

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

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BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun
a good work in you
will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”
Philippians 1:6.*

THE dangers which attend the spiritual life are of the most appalling character. The life of a Christian is a series of miracles. See a spark living in mid ocean, see a stone hanging in the air, see health blooming in a leper colony, and the snow-white swan among rivers of filth and you behold an image of the Christian life. The new nature is kept alive between the jaws of death, preserved by the power of God from instant destruction—by no power less than Divine could its existence be continued. When the instructed Christian sees his surroundings, he finds himself to be like a defenseless dove flying to her nest, while against her, tens of thousands of arrows are leveled. The Christian life is like that dove’s anxious flight as it threads its way between the death-bearing shafts of the enemy and by constant miracle escapes unhurt.

The enlightened Christian sees himself to be like a traveler standing on the narrow summit of a lofty ridge—on the right hand and on the left are gulfs unfathomable, yawning for his destruction. If it were not that by Divine Grace his feet are made like hinds’ feet, so that he is able to stand upon his high places, he would long before this have fallen to his eternal destruction.

Alas, my Brothers and Sisters, we have seen too many professors of religion thus fall. It is the great and standing grief of the Christian Church, that so many in her midst become apostates. It is true they are not truly of her, but beforehand it is not possible for her to know this. Not a few of her brightest stars have been swallowed up by night. Those who seemed the most likely to be fruitful trees in Christ’s vineyard have turned out to be cumberers of the ground, or very upas trees, dripping poison on all around.

The young Christian, therefore, if he is observant, fears lest after putting on his burnished harness amid the congratulations of friends, he may return from the battle ingloriously defeated. He does not pride himself because, like some gallant knight, he puts on his glittering harness—but as he buckles on his helmet and grasps his sword, he fears lest he should be brought back into the camp with his escutcheon marred and his crest trailed in the dust. To such a one, conscious of spiritual perils and fearful lest he should be overcome by them, the doctrine of the text will afford richest encouragement.

If we are helped to set forth the doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints, so as to commend this Truth of God to your understandings and confirm it upon your souls, we shall be glad at heart, because the Truth will make you glad and strong and thankful. Without further pre-

face, we shall *expound the Apostle's words*, in order to show in detail the matter of his confidence. We shall then, in the second place, *support that confidence by further arguments*. And then, thirdly, we shall seek to *draw out certain excellent uses from the doctrine* which the text undoubtedly teaches.

I. First, let us EXPOUND THE APOSTLE'S OWN WORDS. He speaks of a *good work* commenced in "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi." By this he intended the work of Divine Grace in the soul which is of the operation of the Holy Spirit. This is eminently a *good work*, since it works nothing but good in the heart that is the subject of it. To bring a man from darkness into light is *good*. To deliver him from the bondage of his natural corruption and make him the Lord's free man, must be good. It is good for himself. It is good for society. It is good for the Church of God. It is good for the Glory of God Himself.

It is so good a thing, that he who receives it becomes the heir of all good and moreover, the advocate and author of further good! This good is the best that a man can receive. To make a man healthy in body and wealthy in estate, to educate his mind and train his faculties—all these are good, but in comparison with the *salvation of the soul*, they sink into insignificance! The work of sanctification is a good work in the highest possible sense, since it influences a man by good motives. It sets him on good works, introduces him among good men, gives him fellowship with good angels and in the end makes him like unto the good God Himself.

Moreover, the inner life is a good work because it springs and originates from the pure goodness of God. As it is always good to show mercy, so it is pre-eminently good on God's part to work upon sinful and fallen men so as to renew them again after the image of Him that created them. The work of Grace has its root in the Divine goodness of the Father. It is planted by the self-denying goodness of the Son and it is daily watered by the goodness of the Holy Spirit. It springs from good and leads to good and so is altogether good.

The Apostle calls it a "work," and, in the deepest sense, it is indeed a work to convert a soul. If Niagara could suddenly be made to leap upward instead of forever dashing downward from its rocky height, it were not such a miracle as to change the perverse will and the raging passions of men! To wash the Ethiopian white, or remove the leopard's spots, is proverbially a difficulty—yet these are but surface works! To renew the very *core* of manhood and tear sin from its hold upon man's heart—this is not only the finger of God, but the baring of His arm.

Conversion is a work comparable to the making of a world. He, only, who fashioned the heavens and the earth could create a new nature. It is a work that is not to be paralleled. It is unique and unrivalled, seeing that Father, Son and Spirit, must all cooperate in it—for to implant the new nature in the Christian, there must be the decree of the Eternal Father, the death of the ever-blessed Son and the fullness of the operation of the adorable Spirit. It is a work indeed! The labors of Hercules were but trifles compared with this! To slay lions and Hydras and cleanse Augean stables—all this is child's play compared with renewing a right spirit in the fallen nature of man!

Observe that the Apostle affirms that this good work was *begun by God*. He was evidently no believer in those remarkable powers which some

theologians ascribe to “free will”! He was no worshipper of that modern Diana of the Ephesians. He declares that the good work was begun by *God*, from which I gather that the faintest gracious desire which ultimately blossoms into the fragrant flower of earnest prayer and humble faith is the work of God. No, Sinner, you shall never be before God! The first step towards ending the separation between the prodigal son and his father is taken by the Father, not by the son!

