

WHAT GOD CANNOT DO!

NO. 568

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***“God, that cannot lie.”
Titus 1:2.***

TRUTH once reigned supreme upon our globe and then earth was Paradise. Man knew no sorrow while he was ignorant of falsehood. The Father of Lies invaded the garden of bliss and with one foul lie he blighted Eden into a wilderness and made man a traitor to his God. Cunningly he handled the glittering falsehood and made it dazzle in the woman's eyes—“God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

Proud ambition rode upon that lie as a conqueror in his chariot and the city of Mansoul opened its gates to welcome the fascinating enemy. As it was a lie which first subjugated the world to Satan's influences, so it is by lies that he secures his throne. Among the heathen his kingdom is quiet and secure, because the minds of the people are deluded with a false mythology. The domains of Mahomet and the Pope are equally the kingdom of Satan and his reign is undisturbed, for human merit, priestly efficacy, and a thousand other deceptions buttress his throne. The darkness of ignorance, the dungeons of falsehood and the chains of superstition are the main reliance of that monster who oppresses all the nations with his infernal tyranny.

Since by the lie Satan now holds the world and maintains his power, he everywhere encourages lies and aids their propagation. Look about you and see what a prolific family falsehood has! The children of the untrue are as many as the frogs of Egypt, and like those plagues, they intrude into every chamber. The slime of falsehood may be seen upon most things, both in secular and religious life. You have lying news and garbled reports in print. And as for the flying gossip of the tongue, if it touches the characters of good men, beware of believing a word it utters. If you would not have complicity with those who make the lie, be not hasty to entertain it.

From the high places of the earth falsehood is not excluded. The untruth glides right royally from the kingly tongue, but is as much a lie as if the ragged mendicant had blurted it forth with low-lived oaths and curses. What is diplomacy for the most part? Is it not “the art of lying”? Was not he thought to be the best politician who used language to conceal his thoughts? In how many a conference have the plenipotentiaries labored which could overreach, dissimulate and intrigue to the greatest degree?

In the commerce of courts who knows not that flatteries and lies are the most abundant commodities? The art of king-craft, as practiced by the most high and mighty Prince James, whose name dishonors our English Bible, was only and simply the science of lying in the neatest possible manner. In these modern times, the difference between the promises of

the politicians and the performances in the House of Commons proves that the lie is still commonly patronized. Falsehood is everywhere. It is entertained both by the lowest and the highest. It permeates all society. It has ruined the whole of our race and so defiled the entire world that upright men exclaim, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!"

In the so-called religious world, which *should* be as the Holy of Holies, here, too, the lie has insinuated itself. Of old there were prophets who prophesied lies and dreamers of false dreams. And there were others who spoke the Word of God with such bated breath and after such a fashion that it was no longer the Truth as it came from God, but truth alloyed with human falsehood. It is so today. There are those wearing the vestments of God's priests who do not hesitate to profess what they do not believe. Such men are the priests of Hell. To wear a bishop's miter and teach infidelity—how shall I stigmatize it? It is nothing less than detestable hypocrisy and robbery.

And what shall I say of men of all creeds, all subscribing to the same articles and catechism when all the world knows they cannot all honestly believe the same thing and yet differ as much from one another as light from darkness? What shall I say but that shame covers my face that there should be so many ministers of God who are untrue to their convictions and continue to do and say what they feel to be unscriptural? In other quarters philosophy is *believed* and Christianity *professed*—the traditions of men are put in the place of God's Truth. The prophets prophesy lies and the people love to have it so.

Brethren, we have everywhere to battle with falsehood and if we are to bless the world we must confront it with sturdy face and zealous spirit. God's purpose is to drive the lie out of the world and let this be your purpose and mine. His Holy Spirit has undertaken to drive falsehood out of our hearts—be this *our* determination, in His strength—that it shall be cut up root and branch and utterly consumed. Then let us walk in the Truth of God. "Buy the Truth and sell it not," hold fast the Truth, speak the Truth in love and act the Truth in all our deeds, for so shall we be known to be the children of that God of whom our text asserts that He is "God, that cannot lie."

After wandering over the sandy desert of deceit, how pleasant is it to reach our text and feel that one spot, at least, is verdant with eternal Truth! Blessed be You, O God, for You cannot lie!

We will use our text in the following manner this morning—first, while we do not attempt to prove it, we will remind you of a few things which may confirm your confidence that God cannot lie so that our opening remarks shall be upon the truth of the text. Then secondly, we will speak upon the breadth of the text, endeavoring to show that we must give no narrow interpretation to the words before us, but must receive them with an extent of meaning not usual to the expression. And then, thirdly, we will try to use the text for our own improvement, arguing from it that if God cannot lie He ought to receive our loving confidence.

I. First, then, let us commune together awhile concerning THE TRUTH OF THE TEXT, not, as we have said, to prove it, because we all believe it,

but to confirm our confidence of it. I think we shall feel assured that God cannot lie when we remember that He is not subject to those infirmities which lead us into falsehood. Lord Bacon has said, "There are three parts in truth—first, the enquiry, which is the wooing of it. Secondly, the knowledge of it, which is the presence of it. And thirdly, the belief, which is the enjoyment of it."

In each of these three points, by reason of infirmity, men fail to be perfectly true. In the search after truth, our moral eye is not altogether clear and therefore we fail to see what we love not. We do not follow truth in a straight line, but are very liable to turn aside to the right hand or to the left, either to obey our prejudices or advance our profit. "Truth lies in a well," said the old philosopher. Many go down into that well to find Truth, but looking into the water they see their own faces and become so desperately enamored of their own beauty that they forget poor Truth, or dream that she is the counterpart of themselves.

Now the great God cannot be liable to this error, because there is no discovery of truth with Him. He needs not to search anything out, for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." When in Scripture that term is sometimes used—"Shall not God search this out?"—when we hear Him spoken of as "searching the heart and trying the reins of the children of men," it is not because He is not perfectly acquainted with all things, but only to set forth the certainty and accuracy of Divine knowledge.

God has no need to search, or if He had, having nothing in Him which should lead Him to make a dishonest search, He does not lie. When *we* have searched out the Truth of God *there* is the knowing of it. And here the falsehood gets a footing in the form of a sin of omission, for we often refuse to know all that we might know. It would be inconvenient, perhaps, for us to be too well acquainted with certain arguments, for then our prejudices must be given up and therefore we close our eyes to them for fear of knowing the truth.

Do not many men leave passages of Scripture altogether unread because they have no wish to receive the doctrines which are taught in them? Every time you refuse to give a hearing to God's Truth, you do in effect lie because you prefer not to know the Truth of God, which is really to prefer to hold error. Now nothing of this kind can ever happen with our only wise God. He knows all Truth, seeing it all at a glance and retaining it ever in His mind. In nothing is He ignorant, either willfully or otherwise.

He receives Truth as His own Beloved and when the world casts her out, she finds a happy shelter beneath His shield. We are quite clear that we frequently fall into the lie through a defect in our believing, for we sometimes know more than we care to believe. Truth is grasped by the understanding but thrust out by the affections. We know her as Peter knew his Lord and yet deny it after the same fashion as that disciple did his Master. Moreover, through weakness, we are led to doubt what we know to be God's Truth and even to speak unadvisedly with our lips.

Now this can never occur with God, since God is One and is not to be divided into parts and passions and His tongue can never be diverse from His heart. God's tongue *is* His heart and God's heart *is* His hand. God is

One. You and I are such that we can know in the heart, and yet with the tongue deny. But God is One and indivisible. God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Then again, the Scriptural idea of God forbids that He should lie. Just review your thoughts about God, if you can. What idea have you formed of Him? If you have read Holy Scripture and have gotten the slightest shadow of an idea of God, I think you will see that it is utterly inconsistent with the thrice Holy One, whose kingdom is over all, that He should lie. Admit the very possibility of His speaking an untruth and to the Christian there would be no God at all. The depraved mind of the heathen may imagine a monster to be a god who can live in adultery and in theft and in lying, for such the gods of the Hindus are described as being. But the enlightened mind of the Christian can conceive no such thing. The very word "God" comprehends everything which is good and great. Admit the lie and to us at once there would be nothing but the black darkness of Atheism. I could neither love, worship, nor obey a *lying* God.

Again, we all know that God is too wise to lie. Falsehood is the expedient of a fool. It is only a short-sighted man who lies. For some present advantage the poor creature who cannot see the end as well as the beginning states that which is not. But no wise man who can look far into the future ever thinks a lie to be profitable. He knows that Truth may suffer loss at first but that in the long run she is always successful. He endorses that worldly-wise proverb, that, "Honesty is the best policy" after all. And the man, I say, who has anything like foresight, or judgment, or wisdom, prefers always the straight line to the curve and goes directly to the mark, believing that this is in the end the best.

Do you suppose that God, who must know this, with an intensity of knowledge infinitely greater than ours, will choose the policy of the witless knave? Shall God, only wise, who sees the end from the beginning, act as only brainless fools will choose to behave themselves? Oh, it cannot be, my Brethren! God, the All-Wise, must also be All-True. And the lie, again, is the method of the little and the mean. You know that a great man does not lie. A good man can never be false. Put goodness and greatness together and a lie is altogether incongruous to the character.

Now God is too great to need the lie and too good to wish to do such a thing! Both His greatness and His goodness repel the thought. My dear Friends, what motive could God have for lying? When a man lies it is that he may gain something, but "the cattle on a thousand hills" are God's and all the beasts of the forest and all the flocks of the meadows. He says, "if I were hungry I would not tell you." Mines of inexhaustible riches are His and treasures of infinite power and wisdom. He cannot gain anything by untruth, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." Why, then, should He lie?

Men are false, oftentimes, to win applause. See how the sycophant cringes to the tyrant's foot and spawns his villainy. But God needs no honor and no fame, especially from the wicked. To Him it were the greatest disgust of His righteous soul to be loved by unholy creatures. His Glory is great enough even if there were no creatures! His own self-

contained Glory is such that if there were no eyes to see it and no ears to hear it, He would be infinitely glorious. He asks nothing—no respect and no honor of man—and therefore has He no need to stoop to the lie to gain it. And of whom, again, could He be afraid? Men will sometimes, under the impulse of fear, keep back or even contradict the truth, but can fear ever enter into the heart of the eternal God?

He looks down upon all nations who are in rebellion against Him and He does not even care to rise to put them down. “He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision!” Are not the chariots of the Lord twenty thousand, even thousands of angels? Even these are but as a drop in a bucket, when compared with the deep and infinite sea of His own power. Who, then, shall think that Jehovah needs to be afraid? “Fear,” and “Jehovah,” are two words which cannot meet together. Therefore, since there can be no motive whatever which should possibly lead God to lie, we feel well assured that the declaration of Paul is most certainly true—“God, that cannot lie.”

Moreover, dear Friends, we may add to all this the experience of men with regard to God. It has been evident enough in all ages that God cannot lie. He did not lie when Adam fell. It seemed a strange thing, that after all the skill and labor which had been spent in making such a world as this, so fair and beautiful, God should resign it to the dominion of Satan and drive the man whom He had made in His own image, out of his home, his Eden, to labor in sweat and toil and suffering until he came to his grave. But God did it and the fiery sword at the gate of Eden was proof that God could not and would not lie.

He might come to Adam and bemoan himself, crying, “Adam, where are you?” as if He pitied him and would, if it had been possible, have spared the stroke. But still it must be done and Eden is blasted and Adam becomes a wanderer upon the fruitless earth. Then afterwards, to quote a notable instance of God’s faithfulness, when the flood swept away the race of men and Noah came forth the heritor of a new Covenant, we have clear proof that God cannot lie. No flood has ever destroyed the earth since then. Partial floods there have been and parts of provinces have been inundated, but no flood has ever come upon the earth of such a character as that which Noah saw—therefore the rainbow, every time it is painted upon the cloud—is an assurance to us that God cannot lie.

Then He made an oath with Abraham that he should have a son and that his seed should become possessors of all the land in which the Patriarch had sojourned. Did not that come true? They waited in Egypt two hundred years. They smarted under the tyrant’s lash. They lay among the pots and yet, after all, with a high hand and with an outstretched arm He brought forth His people, led them through the wilderness and divided Canaan by lot to them, having driven out the inhabitants of the land before them. Since that time He made His Covenant with David and how fast has that stood! All the threats which He has uttered against the enemies of Israel—how surely have they been fulfilled!

Last of all and best of all, when the fullness of time was come, did not God send forth His own Son, born of a woman, made under the Law? Did He not, according to His ancient promise, lay upon Him the iniquity of us

all? Were not the Incarnation and death of our Lord Jesus the grandest proof of the truthfulness of God which could be afforded? His own Son must leave Heaven emptied of His Glory, must be given up to be despised and rejected of men, must be nailed to the accursed wood and be forsaken in the hour of His bitterest grief—herein is Truth, indeed! I say if this must be according to the promise and if this was according to the fact, then we have the clearest and the surest evidence that God cannot by any possibility be false to His own Word. Rightly has He earned the title which His Nature claims—“God, that cannot lie.”

May I not add as another argument that you have found Him true? You have been to Him, dear Friends, in many times of trial. You have taken His promise and laid it before His Mercy Seat. What do you say—has He ever broken His promise? You have been through the floods—did He leave you? You have passed through the fires—were you burned? You have cried to Him in trouble—did He fail to deliver you? O you poor and needy ones, you have been brought very low, but has He not been your Helper? You have passed hard by the gates of the grave and Hell has opened its horrid jaws to swallow you up, but are you not today the living monuments of the fidelity of God to His promise and the veracity of every Word of the Most High God? Let these things, then, refresh your memories that you may the more confidently know that He is “God, that cannot lie.”

II. Let us pass on to look at THE BREADTH OF MEANING IN THE TEXT. When we are told in Scripture that God cannot lie there is usually associated with the idea the thought of *immutability*. As for instance—“He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent.” The word “lie,” here includes beyond its ordinary meaning the thought of *change*, so that when we read that God cannot lie, we understand by it not only that He cannot say what is untrue, but that having said something which *is* true, He never changes from it and does not by any possibility alter His purpose or retract His Word.

This is very consolatory to the Christian, that whatever God has said in the Divine purpose is never changed. The Decrees of God were not written upon sand, but upon the eternal brass of His unchangeable Nature. We may truly say of the sealed Book of the Decrees, “Has He said and shall He not do it? Has He purposed and shall it not come to pass?” We read in Scripture of several instances where God apparently changed, but I think the observation of the old Puritan explains all these, He says, “God may will a change, but He cannot change His will.” Those changes of operation which we sometimes read of in Scripture did not involve any change in the Divine purpose!

God, for instance, sent to warn Hezekiah that according to the common course of nature he must die, and yet afterwards fifteen years were added to his life—God’s purpose having been all along that Hezekiah should live till the end of the fifteen years. But still His purpose equally included that Hezekiah should be brought so near to the gates of death that in the ordinary course of nature he must die. And then that the miracle should come in was still part of the purpose, that Hezekiah might be cured in a supernatural manner and be made to live nearer to his God in consequence. God wills a change, but He never changes His will.

And when the Last Great Day shall come, you and I shall see how everything happened according to that hidden roll wherein God had written with His own wise finger every thought which man should think, every word which he should utter and every deed which he should do. Just as it was in the Book of Decree, so shall it transpire in the roll of human history. God never changes, then, as to His purpose and here is our comfort. If He has determined to save us and we know He has, for all who believe in Him are His elect, then we shall be saved. Heaven shall never by any possibility be defeated by Hell. Hell and earth may combine together to destroy a soul which rests upon Christ, but while God's Decree stands fast and firm, that chosen soul is safe! And since that Decree never can be removed, let us take confidence and rejoice.

No promise has ever been altered and no threat, either. Still is His promise sure. "I have not said unto the seed of Jacob, seek you My face in vain." No new decrees have been passed repealing the past. We can never say of God's Book, as we can of old law books, that such-and-such an act is obsolete. There is no obsolete Statute in God's Book. There stand promises, as fresh, as new, as vigorous and as forceful today as when they first dropped from the mouth of God. The words, then, "God, that cannot lie," include the very gracious and precious doctrine that He cannot by any possibility change.

But we must not, while talking in this manner, forget the primary meaning, that He cannot be false in His thoughts, Words, or actions. There is no shadow of a lie upon anything which God thinks, or speaks, or does. He cannot lie in His prophecies. How solemnly true have they been! Ask the wastes of Nineveh! Turn to the mounds of Babylon! Let the traveler speak concerning Idumea and Petra. Turn even to the rock of Sidon and to Your land, O Immanuel! We may boldly ask the traveler, "Has He said and has He not done it? Have His words fallen to the ground? Has God's curse been an idle Word?" No, not in one single case.

All the words of the Lord are sure. The prophecies will be as true as they have been and the Book of Revelation, though we may not comprehend it today, will doubtless be fulfilled in every stroke and in every line and we shall marvel how it was that we did not know its meaning. But at present it is enough for us to know its Truth—its meaning shall only be learned as the events explain the prophesy. As God is true in His prophecies, so is He faithful to His promises. Have you and I, dear Friends, a confidence in these? If so, let us try them this morning.

Sinner, weeping and bemoaning yourself, God will forgive you your sin if you believe in Jesus! If you will confess that He is faithful and just to forgive you, He has promised to do so and He cannot lie. Christian, if you have a promise today laid upon your heart, if you have been pleading it, perhaps for months and it has not been fulfilled, I pray you gather fresh courage this morning and again renew your wrestling. Go and say, "Lord, I know You cannot lie, therefore fulfill Your Word unto Your servant."

If the promises of God were not kept, God would lie. They must, therefore, be fulfilled. And let us believe that they will be and go to God, not with a wavering spirit which half hopes that the Words may be true, but with the full assurance that they cannot fail! As certainly as we know that

day and night shall not cease and that summer will not fail, so surely let us be convinced that every Word of the Lord shall stand!

His threats are true, also. Ah, Sinner, you may go on in your ways for many a day, but your sin shall find you out at last. Seventy years God's long-suffering may wait over you, but when you shall come into another world you shall find every terrible Word of Scripture fulfilled. You shall then know that there is a place, "where their worm dies not and the fire is not quenched." You shall then experience the "wailing and gnashing of teeth" unless you repent. If you will believe in Jesus you shall find the promise true! But if you will not, equally sure shall be the threat.

This is a dreadful part of the subject to those who are out of Christ, who have never been partakers of the Holy Spirit. It will be in vain for you to cry to Him, then, and ask Him, then, to change His mind. No, though you should weep oceans of tears, Hell's flames cannot be quenched nor can your soul escape from the place to which it is finally doomed! Today, while mercy is preached to you, lay hold upon it! But remember, if you do not, as God cannot lie He cannot suffer you to escape—you must feel the weight and terror of His arm.

We might thus go through everything which concerns God, from prophesy to promises and threats and onwards and multiply observations but we choose to close this point by observing that every word of instruction from God is most certainly true. It is astounding how much sensation is caused in the Christian Church by the outbreak, every now and then, of fresh phases of infidelity. I do not think that these alarms are at all warranted. It is what we must expect to the very end of this dispensation.

If all carnal minds believed the Bible, I think the spiritual might almost begin to doubt it. But as there are always some who will attack it, I shall feel none the less confident in it. Really, the Book of God has stood so many attacks from such different quarters that to be at all alarmed about it shows a very childish fear. When a rock has been standing all our lifetime and has been known to stand firmly throughout all the ages of history, none but foolish people will think that the next wave will sweep it away.

Within our own short life—say some five-and-twenty years' recollection—have we not remembered, I was about to say almost as many as five-and-twenty shapes of infidelity? You know it must change about every twenty years at least, for no system of infidelity can live longer than that! There was the witty system of objection which Voltaire introduced. And how short-lived was that! Then came the bullying, low-lived, blackguard system of Tom Paine. And how short-lived was its race! Then, in more modern times, unbelief took the shape of Secularism—what particular shapes it takes now we scarcely know—perhaps Colensoism is the most fashionable—but that is dying out and something else will follow it.

These creations of an hour just live their little day and they are gone. But look at belief in Scripture and at Scripture itself. The Bible is better understood, more prized, and I believe, on the whole, more practiced than ever it was since the day when its Author sent it abroad into the world. It is still onward. And after all which has been done against it, no visible ef-

fect has been produced upon the granite wall of Scriptural Truth by all the pickaxes and boring rods which have been broken upon it.

Walking through our Museums nowadays, we smile at those who think that Scripture is not true. Every block of stone from Nineveh, every relic which has been brought from the Holy Land speaks with a tongue which must be heard even by the deaf adder of Secularism and which says, "Yes, the Bible is true and the Word of God is no fiction." Beloved, we may rest assured that we have not a Word in the Book of God which is untrue. There may be an interpolation or two of man's which ought to be revised and taken away, but the Book, as it comes from God, is Truth and nothing but Truth—not only containing God's Word, but *being* God's Word—being not like a lump of gold inside a mass of quartz, but all gold and nothing but gold!

And being Inspired to the highest degree—I will not say *verbally* inspired, but more than that—having a fullness more than that which the letter can convey! Having in it a profundity of meaning such as words never had when used by any other being, God having the power to speak a multitude of Truths at once. And when He means to teach us one thing according to our capability of receiving it, He often teaches us twenty other things which, for the time, we do not comprehend but which, by-and-by, as our senses are exercised, reveal themselves by the Holy Spirit. Every time I open my Bible I will read it as the Word of "God, that cannot lie." And when I get a promise or a threat, I will either rejoice or tremble because I know that these stand fast.

Dear Friends, this leads us, in closing this point, to say that when we read that passage—"God, that cannot lie"—we understand that His very Nature cannot lie, for He hates lies! Wherever there is a lie God is its Enemy. It was to overcome the lie of sin that God sent His Son to bleed. And every day the thoughts of God are centered upon the extermination of evil and the extension of His own Truth. Nothing can set forth in words to us the hatred and detestation which God has in His heart of anything which is untrue. O that we knew and felt this and would glow with the same anger, seeking to exterminate the false, slaying it in our own hearts and giving it nothing to feed upon in our temper, our conversation, or our deeds!

III. But I shall now come to make a practical use of the text, in the third place, by observing HOW WE OUGHT TO ACT TOWARDS GOD IF IT IS TRUE THAT HE IS A "GOD THAT CANNOT LIE." Brethren, if it is so that God cannot lie, then it must be the natural duty of all His creatures to believe Him. I cannot resist that conclusion. It seems to me to be as clear as noonday that it is every man's duty to believe the Truth of God, and that if God must speak and act Truth and Truth only, it is the duty of all intelligent creatures to believe Him.

Here is "Duty-faith" again, which some are railing at, but how they can get away from it and yet believe that God cannot lie, I cannot understand. If it is not my duty to believe in God, then it is no sin for me to call God a liar. Will anyone subscribe to that—that God is a liar? I think not. And if to think God to be a liar would be a most atrocious piece of blasphemy, then it can only be so on the ground that it is the natural and incumbent duty of every creature understanding the truthfulness of God to believe in

God! If God has set forth the Lord Jesus Christ as the Propitiation for sin and has told me to trust Christ, it is my *duty* to trust Christ, because God cannot lie.

And though my sinful heart will never believe in Christ as a matter of duty but only through the work of the Holy Spirit, yet faith does not cease to *be* a duty. And whenever I am unbelieving and have doubts concerning God, however moral my outward life may be, I am living in daily sin! I am perpetrating a sin against the first principles of morality. If I doubt God, as far as I am able I rob Him of His honor and stab Him in the vital point of His Glory. I am, in fact, living an open traitor and a sworn rebel against God upon whom I heap the daily insult of daring to doubt Him.

O my Hearers, there are some of you who do not believe in Christ! I wish you would look at your character and position in this light. You are not trusting in Christ for your salvation. Remember, "He that believes not God, has made Him a liar." Those are John's own Inspired Words and you are, every day that you are not a Believer in Christ, virtually writing upon your doorpost and saying with your mouth, "God is a liar. Christ is not able to save me. I will not trust Him. I do not believe God's promise. I do not think He is sincere in His invitation to me to come to Christ. I do not believe what God says."

Remember that you are living in such a state as this and may God the Holy Spirit impress you with a sense of the sin of that state. And feeling this your sin and misery, I pray God to lead you to cry, "Lord, I believe, help You my unbelief!" This, then, is our first practical conclusion from the fact that God cannot lie. Other thoughts suggest themselves. If we were absolutely sure that there lived on earth a person who could not lie, how would you treat him? You know there cannot be such a man! There may be a man who *will not* lie, but there cannot be a man of whom it may be said that he *cannot* lie, for alas, we have all the power of evil in us and we can lie and to a certain degree it is quite true that "all men are liars."

But if you could be certain that there was a man out of whose heart the black drop had been wrung and that he could not lie—how would you act towards him? Well, I think you would cultivate his acquaintance. If you are true yourselves, you would desire his friendship. You would say, "He is the friend for me! I have trusted in such-and-such a man and he has played the Judas. I asked counsel of another, and he was an Ahithophel. But if this man cannot lie, he shall be my bosom companion if he will accept me. And he shall be my counselor if he will but have the goodness to direct me."

I should expect to see a levee of all the good in the world waiting at the man's door! You know how the world, with all its sinfulness, does reverence the man who is true! We had an instance in our streets the other day of the good man and the true, who received homage of all and yet that man could lie. But inasmuch as we never have seen that he did, but his life has been straightforward, therefore have we paid him honor and deservedly so. Well now, if such is the case, should not all Christians seek more and more the friendship of God. "O Lord, be You my familiar Friend, my Counselor, my Guide. If You cannot lie I will lay bare my heart to You. I will tell You all my secrets. I will trust You with all the desires of my

heart. I know You can never betray me, or be unfaithful. Let there be a union established between my soul and Yours, and let it never be broken." Let communion with God be the desire of your hearts on the ground that He cannot lie.

If we knew a man who could not lie we should believe him, I think, without an oath. I cannot suppose that when he came into the court of justice they would pass him the Bible. No, his word would be better than the oath of ordinary men if he could not lie. You would not need any sign or evidence to prove what he said. You would take his word at once. So should it be with God. Ah, dear Friends, God has given us more than His Word, He has given us His Oath. And yet, strange is it that we who profess to be His children are vile enough to distrust our own Father. And sometimes, if He does not give us signs and evidences, we begin to distrust Him so that, after all, I am afraid we rather trust the signs than trust God and put more confidence in frames and evidences than we do in the naked promise, which is an atrocious sin, indeed!

Many Believers cannot be comfortable without signs and evidences. When they feel in a good frame of mind—ah, then God's promise is true! When they can pray heartily, when they can feel the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, then they say, "How God has kept His promise." Ah, but, my Brothers and Sisters, that is a *seeing* faith. "Blessed are they that have *not* seen and yet have believed." Faith is to believe in God when my heart is as hard as the nether millstone! When my frames are bad, when I cannot pray, when I cannot sing, when I can do nothing good. To say, "He has promised and will perform. He has said that whoever believes in Christ is not condemned. I do believe in Christ and therefore I am not condemned"—this is genuine faith.

