let the lover of the Lord Jesus abound in it. The possession of your mind in peace, keeping yourself quiet, calm, self-possessed, content—this is a blessed state. And in such a state Jesus was—therefore, “put you on the Lord Jesus Christ.” He was never in a fret or fume. He was never hurried or worried. He never repined or coveted. Had He nothing to worry Him? More than you have, Brothers and Sisters. And did He not have many things to distress Him? More than all of us put together! Yet He was not ruffled but showed a prince-like calm, a Divine serenity. This our Lord would have us wear.

His peace He leaves with us and His joy He would have fulfilled in us. He wishes us to go through life with the peace of God keeping our hearts and minds from the assaults of the enemy. He would have us quiet and strong—strong because quiet—quiet because strong. I have read of a great man, that he took two hours and a half to dress himself every morning. In this he showed littleness rather than greatness—but if any of you put on the Lord Jesus Christ you may take what time you will in dressing yourself. It will take you all your lives, my Brothers and Sisters, to fully put on the Lord Jesus Christ and to keep Him on!

Let me say again that you are not only to put on all these garments which I have shown you in the wardrobe of the Colossians, but, more than this—you are to put on all else that makes up Christ Himself. What a wardrobe is this! “Put on Christ,” says the text. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ for daily wear. Not for high days and holy days only, but for *all* time and *every* time! Put on the Lord Jesus Christ on the Lord’s-Day but do not lay Him aside during the week. Ladies have ornaments which they put on occasionally for display on grand occasions. As a rule, these jewels are hidden away in a jewel case. Christians, you must wear your jewels always! Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and have no case in which to conceal any part of Him. Put on Christ to keep Him on!

I saw a missionary from the cold north the other day and he was wearing a coat of moose skin which he had worn among the Red Indians. "It is a capital coat," he said. "There's nothing like leather. I have worn it for 11 years." In the arctic region through which he had traveled he had worn this garment both night and by day—for the climate was much too cold to allow the taking off of anything. Brethren, the world is far too cold to allow our taking off Christ even for an hour! So many arrows are flying about that we dare not remove a single piece of our armor even for an instant. Thank God we have in our Lord a Garment which we may always wear. We can live in it and die in it—we can work in it, rest in it and, like the raiment of Israel in the wilderness—it will never wax old.

If you have put on something of Christ, put on more of Christ. I dare not say much in commendation of apparel here in England, for the tendency is to exceed in that direction. But I noticed, the other day, the remark of a missionary in the South Sea Islands. He stated that as the heathen people became converted they began to clothe themselves. And as they acquired tenderness of conscience and delicacy of feeling, they gave more attention to their clothes—wearing more and of a better sort.

However that may be as to dress for the *body*, it is certainly so as to the arraying of the *soul*. As we make spiritual progress we have more Graces and more virtues than in the beginning. Once we were content to wear only faith, but now we put on hope and love. Once if we wore humbleness, we failed to wear thankfulness—but our text exhorts us to wear a full dress, a court suit—for we are to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." You cannot wear too much of Him! Be covered from head to foot with Him. Put on the Lord in every time of trial. Do not take Him off when it comes to the test. Quaint Henry Smith says that some people wear the Lord Jesus as a man wears his hat which he takes off to everybody he meets.

I am afraid I know persons of that kind—they wear Christ in private, but they take Him off in company—especially in the company of the worldly, the sarcastic and the unbelieving. Put on Christ, intending never to take Him off again. When tempted, tried, ridiculed, hear in your ears this voice, "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ."

III. My time fails me, and I must hurriedly notice, in the third place, HOW ARE WE TO ACT TOWARDS EVIL IN THESE GARMENTS? The text says, "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof." By the flesh is here meant the evil part of us which is so greatly aided by the appetites and desires of the body. When a man puts on Christ, has he still the flesh about him? Alas, it is so! I hear some brethren say that they have no remaining corruptions.

I claim liberty to believe as much as I like of a man's statements as to his own personal character. When he bears witness concerning himself, his witness may or may not be true. When a man tells me that he is perfect, I hear what he has to say but I quietly think within myself that if he had been so, he would not have felt the necessity of spreading the information. Good wine needs no compliment and when our town once holds a perfect man within its boundary there will be no need to advertise him! Goods that are puffed probably need puffery.

Brethren, I fear we have all very much of the flesh about us and therefore we need be on our guard against it. What does the Apostle say? "Make no provision for the flesh." By this he means several things. First, give *no tolerance* to it. Do not say, "Christ has sanctified me so far, but you see I have a bad temper naturally and you cannot expect it to be removed." Dear Brother, do not make provision for thus sheltering and sparing one of your soul's enemies! Another cries, "You know I always was a good deal desponding and therefore I can never have much joy in the Lord." Don't make room for your unbelief! If you find a kennel for *this* dog, it will always lie in it!

"But," says another, "I was always rather fond of gaiety and so I must mix up with the world." Well if you cook a dinner for Satan, he will surely take a seat at your table! This is to make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts of it. Do not do so, but slay the Canaanites—break their idols, throw down their altars—and cut down their groves. Moreover, give sin *no time*. Allow no furlough to your obedience. Do not say to yourself, "At all other times I am exact, but one time in a year, at a family meeting, I take a little liberty." Is it liberty to you to *sin*? I am afraid there is something rotten in your heart.

"Ah!" cries one, "I only allow myself an hour or two occasionally with questionable company. I know it does me harm but we must all have a little relaxation and the talk is very amusing, though rather loose." Is evil a relaxation to you? It ought to be worse than slavery! What a trial is foolish talking to a child of God! How can you find pleasure in it? Give no license to the flesh! You cannot tell how far it will go. Keep it always under subjection and make no space for its indulgence. Provide *no food* for it. Carve it no rations. Starve it out—at any rate, if it needs fodder—let it look elsewhere.

When you are allotting your provision to the body, the soul, the spirit—allot nothing to the depraved passions. If the flesh says, "What is for me?" say, "Nothing." Some people like a little bit of reading for the flesh. As some people like a little bit of what they call "rather high" meat, so do these folk enjoy a portion of tainted doctrine or questionable morality. Thus they make provision for the flesh and the flesh takes care to feed on it and to give its lusts a meal. I have known professors whom I would not dare to judge, dabble just a little in matters which they would forbid to others but they think them allowable to themselves if done in secret.

"You must not be too exact," they say. But the Apostle says, "Make not provision for the flesh." Do not give it a morsel—do not even allow it the crumbs that fall from your table. The flesh is greedy and never has enough—and if you give it some provision it will steal much more. "Put you on the Lord Jesus Christ," and then you will leave *no place* for the lusts of the flesh. That which Christ does not cover is naked unto sin. If Christ is my Livery and I wear Him and so am known to be His avowed servant—then I place myself entirely in His hands always and forever—and the flesh has no claim whatever upon me!

If, before I put on Christ, I might make some reserve and duty did not call, yet now that the Lord Jesus Christ is upon me, I have done with reserves and am openly and confessedly my Lord's. "Know you not," says

the Apostle, “that as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ?” Being buried with Him we are dead to the world and live only unto Him. The Lord bring us up to this mark by His mighty Spirit and He shall have the glory of it.

IV. If this is the case and we have, indeed, “put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” we will thank God evermore. But if it is not so, let us not delay to be arrayed in these garments. **WHY SHOULD WE HASTEN TO PUT ON CHRIST?** A moment is all that remains. It is dark. Here is armor made of solid light—let us put on this attire at once—then the night will be light about us and others beholding us will glorify God and ask for the same raiment. With so dense a night round about us a man needs to be dressed in luminous robes. He needs to wear the light of God. He needs to be practically protected from the darkness around him.

“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” moreover, for the night will soon be over and the morning will soon dawn. The rags of sin—the sordid robes of worldliness—are not fit attire for the heavenly morning. Let us dress for the sunrise. Let us go forth to meet the dawn with garments of light about us. “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ,” for He is coming, the Beloved of our souls! Over the hills we hear the trumpet sounding! The heralds are crying aloud, “The Bridegroom comes! The Bridegroom comes!” Though He has seemed to tarry, He has been always coming post haste. Today we hear His chariot wheels in the distance. Nearer and nearer is His advent.

Let us not sleep as others do. Blessed are they who will be ready for the wedding when the Bridegroom comes! What is that wedding dress that shall make us ready? Nothing can make us more fit to meet Christ and to be with Him in His glory than for us to put on Christ today! If I wear Christ as my garment I do great honor to Christ as my Bridegroom. If I take Him for my glory and my beauty while I am here, I may be sure that He will be all that and more to me in eternity! If I take pleasure in Jesus here, Jesus will take pleasure in me when He shall meet me in the air and take me up to dwell with Him forever.

Put on the wedding dress, you beloved of the Lord! Put on the wedding dress, you brides of the Lamb and put it on at once, for behold He comes! Haste, haste, you slumbering virgins! Arise and trim your lamps! Put on your robes and be ready to behold His Glory and to take part in it! O you virgin souls, go forth to meet Him! With joy and gladness go forth, wearing Himself as your gorgeous apparel, fit for the daughters of a king!

The Lord bless you, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 12; 13:8-14.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—917, 262, 263.**

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THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF GOD

NO. 1601

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 29, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you set at nothing your brother? For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
Romans 14:10-12.

NO doubt there is an error in our version, for where in the 10th verse we read, “The Judgment Seat of Christ,” it should be, “The Judgment Seat of God.” I suppose the word, “Christ,” slipped into certain manuscripts because Paul had been speaking of Christ and it was thought to be natural that he should continue to use the same name. Paul did not say “Christ,” but, “God”—but by that word he meant the same Person. Paul knew that Christ is God and when he was speaking of Christ it was no deviation from the subject for him to speak concerning Him under the title of “God.” It was necessary, here, for him to use the word, “God,” though, because he was about to quote from the Old Testament Scriptures a passage which speaks concerning the Sovereignty of God which is to be acknowledged and confessed by all mankind.

The passage runs, “We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of God, for it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” I beg you to notice how strongly this passage goes to prove the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ because the whole run of the passage is concerning Christ. “To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living.” And then the Apostle immediately, without any break in the sense whatever, speaks of God, because He was speaking of the same Person and he quotes a passage which relates to God, Himself, and uses it as relating to Christ! It does, indeed, relate to our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is “very God of very God,” and God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

In another place Paul most distinctly declares that it is Christ who is to judge the world. Look at the 5th chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, at the 10th verse, “We labor, 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 has done, whether it is good or bad.” Therefore, though the reading should be *God*, the sense is “Christ.” It would have been a most important point with Paul to draw a distinction between Christ and God if

there had been any doubt as to His Divinity. It would have been a most necessary thing to prevent us from idolizing a mere man.

But here, so far from taking any pains to make such distinction between Christ Jesus and God, as would have been necessary if He were *not* God, Paul interchanges the two words. He speaks of them in the same breath, for they are one! “The Lord shall judge His people,” and it is “the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:1). “Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him” (Rev. 1:7). This judgment by Christ is, by our Apostle, proved from an Old Testament prophecy which certainly refers to Jehovah, Himself. Read Isaiah 45:23 and learn from it that our Lord Jesus is Jehovah and let us joyfully adore Him as our Savior and God to whom be Glory forever and ever.

The doctrine of eternal Judgment, upon which I shall speak this morning, is introduced to us for a certain reason. Paul saw among Christians a much too common habit of judging one another. I suppose if Paul were to come among us, now, he would not see any remarkable difference upon that point. Back then the bulk of the converts were Jews and, as such, they brought into the Christian Church their former religious habits—those men who had devoutly kept the Ceremonial Law felt as if they would violate their consciences if they did not continue to keep its more prominent precepts. And though they gave up certain of its observances which were evidently abolished by the Gospel, they kept up others, such as special days for religious fasts and feasts.

Many true but weak Believers were very scrupulous about what they ate, thinking to keep up the legal distinction between clean meats and unclean. At the same time, the Church had in her midst men who said, and said correctly, “The coming of Christ has done away with the old dispensation; these holy days are all types and shadows whose substance is in Christ. Has not the Lord shown to Peter, who is the minister of the circumcision, that from now on nothing is common or unclean?” The men of strong faith blamed their weaker brethren for being superstitious and, by their superstition, bringing a yoke of bondage upon themselves. “No,” replied the weaker sort, “we are not superstitious! We are conscientious, while *you* go much too far in your liberty and cause us to stumble.”

Thus while the strong looked down upon the weak, almost doubting whether they could have come into the liberty of Christ at all, the weak condemned the strong, almost charging them with turning their liberty into licentiousness! They were both wrong, for they were *judging one another*. Paul, who was, himself, most strongly opposed to the Judaizing party and in every respect came out clear and straight upon the bold lines of Christian liberty, was, nevertheless, so actuated by the spirit of his Master that he was ready to be all things to all men—and seeing grave peril of dissension where all should be love—he rushed into the breach and he said, “Do not judge one another: what have you to do with judging? There is a judgment yet to come.”

He mentioned the future judgment on purpose, that by its powerful influence upon their minds they might be taken away from the frivolous amusement, for it does not come to much more—the frivolous amuse-

ment, the mischievous meddlesomeness of judging one another when already the Judge is at the door! Let us linger a minute over this practical point and see how Paul rebukes the spirit of judging one another. First, he says in effect that it is unnatural. "Why do you judge your Brother in Christ? Why do you set at nothing your Brother? He whom you judge or despise is your Brother! You have called the weak one superstitious, but he is your Brother! You have called the strong man licentious because he enjoys his liberty, but he is your Brother."

If we must judge, certainly it should not be those who are linked to us by the ties of spiritual relationship. Are not all Believers one family in Christ? Wherever the root of the matter is to be found, there exists an overwhelming argument for undying unity. Why, then, will you take your Brother by the throat and drag him before your judgment seat and make him answer to you, Brother to Brother, and then condemn him? Shall a Brother in Christ condemn a Brother in Christ? When the outside world censures Christians, we understand it, for they hated our Master and they will hate us. But inside the charmed circle of Christian communion there should be esteem for one another, a defending of each other—we should be anxious to apologize for infirmity than to discover imperfection! Far be it from us to find flaws where they do not exist!

Would to God it were so, that perfect love cast out all suspicion of one another and that we had confidence in each other because Christ, our Lord, will hold up our Brothers and Sisters even as He has held us up! This judging among Christians, then, is, first of all, unnatural! And, next, it is an anticipation of the Judgment Day. There is to come a day when men shall be judged—judged after a better fashion than you and I can judge. How dare we, then, travesty God's great assize by ourselves mounting the throne and pretending to rehearse the solemn transactions of that tremendous hour? Judgment will come soon enough—may the Lord have mercy upon us in that day! My Brother, why need you hurry it on by yourself ascending the throne? Cannot God do His own work? "Vengeance is Mine: I will repay," says the Lord.

We need not spend our time in perpetually trying to discern between the tares and the wheat. The tares to which the Savior referred in that parable were so like the wheat that men could not tell which was which. And His command was, "Let both grow together until the harvest." At harvest time He will give the reapers directions for separating between the real wheat and that which was a mockery of it. As for us, the saints shall judge the world, but for the present the order is, "judge nothing before the time." We can separate between the outwardly vile and the outwardly pure by marks which God has given us—such as these—"By their fruits you shall know them" and, "If any man loves not the Lord Jesus let him be anathema." As guardians of the Church's honor, we are bound to use these rules.

But between a Brother in Christ and another Brother in Christ differing on minor points, between Christian and Christian, each one obeying his conscience, we are not to exercise mutual condemnation. Come here, Brothers and Sisters! Here is work enough for you all in dragging the great net to shore! What are you doing there? Sitting down and trying to

put the good into vessels and cast the bad away? That work may be left till later on—for now let us drag the net to shore! Haul away, Brethren, with all your might! By-and-by shall come the time for reckoning up the results of our fishing and separating between the seeming and the true!

Moreover, we not only anticipate the Judgment, but we impudently intrude ourselves into the office and prerogative of Christ when we condemn the saints. “We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ”—that is the true Throne of Judgment. How many times have I had to appear before the judgment seat of my fellow men! Sometimes one’s motives are attacked. Another time one’s actions, or mode of speech, or way of managing Church affairs. Well, it is a small matter for us to appear before *man’s* judgment seat—we may very well refuse to put in an appearance at all, for man is not our master and we are not bound to answer to his summons.

Why is it that so many brethren seem to think that they are masters and have a right to judge the Lord’s servants? I know some Christians who not only form judgments and very severe judgments, too, upon all that are round them as to the facts that come under their notice, but they also, without any facts, whatever, conceive notions concerning persons whom they have *never seen* and are full of obstinate prejudices against them! Many twist words into meanings which they were never intended to mean by the person who used them and others, even without so much as the excuse of misunderstanding words, sit down and imagine evil against their brethren! They dream that they are slighted and then hard judgments follow. Once imagine that you are badly treated and then you will think that everything is done out of spite to you—and the next thing is to think spitefully of others.

There are persons about who are liberally gifted in the line of gossip who, by their talk, would make you think that you were living in Sodom and Gomorrah, if not in Tophet! You are made to fear that everyone you have trusted is a vile deceiver; that every man who is zealous is mercenary; that every minister is preaching in public what he secretly disbelieves; that every generous subscriber only gives out of pride! You are told that, in fact, you are living in a place where the race of Judas Iscariot is to be seen, reproduced ten thousand times over! One goes to bed and cannot sleep after talking to these tale-bearers. The consolation is that there is no truth in their wonderful discoveries. These slanderous statements are a base burlesque of judgment and nothing more.

Why are they thought so much of? After you and I have done our best to hold our mimic court and have summoned this man and that man before us, what is it, at its best, but child’s play and at its worst a violent usurpation of the rights of Christ Jesus who, alone, reigns as Lawgiver in the midst of His Church today and who will sit as Judge on the clouds of Heaven, by-and-by, to judge the world in righteousness? The Apostle argues strongly against this evil spirit of censoriousness in the Christian Church and to give a knock-down blow to it, he says, “It is all needless. You need not judge one another, for both your Brother and yourself will stand before the Judgment Seat of God. There is no need of your condemnation, for if any man is worthless, the Judge will condemn him—you may

not interfere with the business of the great Supreme—He will manage the affairs of men far better than you can.”

Yet more, your judgment is unprofitable. You would spend your time much more profitably if you would remember that you, who can be so exact and severe in pointing out this fault here and the other fault there, will be, yourselves, examined by an unerring eye! Your own account books have to be sent in and to be examined item by item—therefore look well to your own matters. If you were watching your own heart, out of which are the issues of life. If you were watching your own tongue and bridling it and so mastering your whole body. If you were watching your own opportunities for usefulness. If you were observing your Master’s eyes as a handmaiden looks to her mistress, you would be doing something that would pay you far better than censuring others—something much more to the glory of God, much more to the gain of the Church—much more to the comfort of your own soul. So the Apostle winds up by saying, according to the most forcible rendering of the original, “We must, each one of us, give an account of himself to God.”

Brothers and Sisters, I bring these Truths of God before you because they are meant for Brothers in Christ and not so much for the outside world. It is to those who have faith and are in the family of love, that the word of warning is given that we do not judge. And to us the argument is addressed that we shall, each one, give an account for himself to God. I do not know that you specially need a warning against unkind judgments, but I know that you may need it, even as other Churches have. I am very thankful that we have not been much disturbed with this great evil but, still, it does come up among all Christian people more or less.

I read the other day in an interesting pamphlet about the Apocalypse, a note which furnishes me with an illustration. The writer endeavors to explain why the tribe of Dan is not mentioned in the Book of Revelation as having its chosen twelve thousand. All the other tribes are there, but Dan is missed and Manasseh is put in his place. The author says it is because Dan signifies “judgment,” or, “one that judges.” He says—“These judges of evil thoughts have been sad troublers in Israel in all ages, not fearing to judge their brother and set at nothing their brother, they have judged everything and everybody but themselves. All who have not pronounced their Shibboleth, nor seen eye to eye with them have been adjudged as heretics, not to be tolerated, but tabooed to the extent of their ability. In vain for them has it been written, ‘Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts.’”

“Like their great ancestor of this tribe, they deal in foxes and firebrands and too often set on fire their neighbors’ standing corn, an act we have never been able to commend even in Samson. This predilection for foxes and firebrands has unhappily developed in the seed of Dan to this day. And so in the place of Dan, the Judge, we get Manasseh, one who forgets, one who, though cast off by his brethren, forgets and forgives their injuries and we account it a good exchange. And in the New Jerusalem home, where failure will be no more, Dan, ‘a serpent in the way,’ or, ‘a lion’s whelp,’ would be as much out of work as out of place.” If any of the

Danites hear or read this, let them pray for Grace to change their habits and natures.

I. Now I come to the doctrine, itself, the solemn doctrine of Judgment to Come. May God make it impressive to our hearts. Our thoughts are now directed to the future judgment and we notice concerning it, first, that THE JUDGMENT WILL BE UNIVERSAL. "For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of God. For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." There will come a judgment, then, for all classes of persons—for the strong Brother who with his knowledge of Christian liberty went as far as he should. Perhaps further than he ought to have gone. He judged himself to be right in the matter, but he must stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ about it.

There will also be a judgment for the weak Brother. He who was so scrupulous and precise ought not to be censuring the other man who felt free in his conscience, for he will, himself, stand before the Judgment Seat of God. No elevation in piety will exclude us from that last solemn test and no weakness will serve as an excuse. The man of one and the man of 10 talents must, alike, be reckoned with. Weak Christians are exempted from many trials by the gentleness of God, but not from the *ultimate* trial, for we shall, each one of us, give an account of himself unto God—the strong and the weak. The men who bore office in the Church will have to answer for it, even as says the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 13:17, "They watch for your souls, as they that must give an account."

And again "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful: he that judges me is the Lord." I could, on bended knees, ask your pity for myself, having to minister to so large a congregation and with so much larger a congregation outside to whom I weekly minister through the press. Ah me, who is sufficient for these things? Who shall be found faithful in such a position? I think all ministers might, with tears in their eyes, cry to you, "Brethren, pray for us." It will be the height of my ambition to be clear of the blood of all men. If, like George Fox, I can say in dying, "I am clear, I am clear," that were almost all the Heaven I could wish for! Oh to discharge one's ministry aright and to be able to render an account like that of Paul, who said, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith." This is my soul's longing.

Yes, but not only will ministers, deacons, elders and persons who had high standing in the Church have to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, but so will the most obscure of the members of the Church and those secret ones who never dared to take up membership at all! You will not be able to hide away forever. The man with the one talent must be summoned before his Lord as certainly as the man with 10 and of each one a reckoning shall be taken. In our Lord's parables it is always the King's own servants that are called before him. "The lord of those servants comes and reckons with them." Our Master will say to each one of His servants, "Give an account of your stewardship." "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked." "For we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of God."

I have not time or space to enter into the differences of that judgment as it regards the righteous and the wicked, but I confine myself to the one fact that *all* mankind will be judged according to the Word of the Lord in the 2nd chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, at the 5th verse—"The day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace, to every man that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God."

What a motley throng will gather at that assize of all nations and peoples and tongues! Persons of all ages, too. You boys and girls and you who have lived through a long life. Kings and princes will be there to give in their weighty account and senators and judges to answer to their Judge! And then the multitude of the poor and needy and those that live neglecting God and forgetful of their souls—they must all be there! It is a *universal* judgment. John says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Both sheep and goats shall gather before the great dividing Shepherd—the wise and foolish virgins shall both hear the midnight cry. The house on the rock and the house on the sand shall, alike, be tested by the last tremendous storm!

Tares and wheat, alike, shall ripen. Bad fish and good shall be sorted out from the net, while the multitudes outside—the nations that knew not God—shall all, without exception, hear with trembling the summons to the dread tribunal! Saints and sinners, too, only on what a different footing, are all to be judged out of the books and out of the Book of Life. Thus says the Word of the Lord—"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 has done, whether it was good or bad." To the saints the judgment of the things done shall be according to righteousness, for these things shall be taken in evidence that they were, indeed, reconciled to God. The Judge will say, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundations of the world."

And then shall come the evidence—"For I was hungry and you gave Me meat; thirsty, and you gave Me drink," and so on. These fruits shall be the evidence that they were in Christ—the evidence of their being justified by faith. While on the other hand, the sour and bitter fruit of the ungodly shall be an evidence that they were not planted of the Lord—"I was hungry, and you gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink; sick and in prison, and you did not minister unto Me." We need have no fear of the Judgment to come when we know that we are in Christ, for who fears to enter a just court when he knows that by the highest authority he has already been cleared? How complete the Christian's safety! There will be no accuser! So bright will be the righteousness of a saint through faith that no accuser will appear!

Hark, the herald gives forth the challenge! "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" All through the court it rings! And God is

there—the faithful and all-seeing God. Does He lay anything to their charge? Far from it. “It is God that justifies.” Outside the court the voice demands, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” They hear it in Heaven and angels, who have watched the race of every Believer and seen how he has been running towards the goal, are silent as to any accusation. The challenge is heard in Hell where devils hate the godly, but they dare not forge a lie against them. Happy he who can say, “There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give me at that day.” Mark, He will give it as *Judge* and on that day!

How can some say, among you, that there is no judgment for the saints? Who, then, need fear to enter the court when every accusation is silenced and a reward is expected? But still you say that the Believer has *sinned*. Yes, but that sin has been *forgiven* and he has a righteousness with which to answer the Law. I will show you before I have done how the Christian has been judged, condemned and tried—and in reference to him the essence of the Judgment is past already, so that there can be no condemnation!

And, therefore, that second challenge, “Who is he that condemns?” The Judge is the only one who can condemn and we are sure that He will not, for, “it is Christ that died, yes rather, that has risen again, who also makes intercession for us.” Tremble not, therefore, at the doctrine that we shall all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, but pray that, as John puts it, “we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment,” because as Jude says, the Lord Jesus “is able to present you faultless before the Presence of His glory with great joy.” Not a single person shall escape the Judgment! There shall be no omission from the calendar! Every being of the race of Adam shall answer for himself! “The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains and the mighty men, and every slave, and every free man” must see the face of Him that sits upon the Throne of God!

We shall have to put in an appearance as men do in court when they are subpoenaed to attend. The word of Jesus is, “Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Ah, how unwilling will rebels come before that Throne! Pharaoh, you must see a greater than Moses! Herod, you must see the young Child upon His Throne! Judas, you hanged yourself to escape the judgment of your conscience, but by no means can you escape the judgment of your God! Though 4,000 years have elapsed since men died and their bodies may have melted away, yet when the trumpet rings out clear and shrill, their bodies shall live again and they must all come forth, each one to answer for himself at that grand assize before the Judge of all the earth who must do right with each of them!

Let us, then, bow before the solemn Truth that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained.

II. The second Truth of God, which we must make as prominent as ever we can, is that IT WILL BE A PERSONAL JUDGMENT for each one. This is the pith of what the Apostle is saying—“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” The judgment will not proceed in a rough, in-

discriminate manner, as upon a race or tribe, but each man will have to stand alone and the account reckoned will not be of a family or a nation, but of each, individually, for himself. Note this carefully, O men—We shall have to give an account, *each* man for his *own* actions, for his own thoughts, for his own words, for his own intentions—no, not only of that, but of himself. We shall, each man, have to give account of the state of his own heart, of the condition of his mind before God, whether he repented, whether he believed, whether he loved God, whether he was zealous, whether he was truthful, whether he was faithful.

If it only dealt with actions, words and thoughts, the account would be solemn enough. But we must each one give an account of *himself*—of what he was as well as what he did—of what was in his heart as well as of that which came out of it in his deeds. Oh, what a trial this will be! We shall then have to give an account of our judgments of others. We shall not have to answer for what *they* did, but for our daring to judge and condemn them! Did you ever think of this, you that judge others, that you are laying down the standard by which you will have to be judged yourselves? I generally find that those who are most severe towards others need and often expect great leniency towards themselves—but it will not be so at the last, for thus it is written—“With what judgment you judge you shall be judged.”

How easy it will be to judge the fault finding at the Judgment Day! The Judge will only have to say, “They have already condemned themselves. They have condemned their own faults as they saw them in others. They have used the sharpest judgments against less faults than their own—out of their own mouths let them take the sentence and depart.” You will have to render no account for other people, but you will have to render an account of yourself and how you judged other people. The last account will be wholly personal, therefore see you to it. That account will, according to my text, have connected with it full *submission*.

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me.” You may say, today, “I do not care about God.” You will *have* to care about Him! As truly as God lives you will *have* to bow. You may say, “What matters it to me what Scripture says?” It *will* matter to you, as certainly as God lives, which is putting it on the most solemn certainty that can be! God has taken an oath about it and declares that you *shall* acknowledge His way. You had better bend at once, for you must either break or bow. God means to have His Sovereignty acknowledged by all mankind. Has He not made us? Do we not owe everything to Him? He will not have His crown rights denied forever! He is Lord of all and He swears by Himself that every knee shall bow and acknowledge it. You will have to come to it, my Friend.

Next, you will have to confess, so the text says. By this I understand that you will have to acknowledge that God is your Lord and Master and had a right to your services; that you ought to have kept His Laws; that in sinning you have done unrighteously and acted as you ought not to have acted. That confession you will not be able to withhold. Oh how the wicked will bite their tongues when they have to acknowledge their folly and wrong doing! But it will have to come out of every man’s mouth.

When God pronounces sentence and the ungodly are sent down to Hell, they will give their own assent to His righteousness in condemning and punishing them! The verdict of the castaways in Hell is that they deserve it and this is, indeed, the Hell of Hell—that they cannot deny the justice of those pains which come upon them as the result of their disobedience! God will see to it that we shall justify Him either in life or in death by confessing that He is righteous.

I appeal to you, my dear Hearers, whether you are ready with your account which you will have to render to God! Have you kept one at all? Sometimes when men appear before a court they plead that they have no books and it is always a bad sign. You know what the judge thinks of him. Can you dare to examine yourself and answer questions? Can you give an account of your stewardship? Have you kept it correctly, or have you credited yourself with large things where you ought to have debited yourself? Your fraud will be discovered, for the great Accountant will read it through and will detect an error in a single moment! Is your account kept correctly and are you ready to render it in at this moment?

Christian Brothers and Sisters, you and I might hold back a little before we could say, “Yes,” to that and yet I trust we could say it, for we know ourselves to be accepted with God. As for those who have scarcely thought of their God, their Maker, what will *they* do? What *can* they do, when each one of them must give an account before God and they have no account except that which will condemn them for having wasted their Master’s goods, for having defrauded the eternal God of that which was justly His due and having spent upon their lusts that which ought to have been dedicated to their God?

This judgment, then, will be personal. You cannot put your godly mother into the scale with yourself! You cannot associate your dear old father with yourself in Judgment. O children, you cannot be judged by your ancestry, but by your acts, for it is written—“The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to His works.” Oh, see to it! God help you to do so!

III. Thirdly, THIS JUDGMENT WILL BE DIVINE. “We shall stand before the Judgment Seat of God.” The Judgment will be universal, personal, Divine—and because it is the Judgment Seat of God, it will be a judgment according to the Truth of God. God will make no mistakes. He will not impute any wrong to us undeservedly and He will not give us credit for right because we bore the appearance of it. He will search to the very core and essence of the matter. Are you ready to be tried as by fire? Trial by fire is but a scant figure of trial compared to the searching eyes of the Most High God! He will test us by the supreme standard of *perfect* Justice.

We judge by one another and if we are as liberal, or as prayerful, or as gracious as others, we consider that it is all right. But the balances of the Sanctuary are far more exact. It will not be you in one scale and I in another—and if I am as gracious as you, we shall both be accepted. Ah, no! There is another standard than that—the standard of the Truth of God and Grace in the heart and real love to God and conformity to the image of Christ! Judge whether you can stand that test. That judgment will be most searching. “The Lord ponders the hearts.” He will not judge after the

sight of the eyes, but search out our secrets. Then shall the foundations be tested! Then shall all that the man rested on and stayed himself upon be tried—whether it was the Rock of Ages or whether it was the mere sand of presumption.

There will be no such trial day before or after as that day of the Assize of God, “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it was good, or whether it was evil.” That judgment will be impartial. You and I are always partial in weighing ourselves. We generally give the most lenient verdict except when we happen to be despondent in spirit and then we are morbidly sensitive. But God will judge us without partiality. Rich Friend, that diamond ring will answer no purpose on that day! My Ladies, those fine garments will make no impression in that court! My learned Friend, that handle to your name will be of no use! And you, fine Sir, with your knighthood, earldom, or dukedom will be none the better off, for coronets and even imperial crowns all go for nothing before the Throne of God, who is no respecter of persons!

This judgment will be final. The sentence of the Supreme Court will settle all. Does He say, “Depart you cursed”? They can do no other. Does He say, “Come you blessed”? Oh, how blessed to enter into the eternal Home! May none of you ever hear Him say, “Depart,” for He will never reverse the sentence! You will have to depart and keep on departing, going further, further and further away from Him who is Hope and Life and Joy! There is no hope held out that He shall ever say, “Come back again, you cursed.” No, “Depart into *everlasting* fire in Hell.” God save us from such an ultimatum as that! At the Last Judgment certain sins will prove to be of heavy weight. I will do no more than mention a few of them. There is one that is never treated leniently by any judge—it is contempt of court. God will speedily condemn those who have despised His authority!

Are there any such here who have despised the Lord their God and set at nothing His counsel? They seldom or never think of God or His Law, or even regard His Day. They say, “Who is the Lord that we should obey His voice?” Beware, you despisers and wonder and perish, for the Lord our God is jealous of His great name and He hears the voices of them that scoff at Him! Rejection of *mercy* is also a high crime and misdemeanor. The Judge who shall sit upon the Throne has already presented mercy to all of you and the unconverted among you have refused it! Surely you deserve the deepest Hell who slight eternal love! If the Judge can say, “The prisoner at the bar has had the glad tidings of forgiveness presented to him, but has refused to listen to the gracious message, or, having listened and being almost persuaded, he, nevertheless, put it off to a more convenient time—and here he stands a trampler on the blood of Christ!”—If the Judge can say this, do you wonder if He says, “Depart, you Cursed”?

This will be the fiercest heat of the eternal burnings! You refused mercy! You put away from you Eternal Life and counted yourselves unworthy of salvation! This sin will be a millstone about the soul forever. Then there is the crime of willful, deliberate sinning, with intent to do so. Have any of you been guilty of this fact and have you not fled to Christ? Did you choose sin, knowing it to be sin? Are you still choosing sin and living in it against the voice of conscience? Ah, believe me, sin repeated,

sin continued in, will bring swift and sure destruction! These sins go beforehand to Judgment and there lodge solemn complaints against the guilty.

I cannot close amid these clouds. Break forth, O sun! Turn to the passage from which Paul quoted, for there you shall hear a sweet Gospel Words which may fitly end my discourse. Paul's mind was at Isaiah 45:23. He did not quote the words, literally, but he gave the sense. Here is the passage—"I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Now, what words do you think come before these? You shall look for yourselves. I will wait while you open your Bibles. Do you see the blessed lines? God declares that every man shall bow before Him and confess His authority. But what words of exhortation stand before that oath of His? I wish I could make it flash out, at this moment, in letters of light right round the building—"Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

That message of mercy stands side by side with the judgment prophecy! Come, then, dear Hearts, you that are guilty, come and bow before your God before He ascends the throne of Judgment! Come and do willingly what you will have to do, by-and-by, unwillingly. Come, now, and confess that He is Judge and ought to be honored! Confess that He is King and ought to be obeyed! Confess that you are His subject and are bound to serve Him! Confess that you have done wrong, grievous wrong, in having broken His Laws! Come and make out your own indictment! Come and be your own accuser! Come and condemn yourself! Come and bow your head when God's Law condemns you! Come and acknowledge that you deserve Divine Wrath and submit yourself to the Lord's Justice!

Then give another look to your God and Savior and say, "My Lord, I know You are my Judge, but You are also my Redeemer—I accept the place of condemnation, but I see that You did stand there in my behalf—the Just for the unjust, my Substitute, bearing my sin and punishment. Blessed Lord, I accept You as my Substitute! I yield myself up to You! I stand now tried, condemned, punished, dead, raised again in You and, therefore, pardoned, acquitted, justified, beloved, accepted for Jesus' sake."

Oh, is not this a blessed ending to a solemn sermon?—

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

God bless you. Amen.

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PATIENCE, COMFORT AND HOPE FROM THE SCRIPTURES NO. 2753

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1901.**

***DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 20, 1879.***

***“For whatever things were written before were written
for our learning, that we through the patience and
comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”
Romans 15:4.***

THE Apostle Paul was an Inspired man when he wrote this Epistle, so there was no necessity on the part of the Holy Spirit, when guiding his mind and pen, to employ words which had been used before in the Scriptures, for His language is unlimited. Yet Paul, Inspired as he was, frequently quoted from the Old Testament and in the verse preceding our text he quotes from the Psalms—“As it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached You fell on Me.” One special reason for quoting from the Old Testament was, doubtless, to put honor upon it, for the Holy Spirit foresaw that there would be some in these later days who would speak of it disparagingly. Not so did our Lord Jesus Christ! Not so did His Apostles! Not so did any by whom the Holy Spirit spoke! The Old Testament is not to be regarded with one jot less of reverence and love than is the New Testament—they must remain bound together, for they are the one Revelation of the mind and will of God—and woe be to the man who shall attempt to rend asunder that seamless garment of Holy Scripture!

There are some who speak of the Old Testament as if it were worn out, but, indeed, it has about it all the freshness, the force and the dew of its youth and, in the additional light that the New Testament throws upon its histories, its prophecies and its promises, it has gathered force rather than lost any, so that we, probably, can appreciate the Old Testament Scripture far more highly, now that we also have the New Testament, than we could have done if we had not received both the early and the later Revelations.

Some have supposed that the light of the New Testament is so bright that it quite eclipses the light of the Old Testament, as the rising of the sun makes us forget the moon, but it is not so. The Old Testament now shines with a brighter light than ever to those whose faith is fixed on Jesus Christ and whose eyes behold Him in the pages of the New Testament. I confess that, sometimes, a type or an emblem which would have been dark or obscure but for the light that has been shed upon it by the New Testament, has seemed to me, if possible, to be clearer even than

the New Testament itself. I have seemed to see the brightness of the glory of the Revelation concentrated and focused about some of the darker passages of the Old Testament so manifestly that, instead of the Old seeming to be outdone by the New, I have almost thought it to be the other way around—if such a thought might be tolerated for a moment. There is no need, however, to compare them, for they are both a part of all that Scripture which is God-breathed.