Midnight never seeks the sun—long would it be before darkness found within itself the germs of light. Long ages might revolve before Hades should develop the seeds of Heaven, or Gehenna discover in its fires the elements of everlasting glow. But till then it shall never happen that corrupt nature shall educe from itself the germs of the new and spiritual life, or sigh after holiness and God! I have heard lately, to my deep sorrow, certain preachers speaking of conversions as being *developments*. Is it so, then, that conversion is but the development of hidden graces within the human soul? It is not so! The theory is a lie from top to bottom!

There lies within the heart of man no grain or vestige of spiritual good. He is to all good, alien, insensible, dead and he cannot be restored to God except by an agency which is altogether from without himself and from above! If you could develop what is in the heart of man, you would produce a *devil*—for that is the spirit which works in the children of disobedience! Develop that carnal mind which is enmity against God and you cannot by any possibility be reconciled to Him and the result is Hell. The fact is that the Divine life has departed from the natural man—man is dead in sin and life must come to him from the Giver of life, or he must remain dead forevermore.

The work that is in the soul of a true Christian is not of his own beginning, but is commenced by the Lord! It is implied in the text further, that *He who began the work must carry it on*. “He who has begun a good work in you will perform it,” will complete it, will finish it, as the margin puts it. The Apostle does not say as much, but still it is in the run of the sense, if not of the words, that God must perform it or else it never will be performed. Along the road from sin to Heaven, from the first leaving of the swine trough right up to the joyful entrance into the banquet and the music and dancing of glorified spirits—every step we take must be enabled by Divine Grace.

Every good thing that is in a Christian, not merely begins, but progresses and is consummated by the fostering Grace of God through Jesus Christ. If my finger were on the golden latch of Paradise and my foot were on its jasper threshold, I should not take the last step so as to enter Heaven unless the Divine Grace which brought me so far should enable me fully and fairly to complete my pilgrimage. Salvation is God’s work, not man’s! This is the theology which Jonah learned in the great fish college, in the university of the great deep—to which college it would be a good thing if many of our divines in *these* days could be sent!

Human learning often puffs up with the idea of human sufficiency—but he that is schooled and disciplined in the college of a deep experience and made to know the vileness of his own heart, as he peers into its chambers of imagery—will confess that from first to last salvation is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy! But the Apostle’s main drift in the verse is that this good work which is begun in Be-

lievers by God, which can only be further performed by God, *most certainly will be so carried on.*

You observe he declares himself to be confident of this Truth of God. Why did Paul need to write so positively, “being confident of this very thing”? Surely, as an inspired man, he might simply have written, “He who has begun a good work in you”! But he gives us over and above the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—the confidence which had been worked in him as the result of his own personal faith. He had been, himself, very graciously sustained and he had been favored personally with such clear views of the Character of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ that he felt quite confident that God would not leave His work unfinished.

He felt in his own mind that whatever anybody else might affirm, he was fully assured and would stand to the Truth and defend it with all his might, that He who has begun a good work in His people will surely finish it in due season. Indeed, dear Friends, in the Apostle’s words there is good argument. If the Lord began the good work, why should He *not* carry it on and finish it? If He stays His hand, what can be the motive? When a man commences a work and leaves it half complete, it is often from lack of power—men say of the unfinished tower, “This man began to build and was not able to finish.”

Lack of forethought, or of ability, must have stopped the work. But can you suppose Jehovah, the Omnipotent, ceasing from a work because of unforeseen difficulty which He is not able to overcome? He sees the end from the beginning! He is almighty! His arm is not shortened! Nothing is too hard for Him! It were a base reflection upon the wisdom and power of God to believe that He has entered upon a work which He will not, in due time, conduct to a happy conclusion! God did not begin the work in any man’s soul without due deliberation and counsel. From all eternity He knew the circumstances in which that man would be placed, and He foresaw the hardness of the human heart and the fickleness of human love.

If, then, He deemed it wise to begin, how can it be supposed that He shall change and amend His resolve? There can be no conceivable reason with God for leaving off such a work—the same motive which dictated the commencement must be still in operation and He is the same God—therefore, there must be the same result, namely, His continuing to do what He has done. Where is there an instance of God’s beginning any work and leaving it incomplete? Show me for once a world abandoned and thrown aside half-formed! Show me a universe cast off from the Great Potter’s wheel, with the design in outline, the clay half-hardened and the form unshapely from incompleteness!

Direct me, I pray you, to a star, a sun, a satellite—no, I will challenge you on lower ground—point me out a *plant*, an *ant*, a grain of *dust* that has about it any semblance of incompleteness! All that man completes, let him polish as he may—when it is put under the microscope it is but roughly finished, because man has only reached a certain stage and cannot get beyond it. It is perfection to his feeble optics, but it is not *absolute* perfection. But all God’s works are finished with wondrous care! He as accurately fashions the dust of a butterfly’s wing, as those mighty orbs that gladden the silent night.

Yet, my Brethren, some would persuade us that this great work of the salvation of souls is begun by God and then deserted and left incomplete!

And that there will be spirits lost forever upon whom the Holy Spirit once exerted His sanctifying power—for whom the Redeemer shed His precious blood, and whom the eternal Father once looked upon with eyes of complacent love! I believe no such thing! The repetition of such beliefs curdles my blood with horror! They sound like blasphemy!