Again, if we knew a man who could not lie we should believe him in the teeth of fifty witnesses the other way. Why, we should say, "they may say what they will, but they can lie." You might have good evidence that they were usually honest men, but you would say, "They can lie. They have the power of lying. But here is a man who stands alone and cannot lie. Then his word must be true!"

This shows us, Beloved, that we ought to believe God in the teeth of every contradiction. Even if outward Providence should come to you and say that God has forsaken you, that is only one. And even if another and another and another should come and fifty trials should all say that God has forsaken you, yet, as God says, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you," which will you take—the one promise of God who cannot lie, or the fifty outward Providences which you cannot interpret? I know what the devil has been whispering in your ear—

***"The Lord has quite forsaken you,
Your God will be gracious no more."***

But then, remember who has said, "Fear you not, for I am with you: be not dismayed, for I am your God." Which will you believe—the devil's insinuation, or God's own testimony? My dear Sister, you have been praying for a certain thing for years? You pray, you pray, and you pray again, and now discouragement arises! Unbelief says, "God will not hear that prayer! That prayer of yours does not come up before the Throne of God and there will be no answer." But the Lord has said, "Ask and it shall be given you.

Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you.” Which will you believe—your unbelief—the long months of weariness and the anxieties which prompted you to discouragement? Or will you believe in the naked promise?

Why, if God cannot lie, let us give Him what we would give to a man if he were of the same character—our full confidence even in the teeth of contradiction—for He is “God, that cannot lie.” If a man were introduced to us and we were certain that he could not lie, we should believe everything he said, however incredible it might appear to us. I shall have an appeal to every soul here present. It does seem very incredible at first sight that God should take a sinner, full of sin and forgive all his iniquities in one moment simply and only upon the ground of the sinner believing in Christ! I remember the time when it seemed to me utterly impossible that I could ever have my sins forgiven.

I had a clear sense of the value of pardon and this thought would be always ringing in my ears—“It is too good to be true that you should be pardoned. That you, an *enemy*, should be made into a child! That you who have gone on sinning against light and against knowledge, should yet rejoice in union to Christ. The thing is too good to be true!” But, beloved Friends, supposing it should seem too good to be true, yet, since you have it upon the testimony of One who “cannot lie,” I pray you believe it.

“But, Sir.” No! None of your “buts”! He cannot lie. “Ah, but.” Away with your “ahs” and your “buts,” for Jehovah cannot lie! He has said it, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” To believe is to trust Christ. If therefore you are trusting Christ, you must be saved. And whatever you may be, or whatever you may have done, if you will now trust Jesus Christ you have God’s Word for it—and He cannot lie—that you shall be saved! Come now, will you kick against the promise because of its greatness? Do not! Let your doubts and fears be hushed to sleep and now, with the promise of God as your pillow and God’s faithfulness as your support, lie down in peace and behold in faith’s open vision the ladder, the top of which leads to Heaven!

Trust the promise of God in Christ and depend upon it that He will be as good to you, even to *you*, as His own Word, and in Heaven you shall have to sing of the “God, that cannot lie.” I would that these weak words of mine, for I am very conscious of their feebleness this morning, may nevertheless have comfort in them for any who have been doubting and fearing—that they may trust my Lord. And sure I am that if they begin a life of faith, they will begin a life of happiness and of security! “The just shall live by faith,” and well may they do so, when they have trust in a “God, that cannot lie.”

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FIVE LINKS IN A GOLDEN CHAIN

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*"To Titus, my own [or, "true"] son after the common faith:
Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and
the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior."
Titus 1:4.*

AMONG the friends of Paul, Titus was one of the most useful and one of the best beloved. Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles and Titus was a Gentile. I should suppose that both his parents were Gentiles and, in this respect, he differed from Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess. Timothy would well serve as a preacher to the circumcision, but Titus would be a man after Paul's heart as a preacher to the Gentiles. He seems to have been a man of great common sense, so that, when Paul had anything difficult to be done, he sent Titus. When the collection was to be made at Corinth on behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem, Paul sent Titus to stir the members up and, with him, another brother to take charge of the contributions. Titus appears to have been a man of business capacity and strict honesty, as well as a man who could order the Church aright and preach the Gospel with power.

Paul was, on one occasion, comforted by the coming of Titus. At another time, he was sad because Titus was not where he had hoped to meet with him. Though we know little about him from the Acts of the Apostles, or anywhere else, he appears to have been in every way one of the ablest of the companions of Paul—and the Apostle takes care to mention him over and over again in his Epistles to the Galatians and to the Corinthians—rendering honor to whom honor is due. It is a great pity when eminent men forget those who help them and it is a sad sign when any of us do not gratefully feel how much we owe to our coworkers. What can any servant of God do unless he has kind friends to bear him up by their prayers and their help? Paul did not forget to mention his friend and helper, Titus.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in this particular verse, which I have chosen for my text, it seems to me that Paul has brought together five points in which he was one with Titus. It is a great blessing when Christian men are in union with each other and when they are willing to talk about the bonds that unite them. The more we can promote true unity among Christian men, the better. "First pure, then peaceable," must be our motto. First, the Truth of God—afterwards, unity in the Truth. We must not be content with merely contending for the faith—we must next fight the battles of life—and do all we can to note the points in which true Christians are agreed. I desire, at this time, to "stir up your pure minds

by way of remembrance,” to refresh your memories in regard to all the love that we have borne to one another in the days and years that are now past—and to exhort you to a still closer union in heart unto the Glory of God.

There are five things in which Paul seems to me to bring out clearly his union with Titus. I might call them, “five links in a golden chain.” I shall only briefly speak of each of the five and try to apply them to ourselves.

I. First, Paul says of himself and Titus, that THERE WAS A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM—“Titus, my own son.”

This was a very close relationship—not that Titus was Paul’s son after the flesh, for there was no natural relationship between them at all. Probably, in the early part of their lives, they had been total strangers to one another. But now, *Paul views Titus as his son*. We know, Beloved, many of us, that the Grace of God creates relationships of a very near and tender kind, relationships which will endure through life, relationships which will outlast death and be, perhaps, even more strong and vivid in eternity than they are here! Up yonder, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, I should think that the relationships which come of the flesh will, to a large degree, be merged in their celestial condition, but there, the sonship of Titus towards Paul is even stronger than it was when they were here below.

How comes that sonship? It comes, often, through God blessing a ministry to the conversion of a soul. Henceforth, he who has spoken the Word with power to the heart bears to him who has heard it the relationship of a father to a son. There are many in this place to whom I stand in this most hallowed relationship. You recognize it, I know, and I desire to express my intense and fervent love to the many of you who have been born unto God by the preaching of the Word here. I do not know of anything that has more greatly comforted me during the last week or two, in the time of sharp contention for the faith, than the reception of so many letters from persons of whom I have never heard before, saying, “You do not know me, but you are my spiritual father, and now, at such a time of trial as this is to you, I must write and send you a word of good cheer.” It is always a marvel to me that my feeble testimony should ever be blessed to the conversion of a seeking soul, but when I think of the hundreds and the thousands—yes, I am not exaggerating when I say *thousands*—whom I have met with here on earth, and the many more, at present unknown to me, whom I hope to meet with either here or in Heaven, I do rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice! And I cannot help expressing my great love to all those who have been brought to the Savior by the words which I have preached and published.

The Apostle Paul not only said of Titus that he was his son, but *he called him his “true” son*. The Revised Version correctly translates it, “My true child.” We have, alas, some who have called us, “father,” in a spiritual sense, of whom we have cause to be ashamed. There are converts and converts. There are those who *say* they have received the Word and, perhaps, they have after the poor fashion in which the brain can receive it, but they have never received it in the *heart*—so, after running well, for

a while, they grow weary and turn aside. And then the gainsayer says, "That is one of your converts!" They throw this in our teeth and we do not wonder that they should do so. These base-born ones, these who have no part nor lot in the matter, though they pretend to have it—these are a perpetual grief to us—a wound in our spirit which is hard to bear. But, oh, what a mercy it is when we know that many of our converts are our "true" spiritual children, in whom the work of repentance was deep, and whose profession of faith was sincere—who are not the products of free will, but the products of the Holy Spirit—and who bring forth fruit, not of themselves, but their fruit is found in Christ Jesus to whom they are eternally joined! Oh, those of you, between whom and myself there is this intimate relationship, let us feel some touch of this sacred kinship and rejoice before God that we feel it!

But, Beloved, many of you are joined together by spiritual ties in other relationships. You, also, have been the means of bringing souls to Christ and there are those sitting by your side who, for that reason, look upon you with great love. Others of you are Brothers and Sisters in Christ—there is a brotherhood produced by the Christian life that will remain when other brotherhoods have all disappeared. An ungodly man may be the literal brother of a saint, but they will be separated in that day when there shall be weeping at the Judgment Seat of Christ. And they shall be eternally separated, for, though they seemed to be of one family, they were really of two families—the one an heir of wrath, the other receiving Grace to become a child of God.

But Beloved, as many of you as believe in Jesus Christ are members of one family. You are related to one another in the highest possible way through the kinship of the *spiritual* life. Therefore let us now salute each other in the Lord. Standing or sitting in our places and without using any outward sign or symbol, let our hearts go out to one another in loving greeting. As one family we dwell in Christ, knit to one another by ties of sympathy, love and mutual delight, because knit to Christ Jesus the Lord! I want you to feel that blessed union. Let us make this service a sort of family gathering, as when the father stands up at the head of the table at Christmas time, or on New Year's Day, and says that he is glad to see all the family at home once more. I seem to stand among you, thus, not as the oldest in years, but still the chief official member of this Church—and I salute you all, and bid you rejoice together because of ties of love which time cannot loose and death, itself, cannot dissolve!

II. Then the Apostle, wishing to show how real was the union between himself and Titus, next mentioned that THEY WERE BRETHREN BY A COMMON FAITH—"Titus, my true son after the common faith."

Yes, Beloved, and *our* faith is also common. It is the same faith in two respects. First, because *we believe the same truths* and, secondly, because we believe them with "like precious faith." We who are rightly members of this Tabernacle Church have believed the same Truths of God—there is no dispute or discussion among us about the fundamentals of our faith. To us, there is one God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To us, there is one Mediator—Jesus Christ the Savior. We believe in the election of Grace by the Divine Father. We believe in the vicarious Sacri-

face of the Eternal Son. We believe in the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and in the need of it in the case of every living man, woman and child.

We believe in “one Lord, one faith, one Baptism.” I feel intensely grateful for this unity of faith. A Church divided in its doctrine—what can it do? If it has to spend its strength in continual debate! What force has it with which to conquer the world? But knowing, as we know, that the Scriptures are our unerring guide, that the Holy Spirit is the Infallible Explainer of the Scriptures, we come to one common fountain to learn what we are to receive, and we receive it with one common anointing, even the anointing of the Spirit of God!

This unity of the faith is one of the things in which we ought continually to rejoice. I hope that I love all Christians, yet I cannot help saying that when I sit down and talk with a Brother who believes the Doctrines of Grace, I feel myself a great deal more at home than I do when I am with one who does not believe them. Where there is the unity of the faith, there seems to be a music which creates harmony—and that harmony is delightful to the renewed spirit. God grant, dear Friends, that none of us may err from the faith, but that we may be steadfast, immovable, firmly fixed in our belief of the great Doctrines of the Gospel, for this is the way in which we are made truly one!

Then Paul says that he and Titus were one, “after the common faith,” that is, *the one faith was believed by them in the same way*. There is only one faith worth having. Paul calls it, in the first verse, “the faith of God’s elect.” It is real faith, cordial faith, childlike faith, God-given faith! It is not a faith that springs out of human nature unaided by the Holy Spirit, but it is precious faith—faith which is the gift of God and the work of the Holy Spirit! Now, if we believe only intellectually, we do not enter into sympathy with one another as we do when we both believe *spiritually*, with heart and soul, from the very depths of our being.

Beloved, I trust that I can say of myself and of you, also, that we have received faith as a gift from God. Here, then, is another sacred tie binding us together. You have that jewel of faith gleaming on your bosom and here are others who have the same precious gem—and by that very fact you are drawn to each other. Your faith and my faith, if they are both true faith, are, “the common faith.” I may have very little faith and you may have the full assurance of understanding, but your faith and mine are of the same sort. Your faith may be but as a grain of mustard seed and your friend’s faith may have grown into a tree, but it is the same faith—it clings to the same Christ and will produce the same eternal results in the salvation of the soul! Come, then, let us spiritually shake hands, again, over this second point. First, we are closely related to one another. Secondly, we possess a common faith, which is a wonderful bond of union between us.

III. Carefully note the third link. It is this—WE HAVE A MUTUAL BLESSING, for Paul wishes for Titus, “Grace, mercy and peace.” This is just what Titus would have wished for Paul if he had been sending him a blessing! And I wish to you, Beloved, “Grace, mercy and peace,” and

I think you are, in your hearts, wishing for me, also, “Grace, mercy, and peace.” We all alike need these three choice favors!

First, we need “*Grace*” to help. I know how it is with the weak Believer—he sees some brave Christian doing mighty works for God and he says, “Oh, I wish that I were like he is! Oh, that I were as strong as he is!” And he gets the notion that this more prominent worker has no fainting fits or weaknesses such as he has. Oh, no—he supposes that his Brother’s head is bathed in everlasting sunshine and that his heart is continually flooded with rivers of delight! That shows, my Friend, that you are greatly mistaken, for the most eminent saint has no more Grace to give away than the least in the family of God has! I sometimes wish that I could rid the minds of our dear trembling friends, Miss Much-Afraid and Mr. Despondency, of the ideas they have concerning some of us to whom they look up with esteem. I am not going to let you into *all* our secrets, but, believe me, our heads ache as much as yours and our eyes are sometimes as wet with tears as ever yours are! Yes, and our hearts get quite as heavy as yours do.

“Yes,” you say, “very likely, but then, somehow or other, you are stronger than we are.” Just so, but suppose you have to carry 50 pounds and you can carry that and no more? Well, you have strength enough for your task. If another man has to carry 100 pounds and he can just carry that, and no more, he is in exactly the same condition as you are! Here is a Brother who has a large measure full of manna which he is carrying for the supply of his family. Here is another who has quite a small measure and, as he carries it into his tent, he says to himself, “Oh, I wish that I had that great bushel of manna that my Brother took into his tent just now.” Yes, but listen—“he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.” Mark you, I do not discourage the attempt to gather much Grace, I would urge you to get all you can of it, for, however much you gather, you will have none too much, but I would discourage your despair if there should seem to be but little falling to your share, for you shall have no need! The fact is, all of us need Grace. You who preach the Gospel, you who are deacons, you who are elders, you who teach the infant class, you who can only give away a tract—you must do all these works with Grace or else you will not really do them at all! And our need of Grace is a common meeting place for us all. Only Grace can save you and only Grace can save me—and the Grace of God shall be given to us and all Believers as we have need of it.

Our next need is, “*mercy*” to forgive. Titus, perhaps, thought to himself, “Well, Paul wishes mercy for me, but can hardly wish it for himself, for he is such an eminent servant of God, so holy, so consecrated, so zealous, so self-denying that he does not need mercy.” I reminded you, in our reading, that Paul, in writing to a Church, says, “Grace be to you, and peace,” but when he writes to a minister, he says, “Grace, *mercy* and peace.” It looks as though ministers needed more mercy than their people did! And it is my firm conviction that the more eminent is their office and the more remarkable is their usefulness in the service of God, the more mercy they require! Brothers, how can we meet our responsibilities unless we constantly cry, “Lord, have mercy upon us”? How can we deal

faithfully with the souls committed to our charge and be clear of the blood of all men, unless the Lord shall have mercy upon us, and upon us beyond all others?

All of us, then, need mercy. I do. Do not you? You are only a plain man with a family growing up around you, but you need mercy for your sins as the head of the household. Perhaps you are only a domestic servant, my Sister, but you need mercy even in that humble calling of yours. You, perhaps, dear Friend, are very rich—oh, you need much mercy! And you, on the other hand, are very poor—I am sure that you need mercy. Some of you are in good health. You need mercy lest you should pervert that strength to an evil purpose. Others of you are very sickly—you may well cry for mercy, that you may bear up under your many pains and depressions of spirit. We all need mercy. So that is another point in which we are one.

The third word of the benediction is "*peace*" to comfort. I hope that many of us know what peace of conscience means, what peace with God means and what peace with man means. If God has given us His peace, it is a treasure of untold value, "the pearl of great price." To be at peace with God is better than to be a millionaire, or Czar of all the Russias. Peace of mind, restfulness of heart, quiet of spirit, deliverance from care, from quarrelling, from complaining—I know that I need that kind of peace—and you need it, too, do you not? You need it in your family, in your business, in your own hearts! Well, then, here we meet, again, having this same need of peace and, when we get it, we meet once more in finding the same delicious enjoyment of it! I wish to you, Beloved, now and henceforth, Grace, mercy and peace! And I believe that you wish the same to me. And herein, again, we join our hands and bless God that we feel true union of heart.

IV. Upon the next part of my subject, which is more weighty, still, I must say but little. It is this—"Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." That is, WE ARE ONE IN THE SOURCE OF EVERY BLESSING.

All good comes to us from God the Father through the one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. I love to think of this—that all the Grace, mercy and peace that come to you—and all the Grace, mercy and peace that come to me, come from the heart of God! How many wagons there are upon the road of Grace and all of them heavily laden! One stops at that Brother's door and another waits at this Sister's gate, but they all started from one spot. Look on the side of the wagons and you will see the name of the same Proprietor on every one of them! "The chariots of God are twenty thousand," but they are all the Lord's, so that whatever Grace, mercy and peace come to us at all, come from the same place! Get to the very foundation of this Truth of God and you will see that we who believe all eat bread baked in the same oven, our clothes come out of the same wardrobe, the water that we drink comes from the same Rock! Yes, and the shoes that we wear were made by the same mighty Worker who bade Moses say to Israel of old, "Your shoes shall be iron and brass; and as your days, so shall your strength be." You have not anything that is worth having but what your Father gave to you! And your Father is *my*

Father—and the hand that passes the blessing to you passes the blessing to me and to the whole family of Believers!

These blessings not only all come from the same source, but *they all come by the same channel*—“the Lord Jesus Christ.” There is the sacred blood mark on every Covenant blessing, whether you have it, or your Brother has it, or some Christian far away in India gets it. It all comes by the same Divinely-appointed Channel—the Man, the God, Christ Jesus our Lord! I do not know how you feel about this matter, but it seems to me as if this ought to bind us very closely together. I remember when I first left my grandfather, with whom I had been brought up as a little child, how grieved I was to part from him. It was the great sorrow of my little life. Grandfather seemed very sorry, too, and we had a cry together. He did not quite know what to say to me, but he said, “Now child, tonight, when the moon shines and you look at it, don’t forget that it is the same moon your grandfather will be looking at.” And for years, as a child, I used to love the moon because I thought that my grandfather’s eyes and my own somehow met there on the moon! How much better it is to think that you, dear Friend, going so far away to Australia, are looking to the Savior, while we are doing the same thing, here, and so our eyes meet! You go to God at the Mercy Seat in prayer and that is just where we go—so, after all, we pray at the same sacred spot and our petitions meet at the great Throne of Mercy! Thus we are made to feel our blessed union in Christ.

Some people say that they try to remember other people, but if you really love them, you will not “try” to remember them—you will not be able to keep from remembering them! Their image will come up before your mind’s eye. You cannot avoid it and you will not wish to avoid it. So, dear Friends, we will not say that we will try to remember each other while we are parted a while—but every blessing that comes to us shall remind us that it comes from our Father, through Jesus Christ our Mediator—and so we shall feel that we are truly one.

V. Then, to close, there is one more point of union and that lies in OUR COMMON RELATIONSHIP TO OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. See how Paul puts it, “The Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.”

I must dwell briefly upon every word of this title. First, Jesus is *Lord* to all His people—and equally *to be obeyed by them all, and adored by them all*. It is important that, with bowed knee and reverent love, we call Him Lord and God. We put our finger into the print of the nails and the wound in His side, confessing that He is and must be real Man, but, at the same moment, we cry with Thomas, “My Lord and my God.” I cannot pretend to have any union with the man who cannot, from his heart, say that! If you do not count Christ to be God, well, go your way, my fellow man, and I will go mine—but your way and my way cannot be the same. We know that this is the Christ of God, and he who does not know it needs to be taught of God the very first principles of the Gospel. So, you see, we have a true unity in the Lordship of Christ—we desire, as one man, to be obedient to all His commands and to worship Him as “very God of very God.”

Then comes the next word, “the Lord Jesus Christ.” That will come again when I speak of the word, “Savior,” so I pass on to the following word, “the Lord Jesus Christ.” He is, to all of us who believe, the Anointed One, so anointed that every Word that Jesus Christ has spoken is to us Infallibly Inspired. We believe in Jesus, not only as men say they do, today, but we *really* believe in Jesus, for we believe in His Doctrine, in that which He, Himself spoke, and in that which He spoke by His Inspired Apostles. We cannot separate between Christ and the Truth He came to preach, and the work He came to do—nor will we attempt to do so. He is to us the Anointed of God, as Prophet, Priest and King—and we accept Him in all the offices for which He bears that anointing, do we not, my Brothers and Sisters? I know that we do! As Brothers and Sisters in one common faith, we rejoice in the common Christ whose anointing has fallen upon us, too. Though we are but as the skirts of the garment of our Great High Priest, yet the holy oil upon His head has come down even to us, as it is written, “you have an unction from the Holy One.”

The Apostle further writes, “The Lord Jesus Christ *our Savior*.” Sometimes, in the Bible, we find the Lord Jesus Christ called, “*a Savior*.” “Unto you is born in the city of David *a Savior*, which is Christ the Lord.” That is good, but it is not good enough for what poor sinners need. Our Lord Jesus Christ is not *a Savior* among other saviors, though He does instrumentally make His people saviors, as it is written, “saviors shall come up on Mount Zion; and happy are they who, as instruments in His hands, save souls from death, and hide multitudes of sins.” But Jesus is also called “*the Savior*.” He is “*the Savior* of all men, specially of those that believe”—the Savior, *par excellence*.

Then, next, He is *my Savior*, as Mary sang, “My spirit has rejoiced in God *my Savior*.” Oh, that is sweet, indeed—to get a personal grip of Him and to know that He has saved me from despair, from sin, from the power of evil, from death, from Hell! But there is, in some respects, a superior sweetness in this plural pronoun, “*our Savior*.” Selfishness is gone when we come to feel an intense delight in this Truth of God—that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior of many more beside ourselves. “*Our Savior*”—does not this bind us to one another? A common delight in one person is one of the strongest bands of sympathetic union that can bind men together—and a common obligation to some one superior Being becomes a great reason for our being knit together in love. My Savior, your Savior, our Savior—“The Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.” Whenever we feel any disposition to break off from this Brother and from that, whom we know to be, after all, saved in the Lord, let us come together with a fresh clasp of the hands as we say to one another, “We rejoice in our Savior and we are one in Him.”

What I want to say—as a parting word, before I leave you once more for my season of rest—is just this. Let us keep close together, now, shoulder to shoulder, if ever we did so in all our lives. “Close your ranks!” must be the message to the faithful in these evil days. Let us feel heart touching heart in the deepest and truest Christian affection, for, in proportion as we are welded together in love, we shall be strong for all the practical purposes for which the Holy Spirit intends a Church to be used.

These 34 years—is not that the number?—they are so many, I begin to forget the number—a third of a century have I served among you as a preacher of the Gospel! I am always fearing that I shall get “flat, stale and unprofitable,” and that my voice will cease to have any music for you, but there is one thing I know, from the first day I came among you until now, I have preached nothing but “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God!” “Jesus Christ and Him Crucified!” And I am not afraid that that *Gospel* will ever get “flat, stale, or unprofitable.” And this is the golden chain which has bound us together in holy fellowship. This is the foundation on which we have built—“One Lord, one faith, one Baptism.” Yes, one Baptism—there are others who hold another baptism, but we know of no outward baptism but the *immersion* of the Believer into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit! And upon this point we are all agreed, as we are upon the rest of the articles of our faith.

So, being one, let us show to all the world what the power of Christian unity really is! Keep together in the Prayer Meetings. Never let those precious gatherings decay or drop. If you have come together in large numbers—and you have in my presence—do so *much more in my absence*. Let each one feel bound to meet with his Brothers and Sisters in prayer. I am longing for a genuine revival of religion—a revival of religion *everywhere*—and I think I can see signs that it is coming. I find that many of the Baptist ministers who love the Gospel are going over the groundwork, preaching the fundamental doctrines more than they ever did—that is a good thing. I find that the Churches are meeting together for prayer at this juncture more than they have done, seeking that God will help and guide them to be faithful—that also is a good thing.

And people are talking about the plan of salvation—on the tops of omnibuses and in the railway carriages—everywhere it comes up as a subject of debate! In the daily papers the same theme is brought forward, for which I thank God. And though I have had to bear my share of reproach for the Truth’s sake, yet I joyfully accept it. Anything which can call public attention to the Gospel of Christ is a help to us and I believe that the attention called to this question is hopeful, that the discussion of it by so many is still *more* hopeful and that the firm adherence to the faith, which I see in so many, will be attended by an intense zeal for the conversion of souls—and then we shall see a revival. God has been hindered and hampered by the false doctrine and heresy that have been cherished in so many of the churches—and the Spirit of God has been grieved and driven away by the utter rottenness of worldliness that has been indulged in by so many professing Christians. By God’s Grace we have let a little light into this darkness. By God’s Grace we have opened a door, here and there, and a clear cold draft is blowing out some of the fog and the evil gases of the stagnant atmosphere that has been poisoning our people far too long.

Now is our time, Brothers and Sisters! Let us, as one man, pray God to send this benediction from on high—“Grace, mercy and peace.” I charge you, while I am away, to be instant in and out of season about this matter and to let this be a special object of supplication with the members of this Church—that we should have a revival of religion here,

at any rate, while the pastor is away. It is better for it to come while he is away, for nobody will then put the credit of it upon any instrument. Break out, heavenly fire! Descend! Descend! Descend! Let the sacrifice be consumed!

As for you who do not know and love the Lord, we love you, we desire to bring you into the blessed circle of love by the door of faith in Christ. Look alone to Jesus Christ, who is the only way of salvation for you as for us. Oh, that you would look to Him and live! God grant it, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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

While reading this chapter we must understand that Titus was sent to Crete to superintend the preaching of the Gospel throughout that island. Crete was, at that time, inhabited by a people who were only partially civilized, and sunk in the very worst of vices. Paul, therefore, tells Titus to speak to them about things which would hardly be mentioned to Christians nowadays.