Nor has the authority of the Old Testament ceased. Of course the legal ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation are done away with, for we are not under the Law, but under Grace—yet even in their passing away, they answer an important purpose. They often afford us instruction where they are not needed for direction. Still is it true, my Brothers and Sisters, concerning the entire Book, that it was “written for our learning.” And he is a learned man who knows much of Scripture. But he is unlearned and unstable in the things of God who knows a thousand other things, but does not know “what things were written before,” and who does not bend his soul, his heart, his intellect to the believing and the understanding of that which God has spoken of old times by His Prophets and Apostles.

Believing this most truly, as I am sure we do, let us think, for a little while, about Holy Scripture and that which grows out of it. The text says, “that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

I shall take the liberty of reading the text not exactly as it is in our version, but putting in the articles which our translators have left out. I never like to leave out the article where it is inserted by the original writer. So the passage runs thus, “That we through *the* patience and *the* comfort of the Scriptures might have *the* hope.” That rendering conveys to us another shade of meaning and I am convinced that it is the true one. Grammatical construction requires that the meaning should be thus brought out by the use of the articles.

So, first, we will consider *the patience of the Scriptures*. Secondly, *the comfort of the Scriptures*. And then, thirdly, though that may not be precisely according to the letter of the text, yet, I think perfectly consistent with the Truth of God—*the hope of the Scriptures*.

I. First, then, let us think of THE PATIENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

You, know, Beloved, that we are saved by faith and that by faith we find complete and immediate salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. But you must never forget that as soon as we are saved, we come under the discipline of Christ and a part of that discipline lies in the exercise of patience—patience in many senses—“the patience of the Scriptures.”

First, there is *the patience inculcated in the Scriptures* of which I should say, first, that it signifies resignation to the Divine will. In the olden times, the Scriptures enjoined submission to the will of the Most High, whatever that submission might involve. Solomon wrote, “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction: for whom the Lord loves He corrects; even as a father, the son in whom he delights.” The Lord Himself said, by the mouth of His servant, the Psalmist, “Be still and know that I am God.” And the Holy Spirit said through the lips of the weeping Prophet, Jeremiah, “Why does a living

man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" The Old Testament, like the New, bids us be patient under the hand of God. So we must be, my Brothers and Sisters. Submit yourselves unto God for this is an essential part of the life of faith. The man who will not yield himself up to the Divine will and meekly bear it, whatever it may be, is evidently rebellious against his God. How, then, can he be said to be trusting in the Lord? He has at least some unbelief still clinging to him, for, were he fully a Believer, he would resign himself to the Lord's will and humble himself under the mighty hand of God that he might exalt Him in due time.

This patience also includes a continuance in the good work and walk, though we may have to face human or even Satanic opposition. The patience inculcated in the Scriptures is a patient perseverance in well-doing—it is the walking in the path of the just which "shines more and more unto the perfect day." It is the constant abiding in the fear of the Lord. Nowhere does either the Old or the New Testament speak of our being saved by a kind of temporary faith or a spasm of love—but herein is seen the patience of the saints—that although they are opposed by the seed of the serpent and by the old serpent, himself, they still hold on their way despite all opposition and persecution, even to the end, and so they are saved.

This patience of the saints also includes the bearing of our brother's burdens. It is in that connection that our text appears—"We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." And this is part of the patience inculcated in the Scriptures. The old Law taught men to love their neighbors as themselves. Now, we quickly make excuses for our own infirmities and it, therefore, behooves us to endure the infirmities of others—to put a kind construction on what might have been harshly condemned—to bear with the misconceptions of our conduct made by others in their mistake, or even misrepresentations made in their anger—to be gentle and tender as a nurse is with a child—never to be hard, harsh, or severe, for this is contrary to the Second Table of the Law which can be summed up in the brief expression, love to men. Oh, I would to God that we had more of this spirit in all our churches! Our Savior said to His disciples, "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." But how often is that new commandment forgotten in the impatient way in which we show our petulance towards weak and, perhaps, provoking saints? God grant that in the future we may have more patience in this respect!

Patience in the Old Testament is often set forth in waiting for the fulfillment of the promises and the prophecies. The Patriarchs had to wait. Israel had to wait. We, also, are exhorted to wait on the Lord and to be of good courage, for He shall strengthen our heart. "Though the vision tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." So you see that the patience of the Scriptures, that is to say, the patience which the Scriptures inculcate, is that which we all need to exercise.

But it is also *the patience which the Scriptures exhibit*, for, when you turn to the grand old Book, you find that it gives us, in actual life, the

exemplification of the precepts which were written upon the tablets of stone, or upon the ancient rolls of Scripture. "You have heard of the patience of Job," says the Apostle James. You may not have to sit among the ashes as he did, or to endure such trials as fell upon him, but, between here and Heaven, you may expect to have losses, crosses, bereavements and harsh words from those who ought to be your comforters! O Beloved, may you have, at such times, the patience of the Scriptures and be able to say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job is one of the earthly patterns of patience, though he was not perfect in it. May our patience at least come up to his standard!

We need, too, the patience of David. He held on his way though opposed by wicked men, and especially by Saul who hunted him like a partridge upon the mountains. Yet David behaved himself with discretion and would not lift up his hand to smite the Lord's anointed, even though the crown of Israel seemed again and again to be within his reach. You know how patiently he persevered, notwithstanding all the opposition which came to thrust him out of his course.

Then with regard to bearing the infirmities of our brethren, you know the patience of the Scriptures as set forth in the case of Joseph. How tender and kind he was to his brothers even when he seemed to be most severe to them! With what a generous heart did he forgive their cruelty to him! You remember how he framed excuses for them as he said, "So now it was not you that sent me here, but God," though he knew right well that in their jealousy and malice they had sold him for a slave.

If I speak of the patience that waits for the fulfillment of promises, I may remind you that the Old Testament sets before you notable examples of this kind of waiting in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They waited long in the land of which they owned not so much as a single foot, except the field that contained Abraham's place of burial in the cave of Machpelah. Dwelling in tents, they waited, sojourners with God and strangers in the land, until the time when the promise should be fulfilled. This is just how you, also, have to live, Believer. This world is not a place of rest for you, for it is polluted—so you are to live the separated life of a pilgrim and a stranger until the Lord shall bring you into the Heavenly Canaan and give you the "inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away," which is "reserved in Heaven for you."

This patience is, however, most clearly set forth in the Scriptures in the life of our dear Lord and Master. You will find in Him patience in its highest perfection. He is the model of patient perseverance in the work His Father gave Him to do. He is the pattern of patient silence under the reproaches and sarcasms of wicked men, the image of patient suffering as He bowed His head unto death, even the death of the Cross. He it is, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame." This is part of the patience of the Scriptures and such patience as this we have, each one of us, to seek.

But, in addition to its being the patience inculcated and the patience exhibited, it is *the patience produced by the Scriptures*. Beloved, if you read the Scriptures diligently and meditate much upon them—if you

drink in of their spirit, it will be with you as it is with certain insects which, when they feed upon a peculiar kind of flower, their silk is colored like that upon which they feed. You shall find that feeding upon the patience of the Scriptures in meditation and prayer, you will find reproduced in you the patience of the Scriptures! If you want to kill impatience turn to the Word of God, look up an appropriate text, ask to have it applied to your heart by the Holy Spirit and see whether the Grace of patience is not thus implanted within you! Have you become weary in well-doing? Then stay yourselves upon a precious promise and your weariness will speedily depart! Do you seem as if you could not bear the continued opposition of ungodly men? Turn to the promises of your gracious Lord and Master and you shall learn to rejoice and be exceedingly glad, even when they persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for His name's sake! The saints of God have long proved that the Scriptures produce patience.

There is no literature in the world that is comparable to the many Books that are put here into one library called the Bible. There are no philosophical maxims under Heaven that can produce such patience as the Word of God produces when the Spirit of God comes riding in His own chariot of the Word into the soul of man. It is not the patience of a brute beast that cannot complain, or the patience of the stoic who refuses to feel—it is the patience of a child who believes in his father's love, the patience of a soldier who does not expect to conquer the enemy without stern fighting, the patience of a pilgrim who pushes on because he believes in the inheritance which he will ultimately reach. This is the patience of the Scriptures! May God, in His great mercy, work it in each one of us!

II. Then, in addition to the patience of the Scriptures, we are exhorted to seek to possess THE COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It is not right for us to be patient, yet miserable. I think I have seen some who professed to be Christians give themselves up to a mode of life which was not at all what it should be. They did not actually complain, but one could see that they were not happy. This is not the point to which the Spirit of God would bring us—He would have us get the comfort of the Scriptures. Well, now, what is the comfort of the Scriptures?

To go over the same heads again, I should say that it is, first, *the comfort which the Scriptures inculcate*. You know how the Word of God abounds in injunctions and promises concerning comfort and consolation. "Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem." There are many passages in the Old Testament in which we are plainly exhorted to be glad. And when you come to the New Testament, you have such messages as this. "Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me." Or this, "Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice." The Scripture bids us not merely to submit to tribulation, but to rejoice in it—not simply to be patient, but to glory in infirmities, to glory in trials, to glory in tribulations because then the Grace of God rests upon us all the more manifestly.

Then, Brothers and Sisters, we should have *the comfort which the Scriptures exhibit*. What a charming picture of a comfortable, happy

frame of mind is that of Enoch, who walked with God for centuries together! “Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, three hundred years.” How beautifully do we see the spirit of consolation exhibited in the character of Abraham, who, with all his troubles as a stranger in a strange land, walks among men as a king! Have you never envied that quiet dignity with which, believing in God, he seemed also to master all around him without any sign of agitation of mind? Oh, that you had such comfort as he had when he took his son, his only son, whom he loved, to offer him up for a sacrifice! You never have had such a test as that and, probably, you never will—but in all that time of testing, what solid comfort he had! There were no written Scriptures then, yet how grand is the consolation which the Scripture describes him as having! “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 your seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from hence also he received Him in a figure.” Therefore he staggered not at the promise through unbelief.

Admire, too, the comfort that you often see in the case of David. His was a troubled life, but he stayed himself upon his God. As one remarkable instance of this, think of the time when he came back from the Philistines and found Ziklag burned. All who were left in it were carried away captive and “the people”—his own followers—“spoke of stoning him—but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.” All through the Psalms you get beautiful pictures of the comfort that David enjoyed even in his times of trouble. “Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.” Thus he talked to himself and admonished himself—and even when he sank in deep waters, he still cried unto the Lord and still hoped in His mercy. What a sweet song of hope he sings in the 23rd Psalm! “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

So, be patient, Brothers and Sisters, but be comfortable, too! Submit to the will of God, but do not do it like slaves who submit because they must, but like children who learn to rejoice in their father’s will and who, though they cannot understand it, yet believe it to be good and right. If you want to exhibit the comfort of the Scriptures, do as Hezekiah did when Rabshakeh came with Sennacherib’s letter full of filthiness and blasphemy. “Hezekiah went up into the House of the Lord and spread it before the Lord.” This is the comfort of the Scriptures, that we may go to the Lord in the worst time of trouble and spread the whole case before the eyes of Infinite Love, expecting and being sure that God will, in some way, work deliverance for us.

And, as I said about the patience of the Scriptures, so is it with the comfort. I have spoken of the comfort which the Scriptures inculcate and exhibit. Now I want to speak of *the comfort which the Scriptures produce*. Oh, how sweetly do the Scriptures console and cheer the heart! I am only saying what many of you, dear Brothers and Sisters, know as well as I

do, and I know it in my very heart. There have been times in my life when all the words of men, however kindly they may have been spoken, have altogether failed to comfort me. But a promise—yes, I was about to say, *half* a promise—from God has lifted my soul out of the depths of despair and made it rise like a lark, singing as it soared in the clear sunlight of Jehovah's Countenance! When the Spirit of God applies even the briefest portion of Scripture to our spirit, it is a balm for every care and the end of every difficulty. We are glad, then, in the worst of weathers, to take up our cross and go on our way rejoicing when the consolations of the Holy Scriptures are applied to us by the Holy Spirit! For, Brothers and Sisters, the Scriptures always exactly fit our case, whatever it may be.

Was there ever a book that was so much written for you as this Book is? I claim that it was written for me, yet I grant that it was also written for you—I mean, not merely for you all, as a whole congregation, but for each child of God. There are passages in the Bible which sometimes come to my heart with such force that it seems as if the Holy Spirit must have written them the very day I read them! He must have known all about my case, for He has put a little word into that verse which just exactly suits me! I know that it was written thousands of years ago, but what a marvelous prescience must have been there to foresee the peculiarity and specialty of my trouble! Have not you found it so, Beloved? Has not the comfort of the Scriptures been so suitable, so tender, so condescending, that you have enjoyed it and been made glad by it?

There is also this further comfort, that the Scriptures are so certain. When we have trusted in a praise of God, we have not relied upon a cunningly devised fable. When we rely upon a Covenant declaration, it is not a bruised reed which will break beneath our weight, but it is a strong, substantial column which will bear all the load that we can possibly put upon it, so that we may have the fullest consolation and good hope through Grace by this comfort of the Scriptures.

Let us just think of a few Old Testament passages and see if they do not give us great comfort. "I know their sorrows." That is a very old statement of God concerning the children of Israel in Egypt, but, it is just as true concerning all *our* sorrows—they are all known to God. "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." That is part of the last message of Moses to the children of Israel. Does not that comfort of the Scriptures cheer you? Here is another precious passage: "Fear not, you worm Jacob, and you men of Israel; I will help you, says the Lord, and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the Covenant of My peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you." "I have loved you with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you." "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you."

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain you: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shall

you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” “As your days, so shall your strength be.” Do you want me to keep on quoting such precious promises as these? I might do so all night long, for these charming notes of the comfort of the Scriptures are practically without end! Oh, may the Divine Spirit lay some of them home to your troubled hearts, so that, beloved Brothers and Sisters, you may not only have patience and comfort, but that you may have *the* patience and *the* comfort of the Scriptures!

III. Now I have to speak briefly on the last part of our subject, which is—THE HOPE OF THE SCRIPTURES—“that we through the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures might have the hope.”

You have noticed, I daresay, that the matters which concern our salvation are always spoken of as the objects of faith. A man does not obtain the pardon of his sins by hoping for it—he is not regenerated because he hopes to be born-again. Justification is not given to him because he hopes for it. All these things are matters of faith, not of hope. We are justified by faith. It is by faith that we receive the forgiveness of our sins. Faith has to do with the past—with what Christ has accomplished. But hope looks forward to the future. Hope is for those who are saved and hope comes to us and is strengthened in us by the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures.

Well now, Brothers and Sisters, what is the hope which we get as God enables us to have the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures? Well—to go over the same three points again—it *is such a hope as the Scriptures hold forth*. For instance, they hold forth this hope—“The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.” So, if you have the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, you will be sure about that great and glorious Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. Your hope will be very bright about that matter because you will feel sure that we shall be preserved, upheld, comforted and rendered triumphant even over the last enemy, which is death, for He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” That is one hope which the Scripture sets forth to us. Than there is the hope that after death will come the Resurrection and eternal life and Glory, for that is also part of the hope set forth in the Scriptures, as Job said, “I know that my Redeemer lives and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” And David said, “As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness.” And Isaiah said, “Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.” Albeit that the Old Testament in itself has not the brightness of hope that there is in the New Testament, yet there is enough, even there, to make us very hopeful for the future. And if you read the whole of the Scriptures through, you will see that the man who, by the patience of the Scriptures is holding on his way, and by the comfort of the Scriptures is cheered—in so doing has the good hope of final perseverance and of eternal glory!

Then, also, this hope is *such as the Scriptures exhibit*. We have a very beautiful picture of hope in the 11th Chapter of Hebrews where the Apostle describes all those heroes of the faith and then says, “These all died in

faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.” They all died looking for what they had not seen, but of which they were so sure that they already embraced it! Over their mausoleum we may inscribe the words, “the children of the morning.” They had not seen the full light of the day, but they were persuaded of its coming—they watched for it, spoke of it and lived and died in expectation of it! You are to have the same kind of hope that Abraham had, of whom our Lord said to the Jews, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it and was glad.” You are to have the same sort of hope that all the Patriarchs had when they remained far off from the country from which they had gone out because, like Abraham, they “looked for a city who has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.” You are to have a hope like that of Joseph, who died in Egypt, yet gave commandment concerning his bones, that they were not to be left there, for he still claimed his portion, not with Pharaoh, but with his forefathers in the land of promise.

I have not time to go through the list of the hopeful spirits of the Old Testament, but I would just remind you that they never hoped to have the inheritance without patiently waiting on God’s time for them to receive it, and they only hoped to have it through the comfort of the Scriptures which had promised it to them. It must be the same with us. Through believing in Christ Jesus our Lord, and relying upon the promises of our faithful, Covenant-keeping God, we also, through the patience of the Scriptures, and the comfort of the Scriptures, shall inherit the hope which is set forth and exhibited in the Scriptures.

Lastly, *this is a hope such as the Scriptures always produce in those who believe them, obey them and follow them.* O Brothers and Sisters, if you are patiently fighting the battles of the Lord, determined that nothing shall turn you aside from following the great Captain of your salvation—if you are resting in the precious blood of Jesus and the Holy Spirit has worked in you this determination that come what may, you will never turn aside from the King’s highway of holiness—then I know that you will delight in and seek after all the comforts that are stored up for you in the Inspired Word of God! You will prize your Lord’s promises, you will observe your Lord’s ordinances and, above all, you will esteem and love your blessed Lord, Himself, who is “the Consolation of Israel.” You will honor the Divine Spirit, who is the Comforter, who brings the comfort of which our text speaks. And when you have thus realized the patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, oh, what a hope you will have! You will share the hopes of all the saints, the hopes which stirred their spirits when they died, some of them in anguish at the stake or on the rack, or dragged at the heels of wild horses, or stoned, or sawn in two, or slain with the sword. You will have the hope with which your godly mother died. The hope with which all those who were in Christ have died. You will have the hope that when the Master comes, He will find you ready to welcome Him—the hope that when His Throne is set and His courtiers are gathered around it in the Great Day of Account, you will be there—and the hope that, forever, you will be with Him where He is, to behold His Glory, the Glory which the Father has given Him!

I could not, if I had the tongues of men and of angels, explain and expound all that is included in the hope of patient souls that are comforted by the Inspired Word of God! It is a hope full of immortality and of it the Apostle Paul says, when writing to the Hebrews, “which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil; where the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” This hope we would not part with for ten thousand worlds if we had them—do you not say so, Beloved? Oh, let your eyes sparkle at the very thought of this hope! Let your hearts dance even at the mere mention of it! Let your whole soul be invigorated and kept in tune by this hope—that when Jesus comes in His Glory, you shall be with Him and shall reign with Him forever and ever!

Now I must send you away with this mournful reflection—that there are some of you who have no hope. Sometimes, we use the word, “hope,” very incorrectly. A man dies without any faith in Christ and someone says, “Well, I hope it is all right with him.” I dare not say that! I dare say, “I wish it had been all right with him. I desire that it might have been.” But hope needs solid ground to rest upon if it is to be a good hope. An idle, vain hope is for idle and vain men. A foolish hope is only fit for fools. Sirs, what right have some of you to hope that you will ever get to Heaven? If, when you go out of this Tabernacle, you were to turn to the left and go towards London Bridge, it would be very absurd for you to say that you hoped that, in that way, you would get to Clapham. And when you turn your faces towards the world, towards self, towards sin, it is idle for you to say, “I hope we shall all meet in Heaven.” I am sure I wish, with all my heart, that we may—and that means that I hope the Lord will turn your faces heavenward!

May the Holy Spirit bring you to repent of sin, to believe in Jesus, to cast yourselves wholly upon Him—may He, by His Grace, cut the links which now bind you to the world and enable you to give yourselves up wholly to Christ, that He may save you! May the Lord do this in His infinite mercy, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 15:1-16.**

Verse 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 everyone 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 You 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 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 whatever things were written before 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 whatever things were written before were written for our learning.’”

4, 5. *That we, through the 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 like-minded, 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 like-minded, 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 like-minded with one another when we become like-minded with Christ, but not till then.

6, 7. *That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive you 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 something 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, perhaps, 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 You among the Gentiles, and sing unto Your name. And again he said, Rejoice, you Gentiles, with His people. And again, Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; and laud Him, all you people.*

And again, Isaiah said, 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 the 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 you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you 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 Spirit.* 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” say 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 Spirit.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—852, 734, 746, 848.

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

OUR URGENT NEED OF THE HOLY SPIRIT NO. 1332

DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JANUARY 7, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"Through the power of the Holy Spirit."
Romans 15:13.*

*"By the power of the Spirit of God."
Romans 15:19.*

I DESIRE to draw your attention, at this time, to the great necessity which exists for the continual manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit in the Church of God if by her means the multitudes are to be gathered to the Lord Jesus. I did not know how I could much better do so than by first showing that the Spirit of God is necessary to the Church of God for its own internal growth in Grace. Hence my text in the 13th verse, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit"—where it is evident that the Apostle attributes the power to be filled with joy and peace in believing, and the power to abound in hope, to the Holy Spirit.

But then, I also wanted to show you that the power of the Church outside, that with which she is to be aggressive and work upon the world for the gathering out of God's elect from among men, is also this same energy of the Holy Spirit. Hence I have taken the 19th verse, for the Apostle there says that God had through him made "the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." So you see, dear Friends, that first of all, to keep the Church happy and holy within herself there must be a manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit. And secondly, that the Church may invade the territories of the enemy and may conquer the world for Christ, but she must be clothed with the same sacred energy.

We may, then, go further and say that the power of the Church for external work will be proportionate to the power which dwells within her. Gauge the energy of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of Believers and you may fairly calculate their influence upon unbelievers. Only let the Church be illuminated by the Holy Spirit and she will reflect the light and become to onlookers "fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners." Let us, by two or three illustrations, show that the outward work must always depend upon the inward force.

On a cold winter's day when the snow has fallen and lies deep upon the ground, you go through a village. There is a row of cottages and you will notice that from one of the roofs the snow has nearly disappeared, while another cottage still bears a coating of snow. You do not stay to make enquiries as to the reason of the difference, for you know very well what is the cause. There is a fire burning inside the one cottage and the warmth glows through its roof, and so the snow speedily melts. In the other there is no tenant—it is a house to let and no fire burns on its hearth and no

warm smoke ascends the chimney—therefore there lies the snow. Just as the warmth is inside so the melting will be outside.

I look at a number of Churches and where I see worldliness and formalism lying thick upon them, I am absolutely certain that there is not the warmth of Christian life within. But where the hearts of Believers are warm with Divine Love through the Spirit of God, we are sure to see evils vanish and beneficial consequences following. We need not look within—in such a case the exterior is sufficient index. Take an illustration from political life. Here is a trouble arising between different nations. There are angry spirits stirring and it seems very likely that the Gordian knot of difficulty will never be untied by diplomacy, but will need to be cut with the sword.

Everybody knows that one of the hopes of peace lies in the bankrupt condition of the nation which is likely to go to war, for if it is short of supplies, if it cannot pay its debts, if it cannot furnish the material for war, then it will not be likely to court a conflict. A country must be strong in internal resources before it can wisely venture upon foreign wars. Thus is it in the great battle of the Truth of God—a poor starving Church cannot combat the devil and his armies. Unless the Church is, herself, rich in the things of God and strong with Divine energy, she will generally cease to be aggressive and will content herself with going on with the regular routine of Christian work, crying, “Peace! Peace!” where peace should not be.

She will not dare to defy the world, or to send forth her legions to conquer its provinces for Christ when her own condition is pitiably weak. The strength or weakness of a nation’s money supply affects its army in its every march. And in like manner, its measure of Grace influences the Church of God in all its actions. Suffer yet another illustration. If you lived in Egypt you would notice, once each year, the Nile rising. And you would watch its increase with anxiety, because the extent of the overflow of the Nile is very much the measure of the fertility of Egypt. Now the rising of the Nile must depend upon those far-off lakes in the center of Africa—whether they shall be well filled with the melting of the snows or not. If there is a scanty supply in the higher reservoirs, there cannot be much overflow into the Nile in its after-course through Egypt.

Let us translate the figure and say that, if the upper lakes of fellowship with God in the Christian Church are not well filled—if the soul’s *spiritual* strength is not sustained by private prayer and communion with God—the Nile of practical Christian service will never rise to the flood. The one thing I want to say is this—you cannot get out of the Church what is not *in* it. The reservoir must be filled before it can pour forth a stream. We must, ourselves, drink of the living water till we are full—and then out of the midst of us shall flow rivers of living water—but not till then. Out of an empty basket you cannot distribute loaves and fishes, however hungry the crowd may be. Out of an empty heart you cannot speak full things, nor from a lean soul bring forth fat things full of marrow which shall feed the people of God.

Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks, when it speaks to edification at all. So the first thing is to look well to *home* affairs and pray

that God would bless us and cause His face to shine upon us, that His way may be known upon earth and His saving health among all people—

**“To bless Your chosen race,
In mercy, Lord, incline,
And cause the brightness of Your face
On all Your saints to shine.
That so Your wondrous way
May through the world be known;
While distant lands their tribute pay,
And Your salvation own.”**

This morning, in trying to speak of the great necessity of the Church, namely, her being moved vigorously by the power of the Holy Spirit, I earnestly pray that we may enter upon this subject with the deepest conceivable reverence. Let us adore while we are meditating! Let us feel the condescension of this blessed Person of the Godhead in deigning to dwell in His people and to work in the human heart! Let us remember that this Divine Person is very sensitive. He is a jealous God.

We read of His being grieved and vexed and, therefore,, let us ask His forgiveness of the many provocations which He must have received from our hands. With lowly awe let us bow before Him, remembering that if there is a sin which is unpardonable, it has a reference to *Him*—the sin against the Holy Spirit which shall never be forgiven—neither in this world nor in that which is to come. In reference to the Holy Spirit we stand on very tender ground, indeed. And if ever we should veil our faces and rejoice with trembling, it is while we speak of the Spirit and of those mysterious works with which He blesses us.

In that lowly spirit and under the Divine overshadowing, follow me while I set before you seven works of the Holy Spirit which are most necessary to the Church—for its own good and equally necessary to her in her office of missionary from Christ to the outside world.

I. To begin, then, the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in the QUICKENING of souls to spiritual life. All the spiritual life which exists in this world is the creation of the Holy Spirit, by whom the Lord Jesus quickens whomever He wills. You and I had not life enough to know our death till He visited us! We had not light enough to perceive that we were in darkness, nor sense enough to feel our misery! We were so utterly abandoned to our own folly that, though we were naked, poor and miserable, we dreamed that we were rich and increased in goods! We were under sentence of death as condemned criminals and yet we talked about merit and reward!

Yes, we were *dead* and yet we boasted that we were alive—counting our very death to be our life! The Spirit of God, in infinite mercy, came to us with His mysterious power and made us live. The first token of life was a consciousness of our being in the realm of death and an agony to escape from it. We began to perceive our insensibility and, if I may be pardoned such an expression, we saw our *blindness*. Every growth of spiritual life, from the first tender shoot until now, has also been the work of the Holy Spirit.

As the green blade was His production, so is the ripening corn! The increase of life, as much life as there is at the beginning, must still come by

the operation of the Spirit of God who raised up Christ from the dead. You will never have more life, Brothers and Sisters, unless the Holy Spirit bestows it upon you. Yes, you will not even know that you *need* more, nor groan after more, unless He works in you to desire and to agonize according to His own good pleasure. See, then, our absolute dependence upon the Holy Spirit! If He were gone, we should relapse into spiritual death and the Church would become a morgue!

The Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to make everything that we do to be alive. We are sowers, Brothers and Sisters, but if we take dead seed in our seed baskets there will never be a harvest! The preacher must preach living Truths of God in a living manner if he expects to obtain a hundred-fold harvest. Too much of Church work is nothing better than the movement of a galvanized corpse! Too much of religion is done as if it were performed by a robot, or ground off by machinery. Nowadays men care little about heart and soul—they only look at outward performances. Why, I hear they have now invented a machine which talks, though surely there was talk enough without this Parisian addition to the band of prattlers!

We can preach as machines, we can pray as machines and we can teach Sunday school as machines. Men can give mechanically and come to the Lord's Table mechanically—yes, and we, ourselves, shall do so unless the Spirit of God is with us! Most hearers know what it is to hear a live sermon which quivers all over with fullness of energy. You also know what it is to sing a hymn in a lively manner and you know what it is to unite in a live Prayer Meeting! But, ah, if the Spirit of God is absent, all that the Church does will be lifeless! It will be as the rustle of leaves above a tomb, the gliding of specters, the congregation of the dead turning over in their graves!

As the Spirit of God is the Quickener to make us alive and our work alive, so must He specially be with us to make those alive with whom we have to deal for Jesus. Imagine a dead preacher preaching a dead sermon to dead sinners—what can possibly come of it? Here is a beautiful essay which has been admirably elaborated and it is coldly read to the cold-hearted sinner. It smells of the midnight oil but it has no heavenly unction, no Divine power resting upon it, nor, perhaps, is that power even looked for! What good can come of such a production? As well may you try to calm the tempest with poetry or stay the hurricane with rhetoric as to bless a soul by mere learning and eloquence!

It is only as the Spirit of God shall come upon God's servant and shall make the Word which He preaches to drop as a living seed into the heart, that any result can follow his ministry! And it is only as the Spirit of God shall then follow that seed and keep it alive in the soul of the listener that we can expect those who profess to be converted to take root and grow to maturity of Grace and become our sheaves at the last! We are utterly dependent here and, for my part, I rejoice in this absolute dependence!

If I could have a stock of power to save souls which would be all my own, apart from the Spirit of God, I cannot suppose greater temptation to pride and to living at a distance from God! It is well to be weak in self and better, still, to be *nothing*—to simply be the pen in the hand of the Spirit of

God—unable to write a single letter upon the tablets of the human heart except as the hand of the Holy Spirit shall use us for that purpose. That is really our position and we ought practically to take it up! And doing so, we shall continually cry to the Spirit of God to quicken us in all things and quicken all that we do—and quicken the Word as it drops into the sinner's ears.

I am quite certain that a Church which is devoid of life cannot be the means of life-giving to the dead sinners around it. No! Everything acts after its kind and we must have a *living* Church for living work! O that God would quicken every member of this Church! "What," you ask, "do you think some of us are not alive unto God?" Brothers and Sisters, there are some of you, concerning whom I am *certain*, as far as one can judge of another, that you have life, for we can see it in all that you do! But there are some others of you, concerning whose spiritual life one has to exercise a good deal of faith and a great deal more charity, for we do not perceive in you much activity in God's cause, nor care for the souls of others, nor zeal for the Divine Glory! If we do not see any fruits, what can we do but earnestly pray that you may not turn out to be barren trees?

That is the first point and we think it is as clear as possible that we must have the quickening power of the Spirit for ourselves if we are to be the means in the hand of God of awakening dead souls.

II. Next, it is one of the peculiar offices of the Holy Spirit to ENLIGHTEN His people. He has done so by giving us His Word which He has inspired. But the Bible, inspired though it is, is never spiritually understood by any man apart from the personal teaching of its great Author. You may read it as much as you will and never discover the inner and vital sense unless your soul shall be led into it by the Holy Spirit Himself!

"What?" says one, "I have learned the Shorter Catechism and I have got the creed memorized by heart, and yet do I know nothing?" I answer, you have done well to learn the *letter* of the Truth of God, but you still need the Spirit of God to make it the light and power of God to your soul! The letter you may know, and know it better than some who know, also, the spirit, and I do not, for a moment, depreciate a knowledge of the letter—unless you suppose that there is something saving in mere head knowledge! But the Spirit of God must come and make the letter *alive* to you. He must transfer it to your heart, set it on fire and make it burn within you, or else its Divine force and majesty will be hid from your eyes.

No man knows the things of God save he to whom the Spirit of God has revealed them. No carnal mind can understand *spiritual* things. We may use language as plain as a pikestaff, but the man who has no spiritual understanding is a blind man and the clearest light will not enable him to see. You must be taught of the Lord, or you will die in ignorance! Now, my Brothers and Sisters, suppose that in a Church there should be many who have never been thus instructed—can you not see that evil must and will come of it? Error is sure to arise where the Truth of God is not experimentally known. If professors are not taught of the Spirit, their ignorance will breed conceit, pride, unbelief and a thousand other evils!

Oh, had you known more of the Truth of God, my Brother, you had not boasted so! Oh, had you seen that Truth of God which, as yet, has not

been revealed to you because of your prejudice, you had not so fiercely condemned those who are better than yourself! With much zeal to do good, men have done a world of mischief through lack of instruction in Divine things! Sorrow, too, comes of ignorance. O, my Brother, had you known the Doctrines of Grace you had not been so long a time in bondage! Half of the heresy in the Church of God is not willful error, but error which springs of not knowing the Truth of God, not searching the Scriptures with a teachable heart, not submitting the mind to the light of the Holy Spirit!

We should, as a rule, treat heresy rather as ignorance to be enlightened than as a crime to be condemned. Unless, alas, that sometimes it becomes willful perversity when the mind is greedy after novelty, or puffed up with self-confidence! Then other treatment may become painfully necessary. Beloved, if the Spirit of God will but enlighten the Church thoroughly, there will be an end to divisions! Schisms are generally occasioned by ignorance and the proud spirit which will not accept correction. On the other hand, real, lasting, practical unity within exists in proportion to the unity of men's minds in the Truth of God. Hence the necessity for the Spirit of God to conduct us into the whole Truth of God.

My dear Brother, if you think you know a doctrine, ask the Lord to make you sure that you know it, for much that we think we know turns out to be unknown when times of trial put us to the test. We really know nothing unless it is burnt into our souls as with a hot iron by an experience which only the Spirit of God can give! I think you will now see that the Spirit of God, being necessary for our instruction, we pre-eminently find, in His gracious operation, our strength for the instruction of others—for how shall those teach who have never been taught? How shall men declare a message which they have never learned?

“Son of man, eat this roll,” for until you have eaten it yourself, your lips can never tell it to others. “The farmer that labors must first be a partaker of the fruits.” It is the law of Christ's vineyard that none shall work there till, first of all, they know the flavor of the fruits which grow in the sacred enclosure. You must know Christ, Grace, love and the Truth of God, yourself, before you can ever be an instructor of babes for Christ. When we come to deal with others, earnestly longing to instruct them for Jesus, we perceive even more clearly our need of the Spirit of God.

Ah, my Brother, you think you will put the Gospel so clearly that they *must see it*—but their blind eyes overcome you. Ah, you think you will put it so zealously that they *must feel it*—but their clay-cold hearts defeat you! Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon, depend upon it! You may think you are going to win souls by your pleading, but you might as well stand on the top of a mountain and whistle to the wind, unless the Holy Spirit is with you! After all your talking, your hearers will, perhaps, have caught your idea, but the mind of the Spirit, the *real soul* of the Gospel, you cannot impart to them—this remains, like creation itself, a work which only God can accomplish.

Daily, then, let us pray for the power of the Spirit as the Illuminator. Come, O blessed Light of God! You, alone, can break our personal darkness and only when You have enlightened us can we lead others in Your

light! An ignorant Christian is disqualified for great usefulness, but he who is taught of God will teach transgressors God's ways and sinners shall be converted unto Christ! Both to burn within and shine without you must have the illuminating Spirit!

III. One work of the Spirit of God is to create in Believers the spirit of ADOPTION. "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, whereby you cry, Abba, Father!" "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!" We are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and so receive the nature of children—and that nature, which is given by Him, He continually prompts, excites, develops and matures—so that we receive day by day more and more of the childlike spirit.

Now, Beloved, this may not seem to you to be of very great importance at first sight, but it is, for the Church is never happy except all her members walk as dear children towards God. Sometimes the spirit of slaves creeps over us—we begin to talk of the service of God as though it were heavy and burdensome—and are discontent if we do not receive present wages and visible success, just as servants do when they are not happy. But the spirit of adoption works for love, without any hope of reward, and it is satisfied with the sweet fact of being in the Father's house and doing the Father's will.

This spirit gives peace, rest, joy, boldness and holy familiarity with God. A man who never received the spirit of a child towards God does not know the bliss of the Christian life! He misses its flower, its savor, its excellence and I should not wonder if the service of Christ should be a weariness to him because he has never, yet, got to the sweet things and does not enjoy the green pastures where the Good Shepherd makes His sheep to feed and to lie down. But when the Spirit of God makes us feel that we are sons and daughters, and we live in the House of God to go no more out forever, then the service of God is sweet and easy and we accept the delay of apparent success as a part of the trial we are called to bear.

Now, mark you, this will have a great effect upon the outside world! A body of professors performing religion as a task, groaning along the ways of godliness with faces full of misery, like slaves who dread the lash, can have but small effect upon the sinners around them. They say, "Those people serve, no doubt, a hard master, and they are denying themselves this and that. Why should we be like they?" But bring me a Church made up of children of God—a company of men and women whose faces shine with their heavenly Father's smile! Who are accustomed to take their cares and cast them on their Father as children should! Who know they are accepted and loved, and are perfectly content with the great Father's will! Put them down in the midst of a company of ungodly ones and I will guarantee you they will begin to envy them their peace and joy. Thus happy saints become most efficient operators upon the minds of the unsaved!

O blessed Spirit of God! Let us all, now, feel that we are the children of the great Father and let our childlike love be warm this morning! And so shall we be fit to go forth and proclaim the Lord's love to the prodigals who are in the far-off land among the swine! These three points are self-evident, I think. Now we pass to the fourth.

IV. The Holy Spirit is especially called the Spirit of HOLINESS. He never suggested sin nor approved of it, nor has He ever done otherwise than grieve over it—holiness is the Spirit's delight! The Church of God wears upon her brow the words, "Holiness to the Lord." Only in proportion as she is holy may she claim to be the Church of God at all. An unholy Church? Surely this cannot be her of whom we read, "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."

Holiness is not mere morality, not the outward keeping of Divine precepts out of a hard sense of duty while those Commandments, in themselves, are not delightful to us. Holiness is the entirety of our manhood fully consecrated to the Lord and molded to His will! This is the thing which the Church of God must have, but it can never have it apart from the Sanctifier, for there is not a grain of holiness beneath the sky but what is of the operation of the Holy Spirit! And, Brothers and Sisters, if a Church is destitute of holiness, what effect can it have upon the world? Scoffers utterly condemn and despise professors whose inconsistent lives contradict their verbal testimonies!

An unholy Church may pant and struggle after dominion and make what noise she can in pretense of work for Christ, but the kingdom comes not to the unholy, neither have they, themselves, entered it. The testimony of unholy men is no more acceptable to Christ than was the homage which the evil spirit gave to Him in the days of His flesh, to which He answered, "Hold your peace." "Unto the wicked," God says, "What have you to do to declare My statutes?" The dew is withheld and the rain comes not in its season to the tillage of those who profess to be the servants of God and yet sow iniquity.