No, where the Lord begins He will complete. And if He puts His right hand to any work, He will not stop until the work is done, whether it is to strike Pharaoh with plagues and at last to drown his chivalry in the Red Sea, or to lead His people through the wilderness like sheep and bring them in the end into the land that flows with milk and honey. In nothing does Jehovah turn from His intent. “Has He said and shall He not do it? Has He purposed it, and shall it not come to pass?” “He is God and changes not and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

There is a world of argument in the quiet words which the Apostle uses. He is confident, knowing what he does of the Character of God, that He who has begun a good work in His saints will perform it until the day of Christ. Notice the *time* mentioned in the text—the good work is to be perfected in the *day of Christ*, by which we suppose is intended the Second Coming of our Lord. The Christian will not be perfected until the Lord Christ shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel and the voice of God.

But what about those, you say, who have died before His coming? How is it with them? I answer, their souls are doubtless perfect and made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. But Holy Scripture does not regard a man as perfect when the *soul* is perfected—it regards his body as being a part of himself—and as the *body* will not rise again from the grave till the coming of the Lord Jesus, then we shall be revealed in the perfection of our manhood, even as He will be revealed.

That day of the Second Coming is set as the day of the finished work which God has begun, when, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, body, soul, and spirit, shall see the face of God with acceptance and forever and ever rejoice in the pleasures which are at God’s right hand. This is what we are looking forward to—that God who taught us to repent—will sanctify us wholly! That He who made the briny tear to flow, will wipe every tear from that same eye! That He who made us gird ourselves with the sackcloth and the ashes of penitence, will yet gird us with the fair white linen which is the righteousness of the saints!

He who brought us to the Cross will bring us to the crown! He who made us look upon Him whom we pierced and mourn because of Him, will cause us to see the King in His beauty and the land that is very far off. The same dear hand that struck and afterwards healed, will, in the latter days, caress us! He who looked upon us when we were dead in sin and called us into spiritual life, will continue to regard us with favor till our life shall be consummated in the land where there is no more death, sorrow nor sighing! Such is the Truth of God which the text evidently teaches us.

One remark I here feel bound to make, though it is running somewhat from the theme. It is this—I marvel beyond measure at those of our Christian Brethren who hold the doctrine of the Final Perseverance and yet remain in the Anglican Church, because their so remaining is utterly inconsistent with such a belief. You will say, “How? Is not the doctrine of Final Perseverance taught in the Articles?” Undoubtedly it is! But it is a flat

contradiction to what is taught in the Catechism. In the Catechism and in parts of the liturgy we are distinctly taught that children are born again and made members of Christ in Baptism.

Now, to be regenerated, or born again, is surely the beginning of a good and Divine work in the soul. And then, according to this text and according to the doctrine of Final Perseverance, such a Divine work being begun, will most certainly be performed until the day of Christ. Now, no one will be so foolhardy as to assert that the good work which, according to the Prayer-Book, is begun in an infant at its so-called "baptism," is beyond all question perfected in the day of Christ—for, alas, we see these regenerated people drunk, lying, swearing! We have them in prison, convicted of all kinds of crimes! We have even known them to be hanged!

If I were an evangelical clergyman and believed in the doctrine of Final Perseverance, I must at once renounce a Church which teaches a lie so intolerable as that—that there is a work of Grace begun on an unconscious infant in every case when water is sprinkled from priestly hands! No such work is begun and consequently no such work is carried on! The whole business of infant baptism, as practiced in the Anglican Episcopal Church, is a perversion of Scripture, an insult to God, a mockery of Truth and a deceiving of the souls of men! Let all who love the Lord, and hate evil, come out of this more and more apostatizing Church, lest they be partakers of the plague which will come upon her in the day of her visitation!

II. Secondly, WE SHALL SHOW FURTHER GROUND FOR OUR BELIEF IN THE DOCTRINE OF THE FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. Our first ground shall be *the express teaching of Holy Scripture*. But, my dear Friends, to quote all the Scriptural passages which teach that the saints shall hold on their way would be to quote a large proportion of the Bible, for, to my mind, Scripture is saturated through and through with this Truth of God.

And I have often said that if any man could convince me that Scripture did not teach the perseverance of Believers, I would at once reject Scripture altogether as teaching nothing at all—as being an incomprehensible book of which a plain man could make neither heads nor tails, for this seems to be of all doctrines the one that lies most evidently upon the surface. Take the ninth verse of the 17th chapter of the book of Job and hear the testimony of the Patriarch: "The righteous also shall hold on his way and he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

Not, "the righteous shall be saved, let him do what he will"—that we never believed and never shall—but "the righteous shall hold on his way"—his way of *holiness*, his way of *devotion*, his way of *faith*—he shall hold to that and he shall make a growth in it, for he that has clean hands shall add "strength to strength," as the Hebrew has it, or, as we put it, "shall be stronger and stronger."

In the 125th Psalm, read the first and second verses, "They that trust in the Lord," that is the special description of a Believer, "shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abides forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even forever." Here are two specimen ears pulled out of those rich sheaves which are to be found in the Old Testament. As for the New Testament, how peremptory are the words of Christ in the 10th of John, 28th

verse, “I give unto them eternal life”—not life *temporal* which may die—“and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hands. My Father, which gave them to Me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hands.”

The Apostle tells us, 11th Romans, 29th verse, that, “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” That is, whatever gifts the Lord gives, He never changes his mind of having given them so as to take them back again. And whatever calling He makes of any man, He never retracts it, but he stands to it still. There is no playing fast and loose in Divine mercy! His gifts and calling are without repentance. Following that terrible passage in the sixth of Hebrews, which has raised so many questions, you find the Apostle, who seems at first sight to have taught that Believers might turn away—you find him in the ninth and 10th verses disclaiming any such idea! “Beloved,” he says, “we are persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have showed toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.”