Titus 1:1-4. *Paul, a servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but has in due times manifested His Word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior; to Titus, my own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior. You have probably noticed that Paul's benediction, when he is writing to a minister, is always. "Grace, mercy and peace." Writing to Churches, his usual formula is, "Grace be to you and peace," but God's servants, called to the work of the ministry, need very special "mercy"—as if the higher the office, the greater the liability to sin and, therefore, in his Pastoral Epistles, whether he is addressing Titus or Timothy, Paul wishes for his sons in the faith, "Grace, mercy and peace." Oh, what a mercy it will be for any of us ministers if, at the last, we are clear of the blood of all men! If, having been called to preach the Gospel, we shall do it so faithfully as to be acquitted and even rewarded by our Lord and Master, it will be mercy upon mercy! [This "charge" of the beloved Pastor has even more force and pathos now that he has gone "away" to Heaven.]*

5, 6. *For this cause left I you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed you: if any are blameless, the husband of one wife. For there were many converts, there, who had two or three wives. Whatever position they might be permitted to occupy in the Church, they could not become officers—they must keep in the rear rank.*

6-12. *Having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the*

faithful Word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own. According to Jerome, this was Epimenides, a prophet-poet who lived in Crete in the sixth century before Christ.

12. *Said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.* They were a degraded people and, therefore, those who would teach them had a most difficult task and needed great Grace. Paul exhorts Titus that only specially fit men—men whose example would have influence and whose characters would have weight—should be allowed to be elders in such Churches.

13-16. *This witness is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth. Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.* This was bad soil, but it had to be plowed, sown and, with an Almighty God at the back of the Gospel plower and sower, a fruitful harvest came even in Crete! We need not be afraid of the adaptation of the Gospel to the lowest of the low. If there is any quarter of the town where the people are more sunken in vice than anywhere else, there the Gospel is to be carried with more prayer and more faith than anywhere else! Depend upon it, God can bless His Word anywhere—among Cretans or among any other sort of degraded people.

Titus 2:1. *But speak you the things which become sound doctrine.* There are certain things which are suitable to go with sound doctrine—they are meet and fit and appropriate thereto.

2. *That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.* Among the heathen, old men often gave themselves up to drunkenness and gluttony. So, now, this is the teaching that is to be given to aged Christian men. They need faith, love and patience, as well as the virtues of sobriety, gravity and temperance! The infirmities of old age often create petulance, so the Grace of God is to make the venerable Christian to be full of faith, love and patience.

3. *The aged women, likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.* Old women also among the heathen were often addicted to the taking of much wine, so here they are cautioned against it by the Spirit of God. They are also tempted to spread slanderous reports against people—having little to do in their old age, they are apt to do that little by way of mischief—so they are warned that they are not to be “false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” And how beautifully can an aged Christian woman, by her kindly example, be a teacher of good things! There is no more charming sight under Heaven, I think, than that of an elderly Christian lady whose words and whose whole life are such as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

4, 5. *That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed.* There were some women who supposed that the moment they became Christians, they were to run about everywhere. “No,” says the Apostle, “let them stay at home.” There is no gain to the Christian Church when the love, the industry and the zeal, which ought to make a happy home, are squandered upon something else. The young women of Crete appear to have been such that they needed to be taught “to love their husbands.” That expression does not occur elsewhere in Scripture. Christian women do not need to be told to love their husbands, but these Cretans, just brought out of the slough of sin, had to be taught even *this* lesson. Oh, what a blessing is love in the marriage relationship! And what a gracious influence love has upon children! How are they to be brought up aright except the whole house be perfumed with love?

6. *Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober-minded.* That exhortation is as necessary in London as it was in Crete! Young men often know a great deal, or think they do—and they are very apt to be intoxicated with the idea of knowing so much and being able to do so much—so that the exhortation to them is to “be sober-minded.”

7-9. *In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing incorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants—Or, as it might and should be rendered, “bond-slaves.”*

9, 10. *To be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining.* Not picking and stealing, which very naturally was the common habit of slaves—and who wonders at it in their wretched condition?

10. *But showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.* Is not that a wonderful passage? Here is a slave, able to be an ornament to the Gospel of Christ! This blessed Gospel is not sent only to kings and princes! When Paul preached it, the great mass of the population were in cruel bondage, treated like dogs, or even worse. Yet the Gospel even had a message for them—it told them that they might, by a godly character, adorn the doctrine of God, their Savior!

11-15. *For the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise you.*

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

A SEARCHING TEST

NO. 3521

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JULY 20, 1916.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 18, 1872.

*“Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them who are defiled
and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their mind and
conscience are defiled.”*
Titus 1:15.

I SHALL not profess, this evening, to enter into a full exposition of this text, for there are many deep things in it, and many intricate questions are suggested by it. I shall only make some observations upon it intended to be of practical service.

This text has often been misused—made to mean what was never in the Apostle’s mind. He does not mean that a wrong thing becomes right to a pure-minded man—that is the very opposite of what he does mean! He means that when men’s minds are pure, other matters become pure to them, but when their minds are impure, then they use these things for impurity. We shall endeavor to pick out the meaning as we go along, but by no means does it mean that I may pretend that I am of a pure mind and that, therefore, will make impurity, itself, pure! That would be to prove, if I found any pleasure in impurity, that my mind was impure. The true solution of the conduct of a man who professes to be pure in mind and yet commits himself to an unholy course of life, is not that the man makes that unholy life, pure, but that his unholy living proves that his mind is not pure at all!

Our text has in it, tonight, *two kinds of men—the pure and the defiled and unbelieving*. And secondly, it has *two kinds of effects produced upon these men by outward things*—to the one, all things are pure—to the other, there is nothing pure. First, let us talk about these—

I. TWO KINDS OF MEN.

First, the *pure*—where shall we find them? Where are they born? We answer, no men are born so! Who shall bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one! Not one! As our parents have sinned, we, their children, are born with tendencies to sin—we are impure even from birth! There

are none pure but those who are made so by a second creation! The first time they are marred upon the wheel. They must go under the Creator's hand a second time—they must feel the power of the purifying Spirit of God creating them anew before they can be called pure at all! And these are not absolutely pure. Even in those who are entitled to be called, "pure in heart," there remains impurity. If any man shall question that, let him remember the First Epistle of John, the first Chapter, at the 8th verse—"If any man says he has no sin, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him." There is sin in the best of men—and if they do not perceive it, it must be because they are blinded with a foolish self-conceit—for in the purest heart there still remains connected with it the old nature and the impurity inherited from the first Adam. This makes life a perpetual conflict until life's close. Still, we name men by their predominant characteristics. The partial impurity of a good man does not entitle him to be called impure. If the master principle within him, the reigning principle, is purity, he is a pure man. A man may once in his life have spoken an untruth—he may have been surprised into saying a thing which is not—but if the general tenor of his life is stern integrity, we do not, therefore, condemn him and brand him as a liar! Otherwise where were the men living upon earth who would be worthy of a name implying praise? The godly are pure—have been made pure by regeneration, and they are pure, though not absolutely so.

They are *pure in their affections*. They love not that which is unchaste, unhallowed, untruthful, unlawful before God. Their soul loves that which God approves. They seek after that which God, Himself, commands. If they do not always keep God's statutes, yet they love them. And if they do not always walk in His ways without slipping, yet they love His ways and desire to walk in them without a single turning aside to the right hand or to the left! The set of the current of their soul is towards purity. They mourn over those currents and eddies into which they are turned by temptation. They are the last men to excuse them—the rush and current of their soul, their deepest and truest life—is that they may be cleansed from all false ways and from sin. And as they are pure in their affections, they become *pure in their actions*. They, if they are, indeed, the people of God, cannot run with the multitude to do evil. The swine may find its pleasure in the mire, but God's sheep love clean pastures. The raven may feed upon its garbage and be at home, there, but not so the dove—it likes the clean garner and the clean roosting place. The child of God shuns not only the darker sins which defile so many, but even those which others think but a trifle. And what some would permit and rejoice in, the Christian mourns, abhors, laments and avoids. The actions of the

Christian—I do not claim perfection for them, but I do claim that the true Christian strives after perfection in his actions, that he seeks after it, yes, and that, as a rule, he comes nearer to it than his enemies would allow, or than even his own reflections, when he is examining himself, would permit him to believe! God has a people who still walk uprightly in the world. There are still some that are as pillars in the House of God upon whom he has written the name of our God—some who have not defiled their garments—who shall walk with Him in white, for, by His Grace, they are made worthy.

And these men being thus pure in their affections and in their actions are most of all *pure in their desires*. Their greatest desire is towards purity. I am sure I speak the language of every renewed heart when I say that if the Lord were to appear by night to you, and say to you, as He did to Solomon, “What shall I give you?” there is no renewed heart here that would say, “Lord, give me riches!” There is no one that would say, “Give me health!” We may desire both of these things in a secondary degree, but our main desire would be this, “Lord, give me that holy character which would please You and bring honor to the religion I profess.” Holiness, holiness, holiness—it is a thing which every renewed heart longs after beyond everything else! I would have perfect orthodoxy in my head if I could, but I know even if I had that, an unhallowed life would render it of little service to me. But could I have a clean heart, other things would come with it and from it, for the pure in heart shall see God! And if they see God, what else is there that they shall *not* see, for the eyes which have glanced on God, Himself, will be able to perceive the difference between truth and error, and will not be liable to be deceived! The Christian is pure in his desires. Now if it is so, that in his affections within, and his actions without, and in the desires of his entire nature, he would be pure, he is entitled to this name and God has given it to him!

But there are *some, on the other hand, who are defied and unbelieving*. These two things appear to go together. Now it was denied some time since, that every unbeliever is unclean in his life, and I think there is some ground in the denial. I should not like to stand here and say that I believe every infidel, every rejecter of the religion of Christ is a man unfit for the social circle and a sinner against the laws of decency! I do not believe it. Honestly, I must say that there are some men who have rejected the Gospel—I grieve that they have—have denied God and yet somehow they have been a vast deal better than their creed, and they have managed to walk in a consistency of moral conduct towards man which has almost been worthy to be set up as an example to Christians! I believe such cases are not the rule, and that candor, when it has made the ad-

mission which I have made, is compelled to add that this is an extraordinary thing and cannot have been produced by the creed, for the creed, itself, of the godless is necessarily logically and properly the creed of the unbelieving, producing sin! Why should they obey a Law of God if they do not believe in a Law-Giver, or if they only believe in a law-giver who will not punish and who cannot reward? When men have denied God, they have surely given up the sanction which should lead them to anything like purity—and if they live as most of them do live—it cannot be said that they are inconsistent with their creed.

Yet, indeed, as a rule, and as a rule without exception—having said what I have said (and I do not contradict myself)—as a rule without an exception, *the unbelieving heart is a defiled heart for all that*. For what did we admit? That the man who rejects his God is not, therefore, a thief? Has he not robbed God? What did we say? That the man who rejects Christ is not, therefore, licentious? Is that purity which rejects perfection? Is that heart pure that cannot see loveliness in the Character and the Person of the Redeemer? What did we admit? That the unbeliever is not seditious? Yet is he a loyal subject of God who denies the Godhead, who rails against God, and who lives from day to day as if there were no God at all? Men, if they were called sinners, would not shudder at the word—they admit it! But call them criminals and at once they are angry and defend themselves—the reason being, I suppose, that with the mass of mankind it seems a trifle to offend God, but a very serious thing to have offended man! And here is the whole stress of the matter—the defilement of the unbeliever lies always God-ward, even when it is not apparent man-ward. And when the unbeliever, somehow or other, keeps his garments clean as before his fellow men, yet as before his God what is he? He is one who has cast off all obligations to his Maker, who denies all responsibilities to his King, who receives bounties from Jehovah's hands but is not grateful and will not even acknowledge that the mercies come from those hands at all! He lives in habitual contempt of the Adorable—destitute of all admiration for the infinitely Glorious—who does what angels must shudder to think of—lives without love to Christ, without trust in the promises of God! There is a defilement, there, which, I venture to say, is even greater if looked at in a right light, than any form of defilement which becomes perceptible by men as between themselves!

But notice in this text that it seems to correct a good deal of the mental philosophy we have heard of. For instance, I have heard it asserted that conscience is God's vice regent among men. I have often heard expressions from the pulpit and read them in books which led me to infer that every fallen man has got not only something good in him, but some

strong principle almost akin to the Divine! I believe in the fall of man and I believe that to be *total*—and that *conscience* is a power which has fallen with all the rest, and that there does not exist in the world a pure conscience—except so far as God has purified it by the work of His Spirit. Conscience, itself, is a defiled thing! And so far from being a representative of God, I could not think for a moment of comparing it with that Ever-Blessed and Pure Being! The fact is that conscience, although it must be to man practically his guide, is not ever a safe one, for the true guide of every man is the Bible, the revealed will of God. That is true, pure and right, but my conscience may often be a dark conscience, an ignorant conscience, a perverted conscience—and so my business is not to follow my conscience as I find it, but to go to God and ask Him to enlighten my conscience and guide it! Neither is it an excuse for a man for doing wrong when he says he was conscientious in doing it. It is an excuse as far as *men* are concerned, but not before God! God's Law is not of variable quantity or quality depending upon the quantity or quality of the conscience—it is fixed and definite! Just as if a man were to take prussic acid, believing that it would benefit him—he would die, despite his conscience—or as if a person were to walk northward, expecting to reach his home in the south! He would not do anything of the kind! Or as if a man were to go to sea in a leaky vessel and a storm came on—his conscience would not save him—so it is with you! If you are astray, you are astray. Your business was to have waited upon God to have had that conscience corrected! Your business was to have laid that conscience at the foot of the Cross and ask the Master to purify it—to have waited upon the Holy Spirit for His teaching and consulted the Infallible Oracles of God's Book to know what was the will of the Most High! It is not, therefore, for every man to be crying up his conscience. I believe in the conscience, by all means, among men, but there is none perfect before God! Their conscience should be bowed to God's Law, to God's Gospel, to believe His teachings and to obey His precepts. Conscience, no more than any other power, is irresponsible! It is under law in Him. He created man and put the conscience within him, which conscience has been spoiled and injured by the Fall.

Now there are men in the world with defiled understandings and defiled consciences. They cannot judge rightly. *Their understanding is defiled.* They put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. "A man cannot do that," says one. He *does* do it. There are thousands in this world who deliberately judge amiss, and who, when they sit down, even to think of a question (which, alas, we cannot often bring them to do), naturally come to a wrong conclusion because the scales which they weigh are out of

gear. The measure which they use is not the measure of the sanctuary! Their understanding is defiled. And even when they bring their moral sense to bear upon some question, they are inevitably mistaken because *their conscience, itself, has become defiled also*. A sad state for men to be in, but into this state each man, according to his degree, is brought until his will turns to God and is rectified by the great Spirit. We are all impure—impure in every part. “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.” We are all fallen. In manhood’s vast temple there stands not a solitary pillar that is quite erect. Here and there, there are masses that seem as though they stood as once they were, to let us know how grand a thing human nature might have been—but there is enough upon the whole to let us see that it is all in ruin, and in such ruin that unless He who built it at the first shall put forth His Omnipotent Power and use again the old fiat which created the world, it will still be a ruin and desolation—a den of all manner of unclean things!

Thus have I spoken upon the two sorts of men, the pure and the defiled. But now, secondly, here is the main point that we have to speak of—

II. THE TWO AFFECTS PRODUCED ON THESE TWO KINDS OF MEN.

To those who are pure, *all things are pure*. To those who are impure and unbelieving, *everything becomes impure*. Only a few things by way of specimen.

First, let us think *of the attributes of God*. To the Believer in Christ, whose heart is pure, how glorious is God! And every time we think of Him, adore Him and have fellowship with Him, we grow purer for it. The true Believer cannot think of God and draw nearer to Him without becoming more like his God. But look at the unbeliever. Oft-times his very thoughts of God have been, themselves, defiled by the defilement of his understanding, irritating him, filling him with wrath and abhorrence. He does not delight in the holiness of God—he says it is severity. “How can a man be happy with such laws to bind him?” He does not delight in the wisdom of God in Providence—he thinks things are ordered very much amiss, seeing they do not all conduce to his pleasure in the ways of sin! And, especially, if you set before him God’s mercy, that most blessed of all attributes which, to the Believer, is purifying to the highest degree, you will find the unbeliever saying, “God is Merciful,” and making that an excuse for his continuing in sin! How sad it is that when we preach the Gospel and give the invitations of Infinite Mercy, there are many who will say, “Ah, then, I can turn to God just when I like, and He is very gracious, and He will forgive me! Therefore I will continue in my rebellion against Him.” And when we have been pathetic, and our soul has poured

over from our eyes as we have spoken of those saved at the eleventh hour, while there have been some minds that have been led to Christ, thereby, there are some who have drawn the horrible inference that they, too, might wait until the eleventh hour and venture their eternal interests upon the mercy of God at the last! Brothers, I believe you cannot preach of God without some men making mischief of it, even of just so simple a Truth as His Mercy. But when you come to His Sovereignty—a deep that can never be fathomed—how many have been drowned in it! I believe we ought to speak about it. I am not of those who say we should be silent upon it, but how many have been drowned in those deeps, willfully, because they have said, “Who has resisted His will? Why does He find fault? If it is to be, it is to be. If it will be, it will be.” They have even dared to make God the Author of their sin and drawn an apology for their unrighteousness from the thrice holy King of Kings! To the pure in heart, all things are so pure that we, ourselves, sink into nothing in humility and penitence before Him! But to the ungodly, even God, Himself, becomes an argument for continuance in sin!

Now take another. It is so with God, but *it is equally is so with the Gospel*. The Doctrines of the Gospel are, to the Believer, very pure. There is not one of them but what has a practical effect upon his life. I take the Doctrine of Election. Then if He has chosen us, He has chosen us to be a peculiar people zealous of good works, and special love we feel binds us to special service. We often sing—

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

So with the Doctrine of Redemption that He has redeemed us by His precious blood. The inference from it is, “You are not your own, you are bought with a price—therefore, glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are His.” Take the sweet Doctrine of Final Perseverance, “The righteous shall hold on his way.” Now the godly man feels that he must so live as to prove that he is a godly man by persevering, and he looks for daily Grace to hold him on and to keep him to the end. He blesses that Infinite Affection that does not turn aside from him and he feels drawn to it by constant watchfulness. I might mention all the Doctrines, but every Christian will admit at once that he that has this hope in him purifies himself. But take the effect of these Truths of God upon the unbelieving and the impure. Why, you know how they will pervert Divine Election! How often men have made that a coverlet for the grossest licentiousness! As for the redeeming blood, alas, how many have made the Cross, which is the Tree of Life, to be the tree of death to them! It has

become a savor of death unto death to them. We have known some whose damnation is just—who have said, “We are the children of God, and we will live as we like,” and they have, therefore, given themselves over to uncleanness. Surely of all blasphemers, they must bear the palm—they stand among the worst. But when men thus turn the Gospel into licentiousness, are we to say it is the Gospel’s fault? Are we to keep back some of these Doctrines? By no means, for, “unto the pure all things are pure.” Unto the unclean and unbelieving, these holy things will always be impure. You might as well forbid the sun to shine because when its beams fall upon a dunghill, it brings forth unwholesome odors! Yes, but that same sun, when it falls upon the flowers, makes them shed their aromatic perfume on every hand! It is doing incalculable good. It is not the sun, but the dunghill that must be blamed. And when the Truth of God is perverted, you must not blame the Truth, but blame the unclean, unbelieving heart that turns it into sin!

Now the same thing is true *of the ordinances of the Gospel*, and dreadfully true, here, too! When you come to the ordinances of the Gospel, such, for instance, as the preaching of the Word—the true Believer, every time he hears the Word is purged by the Word. “Now you are clean, you are purged through the Word which I have spoken to you.” The Truth of God shows him his own sinfulness. He sees his face in a mirror and endeavors to remove the spots which the Word of God reveals to him. But an ungodly man hearing the Word of God, grows the worse, perhaps, not only openly, but in his heart! Oh, there are some that sit in this very place—have done so for years! I thank God they are getting to be very, very few, now. I hope there will be none such, soon. May Grace grant there may not be one! But you will notice that the very Truth of God which once made them tremble, does not now—and whereas some years ago the preaching of the Gospel often brought tears to their eyes and sent them on their knees, it does not now—and sins which they were gladly to give up at one time, and which pricked their conscience, are now indulged in without compunction, for the same Gospel which softens, hardens, as the sun, which shines on wax and melts it, shines on clay and hardens it! Even the blessed ordinance of preaching—the hearing of the Word—may make some men to become yet more and more unclean. Alas, that it should be so. But see how Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, both of them (for I cannot now stay long to discriminate), have been misused. Whereas these are, both of them, ordinances to lead men to remember precious Truths of God—the death and burial of the Lord in the one case, and the soul’s feeding in the other case, on the precious body and blood of Jesus, and rejoicing in Him as blessed spiritual meat,

how is it that we have been told (and it is preached from thousands of pulpits in England) that Baptism washes away sin and absolutely regenerates the soul? And though I have been chided for putting too strong a sense upon the word, “regenerate,” I have lived to see a stronger sense put upon it by some than I put upon it until it has become with some, simply a superstitious ordinance, and nothing more, full of mischief. And as to the Lord’s Supper, they tell us that there is in it a power to forgive all sin, even the most heinous. And this is not spoken now and then, accidentally—a slip of tongue—but is printed and scattered all over England as a true Doctrine of God!

Well, these men’s minds are impure and, therefore, even those two precious ordinances are turned into superstition and into impurity—and I suppose it always will be so. But if the mind becomes pure, and becomes believing in Christ, it will never exalt mere bread and wine into the place of Deity, and water into the place of the Divine Spirit, Himself. God save us from having our minds rendered so impure as to fall into superstition by simple ordinances which are full of instruction! I do not doubt that there are many who are now depending for eternal life upon having gone to the “Sacrament of the Mass,” and are expecting to enter Heaven because they have reposed their confidence in a man who was arrogant enough to call himself the exclusive priest of God! God save us from having our understanding defiled, for it must be before it can submit to the belief of such superstition as this!

But I must pass on. I have often noticed how *the Church of God, itself*, becomes to pure minds one thing, and to impure minds another. You shall find a man a member of a Christian Church who will tell you that wherever he has gone in that Church he has met with Brothers and Sisters full of love, full of earnestness—and he has been delighted to associate with them. I have been at the bedside of a venerable Brother recently, whom nearly all of you know, and if you were to hear his opinion of the Church of which he is a member, he would speak of it in the most glowing terms. The reason is that he sees in his fellow Christians very much what there is in himself. The man who is loving comes to love the Brethren! The man who is chaste, pure and zealous, attributes to others a like spirit and believes they are pure, and they are to him so assuredly. But you shall meet with another, a carnal, worldly-minded professor, and he says, “Oh, there’s no love!” He has not any. “There’s no zeal” he says. There certainly would not be if all were like he! “Ah,” he says, “I don’t see any of the Apostolic living that I read of in the Scriptures.” There is no Apostolic living in his own case! He didn’t see it because he hasn’t got it! To use an old illustration—if you send a buzzard flying over a tract of

country, what will it see? Why, it will be looking out for all the dead car-casses and it will be sure to be able to tell you how much carrion there is about! But if you send a dove over that same space, it won't have an eye for it, for it has no taste for it—but it will tell you of everything that is fair and beautiful, like itself! So is it with the pure mind in the midst of God's people—it sees purity! It cannot shut its eyes to impurity, but it rejoices in the Truth and speaks of it, and speaks it as well as it can at all times with a charity that thinks no evil. But with the impure and the unbelieving, every place is defiled—and the man tars everything with the filth that is in his own bucket!

Now *the events of Providence*—I will not detain you much longer, but let me observe that all the events of Providence are, to some men, one thing, and to some men another! Is a man with a pure mind suddenly lifted up in the world in wealth? He uses that for the poor of the Church of Christ. If he is impure, then that wealth allows him to gratify his impure taste and he sinks deeper in impurity! Does a pure man come to poverty? Then his poverty drives him nearer to God and he seeks to make himself useful among the poorer Brethren where he dwells. But if he is impure, he assumes the most groveling tastes and becomes the more wicked! Is a man a Christian? Then health is a delight to him—to consecrate it all to his Lord. Has a sinner health—then that health shall enable him to go farther into sin, or, at any rate, to indulge himself the more, for he will not consecrate it to his God. Anything that happens may be used two ways—and the pure shall see in every event something which he can turn to God's Glory! And the impure can see in everything a means by which he may indulge himself.

Now it is so if you mingle with the sons of men and see their sins. We are grieved at them. But when the Christian sees sin, he thinks, "This is what I would be but for the Grace of God." So he praises God for His Grace. "This is what I shall be," he says, "if I am not watchful." So he becomes the more watchful and out of the very sin of his fellow men, he extracts some reasons for greater holiness and grows more pure because he observes the loathsomeness of impurity and turns from it the more earnestly. But the ungodly man is carried away by the evil example—his conscience is more deadened by it—and he becomes bolder in sin in consequence of what he sees in others! I am sure you will have observed it so, that where the good man gathers grapes, another finds nothing but poisoned apples—and where the Christian turns over this man's depravity and finds in it a reason for greater holiness in his own person, the ungodly man only sees more excuses for himself for the past—and the greater license for himself in the future! Take another list of things,

namely, the treatment of men to us. Suppose men praise us? The Christian says, "I must be watchful, for the praise of man is often inconsistent with the favor of God." The ungodly man says, "Everybody praises me! What a silly fellow I must be!" There is a foulness of pride which comes upon him. The man who lives near to God, if he is sneered at by the sons of men, says, "It comes upon me for God's sake. By His Grace, I will bear it." But the other says he will not have any more of that and turns aside from a path which becomes rough, even though he knows that path to be right! How often has unjust treatment driven the ungodly man to anger, and in some cases to malice and to resolutions of revenge! To the impure an injustice makes him more impure. But see the Christian who is like his Master. Every injustice makes him cry for Grace to forgive—and when yet more injustice is heaped upon him, he forgives the more and tries to heap yet more coals of fire upon the head of his enemy by doing him the greater kindness, if by any means he may win his soul! So out of the worst of things the Christian extracts the best, while from the very best of things an unhallowed mind may extract the worst!