After all, the acts of the Church preach more to the world than the words of the Church! Put an anointed man to preach the Gospel in the midst of a really godly people and his testimony will be marvelously supported by the Church with which he labors. But place the most faithful minister over an ungodly Church and he has such a weight upon him that he must first clear himself of it or he cannot succeed. He may preach his heart out! He may pray till his knees are weary, but conversions will be sorely hindered if, indeed, they occur at all. There is no likelihood of victory to Israel while Achan's curse is on the camp! An unholy Church makes Christ to say that He cannot do many mighty works there because of its iniquity.

Brethren, do you not see in this point our need of the Spirit of God? And when you get to grappling terms with sinners and have to talk to them about the necessity of holiness—a renewed heart and a godly life coming out of that renewed heart—do you expect ungodly men to be charmed with what you say? What does the unregenerate mind care for righteousness? Was a carnal man ever eager after holiness? Such a thing was never seen! As well expect the devil to be in love with God, as an unredeemed heart to be in love with holiness! But the sinner must love that which is pure and right, or he cannot enter Heaven! *You* cannot make him

do so. Who can do it but that Holy Spirit who has made you to love what once *you* despised?

Go not out, therefore, to battle with sin until you have taken weapons out of the armory of the Eternal Spirit! Mountains of sin will not turn to plains at your bidding unless the Holy Spirit is pleased to make the Word effectual. So then, we see that as the Spirit of holiness we need the Holy Spirit.

V. Fifthly, the Church needs much PRAYER and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Grace and of supplications. The strength of a Church may pretty accurately be gauged by her prayerfulness. We cannot expect God to put forth His power unless we entreat Him to do so. But all acceptable supplication is worked in the soul by the Holy Spirit. The first desire which God accepts must be excited in the heart by the secret operations of the Holy One of Israel. And every subsequent pleading of every sort which contains in it a grain of living faith and, therefore,, comes up as a memorial before the Lord, must have been effectually worked in the soul by Him who makes intercession in the saints according to the will of God.

Our great High Priest will put into His censer no incense but that which the Spirit has compounded! Prayer is the creation of the Holy Spirit! We cannot do without prayer and we cannot pray without the Holy Spirit! And, therefore, our dependence on Him. Furthermore, when we come to deal with sinners, we know that they must pray. "Behold he prays," is one of the earliest signs of the new birth! But can we *make* the sinner pray? Can any persuasion of ours lead him to his knees to breathe the penitential sigh and look to Christ for mercy? If you have attempted the conversion of a soul in your own strength you know you have failed! And so you would have failed if you had attempted the creation of one single acceptable prayer in the heart of even a little child.

Oh then, dear Brothers and Sisters, let us cry to our heavenly Father to give the Holy Spirit to us! Let us ask Him to be in us more and more mightily as the Spirit of prayer, making intercession in us with groans that cannot be uttered, that the Church may not miss the Divine blessing for lack of asking for it! I do verily believe this to be her present weakness and one great cause why the kingdom of Christ does not more mightily spread—prayer is too much restrained— and, therefore,, the blessing is kept back! And it will always be restrained unless the Holy Spirit shall stimulate the desires of His people. O blessed Spirit, we pray You will make us pray, for Jesus' sake!

VI. Sixthly, the Spirit of God is in a very remarkable manner the giver of FELLOWSHIP. So often, as we pronounce the Apostolic benediction, we pray that we may receive the communion of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to have communion with spiritual things. He, alone, can take the key and open up the secret mystery that we may know the things which are of God. He gives us fellowship with God, Himself, through Jesus Christ. By the Spirit we have access to the Father. Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, but it is the Spirit of God who brings us into communion with the Most High.

So, too, my dear Brothers and Sisters, our fellowship with one another, so far as it is Christian fellowship, is always produced by the Spirit of

God. If we have continued together in peace and love these many years, I cannot attribute it to our constitutional good tempers, nor to wise management, nor to any natural causes, but only to the love into which the Spirit has baptized us so that rebellious natures have been still. If a dozen Christian people live together for 12 months in true spiritual union and unbroken affection, trace it to the love of the Spirit! And if 1,200, or four times that number shall be able to persevere in united service and find themselves loving each other better after many years than they did at the first, let it be regarded as a blessing from the Comforter, for which He is to be devoutly adored!

Fellowship can only come to us by the Spirit, but a Church without fellowship would be a disorderly mob, a kingdom divided against itself and, consequently, it could not prosper. You need fellowship for mutual strength, guidance, help and encouragement—without it your Church is a mere human society. If you are to make a good impression on the world, you must be united as one living body. A divided Church has long been the scorn of Antichrist. No sneer which comes from the Vatican has a greater sting in it than that which taunts Protestants with their divisions! And as it is with the great outward Church so it is with any one particular Church of Christ!

Divisions are our disgrace, our weakness, our hindrance! And as the gentle Spirit, alone, can prevent or heal these divisions by us, we are dependent upon Him for real loving fellowship with God and with one another. Let us daily cry to Him to work in us brotherly love and all the sweet Graces which make us one with Christ, that we all may be one even as the Father is One with the Son—and that the world may know that God has, indeed, sent Jesus and that we are His people.

VII. Seventhly, we need the Holy Spirit in that renowned office which is described by our Lord as THE PARACLETE or COMFORTER. The word bears another rendering, which our translators have given to it in that passage where we read, “If any man sins, we have an Advocate (or Paraclete) with the Father.” The Holy Spirit is both Comforter and Advocate. The Holy Spirit, at this present moment, is our Friend and Comforter, sustaining the sinking spirits of Believers, applying the precious promises, revealing the love of Jesus Christ to the heart. Many a heart would break if the Spirit of God had not comforted it. Many of God’s dear children would have utterly died by the way if He had not bestowed upon them His Divine consolations to cheer their pilgrimage.

That is His work and a very necessary work, for if Believers become unhappy they became weak in many points of service. I am certain that the joy of the Lord is our strength, for I have proved it so and proved also the *opposite* truth! There are on earth certain Christians who inculcate gloom as a Christian’s proper state. I will not judge them, but this I will say, that in evangelistic work they do *nothing* and I do not wonder at it! Till snow in harvest ripens wheat. Till darkness makes flowers bloom. Till the salt sea yields clusters bursting with new wine, you will never find an unhappy religion promotive of the growth of the kingdom of Christ! You must have *joy* in the Lord, Brothers and Sisters, if you are to be strong in the Lord and strong for the Lord!

Now, as the Comforter, alone, can bear you up amid the floods of tribulation which you are sure to meet with, you see your great need of His consoling Presence. We have said that the Spirit of God is the *Advocate* of the Church—not with God, for there, *Christ* is our sole Advocate—but with man! What is the grandest plea that the Church has against the world? I answer, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the standing miracle of the Church! External evidences are very excellent. You young men who are worried by skeptics, will do well to study those valuable works which learned and devout men have, with much labor, produced for us. But, mark you, all the evidences of the truth of Christianity which can be gathered from analogy, from history and from external facts are nothing whatever compared with the operations of the Spirit of God! These are the arguments which convince!

A man says to me, “I do not believe in sin, in righteousness, or in judgment.” Well, Brothers and Sisters, the Holy Spirit can soon convince him! If he asks me for signs and evidences of the Truth of the Gospel, I reply, “Do you see this woman? She was a great sinner in the very worst sense and led others into sin. But now you cannot find more sweetness and light anywhere than in her. Do you hear this profane swearer, persecutor and blasphemer? He is speaking with purity, truth and humbleness of mind. Observe yon man who was, before, a miser, and see how he consecrates his substance! Notice that envious, malicious spirit and see how it becomes gentle, forgiving and amiable through conversion.

How do you account for these great changes? They are happening here everyday! Why? Is it a lie which produces truth, honesty and love? Does not every tree bear fruit after its kind? What, then, must that Grace be which produces such blessed transformations? The wonderful phenomena of ravens turned to doves and lions into lambs—the marvelous transformations of moral character which the minister of Christ rejoices to see worked by the Gospel—these are our witnesses and they are unanswerable!

Peter and John have gone up to the Temple and they have healed a lame man. They are soon seized and brought before the Sanhedrim. This is the charge against them—“You have been preaching in the name of Jesus and this Jesus is an impostor.” What do Peter and John say? They need say nothing, for there stands the man that was healed! He has brought his crutch with him and he waves it in triumph! And he runs and leaps! He was their volume of evidences, their apology and proof. “When they saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John, they could say nothing against them.” If we have the Spirit of God among us and conversions are constantly being worked, the Holy Spirit is thus fulfilling His advocacy and refuting all accusers!

If the Spirit works in your own mind, it will always be to you the best evidence of the Gospel. I meet, sometimes, one piece of infidelity and then another, for there are new doubts and fresh infidelities spawned every hour—and unstable men expect us to read all the books they choose to produce. But the effect produced on our mind is less and less. This is our answer. “It is of no use your trying to stagger us, for we are already familiar with everything you suggest. Our own native unbelief has outstripped

you! We have had doubts of a kind which even *you* would not dare to utter if you knew them! There is enough infidelity and devilry in our own nature to make us no strangers to Satan's devices.

"We have fought most of your suggested battles over and over again in the secret chamber of our meditation and have conquered, for we have been in personal contact with God! You sneer, but there is no argument in sneering. We are as honest as you are and our witness is as good as yours in any court of law—and we solemnly declare that we have felt the power of the Holy Spirit over our soul as much as any old ocean has felt the force of the north wind! We have been stirred to agony under a sense of sin and we have been lifted to ecstasy of delight by faith in the righteousness of Christ. We find that in the little world within our soul the Lord Jesus manifests Himself so that we know Him!

"There is a potency about the doctrines we have learned which could not belong to lies, for the Truths of God which we believe, we have tested in actual experience. Tell us there is no meat? Why, we have just been feasting! Tell us there is no water in the fountain? We have been quenching our thirst! Tell us there is no such thing as light? We do not know how we can prove its existence to you, for you are probably blind, but *we* can see! That is enough argument for us and our witness is true! Tell us there is no spiritual life! We feel it in our inmost souls. These are the answers with which the Spirit of God furnishes us and they are a part of His advocacy."

See, again, how entirely dependent we are on the Spirit of God for meeting all the various forms of unbelief which arise around us. You may have your societies for collecting evidence and you may enlist all your bishops and doctors of divinity and professors of apologetics—and they may write rolls of evidence long enough to girdle the globe—but the only Person who can savingly convince the world is the Advocate whom the Father has sent in the name of Jesus! When He reveals a man's sin and the sure result of it, the unbeliever takes to his knees! When He takes away the scales and sets forth the crucified Redeemer and the merit of the precious blood, all carnal reasonings are nailed to the Cross!

One blow of real conviction of sin will stagger the most obstinate unbeliever and afterwards, if his unbelief returns, the Holy Spirit's consolations will soon comfort it out of him. Therefore, as at the first, I say at the last—all this depends upon the Holy Spirit and upon Him let us wait in the name of Jesus, beseeching Him to manifest His power among us! Amen.

Portion Of Scripture Read Before Sermon—Romans 15
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—912, 446, 445.

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A ROUND OF DELIGHTS

NO. 1384

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 11, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Now the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.”
Romans 15:13.***

THIS is one of the richest passages in the Word of God. It is so full of instruction that I cannot hope to bring out even so much as a tenth of its teaching. The Apostle desired that the Roman Christians might be in the most delightful state of mind, that they should be filled with joy and peace and that this should lead on to yet further expectations and create an abundance of hope in their souls. See, dear Friends, the value of prayer, for if Paul longs to see his friends attain the highest possible condition, he prays for them! What will prayer not do? Whatever you desire for yourself or for another, let your desire be prepared like sweet spices and compounded into a supplication—then present it to God and the benediction will come.

I gather, also, from Paul's making this state of happiness a subject of request unto God, that it is possible for it to be attained. We may be filled with joy and peace in believing and may abound in hope! There is no reason why we should hang our heads and live in perpetual doubt. We may not only be somewhat comforted, but we may be full of joy! We may not only have occasional quiet, but we may dwell in peace and delight ourselves in the abundance of it. These great privileges are attainable, or the Apostle would not have made them the subjects of prayer. Yes, and they are possible for us, as the meaning of the Epistle to the Romans was not exclusively for the Romans, so this text belongs to us, also. The words still rise to Heaven as the prayer of the Apostle for us, upon whom the ends of the earth are come, that we, also, may be filled with joy and peace and abound in hope through the Holy Spirit.

The sweetest delights are still grown in Zion's gardens and are to be enjoyed by us—and shall they be within our reach and not be grasped? Shall a life of joy and peace be attainable and shall we miss it through unbelief? God forbid! Let us, as Believers, resolve that whatever privilege is to be enjoyed we will enjoy—whatever lofty experience is to be realized, we will, by God's gracious help, ascend to it, for we wish to know to the fullest the things which are freely given to us of God. Not, however, in our own strength will we thus resolve, for this condition of faith, joy and peace must be worked in us by God alone.

This is clear enough in the text, for it is the God of Hope who, alone, can fill us with joy and peace. And yet again, our hope which is to abound will only abound through the power of the Holy Spirit. The fact that the happy condition described is sought by *prayer* is a plain evidence that the

blessing comes from a Divine source and the prayer itself is so worded that the doctrine is prominently presented to the mind. So, Brothers and Sisters, while we resolve to obtain everything of privilege that is obtainable, let us set about our efforts in Divine power, not depending upon *our* resolutions, but looking for the power of the Holy Spirit and the energy of the God of Hope.

I shall need you to follow me while I notice, concerning the blessed state of fullness of joy and peace, first, from where it comes. Secondly, what it is, taking its delights in detail. And then, thirdly, what it leads to. We are to be filled with joy and peace that, “we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

I. If there is, then, such a condition as being divinely filled with all joy and peace in believing, FROM WHERE DOES IT COME? The answer is, it comes from “the God of Hope.” But in order that we may see *how* it comes, let us look a little at the chapter in which we find our text, for the connection is instructive. To know joy and peace through believing, we must begin by knowing *what* is to be believed—and this we must learn from Holy Scripture, for there God is revealed as the God of Hope. Unless God had revealed Himself, we could not have guessed at hope, but the Scriptures of Truth are windows of hope to us.

Will you kindly read the 4th verse of the chapter and note how strikingly parallel it is to our text—“For whatever things were written before, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” See, then, the God of Hope is revealed in Scripture with the design of inspiring us with hope! If we would be filled with faith, joy and peace, it must be by believing the Truths of God set forth in the Scriptures. Before we have any inward ground of hope, God Himself, as revealed in the Bible, must be our hope. We must not ask for joy, first, and then found our faith upon it, but our joy must grow out of our faith—and that must rest only upon God.

Our Apostle sets us an example of how to use the Scriptures, for in this chapter he searches out the Truth from Moses, David and Isaiah, and then places one text with another and gets a clear view of the testimony of God. What is very much to our point, he sees in those Scriptures that to us Gentiles, God has of old been set forth in the Scriptures as the God of Hope. Before it seemed as if salvation were of the Jews and of the Jews, alone, and we were shut out. But now, on turning to the Old Testament itself, we discover that God had spoken good things concerning us before we knew Him. There was *always* hope for the Gentiles—and though Israel perceived it not—Patriarchs and kings and Prophets full often spoke words which could not be interpreted otherwise.

“In you and in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” is a promise which leaped over the bounds of Canaan! As, then, by searching, the Apostle found in the Word of God hope for the Gentiles, so will the most heavy laden and burdened spirit discover sources of consolation if the Bible is diligently read and faithfully believed. Every promise is meant to inspire the Believer with hope—therefore use it to that end. Use the written Word as the source of comfort and do not look

for dreams, excitements, impressions or feelings. Faith deals with the Scriptures and with the God of Hope as therein revealed and out of these it draws its fullness of joy and peace. Beloved, if you desire to get faith in Christ, or to increase it, be diligent in knowing and understanding the Gospel of your salvation as set forth in the Word of God.

“Faith comes by hearing,” or by *reading* the Word of God. How shall you believe that which you do not know? Do not, at once, make an effort to believe before you are instructed. First know what God has revealed. See how He has displayed to you the hope of everlasting life and then believe with all your heart the testimony of God. Every promise and Word of God must be to you a foundation most sure and steadfast whereon to build your hope. Let your anchor grasp and hold to each revealed Truth of God, whatever your feelings may be.

We begin, then, by saying that fullness of joy and peace comes to us from the God of Hope as He reveals Himself in Holy Scriptures. As it is written, “Hear, and your soul shall live,” so do we find that we must hear if our soul is to rejoice. Now, it so happens that the Scriptures were not only written that the Gentiles might have hope, but that they might have joy. I ask you to notice the passages quoted by the Apostle, for at least the last three of them call us to joy. Thus in verse 10, Moses says, “Rejoice, you Gentiles, with His people.” If there is any joy for the elect nation, it is for us, also, who believe. If there is any joy for Israel, redeemed out of Egypt, led through the Red Sea, fed with manna and brought to the borders of Canaan, that joy is for us, also!

If there is any joy for the Jews over the burnt offering. If any joy at the paschal supper. If any delight at the Jubilee. All that joy may be shared by us, for thus says the Lord, “Rejoice, you Gentiles, with His people.” Joy in their joy! Again, David says (verse 11), “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; and laud Him, all you people.” Now, where there is praise, there is joy, for joy is a component element of it! They that praise the Lord aright, rejoice before Him. Go, you Gentiles, when David bids you, and unite with Israel in praising God! He bids you take full possession of the joy which moves the favored nation to magnify the Lord!

Again, Isaiah says, “There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust,” or, as it should be translated, “hope.” Now, hope is ever the source of joy! So, then, in the Scriptures we see God is the God of Hope. And on further search we see that the hope of the Gentiles permits them to rejoice with His people. In fact, we see that God Himself is the hope of all those who know Him—and the consequent source of joy and peace. Again, then, I am brought to this, that, to begin with, the joy and peace which we all desire to obtain must be sought through a *knowledge* of the God of Hope as He is revealed to us in the Scriptures. We must begin with that sure Word of testimony where we do well if we take heed as unto a light that shines in a dark place.

There must be belief in God as revealed in the Word, even though as yet we see no change within ourselves, nor any conceivable internal ground in our nature for hope *or* joy! Blessed is he who has not seen and yet has

believed—he who can hang upon God without the comfort of inward experience is on the high road to being filled with joy and peace! The Apostle, in the text, leads us through the Scriptures to God, Himself, who is personally to fill us with joy and peace, by which I understand that He is to become the great Object of our joy! As Israel in the Red Sea triumphed in the Lord, even so do we joy in God by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Like David, we say, “Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God, my exceeding joy.” And with Isaiah we sing, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God.” When first the Lord looked upon us through the windows of His Word we began to hope. By-and-by His good Spirit caused our hoping to grow into believing. And since then, as our knowledge of the Lord has increased, our believing has risen to fullness of joy! Our God is a blessed God, so that to believe in Him is to find rest unto the soul and to commune with Him is to dwell in bliss! Beloved, when you think of God, the Just One, apart from Christ, you might well tremble, but when you see Him in Jesus, His very justice becomes precious to you as “the amazing crystal,” and you learn to build it into the foundation of your joy!

The holiness of God, which before awed you, becomes supremely attractive when you see it revealed in the Person of Jesus Christ your Lord! How charming is “the glory of God in the face of Christ.” As for the love of God, as you see it set forth in this Book and in His Son, it inspires you with every sacred passion. As for His eternal Immutability, it becomes the groundwork of your peace, for if He changes not, then all His promises will stand sure to you and to all His people from generation to generation. His power, which was once so terrible in the thunder and in the storm, now becomes delightful to you as you see it yoked to the promise that the promise may be fulfilled and behold it concentrated in the Man, Christ Jesus, that His purposes may be achieved.

In fact, there is no attribute of God, there is no purpose of God, there is no deed of God, there is no aspect under which God is seen, but what becomes the object of the Christian’s joy when he has seen Him and believed in Him as revealed in the Scriptures! To the Believer, God is his sun, his shield, his portion, his delight, his all! His soul delights herself in the Lord. At first he hoped in God that, perhaps, He would smile upon him. He turned to the Scriptures and he found, there, many a cheering declaration and these he knew to be true and, therefore, he believed God that He would do as He had said! And now not only has his hope become faith, but his faith has budded and blossomed and brought forth the almonds of joy and peace.

You see, then, how the Lord is the Author of all our holy gladness. Our God is, however, called the God of Hope, not only because He is the Object of our hope and the ground of our joy and peace, but because He it is that works hope and joy in us. No joy is worth having unless the Lord is the beginning and the end of it. And no joy is worth receiving unless it springs from hope in Him. He must breathe peace upon us, or else the storm-tossed waters of our spirit will never rest—nor is it desirable that they

should—for peace without God is stupefaction, joy without God is madness and hope without God is presumption!

In true Believers their hope, faith, joy and peace are all of Divine workmanship. Our spiritual raiment is never homespun—we are Divinely arrayed from head to foot. This blessed name of “God of Hope” belongs to the New Testament and is a truly Gospel title. Livy tells us that the Romans had a god of hope, but he says that the temple was struck by lightning and in a later book he adds that it was burned to the ground. Exceedingly typical this is of whatever hope can come to nations which worship gods of their own making. All idol hopes must perish beneath the wrath of the Most High! The god of unenlightened human nature is only sufficiently enlightened to discover its sin and is the God of Terror! In fact, to many, the Lord is the God of Despair.

But when you turn to the Revelation of God in Scripture, you find Him to be a God whose gracious Character inspires hope and from then on you turn away from everything else to fix your hope on God alone. “My soul, wait you only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” God, in Christ Jesus, has ceased to be the dread of men and has become their hope! Our Father and our Friend, we look for all to You! And, blessed be God, the hope which He excites is a hope worthy of Him! It is a God-like hope—a hope which helps us to purify ourselves. At first we hope in God for cleansing from every sin and then for acceptance here and hereafter. We hope for pardon through the Atonement which is in Christ Jesus and when we have it, we hope for sanctification by the Spirit.

Our hope never ceases to rise higher and higher and to receive fulfillment after fulfillment—and we know that it shall continue to do so till we rise to dwell at His right hand forever and ever. He who grasps this hope has a soul-satisfying portion for which a man might well be content to suffer a thousand martyrdoms if he might but abide in it! It is a hope which only God could have contrived for man—a hope founded in Himself—a hope presented to the sons of men in Christ Jesus because His sacrifice has been presented and accepted. It is a hope which God alone can inspire in men, for even if they hear the Gospel they do not find hope till He comes in power to their souls! It is a hope which always adores God and lies low at His feet, never dreaming of being independent of Him. It is a hope which lays her crown at His feet and takes Him to be her Lord forever and ever. This is the hope which is the mother of our joy and peace—and only as it is worked in us by the Lord can we be truly happy and restful.

II. Secondly, let us enquire, WHAT IS THIS BLESSED STATE OF MIND of which we have spoken a little? Let us look into the words. He says, “That the God of Hope may fill you with all joy and peace in believing.” This is a state of mind most pleasant, for to be filled with joy is a rare delight, reminding one of Heaven. It is, however, a state as safe as it is pleasant, for the man who has the joy which God gives him may be quite easy in the enjoyment of it. The best of the world’s joy is but for a season—while you are enjoying it you fear it will soon be over—and what

then? Earth's best candles will soon burn out. The day of this world's mirth will end in a night of misery!

These thoughts mar and sour all fleeting joys. But the joy which God gives has no afterthought about it. It is wholesome and safe and abiding. We may drink our full without being sickened, yes, revel in it without worry. At the same time it is most profitable joy, for the more a man has of this joy the better man he will be. It will not soften him and render him effeminate, for it has a singular strengthening power about it. There is, doubtless, a tonic influence in sorrow, but holy joy is, also, exceedingly invigorating, for it is written, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." The more happy we can be in our God, the more thoroughly will the will of Christ be fulfilled in us, for He desired that our joy might be full.

The more you rejoice in God, the more you will recommend true religion. The more full of delight you are, especially in trying times, the more you will glorify God! Few things are at the same time both pleasant and profitable, but holy joy and peace possess that double excellence. Fullness of spiritual joy is both the index and the means of spiritual strength. I commend this state, therefore, to you! I trust that we shall not be so unbelieving as to be afraid of Heaven's own consolations, nor so unreasonable as to decline to be filled with joy and peace when they may be had by believing.

Now, notice, that it is a state which has varieties in it. It is joy *and* peace—and it may be either. Sometimes the Believer is full of joy. Joy is active and expressive. It sparkles and flashes like a diamond. It sings and dances like David before the Ark. To be filled with holy joy is a delicious excitement of the sweetest kind! May you often experience it until strangers are compelled to infer that the Lord has done great things for you! Nevertheless, the flesh is weak and might hardly endure continuous delight and so there comes a relief, in the lovely form of peace, in which the heart is really joyous but after a calm and quiet manner.

I have seen the ringers make the pinnacles of a Church tower reel to and fro while they have made the joy bells sound out to the fullest. And then they have played quietly and let the fabric settle down again. Even thus does joy strain the man, but peace comes in to give him rest. In this peace there is not much to exhilarate, not much which could fittingly be spoken out in song—but silence, full of infinite meaning—becomes the floodgate of the soul. You seek not the exulting assembly, but the calm shade and the quiet chamber. You are as happy as you were in your joy, but not so stirred and moved. Peace is resting joy—joy is dancing peace! Joy cries hosanna before the Well-Beloved, but peace leans her head on His bosom.

In the midst of bereavements and sickness we may scarcely be able to rejoice, but we may be at peace. When faith cannot break through a troop with her sacred joy, she stands still and sees the salvation of God in hallowed peace. We work with joy and rest with peace. What a blessing it is that when we come to die, if we cannot depart with the banners of triumphant joy all flying in the breeze, we can yet fall asleep safely in the arms of peace. How pleasant a life do they lead who are not the subjects of

any great excitement, but maintain calm and quiet communion with God. Their heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. They neither soar nor sink, but keep the even tenor of their way.

It is a state of mind, then, which admits of variations, and I really do not know which to choose out of its two forms. I should not like to be without joy and yet I think there is something so solid about peace that I might almost give it the preference. I think I love the quiet sister the better of the two. That famous text in Isaiah—"They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint" looks somewhat like an anti-climax. It would appear to place the greatest, first, and then the less—and then the least—but it is not so. The mounting up with wings as eagles must always be more or less temporary—we are not eagles and cannot always be on the wing. The Lord *renews* our strength like the eagles and this shows we are not always up to the eagle's mark.

Well, though it is a grand thing to be able to fly, it is a better thing to be able to run! This is more like a man, involves less danger and is more practically useful. It is good to run, but even that is not the best journey pace! It is best of all to walk, for this is a steady, persevering pace in which to move. "Enoch walked with God." This is God's pace, who even when He makes clouds, His chariot is described as walking upon the wings of the wind. We read of the *walk of faith* and the *walk of holiness*, for walking is practical and is meant for every day. You young people, I like to see you run and I am glad to take a turn at it myself, but, after all, steady, sober, unwearied walking is the best. To walk without fainting is a high experimental attainment and is none the less valuable because at first sight there seems nothing striking about it. Walking is the emblem of peace and running and mounting up with wings as eagles are the emblems of joy.

But, Beloved, this blessed state is, also, a compound, for we are bid at one and the same time to receive both wine and milk—wine exhilarating with joy and milk satisfying with peace. "You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace." You shall lie down in the green pastures of delight and be led by the still waters of quietness. Our heart may be as an ocean, gloriously casting upward its spray of joy and lifting up its waves on high in delight, as one claps his hands for joy. And yet, at the same time, as down deep in the coral caverns all is still and undisturbed, so may the heart be quiet as a sleeping babe. We see no difficulty in understanding both lines of the hymn—

***"My heart is resting, O my God,
I will give thanks and sing."***

We rest and praise—as trees hold to the earth by their roots and perfume the air with their blooms—as morning comes without the sound of a trumpet and yet awakens the music of birds by its arising. Ours is no froth of joy—there is solid peace beneath our effervescence of delight. Happy are we to have learned how to combine two such choice things—

***"Joy is a fruit that will not grow
In nature's barren soil.
All we can boast, till Christ we know,***

Is vanity and toil.

***But where the Lord has planted Grace,
And made His glories known,
These fruits of heavenly joy and peace
Are found, and there alone.”***

Now, I need you to lay stress on the next observation I am about to make because I began with it and wish to leave it upon your minds as the chief thought. The joy and peace here spoken of are through *believing*. You come to know the God of Hope through the Scriptures which reveal Him. By this you are led to believe in Him and it is through that *believing* that you become filled with joy and peace!

It is not by *working*, nor by *feeling* that we become full of joy! Our peace does not arise from the marks, evidences and experiences which testify to us that we are the sons of God, but simply from *believing*. Our central joy and peace must always come to us, not as an inference from the internal work of the Spirit in our souls, but from the finished work of the Lord Jesus and the promises of God contained in the Scriptures. We must continue to look out of self to the written Word wherein the Lord is set forth before us. And we must rest in God in Christ Jesus as the main basis of our hope—not depending upon any other arguments than those supplied by the Bible, itself. I will show, by-and-by, how we shall afterwards reach to a hope which flows out of the work of the Spirit within us, but at the first, and, I think, permanently and continuously, the main ground of the surest joy and truest peace must come to us through simply believing in Jesus Christ.

Beloved, I know that I have been converted, for I am sure that there is a change of heart in me. Nevertheless, my hope of eternal life does not hang upon the *inward* fact. I rest in the *external* fact that God has revealed Himself in Jesus as blotting out the sin of *all* His believing people, and, as a Believer, I have the Word of God as my guarantee of forgiveness. This is my rest! Because I am a Believer in Christ Jesus, therefore I have hope, therefore I have joy and peace, since God has declared that, “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” This joy can only safely come through believing and I pray, Brothers and Sisters, you never drift away from child-like faith in what God has said! It is very easy to obtain a temporary joy and peace through your present easy experience, but how will you do when all things within take a troublous turn?

Those who live by feeling change with the weather! If you ever put aside your faith in the finished work to drink from the cup of your own inward sensations, you will find yourself bitterly disappointed. Your honey will turn to gall, your sunshine into blackness—for all things which come of man are fickle and deceptive. The God of Hope will fill you with joy and peace, but it will only be through believing! You will still have to stand as a poor sinner at the foot of the Cross, trusting to the complete Atonement. You will never have joy and peace unless you do. If you once begin to say, “I am a saint, there is something good in me,” and so on, you will find joy evaporate and peace depart. Hold on to your believing!

Come back to the text, again, and you will find that this joy and peace, according to Paul, are of a superlative character, for, after his manner,

Paul makes language for himself. He often manufactures a superlative by the use of the word “all,” as here, “Fill you with *all* joy.” He means with the best and highest degree of joy! He means with as much joy as you can hold—with the very choicest and most full of joys in earth or in Heaven. God give you the joy of joys, the light of delight, the Heaven of Heaven! Then notice the comprehensiveness of his prayer. “All joy”—that is joy in God the Father’s love, joy in God the Son’s redeeming blood, joy in God the Holy Spirit’s indwelling—joy in the Covenant of Grace, joy in the seal and witness of it, joy in the promises, joy in the decrees, joy in the doctrines, joy in the precepts, joy in everything which comes from God! “All joy.” Paul also requests for them all peace—peace with God, peace of conscience, peace with one another, peace, even, with the outside world, as far as peace may be. May you all have it.

And now observe the degree of joy and peace which he wishes for them—“that you may be filled”—and that by the God of Hope, Himself! God alone knows our capacity and where the vacuum lies which most needs filling. A man might try to fill us and fail, but God, who made us, knows every corner and cranny of our nature and can pour in joy and peace till every portion of our being is flooded, saturated and overflowed with delight! I like to remember David’s words, “The rain, also, fills the pools,” for even thus does the Lord pour His Grace upon the thirsty soil of our hearts till it stands in pools! As the sun fills the world with light and enters into all places, even so the God of Hope, by His Presence, lights up every part of our nature with the golden light of joyous peace till there is not a corner left for sadness or foreboding!

This is Paul’s prayer and he expects its answer to come to us through *believing* and in no other way. He does not ask for mysterious revelations, dreams, visions, or presumptuous persuasions. He seeks for us no excitement of fanaticism nor the intoxication of great crowds and pleasing oratory. Neither does he seek that we may imagine ourselves to be perfect and all that kind of lumber, but that we may be happy through simply believing in the God of Hope as He is set forth in the Bible! I take this Book of God into my hands and say, “Whatever things are written here were written for my learning, that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures I might have hope.” I do have hope, for I believe this Book and now I feel joy and peace welling up within my soul! Brethren, receive this benediction! O Lord, fulfill it in the heart of every Believer before You!

III. Now thirdly, WHAT DOES THIS LEAD TO? “Lead to?” asks one, “Lead to, why surely it is enough in itself. What more is needed?” When a man brings you into a chamber vaulted with diamonds and amethysts, and pearls and rubies—with walls composed of slabs of gold and the floor made of solid pavements of silver—we would be astonished if he said, “This is a passage to something richer, still.” Yet the Apostle directs us to this fullness of joy and peace through believing that we may, by its means, reach to something else—“that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.” How often do great things in the Bible, like the perpetual cycles of Nature, begin where they end and end where they begin? If we begin with the God of Hope, we are wound up into holy joy

and peace that we may come back to hope again and to abounding in it by the power of the Holy Spirit!

First, I notice that the hope here mentioned arises, not out of pure believing, but out of the *joy* created in us by our *having* believed! Hope led to faith, faith to joy and now joy back, again, to hope. This is the story as far as I am concerned—I began with believing. I felt nothing good within me, but I believed in what God revealed concerning Himself. I saw nothing, but I believed on the ground that God said so. I soon had joy and peace in my soul as the result of my faith and now, because of this joy and peace, I hope and expect further blessings! Though still resting my soul upon the finished work of Jesus, yet hopes do arise from the work of the Holy Spirit within me! The God who has caused me, by believing, to rejoice that the past is all atoned for and who has given me peace because my sins are forgiven for His name's sake, will not dash that joy by revoking my pardon!

He who has given me joy because He has quickened me and has, up to this day, preserved me, will not, I am persuaded, forsake me and suffer me to perish! Surely He will never leave me, after having done so much for me! My present joy gives me a hope, most sure and steadfast, that He will never turn His back upon me. If He did not intend to bless me in the future, He would not have done so much for me in the past—and He could not and would not be doing so much for me now. This hope, you perceive, drinks its life at the fountain of personal experience. The first hope we ever know comes together with our simply believing the Word of God. But now there arises in us an abounding of hope which is the outgrowth of the inward life. Fear is banished, now, for we have looked to the God of Hope and found acceptance in the Beloved.

Now, therefore, in the chamber where Fear formerly dwelt, Hope takes up its residence—azure-winged, bright-eyed Hope makes its nest there and sings to us all the day long! The text speaks of an abounding hope and if you consider, for a while, you will see that very much hope must arise to a Christian out of his spiritual joy. If you have once been in the bosom of Jesus and known His joy, your hope will overflow! For instance, you will argue—He has pardoned my sins and made me to rejoice as a forgiven man—will He condemn me, after all? What does the pardon mean if, after all, the transgressions are to be laid upon me and I am to suffer for my sins?

The Believer has great joy because God's love is shed abroad in his soul and he argues that if the Lord loves him so intensely now, He will not undergo a change and remove His love. He who in love redeemed me by the blood of His Son will love me eternally, for He changes not! Is not this a sound argument? Grace enjoyed is a pledge of Glory! Redeeming love is the guarantee of preserving love! Acceptance with God today creates a blessed hope of acceptance forever! Faith and joy within the soul sing to one another somewhat after this fashion—

***“His smiles have freed my heart from pain,
My drooping spirits cheered
And will He not appear again
Where He has once appeared?”***

***Has He not formed my soul anew,
And caused my light to shine
And will He now His work undo,
Or break His Word Divine?"***

Perfectly assured of the Lord's goodness, the man confronts the future without fear and, in due time, approaches death without dismay. Since the Lord has begun to make us like His Son, we conclude that He will perfect His work and raise us from our graves in the full image of our Redeemer.

He has already given us to know something of the joy of Christ who prayed that His joy might be fulfilled in us that our joy might be full and, therefore, we are sure that we shall bask in the joy of Heaven. We will, therefore, lie down in peace and rest when our last day on earth shall come, for we shall rise with Jesus—of this we have no doubt. We shall enter into the joy of the Lord, for we have entered into it already! Thus out of peace and joy there grow the noblest of human hopes. Little enjoyment, like a weak telescope, gives us but a faint prospect, but great enjoyment is an optic glass of marvelous power and brings great things near to us.

Joy and peace are specimens of Heaven's felicities and set the soul both hoping and hungering. Having tasted of the grapes of Eshcol, we believe in the land which flows with milk and honey and long to rest under the branches which bear such luscious clusters! We have seen the Celestial City far away, but the light of it is so surpassing that we have longed to walk its golden streets, yes, and have felt sure of doing so before long! He who has seen a little of the light of the morning expects more eagerly the noonday. He who has waded into the river of joy up to the ankles, becomes eager to enter it still further till he finds it a river to swim in, "wherein the soul is borne along by a sacred current of unutterable delight."

Up, you saints, to your Pisgah of joy, for there you shall have a full view of Canaan which stretches before you and is soon to be yours! Whatever your joy and peace may be now, you ought to see at once that they are meant to be only a platform from which you are to look for something brighter and better—you are filled with joy and peace that you may abound in hope! Our Apostle rightly adds, "by the power of the Holy Spirit," for I take it that this is partly mentioned by way of caution because there are hopes rising out of inward experience which may turn out to be fallacious and, therefore, we must discriminate between the hope of Nature and the hope of Grace.

I have heard young people say, "I know I am saved, because I am so happy." Be not too sure of that. Many people think themselves very happy and yet they are not saved. The world has a happiness which is a fatal sign and a peace which is the token of spiritual death. Discernment, therefore, is needed, lest we mistake the calm before a storm for the rest which the Lord gives to those who come unto Him. Hope may arise out of our joy, but we must mind that we do not fix our confidence in it or we shall have a sandy foundation. The solid Grace of hope which abides and remains in the soul is born of faith through the Word of God!

Let me begin again with you lest there should be any mistake. You hear of the God of Hope and are led to believe in God as He is revealed in Scripture. So far all is plain sailing. If you believe in the Christ of God, you obtain joy and peace, but these are *results*, not causes! You must not begin with your own joy and peace and say, "My hope of salvation is built upon the happiness I have felt of late." This will never do! Begin, first of all, with the Scriptures, not with your feelings or fancies, nor with your impressions and excitements—these will be ruinous as a foundation! Begin with God revealed in Christ Jesus as the God of Hope and let your joy and your peace come from your believing in Him!