The Apostle Peter, who is in no way given to administer too much comfort to the saints, but deals very sternly with hypocrisy, has put it very strongly in the first chapter of his first Epistle, at the fifth verse, where he says of all the elect according to the foreknowledge of God—they are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Brothers and Sisters, the 54th of Isaiah, which I read in your hearing this morning, with many more to the same effect, are scarcely to be understood if it is true that God’s children may be cast away and that God may forsake those whom He did foreknow!

Yonder Bible seems to be disemboweled and stripped of its life, if the unchanging love of God is denied! The Word of God is laid on the threshing floor and the chaff, alone, is gathered and the *wheat* is cast away, if you take out of it its constant and incessant teaching that the “path of the just is as the shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” But further, in addition to the express testimonies of Scripture, we have to support this doctrine all the attributes of God, for if those who have believed in Christ are not saved, then surely *all the attributes of God* are in peril!

If He begins and does not finish His work, all the parts of His Character are dishonored. Where is His wisdom? Why did He begin that which He did not intend to finish? Where is His power? Will not evil spirits always say “that He *could not* do what He did not do”? Will it not be a standing jeer throughout the halls of Hell that God commenced the work and then stayed from it? Will they not say that the obstinacy of man’s sin was greater than the Grace of God, that the hardness of the human heart was too hard for God to dissolve?

Would there not be a slur at once cast upon the Omnipotence of Divine Grace? And what shall we say of the Immutability of God, if He casts away those whom He loves—how shall we think that He does not change? How will the human heart ever be able to look upon Him, again, as Immutable if after loving He hates? And, my Brothers and Sisters, where will be the *faithfulness* of God to the promises which He has made over and over again and signed and sealed with oaths by two immutable things, wherein

it was impossible for God to lie? Where will be His Grace if he casts away those that trust in Him, if after having tantalized us with sips of love He shall not bring us to drink from the fountainhead?

It is all in vain for us, therefore, to trust if His promise can be forgotten and His mind can be turned. Therefore we need not talk of Ebenezers in the past as though they comforted us for the future, if the Lord does cast away His children, for the past is no guarantee whatever as to what He may do in days to come. But the veracity of God to His promise, the faithfulness of God to His purpose, the Immutability of God in His Character and the love of God in His Essence—all these go to prove that He cannot and will not leave the soul that He has looked upon in mercy until the great work is done.

Further, how can it be that the righteous should, after all, fall from Grace and perish, if you recollect *the doctrine of the Atonement*? The doctrine of Atonement, as we hold it and believe it to be in Scripture, is this—that Jesus Christ rendered to Divine justice a satisfaction for the sins of His people—that He was punished in their place. Now if He were so, and I do not believe any other atonements worth the turning of a finger, if He were really our satisfactory vicarious Sacrifice, then how could the child of God be cast into Hell? *Why* should he be cast there? His sins were laid on Christ—what is to condemn him? Christ has been condemned in his place! In the name of everlasting justice, which must stand, though Heaven and earth should rock and reel, how can a man for whom Christ shed His blood be held as guilty before God, when Christ took his guilt and was punished in his place?

He who believes must surely be ultimately brought to Glory—the Atonement requires it—and since he cannot come to Glory without persevering in holiness, he must so persevere, or else the Atonement is a thing that has no efficacy and force. The doctrine of *justification*, in the next place, proves this. Every man that believes in Jesus is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses. The Apostle Paul regards a man who is justified as being completely set free from the possibility of accusation. Have you not the rolling thunder of the Apostle's holy boasting still in your ears: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" If nothing can be laid to their charge—if there is no accuser—who is he that condemns? If *God* considers Believers just and righteous through the righteousness of His dear Son. If they put on His wondrous mantle—the fair white linen of a Savior's righteousness—where is there room for anything to be brought against them by which they can be condemned? And if not accused, nor condemned, they must hold on their way and be saved!

Further still, my Brethren, *the intercession of Christ in Heaven* is a guarantee for the salvation of all who trust Him. Remember Peter's case—"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not." And the prayer of Christ preserved Peter and made him weep bitterly after he had fallen into sin. The like prayer of our ever-watchful Shepherd is put up for all His chosen—day and night he pleads, wearing the breastplate as our great High Priest before the Throne of God—and if He pleads for His people, how shall they perish unless, indeed, His intercession has lost its authority?

Moreover, do you not remember that every Believer is said to be “one with Christ”? “For you are members of His body,” says the Apostle, “of His flesh, and of His bones.” And is your imagination so depraved that you can picture Christ, the Head, united to a body in which the members frequently *decay*—hand and foot and eyes, perhaps, rotting off so as to need fresh members to be created in their place? The metaphor is too atrocious for me to venture to enlarge upon it! “Because I live you shall live also,” is the immortality that covers every member of the body of Christ! There is no fear that the righteous will turn back to sin and give themselves up to their old corruptions, for the holiness that is in Christ by the vital energy of the Holy Spirit penetrates the entire system of the spiritual body and the least member is preserved by the life of Christ!

Once more—*The inner life of the Christian* is a guarantee that he shall not go back into sin. Take such passages as these, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever” (1 Peter 1:23). Now, if this seed is incorruptible and lives and abides forever, how say some among you that the righteous become corrupt and fall from Grace? Hear the Master—“The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” How say you, then, that this water which Jesus gives dries up and ceases to flow? Hear Him yet again—“As the living Father has sent Me and I live by the Father, so He who feeds on Me, even he shall live by Me... He that eats of this bread shall live forever” (John 6:57, 58).