Let us close—though there are many, many illustrations that might be given of this. Here you have, tonight, means afforded for judging yourselves. Do you find in God's Book that which makes you angry with God? Do you find in the Gospel that which makes you complaisant with yourself while you are unregenerate? Do you find in Providence that which irritates you, or which seems to excuse you in sin? Then your mind is impure, for these things are with you according to what you are. "It is dark," you say. It is your eyes that are dark—the Light of God is light and bright. "It is bitter," you say, when we bring you the honey of the Gospel. It is not the honey that is bitter—it is your mouth—it is your mouth that is out of order. How often ought people to recollect this when they hear a true Gospel sermon! George Herbert says, "Judge not the preacher—*he is your judge.*" And very often when a man has condemned the sermon, he had far better condemn himself! He has not agreed with it? No, if he had, it would not have been true! When sometimes we have heard some man of low life railing at us, we have said, "Thank God! Supposing that wretch had praised us, we would have known there was something amiss about us! There are public papers which, if they praised a man, you would know at once that the man deserved hanging, or something near approaching to it! Their censure is the only homage they can give to that which is right. So when any soul kicks against Christ—the precious blood of Christ, the Gospel of God, the purity of God—do we condemn God because this man condemns Him? No, but God is glorified by the unrighteous nature of this man rebelling against Him! If God were other

than He is, an unrighteous man might love Him, but being hated and despised, and forgotten of ungodly men, it does but prove that God is not such as they are, but infinitely superior to them! Let us judge ourselves, then, by this.

But provided we are obliged to come to the conclusion that our minds are not pure, we need not end there, for there are means by which they may be made so! Glory be to God, if my mind and conscience are defiled, they need not always be so. There is cleansing. I cannot effect it for myself, nor can any outward forms do it—

***“No outward form can make me clean,
The leprosy lies deep within”***

But God has set forth Christ to be a Savior—and He shall save His people from their sins—from their sinfulness, too, and whoever believes in Christ Jesus, that is, trusts in Him, there is already in him the beginning of purity! God the Holy Spirit will give him more and more of the likeness of Christ, for he that believes shall be saved from sin, from indwelling sin, from all sin, from the power as well as from the guilt of it! Faith will cleanse him, applying to him the precious blood and the water which flows from the side of Christ! Faith will, by the Holy Spirit's power, become a cleansing as well as a saving Grace! God grant it to us, and may we all be among the pure, unto whom all things shall be pure. We ask it for Christ's sake! Amen.

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

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

ADORNING THE GOSPEL

NO. 2416

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, JUNE 9, 1895.
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***“That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”
Titus 2:10.***

I AM afraid that there are some Christians who would hardly like the best preaching that they could ever have. The best doctrine that could ever be delivered would be like that of our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself—eminently ethical, full of precepts and words of wisdom for daily life. I verily believe that if some stern doctrinalists had heard some of Christ's sermons, they would have said that they had not the Gospel in them! He did not preach, every time He spoke, those grand doctrines which plainly show the way of salvation, but He frequently proclaimed those important precepts which show us the *fruits* of salvation and which help us to judge whether we have been saved or not.

You will notice that it was often the same in the preaching of the Apostles. Although Paul, himself, is a master of doctrine and, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, gives us a whole system of theology in miniature—though he never shrinks from the most profound doctrine, going to the very depths of the Doctrine of Election and to the very heights with the Doctrines of Justification by Faith and the Final Preservation of the Saints—yet he is preeminently practical in his teaching and often deals with the details of ordinary life.

Exceedingly noticeable is this in his Epistle to Titus. As you know, Titus was a teacher of teachers. He had to set in order the things that were needing and to show other preachers how they were to preach. He was told to bid the aged men to “be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.” Further, he was to instruct “the aged women, likewise, that they be in behavior as becomes holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things.” This was very close dealing with most practical matters! These aged women, in their turn, were to be instructors, “that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed. Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober minded.” You see how much of the Epistle is taken up with the affairs of ordinary life and matters of holy practice. So let our preaching be and let Christian people learn to receive joyfully such instruction! God will assuredly bless it, not only to its own great end of promoting holiness, but also as the means of convincing men of sin wherein they deviate from these blessed precepts—and thus, by conviction of sin—leading them to

feel their need of a Savior and thus, incidentally, driving them to the Cross where all hopes of salvation must alone be fixed!

I feel glad that my text is so practical and I am not ashamed to preach the practical precepts of our holy faith. Yet I want you to notice how continually and how wisely Paul interweaves his practical exhortations with the doctrines of religion. He would have the bondservants to be obedient, honest and faithful towards their masters for this reason, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” Ah, you who despise doctrines, who turn upon your heels if there is a doctrinal sermon, where are you, now, when the true motive for which holiness of life is to be carried out is to be found here, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things”? It is the fashion, nowadays, to talk much about preaching Christ, but not His doctrines. I neither understand nor wish to understand what that expression can mean. Christ without His doctrine? The great Teacher without His teachings? The Lord without His commands? The Christ without His anointing? Jesus, the only Savior, without His precious blood of Atonement? This is Judas-like, to betray the Son of Man with a kiss, to set up a engraved image in the place of Christ, a stuffed idol from which everything is absent that is vital to the true Christ of God! Dear Friends, we love “the doctrine of God our Savior” with all our hearts! We have received it to the joy of our spirit and in it we find the mainspring of motive which leads us to love our God and to walk in obedience to His precepts.

There are two matters upon which I am going to speak as the Holy Spirit shall guide me. First, *here is a name of adornment for the Gospel*—“the doctrine of God our Savior.” And, secondly, *here is a method of adornment for the Gospel*. These poor slaves were bid to so act that they should adorn the doctrine of God their Savior in all things.

I. First, here is A NAME OF ADORNMENT FOR THE GOSPEL. Let us think it over for a few minutes—“the doctrine of God our Savior.”

Dear Friends, our misery was great, otherwise we had never needed a Savior who should be called, “God our Savior.” For a little sin, or for a sin however great, which had but little of evil in its consequences, we might have been saved by some finite being! But if God, Himself, must leave His high abode and sojourn here to be our Savior, then was our ruin terrible in the extreme! It is part of the doctrine that we have learned from the Bible that man is lost and utterly undone by nature and by practice, too. And we could not fully preach “the doctrine of God our Savior” if we did not show, first, how awful is the gulf which is open before us—which none but God could fill. To proclaim aright the remedy for sin, we must declare how desperate was the disease, which none but God could heal, nor even He, except by shedding of His own blood! Surely this is a grand doctrine—that we need a Divine Savior, and that there is such a Savior provided—but that apart from Him there is no salvation!

It is also a very precious thought to us that while our ruin is evidently great, yet it is most sure that the remedy is equally great, or even greater, for we have a Savior whose name is, “God our Savior.” He is the one door of hope for the most despairing and desponding of men, “God our Savior.” Further down in this chapter, Paul calls Him, “the great God and

our Savior Jesus Christ.” He that has come from Heaven to save us is a Man and feels for us with all the sympathy of a man, but He is also God and, therefore “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.” It is the best news that was ever published among the sons of men, that He whom we have offended has, Himself, become our Savior!

When no eye had pitied—when, even had it pitied, there was still no arm that could have sufficed for our rescue—His eye pitied and His arm was made bare for the salvation of the sons of men! This was the Doctrine that, in Paul’s days, was whispered about everywhere, from Nero’s palace, down to those horrible holes where the slaves had to sleep at night. Afterwards, in the catacombs and in the caves of the earth, this was the story that the poor people came together to hear—that God was a Savior, that the Most High had, Himself, interposed to save the fallen and ruined sons of men! When it could be preached in the streets, it was so preached. When it might be proclaimed in the public synagogue, or in a school where philosophers gathered, or on Mars Hill at Athens, it was so preached. But when it could not be spoken in public, it was *whispered* and told privately from one to another of those who believed. Even the slaves passed on the message of hope to their fellow slaves, so that this grand Doctrine—“the doctrine of God our Savior”—was scattered abroad as the light is spread when the sun rises in the East and hastens on his course till the whole round globe is lightened by his golden rays!

“The doctrine of God our Savior.” Once more, my dear Friends, *this Doctrine is, in itself, Divine*, for there is an idiom here by which we are made to understand that it is not only a doctrine which speaks of God our Savior, but it is *the* Doctrine of God our Savior! It is His breath—the Doctrine is, itself, the very breath of God! This Divine teaching, this Revelation, this doctrine of salvation by a Divine Savior, has a divinity about itself! Let us, therefore, proclaim it wherever we have the opportunity and let us not attempt to conquer the world with any other weapon but “the doctrine of God our Savior!” Let us take it as David took Goliath’s sword from Ahimelech and say, “There is none like that; give it to me.”

I do not believe in the science of comparative religions. No! There is but one true religion, all the rest are lies! There is but one faith of God’s elect. There is “one Lord, one faith, one Baptism.” There is but one faith that comes from God! Paul once wrote the words, “another gospel,” but, directly, as if afraid somebody would catch at the expression and think there might be two gospels, he recalled the words, and said, “which is not another, but there are some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.” There is but *one* message of salvation and that concerns the one and only Savior—and—“there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” This will be thought by some people to be very narrow-minded talk, but we are not at all afraid of being thought narrow-minded! We are a great deal more afraid of running in the broad way with the multitude to do evil and excusing others in the doing of it! No, the Word of Christ, Himself, still stands—“He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son that whoever believes in

Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.”

So, you see, this wonderful teaching of Paul’s reminds us of the greatness of our misery, of the Divine Nature of our Savior and implies that the Doctrine, itself, is of a Divine order. I think I ought, also, to say, dear Friends, that these things being so, our safety is great! Our salvation, because we have God for our Savior, is great, indeed! In his Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul asks the question which has never been answered—“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation which, at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”

You can never think too much of this great salvation! When you desire it, prize it as a beggar might prize gold. When you have it, grasp it as the pearl of great price! We have, indeed, a great salvation—it is salvation from spiritual death, salvation from the rule and government of Satan, as well as from the manners and customs of an ungodly world. And it is also salvation from the guilt of sin, salvation from the dread of Hell, salvation from the fear of death and, it shall ultimately be perfect salvation from the least spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing! Our salvation to the fullest will only be revealed in the day of Christ’s appearing, when the body, also, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and all the surroundings of this poor sin-smitten earth—and the creation, itself—through this great salvation, shall be brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

“The doctrine of God our Savior”—the more I think of all that is meant by these words, the more it seems to be an ornament of the rarest kind for the neck of the Gospel! “The doctrine of God our Savior.” Turn the words over in your minds—see what a Gospel it is that you have received, see how great it is, see how Divine it is—prize it so as to rejoice in it day by day and so as to defend it, if necessary, with your lives! Rejoice in it so that when you come to die, it shall be the light that shall remove the darkness of the last dread hour!

Let us make a little further enquiry into this Doctrine of God our Savior. Why is the Gospel called by this name? Well, first, because *God, our Savior, is the Author of the Doctrine, and the Author of the salvation which it brings*. It all comes from Him. It seems to be thought, nowadays, that the Gospel which we have received has been evolved from man’s inner consciousness and that there are to be further evolutions which will blot out the present as the human race keeps rising, from platform to platform, till, one of these days, it will get up—God, alone, knows where—but certainly far beyond any necessity for such a Gospel as the martyrs died for and the Apostles declared! With such views we have no sympathy, whatever, and we entertain towards such erroneous notions the most determined opposition! We believe in a Revelation from God and we believe

that it is woe unto him who adds to or takes from that Revelation. We do not think the Church will have a particle of enthusiasm left in it—and it has none too much now—if ever people should get the idea that the Gospel is not a Divine Revelation, but only the product of human thought. Dear Friends, the doctrine that we believe and teach, and by which we have been saved, is, “the doctrine of God our Savior” because it came from Him—He is the Author of it.

And next, it is “the doctrine of God our Savior” because He is the substance of it. If you take the whole Truth of the Gospel and compress it till you get the very essence of it, you will find that it is, “Jesus only.” The very substance of the Gospel is Jesus Christ, Himself—His Person, His work, His glorious offices. It is, indeed, “the doctrine of God our Savior.” Beware that you hear no doctrine but that which exalts Him! If there is any teaching which puts Him into a corner, you get into a corner as far as you can from it! If there is any teaching that does not lift Him up, how can it be blessed of the Holy Spirit, since it is the Holy Spirit’s work to reveal Christ to His people and to make Him great in their thoughts?

**“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good”**

and, therefore, to this Gospel we must adhere with all our hearts! It is the Doctrine of God our Savior, for He is the substance of it!

Yet again it is the Doctrine of God our Savior because *He is the object of it—it all points to Him*. If you hear a real Gospel sermon, it directs you to look to Jesus Christ. That teaching which leads you to think of the priest and to think of the church, whatever there may be about them that is good, is not “the doctrine of God our Savior.” “To Him give all the Prophets witness,” to Him the Gospel continually points and this is the preacher’s one cry, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.”

This “doctrine of God our Savior” is simplicity, itself, and yet no man ever understood it except by the Holy Spirit’s teaching, for no man can rightly say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Spirit. Simple as it is, it seems to me that it is the most wonderful thing that was ever revealed, if I think of the effect it has upon the hearts of men! When Paul began to preach it and when he wrote these words to Titus, this simple teaching was being carried all over the known world by enthusiastic spirits, some of them able to speak in strange tongues and with words of eloquence, but the great mass of them, poor people, servants, *slaves!* Yet, wherever they went, they that were scattered abroad, spread this doctrine everywhere and it burned away until the great Roman Empire simmered like a pot on the fire and, after a while, boiling over and scalding many with its scum.

The great ones of the earth, of course, ridiculed this “doctrine of God our Savior”—it was “foolishness” to them—and he that received it was thought to be an idiot—he had forsaken the gods of his fathers, so he must be a fool. Yet the doctrine still went on spreading and then they tried to put out the fire and to quench it with blood, but men bravely died for it rather than deny it! They pressed to the judgment seats, so determined to avow their faith in Christ that Roman governors had to write

home to know what they were to do. The more they put the Christians to death, the more Christians there were! Further cruelties were committed—unspeakable tortures of all kinds were invented—but, for Christ’s sake, His followers endured all! They seemed to come on with an almost Omnipotent force to make a huge hecatomb of victims! They appeared to press onward through martyrdoms of a most horrible kind and all the while, this “doctrine of God our Savior” had a wonderful power among men!

And, dear Friends, you who are conversant with Church history know how often this Doctrine has broken all the bands that wicked men tried to fasten around it. I often wondered, until I understood the *supernatural* reason for it, what made the French Protestants, for instance, meet together in the desert, towards the South of France, while they were being dragooned by the king’s soldiers and while multitudes of them were being hunted to death. How was it that, in the dead of night, in lonely places, they came together to hear the Gospel? What is there about this Gospel that seems to touch the soul of man and makes him quite another creature—makes him joyous instead of sad, and makes him so mighty that he dares to defy death and Hell in defense of it? The reason is because this Doctrine cures the woe and misery of the *soul*—and brings light, comfort, happiness and hope to it! It is made by God, on purpose, to touch the heart of man and stir it to its very depths!

As for the new doctrine that many are teaching—it has not enough in it to make even a mouse enthusiastic! It has not enough in it for them to bait a mousetrap of their own—and the only way in which they can make any progress at all is by sneaking into our churches, obtaining a hearing and winning attention, and then, traitors as they are, speaking against the very Truths of God that has built our houses of prayer! They cannot build their own places of worship—there is nothing in their teaching that can make anybody generous and there is nothing in it that can make anybody glad. No, it is “the doctrine of God our Savior” that Paul insists upon, and he says to Titus, “having adorned it as well as I can with my preaching, now you take care that you and your people adorn it with your lives.”

II. That is to be the second part of my subject, A METHOD OF ADORNMENT FOR THE GOSPEL.

Let us enquire, first, *who were the persons* who were to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things”? They were, according to our translation, “servants,” but the correct word would be serfs, or slaves. These Christian slaves were to adorn the Doctrine of God their Savior. Some of these slaves—the women slaves especially—spent much of their time in adorning their mistresses. I will not attempt to repeat the terrible stories that are told of Roman women and their cruelty to their handmaids. Certainly the poor slaves had to spend hours upon hours in the adornment of their mistresses and some of the male “swells” of the Roman Empire wasted a great deal of the time of their slaves—the men, I mean—in the adornment of themselves. So that these slaves would have a pretty good idea of what was meant by the ornamenting or adorning of

the Gospel and it must have struck them as a very wonderful thing that they should be selected to adorn the Gospel!

The word is not applied to the masters, to the princes, or to any of the great ones of the earth—but to those, who, in addition to being poor, were not even owners of themselves! Slaves in Paul's days were simply goods and chattels, but they were regarded as goods and chattels of the very lowest kind—they were as often and as freely sold as the sheep in the market. Think of how they used to be treated, when, for instance, for making a slight mistake in waiting at table, a slave was thrown into the fishpond to be eaten alive by the fish—the thing was frequently done. The most fearful punishments were executed on them and you might have seen in Pompeii the wretched places by the doorway where the slave, who was the porter, had an iron collar and a weight about his neck, and where he slept under the stairs, as a dog might do in a kennel and, perhaps, for years never left his miserable den. Yet *these* were the kind of people who were to adorn the Gospel! Paul did not think badly of them. Everybody else did, but he set the task of adorning the Gospel by making it lovely and beautiful in the eyes of men—to even the very poorest and worst-off as to their position! Is it not wonderful to think of, and yet, such is the literal fact?

Paul also told them *how they were to adorn the Gospel*. I do not think, for a moment, Paul believed that the practice of slavery ought to exist. He believed to the fullest extent that the great principles of Christianity would overthrow slavery anywhere and the sooner they did so, the better pleased would he be, but, for the time being, as it was the custom to have slaves, they must adorn the Doctrine of God their Savior in the position in which they were.

Slaves in those days were constantly rebelling. At one time they rose up and, for a while, they kept all Rome in fear and alarm, for the masters thought they would all be killed by their rebellious slaves. So Paul exhorts them, first, “to be obedient unto their own masters.” Then the man's master, however wicked he might be, would say, “Whatever has come over my slave? My orders are exactly carried out—all I could wish to have done is done, and done well. He is not an eye-servant or a mere man-pleaser, but he does his work heartily and I have heard him say that he does it out of love to one, Jesus, who is his God and Savior.” The slave was to put aside all his selfishness and, finding himself a slave, to determine that he would so serve his master that he might recommend his religion to his master!

The slaves were also to be “well pleasing” to their masters—“to please them well in all things.” They were not to be always quarrelling, grumbling and complaining about this, and that, and the other, but to wear a contented spirit. Then the master would be sure to ask, “What has come over my slave?” And, by the way in which he acted, the slave would be a practical missionary to his master!

Paul added, “not answering again.” Of course, the slaves were usually sharp in their retorts to their masters. They did not care whether they lived or died and they said hard things. Paul says let the quiet patience of the Christian slaves make their masters and mistresses wonder what it is

that has made such a difference in them. He also added, “not purloining.” Slaves and servants in Paul’s time were all thieves. In the writings of secular authors of that period, you constantly meet with the declaration that, “to multiply servants is to multiply thieves.” Of course the poor creatures helped themselves whenever they could—if you treat a man like a dog, should you be surprised if he acts like one? But the *Christian* slave might be trusted with untold gold! And obedience to this precept, “not purloining,” was the way in which he adorned the Doctrine of God, his Savior.

He was also to be faithful to his master—“showing all good fidelity.” There were Christian slaves who had bad masters, who, nevertheless, were faithful to them in guarding their interests, and it was such a marvel that the rich heathen who despised the name of Christ, yet coveted to buy Christian slaves, for they found them to be the most faithful of mankind and wondered what it was that made them so! This is what Paul meant when he said that they should adorn the Doctrine of God, their Savior, in their sad and low estate, by not being degraded by it, but standing up in the grandeur of their Christian liberty, determining that they would not be the slaves of sin—and this was a wonderful adornment for the Gospel!

You and I are not slaves! We have been saved from that degradation by this Gospel of God our Savior, for our fathers were as much slaves as these poor people were, but we are free. *What can we do to adorn the Gospel of God our Savior?* Well, first, remember that the adornment of the Gospel of God our Savior is not to be esthetic. We cannot adorn the Gospel with music, with painting and with architecture. When you stand beneath the blue sky and see how God has decked His world with many flowers beneath your feet, and all around you hear the birds singing. And when, in the still and silent night, you gaze upon the silver stars, you feel that there is nothing we can build and nothing we can make that is in the least worthy of the great God. You remember how Stephen said of the Temple at Jerusalem, “Solomon built Him an house,” and then added, “Howbeit the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands. As says the Prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will you build Me? says the Lord: or what is the place of My rest?” As much as to say there was nothing in all that material grandeur, for, from the very day in which Solomon built the Temple with all its splendor, religion declined and decayed throughout all Israel! You cannot “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” with anything tangible and material—it is to be adorned in quite another way.

Neither can you adorn the Doctrine by anything peculiar in your garb or your mode of speech, as some have tried to do. The Gospel is not any the better for a broad brim to your hat. It will not be any the worse for the color of your coat. Neither can it be adorned by any ecclesiastical addition whatever! Neither can it be adorned by the flowers of rhetoric. What grand speeches are sometimes made about the Gospel! Yet, somehow, they do not seem to fit it. The Gospel is best adorned when most unadorned! In her native beauty she is altogether unrivalled, she is then

a queen—but when you deck her out, as they do who come from Rome, with meretricious garments—her true splendor is marred and hidden.

How, then, can we ornament the Gospel? An ornament should always be suitable. Nothing is really ornamental that is not suitable to the person upon whom it is placed. Then, what is appropriate to the Gospel? Well, *holiness* suits the Gospel. Adorn it with a holy life! How pure, how clean, how sweet, how heavenly the Gospel is! Hang, then, the jewels of holiness about its neck and place them as rings on its hands. The Gospel is also to be adorned with *mercifulness*. It is all mercy, it is all love, there is no love like it—“God so loved the world.” Well, then, adorn the Gospel with the suitable jewels of mercifulness and kindness! Be full of loving-kindness to others, for you have tasted of the lovingkindness of the Lord! The Gospel is also the Gospel of happiness. It is called, “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.” A more correct translation would be, “the happy God.” Well, then, adorn the Gospel by being happy!—

**“Why does your face, you humble souls,
Those mournful colors wear?”**

Adorn the Gospel by a cheerful countenance and a happy life!

Men of business, adorn the Gospel by the strictness of your integrity. Ours is a just Gospel, for God is Just, and yet the Justifier of everyone that believes in Jesus. The Gospel makes abundant provision for justice to all men, so I pray that you may be so exact, so particular about everything, that when men speak of you, they will not be able to say that you make a profession of religion, but it has not much effect upon your life. Never let it be so said truthfully—be so strictly just that people will not need to count money after you, for in that way they will see what is the meaning of the expression, “adorning the doctrine.” A person asked me, one day, “Is not such-and-such a person Baptist?” I replied, “I do not know him.” He said, “He is a fellow who says a very long grace before his dinner and he goes to such-and-such a Chapel.” “Well,” I answered, “if he goes there, he certainly attends a Baptist Chapel.” Then he said, “He is as big a thief as there is out of prison anywhere.” I said, “I hope he is not a Baptist. At any rate, he is not a *Christian* if he is what you say, for a Christian is an honest man.” Unless we are strictly so, we do not adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior.

Adorn the Gospel, next, by your *unselfishness*. If you are always looking to your own interests. If you have no thought but for your own personal comfort. If your religion can live and die within your own heart, you have not any that is worth having! If you would adorn the Gospel, you must love others, love them intensely and make it one objective of your lives to make other people happy, for so you will then be acting according to the spirit and genius of the Gospel, and you will be adorning the Doctrine of God our Savior in all things!

Again, let a spirit of *quick forgiveness* be upon you. Resent no injury. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, “But I say unto you, 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.” Thus you will have a fine set of jewels to adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior!

Next, *have patience under trouble*. Be not afraid of sudden fear. Be not carried away into grumbling or murmuring in the time of your poverty or pain. A patient woman, one who can bear up and bear on under all kinds of adversity, is one of the greatest ornaments of the Gospel!

A *placid and steady calm* is also a great adornment for the Gospel. One has seen such gentleness of spirit in some Christian matrons that we have felt that they have been an ornament to the Doctrine of Jesus Christ. May we learn that holy calm and may the Spirit of God so dwell in us that in all we say, and all we do, and all we are, we may adorn the Doctrine of God our Savior in all things! May the Lord add His blessing upon this discourse, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
TITUS 2:6-15; 3.**

Titus 2:6. *Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober minded.* They are full of spirits, they are very sanguine, they are apt to be carried away with novelties—exhort them to have that which is thought to be a virtue of age, namely, sobriety. Let them be old when they are young that they may be young when they are old.

7. *In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works.* Titus was, himself, a young man. He must, therefore, be a pattern to young men and, as a pastor or Evangelist, he must be a pattern to all sorts of men.

7, 8. *In doctrine showing incorruptibility, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.* It is a pity when the Truth of God suffers at the hand of its own advocate and, perhaps, the very worst wounds that Truth has received have been in the house of its friends. You must be careful, therefore, “that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”

9. *Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters.* They were mostly slaves in those days. A sad condition of society was that in which service meant slavery, yet even slaves were “to be obedient unto their own masters.”

9, 10. *And to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining.* Not practicing petty thefts, as, alas, some servants do even now—

10. *But showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.* The life of the Christian, even if he is a servant, is to be an ornament of Christianity. Christ does not look for the ornament of His religion to the riches or the talents of His followers, but to their *holy lives*, “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”

11, 12. *For the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.* Christians are not to run out of the world, as monks and hermits sought to do, but to live “in this present world.” Yet, while in the world, we are to be godly—that is, full of God! That kind of life which is without God is not for

Christians! Those worldly desires, the pride and ambition which are common to worldly men are not to have power over us. We are to deny them and to live soberly. This word relates not only to eating and drinking, but to the general sobriety of a man's mind—"Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

13, 14. *Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* See what Christ died for? See what Christ lives for? See what we are to live for—that we should not only be a people purified, but purified unto Himself! We are not only to have good works, but we are to be *zealous* of them—we are to burn with zeal for them, for zeal is a kind of fire—it is to burn and blaze in us until we warm and enlighten others!

15. *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise you.* As I have already reminded you, Titus was a young man, and people are apt to despise the pastoral office when it is held by a young man. Yet they ought always to *respect* it, whether it is held by a young man or an old man. God knows best who is most fitted for the work of the ministry—and those of us who are getting old must never look with any kind of scorn or contempt upon those who are commencing their service, for we, too, were once young. You cannot measure a man's Grace by the length of his beard, nor by the number of his years.

Titus 3:1, 2. *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be not brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.* Gentleness was not reckoned a virtue among the Greeks. I do not suppose that the people in Crete had ever heard of it before Paul wrote this Epistle to Titus. Among the Romans and the Greeks, it seemed to be a virtue to stand up for your own, to be like a gamecock who is always ready to fight and will never miss a chance of fighting. But this Christian virtue of gentleness is a most amiable one and greatly adorns the Doctrine of Christ. The world has run away with this word, gentle, and now calls many a person a gentleman who has no right to the name. I wish that every gentleman were, indeed, a gentleman! It is very significant that Moses, the type of the Lord Jesus under the Law, was the meekest of men—should not Christians, therefore, excel in gentleness under this milder dispensation?