Then afterwards it will be fair enough to draw arguments for the abounding hope, but it must be by the Holy Spirit. That hope which is worth having, which springs from inward experience, must still be worked in us by the Holy Spirit and I will show you how it is natural that it should be so. We ask ourselves, "How shall I hold on to the end?" The answer will be suggested by another question, "How have I held on till now?" I feel, now, a joy and peace because my faith has been sustained until this day—how have I been preserved up to now? By the Holy Spirit! Then He is able to keep me to the end!

I feel joy and peace, already, because in some measure sin is conquered in me. How will my soul be yet further sanctified and sin cast out of me? Why, by the same Holy Spirit who has already renewed me! I have had an earnest of what He can do and, therefore, I have an abounding of hope of what He *will* do. My joyful experience of His indwelling, comforting, illuminating and sanctifying power leads me into a full and confident assurance that He will carry on the work of Grace and present me complete at the Last Great Day. Beloved, go forward, keeping close to the groundwork of faith, and you will feel joy and peace in your hearts!

Expect what you will. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." Expect great things, expect things beyond all expectation! Your largest hopes shall all be exceeded! Hope and hope, and yet hope again, and each time hope more and more, but the Lord will give you more than you have hoped for! When you enter His palace gates at the last, you will say, "My imagination never conceived it! My desires never compassed it! My hope never expected it! The glory surpasses all! The tenth has not been told me of the things which God had provided for me!" "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." Amen.

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**“PEACE IN BELIEVING”
NO. 2626**

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, JUNE 11, 1899.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 19, 1882.**

***“Peace in believing.”
Romans 15:13.***

ON whatever subjects I may be called to preach, I feel it to be a duty which I dare not neglect to be continually going back to the Doctrine of the Cross—the fundamental Truth of God of justification by faith which is in Christ Jesus. This topic is essential to the life of the soul. Men are not saved but by faith in Jesus and, therefore, to this great central point we must return again and again and again, hoping that God will bless His own Word to those who hear it proclaimed. I notice that some of our friends, who are bakers, have in their shop windows divers articles of confectionery, and I suppose they have their set days for making their various kinds of cake and sweetmeats. But one thing I know they never forget to do and that is to bake, every day, a batch of bread because, if their customers do not need this or that confectionery, they always need bread—and what is the good of a baker if he has no bread? I wish that every preacher felt that, albeit there are certain things which are sweet and toothsome, which some mouths are always craving, yet the chief business of the minister, like that of the baker, is to have a constant supply of good bread. It may be a very ordinary kind of food.

Some may even call it commonplace and what a mercy it is when bread is a commonplace thing! I have known some people who would have been glad if they could place it in common upon their tables, but they have not been able to get it, and the necessity has grown into a luxury. And what a mercy it is when the Gospel is a commonplace thing—when you have so much of it that you really understand it, enjoy it and feed upon it! It is then as it ought always to be with the true ministry of the Gospel. So, preacher, whatever you choose to neglect, never neglect to preach Christ Crucified and the simple, soul-saving precept, “Look and live.”

What if there are some prophetic passages which you cannot understand? The day shall declare them! What if there are certain deep Doctrines that are too profound for you? You and your people shall learn them in eternity, if you learn them not in time! But as for this Doctrine, that, “he that believes on the Son has everlasting life”—it must be learned now or never! And if it is not learned now, men will be shut out

of Heaven eternally. Therefore, let this Truth of God be proclaimed again and again and again! Let it still be preached, even though some who have itching ears weary of it, for there is an urgent necessity that it should be made known whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. Better that the sun should not rise than that Christ should not be preached! Better that the wheels of time should stand still than that the name of Jesus should not be sounded forth! Better that the dews be withheld and the rain fall not again upon the earth, than that the glorious Gospel of the blessed God be hidden from the sons of men!

So, then, this is my reason for coming to you, again, as I have come so many hundreds of times before, with the same old message, “Believe and live.” I am comforted by the persuasion that all who are saved by believing are the most ready to hear this story over and over again. It is not what I do not know so much as what I do know that I delight to hear—and many others are of the same opinion as I am in that matter. It is a curious phase of human nature, but it is true. You may talk to a congregation about discoveries in the center of Africa and yet you may lose their attention. But if you speak about the village, or hamlet, or street in which one of them was born or lived, he will prick up his ears at once. The very thing that he knows best is that which, somehow, holds his attention the most. So have I often seen it in the highest affairs—they who understand the Gospel best are the most ready to hear of it again and yet again. If I were to take *Luther on the Galatians*, intending to give it as a present to someone who would be sure to appreciate it, I would not bestow it upon a man who was not a believer in Jesus Christ, or give it to one who did not understand the Doctrine of salvation by faith—I would hand it over to the man who has long believed in Christ and found rest in Him—for I would be certain that the strong and racy utterances of the great Reformer would be appreciated by him. They love the Gospel most who know it best!

Another thing comforts me, too, namely, that in such a congregation as this there are always some persons who are just ready to believe. I throw the fly with confidence because there are always fish rising to it. God is plowing the hearts of many and so preparing the soul for the good Seed of the Kingdom! Little children die. Aged mothers are carried away. There is sickness in the body, or loss in the business, or suffering of various kinds—all this is the passing of God’s great plow up and down these furrows—and when I scatter the good Seed, I know that the furrows are gaping for it. They are hungry for it, so they gladly receive it! Here are many of those who are ordained unto eternal life to whom the Truth of God concerning “peace in believing” comes as the very message of God to their soul, the good news that they are most glad to hear! So they receive it and go on their way rejoicing. Doubtless, there are some hearers of that kind here right now—oh, that we may very soon hear of their conversion, for it would gladden our heart to have such good tidings! Therefore, by the help of God, let us at once get to our work.

I. And, first, having to talk about faith and one of its sweet results—for our subject is that faith brings peace to the soul, “peace in believing”—the first head shall be that IT IS A FILLING PEACE.

In the verse from which our text is taken, the Apostle says, “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,” so that the peace which arises from faith is a filling peace. There is, in the heart of an awakened man, *a great vacuum caused by sin*. He is like some of those great artificial harbors which I have seen, in various places, out of which they sometimes allow all the water to run and there remains a dreary expanse of mud. What is the use of it? What is needed in order to make it of service once more? Why, simply that the tide should come into it, fill it and cover up all that mud! As I look on some of you, dear Friends, I know that your heart is just like that great harbor full of mire. What is to be done for you? What is to be done *with* you? Well, the Grace of God can come in and cover all your transgressions and your iniquities till they shall never be mentioned against you ever again! What a blessed peace that is which quiets the conscience—which takes away the sense of guilt and puts in the place of it, consciousness of perfect pardon, of justification and of acceptance before God! This is “peace in believing.” It fills the vacuum that sin has made.

Then this Divine flood, when it has covered that part of our distress, flows in *over our sinfulness as well as our sins*, for, in addition to our actual transgression, there is the defilement of our nature. And when a man is awakened, it is a cause of moaning and unrest to him that he not only *has* sin, but that he *is* sin—that his very nature is a fountain of evil containing much that is adverse to God and in alienation from Him. But, by believing, there flows into the heart a flood of life which removes our death—a purifying stream which takes away our corruption and we have peace with God, for “we which have believed do enter into rest” about that matter, too. And though we sometimes have to cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Yet we “thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,” that we are delivered from the dominion of sin and that we shall, by-and-by, be delivered from the very existence of it and shall be like unto God in purity and true holiness. That is, indeed, a blessed peace—a peace that comes of a changed nature, of a renewed heart and of reconciliation to God.

You will tell me that those blessings are enough to fill a man with peace and, truly, I think they are. But as when the tide comes in, it not only rolls up the main stream of the Thames, but it also flows into every creek and fills every tiny streamlet, so is it with the Grace of God. There is a black stream that sometimes runs into the river of a man’s life and makes it turbid—that is *the fear of death*. But, oh, I have seen the great flood of eternal life come rolling up and drive the black stream back till all was pure, all was quiet and calm! Is it not so with the man who believes in Jesus? He loses the fear of death. Sometimes, instead of fearing it, he almost longs for it! As Mr. Flavel, when living in sweetest communion with Christ, said, “I never saw a face more beautiful than that of

death when I saw the light from the face of Christ fall on it. Then I longed to die much more than to live.” And good Dr. Watts sang—

**“Oh, if my Lord would come and meet,
My soul should stretch her wings in haste,
Fly fearless through Death’s iron gate,
Nor feel the terrors as she passed!”**

Yes, this “peace in believing” will fill your soul so as to drown the fear of death!

Perhaps another says, “*The fear of life* is that which is upon me, the fear of the troubles incident to my condition and my position among my fellow men, the fear which arises out of those three questions, “What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And how shall we be clothed?” Beloved, the peace which comes through believing will chase these fears away and fill your soul with perfect rest concerning them. Indeed, these things will seem to you to be only trifles after which the Gentiles seek—and you will scorn to be troubled by them, for you will remember that “your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things,” and He will supply your need in His own good time and way.

Then, sometimes, will come upon us, to break our peace, *the cravings of desire*. A man is never perfectly at peace if he is ambitious and craving for this or that which, as yet, is beyond his reach. “Peace in believing” makes us say of Christ, “He is all my salvation and all my desire.” He loves us to know that all things are ours and, therefore, that there is nothing left in the region of desire, for—

**“All things are ours—the gift of God—
The purchase of a Savior’s blood!
While the good Spirit shows us how
To use and to improve them too.”**

Oh, what a blessed, blessed rest it is when a man’s desires are satisfied with the favor of God!

One very natural cause of disturbance of mind is *solicitude about our families*—anxiety as to how we shall bring them up in the fear of God, earnest longing that they may become believers in Christ, honorable Christian men and women, but Faith learns to bear even this without having her peace broken, for she pleads the promise, “Unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Faith falls back upon the Inspired Word—“But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto the children’s children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.” I know of no cause of disquietude which faith will not remove. I know of no groundswell disturbing the mind which faith cannot quiet. I know of nothing on earth, in Heaven, in Hell, in time, in eternity, in life, in death which is not fully met by the Covenant blessings which are within reach of faith and which faith learns to appropriate. This “peace in believing” is a sea that has no bottom nor shore—it is a peace of intense restfulness! Oh, that we were all plunged in it this very hour!

II. Now, very briefly, let me remind you that, according to the text, IT IS FAITH’S PEACE that is such a filling peace as I have tried to describe.

I may be addressing some persons who are needing to find peace for their souls, but they have never sought faith's peace. *There is a false peace that some get*—the peace of carelessness—they do not even think about eternity. They “count it one of the wisest things to drive dull care away.” They scarcely think of what will happen even a month ahead, but they say that they are content to live by the day. This is the way in which the man protects himself when, after the thief has broken into his house, he covers up his head, lies in bed and thinks that he and his property must be safe because he cannot hear the burglar at work. This is the kind of philosophy of men who, when they are ready to fail in business, shut up their books and never take stock because they would be so disturbed if they knew their real condition! It is a beggarly, cowardly kind of peace that is fit for fools and madmen, but is not fit for you who are reasonable, responsible beings. Oh, I would scorn to have a peace in my heart which consisted in shutting my eyes! The truth ought to be faced and, the more dangerous the truth, the more urgently does it call upon us to look at it! And he is the wise man who can stand before the truth that frightens most men and, having looked it in the face, can say, “Now I am not afraid. I am, rather, the more established in my conviction of my safety, now that I have seen that which would have destroyed me if it had not been for faith in Christ.” Shun, I pray you, the safety which is but in appearance, and does but thinly film the deadly ulcer that needs to be eradicated from your body!

Some others seek *a peace which comes of hardihood*. They not merely shut their eyes, but they lie against the Truth of God. “The fool has said in his heart, There is no God,” and he gets peace out of that foolish and false declaration. Men deny the immortality of the soul. They deny the Divinity of Christ. They deny the Inspiration of the Bible and so they think that they shall sew pillows together that shall make it easy for their heads to rest! Let those do this who dare, but, as for some of you, you cannot do it, for you know too much and you have felt too much to ever be self-deceived in such a fashion as that! Can he ever be an infidel who has seen his mother die joyfully triumphant? Is it possible for me, for instance, to find a shelter from my sins by denying that there is any hereafter, when I have stood by the bedside of saints and seen their ecstasy, and have heard the strange things, scarcely lawful for a man to utter, which they have told concerning that which is within the veil? Some of us are spoiled for infidelity, for we have had familiar communion with the Eternal! We have spoken with Him, “as a man speaks with his friend” and, therefore, this escape from thought avails us not! Thank God that it does not avail us, for the abhorred of the Lord fall into this deep ditch and how seldom do they come up out of it! May God grant that we may never need to tell a lie and violate our conscience in order to give it peace! That is not the rest of faith which I commend to you!

Some have tried to get *peace from self-confidence*. They think they are as good as others, if not rather better. As they see those who are mere professors of religion, they thank God that *they* are not professors of religion, for they are not hypocritical and, therefore, they do not pretend to

be what they are not. Yet there is often a worm at the root of that proud boasting and, in your sober moments, you who talk in this fashion do not really think thus of yourselves. You are not insane and you know that you are not doing that which is pleasing to God, or living to His Glory. Self-righteousness is sometimes a delusion, but it generally begins by a man’s attempting to delude himself. But there is no real peace to be obtained by any works that we can perform, or by the pretense that we have performed works which are meritorious in the sight of God. There is no promise of peace to come in this fashion.

But, perhaps, you have patched up your self-righteousness with a few ornaments stolen from the Church of God. Were you, as an infant, “baptized” and made “a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven”? Have you been confirmed, and taken the “sacrament”—as it is wrongly called—and is there not much efficacy in that? Sirs, listen to me! There is *nothing* in it! There is nothing whatever in it unless you have first believed in the Lord Jesus Christ! Or, if there is anything in it, you have participated in ordinances to which you had no right, for these things are only for Believers—and if you have not believed in Jesus, you are intruders into His Church and you have stolen from His altar that which He reserves for His own people—and little advantage will this be to you. Beware of trusting in your church-going, or your chapel-going, or your Tabernacle-going! Beware of trusting in your prayers, or your Bible reading, in your hymns and holy thoughts and almsgivings. They are all lighter than vanity and, as chaff from the fan of the winnower, shall they be blown away! There is no peace in them though you multiply them as the sand upon the seashore. Our text speaks of “peace in believing,” and there is no peace worthy of the name that is to be found in any other way!

III. But now, thirdly, this “peace in believing” is A WELL-FOUNDED PEACE. But what is it?

It is, first, *a peace which is the result of believing the Word of God, who cannot lie*. God, the ever-blessed Father, says, “Listen to Me. I have given My Well-Beloved Son to be a Savior to you. Trust in Him and you shall be saved.” I trust in Him and I am saved. How do I know that? Why, because God said so! And God cannot lie! Is there any better foundation for peace in this world than the Word of God? What God has spoken must be true. “Let God be true and every man a liar.” And I, believing what He has said, have a right to all the peace that can come out of that sure Word which I have believed!

Remember, too, that *this Word of God comes to us by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit*. If you do not believe that Book to be Inspired, I have nothing to say to you just now. But most of us do believe that every part of it is “God-breathed.” Well, then, knowing that Book to be the Infallible Word of God, if we get peace through believing what is in that Book, we have sure ground to stand upon! Either the Book is a lie, or else our faith is fully warranted, and our peace is perfectly justified. Oh, what a blessed thing it is to feel that you have Scripture at your back! Many saints that I have read of have asked, when dying, to have their fingers

laid upon some precious promise of the Word, and they have thus witnessed to their conviction that the passage was the very Truth of God to their souls. One said, “Guide me to that glorious Eighth of Romans.” Another had his finger laid upon this text, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” And another on this verse, “Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.” You know how you take one another’s word and trust to it. And when you get a note of hand in black and white from a good tradesman, you do not mistrust it. Then, shall we ever mistrust the black and white of *God*—the record of His dear Son which He has given us in Holy Scripture? No! Nor will we mistrust the peace that comes into our heart through believing it!

And then, my Brothers and Sisters, also mark that *our peace is founded on God’s testimony concerning His Son*. He tells us, in this Book, that the Only-Begotten took upon Him human form and came down among men—that being here, He lived the life of a servant and, at the last, taking upon Him man’s sin and as the Substitute for guilty men, He went up to the Cross and there bore His Father’s wrath, dying in the place of the guilty, “the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” I recollect how I grasped that Truth of God when I first understood it—it was that Doctrine of Substitution which brought peace to my troubled spirit. I saw that if Christ died for me, then I should not die! And that, if He paid my debt, it *was* paid and I was clear! And I knew that this was the case as soon as I believed in Him. So I did believe in Him and I was filled with “peace in believing.” And that “peace in believing” meets every need of the heart. Are you troubled? “All things work together for good to them that love God.” Are you afraid that you shall fall? Rest content about that, also, for, “He will keep the feet of His saints.” Are you afraid that you shall ultimately perish? Has He not said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand”?

Our faith is, indeed, well-founded, and can be abundantly justified! Faith in Christ is nothing but common sense of sanctified of God. It may be common sense to trust some banker who has long maintained his credit and not to be always worrying about whether he is solvent or not, but it is infinitely greater common sense to trust God—to trust His Son—to trust His Spirit—to trust His Word! If you trust these, you shall enjoy a calmness of spirit which will not be the effect of a mistaken confidence, but the result of the most glorious facts—a peace which may be questioned and cross-questioned, examined and cross-examined, but the answer it shall give to all enquiries will be satisfactory. Faith’s building may be searched, tried and tested from foundation to top stone, but no flaw shall be found in any part of it. It is a good, wise, true, just and proper thing to trust the Lord Jesus Christ—and so to have “peace in believing!”

IV. I have done when I have noticed just one more point, namely, that I believe this “peace in believing” to be A MOST FRUITFUL PEACE.

I wish you all knew it, for, *first, it makes even this world a better and a happier place.* It takes the sting out of all troubles to have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is no man who is so ready to cope with the troubles of life as the one who knows that all is right for eternity. Some of you often get worried in your daily calling and when you come home from business, you cannot rest. When you go to bed, you cannot sleep, for there is within you a fear of death and of a dreaded something after that. But suppose that a man can say, "That matter is all settled"—

***'Tis done! The great transaction's done!
I am my Lord's, and He is mine!—***

"I have trusted myself with Christ, and I know that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day"? He goes to his business feeling that he has a burden off his shoulders—the great burden he had so long carried—and he is ready for anybody and ready for anything! If you set a man to run up a hill and lay heavy weights on his back, he must make slow work of it. Take off those weights and now watch him! Why, he turns into a gazelle and he leaps from crag to crag when the burden is gone! Ah, dear Friends, if you were relieved of your burdens, your very office work would grow lighter! Your bargaining would be more wisely done! You would be able to deal better with your fellow men when you have come to your proper position before God and all is made right there.

This peace with God *is fruitful in the growth of all other Graces.* Have you a garden? If so, have you some fruit trees in it? Do you dig them up every year? Do you take them out of the ground two or three times in a season, and carry them about the garden and then plant them in a fresh spot? If so, I would not give you a penny for all your fruit! But when you plant your tree in good soil and it is well-watered and fertilized, when the fruit-bearing season comes, there is your fruit. It is a blessed thing to get the very roots of your being entwined around Christ—now you can grow, now you can bring forth fruit! Now you will get patience. Now you will get hope. Now you will get love and soon you will get full assurance! You will have the work of sanctification going on, you will be more and more consecrated and devoted to Christ—and you will become "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." God give you "peace in believing," that you may grow in every other Grace!

And this, I know, *will help you to serve others.* A man who is enjoying the blessings of true religion, living *in* it and living *on* it, wants other people to know about it and to share it with him. I think that nobody would give a recommendation to a new kind of food which he did not like, himself, and which did him no good. He would say, "Well, if this is intended to keep me from being ill, I would rather be ill than eat it! I certainly shall not recommend it to others." But he that has eaten it, loves the flavor of it and finds that nourishment comes from it, says to his friend, "You are getting emaciated, and thin, and debilitated as I was—you should try what I have tried." He is sure to commend it because it has done so much for him. And when we enjoy the Gospel, we are sure to

recommend it to others. God’s happy people are God’s working people! Those who fear and tremble and never have any joy in the Lord are generally a barren generation. But they who delight themselves in the Lord are sure to speak of Him to others and to bring others to Christ!

Lastly, I believe that “peace in believing” is *one of the best instrumentalities for bringing others to Christ*. If you are soon to be very happy in a time of trial—if you are known to be very patient in great pain—and especially if the Lord helps you to be triumphant in the solemn article of death, you will be a soul-winner! Those who come round your bed will never forget the joyous look on your face—it will be a life-long sermon to them. I do not advise you to sit up like Addison and make a show of it, and say, “Come see how a Christian can die!” No, that is a style of thing I do not admire. But when you can honestly, straightforwardly, without any parade, sweetly fall asleep in Jesus Christ, triumphantly entering into Glory and let those around you hear your shout of victory as you enter in to be “forever with the Lord”—if you can do that, the memory of it will abide—and those who were unconvinced, before, are most likely to be decided! While those who never hesitated will be more than ever confirmed in the faith!

In conclusion, to gather up all in a word, you who have no peace may have it even now. Believe! That is, trust! Trust Jesus with your souls and you shall have “peace in believing.” And you who have it, though it is somewhat broken, may have it to the fullest! Where you obtained your first peace, you can get more! Where peace has only trickled in, it can come pouring in, it can rush in like a Heavenly deluge and flood your entire nature, to the praise and glory of your gracious God! May He make it to be so, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS 8:14-39.

Verse 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 always 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 you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but you 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 bears 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 Brothers and Sisters, 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 waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.* All creation is, as it were, watching and waiting on tiptoe for the day when God shall manifest His sons and daughter, who, at present, are 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 has subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. 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 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-molded 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 sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes 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 to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” 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 In-

spired 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, Brothers and Sisters, 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—right now it is all right! “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 begin 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 purposes, or God’s decrees—they seem to be afraid of them—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 future things 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 say, then, to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? 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 anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God who justifies.* Ring out the challenge in Heaven itself! Trumpet it through all the caverns of Hell! Let the whole universe hear it! “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” None can, for “it is God who justifies,” 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 condemns?* None will answer to that challenge, for

34, 35. *It is Christ that died, yes, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 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. “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 affliction 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 Savior? 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 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 your 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. *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord—*

***“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.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—23 (VERSION I), 708, 775.

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

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

NO. 30

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 17, 1855,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL.

“The power of the Holy Spirit.”
Romans 15:13.

POWER is the special and peculiar prerogative of God, and God alone. “Twice have I heard this, that power belongs unto God” (Psa 62:11). God is God—and power belongs to Him. If He delegates a portion of it to His creatures, yet still it is *His* power. The sun, although he is “like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoices as a strong man to run his race,” yet has no power to perform his motions except as God directs him. The stars, although they travel in their orbits and none could stay them, yet have neither might nor force except that which God daily infuses into them. The tall archangel, near His Throne, who outshines a comet in its blaze, though he is one of those who excel in strength and hearkens to the voice of the commands of God, yet has no might except that which his Maker gives to him. As for Leviathan, who so makes the sea to boil like a pot that one would think the deep were hoary—as for Behemoth, who drinks up Jordan at a draught and boasts that he can snuff up rivers. As for those majestic creatures that are found on earth, they owe their strength to Him who fashioned their bones of steel and made their sinews of brass. And when we think of *man*—if he has might or power—it is so small and insignificant that we can scarcely call it such. Yes, when he is at his greatest—when he sways his scepter, when he commands hosts, when he rules nations—still the power belongs to God. And it is true, “Twice have I heard this, that power belongs unto God.” This exclusive prerogative of God is to be found in each of the three Persons of the glorious Trinity. The Father has power—for by His word were the heavens made and all the host of them. By His strength all things stand and through Him they fulfill their destiny. The Son has power—for like His Father, He is the Creator of all things—“Without Him was not anything made that was made,” and, “by Him all things consist.” And the Holy Spirit has power. It is concerning the power of the Holy Spirit that I shall speak this morning. May you have a practical exemplification of that attribute in your own hearts—when you shall feel that the influence of the Holy Spirit is being poured out upon me—so that I am speaking the words of the living God to your souls! And may it be bestowed upon you when you are feeling the effects of it in your own spirits.

We shall look at the power of the Holy Spirit in three ways this morning. First, *the outward and visible displays of it*. Second, *the inward and spiritual manifestations of it*. And third, *the future and expected works thereof*. The power of the Spirit will thus, I trust, be made clearly present to your souls.

I. First, then, we are to view the power of the Spirit in the OUTWARD AND VISIBLE DISPLAYS OF IT. The power of the Spirit has not been dormant—it has exerted itself. Much has already been done by the Spirit of God—more than could have been accomplished by any being except the Infinite, Eternal, Almighty Jehovah, of whom the Holy Spirit is one Person. There are four works which are the outward and manifest signs of the power of the Spirit—creation works, resurrection works, works of attestation or of witness and works of Grace. Of each of the works I shall speak very briefly.

1. First, the Spirit has manifested the Omnipotence of His power in *Creation works*. For though not very frequently in Scripture, yet sometimes Creation is ascribed to the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Father and the Son. The Creation of the heavens above us is said to be the work of God's Spirit. This you will see at once by referring to the sacred Scriptures, Job 26:13—"By His Spirit He has garnished the heavens, His hand has formed the crooked serpent." All the stars of Heaven are said to have been placed aloft by the Spirit and one particular constellation called the "crooked serpent" is specially pointed out as His handiwork. He looses the bands of Orion. He binds the sweet influences of the Pleiades and guides Aeturus with his sons. He made all those stars that shine in Heaven. The heavens were garnished by His hands and He formed the crooked serpent by His might. So also in those continued acts of Creation which are still performed in the world. As the bringing forth of man and animals, their birth and generation. These are ascribed also to the Holy Spirit. If you look at the 104th Psalm, at the 29th and 30th verses, you will read, "You hide Your face, they are troubled. You take away their breath they die and return to their dust. You send forth Your Spirit, they are created and You renew the face of the earth." So you see that the creation of every man is the work of the Spirit—and the creation of all life and all flesh—*existence* in this world is as much to be ascribed to the power of the Spirit as the first garnishing of the heavens, or the fashioning of the crooked serpent. And if you will look in the 1st Chapter of Genesis, you will see there more particularly set forth that peculiar operation of power upon the universe which was put forth by the Holy Spirit. You will then discover what was His special work. In the 2nd verse of the 1st Chapter of Genesis, we read, "And the earth was without form and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." We know not how remote the period of the Creation of this globe may be—certainly many millions of years before

the time of Adam. Our planet has passed through various stages of existence and different kinds of creatures have lived on its surface, all of which have been fashioned by God. But before that era came, wherein man should be its principal tenant and monarch, the Creator gave up the world to confusion. He allowed the inward fires to burst up from beneath and melt all the solid matter so that all kinds of substances were commingled in one vast mass of disorder. The only name you could give to the world then was that it was a chaotic mass of matter. What it should be, you could not guess or define. It was entirely without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep. The Spirit came and stretching His broad wings, bade the darkness disperse and as He moved over it, all the different portions of matter came into their places and it was no longer “without form and void.” It became round like its sister planets and moved, singing the high praises of God—not discordantly as it had done before—but as one great note in the vast scale of Creation. Milton very beautifully describes this work of the Spirit in thus bringing order out of confusion, when the King of Glory, in His powerful Word and Spirit, came to create new worlds—

***“On heavenly ground they stood. And from the shore
They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heaven’s height and with the center mix the pole.
‘Silence you troubled waves and you deep, peace,’
Said then the Omnificent Word. Your discord end.
Then on the watery calm
His brooding wings, the Spirit of God outspread
And vital virtue infused and vital warmth
Throughout the fluid mass.”***

This, you see, then, is the power of the Spirit. Could we have seen that earth all in confusion, we would have said, “Who can make a world out of this?” The answer would have been, “The power of the Spirit can do it. By the simple spreading of His dove-like wings He can make all the things come together. Upon that there shall be order where there was nothing but confusion.” Nor is this all the power of the Spirit. We have seen some of His works in Creation. But there was one particular instance of creation in which the Holy Spirit was more especially concerned, viz., the formation of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a woman and made in the likeness of sinful flesh, yet the power that begat Him was entirely in God the Holy Spirit—as the Scriptures express it, “The power of the Highest shall overshadow you.” He was begotten as the Apostles’ Creed says, of the Holy Spirit. “That holy Thing which is born of you shall be called the Son of the Highest.” The corporeal frame of the Lord Jesus Christ was a masterpiece of the Holy

Spirit. I suppose His body to have excelled all others in beauty. To have been like that of the first man, the very pattern of what the body is to be in Heaven, when it shall shine forth in all its glory! That fabric, in all its beauty and perfection, was modeled by the Spirit. In His Book were all the members written when as yet there were none of them. He fashioned and formed Him. And here, again, we have another instance of the creative energy of the Spirit.

2. A second manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power is to be found in the *Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ*. If you have ever studied this subject, you have, perhaps, been rather perplexed to find that sometimes the Resurrection of Christ is ascribed to Himself. By His own power and Godhead He could not be held by the bond of death, but as He willingly gave up His life, He had power to take it again. In another portion of Scripture you find it ascribed to God the Father—"He raised Him up from the dead." "Him has God the Father exalted." And many other passages of similar import. But, again, it is said in Scripture that Jesus Christ was raised by the Holy Spirit. Now all these things were true. He was raised by the Father because the Father said, "loose the Prisoner—let Him go. Justice is satisfied. My Law requires no more satisfaction—vengeance has had its due—let Him go." Here He gave an official message which delivered Jesus from the grave. He was raised by His own majesty and power because He had a right to come out and He felt He had and therefore "burst the bonds of death—He could be no longer held of them." But He was raised by the Spirit as to that energy which His mortal frame received, by which it rose again from the grave after having lain there for three days and nights. If you need proofs of this, you must open your Bibles again, 1 Peter 3:18—"For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit." And a further proof you may find in Romans, 8:11—(I love, sometimes, to be textual, for I believe the great fault of Christians is that they do not search the Scriptures enough and I will make them search them when they are here if they do not do so anywhere else)—"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you." The Resurrection of Christ, then, was effected by the agency of the Spirit and here we have a noble illustration of His omnipotence. Could you have stepped, as angels did, into the grave of Jesus and seen His sleeping body, you would have found it cold as any other corpse. Lift up the hand, it falls by the side. Look at the eye—it is glazed. And there is a death-thrust which must have annihilated life. See His hands. The blood distils not from them—they are cold and motionless. Can that body live? Can it start up? Yes. And be an illustration of the might of the Spirit! For when the power of the Spirit came on Him, as it was when it fell upon the dry

bones of the valley—"He arose in the majesty of His Divinity and bright and shining, astonished the watchmen so that they fled away. Yes, He arose no more to die, but to live forever, King of kings and Prince of the kings of the earth."

3. The third of the works of the Holy Spirit which have so wonderfully demonstrated His power, are *attestation works*. I mean by this—works of witnessing. When Jesus Christ went into the stream of Baptism in the river Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove and proclaimed Him God's Beloved Son. That is what I style an attestation work. And when afterwards Jesus Christ raised the dead, when He healed the leper, when He spoke to diseases and they fled, when demons rushed in thousands from those who were possessed of them, it was done by the power of the Spirit. The Spirit dwelt in Jesus without measure and by that power all those miracles were worked. These were attestation works. And when Jesus Christ was gone, you will remember that master attestation of the Spirit when He came like a rushing mighty wind upon the assembled Apostles and cloven tongues sat upon them. And you will remember how He attested their ministry by giving them to speak with tongues as He gave them utterance. And how, also, miraculous deeds were worked by them. How they taught, how Peter raised Dorcas, how he breathed life into Eutychus, how great deeds were worked by the Apostles as well as their Master—so that "mighty signs and wonders were done by the Holy Spirit and many believed thereby." Who will doubt the power of the Holy Spirit after that? Ah, those Socinians, who deny the existence of the Holy Spirit and His absolute Personality—what will they do when we get them on Creation, Resurrection and Attestation? They must rush in the very teeth of Scripture. But mark—it is a stone upon which if any man falls he shall be bruised. But if it falls upon him, as it will do if he resists it, it shall grind him to powder! The Holy Spirit has Omnipotent power, even the power of God, because He is God!

4. Once more, if we need another outward and visible sign of the power of the Spirit, we may look at the *works of Grace*. Behold a city where a soothsayer has the power—who has given out himself to be some great one. A Philip enters it and preaches the Word of God—straightway a Simon Magus loses his power and seeks for the power of the Spirit to be given to him, fancying it might be purchased with money! See, in modern times, a country where the inhabitants live in miserable wigwams, feeding on reptiles and the meanest creatures. Observe them bowing down before their idols and worshipping their false gods and so plunged in superstition, so degraded and debased, that it becomes a question whether they have souls or not! Behold a Moffat with the Word of God in his hand. Hear him preach as the Spirit gives him utterance and accompanies that Word with power. They cast aside their idols—they hate and abhor their former lusts. They build houses wherein they dwell. They be-

come clothed and in their right mind. They break the bow and cut the spear in sunder. The uncivilized become civilized. The savage becomes polite. He who knew nothing begins to read the Scriptures. Thus out of the mouths of Hottentots, God attests the power of His mighty Spirit! Take a household in this city—and we could guide you to many such—the father is a drunk. He has been the most desperate of characters. See him in his madness and you might just as well meet an unchained tiger as meet such a man. He seems as if he could tear a man to pieces who should offend him. Mark his wife. She, too, has a spirit in her and when he treats her ill, she can resist him. Many broils have been seen in that house and often has the neighborhood been disturbed by the noise created there. As for the poor little children—see them in their rags and nakedness, poor untaught things.

Untaught, did I say? They are taught and well taught in the devil's school and are growing up to be the heirs of damnation. But someone whom God has blessed by His Spirit is guided to the house. He may be but a humble city missionary, perhaps, but he speaks to such a one. "O," he says, "come and listen to the voice of God." Whether it is by his own agency, or a minister's preaching, the Word, which is quick and powerful, cuts to the sinner's heart. The tears run down his cheeks—such as had never been seen before. He shakes and quivers. The strong man bows down—the mighty man trembles—and those knees that never shook begin to knock together! That heart which never quailed before, now begins to shake before the power of the Spirit. He sits down on a humble bench by the penitent. He lets his knees bend, while his lips utter a child's prayer, but, while a child's prayer, a prayer of a child of God! He becomes a changed character. Mark the reformation in his house! That wife of his becomes the decent matron. Those children are the credit of the house and in due time they grow up like olive branches round his table, adorning his house like polished stones. Pass by the house—no noise or broils, but songs of Zion! See him—no drunken revelry. He has drained his last cup. And, now forswearing it, he comes to God and is His servant. Now, you will not hear at midnight the bacchanalian shout. But should there be a noise, it will be the sound of the solemn hymn of praise to God. And, now, is there not such a thing as the power of the Spirit? Yes! And these must have witnessed it and seen it. I know a village, once, perhaps, the most profane in England—a village inundated by drunkenness and debauchery of the worst kind, where it was almost impossible for an honest traveler to stop in the public house without being annoyed by blasphemy. A place noted for incendiaries and robbers. One man, the ringleader of all, listened to the voice of God. That man's heart was broken. The whole gang came to hear the Gospel preached and they sat and seemed to reverence the preacher as if he were a God and not a man. These men became changed and reformed. And everyone who

knows the place affirms that such a change had never been worked but by the power of the Holy Spirit! Let the Gospel be preached and the Spirit poured out and you will see that it has such power to change the conscience, to ameliorate the conduct, to raise the debased, to chastise and to curb the wickedness of the race, that you must glory in it. I say, there is nothing like the power of the Spirit. Only let that come and, indeed, everything can be accomplished!

II. Now, for the second point, THE INWARD AND SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. What I have already spoken of may be *seen*. What I am about to speak of must be *felt* and no man will apprehend what I say with Truth unless he has felt it. The other, even the infidel, must confess. The other, the greatest blasphemer cannot deny it, he speaks the Truth. But this is what the one will laugh at as enthusiasm and what the other will say is but the invention of our fevered fancies. However, we have a more sure word of testimony than all that they may say. We have a witness within. We know it is the Truth and we are not afraid to speak of the inward spiritual power of the Holy Spirit. Let us notice two or three things wherein the inward and spiritual power of the Holy Spirit is very greatly to be seen and extolled.

1. First, in that the Holy Spirit has *a power over men's hearts*. Now, men's hearts are very hard to affect. If you want to get at them for any worldly objective you can do it. A cheating world can win man's heart, a little gold can win man's heart, a trump of fame and a little clamor of applause can win man's heart. But there is not a minister breathing that can win man's heart, himself! He can win his ears and make them listen. He can win his eyes and fix those eyes upon him. He can win the attention, but the heart is very slippery. Yes, the heart is a fish that troubles all Gospel fishermen to hold! You may sometimes pull it almost all out of the water—but slimy as an eel, it slips between your fingers and you have not captured it, after all. Many a man has fancied that he has caught the heart but has been disappointed. It would need a strong hunter to overtake the hart on the mountains. It is too fleet for human foot to approach. The Spirit, alone, has power over a *man's* heart. Do you ever try your power on a heart? If any man thinks that a minister can convert the soul, I wish he would try. Let him go and be a Sunday school teacher. He shall take his class, he shall have the best books that can be obtained, he shall have the best rules, he shall draw his rampart about his spiritual Sebastopol. He shall take the best boy in his class and if he is not tired in a week I shall be very much mistaken. Let him spend four or five Sabbaths in trying, but he will say, "The young fellow is incorrigible." Let him try another. And he will have to try another, another and another before he will manage to convert one. He will soon find, "It is not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord." Can a minister convert? Can he touch the heart? David said, "Your hearts are as fat as

grease.” Yes, that is quite true. And we cannot get through so much grease at all. Our sword cannot get at the heart—it is encased in so much fatness, it is harder than a nether millstone. Many a good old Jerusalem blade has been blunted against the hard heart. Man, a piece of the true steel that God has put into the hands of His servants, has had the edge turned by being set up against the sinner’s heart. We cannot reach the soul. But the Holy Spirit can. “My Beloved can put in His hand by the hole in the door and my heart will move for sin.” He can give a sense of blood-bought pardon that shall dissolve a heart of stone. He can—

**“Speak with that voice which wakes the dead,
And bids the sinner rise—
And makes the guilty conscience dread
The death that never dies.”**

He can make Sinai’s thunders audible. Yes, and He can make the sweet whisperings of Calvary enter into the soul. He has power over the heart of man! Yes, the glorious proof of the Omnipotence of the Spirit is that He has rule over the heart!