The life which Jesus implants in the heart of His people is allied to His own life—“For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “When He who is your life shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in Glory.” The Holy Spirit dwells in us. “Know you not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?” O Beloved, God Himself shall as soon die as the Christian, since the life of God is but eternal and that is the life which Christ has given to us! “I give unto My sheep *eternal* life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.”

I leave the doctrine with your understandings, the Word of God being in your hands, and may the Spirit of God put it beyond a doubt in your souls that it is even so. Remember, it is *not* the doctrine that every man that believes in Christ shall be saved, *let him do as he wishes*—but it is this doctrine—that each man believing in Jesus shall receive the spirit of *holiness* and shall be led on in the way of *holiness* from strength to strength until he comes unto the perfection which God will work in us at the coming of His own dear Son.

III. Lastly, we have to DRAW CERTAIN USEFUL INFERENCES from this doctrine. One of the first is this—there is much in this Truth of God *by way of comfort* to a child of God who today walks in darkness and sees no light. You know that sometime ago the Lord revealed Himself to you. You remember times when the promises were peculiarly sweet, when the Person of Christ was revealed to your spiritual vision in all its Glory. Then, Beloved, if some temporary depression of spirit should just now overwhelm you. If some heavy personal trial should pass over you, hear the words, “I am the Lord, I change not.”

Believe that if He hides His face, He still loves you. Do not judge Him by outward Providences—judge Him by the teaching of His Word. Do as the bargemen on the canals do when they push backwards to drive their boat

forwards. Take comfort from the *past*—snatch firebrands of comfort from the altars of yesterday to enkindle the sacrifices of today—

***“Determined to save, He watched over your path,
When Satan’s blind slave, you sported with death.
And can He have taught you to trust in His name,
And thus far have brought you to put you to shame?”***

This doctrine should suggest to every Christian *the need of constant diligence*, that he may persevere to the end. “What?” says one, “Is that an inference from the doctrine? I should have thought the very reverse, for if the Believer is to hold on his way, what need of diligence?” I reply that the misunderstanding lies with the *objector*. If the man is to be kept in *holiness* till life’s end, surely there is need that he should be *kept* in holiness—and the doctrine that he shall be so kept is one of his best means of producing the desired result. If any of you should be well assured that, in a certain line of business, you would make a vast sum of money, would that confidence lead you to refuse that business? Would it lead you to lie in bed all day, or to desert your post altogether?

No, the assurance that you would be diligent and would prosper would *make* you diligent! I will borrow a metaphor from the revelries of the season, such as Paul borrowed from the games of Greece—if any rider at the races should be confident that he was destined to win, would that make him slacken speed? Napoleon believed himself to be the child of destiny, did that freeze his energies? To show you that the certainty of a thing does not hinder a man from striving after it, but rather quickens him, I will give you an anecdote of myself.

It happened to me when I was but a child of some 10 years of age, or less. Mr. Richard Knill, of happy and glorious memory—an earnest worker for Christ, felt moved, I know not why, to take me on his knee, at my grandfather’s house and to utter words like these, which were treasured up by the family and by myself especially—“This child,” said he, “will preach the Gospel and he will preach it to the largest congregations of our times.” I believed his prophecy and my standing here today is partly occasioned by such belief. It did not hinder me in my diligence in seeking to educate myself because I believed I was destined to preach the Gospel to large congregations—not at all—the prophecy helped forward its own fulfillment

I prayed and sought and strove, always having this Star of Bethlehem before me, that the day should come when I should preach the Gospel. Even so, the belief that we shall one day be perfect never hinders any true Believer from diligence, but is the highest possible incentive to make a man struggle with the corruptions of the flesh and seek to persevere according to God’s promise. “Well, but,” says one, “if God guarantees final perseverance to a man, why need he pray for it?” Sir, dare he pray for it if God had *not* guaranteed it? I dare not pray for what is *not* promised, but as soon as ever it is promised, I pray for it! And when I see it in God’s Word I labor for it. “Say what you will,” says one, “you are inconsistent.” Ah, well, my dear Friend, we are bound to explain as best we can, but we are not bound to give understanding to those who have none!

It is hard trying to make things appear aright to eyes that squint. It will sometimes happen that people cannot see Truths of God which they do not particularly want to see. But the practical is the main thing, and I

hope it shall be ours, by practical argument, to prove that while those who think that they *can* fall from Grace run awful risks and *do* fall. But those who know they *cannot*, if they have truly believed, yet seek to walk with all carefulness and circumspection! I would seek to live as if my salvation depended on myself and then go back to my Lord, knowing that it does not depend on me in any sense at all. We would live as the opposite doctrine is *supposed* to make men live, which is exactly as the Calvinistic doctrine actually *does* make men live—namely, with earnestness of purpose and with gracious gratitude to God, which is, after all, the mightiest influence—gratitude to God for having secured our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Another matter drawn from the text is this—let us *learn from the text how to persevere*. Brothers and Sisters, you will observe that the Apostle's reason for believing that the Philippians would persevere was not because they were such good and earnest people, but because God had begun the work! So our ground for holding on must be our resting in God. There is a dear Brother sitting here this morning, a member of this Church, who was once a member of another denomination of Christians. One night, when he was quite young and lately converted, he knelt down to pray and he felt himself cold and dead and did not pray many minutes, but went to bed.