3, 4. *For we ourselves, also, were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God, our Savior, toward man appeared.* "The philanthropy of God" would be a good translation, or rather, a sort of borrowing from the Greek itself. "After we had seen the philanthropy of God"—

5-8. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His Grace, we should be made heirs ac-*

ording to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying. It would be worthwhile for you to turn to the other places in which this expression, "This is a faithful saying," occurs.

8. *And these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.* They are saved by faith—let them be careful to maintain good works. "These things are good and profitable unto men," that is, to those who practice and observe them.

9. *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain.* There are hundreds of questions which are thought, by some people, to be very important, but which have no practical bearing, whatever, either upon the Glory of God, or upon the holiness of man. We are not to go into these matters—let those who have time to waste take up these questions—as for us, we have not time enough for things that are unprofitable and vain.

10, 11. *A man who is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself.* When it comes to unbelief of fundamental and vital doctrines, we who are like Titus, set in office over a Church, must deal with such deadly evils with a strong hand.

12, 13. *When I shall send Artemas unto you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter. Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.* Paul had already told Titus to bid the saints in Crete to abound in good works. Now he is commanded to take care of certain traveling Christians and to speed them on their way. It was the custom in olden times, when traveling was very different from what it is now, when the Christians passed from one town to another, to find the Church and to be entertained and speeded on their journey by their fellow Believers. Thus they kept up a practical fellowship of love to all the saints.

14, 15. *And let our people, also, learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful. All that are with me salute you. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. May that final benediction drop like the dew upon this whole company! "Grace be with you all. Amen."*

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

THE TWO APPEARINGS AND THE DISCIPLINE OF GRACE NO. 1894

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 4, 1886,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“For the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”
Titus 2:11-14.*

UPON reading this text, one sees at a glance that Paul believed in a Divine Savior. He did not preach a Savior who was a mere man. He believed the Lord Jesus Christ to be truly Man, but he also believed Him to be God over all and he, therefore, uses the striking words, “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” There is no appearing of God the Father—there is no such expression in Scripture! The appearing is the appearing of that second Person of the blessed Trinity in unity who has already once appeared and who will appear a second time without a sin offering unto salvation in the latter days. Paul believed in Jesus as “the great God and our Savior.” It was his high delight to extol the Lord who once was crucified in weakness. He calls Him, here, “the great God,” thus specially dwelling upon His power, dominion and Glory. And this is the more remarkable because he immediately goes on to say, “who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity.” He that gave Himself. He that surrendered life, itself, upon the accursed tree. He that was stripped of all honor and Glory and entered into the utmost depths of humiliation was, assuredly, the great God notwithstanding all! O Brothers, if you take away the Deity of Christ, what in the Gospel is left that is worth preaching? None but the great God is equal to the work of being our Savior!

We learn, also, at first sight, that Paul believed in a great redemption. “Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity.” That word, “redemption,” sounds in my ears like a silver bell! We are ransomed, purchased back from slavery and this at an immeasurable price—not merely by the *obedience* of Christ, nor the *suffering* of Christ, nor even the

death of Christ, but by Christ's giving *Himself* for us. All that there is in the great God and Savior was paid down that He might "redeem us from all iniquity." The splendor of the Gospel lies in the redeeming Sacrifice of the Son of God and we shall never fail to put this to the front in our preaching! It is the gem of all the Gospel gems! As the moon is among the stars, so is this great doctrine among all the lesser lights which God has kindled to make glad the night of fallen man! Paul never hesitates—he has a Divine Savior and a Divine redemption—and he preaches these with unwavering confidence. Oh that all preachers were like Paul!

It is also clear that Paul looked upon the appearing of the Savior as a Redeemer from all iniquity as a display of the Grace of God. He says, "The Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men." In the Person of Christ, the Grace of God is revealed, as when the sun rises and makes glad all lands. It is not a *private* vision of God to a favored Prophet on the lone mountain's brow, but it is an open declaration of the Grace of God to every creature under Heaven—a display of the Grace of God to all eyes that are open to behold it! When the Lord Jesus Christ came to Bethlehem and when He closed a perfect life by death upon Calvary, He manifested the Grace of God more gloriously than has been done by creation or Providence. This is the clearest Revelation of the everlasting mercy of the living God! In the Redeemer we behold the unveiling of the Father's face. What if I say the laying bare of the Divine heart? To repeat the figure of the text, this is the dayspring from on high which has visited us. This is the Sun which has risen with healing in His wings. The Grace of God has conspicuously shone forth and made itself visible to men of every rank in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. This was not given us because of anything deserved on our part—it is a manifestation of free, rich, undeserved Grace and of that Grace in its fullness! The Grace of God has been made manifest to the entire universe in the appearing of Jesus Christ our Lord!

The grand objective of the manifestation of Divine Grace in Christ Jesus is to deliver men from the dominion of evil. The world in Paul's day was sunk in immorality, debauchery, ungodliness, bloodshed and cruelty of every kind. I have not time, this morning, to give you, even, an outline of the Roman world when Paul wrote this letter to Titus. We are bad enough, now, but the outward manners and customs of that period were simply horrible! The spread of the Gospel has worked a change for the better. In the Apostle's days the favorite spectacles for holiday entertainment were the slaughter of men—and such was the general depravity, that vices which we hardly dare to mention were defended and gloried in. In the midnight of the world's history, our Lord appeared to put away sin. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the manifestation of the Divine Grace to men, came into the world to put an end to the unutterable tyranny of evil. His work and teaching are meant to lift up mankind at large, but also to redeem His people from all iniquity and to sanctify them to Himself as His peculiar heritage.

Paul looks upon recovery from sin as being a wonderful proof of Divine Grace. He does not talk about a kind of Grace that would leave men in sin and yet save them from its punishment. No, his salvation is *salvation from sin*. He does not talk about a Free Grace which winks at iniquity and makes nothing of transgression, but of a greater Grace by far—a Grace which denounces the iniquity and condemns the transgression—and then delivers the victim of it from the habit which has brought him into bondage. He declares that the Grace of God has shone upon the world, in the work of Jesus, in order that the darkness of its sin and ignorance may disappear and the brightness of holiness, righteousness and peace may rule the day. God send us to see these blessed results in every part of the world! God make us to see them in ourselves! May we feel that the Grace of God has appeared to us individually! Our Apostle would have Titus know that this Grace was intended for all ranks of men—for the Cretans who were “always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons”—and even for the most despised bond slaves who, under the Roman empire were treated worse than dogs. To each one of us, whether rich or poor, prominent or obscure, the Gospel has come and its design is that we may be delivered, by it, from all ungodliness and worldly lusts.

This being the run of the text, I ask you to come closer to it, while I try to show how the Apostle stimulates us to holiness and urges us to overcome all evil. Firstly he describes *our position*. Secondly, he describes *our instruction*. And, thirdly, he mentions *our encouragements*. May the good Spirit bless our meditations at this hour!

I. First of all, the Apostle in this text describes OUR POSITION. The people of God stand between two appearances. In the 11th verse he tells us, “The Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.” And then he says, in the 13th verse, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” We live in an age which is an interval between two appearings of the Lord from Heaven. Believers in Jesus are shut off from the old economy by the first coming of our Lord. The times of man’s ignorance God, winked at, but now He commands all men, everywhere, to repent. We are divided from the past by a wall of light upon whose forefront we read the words, Bethlehem, Gethsemane and Calvary. We date from the birth of the Virgin’s Son—we begin with Anno Domini. All the rest of time is before Christ and is marked off from the Christian era. Bethlehem’s manger is our beginning. The chief landmark in all time to us is the wondrous life of Him who is the Light of the world! We look to the appearing of the Grace of God in the form of the lowly One of Nazareth, for our trust is there. We confide in Him who was made flesh and dwelt among us, so that men beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. The dense darkness of the heathen ages begins to be broken when we reach the first appearing—and the dawn of a glorious day begins!

Brothers and Sisters, we look forward to a second appearing! Our outlook for the close of this present era is another appearing—an appearing of Glory rather than of Grace. After our Master rose from the brow of Oli-

vet, His disciples remained for a while in mute astonishment. But soon an angelic messenger reminded them of prophecy and promise by saying, “You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven.” We believe that our Lord, in the fullness of time, will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel and the voice of God—

**“The Lord shall come! The earth shall quake!
The mountains to their center shake
And, withering from the vault of night,
The stars shall pale their feeble light.”**

This is the terminus of the present age. We look from Anno Domini, in which He came the first time, to that greater Anno Domini, or year of our Lord, in which He shall come a second time, in all the splendor of His power, to reign in righteousness and break the evil powers as with a rod of iron!

See, then, where we are—we are compassed about, behind and before—with the appearings of our Lord. Behind us is our trust. Before us is our hope. Behind us is the Son of God in humiliation. Before us is the great God, our Savior, in His Glory. To use an ecclesiastical term, we stand between two Epiphanies—the first is the manifestation of the Son of God in human flesh in dishonor and weakness. The second is the manifestation of the same Son of God in all His power and Glory! In what a position, then, do the saints stand! They have an era all to themselves which begins and ends with the Lord’s appearing!

Our position is further described in the text, if you look at it, as being *in this present world, or age*. We are living in the age which lies between the two blazing beacons of the Divine appearings and we are called to hasten from one to the other. The sacramental host of God’s elect is marching on from the one appearing to the other with hasty feet. We have everything to hope for in the *last* appearing, as we have everything to trust to in the *first* appearing—and we have now to wait with patient hope throughout that weary interval which intervenes! Paul calls it, “this present world.” This marks its fleeting nature. It is present, but it is scarcely future, for the Lord may come so soon and thus end it all. It is present, now, but it will not be present long. It is but a little time and He who will come shall come and will not tarry. Now it is this “present world.” Oh, how present it is! How sadly it surrounds us!

Yet, by faith, we count these present things to be unsubstantial as a dream and we look to the things which are not seen and not present, as being real and eternal! We pass through this world as men on pilgrimage. We traverse an enemy’s country. Going from one manifestation to another, we are as birds migrating on the wing from one region to another—there is no rest for us by the way. We are to keep ourselves as loose as we can from this country through which we make our pilgrimage, for we are strangers and foreigners and here we have no continuing city. We hurry through this Vanity Fair—before us lies the Celestial City and the coming

of the Lord who is the King thereof! As voyagers cross the Atlantic and so pass from shore to shore, so do we speed over the waves of this ever-changing world to the Glory Land of the bright appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Already I have given to you, in this description of our position, the very best argument for a holy life. If it is so, my Brothers and Sisters, that you are not of the world, even as Jesus is not of the world. If this is so, that before you blazes the supernatural splendor of the Second Advent and behind you burns the everlasting light of the Redeemer's first appearing, what manner of people ought you to be? If, indeed, you are but journeying through this present world, suffer not your hearts to be defiled with its sins! Learn not the manner of speech of these aliens through whose country you are passing! Is it not written, "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations"? "Come you out from among them and be you separate, touch not the unclean thing," for the Lord has said, "I will be a Father unto you and you shall be My sons and daughters."

They that lived before the coming of Christ had responsibilities, but not such as those which rest upon you who have seen the face of God in Jesus Christ and who expect to see that face again! You live in light which renders their brightest knowledge a comparative darkness! Walk as children of Light. You stand between two mornings between which there is no evening. The Glory of the Lord has risen upon you, once, in the Incarnation and Atonement of your Lord—that Light is shining more and more—and soon there will come the perfect day which shall be ushered in by the Second Advent. The sun shall no more go down, but it shall unveil itself and shed an indescribable splendor upon all hearts that look for it!

"Put on, therefore, the armor of light." What a grand expression! Helmet of light, breastplate of light, shoes of light—everything of light! What a knight must he be who is clad, not in steel, but in light! Light which shall flash confusion on his foes! There ought to be a holy light about you, O Believer in Jesus, for there is the appearing of Grace behind you and the appearing of Glory before you! Two manifestations of God shine upon you. Like a wall of fire, the Lord's appearings are round about you—there ought to be a special Glory of holiness in the midst. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." That is the position of the righteous according to my text—and it furnishes a loud call to holiness.

II. Secondly, I have to call your attention to THE INSTRUCTION which is given to us by the Grace of God which has appeared unto all men. Our translation runs thus—"The Grace of God has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." A better translation would be, "The Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, disciplining us in order that we may deny ungodliness and worldly lusts." Those of you who know a little Greek will note that the word which, in our version, is rendered, "teaching," is a scholastic term and has to do with

the education of children—not merely the teaching, but the training and bringing of them up. The Grace of God has come to be a schoolmaster to us, to teach us, to train us, to prepare us for a more developed state. Christ has manifested in His own Person that wonderful Grace of God which is to deal with us as with sons, to educate us unto holiness and so to the full possession of our heavenly heritage. We are the many sons who are to be brought to Glory by the discipline of Grace.

So then, first of all, *Grace has a discipline*. We generally think of law when we talk about schoolmasters and discipline, but Grace, itself, has a discipline and a wonderful training power, too. The manifestation of Grace is preparing us for the manifestation of Glory. What the Law could not do, Grace is doing. The free favor of God instills new principles, suggests new thoughts and, by inspiring us with gratitude, creates in us love to God and hatred of that which is opposed to God. Happy are they who go to the school of the Grace of God! This Grace of God entering into us shows us what was evil even more clearly than the Commandments do. We receive a vital, testing principle within whereby we discern between good and evil. The Grace of God provides us with instruction, but also with chastisement, as it is written, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.” As soon as we come under the conscious enjoyment of the Free Grace of God, we find it to be a holy rule, a fatherly government, a heavenly training. We find not self-indulgence, much less licentiousness, but, on the contrary, the Grace of God both restrains and constrains us—it makes us free to holiness and delivers us from the law of sin and death by “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.”

Grace has its discipline and *Grace has its chosen disciples*, for you cannot help noticing that while the 11th verse says that, “the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,” yet it is clear that this Grace of God has not exercised its holy *discipline* upon all men and, therefore, the text changes its, “all men,” into, “us.” Usually in Scripture, when you get a generality, you soon find a particularity near it. The text has it, “teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world.” Thus you see that Grace has its *own disciples*. Are you a disciple of the Grace of God? Did you ever come and submit yourself to it? Have you learned to spell that word, “faith”? Have you childlike trust in Jesus? Have you learned to wash in the laver of Atonement? Have you learned those holy exercises which are taught by the Grace of God? Can you say that your salvation is of Grace? Do you know the meaning of that text, “By Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”? If so, then you are His disciples and the Grace of God which has appeared so conspicuously has come to discipline you!

As the disciples of Grace, endeavor to adorn its doctrine. According to the previous verses, even a slave might do this. He might be an ornament to the Grace of God. Let Grace have such an effect upon your life and character that all may exclaim, “Look what Grace can do! Look how the Grace of God produces holiness in Believers!” All along I wish to be driving

at the point which the Apostle is aiming at—that we are to be holy—holy because Grace exercises a purifying discipline and because we are the disciples of that Grace.

The discipline of Grace, according to the Apostle, has three results—denying, living, looking. You see the three words before you. The first is, “denying.” When a young man comes to our College, he usually has much to unlearn. If his education has been neglected, a sort of instinctive ignorance covers his mind with briars and brambles. If he has gone to some faulty school where the teaching is flimsy, his tutor has, first of all, to fetch out of him what he has been badly taught. The most difficult part of the training of young men is not to put the right thing *into* them, but to get the wrong thing *out* of them! A man proposes to teach a language in six months and in the end, a great thing is done if one of his pupils is able to forget all his nonsense in six years! When the Holy Spirit comes into the heart, He finds that we know so much, already, of what it were well to leave unknown—we are self-conceited, we are puffed up. We have learned lessons of worldly wisdom and carnal policy—and these we need to unlearn and deny. The Holy Spirit works this denying in us by the discipline of Grace.

What have we to deny? First, we have to deny ungodliness. That is a lesson which many of you have great need to learn. Listen to working men. “Oh,” they say, “we have to work hard. We cannot think about God or religion.” This is ungodliness! The Grace of God teaches us to deny this—we come to loathe such atheism. Others are prospering in the world and they cry, “If you had as much business to look after as I have, you would have no time to think about your soul or another world. Trying to battle with the competition of the times leaves me no opportunity for prayer or Bible reading! I have enough to do with my day-book and ledger.” This also is ungodliness! The Grace of God leads us to deny this—we abhor such forgetfulness of God! A great work of the Holy Spirit is to make a man godly, to make him think of God, to make him feel that this present life is not all, but that there is a judgment to come wherein he must give an account before God. God cannot be forgotten with impunity. If we treat Him as if He were nothing and leave Him out of our calculations for life, we shall make a fatal mistake. O my Hearer, there is a God and, as surely as you live, you are accountable to Him! When the Spirit of God comes with the Grace of the Gospel, He removes our inveterate ungodliness and causes us to deny it with joyful earnestness.

We next deny “worldly lusts,” that is, the lusts of the present world or age which I described to you, just now, as coming in between the two appearings. This present age is as full of evil lusts as that in which Paul wrote concerning the Cretins. The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life are yet with us. Wherever the Grace of God comes effectually, it makes the loose liver deny the desires of the flesh. It causes the man who lusted after gold to conquer his greediness. It brings the proud man away from his ambitions. It trains the idler to diligence and it sobers the wanton mind which cared only for the frivolities of life. Not only

do we *leave* these lusts, but we *deny* them. We have an abhorrence of those things wherein we formerly placed our delight. Our cry is, "What have I to do any more with idols?" To the worldling, we say, "These things may belong to you, but as for us, we cannot own them. Sin shall no more have dominion over us. We are not of the world and, therefore, its ways and fashions are none of ours." The period in which we live shall have no paramount influence over us, for our truest life is with Christ in eternity and our conversation is in Heaven. The Grace of God has made us deny the prevailing philosophies, glories, maxims and fashions of this present world. In the best sense we are nonconformists. We desire to be crucified to the world and the world to us. This was a great thing for Grace to do among the degraded sensualists of Paul's day—and it is not a less glorious achievement in these times.

But then, Brothers and Sisters, you cannot be complete with a merely negative religion—you must have something positive. And so the next word is *living*—that "we should *live* soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world." Observe, Brethren, that the Holy Spirit expects us to live in this present world and, therefore, we are not to exclude ourselves from it. This age is the battlefield in which the soldier of Christ is to fight. Society is the place in which Christianity is to exhibit the Graces of Christ. If it were possible for these good Sisters to retire into a large house and live secluded from the world, they would be shirking their duty rather than fulfilling it! If all the good men and true were to form a select colony and do nothing else but pray and hear sermons, they would simply be refusing to serve God in His own appointed way. No, you have to live soberly, godly, righteously *in this world*, such as it is, at present! It is of no use for you to scheme to escape from it! You are bound to breast this torrent and buffet all its waves. If the Grace of God is in you, that Grace is meant to be displayed—not in a select and secluded retreat—but in this present world. You are to shine in the darkness like a light.

This life is described in a three-fold way. You are, first, to live "*soberly*"—that is, for yourself. "Soberly" in all your eating and your drinking and in the indulgence of all bodily appetites—that goes without saying. Drunks and gluttons, fornicators and adulterers cannot inherit the Kingdom of God! You are to live soberly in all your thinking, all your speaking, all your acting. There is to be sobriety in all your worldly pursuits. You are to have yourself well in hand. You are to be self-restrained. I know some Brothers who are not often sober. I do not accuse them of being drunk with wine, but they are *mentally* intoxicated—they have no reason, no moderation, no judgment. They are all spur and no rein. Right or wrong, they must have that which they have set their hearts upon. They never look round to take the full bearing of a matter. They never estimate calmly—but with closed eyes they rush on like bulls. Alas for these unsober people! They are not to be depended on—they are everything by turns and nothing long. The man who is disciplined by the Grace of God becomes thoughtful, considerate, self-contained and he is no longer tossed about by passion, or swayed by prejudice. There is only one insobriety

into which I pray we may fall and, truth to say, that is the truest sobriety. Of this the Scripture says, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." When the Spirit of God takes full possession of us, then we are borne along by His sacred energy and are filled with a Divine enthusiasm which needs no restraint. Under all other influences we must guard ourselves against yielding too completely, that thus we may live "soberly."

As to his fellow men, the Believer lives "*righteously*." I cannot understand that Christian who can do a dirty thing in business. Craft, cunning, over-reaching, misrepresentation and deceit are no instruments for the hand of godly men! I am told that my principles are too angelic for business life—that a man cannot be a match for his fellow men in trade if he is too Puritan. Others are up to tricks and he will be ruined if he cannot trick them in return! O my dear Hearers, do not talk in this way! If you mean to go the way of the devil, say so—and accept the consequences. But if you profess to be servants of God, deny all partnership with unrighteousness! Dishonesty and falsehood are the opposites of godliness! A Christian man may be poor, but he must live righteously—he may lack sharpness, but he must *not* lack integrity! A Christian profession without uprightness is a lie! Grace must discipline us to righteous living.

Towards God we are told in the text that we are to be *godly*. Every man who has the Grace of God in him, indeed, and of a truth, will think much of God and will seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. God will enter into all his calculations. God's Presence will be his joy; God's strength will be his confidence; God's Providence will be his inheritance; God's Glory will be the chief end of his being; God's Law the guide of his conversation! Now, if the Grace of God, which has appeared so plainly to all men, has really come with its sacred discipline upon us, it is teaching us to live in this three-fold manner.

Once more, there is *looking*, as well as living. One work of the Grace of God is to cause us to be "looking for that blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." What is that "blessed hope"? Why, first, that when He comes we shall rise from the dead, if we have fallen asleep, and that if we are alive and remain, we shall be changed at His appearing! Our hope is that we shall be approved of Him and shall hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." This hope is not of debt, but of Grace! Though our Lord will give us a reward, it will not be according to the Law of Works. We expect to be like Jesus when we shall see Him as He is. When Jesus shines forth as the sun, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of our Father." Our gain by godliness cannot be counted down into the palm of our hand. It lies in the glorious future and yet, to faith, it is so near that at this moment I almost hear the chariot of the Coming One! The Lord comes and in the coming of the Lord lies the great hope of the Believer—his great stimulus to overcome evil—his incentive to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord! Oh to be found blameless in the day of the manifestation of our Lord! God grant us this! Do you not see, Brothers

and Sisters, how the discipline of the Doctrine of Grace runs towards the separating of us from sin and the making us to live unto God?

III. Lastly, and briefly, the text sets forth certain of OUR ENCOURAGEMENTS. I will only briefly hint at them.

In this great battle for right, truth and holiness, what could we do, my Brothers and Sisters, if we were left alone? But our first encouragement is that Grace has come to our rescue, for in the day when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared among men, He brought for us the Grace of God to help us to overcome all iniquity. He that struggles, now, against inbred sin has the Holy Spirit within him to help him. He that goes forth to fight against evil in other men by preaching the Gospel has that same Holy Spirit going with the Truth of God to make it like a fire and like a hammer. I would ground my weapons and retreat from a fight so hopeless were it not that the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge! The Grace of God that brings salvation from sin has flashed forth conspicuously like the lightning which is seen from one part of the Heaven to the other—and our victory over darkness is insured. However hard the conflict with evil, it is not desperate. We may hope on and hope always!

A certain warrior was found in prayer and when his king sneered, he answered that he was pleading with his majesty's august ally. I question whether God is the ally of anybody when he goes forth with gun and sword, but in using those weapons which are "not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," we may truly reckon upon our august Ally! Speak the Truth of God, man, for God speaks with you! Work for God, woman, for God works in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure! The appearance of the Grace of God in the Person of Christ is encouragement enough to those who are under the most difficult circumstances and have to contend for righteousness against the deadliest odds. Grace has appeared—therefore let us be of good courage!

A second encouragement is that *another appearing is coming*. He who bowed His head in weakness and died in the moment of victory, is coming in all the Glory of His endless life! Do not question it, the world is not going to darken into an eternal night—the morning comes as well as the night and though sin and corruption abound, and the love of many waxes cold—these are but the tokens of His near advent who said that it would be so before His appearing! The right with the might and the might with the right shall be! As surely as God lives, it shall be so. We are not fighting a losing battle. The Lord must triumph. Oh, if His suffering life and cruel death had been the only appearing, we might have feared. But it is not—it is but the first—and the prefatory part of His manifestation. He comes! He comes! None can hinder His coming! Every moment brings Him nearer! Nothing can delay His Glory! When the hour shall strike, He shall appear in the majesty of God to put an end to the dominion of sin and bring in endless peace! Satan shall shortly be bruised under our feet—therefore comfort one another with these words and then prepare for further battle! Sharpen your swords and be ready for close fighting! Trust in God and

keep your powder dry! This must always be our war cry, "He must reign." We are looking for the appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ!

Another encouragement is that *we are serving a glorious Master*. The Christ whom we follow is not a dead Prophet like Mohamed. Truly, we preach Christ Crucified, but we also believe in Christ risen from the dead, in Christ gone up on high, in Christ soon to come a second time! He lives and He lives as the great God and our Savior. If, indeed, you are soldiers of such a Captain, throw fear to the winds! Can you be cowards when the Lord of Hosts leads you? Dare you tremble when at your head is The Wonderful, The Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace? The trumpet is already at the lip of the archangel—who will not play the man? The great drum which makes the universe to throb, summons you to action—

***"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
You soldiers of the Cross!
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss."***

His Cross is the old Cross, still, and none can overthrow it. Hallelujah, hallelujah to the name of Jesus!

Then come the tender thoughts with which I finish, the memories of *what the Lord has done for us* to make us holy—"Who gave Himself for us." Special redemption, redemption with a wondrous price—"who gave Himself for us." Put away that trumpet and that drum! Take down the harp and gently touch its sweetest strings! Tell how the Lord Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us. O Sirs, if nothing else can touch our hearts, this must—"You are not your own, you are bought with a price."

And He gave Himself for us with these two objectives—first, redemption, that He might redeem us from all iniquity. That He might break the bonds of sin asunder and cast the cords of depravity far from us. He died—forget not that—died that your sins might die! He died that every lust might be dragged into captivity at His chariot wheels. He gave Himself for you that you might give yourselves for Him!