2. But if there is one thing more stubborn than the heart it is *the will*. “My Lord, Will-be-Will,” as Bunyan calls him in his “Holy War,” is a fellow who will not easily be bent. The will, especially in some men, is a very stubborn thing and in all men, if the will is once stirred up to opposition, there is nothing can be done with them. *Free will* somebody believes in. *Free will* many dream of. Free will! Wherever is that to be found? Once there was free will in Paradise and a terrible mess, free will made there, for it spoiled all Paradise and drove Adam out of the garden! Free will was once in Heaven but it drove the glorious archangel out and a third part of the stars of Heaven fell into the abyss. I want nothing to do with free will—but I will try to see whether I have got a free will within. And I find I have. Very free will to evil but very poor will to that which is good. Free will enough when I sin, but when I would do good, evil is present with me and how to do that which I would, I find not. Yet some boast of free will. I wonder whether those who believe in it have any more power over persons’ wills than I have. I know I have not any. I find the old proverb very true, “One man can bring a horse to the water, but a hundred cannot make him drink.” I find that I can bring you all to the water and a great many more than can get into this Chapel. But I cannot make you drink. And I don’t think a hundred ministers could make you drink. I have read old Rowland Hill, Whitfield and several others to see what they did. But I cannot discover a plan of turning your wills. I cannot coax you. And you will not yield by any manner of means. I do not think any man has power over his fellow creature’s will—but the Spirit of God has. “I will make them willing in the day of My power.” He makes the unwilling sinner so willing that he is impetuous after the Gospel! He who was obsti-

nate, now hurries to the Cross. He who laughed at Jesus, now hangs on His mercy. And he who would not believe, is now made by the Holy Spirit to do it, not only willingly, but eagerly. He is happy, is glad to do it, rejoices in the sound of Jesus' name and delights to run in the way of God's commandments. The Holy Spirit has power over the will!

3. And yet there is one thing more which I think is rather worse than the will. You will guess what I mean. The will is somewhat worse than the heart to bend but there is one thing that excels the will in its evil and that is the *imagination*. I hope that my will is managed by Divine Grace. But I am afraid my imagination is not at times. Those who have a fair share of imagination know what a difficult thing it is to control. You cannot restrain it. It will break the reins. You will never be able to manage it. The imagination will sometimes fly up to God with such a power that eagles' wings cannot match it. It sometimes has such might that it can almost see the King in His beauty and the land which is very far off. With regard to myself, my imagination will sometimes take me over the gates of iron, across that infinite unknown to the very gates of pearl and discovers the blessed Glorified. But if it is potent, one way, it is also another. For my imagination has taken me down to the vilest kennels and sewers of earth. It has given me thoughts so dreadful, that while I could not avoid them, yet I was thoroughly horrified at them! These thoughts will come and when I feel in the holiest frame, the most devoted to God and the most earnest in prayer, it often happens that *that* is the very time when the plagues breaks out the worst. But I rejoice and think of one thing—that I can cry out when this imagination comes upon me. I know it is said in the Book of Leviticus when an act of evil was committed, if the maiden cried out against it, then her life was to be spared. So it is with the Christian. If he cries out, there is hope. Can you chain your imagination? No. But the power of the Holy Spirit can. Ah, it shall do it and it does do it at last. It does it even on earth.

III. But the last thing was THE FUTURE AND DESIRED EFFECTS—for after all, though the Holy Spirit has done so much, He cannot say, "It is finished." Jesus Christ could exclaim concerning His own labor—"It is finished." But the Holy Spirit cannot say that. He has more to do—and until the consummation of all things, when the Son, Himself, becomes subject to the Father, it shall not be said by the Holy Spirit, "It is finished." What, then, has the Holy Spirit to do?

1. First, he has to *perfect us in holiness*. There are two kinds of perfection which a Christian needs—one is the perfection of justification in the Person of Jesus. And the other is the perfection of sanctification worked in him by the Holy Spirit. At present, corruption still rests even in the breasts of the regenerate. At present the heart is partially impure. At present there are still lusts and evil imaginations. But, oh, my soul rejoices to know that the day is coming when God shall finish the work

which He has begun—and He shall present my soul, not only perfect in Christ, but perfect in the Spirit, without spot or blemish, or any such thing. And is it true that this poor depraved heart is to become as holy as that of God? And is it true that this poor spirit, which often cries, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this sin and death?” shall get rid of sin and death? I shall have no evil things to vex my ears and no unholy thoughts to disturb my peace? Oh, happy hour! May it be hastened! Just before I die, sanctification will be finished. But not till that moment shall I ever claim perfection in myself. But at that moment when I depart, my spirit shall have its last Baptism in the Holy Spirit’s fire. It shall be put in the crucible for its last trying in the furnace. And then, free from all dross and fine like a wedge of pure gold, it shall be presented at the feet of God without the least degree of dross or mixture. O glorious hour! O blessed moment! I think I long to die even if there were no Heaven—if I might but have that last purification and come up from Jordan’s stream most white from the washing. Oh, to be washed white, clean, pure, perfect! Not an angel more pure than I shall be—yes, not God, Himself, more holy! And I shall be able to say, in a double sense, “Great God, I am clean—through Jesus’ blood I am clean—through the Spirit’s work I am clean, too!” Must we not extol the power of the Holy Spirit in thus making us fit to stand before our Father in Heaven?

2. Another great work of the Holy Spirit which is not accomplished is *the bringing on of the latter-day glory*. In a few more years—I know not when, I know not how—the Holy Spirit will be poured out in a far different style from the present. There are diversities of operations. And during the last few years it has been the case that the diversified operations have consisted in very little pouring out of the Spirit. Ministers have gone on in dull routine, continually preaching, preaching, preaching—and little good has been done. I do hope that perhaps a fresh era has dawned upon us and that there is a better pouring out of the Spirit even now. For the hour is coming and it may be even now, when the Holy Spirit shall be poured out again in such a wonderful manner that many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased—the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the surface of the great deep—when His Kingdom shall come and His will shall be done on earth even as it is in Heaven! We are not going to be dragging on forever like Pharaoh with the wheels off his chariot. My heart exults and my eyes flash with the thought that very likely I shall live to see the out-pouring of the Spirit when, “the sons and the daughters of God, again, shall prophecy and the young men shall see visions and the old men shall dream dreams.” Perhaps there shall be no miraculous gifts—for they will not be required. But yet there shall be such a miraculous amount of holiness, such an extraordinary fervor of prayer, such a real communion with God

and so much vital religion and such a spread of the Doctrines of the Cross that everyone will see that verily the Spirit is poured out like water and the rains are descending from above. For that let us pray—let us continually labor for it and seek it of God.

3. One more work of the Spirit which will especially manifest His power—the *general resurrection*. We have reason to believe from Scripture that the resurrection of the dead, while it will be effected by the voice of God and of His Word, (the Son), shall also be brought about by the Spirit. That same power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies. The power of the resurrection is perhaps one of the finest proofs of the works of the Spirit. Ah, my Friends, if this earth could but have its mantle torn away for a little while, if the green sod could be cut from it and we could look about six feet deep into its bowels, what a world it would seem! What would we see? Bones, carcasses, rotteness, worms, corruption. And you would say, “Can these dry bones live? Can they start up?” “Yes, in a moment! In the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, the dead shall be raised.” He speaks—they are alive! See them scattered—bone comes to his bone! See them naked—flesh comes upon them! See them still lifeless—“Come from the four winds, O Breath and breathe upon these slain!” When the wind of the Holy Spirit comes, they live and they stand upon their feet an exceeding great army.

I have thus attempted to speak of the power of the Spirit and I trust I have shown it to you. We must now have a moment or two for practical inference. The Spirit is very powerful, Christian! What do you infer from that fact? Why, that you never need distrust the power of God to carry you to Heaven! O how that sweet verse was laid to my soul yesterday!—

**“His tried Almighty arm
Is raised for your defense.
Where is the power can reach you there
Or what can pluck you thence?”**

The power of the Holy Spirit is your bulwark and all His Omnipotence defends you. Can your enemies overcome omnipotence? Then they can conquer you. Can they wrestle with Deity and hurl Him to the ground? Then they might conquer you. For the power of the Spirit is our power—the power of the Spirit is our might.

Once again, Christians, if this is the power of the Spirit, *why should you doubt anything?* There is your son. There is that wife of yours for whom you have supplicated so frequently—do not doubt the Spirit’s power. “Though He tarry, wait for Him.” There is your husband, O holy woman! And you have wrestled for his soul. And though he is ever so hardened and desperate a wretch and treats you ill, there is power in the Spirit. And, O you who have come from barren churches with scarcely a leaf upon the tree. Do not doubt the power of the Spirit to raise you up! For it shall be a “pasture for flocks, a den of wild asses,” open, but de-

served, until the Spirit is poured out from on high! And then the parched ground shall be made a pool and the thirsty land springs of water. Then in the habitations of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And, O you members of Park Street! You who remember what your God has done for you especially—never distrust the power of the Spirit! You have seen the wilderness blossom like Carmel. You have seen the desert blossom like the rose. Trust Him for the future. Then go out and labor with this conviction—the power of the Holy Spirit is able to do anything! Go to your Sunday school. Go to your tract distribution. Go to your missionary enterprise! Go to your preaching in your rooms, with the conviction that the power of the Spirit is our great help!

And now, lastly, to you sinners. What is there to be said to you about this power of the Spirit? Why, to me, there is some hope for some of you. *I cannot save you—I cannot get at you.* I make you cry sometimes—you wipe your eyes and it is all over. But I know my Master can. That is my consolation. Chief of sinners, there is hope for you! This power can save you as well as anybody else! It is able to break your heart, though it is an iron one. It can make your eyes run with tears though they have been like rocks, before. His power is able, this morning, if He wills, to change your heart, to turn the current of all your ideas, to make you at once a child of God, to justify you in Christ! There is power enough in the Holy Spirit. He is able to bring sinners to Jesus—He is able to make you willing in the day of His power. Are you willing this morning? Has He gone so far as to make you desire His name, to make you wish for Jesus? Then, O Sinner, while He draws you, say, “Draw me, I am wretched without You!” Follow Him, follow Him and while He leads, tread in His footsteps and rejoice that He has begun a good work in you, for there is an evidence that He will continue it even unto the end.

And, O desponding one! Put your trust in the power of the Spirit. Rest on the blood of Jesus and your soul is safe, not only now, but throughout eternity! God bless you, my Hearers. Amen.

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

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

JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING

NO. 692

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 20, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Joy and peace in believing.”
Romans 15:13.***

I WOULD address myself, this morning, to a special class and if there should be no spiritual instruction for others, I trust that they will follow what is said with their prayers, that the word may be useful to those for whom it is mainly intended. There are a large number of persons who profess to have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ but who assert that they have no joy and peace in believing. They do not make this profession by union with the Christian Church or in any open manner, but when they are pushed upon the matter of personal salvation, they will sometimes tell us, “I do believe in Christ, but still I am so unhappy, I am so miserable, that I cannot believe that I am saved.”

That statement being tantamount to this—that the Word of God declares that whoever believes in Jesus is not condemned—but they assert that they have believed in Jesus and nevertheless they are haunted with fears of condemnation which lead them to believe that they cannot have been delivered from the wrath to come. Now, I shall suppose that the persons whom I am trying to address this morning are sincerely anxious to be saved and that they are not raising this difficulty by way of cavil. If they are cavilers, I shall not attempt to deal with them this morning.

Such persons need a discourse to themselves. I am speaking to tender hearts, or to those who desire to have tender hearts—to those who have their faces towards Jerusalem though as yet they travel in the dark. If you are really desirous to obtain joy and peace through believing, we trust God may bless you to the obtaining of it this morning. We suppose, also, that the persons whom we are addressing are not laboring under any bodily sickness such as might bring on hypochondria feelings and those despondencies which are rather the symptoms of physical disease than marks of spiritual feeling.

I believe there are some persons who are beyond the reach of the preacher and who must be dealt with, if treated at all successfully, by the ordinary physician. Their case has gone beyond the limits of argument. Their mind has got into a disordered condition and the body, also, and therefore both body and mind must be set right by some other means before it is likely that *spiritual* reasons will prevail upon them. Provided you are sane people in some measure of health, and that you are sincere persons, we think that with God’s blessing we may be the means of comfort to you this morning.

At any rate, we will try. And we will begin by making two observations. We grant to you that joy and peace are exceedingly desirable things. We hope you will never be satisfied until you get them and enjoy very much of them—until you are, in fact, as the text puts it—filled with joy and peace. For your own sakes this is very desirable because your present condition is a very mournful and unhappy one. It is still more desirable for the sake of your acquaintances and kinsfolk, for they set down your present despondency to your *religion*, and so you tend, unwittingly, to dishonor the Cross of Christ.

I know you would be willing to suffer anything sooner than that the Gospel should be evilly spoken of. But it is evilly spoken of through *you*, and necessarily so, because you cannot expect carnal persons to have a discernment between your religious feelings, which are right, and those which are wrong. They set your present despondency down to religious feelings of some sort and with one sweeping verdict they are apt to condemn religion altogether.

Now you do not wish this, surely for their own good—for you desire them to find peace. With all your anxiety for yourself you are not selfish—you wish others to enjoy peace in Christ. You would consent, I believe, to the loss of your right eye if your husband and children, if your wife and friends might be reconciled to God by the blood of the Cross. At present, however you are standing in the way—and instead of assisting by proving that “her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace,” you are doing an injury to those dear immortal souls by the misrepresentation which you give them. I grant again that this is done unwittingly, but alas, you are as surely injuring them as if you designed to do them evil.

But a second remark I must also venture upon, namely that you must take care, while valuing joy and peace, that you do not overestimate them. Remember that joy and peace are, though eminently desirable, not *infallible* evidences of safety. There are many persons who have great joy and much peace who are not saved. Their joy springs from a mistake, and their peace is the false peace which does not rest upon the rock of Divine Truth but upon the sand of their own imaginations. It is certainly a good sign that spring is come, that you find the weather to be so warm, but there are very mild days in winter.

I must not infer because the heat of the sun is at such and such a degree, that therefore it is necessarily spring. And, on the other hand, we have had very cold days this week—cold days which, if we had to judge by such evidences, might have convinced us that we were rather in November than in May. And so, joy and peace are like fine sunny days. They come to those that have no faith that are in the winter of their unbelief, and they may not visit you who have believed. Or, if they come, they may not stay, for there may be cold weather in May and there may be some sorrow and some distress of mind even to a truly believing soul.

Understand that you must not look upon the *possession* of joy and peace as being the absolutely necessary *consequence* of your being saved. A man may be in the lifeboat, but that lifeboat may be so tossed about that he may still feel himself exceedingly ill and think himself to be still in

peril. It is not his *sense* of safety that makes him safe—he is safe because he is in the lifeboat—whether he is sensible of it or not. Understand, then, that joy and peace are not infallible or indispensable evidences of safety, and that they are certainly not unchanging evidences.

The brightest Christians lose their joy—and some of those that stand well in the things of God, and concerning whom you would entertain no doubt—entertain a great many suspicions, however, about themselves. Joy and peace are the elements of a Christian, but he is sometimes out of his element. Joy and peace are his usual state, but there are times when, with fights within and wars without, his joy departs and his peace is broken. The leaves on the tree prove that the tree is alive, but the absence of leaves will not prove that the tree is dead.

True joy and peace may be very satisfactory evidences, but the absence of joy and peace, during certain seasons, can often be accounted for on some other hypothesis than that of there being no faith within. And, once more, I pray you, dear Friends, not to seek joy and peace as the first and main thing. Let your prayer be, “Lord, give me comfort, but give me *safety* first. Forbid that I should take comfort except from Your right hand.” Use Toplady’s vow, which he puts into verse—

**“I will not be comforted
Till Jesus comforts me.”**

Believe that it were better for you to go all your life in darkness and to end in everlasting life and light, than to enjoy much of what you thought to be heavenly joy here, and then to go into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Be anxious to be happy, but be more anxious to be *holy*. Be desirous after peace, but be more desirous, still, to get a good hope through Christ from which that peace may flow.

I like the fruit of the tree, but if I transplant the tree and put it into my garden, I should like that better. I like the gold from the mine, but if I may become the possessor of the mine itself, I should much prefer it. I like joy and peace, but I like better, still, that sacred *faith* which looks to Christ and brings me joy and peace as a consequence.

Well now, having thus paved the way by these remarks, we come more distinctly to the text. The text speaks of joy and peace in believing.

I. And the first observation shall be this—THE TEXT MAY BE USED TO CORRECT TWO ERRORS very, very common and very dangerous. The first of the two errors the text corrects is the error of supposing that there is a way of joy and peace through *self*. This is the broad road that leads to death, but it is full of travelers. In different forms and ways the most of men are trying to obtain joy and peace through something done by *themselves*, instead of resting upon the finished work of the Savior.

Some look for joy and peace through good works. Now I can suppose that if you and I had never sinned, joy and peace would have been the consequences of perfect holiness. Adam in the garden must have had joy as the result of serving so good a Master, and he must have felt peace when at nightfall he could say, “O God, I have kept Your command, and I have not touched the forbidden fruit.” Still the fear would haunt him,

“perhaps I may do so,” and that dark suspicion would go far to dampen his joy and disturb his peace.

But do you think that this can bring you solid peace? Since you and I *have* broken God’s Law, any rational joy and peace are impossible under the Covenant of Works, for whatever may be the perfection of our *future* life, it can make no atonement for the *past*. You have broken the alabaster vase—you may preserve the fragments if you will—but you cannot make it whole again. You have spoiled the perfection of your obedience, and having ruined it, God cannot receive it at your hands. YOU may try if you please, but take my word for it, (for I have tried it, too), it is as unlikely for you ever to get peace by attempting to obey God’s Law as it is to gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles.

Many who are conscious of this run to another form. They say, “Then I will do my best, and having done my best I shall, at any rate be able to say, ‘Well, I can do no more.’” A man who is drowning may say that, but it is no solace to him as the billows close over him. In yonder burning house the woman in the upper story who has thought over all the plans of escaping finds it no sort of comfort to say, “I have done all I can and can therefore do no more.”

What if you *should* do all you can? I am afraid none of you will ever do it, yet if you should there is no peace or joy to be found in that. Some try the plan of scrupulous observance of all religious ceremonies! Now, however much these rites and services may differ *externally*, yet trusting in them is the same in all cases. You, all of you, feel vexed with the Romanist that he can rely upon confession, upon penance imposed by his priest, or upon the hearing of masses.

You are indignant with the Puseyite that in a professedly Protestant church he should put confidence in his baptism and confirmation, and so on. But are you equally indignant with *yourself* that you should rely upon your own prayers or upon your own tears? Is there any more virtue before God in your prayers than in the prayers of priests? There certainly is no less, but is there any more? Is there any more virtue in your tears than there may be in those of a so-called saint? I tell you that if you trust in these things, your holiest emotions and your best desires are nothing but an antichrist—foul and unclean—which God will abhor!

The way of salvation is *not* by your holiness nor by your ceremonies, nor by anything upon which you can put your hand. “If you lift up your hammer upon it,” said God of His altar, “you have polluted it.” And so have you, if you have put your little finger to the work. Unless it is all of Christ and not of yourself you have polluted it. And God will see to it that no joy or peace shall ever come to you by that road. Do not, therefore, try it! Do not try to get joy and peace by penitential *feelings*, by *humbling* yourself, by *consecrating* your life, or by any attempts of this kind. These things are good, pre-eminently good in themselves if they are used lawfully—but to *rest* in them will be your ruin. As to your present peace and joy—it can never be obtained by work or by anything from yourself.

But the text also corrects another common error, namely, turning the text upside down. There is such a thing as joy and peace in *believing*, and

some simpletons, therefore, infer that there is such a thing as believing in *joy and peace*! I believe there is such a thing but that it is of Satan, and that the sooner we are clear of it the better. My dear Friend, to get joy and peace through believing is one thing—it is God’s plan of salvation—but to get your believing as the *result* of your joy and peace is quite another thing. It is of yourself, and is a snare of Satan. Beware of it!

You will get peace just as the florist gets his flower from the bulb—but you will never get the bulb from the flower. Take the tulip and try it. That fine flower will come up if you put that ugly bulb into the ground and give it time. You will get the glory of the flower before long. But take the flower and put it into the best prepared earth and see if you will ever get the bulb! Now joy and peace are the soul’s flower. And if you get faith into the ground, joy and peace will come of it. But if you get joy and peace first and say, “Now I believe,” no you do not—it is not believing—it is the very opposite of it!

You must not, therefore, reverse the laws and rules of right procedure. Let me just argue this point with you. To trust Christ because you feel happy is, in the first place, irrational. Now suppose a man should have said during the last panic, “I feel sure that the Bank my money is in is safe.” Why? “Because I feel so easy about my money.” Now anybody would say to him, “That is no reason.”

Suppose he said, “I feel sure that my money is safe,” and you had said, “What is the reason?” “Why because I believe the Bank is safe.” “Oh,” say you, “that is right enough. That is good reasoning.” But here you put the *effect* in the place of the *cause* and try to make that a cause, but you cannot do it. If a man should say, “I have got a large estate in India.” How do you know? “Why, because I feel so happy in thinking about it.” “Why, you fool,” say you, “that is no proof whatever, not the slightest.” But if he says to you, “I feel very happy,” and you ask him why, and he replies, “Because I have got an estate in India.” “Oh,” say you, “that may be right enough.”

A man may be thankful for that which he rightly possesses, but to make joy and peace the evidence of facts from without is supremely ridiculous! For a man to say, “I know I am saved, because I am happy,” is most irrational—while to be happy because you are saved is right enough. Oh, I pray you, take care that you do not act irrationally before God! Or take another view of this thought. Suppose I am in fear this morning about the health of some dear friend. “Well,” I say, “I should like to have my friend healthy, but I want to feel myself safe about that friend. I do not know anything about the state of my friend just now, and I am uneasy. Now I can tell you if I could get to feel easy, then I should be convinced that my friend was well.”

“Why,” you would justly reply, “there is no connection between the two things. The proper mode of procedure is to try and find out whether your friend is well, then you will feel easy.” But you say, “I should believe I was saved if I felt happy.” Is there any reason in that? On the contrary, first of all believe that you are saved and then happiness shall come of it. But you cannot believe that you are saved while you persist in doing what God

tells you *not* to do—looking to your own joy and peace, instead of looking to the finished work of Jesus Christ.

While this is illogical and inconsistent it is also very irreverent. You say to God, “O God, You tell me to trust Christ and I shall be saved. Well, I cannot trust Christ but I can trust my own feelings. And if I were very happy I could believe that He would save me.” Oh let the words I have spoken be forgiven, if they sound like blasphemy, but I think they have the essence of blasphemy in them. What? Are my poor changeable frames of feeling to be set up in preference to the word of Christ? He tells me if I trust Him I shall be saved, and I reply to Him, “I cannot trust Your word, Jesus, but I could rely upon it if I felt so-and-so.” That is to say I could trust *myself* but I cannot trust Him. Weep, dear Friends, that you should have been guilty of such irreverence, and do not persist in it!

Once again, is it not very egotistical? Here is a person who has *God* to deal with and has the Divine promise—“He that believes on Him is not condemned.” And instead of confiding in this, he says, “No, I shall believe nothing which I do not *feel*. When I *feel* I am saved, I shall believe it. When I have joy in consequence of being saved, then I will trust Christ to save me.” That is, “I will trust Him for *nothing*, but I will set up my own feelings and my own knowledge over and above the promises and the positive declarations of a dying Savior.”

May the Lord forgive you, my dear Friends, who are in this state of heart, for being so guilty in this thing. I think, if nothing else should make you feel your sinnership, you ought to feel it on this account—that you find it hard to trust Christ. If you were what you should be, remember that to trust Christ would be the natural outgoings of your nature. But because your nature is what it ought not to be, it becomes so hard for you to trust the truthful One while you think it so easy to trust in what is fickle as the wind and false as the deceitful sea.

Well, I have just exposed these two matters and want your patient attention while I seek to bring out the truth of the text. We are finished with the errors that are *not* in it—now for the Truth of God that *is* in it.

II. The great truth of the text is THAT BELIEVING IN CHRIST IS THE TRUE GROUND FOR JOY AND PEACE. What is believing in Christ? In one word it is *trusting* Christ. He is sent of God to save sinners and those sinners who trust in Him to save them are saved. Faith then, the faith which is the ground of our joy and peace, is a simple trust in Christ.

Now I feel sure, from what we understand of mental science as well as from the teaching of God’s Word and one’s own experience, that if a man unfeignedly trusts Christ, he must, in the main, have joy and peace. I think you will see this. There is a sinner who feels himself guilty before God, but he hears enough of the Gospel to understand that God has devised a plan of salvation. The very believing of that must give some sort of peace.

The sinner would say, “I thought I could not be saved, but now the very whisper of that word, ‘Savior,’ gives me some hope. The black thought that it is impossible for me to be saved is gone. There is evidently a possibility, for there is a desire on God’s part, or else He would not have provided a

plan by which men might be saved.” When, however, the sinner comes to look at the Gospel more carefully, he perceives, in the suitability of the plan, another cause for joy. “Why,” he says, “I see it is thus—God will save me not on account of anything I do or am, but out of pure Divine Grace! I see that He has provided a salvation, not for the good, but for the *bad*—not for those who have something to recommend themselves to Him—but for those who have nothing to recommend but everything to disqualify them for His favor!

“And I see,” says the sinner, “as I look at the Gospel, that the way to get a hold of this is not by feeling any good feeling—if so, it were impossible! Not by doing any good works, else it were also beyond my power! But I perceive that the method of salvation is that of *believing* in the Savior. Now, if my heart is but right. If I really am desirous of salvation, what is it that I am expected to believe?” Already he feels a certain sense of joy at the thought of such a plan! By works he felt he could not be saved, but he begins to hope that it may be by that plan of faith which requires neither good feelings nor good works!

And so he opens his ears and his heart, too, and says, “Master, what is it I am to believe? Only tell me what it is. I am so sick of sin and so sad at heart that if I am to have joy and peace in believing, tell me! And if it is reasonable, if there is anything in it which a man can believe, I am prepared to accept it at once.” Very well then, and so far we shall be agreed that the mere *understanding* that there is a Savior, and the *information* that that Savior is to be received by believing in Him has a tendency to give some joy and peace.

But now to the point. When the sinner asks, “What is it I am to believe in order to have peace? In whom am I to trust?” he is told that he is to look for his salvation, present and to come, wholly from the hands of Christ, and then he will be saved. “Oh,” says he, “but what sort of a Christ is this I am to confide in? Is He worthy of my trust? That is all I want to know.” And the reply we give to the sinner is this—we have trusted Christ for these reasons—

1. We have trusted Him because of the wonderful union of His Natures. He is God, and we know that whatever God undertakes He is able to accomplish. But He is Man, and feeling that He is like ourselves, a man, we realize that He has the requisite tenderness to deal with such poor sinners as we are—compassed about with infirmities. We are prepared to rely upon Him because of His Godhead, which renders Him Omnipotent.

We are equally glad to trust Him because of His Manhood, which makes Him kind and considerate for our infirmities. It seems to us that if we believe Jesus Christ to be God and Man, it is not difficult to place ourselves in the hand of Incarnate Deity.

2. But next, we trust Him because of the evident truthfulness of His Character. We have read the four Evangelists through, and we find Him scorning every subterfuge. His Character seems to us to be resplendent with the Truth of God. We think that no exaggeration was used when it was said, “And we beheld His Glory, the Glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth.”

Our Lord seems to us to be the most tender of Men and the most truthful of Men, too. We cannot believe that He would lie. Moreover, when we consider Him to be God we understand that God cannot lie and we feel inclined to think that every promise He has given will be kept. We believe that if He undertakes to save, Heaven and earth may pass away but He will do what He has promised.

Now we think this is a good reason for our confidence if there were no others. Could we suspect the Savior we should find it difficult to trust Him, but as we cannot imagine a cause for suspecting Him, we (and oh, that you may be brought to the same pass!) feel shut up to believing Him. And when He says, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," we trust Him and we get rest! And we believe that if *you* trust Him you will get rest, too.

Millions of spirits before the Throne of God all bear witness to the trustworthiness of Christ. He did not fail one of them—Mary Magdalene or the thief on the cross, or Saul of Tarsus, or even blaspheming Peter—they have all found Him able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. And we therefore believe Him because of His Nature and of the trustfulness of His Character.

3. But the main reason, perhaps, why we believe Him is because He tells us, and God tells us, that He was sent of God on purpose to save. God has set forth Christ. Christ did not undertake this work on His own account apart from heavenly authorization. He is called "Messiah," that is, the Sent of God.

Now it seems to us that if God sent Christ on purpose to save, and Christ comes into the world and says, "Trust, and I will save you," He has God to back Him and the everlasting honor of the Eternal Trinity is pledged to every soul that comes to rest on Christ to be saved. I venture to say that unless you can make God a liar, you must believe in Christ! And if you are not prepared to trust Christ, remember you do what John says, and I hope you shudder at the thought of doing it—"He that believes not God has made Him a liar, because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son."

4. Another reason why we trust Christ is because we conceive that the merit of His sufferings must be great enough to save us. Beloved Hearer, if you cannot trust Christ, will you come with me a few minutes?

Can you see the Son of God agonizing in the garden? Your Maker lies on the ground. Can you see Him taken before Herod and Pilate, and there mocked and scourged and spit upon? Can your eyes endure to see that spectacle of grief when the plowers made deep furrows on His blessed back? Can you believe that He is very God of very God, and yet is suffering thus? Can you see Jehovah grind Him to powder between the upper and the nether millstone of His wrath?

Can you hear Him say, "It is finished"? Can you mark the fearful shriek of "Eloi! Eloi! Lama Sabachthani?" Can you believe that this is the Son of God—standing for sinners and suffering all this weight of wrath and punishment for us—and yet think that He is not worthy of being trusted to do that for which He died?

Oh, Sinner! Let me tell you, when I heard it said to me, “Look unto Christ and be saved,” I did look and when I saw God suffering for me, the perfect Son of man bleeding for me—the Immaculate and Innocent One afflicted for me—and Jehovah Himself suffering for me in the Person of His own dear Son, I could not help believing!

And it does seem to me this morning that if you really believe that all this has occurred, and that Christ bids you trust Him, you will not say any more, “I cannot trust Him.” I hope you will say instead, “I cannot help trusting Him.” The thing commends itself so to me—if Christ died to save—He is able to save.

5. We have still another reason. After our Lord had died and was buried He was put into the tomb, but He could not be held there. On the third day He rose again from the dead and now He ever lives to make intercession for us. He is gone up on high with this resolve upon His heart, that He will plead for sinners, and that every sinner that seeks God through Him shall find peace by Him. This day I hope your faith believes it. This day the Savior, once slain, stands a living priest before the Father’s Throne, and this is His plea, “Father, forgive them. Father, forgive them.”

Now it is written that He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us. Now we feel as if a living Savior being what He is and having done what He has done must be able to save, and we therefore trust Him.

Now then, if you wind it all up, and say to me, “Why do you personally believe you are saved?” I will tell you. I believe I am saved, I *know* I am—and the ground of my assertion is not because I *feel* I am nor yet because I can preach to you about it, nor because I sometimes or generally feel joy and peace—but I believe I am saved because I—God knows I do—trust myself wholly and entirely in the hands of Him whose business it is to save sinners.

I find my name in the Bible. Why do you look at me? Have you never heard of the little child that sat reading the Bible, and someone said to her, “Why do you read that Book so much?” She said, “I have always loved to read it since I found my name in it.” “Found your *name* in it!” “Yes,” said she, “here it is.” And she pointed to the text, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*.” “That is my name, Sir. That is my name—for if you are not a sinner, I am.”

I know myself to be laden with iniquity, to be defiled with all sorts of sin in my holiest times. I have not one good work that I dare think of, much more, *trust* to! But being what I am, unworthy, undeserving, and Hell-deserving, I trust Christ to save me—and if He does not save me, He is not as good as His word! But I have no suspicion about that—

***“I know that safe with Him remains
Protected by His power
What I’ve committed to His hands,
Till the decisive hour.”***

And now I get joy and peace! But if I wait for joy and peace, and *afterwards* trust, I go the wrong way to work, and put the cart before the horse. Then I have begun to expect a harvest before I sow the wheat—to

expect the flower before I cultivate the stem—and I shall be mistaken and go down to the pit with a curse because I would not obey the command, “Believe and live.” We will now close with the last point.

III. Remember that THE PRINCIPLE OF THE TEXT IS OF CONSTANT APPLICATION—JOY AND PEACE ALWAYS COME THROUGH BELIEVING. I have told you we do not always have joy and peace, but still, in the main, joy and peace are the result of believing, and they are results, not sometimes, but in every case.

For instance, as soon as a person is saved one of the earliest evidences of spiritual life is a great battle within. Some have the notion that as soon as they are saved they shall never have to fight. Why, it is *then* that you begin the campaign! The moment you get into Canaan, what are you to do? Canaan is yours now—you have passed out of the wilderness. It is all yours—what have you got to do? Why you must ever seek to drive those Canaanites out, and you will fight continually till you get to Heaven!

You did not expect this. Well, but you shall have joy and peace while the fighting is going on! Is it possible to be fighting with inbred sins and yet to have joy and peace? My dear Friends, it is not only possible, but it is the *only* chance we have of victory! I know that some of you—and I deeply sympathize with you—are fighting with your bad temper and with many other imperfections. But you have not believed in Christ, and you have not any joy and peace—and you cannot conquer that evil spirit.

Of course you cannot, because while you are distressed in mind, that helps to irritate you! But if you simply believe Jesus, and get joy and peace, oh, then you can use the sword against that bad temper of yours! You will say to these little worries, “Be off with you! I have something more to think of! I have something sweeter to cheer me than anything you can bring to annoy me.”

Why, you will say to yourself, “I trust Christ to save me, and I know He will do it, for He is no liar, and oh, now it is that I feel peace, and now, Lord, help me to overcome that temper of mine! Enable me to be holy like You, since You have done so much for me—now lend me strength.” But you cannot do this, nor hope to conquer except by the blood of the Lamb. Go and wash in the fountain He has opened and you shall be more than a conqueror through Him that has loved you.

Furthermore, remember that even after you are secure in Christ, and accepted before God, and clothed in Jesus’ righteousness, you may sometimes get despondent. Christian men are but men, and they may have a bad liver or an attack of bile, or some trial, and then they get depressed if they have ever so much Divine Grace. I would defy the Apostle Paul himself to help it. But what then? Why then you can get joy and peace through *believing*.

I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to. But I always get back again by this—I know I trust Christ. I have no reliance but in Him, and if He falls I shall fall with Him. But if He does not, I shall not. Because He lives, I shall live also—and I spring to my legs again and fight with my depressions of spirit and my down castings, and get the victory through it!

And so may you! And so you *must*, for there is no other way of escaping from it.

In your most depressed seasons you are to get joy and peace through believing. “Ah!” says one, “but suppose you have fallen into some great sin—what then?” Why then the more reason that you should cast yourself upon Him! Do you think Jesus Christ is only for little sinners? Is He a doctor that only heals finger-aches? Beloved, it is not faith to trust Christ when I have no sin! It is true faith when I am foul, and black, and filthy—when during the day I have tripped up and fallen and done serious damage to my joy and peace—to go back again to that dear Fountain and say, “Lord, I never loved washing so much before as I do tonight, for today I have made a fool of myself. I have said and done what I ought not to have done, and I am ashamed and full of confusion, but I believe Christ can save me, even me, and by His Grace I will rest in Him still.”

That is the true way of Christian life and the only way of getting joy and peace. Go to Christ even when sin prevails. “Yes, but,” I hear one say, “I am so afraid of presumption.” Well, I am not sorry that you are, but when you are most afraid of presumption the true way to get joy and peace and to be kept from presumption is by *believing*. They say that “like cures like.” Certainly belief cures presuming! Trusting Christ cures trusting self!

Dear Friend, when you are afraid of presuming, believe! When you say, “Perhaps, after all, I may be cast away,” then go to the Cross and say, “But if I am I will be cast away trusting in Christ.” “Pshaw,” says the devil, “you fool! Do you think that such a sinner as you can ever be perfectly saved?” Say to the devil, “Whether I am a fool or not I do not know, but if I am not saved, I will be damned trusting Christ. If I am cast away, I will be cast away hanging to the Cross.”

Stick to this, dear Friends, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” You cannot help having joy and peace then—

**“And when your eye of faith is dim,
Still hold on Jesus, sink or swim.
Still at His footstool bow the knee,
And Israel’s God your strength, your peace shall be.”**

Only let your confidence be not in your peace, not in your joy, but in *Christ*.

Now, I will finish with this declaration. If you can get into such a state that all the sins that were ever committed should swear that they will block your pathway to peace. If all the suggestions of Hell that ever came up from the infernal pit should surround you at one time. If, in his own proper person, the very Prince of Hell should stand across the way and swear to spill your soul’s blood.

If, in addition to this, the light of God’s countenance should be hidden from you, and no promise should seem to come comfortably with power to your soul. And if, over and above this, every Christian minister should be silent, or have no word for you but condemnation, and every Christian should turn his back on you and tell you that you were a hypocrite, a deceiver, a foul and lost villain. And if conscience should come in at the back of these and say, “Every word of this is true, you are all this.”

Yet, yet in that fearful extremity, if you can *believe*, you are saved! If you can then come, even in the most abject, filthy, leprous, horrible condition—so that the blackness of Hell were whiteness compared to you! And the hardness of adamant were softness compared to your horrible and obdurate heart—yet if you can come and believe Christ is able to save to the uttermost, and you can fling yourself as a helpless, lost one at the foot of His dear Cross and resolve to live or to die there, you shall never perish! Neither shall any pluck you out of His hand, for He will save and you will rest in His love!

And if you believe in Him you can no more perish than He can perish! And, unless He can be untrue and reverse His promise—and cast His blood upon the ground to be spilt in vain—it is not possible that a soul trusting in Jesus should be lost! May God bless this testimony to you! I have brought you to the water, but I cannot make you drink. I can bring Christ to you in the preaching, but I cannot bring you to Christ. However, I can pray this, that the Lord Jesus may now bless the word and seal it home, both to heart and conscience, for His name's sake.

One word, before we part, to those who know neither joy nor peace through faith in Jesus and have no wish to share these blessings with us because they are satisfied with the delusions of the god of this world. Weigh for one moment your so-called joy with ours and put your peace as you conceive of peace into the scale against ours. Judge now. Is your joy as pure? Has it no alloy? Are your cups without dregs and your delights without bitterness? Is it as lasting as ours? Will it never be cut off? Does your sun never go down? Do your riches never take to themselves wings and fly away?