No sooner had he laid down than a horror of darkness came over him and he said to himself, "I have fallen from Grace." Dear good soul as he was and is, he rose from his bed, began to pray, but got no better, and at five o'clock in the morning, away he went to his class leader! He began knocking at the door and shouting to awaken him. "What do you want?" said the class leader, as he opened the window. The reply was, "Oh, I have fallen from Grace!" "Well," said the class leader, "if you have fallen from Grace, go home and trust in the Lord." "And," said my Friend, "I have done so ever since."

Yes, and if he had known the great Truth before, he would not have been taken up with such nonsense as that of having fallen from Grace. "Fallen from Grace? Then go and simply trust in the Lord." Yes and this is what we must *all* do, fallen or not! We must not trust within, but *always* rely on that dear Christ who died on the Cross. Lord, if I am not a saint, and I often fear I have nothing to do with saintship, yet, Lord, I *am* a sinner and You have *died* to save sinners and I will cling to that! O precious Blood, if I never did experience Your cleansing power! If, up till now, I have been in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, yet there stands the grand old Gospel of the Cross—"He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Lord, I believe today if I never did before! Help my unbelief! This is the true theory of perseverance—it is to persevere in being *nothing* and letting Christ be *everything*! It is to persevere in resting wholly and simply in the power of the Grace which is in Christ Jesus.

Lastly, *this doctrine has a voice to the unconverted*. I know it had to me. If anything in this world first led me to desire to be a Christian, it was the doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints. I had seen companions of my boyhood, somewhat more advanced than myself, who were held up to me as patterns of all that was excellent. I had seen them apprenticed in large towns, or launching out in business for themselves and soon their moral excellences were swept away. Instead of being patterns, they came to be persons against whom the young were warned for their supremacy

in vice. This thought occurred to me—“That may also be my character in years to come! Is there any way by which a holy character can be ensured for the future? Is there any way by which a young man, by taking heed, may be kept from uncleanness and iniquity?”

And I found that if I put my trust in Christ, I had the promise that I should hold on my way and grow stronger and stronger! And though I feared I might never be a true Believer and so get the promise fulfilled to myself, for I was so unworthy, yet the music of it always charmed me. “Oh, if I could but come to Christ and hide myself like a dove in His wounds, then I should be safe! If I could but have Him to wash me from my past sins, then His Spirit would keep me from future sin, and I should be preserved to the end.” Does not this attract you? Oh, I hope there may be some who will be allured by such a salvation as this!

We preach no rickety Gospel which will not bear your weight! It is no chariot whose axles will snap, or whose wheels will be taken off. This is no foundation of sand that may sink in the day of the flood. Here is the everlasting God pledging Himself by Covenant and oath that He will write His Law in your heart—that you shall not depart from Him—He will keep you! That you shall not wander into sin but if for awhile you stray, He will restore you again to the paths of righteousness!

O young men and maidens, turn in here! Cast in your lot with Christ and His people. Trust Him! Trust Him! Trust Him and then shall this precious Truth be yours and the experience of it be illustrated in your life—

***“My name from the palms of His hands
Eternity will not erase!
Impressed on His heart it remains
In marks of indelible Grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
Are the glorified spirits in Heaven.”***

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah 54.

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

EVANGELICAL CONGRATULATIONS

NO. 370

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON MONDAY EVENING, MARCH 25, 1861,
BY THE REV. W. BROCK,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Christ is preached and I therein do rejoice.
Yes and I will rejoice.”
Philippians 1:18.***

HOW Paul would have rejoiced had he been living now! Judging from the effect that was produced upon his mind by the evangelical labors at Rome, what do you think, Brethren, would have been the effect produced upon his mind by the evangelical labors in London? Because the Brethren there were waxing bold in the name of Christ, he was glad. The fact that in the metropolis of the empire the glad tidings were proclaimed filled him with the most profound satisfaction. His heart was and his heart still would be joyful in the Lord!

And yet I take it that the ministry of the Gospel in Rome must have been comparatively on a small and insignificant scale. I suppose that in proportion to the population and in proportion to the size of that city, the preaching must have been very circumscribed and all things considered, considerably obscure. No preacher had lifted his voice from the terrace of the Capitol, no congregation had been gathered into the great area of the Coliseum, no public announcement had been made over all Rome that if the people would flock to the Pantheon they might hear about the incarnation of the Son of God.

Anything like that would have kindled Paul's gladness into rapture! Christ preached out on the Campus Martius, or in the hall of Minerva, or on the platform of the Athenaeum at Rome would have left him nothing this side of Paradise to desire. As it was, his cup was running over. Men were told in honest speech about the One who had come down from Heaven. The One who had come at the Father's bidding to proclaim His will and to accomplish His purposes. They had been told of a Friend that "sticks closer than a brother," of the Advocate and the Mediator between God and man. And, the Spirit of all grace concurring with that which had been preached, the Apostle was fully persuaded in his own mind that they had heard words whereby they would be saved and that the promise of the life that now is and the promise of the life that is to come would by them be personally enjoyed. Hence he said, "I do rejoice," and then emphatically again, "Yes, and I will rejoice."