Again, He died that He might purify us—purify us unto Himself. How clean we must be if we are to be clean unto Him. The Holy Jesus will only commune with those whom He has purified after the manner of His own Nature—purified unto Himself. He has purified us to be wholly His. No human hand may use the golden cup, no human incense may burn in the consecrated censer. We are purified unto Himself, as the Hebrew would put it, to be His *segullah*—His peculiar possession. The translation, "peculiar people," is unfortunate, because, "peculiar," has come to mean odd, strange, singular. The passage really means that Believers are Christ's own people, His choice and select portion. Saints are Christ's crown jewels, His box of diamonds—His very, very, very own! He carries His people as lambs in His bosom. He engraves their names on His heart.

They are the inheritance to which He is the heir and He values them more than all the universe! He would lose everything sooner than lose one of them! He desires that you who are being disciplined by His Grace

should know that you are altogether His. You are Christ's men. You are each one to feel, "I do not belong to the world. I do not belong to myself. I belong only to Christ. I am set aside by Him, for Himself, only, and His I will be." The silver and the gold are His and the cattle upon a thousand hills are His—but He makes small account of them—"the Lord's portion is His people."

The Apostle finishes up by saying that we are to be a people "zealous of good works." Would to God that all Christian men and women were disciplined by Divine Grace till they became zealous for good works! In holiness, zeal is sobriety. We are not only to approve of good works and speak for good works, but we are to be red-hot for them! We are to be on fire for everything that is right and true. We may not be content to be quiet and inoffensive, but we are to be zealous of good works. Oh that my Lord's Grace would set us on fire in this way! There is plenty of *fuel* in the Church—what is needed is *fire*! A great many very respectable people are, in their sleepy way, doing as little as they can for any good cause. This will never do. We must wake up! Oh the quantity of ambulance work that Christ's soldiers have to do! One half of Christ's army has to carry the other half. Oh that our Brothers and Sisters could get off the sick-list!

Oh that all of us were ardent, fervent, vigorous, zealous! Come, Holy Spirit, and quicken us! We may not go about to get this by our own efforts and energies, but God will work it by His Grace. Grace given us in Christ is the fountainhead of all holy impulse. O heavenly Grace, come like a flood at this time and bear us right away! Oh that those of you who have never felt the Grace of God may be enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as to His first appearing! Then, trusting in His death upon the Cross, you will learn to look for His second coming upon the Throne of God and you will rejoice in it! Unto His great name be Glory forever and ever! Amen.

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CHRIST'S MARVELOUS GIVING

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*"Who gave Himself for us."
Titus 2:14.*

WE have once more, you see, the old subject. We still have to tell the story of the love of God towards man in the Person of His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. When you come to your table, you find a variety there. Sometimes there is one dish upon it and sometimes another, but you are never at all surprised to find the bread there every time and, perhaps, we might add that there would be a deficiency if there were not salt there every time, too. So there are certain Truths of God which cannot be repeated too often, and especially is this true of this master Truth, that, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Why, this is the Bread of Life—"God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the salt upon the table and must never be forgotten! This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief."

Now we shall take the text and use it thus—first of all *we shall ask it some questions*. Then *we shall surround it with a setting of facts*. And when we have done that, *we will endeavor to press out of it its very soul as we draw certain inferences from it*. First then—

I. WE WILL PUT THE TEXT INTO THE WITNESS BOX AND ASK IT A FEW QUESTIONS.

There are only five words in the text and we will be content to let it go with four questions. "Who gave Himself for us." The first question we ask the text is, *Who is this that is spoken of?* And the text gives the answer. It is "the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us." We had offended God. The dignity of Divine Justice demanded that offenses against so good and just a Law as that which God had promulgated should not be allowed to go unpunished. But the attribute of Justice is not the only one in the heart of God. God is Love, and is, therefore, full of mercy. Yet, nevertheless, He never permits one quality of His Godhead to triumph over another. He could not be too merciful, and so become unjust—He would not permit Mercy to put Justice to an eclipse. The difficulty was solved thus—God Himself stooped from His loftiness and veiled His Glory in a garb of our inferior clay. The Word—that same Word

without whom was not anything made that was made—became flesh and dwelt among us! And His Apostles, His friends and His enemies beheld him—the Seed of the woman, but yet the Son of God, very God of very God, in all the majesty of Deity—and yet Man of the substance of His mother in all the weakness of our humanity, sin being the only thing which separated us from Him, He being without sin and we being full of it! It is, then, *God*, who “gave Himself for us.” It is, then, *Man*, who gave Himself for us! It is Jesus Christ, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God—who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh and, being found in fashion as a Man, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross! It is Christ Jesus, the Man, the God, “who gave Himself for us.” Now I hope we shall not make any mistakes here, for mistakes here will be fatal! We may be thought uncharitable for saying it, but we should be dishonest if we did not say it, that it is essential to be right here—

***“You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him.”***

You dishonor Christ if you do not believe in His Deity! He will have nothing to do with you unless you accept Him as being God as well as Man. You must receive Him as being, without any diminution, completely and wholly Divine, and you must accept Him as being your Brother, as being a Man just as you are. This, this is the Person and, relying upon Him, we shall find salvation! But rejecting His Deity, He will say to us, “You know Me not, and I never knew you!”

The text has answered the question, “Who?” And now, putting it in the witness box again, we ask it another question—“*What? What did He do?*” The answer is, “*He gave Himself for us.*” It was a gift. Christ's offering of Himself for us was voluntary. He did it of His own will. He did not die because we merited that He should love us to the death—on the contrary, we merited that He should hate us! We deserved that He should cast us from His Presence as obnoxious things, for we were full of sin! We were the wicked keepers of the vineyard who devoured, for our own profit, the fruit which belonged to the King's Son, and He is that King's Son, whom we slew with wicked hands casting Him out of the vineyard! And He died for us who were His enemies. Remember the words of Scripture, “Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; perhaps for a good, a generous man, one might even dare to die; but God commends His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.” He gave Himself! We cannot purchase the love of God! This highest expression of Divine Love, the gift of His own Son, was, in the nature of things, not for sale. What could we have offered that God should come into this world and be found in fashion as a Man and should die? Why, the works of all the angels in Heaven put together could not have deserved one pang from Christ! If forever the angels had continued their ceaseless songs and if all men had remained faithful, and could have heaped up their pile of merit to add to that of the angels—and if all the creatures that ever were, or

ever shall be, could each bring in their golden heap of merit—yet could they ever deserve yon Cross? Could they deserve that the Son of God should hang, bleeding and dying, there? Impossible! It must be a gift, for it was utterly not for sale! Though all worlds were coined and minted, yet could they not have purchased a tear from the Redeemer—they were not worth it. It must be Grace! It cannot be merit! He gave Himself!

And the gift is so thoroughly a gift that no prep of any kind was brought to bear upon the Savior. There was no necessity that He should die, except the necessity of His loving us. Ah, Friends, we might have been blotted out of existence and I do not know that there would have been any lack in God's universe if the whole race of man had disappeared! That universe is too wide and great to miss such chirping grasshoppers as we are! When one star is blotted out, it may make a little difference to our midnight sky, but to an eye that sees immensity it can make no change. Know you not that this little solar system, which we think so vast, and those distant fixed stars and yon mighty masses of interstellar dust and ash, if such they are, and yonder streaming comet, with its stupendous walk of grandeur—all these are only like a little corner in the field of God's great works? He takes them all up as nothing and considers them, mighty as they are and beyond all *human* conception great—to be but the small dust of the balance which does not turn the scale! And if they were all gone tomorrow, there would be no more loss than as if a few grains of dust were thrown to the summer's wind!

But God Himself must stoop, rather than we should die! Oh, what magnificence of love! And the more so because there was no need for it. In the course of Nature, God would have been as holy and as heavenly without us as He is with us—and the pomp of yonder skies would have been as illustrious had we been dashed into the flames of Hell as it will be now! God has gained nothing, except the manifestation of a love beyond an angel's dream, a Grace, the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of which surpass all knowledge of all creatures! God only knows the love of God which is manifested in Jesus Christ. *He gave Himself!* We will leave this point, now, when it is fully understood that Christ's dying to save sinners and giving Himself for the ungodly was a pure act of gratuitous mercy! There was nothing to compel God to give His Son and nothing to lead the Son to die, except the simple might of His love to men. He would not see us die. He had a Father's love for us! He seemed to stand over our fallen race, as David stood over Absalom, and we were as bad as Absalom—and there David stood and said, "My son, my son! Would God I had died for you, my son, my son!" But He did more than this, for He *did* die for us! And all for love of us who were His enemies!—

***"So strange, so boundless was the love,
Which pitied dying man—
The Father sent His equal Son
To give them life again."***

'Twas all of love and of Grace!

The third question is, "*What did He give?*" "Who gave *Himself* for us." And here lies the glory of the text, that He gave not merely the crowns

and royalties of Heaven, though it was much to leave these, to come and don the humble garb of a carpenter's Son! He gave up not only the songs of seraphs, the shouts of cherubim—'twas something to leave them to come and dwell among the groans and tears of this poor fallen world! He gave up not only the grandeur of His Father's court—though it was much to leave that to come and live with wild beasts and men more wild than they, to fast His forty days and then to die in ignominy and shame upon the tree! No, there is little said about all this. He gave all this, it is true, but He gave Himself! Mark, Brothers and Sisters, what a richness there is here! It is not that He gave His righteousness, though that has become our dress. It is not even that He gave His blood, though that is the fount in which we wash. It is that He gave *Himself*—His Godhead and Manhood both combined. All that that word, "Christ," means He gave to us and for us. He gave Himself! Oh, that we could dive and plunge into this unfathomed sea—Himself! Omnipotence, Omniscience, Infinity—Himself. He gave Himself—Purity, Love, Kindness, Meekness, Gentleness—that wonderful compound of all perfections, to make up one perfection—HIMSELF! You do not come to Christ's House and say, "He gives me this House, His Church, to dwell in." You do not come to His Table and merely say, "He gives me this Table to feast at," but you go farther, and you take Him by faith into your arms and you say, "Who loved me, and gave *Himself* for me." Oh, that you could get hold of that sweet word—*Himself*! It is the love of a husband to his wife, who not only gives her all that she can wish, daily food and raiment, and all the comforts that can nourish and cherish her, and make her life glad, but who gives himself to her! So does Jesus. The body and soul of Jesus, the Deity of Jesus, and all that that means, He has been pleased to give to and for His people! "Who gave Himself for us."

There is another question which we shall ask the text, and that is, "*For whom did Christ give Himself?*" Well, the text says, "For us." There are those who say that Christ has thus given Himself for every man now living, or that ever did or shall live. We are not able to subscribe to the statement, though there is a Truth in it, that in a certain sense He is "the Savior of all men," but then it is added, "Specially of them who believe." At any rate, dear Hearer, let me tell you one thing that is certain. Whether Atonement may be said to be particular or general, there are none who partake in its real efficacy but certain characters—and those characters are known by certain Infallible signs. You must not say that He gave Himself for you unless these signs are manifest in you! And the first sign is that of simple faith in the Lord Jesus. If you believe in Him, that is a proof to you that He gave Himself for you! See, if He gave Himself for all men alike, then He did equally for Judas and for Peter. Care you for such love as that? He died equally for those who were then in Hell as for those who were then in Heaven? Care you for such a Doctrine as that? For my part, I desire to have a personal, peculiar, and special interest in the precious blood of Jesus—such an interest in it as shall lead me to His right hand and enable me to say, "He has washed me from my sins, in His

blood." Now I think we have no right to conclude that we shall have any benefit from the death of Christ unless we trust Him—and if we do trust Him, that trust will produce the following things—"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity." We shall hate sin. We shall fight against it. We shall be delivered from it—"and purify unto Himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." I have no right, therefore, to conclude that I shall be a partaker of the precious blood of Jesus unless I become in my life, "zealous of good works," My good works cannot save me, cannot even help to save me—but *they are evidences of my being saved*—and if I am *not* zealous for good works, I lack the evidence of salvation and I have no right whatever to conclude that I shall receive one jot of benefit from Christ's sufferings upon the Cross!

Oh, my dear Hearer, I would to God that you could trust the Man, the God who died on Calvary! I would that you could trust Him so that you could say, "He will save me. He has saved me." The gratitude which you would feel towards Him would inspire you with an invincible hatred against sin! You would begin to fight against every evil way! You would conform yourselves, by His Grace, to His Law and His Word, and you would become a new creature in Him! May God grant that you may yet be able to say, "Who gave Himself for me"! I have asked the text enough questions, and there I leave them. For a few minutes only I am now going to use the text another way, namely—

II. PUT THE TEXT INTO A SETTING OF FACTS.

There was a day before all days when there was no day but the Ancient of Days! A time when there was no time, but when Eternity was all! Then God, in the Eternal Purpose, decreed to save His people. If we may speak so of things too mysterious for us to know them, and which we can only set forth after the manner of men, God had determined that His people should be saved, but He foresaw that they would sin! It was necessary, therefore, that the penalty due to their sins should be borne by someone. They could not be saved unless a substitute were found who would bear the penalty of sin in their place. Where was such a substitute to be found? No angel offered. There was no angel, for God dwelt alone, and even if there had then been angels, they could never have dared to offer to sustain the fearful weight of human guilt! But in that solemn council chamber, when it was deliberated who should enter into bonds of suretyship to pay all the debts of the people of God, Christ came and gave Himself a Bondsman and a Surety for all that was due from them, or would be due from them, to the Judgment Seat of God! In that day, then, He "gave Himself for us."

But Time began, and this round world had made, in the mind of God, a few revolutions. Men said the world was getting old, but to God it was but an infant. But the fullness of time was come and suddenly, amidst the darkness of the night, there was heard sweeter singing than before had come from mortal lips, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will to men!" What lit up the sky with unknown splendor and what had filled the air with *chorales* at the dead of night? Look, the Babe upon

its mother's breast, there in Bethlehem's manger! "He gave Himself for us." That same One who had given Himself a Surety has come down to earth to be a Man, and to give Himself for us. See Him! For 30 years He toiled on, amidst the drudgery of the carpenters shop! What is He doing? The Law of God needed to be fulfilled, and He "gave Himself for us," and fulfilled the Law! But now the time comes when He is 32 or 33 years of age and the Law demands that the penalty shall be paid. Do you see Him going to meet Judas in the garden, with confident, but solemn steps? He "gave Himself for us." He could, with a word, have driven those soldiers into Hell, but they bind Him—He "gave Himself for us." They take Him before Pilate, Herod and Caiaphas, and they mock Him, and jeer Him, and pluck His cheeks, and whip His shoulders! How is it that He will smart at this rate? How is it that He bears so passively all the insults and indignities which they heap upon Him? He gave Himself for us! Our sins demanded smart—He bared His back and took the smart. He gave Himself for us! But do you see that dreadful procession going through the streets of Jerusalem, along the rough pavement of the Via Dolorosa? Do you see the weeping women as they mourn because of Him? How is it that He is willing to be led a captive up to the hill of Calvary? Alas, they throw Him on the ground! They drive accursed iron through His hands and feet! They hoist Him into the air! They dash the Cross into its appointed place and there He hangs—a naked spectacle of scorn and shame, derided of men, and mourned by angels! How is it that the Lord of Glory, who made all worlds, and hung out the stars like lamps, should now be bleeding and dying there? He gave Himself for us! Can you see the streaming fountains of the four wounds in His hands and feet? Can you trace His agony as it carves lines upon His brow and all down His emaciated frame? No, you cannot see the griefs of His soul. No spirit can behold them. They were too terrible for you to know them. It seemed as though all Hell were emptied into the bosom of the Son of God, and as though all the miseries of all the ages were made to meet upon Him, till He bore—

***"All that Incarnate God, could bear,
With strength enough, but none to spare."***

Now why is all this, but that He gave Himself for us till His head hung down in death? And His arms, in chill, cold death, hung down by His side—and they buried the lifeless Victor in the tomb of Joseph of Arimethea? He gave Himself for us!

What more now remains? He lives again! On the third day He comes from the tomb and even then He still gave Himself for us! Oh, yes, Beloved, He has gone up on high but He still gives Himself for us, for up there He is constantly engaged in pleading the sinner's cause! Up yonder, amidst the glories of Heaven, He has not forgotten us poor sinners who are here below, but He spreads His hands and pleads before His Father's Throne and wins for us unnumbered blessings, for He gave Himself for us!

And I have been thinking whether I might not use the text in another way. Christ's servants needed a subject upon which to preach, and so He "gave Himself for us," to be the constant topic of our ministry! Christ's servants needed a sweet Companion to be with them in their troubles, and He gave Himself for us. Christ's people need comfort—they need spiritual food and drink, and so He gave Himself for us—His flesh to be our spiritual meat, and His blood to be our spiritual drink. And we expect, soon, to go Home to the land of the hereafter, to the realms of the blessed, and what is to be our Heaven? Why, our Heaven will be Christ, Himself, for He gave Himself for us! Oh, He is all that we need, all that we wish for! We cannot desire anything greater and better than to be with Christ and to have Christ, to feed upon Christ, to lie in Christ's bosom, to know the kisses of His mouth, to look at the gleaming of His loving eyes, to hear His loving words, to feel Him press us to His heart, and tell us that He has loved us from before the foundation of the world—and given Himself for us.

I think we have put the text now into a setting of certain facts. Do not forget them, but let them be your joy! And now the last thing we have to do is to—

III. TURN THE TEXT TO PRACTICAL ACCOUNT BY DRAWING FROM IT A FEW INFERENCES.

The first inference I draw is this—that *He who gave Himself for His people will not deny them anything*. This is a sweet encouragement to you who practice the art of prayer. You know how Paul puts it, "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?" Christ is All. If Christ gives Himself to you, He will give you your bread and your water, and He will give you a house to dwell in. If He gives you Himself, He will not let you starve on the road to Heaven. Jesus Christ does not Give us Himself and then deny us common things. Oh, child of God, go boldly to the Throne of Grace ! You have got the major—you shall certainly have the minor! You have the greater, you cannot be denied the less!

Now I draw another inference, namely, that if Christ has already given Himself in so painful a way as I have described, since there is no need that He should suffer anymore, *we must believe that He is willing to give Himself now unto the hearts of poor sinners*. Beloved, for Christ to come to Bethlehem is a greater stoop than for Him to come into your heart! Had Christ to die upon Calvary? That is all done and He need not die again! Do you think that He who is willing to die is unwilling to apply the results of His passion? If a man leaps into the water to bring out a drowning child, after he has brought the child alive on shore, if he happens to have a piece of bread in his pocket, and the child needs it, do you think that he who rescued the child's life will deny that child so small a thing as a piece of bread? And come, do you think that Christ died on Calvary, and yet will not come into your heart if you seek Him? Do you believe that He who died for sinners will ever reject the prayer of a sinner? If you believe that, you think harshly of Him, for His heart is very

tender. He feels even a cry. You know how it is with your children—if they cry through pain, why, you would give anything for someone to come and heal them! And if you cry because your sin is painful, the Great Physician will come and heal you! Ah, Jesus Christ is much more easily moved by our cries and tears than we are by the cries of our fellow creatures. Come, poor Sinner, come and put your trust in my Master! You cannot think Him hard-hearted. If He were, why did He die? Do you think Him unkind? Then why did He bleed? You are inclined to think so harshly of Him! You are making great cuts at His heart when you think Him to be rough and ungenerous. “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but rather that he would turn unto Me and live.”

This is the voice of the God whom you look upon as so sternly just! Did Jesus Christ, the Tender One, speak in even more plaintive tones, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest”? You working men, you laboring men, Christ bids you come to Him! “All you that labor.” And you who are unhappy, you who know you have done wrong and cannot sleep at nights because of it! You who are troubled about sin and would gladly go and hide your heads, and get—

“Anywhere, anywhere out of the world”

—your Father says to you, one and all, “Run not from Me, but come to Me, My child!” Jesus, who died, says, “Flee not from Me, but come to Me, for I will accept you. I will receive you. I cast out none that come unto Me. “Sinner, Jesus never did reject a coming soul, yet, and He never will! Oh, try Him! Try Him! Now come, with your sins about you just as you are, to the bleeding, dying Savior and He will say to you, “I have blotted out your sins; go and sin no more; I have forgiven you.” May God grant you Grace to put your trust in Him “who gave Himself for us”!

There are many other inferences which I might draw if I had time, but in this last one, we have drawn to be so applied to your hearts as to be carried out—and it will be enough. Now do not go and try to do good worlds in order to merit Heaven. Do not go and try to pray yourselves into Heaven by the efficacy of praying. Remember, He, “gave Himself for us.” The old proverb is that “there is nothing freer than a gift,” and surely this Gift of God, this Eternal Life must be free, and we must have it freely, or not at all. I sometimes see put up at some of our doctors that they receive “gratis patients.” That is the sort of patients my Master receives! He receives none but those who come gratis. He never did receive anything, yet, and He never will—except your love and your thanks after He has saved you! But you must come to Him empty-handed. Come just as you are and He will receive you, now, and you shall live to sing to the praise and the glory of His Grace who has accepted you in the Beloved and, “who gave Himself for us.” God help you to do it. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 45:1-14.**

It is a Psalm of instruction, and yet it is a song of love, for the science of love to Christ is the most excellent of all the sciences. To know Christ is to love Him, and we are best instructed who love Him most. The Psalm is most of all a Maschil, a Psalm of instruction, when we are taught to love. Hence the Psalm is a song of love.

1. *My heart is overflowing with a good theme.* A good instrument—the heart refined and sanctified—a good subject, for, he says—

1. *I speak of the things which I have made touching the King.* Oh, it is a loyal subject concerning King Jesus! The original has it, “My heart boils up with a good matter”—bubbles up—as if each verse of this Psalm were, so to speak, the bubbling up of a boiling heart that is heated with the love of Christ! And all is concerning Him—concerning Him, the King. “I speak of the things which I have made.” That is experience—things I made on my own—and there is no matter like that. Theoretical theology is of little value. We must have it in the heart—and have it in our own.

1. *My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.* As though it were moved by another hand, as a pen might be. So the Psalmist feels as if his tongue were under Divine Influence and he were about to utter things his own, yet not his own—things which he has made, yet which the Spirit speaks.

2. *You are fairer than the children of men.* And then he sees Him. He sees Him by faith—and he speaks, not so much about him, as to Him. “You are fairer than the children of men.” Oh, it is sweet meditating upon Christ, when Christ Himself is present! It is blessed work to speak about Christ when you can speak to Christ at the same time! You are fairer than the children of men—the very fairest of them. Whatever beauty, excellence and worth there may be about mankind, You have all, and more than all that they possess!

2. *Grace is poured into Your lips.* It comes, therefore, pouring from them. It comes welling up from Your mouth. Every word that You speak is full of Grace and the Truth of God!

2. *Therefore God has blessed You forever.* The Mediator, the God-Man, Christ Jesus, is blessed of God! The blessing of the Most High rests upon Him because He is so infinitely lovely. His words are unspeakably gracious and if God blesses Him, shall not we bless Him? If God, Himself, praises Him, shall not we praise Him? Oh, let us not be silent, but where God leads the way, let us joyfully follow!

3. *Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O most Mighty, with Your glory and Your majesty.* He loves the fighting Christ—Christ with the sword on His thigh. Oh, but it is sweet to see the Prince of Peace—to know that He comes to our heart bearing unspeakably precious blessings! But yet the terrible side of Christ is precious to His saints. They ask Him to gird His sword upon His thigh. An armed Christ can only be armed for the defense of His people and for the deliverance of them from captivity. Therefore, O you loveliest of the lovely, be the mightiest of the mighty too!

4. *And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach You terrible things.* There are three things that are much put to it in this world, and

have a hard time of it—the *Truth of God*, which is beset with error, like the hunted hind pursued by dogs. O God, defend Your Truth! O Christ of God, lay upon Your sword to smite down error! The next thing is *meekness*. A gentle spirit has a hard time of it among the hard-hearted sons of men. They do not understand meekness. They call the meek man a milk-sop. They make mirth out of his gentleness. O sword of the Lord, defend the meek ones of the earth! And there is a third thing that has a hard time of it, and that is righteousness among a godless generation, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter—darkness for light and light for darkness! Righteousness has to run the gauntlet. But, O You who are Truth, and Meekness, and Righteousness embodied, come forth with Your sharp sword and fight on the behalf of these things! We do not ask the Lord to come into the world for the sake of pomp, pride and power. We only want His battles to be battles of love! We only ask Him to extend the Kingdom of His Truth and meekness, and righteousness.

5. *Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies: whereby the people fall under You.* Christ has far-reaching power. He not only can smite with the sword, but He has skill with the bow, and He can dart an arrow to those that are far off, that they may feel His power. Oh, that He would do so now, that those who are leagues away from Him may, to their own surprise, find a shaft come right into their heart, that they may fall under the power of Christ and cry out to Him to come and heal the wound that His own arrow has made! He will do it, for it is written, "I wound, and I heal"—and wherever Christ wounds in mercy, He heals in mercy, too!

6. *Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Your kingdom is a right scepter.* Notice that the more you look at Christ, the more there is to see. Here the songster first said, "You are fairer than the children of men." And now he cries, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." That man has not seen much of Christ who has not perceived Him to be God—God on the Throne, God on an everlasting Throne! Oh, if any of you have not yet believed in Christ as God, I pray you may do so, for you do not know the Christ of the Scriptures at all, however much you may value His moral Character as supreme in wisdom, unless you can say, "My Lord and My God," as Thomas did when he saw His wounds. "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of Your kingdom is a right scepter." There is the joy of it! Christ has absolute sovereignty, but that absolute sovereignty never goes beyond the realm of right! "The scepter of Your kingdom is a right scepter."

7. *You love righteousness, and hate wickedness: therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows.* Christ is no neutral. He loves righteousness and hates wickedness. He is like fire in all that He does. There is about Him a certain strength of heart, both to love and to hate—and it is for this reason that God loves Him, for God hates lukewarmness. "So then, because you are neither cold nor hot," He says, "I will spew you out of My mouth." But Christ is never neutral about those matters. He loves righteousness. He hates wicked-

ness. "Therefore, God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows." And if you want to have the oil of gladness, dear Friends, you must not be neutral! You who live betwixt and between—who are neither very good nor very bad—who are not decided worldlings, nor yet decided Christians, you never have any joy at all! You see, you do not go enough into the world to get its joy, bad and base as it is, and you do not go enough into Christ's Kingdom to get its joy. So you get no comfort either way. Oh, to be cast into the Kingdom altogether—thrown into it as a man into the deep sea and swallowed up in it! In its lowest depths are the sweetest waters!

8. *All Your garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made You glad.* The very clothes of Christ are precious to Believers. "Unto you that believe, He is preciousness." But even His very garments are savored with it, whether He puts on His priestly robes, or His royal robes, or His prophetic mantle. Each one of these has in it a sweet savor of all manner of choice perfumes, myrrh, aloes and cassia. Bitter sweets all of them! Oh, in Christ there is a wonderful bitter sweetness—the pangs of death that breed our life—the pangs of sorrow that bring us joy! His down casting for our uplifting.