Does no moth corrupt, no thief break through and steal? Is it as powerful to fill the heart at all times? Does it never pall? Are you never weary of your delights? Can you live upon them forever and wish no higher good than to have them continued through eternity? Do your pleasures ennoble and exalt? Are you led by them ever higher and higher? Do they elevate you as a man, and develop every higher power and faculty of your being? Do they give you a power and a strength in the path of duty, and never lead astray to folly?

Or are they prone to spread snares for your feet, and to beguile you into evil ways? Ponder these questions, and, if I am not mistaken, you will learn to despise your present state and seek that joy and peace which come through believing in Jesus. May it be so! Amen.

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PLEADING FOR PRAYER

NO. 1887

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 21, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Now I beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; 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.”
Romans 15:30-33.*

THE Apostle of the Gentiles held a very useful and glorious office, but he had by no means a smooth path in life. When we read the account of his sufferings, persecutions and labors, we wonder how a single individual could have gone through them all. He was a true hero. Though a Hebrew of the Hebrews, he stands in the very front of the whole Gentile Church as its founder and teacher under God. And we owe to him what we can never fully estimate. When we consider the struggles of his life, we do not wonder that the Apostle was, sometimes, in great sorrow of heart and heavily burdened in spirit. He was so at the time when he wrote this Epistle to the Christian friends at Rome. It was a great delight to him to have to go to Jerusalem—it was a place which was much revered and loved by him. It was a greater privilege for him to go and exchange salutations with his brother Apostles and it was the most joyous privilege of all to be the bearer of a contribution from the Gentiles to relieve the necessities of the saints at Jerusalem. He rejoiced much more in that gift to Jewish Believers than if it had been anything for himself.

But he was well aware that there were those in Judea who hated him with deadly hatred and would seek his life. He had been the rising hope of the Jewish party and he had become a Christian—therefore the bigoted Jews regarded him as an apostate from the faith of their fathers. They had, moreover, a special venom against him, since he was more bold than any other Christian teacher in going among the Gentiles and shaking off, altogether, the bonds of the Ceremonial Law. He also came out more clearly than any other man upon the Doctrines of Grace and salvation by the Cross of Christ—and this provoked the fiercest hostility. Paul had also the apprehension that he would not be well received even by the Brethren at Jerusalem. He knew what a strong conservative feeling there was among the circumcision for the maintenance of the old Jewish Law and how he was a marked man because he had shaken off entirely that yolk of bondage. Thus he had fears as to foes and doubts about friends. His case was peculiarly difficult.

What did Paul do when his spirit was greatly oppressed? He wrote to his Brothers and Sisters to pray for him! He asked the good friends at Rome that they would lift up their hearts earnestly and unitedly to God, that he might be preserved from the double evil which threatened him. In the last chapter of this Epistle we have the names of a great many of those private individuals at Rome to whom the Apostle appealed. We do not know any of them, except it is the Priscilla and Aquila, of whom we have heard elsewhere. But this great man, this Inspired Apostle of God who was not a whit behind the very chief of Christ's servants, makes his appeal to these unknown and humble individuals, that they would strive together with him in their prayers. I delight in this! It shows the lowly spirit of the Apostle Paul and it reveals to us his high value for the prayers of obscure men and women. He feels that he needs what the prayers of these people can bring to him—he is sure that without those prayers, he will be in danger of failure, but that with them he will be strong for his great enterprise. He sees what prayer can do and he would awaken it into powerful action.

Does it astonish you that a man so rich in Grace as Paul should be asking prayers of these unknown saints? It need not astonish you, for it is the rule with the truly great to think most highly of others. In proportion as a man grows in Grace, he feels his dependence upon God and, in a certain sense, his dependence upon God's people. He decreases in his own esteem and his Brothers and Sisters increase! A flourishing tradesman, a man who has a large business is the man who needs others—he prospers by setting others to labor on his behalf. The larger his trade, the more he is dependent upon those around him. The Apostle was, so to speak, a great master trader for the Lord Jesus. He did a great business for his Lord and he felt that he could not carry it on unless he had the co-operation of many helpers. He did not so much need what employers harshly call, "hands," to work for him, but he did need *hearts* to plead for him and he, therefore, sent all the way to Rome to seek such assistance!

He wrote to those whom he had never seen and begged their prayers, as if he pleaded for his life. The great Apostle entreats Tryphena and Tryphosa, and Mary and Julia to pray for him. His great enterprise needs their supplications! In a great battle the general's name is mentioned, but what could he have done without the common soldiers? Wellington will always be associated with Waterloo, but, after all, it was a soldiers' battle! What could the commander have done if those in the ranks had failed him? The commander-in-chief might very well have touched his hat to the least subaltern or to the humblest private and have said, "I thank you, Comrade. Without you, we could not have conquered." The chief troubles of the great day of Waterloo arose from certain very doubtful allies who wavered in the hour of battle—those were the general's weakness—but his hope and strength lay in those regiments which were as an iron wall against the enemy. Even thus, the faithful are our joy and crown, but the unstable are our sorrow and weakness.

Every ministering servant of the Lord Jesus Christ is in much the same condition as Paul. True, we are of a lower grade and our work is on a smaller scale, but our needs are just as great. We have not all the Grace which Paul possessed and, for that very reason, we make the more pa-

thetic an appeal to you, our friends and fellow helpers, while we use the Apostle's language, and cry, "We beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with us in your prayers to God for us."

I shall call your attention to this text with the longing in my own heart that I, myself, may more abundantly live in your prayers. I have to rejoice in the prayers of thousands of holy men and women who love me in the Lord. I am deeply grateful for the affectionate supplications of multitudes whom I have not seen in the flesh, to whom the printed sermons go week by week. I am a debtor, not only to the beloved people around me, but to a larger company all over the world. These are my comfort, my riches, my strength. To such I speak at this time. Beloved, I need your prayers more than ever! I am more and more conscious of their value—do not restrain them! Just now there is, to me, a special need of Grace on many accounts, and I hope that some of those who have long borne me up will give me a special portion of aid at this hour. I am not worthy to use the same language as the Apostle Paul, but I know no better, and my necessity is even greater than his—therefore I borrow his words, and say, "Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."

In our text there are two things—prayer asked and a blessing given—"Now the God of Peace be with you all. Amen."

I. First, here is PRAYER ASKED FOR.

We will look at the Apostle's request for prayer in general and then, afterwards, we will look to the details which are mentioned in the 31st verse.

First, here is *a request to the people of God for prayer in general*. He asks it *for himself*—"That you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." He knew his own weakness. He knew the difficulty of the work to which he had been called. He knew that if he failed in his enterprise, it would be a sad failure, injurious through coming ages to the entire Church. He cried, "Agonize for me," because he felt that much depended upon him. It is like a man who is willing to lead the forlorn hope, but he says to his comrades, "You will support me." It is like one who is willing to go into a far country, bearing his life in his hands, but he plaintively exclaims, "You won't forget me, will you? Though you stay at home, will you think of me?" It reminds us of Carey, who says, when he goes to India, "I will go down into the pit, but Brother Fuller and the rest of you must hold the rope." Can we refuse the request? Would it not be treachery?

It is not according to the heart of true yoke-fellows. It is not according to the instincts of our common humanity that we should desert any man whom we set in the front of the battle! If we choose a man to be our representative in the service of our God, we must not desert him! A man cannot be charged with egotism if he begs for personal support when he is engaged in labors for others and is not seeking success for himself but the success of the great cause! Under heavy responsibilities he does well to enlist the sympathies and prayers of those whom he is serving—and he has a right to have them! Beloved friends, if you are with me in the great battle for God and His Truth—and if you count me worthy to bear the brunt of this war, I beseech you, for Christ's sake, support me by your

importunate wrestling at the Throne of Grace. Pray for all ministers and workers, but pray, also, for me! I am, of all men, the most miserable if you deny me this!

Observe in what relationship he regards them when he puts the request. "Now," he says, "I beseech you, *Brethren*." "I beseech you." It is the strongest word of entreaty he can find. It is as if he said, "I go down on my knees to you and implore you. I ask it of you as the greatest favor you can do me. I ask it of you as the dearest token of your love, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." He does not call them companions, or fellow workers, or friends. He addresses them as Brothers and Sisters. "You are my Brethren," he says, "I feel a love to you, you Romans, converted to God. I have a longing in my heart to see you and though I have not so much as spoken with you, face to face, yet we are Brethren. The life that is in you beats also in my heart. We are born again of the same Father, we are quickened by the same Spirit, we are redeemed by the same Savior—therefore, spiritually—we are Brethren. Shall not Brethren pray for one another?"

He seems to say, "If you are Brethren, show this token of your brotherhood. You cannot go up with me to Jerusalem and share my danger, but you can be with me in spirit—and, by your prayers, surround me with Divine protection. I do not ask you to come, you Romans, with your swords and shields, and make a bodyguard about me, but I do beg of you, my true Brothers and Sisters, if you are, indeed so, to agonize together with me in your prayers to God for me." If there remains in the Christian Church any brotherhood whatever, every leader of the host, every preacher of the Gospel, every pastor of a Church should receive the proof of that brotherhood in the shape of daily intercession! Every sent servant of God beseeches his Brethren that they strive together with him in prayer to God for him—and I am not a whit behind any of them in the urgency of my request to the many who have, until now, proved themselves my Brethren! I know your love has not grown cold to me. I have abundant evidence of that. O my Brothers and Sisters, act as Brothers and Sisters to me, now, and beseech the Lord to bless me!

But observe what kind of prayer he asks for—"That you strive together"—that you "*agonize*"—that is the word. You have before you, in this expression, a reminder of that great agony in Gethsemane, and I should think the Apostle had that picture before his eyes. In the Garden, our Lord not only prayed as was His habit, but with strong crying and tears He made His appeal to God. "Being in an agony He prayed more earnestly." He wrestled till He "sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground," but none agonized together with Him! That was one of the deepest shades of the picture, that He must tread the winepress alone and, of the people there, must none be with Him. Yet did our Lord seem to ask for sympathy and help—

***"Backward and forward thrice He ran,
As if He sought some help from man,"***

but He found none even to watch with Him one hour, much less to agonize with Him! The Apostle felt that an agony alone, was too bitter for him and he, therefore, piteously cries, "I beseech you, Brethren, that you agonize with me in prayer to God for me."

Now, as the disciples ought to have sympathized with the Savior and entered into His direful grief, but did not, even so it may happen to us. But, Brothers and Sisters, I trust that the unfaithfulness to the Master will not be repeated upon His servants. It remains to all that are true Brethren in Christ, that when they see a man in agony of heart for Christ's sake and for souls' sake, they should bow the knee side by side with him and be true Brethren to him. When his labors become intense; when his difficulties are multiplied; when his heart begins to sink and his strength is failing him—then the man must wrestle with his God—and *then* his Brethren must wrestle at his side! When the uplifted hands of Moses are known to bring a blessing, Aaron and Hur must hold them up when they are seen to grow weary! When Jacob is struggling at Jabbok and we see him there, we must turn in and help him to detain the Angel of the Covenant. If one man can hold Him fast by saying, "I will not let You go unless You bless me," surely a score of you can make a cordon round about Him and speedily win the blessing!

What may not a hundred do? Let us try the power of agonizing prayer! Do we know, as yet, what it means? Let us rise as one man and cry, "O Angel, whose hands are full of benedictions, we will not let You go, except You give us Your own blessing—the blessing of Your Covenant!" If two of you are agreed as touching anything concerning the Kingdom, you shall be heard. But what if hundreds and thousands of the faithful are of one mind and one mouth in this matter? Will you not at once cry unto God, "Bless Your servants! Establish the work of our hands upon us! Yes, the work of our hands, establish it!"? You see, it is earnest prayer which Paul asks for, not the prayer which foams itself away in words, but prayer with force, with energy, with humble boldness, with intensity of desire, with awful earnestness—prayer which, like a deep, hidden torrent, cuts a channel even through a rock! His request was, "that you wrestle with me in your prayers to God for me." And this is our request this day.

He does not, however, wish for a single moment to exclude himself from the prayer, for he says, "that you agonize *with me*." He is to be the first to agonize. This should be the position of every minister. We ought to be examples of wrestling prayer. How I wish that you could realize more fully the work allotted to the Apostles when they said that it was not reasonable that they should leave the Word of God to serve tables! There was a difference about the distribution of the alms among the widows and the 12 declared that they could not attend to such a matter, for, they said, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word." This would be Heaven to me! But notice that at least half, and the *first* half of their work lay in prayer! Oh, if that could be our portion! If we could but have full space for prayer and meditation and were set free from the petty secularities and differences incident to Church life! Oh that we could have more to do with Him from whose right hand the supreme blessing comes—that were a joy indeed! But even if the Apostle could thus, himself, agonize, he did not feel satisfied, for he beseeches others to wrestle with him in prayer to God. He sought communion in supplication! Even thus would I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, to come with me into the inner chamber! Come with me into the Holy of Holies! Let us, together, approach the Mercy Seat! Lend me the help of all the spiritual

force you have, that we may, together, agonize in prayer to God so that the blessing may descend upon the enterprises now in my hands! You see the sort of prayer which is needed, even the effectual fervent prayer of righteous men—and may the Holy Spirit brace up our spirits that we may be able to join in such agonizing in this time of need.

This verse is one of the most intense I ever remember to have read, even in so intense a book as this Holy Scripture. Observe the fervency of the pleading—“Now I beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake.” What an argument! That name is full of power with true hearts. You owe Him everything—you owe Him your souls! You owe Him every hope for the future, every comfort in the present and every happy memory of the past! Your life would have been worse than death apart from Him. His love to you constrains you because you thus judge that when one died for all, all died, and that you so died that from now on you should not live unto yourselves but unto Him. Now, he says, as you cannot repay the Lord Jesus Christ *personally*, repay it to His servant by your prayers! Join him in his agony in remembrance of that greater agony in which none could join, by which you were redeemed from death and Hell! If there is any love to Christ in a Christian’s heart, he must pray that the Holy Spirit would bless the ministry of the Word! Surely your hearts must be turned to stone if you do not plead for a blessing upon that ministry by which you, yourselves, have been brought to Christ! If I have been a spiritual father to any of you, you will not fail to pray for me, will you? As you love that Savior whom I preach, I beseech you, for the sake of Jesus Christ, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me!

But he adds to that, another argument—“*for the love of the Spirit.*” If the Spirit of God has, indeed, loved you and proved it by quickening and sanctifying you, then pray for His ministers! If the Spirit of God has created a love in you which is stronger than mere natural affection—a love which does not arise out of any fleshly relationship, or any mere association, or any casual partiality, but a love which the Holy Spirit, Himself, creates and fosters in your heart—then pray for me! If there is such love in you, not natural and temporary, but spiritual and, therefore, everlasting, then pray for the Lord’s servant! If there is in you a love which may exist, no, *will* exist in Heaven, itself—if there is such a love in you, then, says the Apostle, I beseech you, pray for me!

Brothers and Sisters, I say the same. Unless our profession is a lie, we love each other and we must, therefore, show that love by our prayers for one another. Especially if any of you have been brought to the Lord Jesus Christ by the ministry of any man whom God favors with His help—then that man must live forever in your hearts and be remembered in your prayers! You cannot escape from the obligation of intercession for the man who brought you to Jesus! As long as you live and as long as he remains faithful, you must bear him on your heart in supplication. It must be so—the love of the Spirit has knit us to one another and none can put us asunder! Ours is no feigned unity, but deep, true and real! In Christ Jesus, my Brothers and Sisters, there has been begotten in our hearts an affection for one another which death, itself, shall not destroy! We will not be separated! Then, by the love of the Spirit, I beseech you that you ago-

nize together with me in your prayers to God for me! Every word pleads with tears—there is not a wasted letter in the whole verse!

Why do you think the Apostle, at that special time, asked these Brethren to pray for him so? Was it not because he believed in the Providence of God? He was going up to Jerusalem and the Jews would seek to slay him. They hunted him in every place and now he was going into the lion's den—but he believed that God, in Providence, could overrule all things, so that he should not suffer injury at the hands of blood-thirsty zealots, but should be delivered out of their malicious power. We, also, believe in God that works all things! Therefore, let us pray that all opposition to His Gospel may be overcome.

He believed, also, in the influence that God can have upon men's hearts, especially upon the hearts of His own people. He was afraid that the Jewish Believers would be very cold to him and, therefore, he prays God that His Holy Spirit may warm their hearts and make them full of love, so that the offerings he took to them from the Grecian Churches might be accepted and might foster a sense of hearty fellowship in the hearts of the Hebrew saints towards their Gentile Brethren. Do you not, also, believe that the hearts of all men are in the hands of the Lord? Do you not believe in the supremacy of the will of God over the free will of man? Do you not rejoice that there is not only a Providence that shapes our ends, but a secret influence which molds men's hearts? Therefore it is that we urge you to plead with God that we, also, may have acceptance with His people. We desire to render them much service and to enjoy their loving regard. It is painful to us to differ with any—but joyous to be in communion with all parts of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is more than this, the Apostle believed in the power of the prayers of simple people so to move the mind of God that He would exert His hand in Providence and His influence over the hearts of men. Never let us imagine that the doctrine of the fixity of events, or the supremacy of law, as the philosophers call it, is at all contrary to the Truth of God that prayer is effectual for its own ends and purposes. In olden times a warrior was going forth to battle for his country and a certain preacher of the Word said to him, "My prayer is made continually for you that you may be victorious." The warrior, in his philosophic doubt, replied that he saw no use in the promised prayers, for if God had determined to give him victory, he would have it without prayer—and if fate had decreed that he should be defeated, prayers could not prevent it. To which the godly man very properly replied, "Then take off your helmet and your coat of mail and hang up your sword and buckler. Go not forth to battle at all with your men-at-arms, for, indeed, if the Lord is to conquer your enemies, He can do it without your weapons! And if He will not prosper you, it is in vain for you to mount your war horse."

The argument, when carried out, answers itself—there is, in truth, no force in it! The net result of such reasoning would be absolute *inaction*! Common sense shows us how absurd it is! All *means* are to be used, notwithstanding the eternal purpose of God, for that purpose *includes means and their uses*. We declare that among the most potent means in all the world is prayer—and this must not be neglected! There are certain ascertained forces and among those forces, always to be reckoned with and re-

lied upon, is the force of the cry of God's dear children to their great Father in Heaven! In other words, the power of prayer! In prayer we present the Sacrifice of God's own Son to God's own Self and prevail by its means. O Brothers and Sisters, we ask your prayers without doubt or question! We know and are persuaded that they will avail much! By your power in prayer, God's power will be set in motion and by that force all will be accomplished which shall be for His Glory and for our good!

I hope you have been interested so far. May God grant you may have been influenced by these remarks and excited to incessant intercession!

In our text there is, in the next place, *a statement of the Apostle's desires in detail*. When we pray, we should make a point of praying for something distinctly. There is a general kind of praying which fails from need of precision. It is as if a regiment of soldiers should all fire off their guns—possibly somebody would be killed—but the majority of the enemy would be missed. I believe that at the battle of Waterloo there were no arms of precision, they had only the old Brown Bess and, though the battle was won, it has been said that it took as much lead to kill a man as the weight of the man's body. This is a figure of the comparative failure of indistinct, generalizing prayer! If you pray just anyway, if it is with sincerity, a measure of blessing results from it, but it will take a great deal of such praying to accomplish much. But if you plead for certain mercies *definitely* and *distinctly*, with firm, unstaggering faith, you shall richly succeed!

Our Apostle gives his friends three things to pray for. First, he would have them ask that he might be delivered from them that did not believe in Judea. He was delivered, not perhaps in the precise manner which he hoped for, but he was, to the letter, delivered from the unbelieving Jews. Certain zealots bound themselves with an oath that they would not eat till they had slain him, but they went a long while hungry, for the arm of the Roman Empire was stretched forth to protect Paul against his infuriated countrymen! Strange, it was, that Caesar's power must be as a shield around the feeble servant of the mighty God! From raging mobs and secret confederacies, Paul was saved, apparently, by *Roman soldiers*, but secretly by Roman saints! Against all oppositions from without let us pray.

They were also to ask of the Lord that his service which he had for Jerusalem might be accepted of the saints. This also was granted—the Brethren did accept Paul's embassy. He met with little difficulty. The contribution was accepted with much gratitude and we do not hear, afterwards, of bickering between the Jewish and the Gentile Believers. Such was done in the Apostolic college at Jerusalem to create a heartier feeling towards the Gentile Brethren and the Kingdom of Christ was, from that day on, acknowledged to be over all races and kindreds of men! Paul accomplished very much and had comfort in his mission to the mother Church. Oh that we, also, could be of service to that community of Christians to which we belong! Brethren, pray that our word may be accepted by our own Brothers and Sisters, for some of these are wandering from the way of the Truth of God.

They were to pray, next, that he might come unto them with joy by the will of God and might, with them, be refreshed. That was to be the third prayer. It is to be observed that this petition was also heard, but it was not answered as Paul might have expected or desired. He did come to

them according to the will of God rather than by his own will. He may or may not have been on his way to Spain, as he purposed—he certainly was on his way to *prison*—as he had *not* purposed. His first prayer, that he might be delivered from them that believe not in Judea, was not answered in the way of his never being in danger from them, or coming into difficulties through them—but he was delivered out of their hands by becoming a prisoner to the Roman governor and being sent, under his guardianship, to Caesar, to whom he had appealed. By that means he traveled to Rome at the expense of the Imperial Government and, on landing at Puteoli, close to Naples, he found friends waiting for him! And, as soon as the Roman Brethren heard of his landing, they dispatched a company to meet him at Appii-Forum, a place on the road to Rome where they stopped to change horses and to take refreshments.

There he saw his prayer beginning to be answered. Further on, at a place called the Three Taverns, more dear friends from Rome met him, “whom, when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage.” The Roman saints had long looked for the Apostle and at last he came—an ambassador in bonds, a prisoner who must go to the Praetorian guardroom and there await the emperor’s will and pleasure! They had not expected to see him in such a case, but they were not ashamed of his chains. They made a considerable journey to meet him and he was filled with their company and refreshed by their fellowship as he had desired. Even his imprisonment may have been a rest for him—it could not have involved such wear and tear as his former labors and persecutions!

We read the other day that Holloway Jail is a choice place for rest and enjoyment to a man with a clear conscience and, I dare say that Paul found his confinement at Rome to be rather a refreshment than otherwise after his years of weariness and buffetings! There he was shut away from his furious persecutors. Certainly no Jew could take his life there! He was not afraid of being stoned while in imperial custody and probably he was the most at ease because he had not to preach to such as the Corinthians and the Galatians, from whom he had asked no prayers but had received much grief. He asked the Ephesians and Philippians, the Colossians and the Romans to pray for him—but from the others he would have received little benefit, for they were very weak in the faith and troubled with sad disorders. He was, in his imprisonment, clear of those fickle and quarrelsome folk who had often pained him. His confinement under guard would not permit his preaching himself to death, or wearing himself out with watching—the soldier who kept him would make him reasonable and so, I have no doubt, by the will of God he received precisely what he had asked his friends to pray for—“that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.”

It would not have been Paul’s will to have come to Rome with chains on his wrists, binding him to a soldier, but he did so come, for this was the will of God and was the most sure way to his being refreshed. Paul refreshed the Romans and they refreshed him—and thus he had a happy sojourn in Rome. God was with him and he had the privilege of testifying of Christ before the Roman emperor and making Jesus to be known even in Caesar’s household! Thus, Brothers and Sisters, the Lord heard the prayer of His servants. He will also hear our prayers—not in my way, not

in your way—but in the way which Paul has indicated, namely, “by the will of God.” Therefore pray for a blessing and leave the way of its coming to the good Lord who knows all things! Rest sure that it *will* come by the will of God and then it will be according to our will if we are in full accord with the Lord, as we ought to be.

See the efficacy of prayer, then, in Paul’s case. Though the desire did not seem to be accomplished, yet it was so. When the Lord does not appear to hear His people’s prayers, He is hearing them none the less! Yes, rather He is *answering* them all the more fully and graciously! When the Lord replies by terrible things in righteousness rather than by sweet, smooth deeds of kindness, He is doubly blessing us. Do not vessels often sail more swiftly with a side wind than they would do with a directly fair wind? The sails are more under the action of a side wind than if it blew directly behind them. The Lord often gives His people side gales and these turn out to be the best they can have. Let us trust the Divine Wisdom and rest assured that the Lord will do better things for us than we can ask or even think!

II. I have but little time left to notice THE BLESSING GIVEN, indeed, it occupies but one verse in the text, and that verse is the shortest of the four and, therefore, I may give it due consideration in a brief space. See how Paul, with all his anxiety to gain the prayers of his friends, cannot finish the chapter without uttering a benediction upon them. “Now the God of Peace.” What a blessed name! In the Old Testament Scriptures He is the “Lord of Hosts.” But that is never the style in the New Testament. The “Lord of Hosts” is God as He was revealed under the old dispensation in the majesty of His power, “the Lord is a man of war, the Lord is His name.” But now that our Lord Jesus Christ has further unveiled the Father, we see Him as “the God of Peace.” Is not this a greater, sweeter, and more cheering title? O God of Peace, we long for Your Presence with us all!

What does Paul wish for them? “The God of Peace be with you.” Not only “peace be with you,” but, better far—“The God of Peace”—and so the Source and Fountain of Peace! He wishes them not the drops, but the Fountain itself! Not the light, only, but the sun! He would have God Himself to be with us as “the God of Peace.” He would have the Lord to fill us with an inward peace, so that we may never be disturbed in our minds. He would have the Lord shed abroad His own peace in our hearts, so that we may always feel at peace with God—no cloud coming between our souls and our heavenly Father—no ground of quarrel arising between us and the great King.

When “the God of Peace” makes peace with us and so keeps our minds at peace within, He also creates peace with one another, so that we bear one another’s burdens and those who are strong are willing to bear the infirmities of the weak. “The God of Peace be with you.”

Our Apostle says, “the God of Peace be with *you all*”—not with *some* of you, with Priscilla and Aquila, but with Mary, Amplias, Apelles, Tryphena, Tryphosa and with “the beloved Persis which labored much in the Lord.” And with “Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother.” And “Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints which are with them.” The benediction is, “The God of Peace be with you *all*.” Unless all are at peace, none can be perfectly quiet. One Brother who is

quarrelsome can keep a whole Church in turmoil! One fellow knocking about the boat may stop the oarsmen, rend the sails and run the boat on a rock! I should not like one stray shot from a rifle to be traveling near my windows, for even if all the other shots which are in the armory should lie quiet, that one flying danger might be the end of me! Oh that the peace of God may be with all the saints in all the Churches! It is a blessed benediction. Such a benediction we pronounce with all our heart this morning—“Now the God of Peace be with you all. Amen.”

Do you not think that Paul implies that this will be the result of their prayer? If you will but strive together with me in your prayers, then the God of Peace will be with you. May we not view it as the reward of such prayer? You have prayed for the Lord's servant and now God will bless you with an abundance of peace. Or did he hint that this is a necessary condition and cause of true prayer? When they were all at peace among themselves, happy in their own minds and full of communion with God, then they would begin to pray for God's servants. Put it first or last, may this peace come to you and may there be hearty pleading prayer to God that His blessing may rest upon the Church and upon the testimony of His servants.

Now we draw to a close, Brethren. Prayer is sought most earnestly by me at this moment. I speak, I think, in the name of all those who have to stand prominent as preachers of the Gospel of Christ. We beseech you, our beloved Friends and fellow laborers, that you wrestle together with us with God on our behalf that our testimony may be with power and with success, for the times are very difficult. The very air is full of unbelief! The solid earth seems well near to tremble with unrest—social and political—a deep and terrible unrest that fills us with dark forebodings of the future. The hope of the world lies, under God, in the Church of Jesus Christ. Therefore we beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, if in other days and softer times you did, in a measure, hold back prayer, do so no longer, but wrestle for us with God! What is coming no man knows. We wish not to play the Cassandra, prophesying evil things continually, but who is there, though he is a Prophet bright-eyed as Isaiah, who can give you a good forecast? Are not all the signs of the times big with terror? Therefore to your tents, O Israel, and in your tents cry to God that a blessing may come upon this nation and the world!

Men are perishing all around us! Whatever may have been the state of the world in Paul's day—and it was, no doubt, horrible to the last degree—it is not much better now! The population of the world has so largely increased since those days that all her problems have become more difficult. We are much more aware of the miseries of vast populations than people could have been in Apostolic times. Paul knew but little of the world except that portion of it which bordered on the Mediterranean Sea—the whole world, then, seemed to lie in a nutshell—but now our discoverers and geographers, our steamboats and telegraphs have brought a greater world close to our doors. We share with the sorrows of India! We groan in the darkness of Africa! The cries of China are at our doors and Egypt's griefs are our own! If a population anywhere is starving or suffering oppression, our newspapers declare the evil to all readers and general feeling is awakened! Our sympathies for humanity are called forth much more

than in former times and, so far, this is good, but then it heaps heavier burdens upon the thoughtful and increases the terrible responsibility of those who are able to lend a helping hand! Increase of knowledge demands increase of prayer! "The world for Jesus" is our motto, but how can the world be for Jesus if the Church of Jesus does not wrestle in her prayers?

Dear Brothers and Sisters, remember that the Truth of God, alone, if not enforced by the Spirit of God, will not sink into the hearts of men. They say, "Truth is mighty and will prevail." But this is only half the case. If you put the Truth of God upon a shelf and let the dust lie on her record, of what use will it be to men? Truth unknown—how can it enlighten? Truth not felt—how can it renew? There must, therefore, be the *preacher* to call attention to the Truth—but how shall they preach except they are sent? And how shall they be sent aright except in the power of the Holy Spirit? And how can we expect the Holy Spirit if we do not ask for His working? Therefore, we pray you, wrestle together with us in your prayers, that the Holy Spirit may go forth *with* the Truth of God and *by* the Truth of God!

This will be to your profit. No man hears his pastor preach without deriving some benefit from him, if he has earnestly prayed for him. The best hearers who get the most out of a man are those who love him best and pray most for him. God can make us dry wells to you if you offer no prayers for us! He can make us clouds that are full of rain if you have pleaded with God on our behalf!

But the master argument with which we close is that which Paul mentions—"For Christ's sake." Oh, for God's sake, for His name and Glory's sake, if you would honor the Father, if you would let Jesus see of the travail of His soul, wrestle together with us in your prayers for the Divine working! It is so, Brothers and Sisters, you know it is so that we are wholly dependent upon the Spirit of God! If it is so, that without God's blessing we can do nothing, and that God's blessing is given if we inquire of God for it, then I need not press you further—you will pray for me and for other preachers of the Word of God! If your hearts are right, you will, each one, resolve to offer special, continuous and fervent prayer in private and in your families and in our holy convocations—and these shall deepen into an agony before God—and then a blessing shall be given us which we shall scarcely have room enough to receive! Lord, teach us to pray!

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THE GOD OF PEACE

NO. 49

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, NOVEMBER 4, 1855,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Now the God of Peace be with you all. Amen.”
Romans 15:33***

PAUL once advised the Romans to strive. Three verses before our text he actually gives them an exhortation to strive and yet here he utters a prayer that the God of Peace might be with them all. Lest you should think him to be a man of strife, you must read the verse. He says—“Now I beseech you, Brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.” That is a holy striving and such a striving as that we wish always to see in the Church—a striving in prayer, a surrounding the Throne, together, besieging God’s Mercy Seat, a crying out before God—until it actually amounts to a striving together in our prayers! There is also another kind of striving which is allowed in the Church, and that is striving earnestly after the best gifts—a sweet contention which all of us shall excel all others in love, in duty and in faith. May God send us more striving of that kind in our Churches—a striving in prayer, a striving in duty! And when we have mentioned these strivings, we find them of so peaceable a kind that we come back to the benediction of our text—“Now the God of Peace be with you all. Amen.” Without any preface, we shall consider, first, *the title*—“The God of Peace.” And secondly, *the benediction*—“The God of Peace be with you all. Amen.”

I. First of all, *the title*. Mars, among the heathens, was called the god of war. Janus was worshipped in periods of strife and bloodshed. But our God, Jehovah, styles Himself not the God of war, but the God of Peace. Although He permits war in this world—sometimes for necessary and useful purposes. Although He superintends them and has even styled Himself the Lord, Mighty in Battle, yet His holy mind abhors bloodshed and strife. His gracious Spirit loves not to see men slaughtering one another. He is emphatically, solely, entirely and without reserve, “the God of Peace.” Peace is His delight—“peace on earth and goodwill towards men.” Peace in Heaven (for that purpose He expelled the angels)—peace throughout His entire universe is His highest wish and His greatest delight!

If you consider God in the Trinity of His Persons for a few moments, you will see that in each—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the title is apt and correct—“the God of Peace.” There is *God, the Everlasting Father*. He is the God of Peace, for He, from all eternity, planned the great Covenant

of Peace whereby He might bring rebels near unto Him and make strangers and foreigners fellow-heirs with the saints and joint-heirs with His Son, Christ Jesus. He is the God of Peace, for He justifies and, thereby, implants peace in the soul. He accepted Christ and, as the God of Peace, He brought Him again from the dead. And He ordained peace— eternal peace with His children—through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant. He is the God of Peace! So is *Jesus Christ*, the Second Person, the God of Peace for, “He is our peace who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” He makes peace between God and man! His blood, sprinkled on the fiery wrath of God, turned it to love! Or rather that which must have broken forth in wrath, though it was forever love, was allowed to display itself in loving kindness through the wondrous Mediator, Jesus Christ. And He is the God of Peace because He makes peace in the conscience and in the heart. When He says, “Come unto Me all you that are heavy laden,” He gives “rest.” And with that rest He gives “the peace of God which passes all understanding,” which keeps our heart and mind! He is, moreover, the God of Peace in the Church, for wherever Jesus Christ dwells, He creates a holy peace. As in the case of Aaron of old, the ointment poured upon the head of Christ trickles down to the very skirts of His garments and, thereby, He gives peace—peace by the fruit of the lips and peace by the fruit of the heart—unto all them who love Jesus Christ in sincerity. So is *the Holy Spirit* the God of Peace. He of old brought peace when chaotic matter was in confusion, by the brooding of His wings—He caused order to appear where once there was nothing but darkness and chaos. So in dark chaotic souls, He is the God of Peace. When winds from the mountains of Sinai and gusts from the pit of Hell sweep across the distressed soul. When, wandering about for rest, our soul faints within us, He speaks peace to our troubles and gives rest to our spirits. When by earthly cares we are tossed about like the sea bird, up and down, up and down, from the base of the wave to the billows’ crown, He says, “Peace, be still.” He it is who on the Sabbath brings His people into a state of serenity and bids them enjoy—

***“That holy calm, that sweet repose
Which none but he that feels it knows.”***

And He shall be the God of Peace when, at life’s last hour, He shall still the current of Jordan, shall hush all the howling of the fiends, shall give us peace with God through Jesus Christ and land us safely in Heaven. Blessed Trinity! However we consider You, whether as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, Your name is still thrice well deserved—the God of Peace and the God of Love!

Let us now enter into the subject and see wherein God is a God of Peace. We remark that He is the God of Peace, for He originally created peace. He is the God of Peace for He is the restorer of it. Though wars have broken out through sin, He is the God of Peace because He preserves peace when it is made. And He is the God of Peace because He

shall ultimately perfect and consummate peace between all His creatures and Himself. Thus He is the God of Peace.

I. First of all, He is the God of Peace *because He created nothing but peace*. Go back in your imagination to the time when the majestic Father stepped from His solitude and commenced the work of Creation. Picture to yourself the moment when He speaks the Word and the first matter is formed! Before that time there had been neither space, nor time, nor anything existing, but Himself. He speaks and it is done! He commands and it stands fast. Behold Him scattering from His mighty hands, stars as numerous as the sparks from an anvil! Witness how, by His Word, worlds are fashioned and ponderous orbs roll through that immensity which, first of all, He had decreed to be their dwelling place. Lift up your eyes and behold these great things which He has already created. Let the wings of your fancy carry you through the immensity of space and the vast profound and see if you can discover anywhere, the least sign or trace of war! Go through it from the north even to the south, from the east even to the west and mark well if you can discover one sign of discord—whether there is not one universal harmony, whether everything is not lovely, pure and of good report. See if in the great harp of Nature, there is one string which, when touched by its Maker's finger, gives forth discord! See if the pipes of this great organ God has made do not all play harmoniously. Mark you well and note it. Are there bulwarks formed for war? Are there spears and swords? Are there clarions and trumpets? Has God created any material with which to destroy His creatures and desolate His realms? No! Everything is peaceable above, beneath and all around. All is peace—there is nothing else but calm and quietness. Hark when He makes the angels. He speaks—winged seraphs fly abroad and cherubs flash through the air on wings of fire. He speaks and multitudes of angels in their various hierarchies are brought forth while Jesus Christ, as a mighty Prince of angels, is decreed to be their Head. Is there, now, in any of those angels, one sign of sorrow? When God made them, did He make one of them to be His enemy? Did He fashion one of them with the least implacability or ill-will within his bosom?

Ask the shining cohorts and they tell you, "We were not made for war, but for peace. He has not fashioned us spirits of battle, but spirits of love, joy and quietness!" And if they sinned, He made them not to sin. They did so. They brought woe into the world of their own accord! God created no war. The evil angel brought it first. Left to his free will, he fell. The elect angels, being confirmed by Divine Grace, stood fast and firm. But God was not the Author of any war, or any strife. Satan, of himself, conceived the rebellion, but God was not the Author of it. He may, from all eternity, have foreseen it and it may even be said, in some sense, that He ordained it to manifest His Justice, His Glory and to show His Mercy and Sovereignty in redeeming man—but God had no hand in it whatever. The Eternal renounces war. He was not the Author of it. Satan led the van. That morning star who sang together with the rest, fell of himself!

God was not the Author of his confusion, but the Author of eternal and blessed order!

Look, too, at God in the Creation of this world. Go into the Garden of Eden—walk up and down its bowers. Recline under its trees and partake of its fruits. Roam through the entire world! Sit down by the seashore, or stretch yourself upon the mountain. Do you see the least sign of war? Nothing like it! There is nothing of tumult and of noise—no preparation of destruction. Look at Adam and Eve—their days are perpetual sunshine, their nights are balmy evenings of sweet repose. God has put nothing in their hearts which can disturb them. He has no ill will towards them. On the contrary, He walks with them in the evening under the trees in the cool of the day. He condescends to talk with His creatures and hold fellowship with them! He is, in no sense whatever, the Author of the present confusion in this world. That was brought about by our first parents through the temptation of the Evil One. God did not create this world for strife. When He first fashioned it, peace, peace, peace, was the universal order of the day! May there come a time when peace, once more, shall be restored to this great earth and tranquility to this world! Do you not observe that God is the God of Peace because He created it originally? When He pronounced His Creation, “very good,” it was entirely without the slightest exception, a peaceful Creation! God is the God of Peace.