But how he would have rejoiced, or how he would rejoice if he were living now! Why, for every one man who preached the Gospel in his time there are thousands who are preaching it now. For every hundred hearers of that day, there are thousands upon thousands now. And for every one

place into which the citizens of Rome might go to hear about Christ and Him crucified, I need not say that there are many and ever multiplying places now. And you, my Brethren—the pastor of this church and those connected with him—you have added to the number, thank God, of those places and we are tonight to celebrate the completion of one, I suppose, of the best places that has ever been raised for the honor and for the glory of Christ.

From the first day until now, from its foundation to its top-stone, you have begun and continued and ended—your desire, your prayer, your purpose, your ambition having been just simply this—that here the Redeemer's name may be magnified, that here His great salvation in all simplicity may be proclaimed. And we have come here tonight to assure you of our sympathy, to give to you the pledges of our brotherly affection and in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, to bid you heartily God speed—

***“Peace be within this sacred place,
And joy a constant guest;
With holy gifts and heavenly grace,
Be our attendance blessed.”***

Well, the Apostle rejoiced and would have rejoiced a great deal more had he occupied the place which I am occupying now. My purpose is to show to you tonight why there should be such rejoicing in connection with the preaching of Christ crucified.

Various reasons, of course, could be assigned—at least several reasons could be thrown into various forms. I throw my idea of the matter into this form—by the preaching of Christ the renovation of mankind is *intelligently proposed* and not only so, but it is *graciously guaranteed*.

Given—a ministry that shall speak out openly what Christ is, what Christ has done, what Christ is doing, what Christ requires, what Christ administers and the renovation of our fellow man is not only intelligently proposed but is thereby on God's part graciously guaranteed. I rejoice that the very first text from which my Brother has preached in this noble edifice was, though unfeignedly, so singularly coincident with my own—“They ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.” The preaching and the teaching of Christ was the very first message with which he opened his service here and I take that among other things to be a token for good.

I. In the first place, we rejoice in the preaching of Christ because thereby THE RENOVATION OF FALLEN MAN is intelligently proposed.

High time, by common consent, that something was done in that direction. Everybody admits the foundations are out of course. And while many persons admit it, they also go about to suggest improvement, amendment and cure. You will give me your attention while I recapitulate some of the projects which they suggest in order to the attainment of an end which is desired by us all.

This is one suggestion—Give the people, they say, a good, sound, secular education. Impart to them the elements of knowledge and when they are apprehended and understood, then educe and cultivate the corre-

sponding results. Let them know about their own bodies and their own minds. Let them know something about the chemistry of common life. Let them know something about their relations to one another and to society at large and then when you have done that, there is some hope that their renovation may be obtained.

This is another suggestion—Give to the people sound remunerative employment. Recognize the right of every honest and industrious man to live and then act upon your recognition by not preventing or interfering so that he cannot live. A fair day's wages, they say, for a fair day's work. The ample recompense for the unbegrudging toil. Save your countrymen from the dread of pauperism and never insult them any more by the sanctimonious condescension of some of your so-called Christian charities. Let every man be enabled to earn his bread in the sweat of his brow and thus you may hope that their renovation will be obtained.

This is another suggestion—Confer upon them honorable enfranchisement. Barring the criminal and the imbecile, esteem every man throughout the country to be a free man. If you expect him to pay the tribute, give him a voice in the imposition of that tribute. Let him be regarded by yourselves and equally with yourselves and in all practical respects touching the commonwealth let him be regarded as a free man and then you may hope that the renovation so desirable will be obtained.

This is another suggestion—Take care to raise them into better and more civilized habits. See where they live. See how they eat and drink—mark their demeanor one towards another, and towards the community at large. Change all that, or get them to change it so that they shall prefer cleanliness to filth, frugality to wastefulness, the seemly garment to the rotten rags and the well-ventilated and the well-lighted apartment to the moldy attic in the roof, or to the dark pestiferous, rotten cellar underground. And when you have done *that*, you may hope that so far their renovation will be obtained.

And this is another suggestion—Let the people have their tastes cultivated. Introduce them to the great works of ancient and modern art. Throw open your museums. Take them into your art galleries, admit them into your artistic and your antique salons. Fire their love for the beautiful, kindle it yet more brightly and more brightly still. Insure their rejection of the base through their predilection for the refined and accomplish their abhorrence of the groveling through their rapture with the sublime and when you have done that, you have done much to obtain the renovation that we all desire.

I believe these are the great suggestions of the men who designate themselves and I respectfully regard their designation as the philosophical philanthropists. These are the suggestions which those men make. They say get all such things done and then you will have society just what society ought to be both in regard to God and in regard to man. But now, can you look at these suggestions for a single moment without marking a most fatal defect throughout them all? They tell you about dealing with a man

externally, but not a word about dealing with him *internally*. He is to be better cultured, better dressed, better housed.

But for all that—the subject of all that we are talking about—as for the man essentially and inherently considered, there is nothing whatever done. After all that philosophy and philanthropy together have accomplished, the man’s heart is just what it was before. Well, I say in any company, in any place, what I say here—that if you leave the man’s natural heart untouched, you may culture and cultivate him as you may, there is that which will laugh all your culture and all your cultivation to scorn. If a man’s *heart* is right, his life will be right. If a man’s *heart* is right in its relations towards God and towards man his life will be right, but not else.

And no man’s heart on earth is right. No! There is an universal, an absolute and unvarying necessity, as our Lord brought it out so distinctly with Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” “You must be born again.” And choosing as we do to sit at His feet, we accept the great oracular deliverance from Heaven and authorized by that we pronounce that all the suggestions which I have referred to are worth nothing.