9. *Kings' daughters were among Your honorable women: upon Your right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.* No one is so honored as the one who waits upon the Savior. They are honorable women that minister to Him of their substance, that are often found in His Temple, like Anna of old. These are kings' daughters, every one of them. And as for His Church as a whole, she is a queen! She takes no low mean rank, and her apparel is like her dignity. She is clothed in the gold of Ophir—the best of metals and the best kind of that metal—the gold of Ophir. And "strangely, my Soul, are you arrayed by the great Sacred Three." All manner of royal apparel is put upon the Church of God and upon every member of it!

10. *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father's house.* We cannot know Christ thoroughly unless we leave off knowing the world. There must be a forgetting as well as a remembering. We are to forget our father's house—come right out from it. If Christ is to love His Church, it must be a nonconforming Church in the deepest sense of that word. I mean not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of its mind! Not only are we not to love the world, but we are not to think of it. "Forget also your own people, and your father's house."

11. *So shall the king greatly desire your beauty.* We were thinking of His beauty. But see, when once we see the beauty of Christ, Christ puts a beauty upon us! And when we learn the beauties of Christ, we soon see beauties in His Church. I find that those who rail at the Church of God have not a very high esteem of the Church's Head. But when He is beloved, His people are beloved for His sake. Why, there is an old proverb that says, "Love me, love my dog." Much more may we say, "Love Christ, love His Church."

11. *Because He is your Lord, worship Him.* This is the great business of the Church—to carry on the worship of her Lord! And I believe that, met together as we are tonight, we are met for the noblest purpose under Heaven. When the people of God come together for worship, they are doing that which angels do before the Throne of God—an occupation from which they never cease day or night!

12. *And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift.* Well, but she is a *heathen*. She is a trafficker. What does she know about the King of Israel? Ah, but when Israel acknowledges her King—when the Church of Christ delights in Christ and dotes upon Him, she shall have plenty of converts—from the least likely places!

12. *Even the rich among the people shall entreat Your favor.* They are generally taken up with other things, but then they shall know, when once the Church is right with her King!

13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of worked gold.* Who has worked it but her King, whose own right hand has hammered out the precious fabric, and then has taken every golden thread and, with His own bleeding hands, has worked it into a sacred vesture that shall outlast the stars! “Her clothing is of worked gold.”

14. *She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; the virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.* Happy are those pure virgin spirits that hardly dare think themselves fit to be called a part of the bride, but yet follow her and keep close to her! They are really a part of her, and they “shall be brought unto 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.**

GOOD WORKS

NO. 70

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 16, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Zealous of good works.”
Titus 2:14.***

We shall not be afraid of leading any of you into a legal spirit this morning through what we shall say. After our frequent exhortations to avoid anything like trusting in your works, attended as they have been, we trust, by the Holy Spirit, we are not afraid that you will so misunderstand us as to suppose that when we speak of good works, today, we shall in any way whatever wish you to imagine that they can promote your eternal salvation! We labored when here the Sabbath morning before last, to let you know the difference between the two Covenants, the Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Works. [See Sermon #69, Volume 2—THE ALLEGORIES OF SARAH AND HAGAR—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at www.spurgeongems.org.] We shall beg you to remember what we then said, and if by any slips of the tongue we should say anything that should look like legality, we beg you will put the two together and wherein we shall err from the great Truth of Justification by Faith, to reject our testimony!

“Zealous of good works.” There are some who hear us preach High Doctrine and constantly declare that we are saved by Grace through faith and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, who, therefore, suppose that we cannot preach good works. These also suppose that we could not preach a good sermon of exhortation to Christians to live in holiness. Well, we will not say that we can preach a good sermon at all! But we will say that we will try and preach one as to that matter that shall be as good as theirs and as much lead the children of God to live in holiness as any of their exhortations can do! For their sermons are grounded on trusting in the flesh and based on threats, regulations and promises—which they hope will induce God’s children, but which are well enough for slaves—though of little use in operating on the true-born Believer! The children of God are a holy people—for this very purpose were they born and brought into the world—that they should be holy! For this they were redeemed with blood and made a peculiar people. God’s end in Election, the end of all His purposes, is not answered until they become a people zealous of good works!

Now, this morning, we shall first of all tell you *the nature of good works*, for there are many things called “good works” that are not so at all. Secondly, we shall *trace good works to their origin*—and where good works came from. Thirdly, we shall attempt to show you *the use of good works*. And we shall close up by endeavoring to *prove that our Doctrines, those of free, distinguishing, discriminating Grace, have a tendency to make us who believe them, “zealous of good works.”*

I. First, then, we are about to answer the question, WHAT ARE GOOD WORKS? Now, I dare say we shall offend many here when we tell them what good works are. For in our opinion, good works are the rarest things in the world! And we believe we might walk for many a mile before we should see a good work at all. We use the word, *good*, in its proper sense. There are many works which are good enough between man and man, but we shall use the word, good, in a higher sense today as regards *God*. We think we shall be able to show you that there are very few good works anywhere and that there are none out of the pale of Christ’s Church! We think, if we read Scripture rightly, that no work can be good unless it is commanded of God. How this cuts off a large portion of what men will do in order to win salvation! The Pharisee said he tithed mint, anise and cummin—could he prove that God commanded him to tithe his mint, his anise and his cummin? Perhaps not. He said he fasted so many times a week—could he prove that God told him to fast? If not, his fasting was not *obedience*. If I do a thing that I am not *commanded* to do, I do not *obey* in doing it. Vain, then, are all the pretences of men, that by mortifying their bodies, by denying their flesh, by doing this, that, or the other, they shall, therefore, win the favor of God! No work is good unless God has commanded it. A man may build a long row of almshouses—but if he builds without reference to the commandment—he has performed no good work.

Again—*nothing is a good work unless it is done with a good motive*. And there is no motive which can be said to be good but to the Glory of God. He who performs good works with a view to save himself, does not do them from a good motive because his motive is selfish. He who does them, also, to gain the esteem of his fellows and for the good of society has a laudable motive, so far as *man* is concerned, but it is, after all, an inferior motive! What end had we in view? If for the benefit of our fellow creatures, then let our fellow creatures pay us. But that has nothing to do with God! Work is not good unless a man does it with a view to God’s Glory—and no man can do it with a view to that until God has taught him what His Glory is and he has been brought into subjection to God’s Divine will! If any work is to be a good work, it has to have an eye unto

the Most High and has to promote His Glory and honor in the world. And even, Beloved, when our works are done from the best motives, nothing is a good work unless it is done with faith, for, “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Like Cain, we may build the altar and lay the first fruits of the earth upon it—and it may appear an acceptable sacrifice in itself—but if destitute of the salt of *faith*, there it will lie—it will not be accepted by God, for *without faith* it is impossible to please Him! Bring me a man who all his life long has been spending his health and strength for his fellow creatures. Fetch me some public officer who has fully discharged his trust—one who has labored night and day, even to the wearing down of his constitution because he believed that England expected every man to do his duty and he wished to do it. Bring me that man, let me see all his charitable works. Let me witness the most lavish benevolence, the most profuse bounty—tell me that he has always, with a consistent motive, labored for his country. And then, if he cannot answer this question, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” I shall be bound in all honesty to tell him that he has not done a solitary good work in all his life as far as God is concerned!

Furthermore, *when we have faith in God and perform all our works with the best of motives, even then we have not so much as a solitary good work until the blood of Christ is sprinkled thereon.* Looking on all that we have ever done in our lives, can we find a solitary thing which we dare call good until Christ’s blood is put upon it? Granted there is something good about it, for the Spirit worked it in our souls. There is also much that is evil about it, for even our best exercises are so terribly spoiled, marred and ruined by the sins and imperfections that are in them, that we dare not call them good until Jesus Christ has sprinkled them with His blood and taken the stain away! Oh, how often have I thought to myself, “Now, I have labored to preach God’s Word. I have not spared, at all times, before friends or foes, and I hope I have not shunned to declare the whole Counsel of God!” And yet, Beloved, how many of those sermons have not been good works at all, because I had not an eye out to my Master’s honor at the time, or because there was not faith mixed with them but I preached in a desponding, low, miserable frame? Or, perhaps, I had some natural aim—even in the winning of souls? I have often feared, even when we rejoice to see souls converted, that we may have some evil motive, such as honoring ourselves, that the world may say, “See how many souls are brought to God by him!” And even when the Church associates in doing holy works, have you not noticed that something selfish creeps in? A wish to exalt our own Church, to glorify our own people and to make ourselves mighty? I am sure, Beloved, if you sit

down and pull your good works to pieces, you will find so many bad stitches in them that they need to be all unstitched and done over again! There are so many spots and blurs about them, that you need to have them washed in the blood of Christ to make them good for anything!

And now, Beloved, do you think you have any good works? “Oh!” you say “I am afraid I have not many—no, I know I have not. But thanks be unto His love, He who accepted my person in Christ, accepts my works through Christ and He who blessed me in Him, that I should be a chosen vessel, has been pleased to accept that which He Himself poured into the vessel, ‘to the praise of the Glory of His Grace, wherein He has made me accepted in the Beloved.’”

And now, *you moralists*, you who have trusted in yourselves that you are righteous. If what I have said is true, what has become of all your holiness? You are saying, “I am a charitable man.” Granted that you are! I tell you to go and appeal to your fellow creatures and let them pay you for your charity. You say, “Yes, but I am a consistent and moral man, I am a great credit to the country. If all men would act as I do, what a good thing for this world and generation!” Of course you have served your generation—then send in your bill and let your generation pay you. I tell you, you have toiled for nothing! You have only sown the wind. And likely enough you will reap the whirlwind. God owes you nothing. You have not lived to His honor. You must honestly confess that you have not performed a single action with a desire to please Him! You have labored to please yourself—that has been the highest motive you have had. You felt that if you were good, you would go to Heaven and that if you were evil, you would be sure to go to Hell. You have been thoroughly selfish, from first to last. Reckon up your accounts and settle with yourself! God owes you nothing. You have done nothing for Him. And if you have, then consider within yourself, you have so much violated God’s commands and so frequently done all you could to injure your Maker, if it were possible, that all your accounts are easily struck off. And as for your good works, where are they? Where are they? Ah, it is a figment and a fiction, a laugh and a dream. Good works in sinners? There are no such things! Augustine well said, “Good works, as they are called, in sinners, are nothing but splendid sins.” This is true of the best worlds of the best man who is out of Christ—they are nothing but splendid sins—varnished sins! God forgive you, dear Friends, for your good works! If you are out of Christ, you have as great need to be forgiven for your good works as you have for your bad ones!

II. And now, secondly, WHERE DO GOOD WORKS COME FROM?

It is an old maxim that nature can never rise above itself. Water, coming from the top of a hill, will rise as high as its source. But unless there is some extraordinary pressure put upon it, it will never rise higher. So of human nature. Scripture says it is exceedingly vile. We cannot expect good works out of an evil nature! Can a bitter well send forth sweet water? As poison grows not on healthful trees, with healthful fruit, so healthy fruit cannot grow on poisonous trees. We must not look for good works in an evil nature any more than we should look for the grapes of Sorek on the vines of Gomorrah! We cannot expect to find good works coming from Nature. Truly it is vain and idle to think that good works can arise from the natural man. "Where, then," you ask, "do they come from?" We answer, good works come from a real conversion, brought about by the Spirit of God. Until our conversion, there is not the shadow of goodness about us. In the eyes of the world, we may be reputable and respectable—but in the eyes of God we are nothing of the sort! Could we look into our hearts, as we sometimes look into other people's faces, we would see very much there which would drive out of our souls the very imagination of good works before our heart is changed! How many things there are in the world which we have upon our tables and which we even eat, that if we were to put beneath our microscope, we would be afraid to touch, for we would see all kinds of loathsome creatures creeping and crawling about in them—such things as we never conceived! And so it is with human nature—when once the human heart is put under the microscope of Scripture and we see it with a *spiritual eye*—we see it to be vile and filthy. We then realize that we are quite sure that until we have a new heart and a right spirit, it would be just as impossible to expect to find good works in an unrighteous, unconverted man, as to hope to see fire burning in the midst of the ocean! The two things would be incongruous.

Our good works, if we have any, spring from a real conversion. Yet more, they also spring from a constant spiritual influence exercised upon us, from the time of conversion even until the hour of death. Ah, Christian, you would have no good works if you had no fresh influence, day by day. You would not find the Grace given you at your first hour sufficient to produce fruit today. It is not like the planting of a tree in our hearts, which naturally of itself brings forth fruit. The sap has to come up from the root, Jesus Christ! We are not trees by ourselves, but we are branches fixed on the living Vine. Good works, I know from where you come! You come floating down on the stream of Grace and if I did not have that stream of Grace always flowing, I would never find good works coming from me. Good works from the creature? Impossible! Good works

are the *gifts* of God, His choice pearls, which He sends down with His Grace!

And again—we think that *good works spring from union with Christ*. We believe that the more a man knows and feels himself to be one with Jesus, the more holy he will be. The very fact that Christ and the Christian become one makes the Christian Christ-like. Why is a Christian's character like Christ's Character? Only for this reason—that he is joined and united to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why does that branch bring forth grapes? Simply because it has been engrafted into the Vine and therefore it partakes of the nature of the stem. So, Christian, the only way whereby you can bring forth fruit to God is by being grafted into Christ and united with Him! You Christians who think you can walk in holiness without keeping up perpetual fellowship with Christ have made a great mistake! If you would be holy, you must live close to Jesus. Good works spring only from there. Here we draw the most powerful reasons against anything like trusting in works. For as works are only the gift of God, how utterly impossible does it become for an unrighteous, unconverted, ungodly man to produce any such good works in himself? And if they are God's gifts, how little merit can there be in them!

III. We have thus tried to trace good works to their origin and foundation. And now we come to the third point, which is, WHAT IS THE USE OF GOOD WORKS?

I am rather fond of being *called* an Antinomian, for this reason—the term is generally applied to those who hold the Truth of God very firmly and will not let it go. But I should not be fond of *being* an Antinomian. We are not against the Law of God! We believe it is no longer binding on us as the Covenant of salvation. But we have nothing to say against the Law of God. “The Law is holy—we are carnal, sold under sin.” None shall charge us truthfully with being Antinomians. We quarrel with Antinomians. But as for some poor souls who are so inconsistent as to say the Law is not binding and yet try to keep it with all their might, we do not quarrel with them! They will never do much mischief. But we think they might learn to distinguish between the Law as a Covenant of life and a direction after we have obtained life.

Well, we do love good works. Do you ask, of what use are they? I reply, first—*Good works are useful as evidences of Grace*. The Antinomian says, “But I do not require evidences, I can live without them.” This is unreasonable. Do you see yonder clock? That is the evidence of the time of day. The hour would be precisely the same if we had not that evidence. Still, we find the clock of great use. So we say, good works are the best evidence of spiritual life in the soul. Is it not written, “We know that we have

passed from death unto life, because we love the Brethren?” Loving the Brethren is a good work! Again, “If any man abide in Me, he shall bring forth fruit.” Fruits of righteousness are good works and they are evidences that we abide in Christ! If I am living day by day in sin, what right have I to conclude I am a child of God? A man comes to this Chapel and while he hears the Gospel, he exclaims, “What delicious Truth! What heavenly Doctrine!” Yet when he leaves the place, you may see him enter one public-house after another and get intoxicated! Has this man any right to think himself an heir of Heaven? The man who comes to God’s House and drinks “wine on the lees, well refined,” and then goes away and drinks the cup and enjoys the company of the ungodly, gives no evidence that he is a partaker of Divine Grace! He says, “I do not like good works.” Of course he does not! “I know I shall not be saved by good works.” Of this we are certain, for he has none to be saved by! Many are ready enough to say—

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

who believe they are children of God, because, though they have no good works as evidence, they think they have faith. Ah, Sir, you have faith and there is another gentleman quite as respectable as you are, who has faith. I shall not tell you his name, this morning, but he is better than you are, for it is said, “he believes and trembles,” while you sit unmoved by the most powerful appeals! Yes, you who think you are children of God while you live in sin, you are in the most dreadful error. There is no delusion, if you except the delusion of the Pharisee, which is more dreadful than the delusion of a man who thinks that sin and Grace can reign together! The Christian has sins of heart, over which he groans and laments. But as regards his outward life, he is kept—so that the Evil One touches him not—the Lord keeps him under the shadow of His wing. He does not, except in some falls, allow him to turn out of the way. Works are the evidences of our faith—by faith our souls are justified before God—by works our faith is justified before ourselves and fellow men.

Secondly, we think good works are *the witnesses or testimony to other people of the truth of what we believe*. Every Christian was sent into the world to be a preacher. And just like every other creature that God has made, he will always be preaching about his Lord. Does not the whole world preach God? Do not the stars, while they shine, look down from Heaven and say there is a God? Do not the winds haunt God’s name in their mighty howling? Do not the waves murmur it upon the shore or thunder it in the storms? Do not the floods and the fields, the skies and the plains, the mountains and the valleys, the streamlets and the rivers,

all speak of God? Assuredly they do and a new-born creature—the man created in Christ—must preach Jesus Christ wherever he goes! This is the use of good works. He will preach, not always with his mouth, but with his life! The use of good works is that they are a Christian's sermon. A sermon is not what a man says but what he does. You who practice, are preaching. It is not preaching *and* practicing, but practicing *is* preaching! The sermon that is preached by the mouth is soon forgotten, but what we preach by our lives is never forgotten. There is nothing like faithful practice and holy living if we would preach to the world! The reason why Christianity does not advance with a mightier stride is simply this—that professors are, in a large measure, a disgrace to religion and many of those who are joined to the Church have no more godliness than those who are out of it. If I preached such a contradictory sermon on a Sunday as some of you have preached the most part of your lives, you would go out and say, “We will not go again till he can be a little more consistent with himself.” There is a difference in the very tone of the voice of some people when they are in the Chapel engaged in prayer and when they are in the workshop! You would hardly think them the same persons. Away with your inconsistency! Professors, take heed lest your inconsistencies should blot your evidences and some of you should be found manifesting, not inconsistency, but a most fearful consistency—living in sin and iniquity—and therefore being consistent with yourselves in hypocrisy!

In the third place, *good works are of use to a Christian as an adornment.* You will all remember that passage in the Scriptures which tells us how a woman should adorn herself. “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.” The adornment of good works, the adornment in which we hope to enter Heaven, is the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ—but the adornment of a Christian here below is his *holiness*, his *piety*, his *consistency*. If some people had a little more piety, they would not require such a showy dress. If they had a little more godliness to set them off, they would have no need whatever to be always decorating themselves. The best earrings that a woman can wear are the earrings of hearing the Word with attention. The very best ring that we can have upon our finger is the ring which the Father puts upon the finger of the prodigal son, when he is brought back. And the very best dress we can ever wear is a garment worked by the Holy Spirit—the garment of a consistent conduct. But it is marvelous, while many are taking all the trouble they can to array this

poor body, they have very few ornaments for their soul. They forgot to dress the soul! Oh, no. They are too late at Chapel, all because of that other pin, which they might have left out. They come here just when the service is beginning, because, in truth, they have so much to put on, they could not be expected to be here on time! And there are Christian men and Christian women who forget what God has written in His Word, which is as true, now, as it ever was, that Christian women should array themselves with modesty. It would be a good thing, perhaps, if we went back to Wesley's rule, to come out from the world in our apparel and to dress as plainly and neatly as the Quakers, though alas, they have sadly gone from their primitive simplicity!

I am obliged to depart a little, sometimes, from what we call the high things of the Gospel. For, really, the children of God cannot now be identified by outward appearance from the children of the devil and they really ought to be! There should be some distinction between the one and the other. And although religion allows distinction of rank and dress, yet everything in the Bible cries out against our arraying ourselves and making ourselves proud by reason of the goodness of our apparel! Some will say, "I wish you would leave that alone!" Of course you do, because it applies to yourself! But we let nothing alone which we believe to be in the Scriptures. And while I would not spare any man's soul, honesty to every man's conscience and honesty to myself demands that I should always speak of that which I see to be an evil breaking out in the Church! We should always take care that in everything, we keep as near as possible to the written Word. If you want ornaments, here they are—here are jewels, rings, dresses and all kinds of ornaments—men and women, you may dress yourselves up till you shine like angels. How can you do it? By dressing yourselves out in *benevolence*, in *love* to the saints, in *honesty* and *integrity*, in *uprightness*, in *godliness*, in *brotherly kindness*, in *charity*. These are the ornaments which angels admire and which even the world will admire! For men must give admiration to the man or the woman who is arrayed in the jewels of a holy life and godly conversation. I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, "adorn the Doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things."

IV. Thus have I told you the use of good works. Now just a moment or two to tell you that the religion which we profess in this place and which we preach IS CALCULATED TO PRODUCE GOOD WORKS IN THE CHILD OF GOD.

Some say that that which is called Calvinism, which is an *alias* for the true Gospel, is calculated to lead men into sin. Now we will refute that, just by reminding them that the holiest people in the world have been

those who professed the Doctrines which we hold. If you ask who in the dark ages were the great moral lights of the world, the answer will be such as Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom. And then coming still lower, such men as Wickliffe, Jerome of Prague and Calvin. And every one of these held the Doctrines which we love to proclaim. And just let me remind you, there never were better men in the world than the Puritans—and every one of them held fast the Truths of God we love! I happened to find in a book, the other day, a statement which pleased me so much that I thought I would read it to you. The writer says, “The Puritans were the most resolved Protestants in the nation. Zealous Calvinists, warm and affectionate preachers. They were the most pious and devout people in the land—men of prayer in secret and in public—as well as in their families. Their manner of devotion was fervent and solemn, depending on the assistance of the Divine Spirit. They had a profound reverence for the holy name of God and were great enemies, not only to profane swearing, but to foolish talking and jesting. They were strict observers of the Lord’s-Day, spending the whole of it in public and private devotion and charity. It was the distinguishing mark of a Puritan, in those times, to see him going to Church twice a day, with his Bible under his arm. And while others were at plays and interludes, at revels, or walking in the fields, or at the diversions of bowling, fencing, etc.—on the eve of the Sabbath, these Puritans, with their families, were employed in reading the Scriptures, singing Psalms, repeating sermons, catechizing their children and prayer. Nor was this the work only of the Lord’s-Day, but they had their hours of family devotion on the week days. They were circumspect as to all excess in eating and drinking, apparel and lawful diversions—being frugal, industrious, exact in their dealings and solicitous to give everyone his own.” That is a noble testimony to Puritan Truth and the power of the Gospel. But I have one, which I think will please you, in another part of the book. A learned infidel says of the modern Calvinists and Jansenists, that, “When compared with their antagonists, they have excelled, in no small degree, in the most rigid and respectable virtues. That they have been an honor to their own age and the best model for imitation to every age succeeding.” Only think of an infidel speaking like that! I think it was an infidel who said, “Go to the Arminians to hear about good works. But go to the Calvinists to see them exhibited.” And even Dr. Priestly, who was a Unitarian, admits that, “They who hold the Doctrines of Grace, have less apparent conformity to the world and more of a principle of real religion, than his own followers—and that they who, from a principle of religion, ascribe more to God and less to man than others, have the greatest elevation of piety.”

And just now, as the Unitarians are bringing up all their great men—so great that we never heard their names to this day—and endeavoring to do all they can in London to bring people to Unitarianism, we would just tell them this fact. Dr. Priestly ascribes the coolness of Unitarianism to their becoming more indifferent to religious Doctrine—and accounts for the fact of their chapels not being well attended, by saying that Unitarians have a very slight attachment to their religious Doctrines. What a mercy! For if they continued to hold them, they would inevitably be lost. A man who denies the Divinity of Christ is sure to be lost. It is idle for them to talk of their being Christians! They might as well talk of being holy angels. The best proof I can give you of the holy tendency of our Doctrines is this great fact—in every age those who have held the Doctrines of Grace have exhibited in their lives a holy walk and conversation!

But once more—in just hastily running over the Doctrines, we ask—*what could more tend to make men holy than the Truths of God we preach?* Do we not teach you that God has chosen to Himself a people who must be holy? Is that an unholy Doctrine? Do we not tell you that God has chosen to Himself a people who in this world shall show forth His praise by holy living? Is that an unholy Doctrine? And we have told you that the Holy Spirit gives a new heart and a right spirit and that there is something more required than you can do yourselves—that you are unable to perform such good things as God expects from you—therefore God the Spirit must renovate you! Do you call that an unholy Doctrine? Is the Doctrine, that men by nature are vile and need renewing Grace, unholy? And the Doctrine that the true saints will certainly hold onto the end, is that unholy? I think the contrary to these Doctrines are the most unholy in the world! Is the Doctrine that only those who believe, have an interest in the blood of Christ, an unholy thing? Is the Doctrine that I preach, that Christ has redeemed only such as live in holiness, having been brought thereto by the Holy Spirit, an unholy thing? I think not! We challenge all those who love to speak against our Doctrines to prove that there is a single one of them which has an unholy tendency! Charge us with not holding good works? Come and try to get into our Church and you will soon have a proof that you are wrong—why, we would not have you, Sir, if you would give us a thousand pounds—unless we considered you were a holy man! If you have not good works, it will be a long time before we will receive you. And if you were to steal into our Church, you would be turned out in a week if you lived in sin and unrighteousness. For it would soon be reported to the pastor and deacons and you would see whether we did not hold the necessity of good works! If you did not exhibit them every day, we would cast you out from among

us and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them! Our church order is the best refutation of the calumny.

What more can we say, then? We hope we have proved our points to all honest and consistent men. We only send you away, you hypocrites, with this ringing in your ears, "Except you have the Spirit of Christ, you are none of His." Except you live like Christ, you shall not be with Christ at the last! If your spirit is not sanctified in this world, you will not find that God will sanctify you when you come before His Throne!

But you, poor Sinners, who have no holiness of your own and no good works at all. I know you have not any, because you are not a child of God. Do you feel that you have not? Come, then, and Christ will give you some—He will give you Himself! If you believe on the Lord Jesus, He will wash you from all your sins, give you a new heart and henceforth your life shall be holy, your conduct shall be consistent. He shall keep you to the end and you shall most assuredly be saved! God bless this testimony to any such as are living in sin, that they may be reclaimed from it, for Christ's sake and by His Grace! Amen.

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

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

THE MAINTENANCE OF GOOD WORKS

NO. 2042

DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 2, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving many lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. That being justified by His Grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”
Titus 3:3-8.

LAST Thursday evening my sermon was based upon the contrast in the second chapter of Ephesians, between the expressions “not of works” and “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” I tried to show the true place of good works in connection with salvation. Many of you were not present then and I felt that the subject was of such extreme importance that I must return to the same line of thought in this greater congregation. I shall endeavor by another text which contains the same contrast, to set before you the usefulness, the benefit, yes, and the absolute *necessity* for our abounding in good works if indeed we are saved by faith in Christ Jesus.