But, secondly, He is the God of Peace *because He restores it*. Nothing shows a man to be much fonder of peace than when he seeks to make peace between others. Or, when others have offended him, he endeavors to make peace between himself and them. If I should be able, at all times, to maintain peace with myself and should never provoke a quarrel, I should, of course, be considered a peaceful spirit. And if other persons choose to quarrel and disagree with me—and I desire and purposely set to work to bring about a reconciliation—then everyone says I am a man of peace. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they are the children of God.” God is the great Peacemaker. And thus He is, indeed, the God of Peace. When Satan fell, there was war in Heaven. God made peace there, for He smote Satan and cast him and all his rebel hosts into eternal fire. He made peace by His might and power and majesty, for He drove Satan out of Heaven and expelled him, by his flaming brand, to never again pollute the sacred floor of bliss and never more to endanger Paradise by misleading his peers in Heaven. So He made peace in Heaven by His power. But when man fell, God made peace not by His power, but by His mercy! Man transgresses. Poor man! Mark how God goes after him to make peace with him! “Adam, where are you?” Adam never said, “God, where are You?” But God came after Adam and He seemed to say with a voice of affection and pity, “Adam, poor Adam, where are you? Have you become a god? The evil spirit said you would be a god—are you so? Where are you, now, poor Adam? You were once in holiness and perfection, where are you now?” And He saw the truant Adam running away from Him—

running away from the great Peacemaker—to hide himself beneath the trees of the garden. Again God calls, “Adam, where are you?” Adam says, “I heard Your voice in the midst of the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked and I hid myself.” And God says, “Who told you that you were naked?” How kind He is. Even then you can see He is a Peacemaker! But when, after having cursed the serpent and sent him to the ground, He comes to talk to Adam, you see Him still more as the Peacemaker! “I will,” He said, “put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed. It shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel.” There He was making peace through the blood of the Cross! Do not conceive, however, that that was the first preparation of peace God ever made. That was the first *display* of it, but He had been making peace from all eternity! Through the Covenant He made with Jesus Christ from all eternity, God’s elect people were at peace with God. Although God saw that man would fall. Though He foresaw that His elect would, with the rest, depart from rectitude and become His enemies, yet He, long before the Fall, drew up a Covenant with Jesus, wherein Jesus stipulated that He would pay the debts of all His people. And the Father, on their behalf, did actually and positively forgive their sins and justify their persons, take away their guilt, acquitted them, accepted and received them unto peace with Him!

Though that was never developed until the Fall, and though to each of us it is not known until we believe, yet there was always peace between God and the elect. I must tell you a tale of a poor bricklayer who met with an accident and everyone thought he was going to die and he did. A clergyman said to him, “My poor fellow, I am afraid you will die. Try to make your peace with God.” With tears in his eyes, he looked the clergyman in the face and said, “Make my peace with God, Sir? I thank God that was made for me in the Everlasting Covenant by Jesus Christ long before I was born!” So Beloved, it was. There was a peace—a perfect peace which God made with His Son! Jesus was not merely our Ambassador, but He *was* our Peace. Not merely the Maker of peace, but *our* Peace. And since there was a Christ before all worlds, there was peace before all worlds! Since there always will be a Christ, so there always will be peace between God and all those interested in the Covenant. Oh, if we can but feel we are in the Covenant—if we know we are numbered with the chosen race and purchased with redeeming blood—then we can rejoice because God has been to us the Restorer of breaches, the Builder of cities to dwell in—He has given us peace which once we lost! He is the Restorer of peace.

Thirdly, *He is the Preserver of peace*. Whenever I see peace *in the world*, I ascribe it to God! And if it is continued, I shall always believe it is because God interferes to prevent war! So combustible are the materials of which this great world is made that I am always apprehensive of war. I do not account it amazing that one nation should strive against another—I account it far more amazing that they are not all at arms!

Where did wars and fights come from? Come they not from our lusts? Considering how much lust there is in the world, we might well conceive that there would be more war than we see. Sin is the mother of wars. And remembering how plentiful sin is, we need not marvel if it brings forth multitudes of them! We may look for them. If the coming of Christ is, indeed, drawing near, then we must expect wars and rumors of wars through all the nations of the earth. But when peace is preserved, we consider it to be through the immediate interposition of God. If, then, we desire peace between nations, let us seek it of God, who is the great Pacifier! But there is an *inward peace* which God, alone, can cause. Am I at peace with myself, with the world and with my Maker? Oh, if I want to retain that peace, God, alone, can preserve it! I know there are some people who once enjoyed peace, but who do not now possess it. Some of you once had confidence in God, but may have lost it. You once thought yourselves to be in a glorious state from which now you seem to have somewhat departed. Beloved, no one can maintain peace in the heart but God! He is the only One who can put it there. Some people talk about doubts and fears and seem to think they are very allowable. I have heard some say, "Well a sailor in the sunshine knows his reckoning and can tell where he is, he has no doubt. But if the sun withdraws, he cannot tell his longitude and latitude and he knows not where he is." That is not, however, a fair description of faith. Always needing the sun is needing to live by *sight*. But living by faith is to say, "I cannot tell my longitude and my latitude, but I know the Captain is at the helm and I will trust Him anywhere." But you still cannot stay in that peaceful state of mind unless you have God in the vessel to help you to smile at the storm!. We can be peaceful at times, but if God goes away, how we begin quarrelling with ourselves! God alone can preserve peace! Backslider! Have you lost it? Go and seek it, again, of God. Christian! Is your peace marred? Go to God and He can say to every doubt, "lie down, doubt," and to every fear, "Begone!" He can speak to every wind that can blow across your soul and can say, "Peace, be still," for He is the God of Peace. Since He preserves it, trust in Him!

Fourthly, God is the God of Peace *because He shall perfect and consummate it at last*. There is war in the world now. There is an evil spirit walking to and fro, a restless being, eager, like a lion, to devour. He is walking through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. And there are men bewitched by that evil spirit who are at war with God and at war with one another. But there is a time coming—let us wait a little longer—when there shall be peace on earth and peace throughout all God's dominions! In a few more years we look for a lasting and perpetual peace on earth. Perhaps, tomorrow, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will come again—without a sin offering unto salvation! We know not either the day or the hour wherein the Son of Man shall come. But by-and-by, He shall descend from Heaven with a shout and with the noise of a trumpet. He shall come, but not as once He came—a lowly and humble Man—but a

glorious and exalted Monarch! Then He will cause wars to cease. From that day forth and forever they will hang the useless helm on high and study war no more! The lion shall lie down with the kid and eat straw like the ox. The cockatrice and the serpent shall lose their hurtful powers. The weaned child shall lead the lion and the leopard, each one by his beard, with his little hands! The day is coming, and speedily, when there shall not be found on earth a single man who hates his brother, but when each one shall find in every other, a brother and a friend. And we shall be able to say, as the old poet did, but in a larger sense, "I know not that there is one Englishman alive with whom I am one jot at odds more than the infant that is born tonight." We shall all be united! Nationalities will be leveled because made into one—and the Lord Jesus Christ shall be King of the entire earth! After that time shall come the consummation of peace, when the Last Great Day shall have passed away and the righteous have been severed from the wicked. When the monster battle of Armageddon shall have been fought and won. When all the righteous shall have been gathered into Heaven and the lost sent down to Hell.

Where will be the room for battle, then? Look at the foemen, bruised and mangled in the pit of Hell, perpetually howling, the victims of God's vengeance! There is no fear of war from them. There is Satan, himself, crest-fallen, bruised, battered, slain. His head is broken. There he lies despoiled—a king without his crown. There can be no fear of war from him! Mark the angels who were once under his supremacy—can they arise? No! They writhe in tortures and bite their iron bands in misery! They have no power to lift a lance against the God of Heaven! And look on sinful man, condemned for his sin to dwell with those fallen beings—can he again provoke his Maker? Will he again blaspheme? Can he oppose the Gospel? No! Injured in dungeons of hot iron, there he is—an abject, ruined spirit! Ten thousands times ten thousands lost and perished sinners are there. But if they could all unite in solemn league and covenant to break the bands of death and sever the laws of Justice, He that sits in the heavens would laugh at them—the Lord would have them in derision! Peace is consummated because the enemy is crushed. Then look up yonder. There is no fear of war from those bright spirits. The angels cannot fall—their period of probation is passed forever. A second Satan shall never drag with him a third part of the stars of Heaven! No angel will totter, any more, and the ransomed spirits, blood-bought and washed in the fountain of Jesus' blood, will never fall again! Universal peace is come, the olive branch has outlived the laurel. The sword is sheathed, the banners are furled, the stains of blood are washed out of the world. Again it moves in its orb and sings like its sister stars—but the one song is PEACE—for the God who made it is the God of Peace!

II. Now we come to the *benediction*. "The God of Peace be with you all." I am not about to address you concerning that inward peace which rests in the heart. I am sure I wish above all things that you may always enjoy a peace with your conscience and be at peace with God. May you always

know that you have the blood of Jesus to plead, that you have His Righteousness to cover you, that you have His Atonement to satisfy for you and that there is nothing which can hurt you. But I wish to address you as a Church and exhort you to peace.

First, I will remind you that there is great need to pray this prayer for you all, because *there are enemies to peace always lurking in all societies*. There are five great enemies to peace—avarice, ambition, envy, anger and pride. I shall alter them a little but use the same number. Instead of avarice, I shall commence with *error*. One of the greatest means of destroying peace is error. Error in Doctrine leads to the most lamentable consequences with regard to the peace of the Church. I have noticed that the greatest fallings out have been among those who are most erroneous in Doctrine. Though I admit that some called, Calvinists, are the most quarrelsome set breathing, this is the reason—while they have the main part of the Truth of God, many of them are leaving out something important—therefore God chastises them because they are some of His best children! It may be a sign of life that they are so eager after Truth that they kill one another in order to get it, but I wish they would leave off their quarrelling, for it is a disgrace to our religion. If they had more peace, I might hope better for the progress of Truth. Everyone says to me—“Look there at your Brothers and Sisters! I never saw such a set of cut-throats in my life! I never saw a Church where they have the Gospel, where they are not always falling out!” Well, that is near the truth and I am ashamed to confess it. I pray God, however, to send a little more peace where He has sent the Gospel. There are, however, strifes among our opponents which we do not see. The bishop uses his strong hand and the people dare not disagree. The pastor has such power and authority that the crush of his mailed hand is sufficient to put down everything because there is no freedom!

Now, I would rather have a row in the Church than have all the members asleep! I would rather have them falling to errors than sitting down in indifference! You never expect dead churches to have strife—but where there is a little life, if there is error—it always begets strife. What is the most litigious denomination now existing? No one would have a difficulty in pointing to our excellent friends, the Wesleyans—for just at this moment they are quarrelling and finding fault with one another—splitting up into numberless sections and making reformed churches and so on. What is the cause of it? Because they are in the wrong track, altogether, with regard to church government and with regard to some other things. John Wesley was a good man at making churches, I dare say. But he did not understand what the Church ought to be in these days. He might do for a hundred years ago, but he bound his poor followers too tightly and now they are trying to break out into freedom and liberty. If they had been right at first, they might have gone on and a thousand years would not have spoiled their system! It would have done, now, as well as then! Error is the root of bitterness in the Church. Give us sound Doctrine,

sound practice, sound church government and you will find that the God of Peace will be with us! My Brothers and Sisters, seek to uproot error out of your own hearts. If one of you does not really believe the great cardinal Doctrines of the Gospel, I beseech you, then, for the good of the Church, leave! We need those who love the Truths of God.

The next enemy to peace is *ambition*. “Diotrephes loves to have the pre-eminence,” and that fellow has spoiled many a happy church! A man does not want, perhaps, to be pre-eminent, but he is afraid that another shall be, and so he would have him put down! Thus Brethren are finding fault with each other—they are afraid that such an one, and that such another will go too fast! The best way is to try to go as fast as *he* does. It is of no use finding fault because some may have a little pre-eminence. After all, what is the pre-eminence? It is the pre-eminence of one little animalcule over another! Look in a drop of water. One of these little fellows is five times as big as another, but we never think of that. I dare say he is very large and thinks, “I have the pre-eminence inside my drop.” But he does not think the people of Park Street ever talk about him! So we live in this little drop of the world not much bigger, in God’s esteem, than a drop in the bucket! And one of us seems a little larger than the other—a worm a little above his fellow worm! But O, how big we get! And we want to get a little bigger, to get a little more prominent—but what is the use of it? For when we get ever so big, we shall then be so small that an angel would not find us if God did not tell him where we were! Whoever heard, up in Heaven, anything about emperors and kings? Small tiny insects—God can see the animalcule, therefore He can see us—but if He had not an eye to see the most minute, He would never discover us. O may we never get ambition in this Church! The best ambition is, who shall be the *servant* of all? The strangers seek to have dominion, but children seek to let the father have dominion—and only the father.

The next enemy to peace is *anger*. There are some individuals in the world who cannot help getting angry very quickly. They grow, all of a sudden, very wrathful. While others who are not passionate, who take a longer time to be angry, are fearful enough when they do speak. Others who dare not speak at all, are still worse, for they get to brewing their anger—

“Nursing their wrath to keep it warm.”

They go into a sulky fit, disagreeing with everybody, eternally grumbling. They are like dogs in the flock—only barking and yielding no fleece! O that nasty anger! If it gets into the church, it will split it to pieces! But, somehow or other we cannot, sometimes, help getting angry. O that we could come into the church and leave ourselves behind us! There is nobody I would like to run away from, half as much, as from myself. Try, Beloved, to curb your tempers! And when you do not exactly see eye to eye with another Brother or Sister, do not think it necessary to knock him in the eyes to make him see! That is the worst thing in all the world to do—he will not see any the better for it, for—

**“The man convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still.”**

Then *envy* is another fearful evil. One minister, perhaps, is envious of another because one church is full and the other not. How can teachers agree in the Sunday school if there is any envy there? How can church members agree if envy creeps in? One member thinks another is thought more highly of than he deserves. Why, Beloved, you are all too much thought of! But, after all, it does not matter what you are thought of by *man*—it only matters what *God* thinks of you—and God thinks as much of Little-Faith as of Great-Heart. He thinks as much of Mrs. Despondency as of Christiana, herself! Drive, then, that “green-eyed monster” away and keep him at a distance!

Again, there is *pride*, which gives rise to ill-feeling and bad blood. Instead of being affable to one another and “condescending to men of low estate,” we want that every punctilio of respect should be given to us—that we should be made lords and masters! That, I am sure, can never exist in a peaceable church.

Here, then, are our five great enemies. I wish I could see the execution of them all! Banish them! Transport them forever! Send them away among lions and tigers—we do not want any of them among us! But though I thus speak, it is not because I conceive that any of these have thoroughly crept in among you, but because I would have kept them away. I am most jealous in this matter! I am always afraid of the slightest contention and I desire the God of Peace to be always with us!

Now let me briefly show you the appropriateness of this prayer. We, indeed, ought to have peace among ourselves. Joseph said to his brothers, when they were going home to his father’s house, “See that *you* fall not out by the way.” There was something extremely beautiful in that exhortation. “See that you fall not out *by the way*.” You have all one father. You are of one family. Let men of *two nations* disagree. But you are of the seed of Israel—you are of one tribe and nation. Your home is in one Heaven. “See that you fall not out by the way.” The way is rough. There are enemies to stop you. See that if *you* fall out when you go home, you do not fall out by the way. Stay together. Stand by one another. Defend each other’s character. Manifest continual affection, for remember, you will need it all. The world hates you because you are not of the world. Oh, you must take care that you love one another! You are all going to the same house. You may disagree, here, and not speak to one another and be almost ashamed to sit at the same table even at the Sacrament—but you will all have to sit together in Heaven! Therefore, do not fall out by the way. Consider, again, the great mercies you have all shared together—you are all pardoned, you are all accepted, elected, justified, sanctified and adopted. See that you fall not out when you have so many mercies—when God has given you so much. Joseph has filled your sacks, but if he has put some extra things into Benjamin’s sack, do not quarrel with Benjamin about that, but rather rejoice because your sacks are full!

You have all got enough, you are all secure, you have all been dismissed with a blessing and, therefore, I say once more, “See that you fall not out by the way.”

Now, dear Brothers and Sisters, is there anything I can plead with you this morning in order that you may always dwell in peace and love? God has happily commenced a blessed revival among us. And under our means, by the help of God, that revival will spread through the entire kingdom! We have seen that “the Word of the Lord is quick and powerful.” We know that there is nothing that can stop the progress of His Kingdom and there is nothing that can impede your success as a Church, except strife! If the unhappy day should arrive—let the day be accursed if it does come—when you among yourselves should disagree! There would be a stop to the building of the Lord’s House at once, when those who carry the trowel and bear the spears do not stand side by side—then the work of God must tarry. It is sad to think how much our glorious cause has been impeded by the different fallings out among the disciples of the Lamb. We have loved one another, Brothers and Sisters, up till now, fervently and with a true heart. And I am not afraid but that we shall always do so! At the same time, I am jealous over you, lest there should come in by any possibility any root of bitterness to trouble you. Let us, this morning, throw around you the bands of a man. Let us unite together with a three-fold cord that cannot be broken! Let us entreat you to love one another. Let us entreat you by your one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, to continue as one! Let us beg of you, by our great success, to let our unity be commensurate therewith. Remember “how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity!” The devil wants you to disagree and nothing will please him better than for you to fall at wars among yourselves. The Moabites and Ammonites cut down one another. Do not let us do that—

***“Those should in strictest concord dwell,
Who the same God obey.”***

It is continual bickering and jealousy that has brought disgrace upon the holy name of Christ. He has been wounded in the house of His friends. The arrows we have shot at one another have hurt us more than all that ever came from the bow of the devil! We have done more injury to the escutcheon of Christ by our contentions than Satan has ever been able to do. I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, love one another! I know not how I could endure anything like discord among *you*. I can bear the scoff of the world and the laughter of the infidel. I think I could bear martyrdom. But I could not bear to see you divided! I beseech my God and Master to allow me, first, to wear my shroud before I ever wear a garment of heaviness on account of your divisions! While I feel that I have your love and affection, and that you are bound to one another, I care not for the devils in Hell, nor for men on earth. We have been and we shall be omnipotent, through God! And by faith we will stand firm with one another and to His Truth. Let each one resolve within himself—“if there is strife, I

will have nothing to do with it.” “The beginning of strife is like the letting out of water,” and I will not turn the tap. If you will take care not to let the first drop in, I will be sure about the second. Brothers and Sisters, again I say for the Gospel’s sake, for Truth’s sake, that we may laugh at our enemies and rejoice with unspeakable joy—let us love one another.

Though I may not have preached to the worldly this morning, I have been asking you to preach to them—for when you love one another—that is a beautiful sermon to them. There is no sermon like what you can see with your own eyes. I went to the Orphanage last Wednesday, on Ashley Down, near Bristol, and saw that wonder of faith—I had some conversation with that heavenly-minded man—Mr. Muller. I never heard such a sermon in my life as I saw there! They asked me to speak to the girls, but I said, “I could not speak a word for the life of me.” I had been crying all the while to think how God had heard this dear man’s prayers and how all those 300 children had been fed by my Father through the prayer of faith! Whatever is needed comes—without annual subscriptions, without asking anything—simply from the hand of God! When I found that it was all correct, what I had heard, I was like the Queen of Sheba and I had no heart left in me. I could only stand and look at those children and think, “Did my heavenly Father feed them and would He not feed me and all His family?” Speak to them? They had spoken to me quite enough, though they had not said a word! Speak to them? I thought myself ten thousand fools that I did not better believe my God! Here am I—I cannot trust Him day by day. But this good man can trust Him for 300 children! When he has not a sixpence in hand, he never fears. “I know God,” he might say, “too well to doubt Him. I tell my God, ‘You know what I need, today, to keep these children, and I have not anything.’ My faith never wavers and my supply always comes.” Simply by asking of God in this way, he has raised (I believe) £17,000 towards the erection of a new orphanage! When I consider that—I sometimes think we will try the power of faith, here—and see if we will not get sufficient funds whereby to erect a place to hold the people that crowd to hear the Word of God. Then we may have a tabernacle of faith as well as an orphanage of faith! God send us that—and to Him shall be all the glory! Amen.

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

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

ROMANS, BUT NOT ROMANISTS

NO. 1113

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
[PROBABLY NEAR FIRST OF YEAR, 1873]
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the Church which is at Cenchrea: that you receive her in the Lord, as becomes saints, and that you assist her in whatever business she has need of you: for she has been a succorer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the Churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the Church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the Apostles who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus’ household. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that are of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which labored much in the Lord. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes and the brethren which are with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Salute one another with an holy kiss. The Churches of Christ salute you.”
Romans 16:1-16.

THIS chapter contains Paul’s loving salutation to the various Christians dwelling at Rome. Remember that it is an Inspired passage. Although it consists of Christian courtesies addressed to different individuals, yet it was written by an Apostle and written not as an ordinary letter but as a part of the Inspired volume. Therefore there must be valuable matter in it and though, when we read it, it may appear to be uninteresting, there must be edifying matter beneath the surface because all Scripture is given by Inspiration and is meant to benefit us in one way or another. It shows to us one thing, at any rate, that Paul was of a most affectionate disposition and that God did not select as the Apostle of the Gentiles a man of a coarse, unfeeling, selfish turn of mind. His memory, as well as his heart, must have been in good condition to remember so large a number of names and these were but a few of his many beloved Brethren and spiritual children all over the world whom he mentions by name in his other Epistles.

His warm heart, I doubt not, quickened his memory and secured to his remembrance the form, condition, history, character and name of each one of his friends. He loved them too well to forget them! Christians should love one another and should bear one another’s names upon their

hearts, even as the great High Priest wears the names of all His saints upon His jeweled breastplate. A Christian, because of the love he bears to others, is ever anxious to please by courtesy and desires—never to pain by rudeness. Grace makes the servant of God to be, in the highest sense, a true gentleman. If we learn nothing more from this passage than the duty of acting lovingly and courteously, one to the other, we shall be all the better for it, for there is none too much tender consideration and gentle speech among professors at this time.

I. Beyond this, our text is singularly full of instructive matter, as I shall hope to show you. Without preface, let us notice, first, that THIS PASSAGE REMARKABLY ILLUSTRATES THE VARIOUS RELATIONS OF FAMILIES TO THE CHURCH. Note in the third verse that the Apostle says, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus.” Here you have a household in which both the father and the mother, or say, the husband and the wife, were joined to the Church of God. What a happy circumstance was this! Their influence upon the rest of the household must have been very powerful, for when two loving hearts pull together they accomplish wonders. What different associations cluster around the names of “Priscilla and Aquila” from those which are awakened by the words, “Ananias and Sapphira”!

There we have a husband and a wife conspiring in hypocrisy, and here a wife and a husband united in sincere devotion. Thrice happy are those who are not only joined in marriage, but are one in the Lord Jesus Christ! Such marriages are made in Heaven. This couple appears to have been advanced Christians, for they became instructors of others—and not merely teachers of the ignorant, but teachers of those who already knew much of the Gospel, for they instructed young Apollos—an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures. They taught him the way of God more perfectly and therefore we may be sure were deep-taught Christians themselves.

We must usually look for our spiritual fathers and nursing mothers in those households where husband and wife are walking in the fear of God. They are mutually helpful and therefore grow in Grace beyond others. I do not know why Paul, in this case, wrote, “Priscilla and Aquila,” thus placing the *wife* first, for in Acts we read of them as, “Aquila and Priscilla.” I should not wonder but he put them in order according to quality rather than according to the rule of sex. He named Priscilla, first, because she was first in energy of character and attainments in Divine Grace. There is a precedence which, in Christ, is due to the woman when she becomes the leader in devotion and manifests the stronger mind in the things of God. It is well when Nature and Grace both authorize our saying, “Aquila and Priscilla,” but it is not amiss when Grace outruns Nature and we hear of, “Priscilla and Aquila.”

Whether the wife is first or second matters little if both are truly the servants of God! Dear Husband, is your wife unconverted? Never fail to pray for her! Good Sister, have you not yet seen the partner of your joys brought in to be a partaker in Grace? Never bow your knee for yourself

without mentioning that beloved name before the Throne of Mercy. Pray unceasingly that your life companions may be converted to God.

Priscilla and Aquila were tentmakers and were thus of the same trade with the Apostle, who for this reason lodged with them at Corinth. They had lived in Rome at one time, but had been obliged to leave owing to a decree of Claudius which banished the Jews from the imperial city. When that decree was no longer carried out they seem to have gone back to Rome, which from the vast awnings used in the great public buildings, must have afforded a fine sphere for the tent-makers' craft. It is very likely that their occupation of tent making necessitated their having a large room in which to carry on their work, and therefore they allowed the Christians to meet in it. Paul spoke of the Church that was in their house. It is a great privilege when a Christian family can accommodate the Church of God. It is well when they judge that the parlor will be honored by being used for a Prayer Meeting and consider that the best room in the house is none too good for the servants of God to meet in. Such a dwelling becomes like the house of Obededom, where the ark of God tarried and left a permanent blessing behind.

To pass on. In the seventh verse you have another family. "Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the Apostles who also were in Christ before me." Now, if I understand this passage right, we have here a case of two men, perhaps they are both male names, Andronicus and Junia, or else a husband and wife or a brother and sister—Andronicus and Junia—but at any rate they represent part of a household, and part of a very remarkable household, too, for they were kinsmen of Paul and they were converted to God before Paul was, which interesting fact slips out quite incidentally.

I have wondered in my own mind whether the conversion of his relatives helped to irritate Paul into his murderous fury against the Church of Christ—whether when he saw Andronicus and Junia, his relatives, converted to what he thought to be the superstition of Nazareth—whether that excited in him the desperate animosity which he displayed towards the Lord Jesus Christ. I may leave that as a matter of question, but I feel certain that the prayers of his two relations followed the young persecutor and that if you were to look deep into the reason for the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, on his way to Damascus, you would find it at the Mercy Seat in the prayers of Andronicus and Junia, his kinsmen, who were in Christ before him.

This should act as a great encouragement for all of you who desire the salvation of your households. Perhaps you have a relative who is very much opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For that very reason pray the more importunately for him! There is none the less hope for him because of his zealous opposition—the man is evidently in a thoughtful condition—and the Grace of God is able to turn his ignorant zeal to good account when his heart has been enlightened and renewed. There is something to be made out of a man who has enough in him to be opposed to the Gospel—a good sword will make a good plowshare! Out of persecutors God can make Apostles.

Nowadays the world swarms with milksops of men who neither believe in the Gospel nor thoroughly disbelieve it. They are neither for nor against, neither true to God nor the devil. Such men of straw will never be worth their salt even if they should become converted. An out-and-out honest *hater* of the Gospel is the man who with one touch of Divine Grace may be made into an equally sincere lover of the Truth of God which once he despised! Pray on, pray hard, pray believingly for your relatives and you may live to see them occupy the pulpit and preach the faith which now they strive to overturn! It is a happy and hopeful token for good to a family when a part of the household is joined to the Church of God.

Passing on again, we meet with a third family in relation to the Church, but in this case the master of the house was not a Christian—I suppose not, from the 10th verse, “Salute them which are of Aristobulus’ household.” Not, “Salute Aristobulus,” no, but they that are of his household. Why leave Aristobulus out? It is just possible that he was dead, but far more likely that he was unsaved. He was left out of the Apostle’s salutation because he had left himself out. He was no Believer and therefore there could be no *Christian* salutation sent to him. Alas for him, the kingdom of God was near to him, yes, in his house, and yet he was unblest by it! Am I not speaking to a man in this condition? Where are you, Aristobulus? That is not your name, perhaps, but your character is the same as that of this unregenerate Roman whose family knew the Lord. I might speak in God’s name good words and comfortable words to your wife and to your children, but I cannot so speak to you, Aristobulus!

The Lord sends a message of Grace to your dear child, to your beloved wife, but not to you—for you have not given your heart to Him. I will pray for you and I am happy to know that those of your household who love the Lord are interceding for you both day and night. It is a hopeful connection that you have with the Church, though, perhaps, you do not care much about it. Yet be sure of this—the kingdom of God has come near unto you! This fact will involve dreadful responsibility if it does not lead to your salvation, for, if like Capernaum, you are exalted to Heaven by your privileges, it will be all the more dreadful to be thrust down to Hell.

It is a sad thing in a family when one is taken and another left. Oh, think how wretched will be your condition if you continue in unbelief, for when your child is in Heaven and your wife is in Heaven, and you see your mother who is there, already—and you, yourself, are cast far off into Hell—you will remember that you were called but refused, were bid, but would not come! You shut your eyes to the light and would not see! You rejected Christ and perished willfully, a suicide to your own soul.

Another instance of this, and I think a worse one, is to be seen further on in our text where the Apostle speaks of the “household of Narcissus” in the 11th verse—“Greet them that are of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.” Now I fancy that Narcissus was the master of the house and that the converts in the house were his servants or his slaves. There was a Narcissus in the days of Nero who was put to death by Nero’s successor. He was Nero’s favorite and when I have said that, you may conclude that he was a man of no very commendable character. It is said of

him that he was extremely rich and that he was as bad as he was rich. Yet while the halls of the house of Narcissus echoed to blasphemous songs and while luxurious gluttony mingled with unbridled licentiousness and made his mansion a very Hell, there was a saving salt in the servants' hall and the slaves' dormitory!

Perhaps under the stairs, in the little place where the slave crept in to sleep, prayer was made unto the living God. And when the master little dreamed of it, the servants about his house sang hymns in praise of one Jesus Christ, the anointed Savior, whom they adored as the Son of God. Wonderful are the ways of electing love which passes by the rich and great to have respect unto the man of low degree! It may be there is some bad master within reach of my voice. He is, himself, utterly irreligious, but yet in his house there are those who wait upon the Lord in prayer. He who blacks your shoes may be one of the beloved of the Lord, while you who wear them may be without God and without hope in the world. The little maid in your house fears the Lord, though you are forgetful of His praises. An angel received unawares waits upon you at table.

There was a good man some years ago who used to sit up for a certain king of ours of wretched memory—let his name rot! This king was called a gentleman, but other titles might better describe him. While his master would be rioting, this man was communing with God and reading Boston's, "Crook in the Lot," or some such blessed book, to while away the weary hours. There are still at this day in the halls of the great and wicked, and in the abodes of transgressors of all classes, God's hidden ones who are the salt of the earth. They cry unto God day and night against the iniquity of their masters. There shall be an inquisition concerning all this—the godly shall not always be forgotten—the golden nuggets shall not always lie hidden in the dust. Think, O Masters, how will it fare with you when your humblest menials shall be crowned with glory and you, yourselves, shall be driven into the blackness of darkness forever! Seek you, also, the Lord, you great ones, and He will be found of you.

We cannot afford to stay with Narcissus. Let us turn to the 12th verse. Here we have another instance of a family in connection with Christ's people. "Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord." I suppose two sisters, the names sound like it. Where were their brothers? Where was their father? Where was their mother? "Tryphena and Tryphosa." How often have I seen them in the Church—two humble, earnest, faithful women—the lone ones of the family and all the rest far off from God! O Brother, let not your sister go to Heaven alone! Father, if your daughters are children of God, do not, yourself, remain His enemy! Let the examples of your godly children help you, O Parents, to be yourselves decided for the Redeemer! Hail to you, you gracious women who keep each other company on the road to Heaven! The Lord make you a comfort to one another! May you shine both here and hereafter like twin stars shedding a gentle radiance of holiness on all around. There is work for you in your heavenly Father's House and though you may not be called to public

preaching, yet, in spheres appropriate, you may with much acceptance, “labor in the Lord.”

Further down, in the 15th verse, we have a brother and his sister, “Nereus, and his sister.” It is pleasant to see the stronger and weaker sex thus associated. “They grew in beauty side by side” in the field of nature, and now they bloom together in the garden of Divine Grace. It is a sweet relationship, that of a godly brother and sister—they are as the rose and the lily in the same bouquet—but had they no other relatives? Were there no others remaining of their kindred? Had they no trouble in spirit concerning others dear to them? Depend upon it, they often prayed together and sighed because their relatives were not in Christ, for concerning all the rest of the family the record is blank. God hear your prayers, my dear Friends, when you, like Nereus and his sister, unite in brotherly prayer and sisterly intercession.

One other very beautiful instance of a family connection with the Church is in the 13th verse. “Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.” Now, this is a case of a mother and her son. I would not wish to say anything that is far-fetched, but I think there is no vain conjecture in supposing that this good woman was the wife of Simon the Cyrenian, who carried the Cross of Christ. You will remember he is said by Mark to be the father of Alexander and Rufus, two persons who evidently were well-known in the Church of God at that time. And here we have familiar mention of Rufus and his mother. Whether she was the wife of Simeon, or not, she seems to have been a kind, good, lovable soul—one of those dear matrons who are at once an ornament and a comfort to the Christian Church. And such an excellent woman was she that Paul, when he calls her the mother of Rufus adds, “and mine”—she had been like a mother to him.

I do not wonder that such choice mothers have choice sons—“chosen in the Lord.” If those whom we deeply love carry their religion about with them set in a frame of affectionate cheerfulness, it is hard to resist the charms of their lovely piety. When a godly woman is a tender mother, it is no wonder if her sons, Rufus and Alexander, become believers in Jesus Christ, too, for their mother’s love and example draw them towards Jesus. There is a legend connected with Rufus and Alexander. I have never read it, but I have seen it set forth in glowing colors by an artist in a cathedral in Belgium. I saw a series of paintings which represented Christ bearing His Cross through the streets of Jerusalem. Among the crowd the artist has placed a countryman looking on and carrying with him his pick and spade, as if he had just come into the town from laboring in the fields.

In the next picture this countryman is evidently moved to tears by seeing the cruelties practiced upon the Redeemer and he shows his sympathy so plainly that the cruel persecutors of our Lord who are watching the spectators, observe it, and gather angrily around him. The countryman’s two boys are there, too—Alexander and Rufus. Rufus is the boy with the red head. He is ardent and sanguine, bold and outspoken, and you can see that one of the rough men has just been cuffing him about the head for showing sympathy with the poor Cross-bearing Savior. The next pic-

ture represents the father taken and compelled to bear the Cross, while Alexander holds his father's pick, and Rufus is carrying his father's spade—and they are going along close by the Lord Jesus, pitying Him greatly. If they cannot bear the Cross, they will at least help their father by carrying his tools.

Of course it is but a legend. But who marvels if Alexander and Rufus saw their father carry Christ's Cross so well that they, too, should afterwards count it their glory to be followers of the Crucified One? And that Paul should say, when he wrote down the name of Rufus, that he was a choice man, for so we may translate the passage, "Chosen in the Lord," or, "The choice one of the Lord"? He was a distinguished Christian with great depth of Christian experience and in all respects a fit descendant of a remarkable father and mother.

Thus have we observed the different ways in which families come in contact with Christ. And I pray God that every family here may make up a part of the whole family in Heaven and earth which is named by the name of Jesus. May all your sons and your daughters, your brothers and your sisters, your servants and kinsfolk, but chiefly *yourselves*, take up the Cross of Jesus and be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

II. The interesting passage before us shows WHAT ARE POINTS OF INTEREST AMONG CHRISTIANS. Now, among worldly people points of interest are very many and characteristic. In any worldly community one very important point of interest is how much is a man worth. That is an important point with Christians, too, in the right sense, but the worldly man means by that, "How much *money* has the man scraped into his till?" He may have gained his riches in the worst way in the world, but nobody takes account of that—the one all-important question among Mammonites is—"What is his balance at the bankers?"

Now Paul does not, in his salutation, make a single reference to anyone on account of his wealth or poverty. He does not say, "To Philologus, our brother, who has 10,000 pounds a year, and Julia, our sister, who keeps a carriage and pair"—nothing of the sort! He makes no account of position or property, except so far as those may be implied in the service which each person rendered to the cause of God. Neither is there any allusion made to their holding important offices under government, or being what is called exceedingly respectable people or persons of good family. The points of interest with Paul, as a Christian, were very different from those.

The first matter of which he made honorable mention was their service for the Church. Phoebe, in the first verse, is, "a servant of the Church, which is at Cenchrea. She has been a succorer of many, and of myself also." It is a distinction and honor among Christians to be allowed to serve. The most menial employment for the Church of God is the most honorable. Every man who seeks honor after God's fashion seeks it by being abased, by undertaking that ministry which will involve the most self-denial and will secure the greatest reproach. Foremost in the ranks of the Divine peerage are the martyrs, because they were the most despised. They suffered most and they have the most of honor. So Phoebe shall have her name inscribed in this golden book of Christ's nobility because she is

the servant of the Church and because, in being such, she succored the poor and needy.

I doubt not she was a nurse among the poorer Christians, or as some call them, a deaconess, for, in olden times, it was so, that the elder women who had need were maintained by the Church. And they, in return, occupied themselves with the nursing of sick Believers. And it were well if such were the case, again, and if the old office could be revived. Another special point for remark among Christians is their labor. Kindly refer to your Bibles and read the sixth verse: "Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us." This is the sixth Mary mentioned in the Bible. She appears to have been one who laid herself out to help the minister. "She bestowed much labor on us," says the Apostle, or, "on me"—she was one of those useful women who took personal care of the preacher because she believed the life of God's servant to be precious—and that he should be cared for in his many labors and perils.

What she did for Paul and his fellow laborers we are not told, but it was something which cost her effort, amounting to "much labor." She loved much and therefore toiled much. She was "always abounding in the work of the Lord." Sister Mary, imitate your namesake! Then follow the two good women, Tryphena and Tryphosa, of whom it is said, "who labor in the Lord," and Persis, of whom it is written she "labored much in the Lord." I do not suppose Tryphena and Tryphosa were angry because the Apostle made this distinction, but it is certainly a very plain and explicit one—the first two "labored"—but Persis "labored much." So there are distinctions and degrees in honor among Believers and these are graduated by the scale of *service* done!

It is an honor to labor for Christ, it is a still greater honor to labor *much*. If then, any, in joining the Christian Church, desire place or position, honor or respect, the way to it is this—labor, and labor much! Persis had probably been a slave and was of a strange race from the far-off land of Persia. But she was so excellent in disposition that she is called, "the beloved Persis," and for her indefatigable industry she receives signal mention. Among Believers the rewards of affectionate respect are distributed according to the self-denying service which is rendered to Christ and to His cause. May all of us be helped to labor much, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

At the same time, another point of interest is *character*, for as I have already said, Rufus in the 13th verse is said to be "chosen in the Lord," which cannot allude to his election since all the rest were chosen, too, but must mean that he was a choice man in the Lord, a man of peculiarly sweet spirit, a devout man, a man who walked with God, a man well instructed in the things of God—and a man whose practice was equal to his knowledge. "Salute" him, says the Apostle. He who would be noted in the Church of God must have real character—there must be holiness unto the Lord, there must be faith—a man must have it said of him, "he is full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." This shall get him commemoration, but nothing else will do it.

Apelles is described as “approved in Christ,” a tried, proved and experienced Believer. Christians value those who have been tested and found faithful. Tried saints are had in honor among us. Character, you see, is the one noteworthy point in the society of the Church and nothing else. Yes, there is one thing else. I find one person here noted in the Church as a person around whom great interest centered, because of the time of his conversion. It is in the fifth verse. “Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ.” You know what that means. When Paul began to preach in Achaia, Epaenetus was one of his first converts, and while every minister feels a peculiar attachment to *all* his converts, he has the most tender memory of the first ones. What parent does not prize, above all others, his first child?

I can speak from experience. I remember well the first woman who professed to be brought to Christ when I began to preach the Gospel. I have the house in my mind’s eye at this moment. And though I cannot say that it was a picturesque cottage, yet it will always interest me. Great was the joy I felt when I heard that peasant’s story of repentance and of faith! She died and went to Heaven a short time after her conversion, being taken away by consumption, but the remembrance of her gave me more comfort than I have ordinarily received by the recollection of 20 or even a hundred converts since then. She was a precious seal set upon my ministry to begin and to encourage my infant faith.

Some of you were the first fruits of my ministry in London, in Park Street, and very precious people you are. How gladly would I see some of you in this Tabernacle become the first fruits of this present year—there would be something very interesting about you—for it would encourage us all through the year. If you are brought to seek the Lord just now, I shall always view you with love and think of you as I read this chapter so full of names. I shall be as thankful for those born to God tonight as for those regenerated at any other time, for my heart is earnestly going out after you.

So I have shown you that there are points of interest about individual persons in the Church of God and what they are.

III. But as time has fled, though I have much to say, I must close with the third point, which is this. This long passage REVEALS THE GENERAL LOVE WHICH EXISTS (must I say which *ought* to exist?) IN THE CHURCH OF GOD. For, first, the whole passage shows the love of the Apostle towards the saints and Brethren at Rome. He would not have taken the trouble to write all this to them if he had not really loved them. And it shows that there were Christians in those days who were full of love for each other. Their salutation, the holy kiss, marked their fervor of love, for they were by no means a people given to use outward signs unless they had something to express thereby.

O that Christian love reigned among all Christians now to a greater extent! “Ah!” says one, “there is very little of it.” I know you, my Friend, very well, indeed. You are the man who is forever grumbling at others for lack of love, when the truth is that you are destitute of it yourself! I always find that those who say there is no love among Christians, judge by what they

see at home in their own hearts—for those who love Christians believe that Christians also love one another. You shall find the man of a loving heart, though he will say, “I wish there were more love,” will never be the man to say that there is none. Brothers and Sisters, it is a lie that there is no love among Christians! We love each other, still, and we will show it, by the Grace of God, even more if the Spirit of God shall help us!

Note according to this passage the early Christians were accustomed to show their love to one another by practical help. In the second verse Paul says of Phoebe, “Receive her in the Lord, as becomes saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you, for she has been a succorer of many, and of myself also.” I do not think that the Apostle alluded to any Church business, but to her *own* business, whatever that may have been. She may have had moneys to gather in, or some complaint to make at headquarters of an exacting tax-gatherer. I do not know what it was and it is quite as well that Paul did not tell us. It is no part of an Apostle’s commission to tell us other people’s business. But whatever business it was, if any Christian in Rome could help her he was to do so.

And so if we can help our Christian Brethren in any way or shape, as much as lies in us we are to endeavor to do it. Our love must not lie in words alone or it will be unsubstantial as the air. Mark you, you are not called upon to become sureties for your Brethren, or to put your name on the back of bills for them—do that for nobody, for you have an express word in Scripture against it—“He that hates suretyship is sure,” says Solomon, and, “he that is a surety shall smart for it.” I could wish that some Brethren had been wise enough to have remembered the teaching of Scripture upon that point, for it might have saved them a sea of troubles.

But for your fellow Christians do anything that is lawful for you to do. Do it for one another out of love to your common Lord, bearing one another’s burdens and so fulfilling the Law of Christ. We are bound to show our love to each other even when it involves great sacrifices. In the fourth verse the Apostle says of Priscilla and Aquila that for his life “they laid down their own necks.” They went into great peril to save the Apostle. Such love still exists in our Churches. This is denied, but I know it is so. I know Christians who could say honestly that if their minister’s life could be spared they would be willing to die in his place. It has been said by some here and I have heard it, and have felt that they who said it meant what they said. I know the prayer has gone up from some lips here that they might sooner die than I should. When your pastor has been in danger, many of you have lovingly declared that if your life could stand for his life it should be freely rendered before God. Christians still love each other and they still make sacrifices for one another. I speak this to the honor of many of you, that your love to your pastor has not been in word only, but in deed and in truth, and for this may the Lord reward you.

Christian love in those days had an intense respect for those who had suffered for Christ. Read the seventh verse. Paul says that Andronicus and Junia were his fellow prisoners and he speaks of them with special unction because of that. No one was thought more of among the early Christians than the prisoner for Christ, the martyr, or the almost martyr.

Why there was even *too much* made of such sufferers, so that while Christians were in prison, expecting to be martyred, they received attentions which showed almost too great a reverence for their persons. Now, Brethren, whenever any man in these times is laughed at for fully following Christ, or ridiculed for bearing an honest testimony for the Truth of God, do not be ashamed of him and turn your backs upon him. Such a man may not expect you to give him double honor, but he may claim that you shall stand shoulder to shoulder with him and not be ashamed of the reproach which he is called to bear for Christ his Lord.

So was it with the Church in the olden times—the men who went first in suffering were also first in their love and esteem. They never failed to admit that they were Brothers in Christ to the man who was doomed to die. On the contrary, the Christians of the Apostolic times used to do what our Protestant forefathers did in England. The young Christian people of the Church, when there was a martyr to be put to death, would go and stand with tears in their eyes to see him die—and why, do you think? To learn the way! One of them said, when his father asked him why he stole out to see his pastor burned, “Father, I did it that I might learn the way.” And he did learn it so well that when his turn came he burned as well, and triumphed in God as gloriously as his minister had done!

Learn the way, young man, to bear reproach! Look at those who have been lampooned and satirized, and say, “Well, I will learn how to take my turn when my turn comes, but as God helps me I will speak for the Truth faithfully and boldly.” Again, that love always honored workers. For Paul says, “Mary, who bestowed much labor on us.” And he speaks of the laborers over and over again with intense affection. We ought to love much those who do much for Christ, whether they are Christian men or women. Alas, I know some, who, if anybody does a little more than another, straightway begin to pick holes in his coat. “Mr. So-and-So is very earnest, but, ah, yes! And Mrs. So-and-So, yes—God blesses her, but, but, yes.” For lack of anything definite to say, they shrug their shoulders and insinuate. This is the reverse of the spirit of Paul, for he recognized holy industry and praised it.

Dear friend, do not become fault-finders—it is as bad a trade as a pick-pockets. Till you can do better, hold your tongue! Did you ever know a man or woman whom God blessed that was perfect? If God were to work by perfect instruments, the instruments would earn a part of the Glory. Take it for granted that we are all imperfect—but when you have taken that for granted—love those who serve God well and never allow anybody to speak against them in your hearing. Silence cavilers at once by saying, “God honors them. And whom God honors, I dare not despise!” We cannot be wrong in putting our honor where God is pleased to place His.

Still, Christian love in Paul’s days—though it loved all the saints—had its specialties. Read down the chapter and you will find Paul saying, “my well-beloved Epaenetus.” “Amplias my beloved in the Lord.” “Stachys my beloved.” And “Urbane our helper in Christ.” All these were persons whom he especially esteemed. There were some whom he liked better than others and you must not blame yourself if you judge some Christians to be

better than others—and if you therefore love them better—for even the Lord, Himself, had a disciple whom He loved more than the rest. I desire to love all the Lord's people, but there are some of them whom I can love best while I know the least about them and feel the most comfort in them when I have not seen them for a month or so. There are Christian people whom you could live with in Heaven comfortably enough, but it is a severe trial to bear with them on earth, although you feel that they are good people—and since God puts up with them—so ought you. Since there are such peculiar people, do not be always getting in their way to irritate them—leave them alone and seek peace by keeping out of their way. Brothers and Sisters, let us love one another! By all means let us love one another, for love is of God. But let us all try to be *loveable*, so as to make this duty as easy as possible for our Brethren.

Once more, love among Christians in those early days was known to respect seniority in spiritual life, for Paul speaks of some who were in Christ before himself. Among us I hope there always will be profound esteem for those who have been longest in Christ, for those who have stood the test of years, for our aged members, the elders and the matrons among us. Reverence to old age is but a natural duty, but reverence to advanced Christians is a *privilege* as well. Let it always be so among us. And the last word is this—love to all Christians should make us remember even the most obscure and mean members of the Church. When the Apostle Paul wrote, “Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas,” why, many of us say, “Whoever were these good people?”

And when he goes on to mention, “Patrobas, Hermes,” we ask, “And who were they? What did these men attempt or perform? Is that all? Philologus, who was he? And who was Olympas? We know next to nothing about those good people.” They were like the most of us, commonplace individuals—and they loved the Lord—and therefore, as Paul remembered their names he sent them a message of love which has become embalmed in the Holy Scriptures! Do not let us think of the distinguished Christians exclusively so as to forget the rank and file of the Lord's army. Do not let the eyes rest exclusively upon the front rank, but let us love *all* whom Christ loves! Let us value all Christ's servants. It is better to be God's dog than to be the devil's darling. It were better to be the meanest Christian than to be the greatest sinner. If Christ is in them and they are in Christ, and you are a Christian, let your heart go out towards them.

And now, finally, may Divine Grace, mercy and peace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ. And may we labor to promote unity and love among His people. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly. May we, therefore, in patience possess our souls. O that those who are not yet numbered among the people of the Lord may be brought in through faith in Jesus Christ to His Glory! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 16.

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THE PASTOR'S PARTING BLESSING

NO. 988

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

*"The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."
Romans 16:24.*

THE Christian is a man of generous actions but his wishes go far beyond his deeds. Where he cannot be beneficent he is benevolent. If he cannot actually accomplish good for all, he anxiously desires it. If it is not in his power to confer grace upon any, yet he prays that God would give His Divine Grace to all the brotherhood. His heart entertains thousands, though his house might overflow with ten. His liberal desires feed nations, even though his purse is so scant that he cannot afford more than a penny for a poor child.

God, whose Providence limits our ability, has set no measure to our *willingness*. Our wishes may be boundless though our powers are contracted, and this will be good for ourselves and not useless to others. Christ never came into the world to make individual professors of it isolated—like the icebergs which float away on the wide sea in solitary terribleness. Neither is it intended that we should be so anxious for our own salvation as to be indifferent to the welfare of others.

True religion is not a separating and repelling force, but rather, like attraction, it draws individual atoms into one body and holds them together. It does not shiver to fragments, but welds into one. It is a loadstone, not a whirlwind. God in His Grace gathers together in one body in Christ Jesus all His scattered ones, and the same Spirit who constrains us to love God leads us to love our Brother, also. A loving spirit, when it can actually do no more, naturally seizes upon the ever open outlet of good wishes, benedictions, and intercessions. Thus the great heart of the Apostle relieved itself. Though he would have been willing to lay down his life for the Brethren, yet he did not think it idle to give them his blessing, nor did they reject it as worthless because it cost him nothing.

It was meet that he who had in so many ways proved his sincere love to the saints should in his letter give utterance to it by pronouncing inspired blessings upon them. Thus wrote the Apostle of the Gentiles to those he longed to serve, "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." We have dropped, to a great extent, the custom of having the benediction pronounced by the minister upon the people. The minister, as a rule, rather turns it into a prayer than pronounces it as his own personal blessing. I am not certain that it is a great improvement.

The dread of anything like priest-craft has led us to this custom. It may be, however, that in avoiding an evil we have missed a good. Are benedictions sinful or vain? Are the blessings of good men of no value? Can we no more say, "Peace be to this house," and hope that our peace shall rest

upon it? May not Jacob nowadays bless the two sons of a beloved Joseph? Will it be a mere form if an Isaac should invoke a blessing on his descendants, or a departing servant of God, like Moses, pronounce a benediction on his people?

I confess I would not treat lightly my father's blessing or the benediction of my mother. And though neither father nor mother can, by their mere wish, confer anything upon us, yet who would wish them to depart this life without having bequeathed us the legacy of their blessing? Like Joseph, you may bring your lads to receive their grandsire's blessing if the old man is yet alive—nor need you suspect yourself of being superstitious. Many there are who have had no other heritage than a father's blessing, and have counted themselves rich because of it!

Now, if the blessing of a natural father and mother may be considered valuable without attributing too much to men, I think so may the blessing of those spiritual parents who have been made useful to our souls. I was reading in the life of Caesar Malan an incident which touched my heart, and I feel no scruple in quoting it in this connection. In traveling through one of the valleys of Switzerland he met with a woman who told him that her father was dying, but that he was comforted and cheered by reading a little book.

Being unknown by any one in the village, Malan stepped into the room and sat by the dying man's bed, and was delighted to find that the book which had led to the man's conversion was written by himself. His son, who was his companion, thus describes the scene—"The old man exclaimed, 'Ah, had I not been aged and infirm, I should long ago have gone there to see the good Mr. Malan. Look here, Sir, you cannot think how earnestly I have entreated the Lord that I might see him before I died.

"For a long time I thought He would grant my desire, but I'm afraid I shall have to give it up.' I stole a glance at my father, who was sitting silently looking at his hands. 'What is the name of the book you refer to?' he suddenly enquired as he raised his head. 'Stay,' was the reply, 'here it is, it's always by me,' and he drew from under his pillow a well-worn copy of one of the earliest editions of my father's hymns, and handed it to my father. 'Do you sing any of these, then?' asked my father as he turned over the leaves.

"'Oh, Jeannette knows some of them. She often sings them to me, and I derive pleasure and profit whenever I hear them,' adding, as though speaking to himself, 'If I could only see the dear gentleman who wrote those beautiful hymns. He must be a good Christian.' 'Listen, Brother,' said my father, 'this young gentleman and I have just come from Geneva.' 'You have come from Geneva? Then perhaps you have seen Mr. Malan?' 'Certainly, I have. We all know him well and I can assure you that if he were here he would remind you that he has only been a feeble and imperfect instrument of good to you. And he would speak to you, above all, not of himself, a poor sinner as you are, but of the eternal Grace and perfection of our blessed Lord.'

"The conversation lasted a few moments longer. My father prayed. Then, when we had sung together one of the hymns which Jeannette knew, he prepared to leave, telling her that he was to preach the next day,

Sunday, at Motiers. When he had got to the door, however, he stopped. And returning once more to the bed where the old man was lying with folded hands, said to him with emotion, 'My Father, God Himself, to whom you will so soon depart, has granted your prayer. I am Malan of Geneva, your Brother in the faith of the blessed Savior.'

"The poor old man, fixing his streaming eyes upon him in a long and ardent gaze, and slowly raising his trembling hands, exclaimed, 'Bless me, bless me before I die! You, whom I have so long prayed God to send to me, bless me now that I have had the joy of seeing you.' Falling on his knees at the bedside, my father replied, in tones which betrayed his deep feeling, 'You ought rather to bless me, for you are old enough to be my father. But all blessing comes from God alone. Let us once more ask it of Him together.' And folding in his arms the lowly Brother, whom he felt he should never see again till they met in the better country, my father invoked upon him, 'the peace which Jesus gives,' and we left the hamlet."

I am ready to confess that there are those to whom I feel—with the same respect—without the slightest worship of men or care about mental attainments, or mere office. I recognize those from whom I would gladly receive a blessing. Priest-craft assumes to be the divinely appointed channel of communicating with Heaven, and this monstrous presence is so abominable that we would sooner have the curse than the blessing of a man hardened to such imposture. But men who live near to God and have power with Him in prayer, do, without assuming it, become by their prayers and fervent wishes the means of procuring many blessings for those whom they bear upon their hearts.

I have even now, ringing in my ears, the fervent benediction of a venerable minister whose daily prayers for me, and reading of my sermons, constrained him to make a considerable journey that he might in person pronounce a blessing upon my head. Job thought it no little thing that the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and that when the eyes saw him, then it blessed him.

Good men, in their benedictions, are moved to give us something more than words—for they mean what they say. And they appeal to Heaven to make true their wishes, and their wishes, being prayers minted in another form, become current coin of the realm and greatly enrich us—for they bear the approving stamp of Heaven upon them. I look upon the Apostle's words, though they are venerable with years, as dropping Heaven's own dew upon us tonight. I hear their mellow tones ringing all along the centuries and scattering blessings right through the ages.

Their music is not silent, nor is it impotent at this hour—"The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with *you* all" is Paul's present and ever new blessing. He being dead yet speaks, and his Lord yet hears his holy prayer. Long has the benediction lain in the Epistle like the wheat in the Egyptian catacomb, but there is a vitality in it yet. Lo, it buds and brings forth good to us after the lapse of eighteen centuries! May every one of us feel an unction from the Lord attending these words. May the Apostle bless us now, yes, better may the Apostle and High Priest of our profession pronounce anew this benediction over us.

Let us now analyze the text itself. The first thing we will speak upon is this—*what is meant by the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ?* Secondly, *with whom is it to be?*—the Apostle says, “Be with you all.” And thirdly, *and what will be the effect if it being with us all?*

I. Let us first enquire WHAT IS THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST WHICH THE APOSTLE WOULD HAVE TO BE WITH US ALL? He repeats the expression verbatim in his Epistles to the Corinthians, and to the Philippians, and also in his second letter to the Thessalonians. He closes each of these Epistles with precisely the same benediction. Therefore he felt it to be fitting and weighty.

Does he mean by this, “Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” *the Grace which was revealed in Christ the Savior?* That Grace of God which shone in the gift of a Savior to the sons of men? That Grace which was displayed in the coming of Christ to be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh? Does he mean that which was manifest in the whole life of Christ on earth, was revealed especially in the death of Christ, and which is still to be seen since in His resurrection and ascension—in His intercession, and in His standing as our Representative before the Father’s Throne?

Grace was gloriously revealed in the Person of Christ when He became the Incarnate God, and none can consider Him as uniting in one Person God and Man without discerning much love, and perceiving that it was meant to make way for still more clear displays of mercy. Does not the benediction desire for us a part in the blessing which lies couched in the Messiah’s Person, in whom all nations are blessed? Does the Apostle mean *the Grace which comes to us through Christ* as well as that which is shown to us *in Christ?*

Our Lord, as it were, took out of the riverbed of Grace the great rock which blocked up the water courses, and now along the wide and open channel—

***“Immortal joys come streaming down,
Joys like His griefs, immense, unknown.”***

Christ did not create the Father’s love to us—the elect were loved of God before all worlds—and Christ is the *gift* of that love, not the *cause* of it. Calvary did not procure the Father’s love to us, but the love of God towards us could not, by reason of our sins, and the penalty due, come to us so as to be enjoyed by us. It could not bring to us the blessings which we now possess until Jesus had finished transgression, and made an end of sin.

Both the Grace implied in the sending of the Messiah, and the Grace which flows to us through Him, are here intended. Does the Apostle also mean *the Grace which comes to us WITH Christ?*—by which I mean those peculiar blessings which come to souls who abide in Christ, who commune with Him, walk with Him, work for Him and are raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Him? They are not only saved, but something more. They are not drowning men barely landed on the shore, and hardly possessed of life—they have life abundantly—walk in the light of God’s countenance, and go from strength to strength.

If so, there is an exquisite sweetness of meaning in his benediction. May it be richly fulfilled in each of us. May our union to Jesus be so clearly apprehended that we may experience no stinted measure of vital

energy but rather may be filled with all the fullness of God. Surely Paul means nothing less than this! But he intended more, for his is no niggardly invocation. *Grace in Christ, Grace through Christ, and Grace with Christ*—put these together, and even then you have not grasped the whole of it! He desires for us *all the Grace that is in anyway connected with Christ*. For you will have remarked that in the close of the second of Corinthians, where he gives the same benediction, he extends it, “The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, *and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit* be with you all.”

Here he gives it the shorter form, but he, doubtless, intended it to comprehend all the rest. He really wishes that the one comprehensive blessing of the Divine Unity—even all the triple blessing of the sacred Trinity—may abide with all those who by faith were one with Christ, and therefore were Beloved of the Apostolic soul. “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” then includes all the Grace secured to us in the Everlasting Covenant.

In many of his Epistles the Apostle sums up with a shorter word than our text, and yet in some respects a fuller one, “*Grace be with you all.*” You have this in Colossians, in the first Epistle to Timothy, in Titus, and in Hebrews. He says, “Grace be with you all,” without mentioning any Person of the Godhead. So that “the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” is synonymous with Grace as such, and comprehends all the various displays of Grace which, in other passages of Scripture, referred to the various Persons of the Godhead. He wishes the saints all the Grace they need, all the Grace they can desire. All the Grace the Infinite God can give.

How truly do I echo his great prayer that all Grace may be with you all. Coming to particulars more closely. When it is the desire of our heart that the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with you all, we mean, first, *may the love of Jesus Christ be with you, and may you know that you have it.* May it be so with you that you may distinctly and beyond all doubt know that Jesus loves you, and the fact being ascertained, may you drink deep into the fullness of its meaning. May you be ravished with the assurance that the Ever-Blessed Son of God has set His affection upon you, has loved you from before the foundation of the world, loves you now even as the Father loves Him, and will love you when Heaven and earth shall, like a scroll, be rolled up, and like an outworn vesture be put away.

O that you all might be in such a condition that the love of Christ might shine full into your souls—a noon-tide without a solitary cloud, a summer without a single blight. May you know for sure, by the witness of the Holy Spirit, that you have passed from death unto life and that the love of God is shed abroad within your souls. What a happy Church would it be were all the members in such a condition!

But, alas, we see one fearful, another doubting, and a third declining. Here is one living at a distance from Christ, and another saying, “O that I knew where I might find Him!” May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sense of a conscious enjoyment of His love be the habitual possession of your hearts and minds. Paul intends also as much as this—*may the mercy as well as the love of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!* May that mercy be shown to you by the full pardon of all your sins and your knowledge that they are pardoned. May your conscience be purged from dead

works, and not merely cleansed, but cleansed so that you may know it to be clean. The great mercy is to have no suspicion that sin is left upon you, but to be certain that every transgression of every sort has been forever put away through the precious blood which cleanses from all sin.

Alas, there are many Christians who, even in their prayers, do not appear to understand or distinguish between themselves and the unconverted. I believe it to be our duty to ask for pardon every day. Our Lord in the model prayer teaches us to say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." But we should not confuse that petition of a child to its father with the first supplication for pardon which befitted us as aliens before we were brought near. As guilty sinners we stood before the Judge, but now we are no longer criminals for there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

We need not say with Peter in his enthusiastic folly, "Wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head," for the Master tells us that we have been washed and are clean, and therefore we need only to wash our feet, for we are, in Him, clean every whit. May you not, therefore, come before Him with what is too often used as a mere parrot cry, "Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners." If you Believers are miserable sinners you ought not to be. You are sinners, but you ought not to be miserable.

You have been forgiven. You are justified by faith in Christ Jesus. Is all this nothing? How can you ignore it and still speak of yourself as you would have spoken before you were saved? Is the Lord's pardon nothing that you still complain of being condemned? Do you despise the Divine forgiveness? You are a child of God, and do you still use the language of a slave and feel no liberty in your soul? I fear that what is imagined to be humility is a mangle-mangle of hypocrisy and unbelief. If you are saved it is sheer cant to call yourself a miserable sinner! You ought to be one of the happiest of beings, and rejoice that the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ abides with you!

Furthermore, Beloved, *may you constantly be the subjects of Christ's work.* That will give yet another meaning to this benediction. The Lord Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, is daily carrying on in Believers a purifying work. For He sits as a refiner and He purifies the sons of Levi. He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap. Let us pray that however trying it may be to us, and whatever rough providences it may involve, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with us all in this respect. May our prayer be, "Refining Fire, go through my heart!"

Let the winnowing fan be used. Let our chaff be driven away—there is not a particle of it we would wish to retain. We desire to be sanctified—spirit, soul, and body—through Him who leads His people without the camp that they may be separated unto Himself. May we walk in the light as He is in the light, and so have fellowship one with another, and may the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanse us from all sin.

May the benediction rest upon you also in another manner. May you, Brethren, *be possessors of Christ's peace.* One of the benedictions frequently used by the Apostle expressly mentions peace. "Grace, mercy, and peace be with you." Where Christ is, peace reigns within. He is the Peacemaker, yes, Peace itself. Conscience is quieted, the heart rests in God, the

whole man casts anchor—the boat has reached its haven when it has come to the Well-Beloved. O that you may enjoy this Grace of Christ, for it was His prerogative to say, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”

It was His delight to pronounce upon His disciples the word, “Peace be unto you.” May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds by Christ Jesus. If you are troubled with family concerns, may you roll your burden upon the Lord and find rest. Or if you are vexed about your past transgressions, may you confess the sin unto the Lord and hear His blood speak peace to your soul. Whatever it is that troubles you, may He comfort you and give you His peace—the deep, unruffled calm which reigns in His own bosom.

If there is one gem of Grace which, beyond all others, especially belongs to the Lord Jesus, it is the lovely pearl of peace. He is the Lord and giver of peace, the Prince of Peace, and the Messenger of the Covenant of Peace. Brethren, may we live in peace with God, with men, and with ourselves. We all say “Amen” to that prayer. Would not Paul also desire for us *that we may exhibit in ourselves the Grace which shone so brightly in Christ, and was seen by men and angels to the glory of God the Father?*

You will never have Grace, dear Friends, in the same measure as the Lord Jesus had it (rather let me correct myself, for He had Grace without measure), but you may receive and exhibit the same Grace in your measure. O that you and I may have a high degree of it! Grace displayed itself in the Lord Jesus in a Character absolutely perfect, in which not one of the virtues was absent or exaggerated, and in which not a single fault could be found. You can depict the character of John, for a prominent excellence is visible. You can describe the characteristics of Peter. You can give an idea of Paul—for each of these is like a separate gem, and each one has its own special brightness and color—and I may add each one has their own peculiar *flaws*.

But when you come to the altogether Lovely One your descriptive powers fail you, for He is like the high priest's breastplate in which all the jewels met in harmony. The excellences of all the excellent are in Him, and none of the flaws. In Him all perfections meet to make up one perfection. All the spices, the myrrh, the aloes, the cassia, the sweet cinnamon and whatever else may be grateful to God and to holy men—all these divinely compounded with the art of the apothecary, and well-balanced as to the proportions—are to be found in one rare anointing oil upon the Person of our Well-Beloved.

O may that Grace be with you which was poured upon our glorious Head and continues to distil to the skirts of His priestly garments! May His sacred unction anoint and perfume us all! It was poured on Jesus that it might drop on us. He received this fullness that we might receive out of Him Grace for Grace. He does not possess Grace that He may store it up for Himself, for He needs it not. But He has all fullness in Himself on purpose for us that we may partake of it both now and forever. O that we may manifest it in our lives both public and private, in the emotions of our hearts, and the words of our mouths! May men in all the actions of

our lives observe that we are heirs of Grace by our gracious conversation, knowing us as a tree is known by its fruit.

May this Grace be in you, and abound that you may not be barren nor unprofitable. I am far from having brought out all the various shades of meaning which lie within this ancient benediction. For as the Holy Spirit, like the sun, shines on this crystal text, it flashes with all the colors of the rainbow. It is a very full, rich, and large benediction. Even Aaron himself could not pronounce a fuller blessing. The Lord fulfill it to every one of you, according to the riches of His glory by Christ Jesus!

II. Secondly, WITH WHOM IS THIS GRACE TO BE? "With you all." The Apostle meant with all the saints. He did not actually limit it in words to the saints, but he evidently intended to be so understood. For he was writing "to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," and to them he said, "Grace be with you all." We will not go beyond the Apostolic wish, neither will we stop short of it. This moment I say to you, "the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with *you* all"—with all the members of this Church, and all my fellow servants in Christ Jesus. The like Grace be with all the Churches, with all the chosen of God in every land.

But at the present I may be permitted to utter this as my personal and special wish for you, my beloved Flock at this time, when for a season I shall be absent from you. The demands of health call me away, and what shall I leave with you, my dear companions, my own children, my reverend elder Brethren, my beloved fellow soldiers? What better word shall be the last to salute your ears from my lips till I return to you? How can my affection frame a fitter utterance than that which fell from Paul's pen, when he added to the Apostolic benediction his own personal love, and wrote to the Corinthians, "*The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus*"?

Now, why with you all? Is it not *because you all need it*? There is not one among you who can do without the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. You experienced Christians are greatly in danger when you think your mountain stands firm and will never be moved. You wise and intelligent Believers are in sore peril when you dream that you can battle with error apart from your Master. Conscious weakness is our true strength. "When I am weak then am I strong." The boldest, bravest, wisest, most judicious, and most experienced among you need the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and certainly the babes in Grace and the weaklings of the flock require it no less.

More delightful, still, is it to remember that *you all may have it*. You all, having believed in Jesus, have Him to be your own, and you may surely have His Grace. He who gave you Christ has virtually given you all the Grace that is in Christ Jesus. Indeed, we know from the best authority that Grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. And, Beloved, *there is no Grace which you may not have, no Grace which you ought to be content to go without*. If a line should be drawn in Christian experience and a decree should be passed that such-and-such a Christian should never advance beyond that mark, you might feel very unhappy. And yet some of you have drawn such a line for yourselves—and you are *not* unhappy.

It is grievous to see how we stunt and dwarf ourselves—and appear to be content with a very poor and feeble form of spiritual life. May the Holy Spirit breathe into your hearts a higher ambition, for rest assured if you do not possess the whole land of Canaan it is because you are too idle to drive out the Hivites and Jebusites. For there is not one of all the clans but what you may conquer, though they have chariots of iron. There is not a brook that runs with milk and honey but you may drink of it—if you have but faith and prayer enough to win it for yourselves. He gives more Grace—seek to enjoy it.

My dear Brethren in office, my esteemed Deacons and Elders, I pray that you may have the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ abundantly so that you may walk before us as becomes fathers in Israel, that you may be examples to the flock. That none of the weaker sort may see in you any occasion of stumbling—but much that may lead them forward in the Divine life. You who are especially the workers among us, you Sunday school teachers, you who have the conduct of our adult classes, you who preach for the Master in the streets, or go from house to house with your tracts—I pray that the Grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all.

Whatever your form of work may be, it will come to nothing without His Grace. But you may have it, and I pray you are not content unless you possess it abundantly. Among you there are members of the Church who are very poor. There are, in proportion, probably more poor among us than in another Church of our order and standing. For this I devoutly thank God for I can harshly conceive a Church to be rich in Grace which has not in it many of the Lord's poor. And this I pray, that the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with you who are the sons and daughters of poverty, to enable you to be patient, to sanctify your trials, to make your homes bright with the Presence of the Lord, and to keep you from envy and murmuring.

May your rooms be palaces to you because the King visits you and feasts you with His love. May that same Grace, however, be with the few among us who may be said to be rich—for how much Grace do the wealthy require, that they may be kept from the temptations which beset their position, and may be delivered from the cankering influence of riches? May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, my Brothers and Sisters, that, consecrating your substance habitually to Christ, it may bring with it many comforts to your souls as well as to your bodies. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, dear Brothers and Sisters, who are ripening for Heaven.

May it be light with you at eventide and may your rest be glorious. Though near to Glory, you know right well that you are still dependent upon Grace, and I trust you will abundantly enjoy it. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, young Beginners who have just put on the harness. May you live long in the Christian Church, and serve your Master well. Amid the temptations of youth, and the trials of manhood, may you stand fast and glorify your Lord. Some of you are strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you to keep you strong. If you have trod down strength, and have

had the hind's feet with which you have stood upon your high places, may you never lose your position, but maintain your joy.

And as for you who are doubting and fearing—the timid ones of the flock—may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, too, for He carries the lambs in His bosom and does gently lead those that are with young. A bruised reed He will not break, and the smoking flax He will not quench. While I make the benediction thus as large as the Apostle did, let me remind you very affectionately that there *is a limit* to it. He is speaking to the saints, and to none else. Have you noticed the form this benediction takes in the Epistle to Philemon, and in the Epistle to the Galatians? There the Apostle puts it thus, “The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

It is only meant, then, for spiritual-minded men and women—for such as have been born again of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ cannot be with the carnal. He will not give the blessing of His Presence to those who mind earthly things. When you have been born again you can understand the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, but not till then. May that gracious work of regeneration be worked in every soul here.

The Apostle limits it, again, in his Epistle to the Ephesians. He there utters a desire that the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with, “all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” You cannot expect the blessing of Christ to abide with you if you are hypocritical, or formal, or self-deceived. Sincerity is a necessary index of the Grace of Christ being with you. Do you, dear Hearer, in sincerity love Jesus Christ? If you do, may His Grace be with you! One other limit the Apostle gives. Let me read it to you. I can never read these words either in public or in private without a conscious shudder, but they demand an attentive consideration by us all.

You will find them at the close of the first Epistle to the Corinthians: “The salutation of me, Paul, with my own hand. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” What a limitation is this! He pronounces a solemn curse upon those whom he feels he cannot bless, because they are so base as not to love the infinitely loving Jesus. “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed when the Lord comes,” for that is the meaning of the words, “Anathema Maranatha”—“cursed when the Lord comes,” or, “As surely cursed as the Lord comes.”

Whoever, then, loves not Christ is cursed! Oh, God, save us all from a curse so well-deserved. For not to love such a generous Savior! Not to love One so lovely and so gracious! Not to love one who loved His enemies, and laid down His life for sinners—is in itself to be accursed! That spirit is withered already, Savior, that loves You not! To be able to withhold its affections from so lovely an object is, in itself, a doom. God save you from it! May there not be one among you here upon whom that curse may come, but “may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.”

III. And now as this must serve for my parting word for some little time, let me explain, in the third place, what will be THE RESULT TO YOU IF THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IS WITH YOU ALL. First, there *will be a blessed consequence to you God-ward.* As you have this

Grace of Christ in you, you will love God better. You will seek His face more often. You will pray with more confidence, and more vehemence. You could not have the Grace of Christ without being much in prayer, for this eminently distinguished His Character. If you have the Grace of Christ you will walk with God, even as He did.

Your communion with the Father will be closer then before. It will be less interrupted. It will become thorough. O that I might see a Church made up wholly of saints who live in habitual communion with God! I know it is not so with all in this Church. I know there are many out of our four thousand members who walk with God, but I mourn that there are others who follow afar off. May this affectionately-intended remark raise in each heart the personal enquiry, "Lord, is it I?" And if your hearts condemn any of you, may the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you most effectually that you may amend your ways.

The next beneficial effect *will extend to your fellow Church members*. If you have the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with you, you will love each other fervently with a pure heart. You will have compassion, one towards another. No one will seek his own, but every man his Brother's benefit. Suspicion, harsh judgment, envy, and jealousy will cease. Gossiping and foolish talking will come to an end. Alas, how much these things abound, and what sorrow they cause. When the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us, our speech will be to edification. We shall esteem others better than ourselves.

We shall rather see their excellences than their faults, while we shall each strive which can be of most service to the rest. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity!" By this shall all men know that you are Christ's disciples, if you have love, one towards another. May we be mutually enriched in all spiritual gifts and Graces by having communion in the Grace which is in Christ Jesus. Eighteen years and more have we now dwelt together in union and prosperity, and that this same Grace may continue with us through twice another eighteen years, if the Lord spares us so long, is my soul's most fervent prayer.

Another admirable result will follow towards *your families and yourselves*. If the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with you, you will personally be much the happier. Your troubles will sit lightly upon you when Grace is fully within you. When they are seasoned with Grace, your joys will have a mellow taste in them than now. The family altar will become a reality. The servants will find the house a home, and the children will become children of God when the master and mistress are filled with the Grace of our Lord Jesus. Gracious men are a sure blessing to the neighborhoods in which they live. The sweet perfume of their family piety will blow out at the doors and windows and spread a balmy influence around.

As trades of an ill savor make a whole district nauseous, so saints, who have the sweet savor of Christ in them, render a region fragrant. Thus a blessing will flow out to *the world* which lies in darkness. If the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with us, we shall have all our thoughts and feelings towards sinners materially changed. We shall mourn over them with

intense compassion. Parents, you will not be able to look upon your unconverted children as you now do—holy sorrow will mingle with natural pleasure. Ah, he is a fine young man. He is growing up and is quite his mother's joy. Mother, if his soul is unsaved, do not so much as look at him without a tear.

"Ah," says the father, "there is my girl—what a lovely creature she is!" Is she converted? If not, think what a *fallen* creature she is. Employers, if you have Grace you will not go into your factories as you have done, and think of the "hands," but you will have pity on the "souls" there. Many sensations pass through a man's mind if he stands at a window in Cheapside and sees the rush of the living river. It strikes me that the flow of our crowded streets is one of the most wonderful sights in the whole world. There go the thousands—tramp, tramp, tramp—on, on, on—without a pause. Thoughtful men watch the stream and calculate this and that, according to the manner of statistics.

But the right-minded Christian, contemplating the scene, has this consideration uppermost—"All these are immortal. How many, or how few of them, are on the road to bliss, and how many are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath?" Then will he breathe the prayer involuntarily, "Lord, have mercy upon this guilty city! Save the myriads of this modern Nineveh, and let transgressors learn Your ways." Oh, if the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ were with us, we should, like the Savior, often burst into tears over London, as He did over Jerusalem!

We should not trifle, as we now do, with opportunities of doing good. We should speak to ones and twos if we could reach no more, and Jesus' love would be our theme. Time compels me to cease, but before I leave you, my beloved Flock, I solemnly pronounce this benediction upon you—"The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." And my heart says, Amen, Amen, Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 16

P.S.—During our absence, we trust our ever-affectionate friends, both hearers and readers, will care for our various works and see that they do not lack pecuniary means. The College, the Orphanage and the Tract Distributors are always at work, and expending considerable sums. Mr. Blackshaw, Secretary, Tabernacle, Newington, will receive and acknowledge any aid rendered. To the God of Providence who supplies our needs through the willing offerings of His people, we look confidently. There will be no alteration in the publication of the Sermons during our absence. We have arranged that a Sermon shall appear each week, as usual.

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