Let us come at once to our text. Our Apostle tells us that we are to speak evil of no man but to show meekness unto all men. And he adds this as an all-sufficient reason—we ourselves also were sometimes like the very worst of them. When we look upon the world today, it pains us by its folly, disobedience and delusion. He that knows most of this modern Babylon, whether he observes the richer or the poorer classes of society, will find the deepest cause for grief. But we cannot condemn with bitterness—for such were some of us. Not only can we not condemn with bitterness but we must look upon our sinful fellow creatures with great compassion—for such were some of us.

Yes more—we feel encouraged to *hope* for ungodly men, even for the foolish and disobedient—for we ourselves also were, not long ago, like they. We feel that we must give the thought of our heart and the energy of our lives to the great work of saving men out of gratitude to the Lord our God, who, in His kindness and love, has saved us. “I am a man,” said one, “and everything that has to do with men concerns me”—but the child of God adds to this, “I am also a sinful man and owe my cleansing to the loving favor of the Lord. I was in the same mire of sin as these are in—and if

I am now washed in the laver of regeneration and renewed by the Holy Spirit, I owe it all to Sovereign Grace and am bound by love to man and love to God to seek the cleansing and renewal of my fellow men.”

Eyes that have wept over our own sin will always be most ready to weep over the sins of others. If you have judged yourselves with candor, you will not judge others with severity. You will be more ready to pity than to condemn, more anxious to hide a multitude of sins than to punish a single sinner. I will give little for your supposed regeneration if there is not created in you a tender heart which can truly say—

**“My God, I feel the mournful scene;
My heart yearns over dying men;
And gladly my pity would reclaim,
And snatch the firebrands from the flame.”**

With this feeling towards mankind at large, we are led to consider the Divine remedy for sinfulness and to look with pleasure upon what God has devised for the creation of holiness in a fallen race. He at first created man a pure and spotless being. When He placed Adam in the garden He made a friend of him. And though Adam has fallen and all his race are depraved, God is still aiming at the same thing, namely, to create holy beings, purified unto Himself, to be a peculiar people zealous for good works. What has the Lord done? What is He still doing to this end? How far have we participated in those processes of Divine Grace which work towards this glorious design?

I ask your attention this morning while I speak, first, of what we were. And here let the tears stand in your eyes. Secondly, of what has been done for us—and here let Divine Grace move in your hearts. And, thirdly, of what we wish to do—and here let care be seen in your lives.

I. First, Beloved, let us think for a few minutes only OF WHAT WE ONCE WERE. Think, I say, with tears of repentance in our eyes. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving many lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” The Apostle does not say, “You yourselves,” as if he spoke to Titus and the believing Cretans but *we ourselves*, thus including himself. Beloved Apostle, you do humbly present to us this bitter cup of confession, drinking of it yourself with us and putting yourself on a level with us—“We ourselves also.” Come, then, pastor, elders, deacons, and members of the Church—you that have served your Lord for many years—hesitate not to join in this humiliating confession.

A threefold set of evils is here described. The first set consists of the evils of the mind—“We were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived.” We were foolish. We thought we knew and therefore we did not learn. We said, “We see,” and therefore we were blind and would not come to Jesus for sight. We thought we knew better than God. For our foolish heart was darkened and we imagined ourselves to be better judges of what was good for us than the Lord our God. We refused heavenly warnings because we dreamed that sin was pleasant and profitable. We rejected Divine Truth because we did not care to be taught and disdained the lowly position of a disciple sitting at Jesus’ feet.

Our pride proved our folly. What lying things we tried to believe! We put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter—darkness for light and light for darkness. In thought, desire, language and action “we were sometimes foolish.” Some of us were manifestly foolish for we rushed headlong into sins which injured us and have left that in our bones which years have not been sufficient to remove. Every lover of vice is a fool at large. O my Brothers and Sisters, I suppose you have no photograph of yourself as you used to be. But if you have, take it down and study it and bless God that He has made you to differ so greatly from your former self!

In addition to being foolish we are said to have been disobedient. And so we were, for we forsook the commands of God. We wanted our own will and way. We said, “Who is the Lord, that we should obey His voice?” There is a touch of Pharaoh about every one of us. Obedience is distasteful to the obstinate. And we were such. “I knew,” said God, “that you were very obstinate and had an iron sinew.” Our necks by nature refused to bow to the yoke of our Creator. We would, if we could, be the lords of Providence for we were not content with the Divine allotment. We wished that we were the legislators of the universe, that we might give license to our own lusts and no longer be hampered with restrictions.

To the holy Law of God we were disobedient. Ah, how long some of us were disobedient to the Gospel! We heard it as though we heard it not. Or when it did touch the heart we did not allow its influence to remain. Like water, which retains no mark of a blow, so did we obliterate the effect of the Truth of God. We were determined not to be obedient to the faith of the Lord Jesus. We were unwilling to yield God His due place either in Providence, Law, or Gospel. Paul adds that we were deceived, or led astray. As sheep follow one another and go away from the pasture, so did we follow some chosen companion and would not follow the Good Shepherd. We were deceived.

Perhaps we were deceived in our thoughts and made to believe a lie—certainly we were deceived in our idea of happiness. We hoped to find it where it did not exist—we searched for the living among the dead. We were the dupes of custom and of company. We were here, there, and everywhere in our actions—no more to be relied upon than lost sheep. Children of God, remember these errors of your minds. Lay them upon your consciences and let your souls plead guilty to them. For I feel assured that we have all, in some measure, been in this triple condition—foolish, disobedient, deceived.

The next bundle of mischief is found in the evil of our pursuits. The Apostle says we were “serving many lusts and pleasures.” The word for “serving” means being under servitude. We were once the slaves of many lusts and pleasures. By lusts we understand desires, longings, ambitions, passions. Many are these masters and they are all tyrants. Some are ruled by greed for money. Others crave for fame. Some are enslaved by lust for power—others by the lust of the eye. And many by the lusts of the flesh. We were born slaves and we live slaves until the great Liberator emancipates us. No man can be in worse bondage than to be enslaved by his own evil desires.

We were also the bond slaves of pleasure. Alas, alas, that we were so far infatuated as to call it pleasure! Looking back at our former lives we may well be amazed that we could once take pleasure in things we are now ashamed. The Lord has taken the very name of our former idols out of our mouths. Some who are now saints were once the slaves of drunkenness or of “chambering and wantonness.” Some were given up to evil company and rioting or to pride and self-seeking. Many are the evils which array themselves in the silken robes of pleasure that they may tempt the hungry heart of man.

Once we took pleasure in those sins which are now our misery as we look back on them. O my Brethren, we dare not deny our base original! Today we drink from the well of holiness and not of undefiled pleasures which delight our souls. But we blush as we remember that not too long ago foul and putrid pools seemed sweet to our vitiated taste. Like Nebuchadnezzar in the failure of his mind we fed among beasts in the madness of our sin. Unlike the Egyptians, who loathed to drink of the river when God had smitten it with His curse, we took all the more delight in draughts of unhallowed pleasure because it yielded a fearful intoxication to know that we were daring to defy a Law.

Do not let me talk about these things this morning while you listen to me without feeling. I want you to be turning over the pages of your old life and joining with Paul and the rest of us in our sad confession of former pleasure in evil. A holy man was likely to carry with him a book which had three leaves in it but never a word. The first leaf was black and this showed his sin. The second was red and this reminded him of the way of cleansing by blood—while the third was white—to show how clean the Lord can make us. I beg you just now to study that first black page. It is all black. And as you look at it, it seems blacker and blacker. What seemed at one time to be a little white, darkens down as it is gazed upon, till it wears the deepest shade of all. You were sometimes erring in your minds and in your pursuits. Is not this enough to bring the water into your eyes, O you that now follow the Lamb wherever He goes?

The Apostle then mentions the evils of our hearts. Here you must discriminate and judge, each one for himself, how far the accusation lies. He speaks of “living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” That is to say first, we harbored anger against those who had done us evil. And secondly, we lived in envy of those who appeared to have more good than we had ourselves. The first sin is very common—many abide year after year in the poisonous atmosphere of an angry spirit. All are not alike in this, for some are naturally easy and agreeable. But in all of us there is that proud spirit which resents injuries and would revenge them. Men may sin against God and we are not indignant. But if they sin against us—we are very angry.

To the spirit of Christ it is natural and even delightful to forgive—but such is not the spirit of the world. I have heard of men who would not forgive their own children and of brothers who were implacable towards each other. This is the spirit of the devil. Revenge is the delight of the wicked but to do kindness in return for injury is the luxury of a Christian. One

main distinction between the heirs of God and the heirs of wrath is this—the unregenerate are in the power of self and so of hate—but the regenerate are under the dominion of Christ and so of love. You may judge yourself by this—whether your prevailing spirit is that of wrath or of love—if you are given to anger, you are a child of wrath. And if you are full of love, you are a child of God whose name is Love.

God help us to stamp out the last spark of personal animosity! Let us remove the memories of injury, as the incoming tide washes out the marks on the sand. If any of you have disputes in your family, end them at once, cost what it may. How can you love God whom you have not seen if you do not love your brother whom you have seen? Divine Grace makes a great change in this respect in those who by nature are malicious.

The other form of evil is envy of those who seem to have more of good than we have. Frequently envy attacks men because of their wealth. How dare they have luxuries when we are poor? At other times envy spits its venom against a man's good repute when he happens to be more praised than we are. How can any man venture to be better thought of than we are? Truly this is the spirit of Satan—the spirit which now works in the children of disobedience. The child of God is delivered from envy by the Grace of God. And if it ever does arise, he hates himself for admitting it. He would wish to see others happy even if he were unhappy himself.

If he is in the depths of poverty he is glad that everybody is not so pinched as he is. If he has received unjust censure he is willing to hope that there was some mistake. And he is glad that everybody is not quite so unfairly dealt with. He rejoices in the praise of others and triumphs in their success. What? Do you wince at this and feel that you have not reached it so far? May Divine Grace enable you to get into this spirit for it is the spirit of Jesus! Beloved, sin takes different shapes in different people but it is in us all. This darkness once beclouded those who today shine like stars among the godly. Sin is often restrained by circumstances and yet it is in the heart.

We ought not to take credit to ourselves because of our freedom from evils into which we had no chance of falling. We have not been so bad as others because we could not be. A certain boy has run away from home. Another boy remained at home. Is he, therefore, a better child? Listen—he had broken his leg and could not get out of bed. That takes away all the credit of his staying at home. Some men cannot sin in a certain direction and then they say to themselves, “What excellent fellows we are to abstain from this wickedness!” Sirs, you would have done it if you could, and therefore your self-praise is mere flattery. Had you been placed in the same position as others, you would have acted as others have done—for your heart goes after the same idols.

Sin in the heart of every man defiles everything that he does. Even if an ungodly man should do what in itself might be a good action there is a defilement in his motive which taints it all. You cannot draw pure water from a foul well. As is the heart, such is the life. Listen to this, you that have never passed under the processes of Divine Grace. See what you are and where you are if left to yourselves and cry to the Lord to save you.

II. Now for a more cheerful topic. We are now to think OF WHAT HAS BEEN DONE FOR US. And here let us feel the movements of Divine Grace in our hearts. What has been done for us?

First, there was a Divine interposition. "The kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared." Man was in the dark—plunging onward to blacker midnight every step he took. I do not find, as I read history, any excuse for the modern notion that men are longing for God and laboring to find Him. No, the sheep were never seeking the Shepherd but all were going astray. Men everywhere turn their backs to the light and try to forget what has been handed down by their forefathers—they are everywhere feeling after a great lie which they may raise to the Throne of God. We do not, by nature, long after God nor sigh for His holiness. The gracious Lord came in uncalled for and unsought and in the bounty of His heart and in the great love of His nature He determined to save man.

Methinks I hear Him say, "How shall I give you up?" He sees mankind resolved to perish unless an almighty arm shall intervene. And He interposes in fullness of pity and power. You know how, in many ways, the Lord has intervened on our behalf. But, especially you remember how He came down from Heaven, took our nature, lived among us, mourned our sin and bore it in His own body on the tree. You know how the Son of God interposed in that grand Avatar, that marvelous incarnation in which the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Then He broke what would otherwise have been an everlasting darkness.

Then He snapped the chains which would have fettered our humanity throughout all the ages. The love and kindness of God our Savior which had always existed, at length "appeared," when God, in the Person of His Son, came here, met our iniquities hand to hand and overcame their terrible power—that we also might overcome. Note well that there was a Divine salvation. In consequence of the interposition of Jesus, Believers are described as being saved—"not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us."

Hearken to this. There are men in the world who are saved—they are spoken of not as "to be saved," not as to be saved when they come to die but saved even now—saved from the dominion of the evils which we described under our first head—saved from folly, disobedience, delusion and the like. Whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ whom God has set forth to be the Propitiation for sin is saved from the guilt and power of sin. He shall no longer be the slave of his lusts and pleasures. He is saved from that dread bondage. He is saved from hate—for he has tasted love and learned to love. He shall not be condemned for all that he has ever done, for his great Substitute and Savior has borne away the guilt, the curse, the punishment of sin—yes, the sin itself.

O my Hearers, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ this morning you are saved! As surely as once you were lost, being led astray—so surely are you now saved, if you are a Believer, being found by the great Shepherd and brought back again upon His shoulders. I beg you to get hold of this Truth of God that according to His mercy the Lord has saved us who believe in Jesus. Will you tell me, or rather tell yourselves, whether you are

saved or not? If you are not saved you are lost. If you are not already forgiven you are already condemned. You are in the ruin of fallen nature unless you are renewed by the Holy Spirit. You are a slave to sin unless your liberty has been procured by the great ransom. Examine yourselves on these points and follow me in the next thought.

There was a motive for this salvation. Positively, "According to His mercy He saved us." And negatively, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done." Brethren, we could not have been saved at the first by our works of righteousness. For we had not done any. "No," says the Apostle, "we were foolish, disobedient, deceived," and therefore we had no works of righteousness and yet the Lord interposed and saved us. Behold and admire the splendor of His love, that "He loved us even when we were *dead* in sins." He loved us and therefore quickened us. God does not come to men to help them when they are saving themselves—He comes to the rescue when they are *damning* themselves.

When the heart is full of folly and disobedience the good God visits it with His favor. He comes, not according to the hopefulness of our character, but according to His mercy. And mercy has no eye except for guilt and misery. The Grace of God is not given according to any good thing that we have done since our conversion—the expression before us shuts out all real works of righteousness which we have done since regeneration—as all supposed ones before it. The Lord assuredly foreknew these works but He also foreknew our sins. He did not save us according to the foreknowledge of our good works—these works are a part of the salvation which He gave us.

As well say that a physician healed a sick man because he foreknew that he would be better. Or that you give a beggar an alms because you foresee that he would have the alms. Works of righteousness are the *fruit* of salvation and the root must come *before* the fruit. The Lord saves His people out of clear, unmixed, undiluted mercy and Grace and for no other reason. "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."

Oh how splendidly is the Grace of God seen in the whole plan of salvation! How clearly is it seen in our cases, for "we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived," yet He saved us, "not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy"! Will not some self-convicted sinner find comfort here? O despairing one, does not a little hope come in by this window? Do you not see that God can save you on the ground of *mercy*? He can wash you and renew you according to the sovereignty of His Grace? On the footing of merit you are hopelessly lost—but on the ground of mercy there is hope.

Observe, next that there was a power by which we were saved. "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." The way in which we are delivered from the dominion of sin is by the work of the Holy Spirit. This adorable Person is very God of very God. This Divine Being comes to us and causes us to be born again. By His eternal power

and Godhead He gives us a totally new nature, a life which could not grow out of our former life, nor be developed from our nature—a life which is a new creation of God. We are saved not by evolution but by creation. The Spirit of God creates us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works.

We experience regeneration which means being generated over again, or born again. Remember the result of this as set forth in Covenant terms—“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.” This great process is carried out by the Holy Spirit. After we are regenerated He continues to renew us. Our thoughts, feelings, desires and acts are constantly renewed. Regeneration as the commencement of the new creation can never come twice to any man but renewal of the Holy Spirit is constantly and perpetually repeated.

The life once given is revived—the light once kindled is fed with holy oil which is poured upon it continually. The newborn life is deepened and increased in force by that same Holy Spirit who first of all created it. See then, dear Hearers, that the only way to holiness is to be made anew and to be kept anew. The washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit are both essential. The name of Jesus has been engraved in us—even on our hearts—but it needs to be cut deeper and deeper lest the letters be covered up by the moss of routine, or filled up by the bespattering of sin. We are saved “by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”—one process in different stages. This is what our God has done for us—blessed be His name! Being washed and renewed we are saved.

There is also mentioned a blessed privilege which comes to us by Jesus Christ. The Spirit is shed on us abundantly by Jesus Christ and we are “justified by His Grace.” Both justification and sanctification come to us through the medium of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is shed on us abundantly “through Jesus Christ our Savior.” Beloved, never forget that regeneration is worked in us by the Holy Spirit but comes to us by Jesus Christ. We do not receive any blessing apart from our Lord Jesus. In all works of the Spirit, whether regeneration or renewal, it is the Lord Jesus who is putting forth His power, for He says, “Behold, I make all things new.”

The Mediator is the conduit through which Divine Grace supplies us daily with the water of life. Everything is by Jesus Christ. Without Him was not anything made that was made either in Grace or in nature. We must not think it possible for us to receive anything from God apart from the appointed Mediator. But, oh, think of it!—in Jesus Christ we are today abundantly anointed by the Holy Spirit. The sacred oil is shed upon us abundantly from Him who is our Head. We are sweet to God through the Divine perfume of the Holy Spirit who comes to us by Jesus Christ. This day we are just in the sight of God in Christ’s righteousness, through which we are “justified by Grace.”

Jehovah sees no sin for which He must punish us. He has said, “Take away his filthy garments from him and set a fair miter upon his head.” And this is done. We are accepted in the Beloved. Since Jesus has washed

our feet, we are “clean every part”—clean in the double sense of being washed with water and with blood and so cleansed from the power and guilt of sin. What a high privilege is this! Can we ever sufficiently praise God for it?

Once more—there comes out of this a Divine result. We become today joint-heirs with Christ Jesus and so heirs of a heavenly estate. And then out of this heirship there grows a hope which reaches forward to the eternal future with exceeding joy. We are “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Think of that! What a space there is between “foolish, disobedient, deceived”—right up to “heirs according to the hope of eternal life”! Who thought of bridging this great gulf? Who but God? With what power did He bridge it? How but by the Divine power and Godhead of the Holy Spirit? Where was the bridge found by which the chasm could be crossed? The Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us, has made a way over the once impassable deep.

I have thus very briefly set before you an outline of the work of Divine Grace within the human heart. Do you understand it? Have you ever felt it? Do you feel the life of regeneration pulsing within you this morning? Will you not bless God for it?—

***“We raise our Father’s name on high,
Who His own Spirit sends
To bring rebellious strangers near,
And turn His foes to friends.”***

III. We will now speak on WHAT WE WISH TO DO. And here let us show care in our lives. Mark well these words, “This is a faithful saying and these things I will that you affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

“Be careful to maintain good works.” This precept is full in its meaning. In another Scripture you are told to be careful for nothing but here you are bid to be careful to maintain good works. We read, “casting all your care upon Him. For He cares for you”—but do not cast off your care to maintain good works. You have a number of cares about you—slip a bridle over their heads and train them to plow in the field of good works. Do not let care be wasted over food and raiment and such temporary matters—these may be left with God. But take sacred cares upon you—the cares of holy and gracious living. Yoke your best thoughts to the care of holiness—“be careful to maintain good works.”

What are good works? The term is greatly inclusive. Of course we number in the list works of charity, works of kindness and benevolence, works of piety, reverence and holiness. Such works as comply with the two tables of command are good works. Works of obedience are good works. What you do because God bids you do it, is a good work. Works of love to Jesus done out of a desire for His Glory—these are good works. The common actions of everyday life, when they are well done, with a view not to merit but out of gratitude—these are good works. “Be careful to maintain good works” of every sort and kind.

You are sure to be working in some way—mind you that your works are good works. If you have commenced well, be careful to maintain good works. And if you have maintained them, go on to increase them. I preached last Thursday night as now—salvation by Divine Grace and by Grace alone. And if I know how to speak plainly, I certainly did speak plainly then and I hope I do so now. Remember, you are saved by grace and not by works of righteousness. But *after* you are saved there comes in this precept, “Be careful to maintain good works.”

This precept is special in its direction. To the sinner—that he *may be saved we say not a word concerning good works, except to remind him that he has none*. To the Believer who is saved, we say ten thousand words concerning good works—beseeching him to bring forth much fruit, that so he may be Christ’s disciple. There is all the difference between the living and the dead—the living we arouse to work—the dead must first receive life. Exhortations which may most fittingly be addressed to the regenerate may be quite out of place when spoken to those who are under the power of unbelief and are strangers to the family of Divine Grace.

The voice of our text is to them that have believed in God—faith is presupposed as the absolutely indispensable foundation of good works. You cannot work that which will please God if you are without faith in Him. As there is no coming to God in prayer without believing that He is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, so there is no bringing any other sacrifice to Him without a faith suitable to the business in hand. For living works you must have a *living faith* and for loving works you must have a *loving faith*.

When we know and trust God with holy intelligence and sacred confidence we work His pleasure. Good works must be done freely—God wants not slaves to grace His Throne. He seeks not from us the forced works of men in bondage. He desires the spontaneous zeal of consecrated souls who rejoice to do His will because they are not their own but bought with the precious blood of Jesus. It is the heartiness of our work which is the heart of it. To those who have renewed hearts, this exhortation is addressed—“Be careful to maintain good works.”

This precept is weighty in importance, for it is prefaced thus—“This is a faithful saying.” This is one among four great matters thus described. It is not trivial. It is not a temporary precept which belongs to an extinct race and a past age. “This is a faithful saying”—a true Christian Proverb—“that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.” Let the ungodly never say that we who believe in Free Grace think lightly of a holy life. O you who are the people of my care, I charge you before God and the holy angels that in proportion as you hold the Truth of doctrine, you follow out the purity of precept! You hold the Truth of God and you know that salvation is not of man, nor of man’s work—it is not of merit—but of mercy, not of ourselves but of God alone.

I beseech you to be as right in practice as in doctrine, and therefore be careful to maintain good works. Dogs will open their mouths but do not find bones for them—the enemies of the faith will laugh at it but do not

give them ground of accusation. May God the Holy Spirit help you so to live that they may be ashamed—having no evil thing to say of you!

I am afraid that this precept of being careful to maintain good works is neglected in practice, or else the Apostle would not have said to Titus, “These things I will that you affirm constantly.” Titus must repeat perpetually the precept which commands the careful maintenance of good works. Beloved, I fear that preachers often think too well of their congregations and talk to them as if they were all perfect, or nearly so. I cannot thus flatter you. I have been astounded when I have seen what professing Christians can do. How some dare call themselves followers of Jesus I cannot tell! It is horrible. We condemn Judas but he is to be found in many.

Our Lord is still sold for gain. He still has at His heels sons of perdition who kiss Him and betray Him. There are still persons in our Churches who need to have the Ten Commandments read to them every Sabbath Day. It is not a bad plan of the Church of England—to put up the Ten Commandments near the communion table where they can be clearly seen. Some people need to see them, though I am afraid when they come in their way, they wink hard at some of the Commands and go away and forget that they have seen them. Common morality is neglected by some who call themselves Christians.

My Brethren, such things ought not to be but as long as they are, so we must hear Paul saying—“I will that you affirm constantly that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.” Certain people turn on their heel and say, “That is legal talk. The preacher is preaching up works instead of Divine Grace.” What? Do you dare to say that? I will meet you face to face at God’s right hand at the Last Day if you dare to insinuate so gross a libel. Dare you say that I do not preach continually salvation by the Divine Grace of God and by the Divine Grace of God only? Having preached salvation by Grace without a moment’s hesitation, I shall also continually affirm that they which have believed in God must be “careful to maintain good works.”

This, mark you, is supported by argument. The Apostle presses home his precept by saying—“These things are good and profitable unto men.” He instances other things which are neither good nor profitable, namely, “Foolish questions and genealogies and contentions and strivings about the Law.” In these days some are occupied with questions about the future state instead of accepting the plain testimony of Scripture and some give more prominence to speculations drawn from prophecy than to the maintaining of good works. I reverence the prophecies. But I have small patience with those whose one business is guessing at their meaning.

One whose family was utterly unruly and immoral met with a Christian friend and said to him—“Do you quite see the meaning of the Seven Trumpets?” “No,” answered his friend, “I do not. And if you looked more to your seven children the seven trumpets would suffer no harm.” To train up your children and instruct your servants and order your household aright are “things which are good and profitable unto men.” A life of godliness is better than the understanding of mysteries. The eternal Truth of

God is to be defended at all hazards but questions which do not signify the turn of a hair to either God or man may be left to settle themselves.

“Be careful to maintain good works” whether you are a babe in Grace or a strong man in Christ Jesus. A holy household is as a pillar to the Church of God. Children brought up in the fear of God are as cornerstones polished after the similitude of a palace. You, husbands and wives that live together in holy love and see your children serving God, you adorn the doctrine of God our Savior! Tradesmen who are esteemed for integrity, merchants who bargain to their own hurt but change not, dealers who can be trusted in the market with uncounted gold—your acts are good and profitable both to the Church and to the world! Men are won to Christ when they see Christianity embodied in the good and the true.

But when religion is a thin veneer or a mere touch of tinsel they call it “humbug.” And rough as the word is, it is worthy of the contemptible thing which it describes. If our religion comes from the very soul, if our life is the life of Christ in us and we prove that we have new hearts and right spirits by acting the honorable, the kindly, the truly Christian part—these things are good and profitable unto those who watch us—for they may induce them to seek for better things.

I pray you, my Beloved, be careful to maintain good works. I thus stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance—if your minds were not pure I would not stir them up—for it would be of no use to raise the mud which now lies quiet. I stir you up because I am not afraid to do so but am sure that it will do you good. You will take home this exhortation and you will say, each one to himself, “What can I do more for Jesus? How can I walk more worthy in my profession? How can I be careful to maintain good works?” So may God bless you!

You who do not believe in God. You who have not come to trust in His dear Son—I am not talking to you. To you I must say, first, that you must be made new creatures. I do not talk to a crab-tree and say, “Bear apples.” It cannot. The tree must first become good before the fruit can be good. “You must be born again.” You will never be better till you are made new creatures. You must be spiritually slain and then made alive again. There must be an end of you and there must be a beginning of Christ in you. God grant that this may happen at once and may you immediately believe in the Lord Jesus! Amen.

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