No, my Brethren. To educate the people is expedient, to remunerate them incumbent, to enfranchise them desirable, to civilize them important and to cultivate their tastes, if you will, laudable in all respects—but if you were to do all that tomorrow with every man and woman and child in England, you have not put them into their right position. You have not inspired them with the right dispositions. You have not set them on the prosecution of the right career. A man may be educated and yet licentious—he may be well-paid and yet vindictive. He may be enfranchised and yet covetous. He may be civilized in all his habits and yet intemperate. He may be a man of cultivated taste and yet he may have no love for his neighbor and no love for his God.

Why, what dishonesties, what startling dishonesties have been perpetrated by men who have had all the benefits of our foremost colleges and of our first-rate schools! What debaucheries, what fearful debaucheries have been perpetrated by men whose barns have been filled with plenty and whose presses have burst out with new wine! What inhumanities, what cruel inhumanities have been perpetrated by men who have boasted and who have blustered and who have brawled that they were free! What falsehoods, what shameful, incredible falsehoods, have been perpetrated by men who have been clothed in purple and fine linen and have fared sumptuously every day!

And what profanities, cross and blasphemous have been perpetrated by men who have been the warmest admirers of Michelangelo and Rubens and who have been among the choicest of your connoisseurs, the very choicest of them in art! I need not adduce the evidence. It would insult and grieve the congregation if I did. Everybody here knows how that evidence accumulates. No, no, education and morality are not coincident—competence and morality are not coincident—civilization and morality are not coincident—liberty and morality are not coincident—and refined and

cultivated tastes are not coincident with morality so that if you have the one you are sure to have the other.

Brethren, you may deal with man's external condition as scientifically as you can and with his character—so far as the outward character goes—as philosophically as you can—but as I said before, there is an underlying aboriginal peculiarity of his nature that laughs all your science and your philosophy to scorn. You cannot turn his condition into a paradise, you cannot convert him into a king and a priest unto God. Everywhere, without the exception of a land under Heaven and without the exception of an individual under Heaven, men need the clean heart and the right spirit—the new creation in Christ Jesus.

They are dead in trespasses and sins. And they must be made alive unto God before you will get for them the renovation or the improvement which is so much desired. Hence my rejoicing and hence, as I believe, Paul's rejoicing, were he here, because of the preaching in a commodious place like this—because of the *preaching of Christ*.

Brethren, it will be preaching that goes down to the bottom of things. It will be preaching that deals not with the symptoms but with the sources of human guilt. It will be preaching that takes all profanity and debauchery and dishonesty and inhumanity and falsehood and deals with them. Mark—not in their overt acts so much as in their rudimental germs. My Brother's preaching here will declare that if you could do all which our philosophic philanthropy desires, man would go wrong and be wrong and presently would actually go on to justify and to glory in the wrong. It will be the preaching, in one word, that declares the absolute necessity of a new creation, of a new creation in Christ Jesus.

It will deal not with conjecture but with certainty, not with theories but with facts, not with experiments but with realities, not with the words which man's wisdom teaches but with the words which the Holy Spirit teaches. It will deal not with the superficial, temporary, partial amendment, but intentionally at least with a profound, a radical, a fundamental, an everlasting cure. The preaching will never ignore one peculiarity of our nature because it is embarrassing, nor overlook another because it is inconvenient, nor tremble at another because it happens to be possessed of some authority and power. I anticipate and rejoice that here will stand the preacher to declare in the good mother tongue of us all that the tree is bad, but that by God's grace it can be made good. That men are living unto themselves, but that by God's grace they can be brought to live unto Him. That the Divine image is defaced, but that that Divine image can be restored. That where sin is reigning even unto death, there grace may reign instead through righteousness even unto everlasting life.

And therein we do rejoice and if you are of my mind therein tonight we will *all* rejoice. Think of this place, look around it. Conceive of it devoted to a purpose like this and with tendencies and probabilities—for I am speaking only of these now—with tendencies and probabilities like these before our minds—is there a man or a woman listening to me who does not lift up his heart and rejoice and thank God now? Oh, I see the banner floating

here that will be displayed because of the Truth. I hear the trumpet blowing here that will proclaim the message of God's own mercies to man. I see the embassy going on here touching reconciliation between God and man and I see the confederacies of Christian brotherhood here provoking one another to love and to good works.

Our country will be the better for this place. We shall be relieved of our pauperism after all and saved from our licentiousness and rescued from our immorality. Yes, and we shall be rescued, too, from the superstition that would endanger our immortality by its sacerdotal and wicked and mischief-making tendencies—from the superstition that would put our immortality in jeopardy. And from the atheism that would laugh that immortality to scorn. It will be that our own land, so happy amid the nations of the earth already, shall be the royal habitation of righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. Christ is preached. He has been preached here today already and "therein I do rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice."

II. Secondly, we rejoice in the preaching of Christ because thereby the renovation in question is GRACIOUSLY GUARANTEED.

There can be conceived of by us a wise and sound plan that may, nevertheless, be frustrated when all comes to all by unknown and unperceived opposition. There are men all round about us who say, "Yes, and you ought to remember that and hold your peace, for just as beyond any question civilization will fail, so Christianity will fail likewise." And they have apparently a case. Let us look at it. They say, "What can you do *there*?" And then they point us to the masses rising up early, sitting up late, eating the bread of carefulness, if in hundreds of cases they can get the bread to eat. "What can you do *there*?" And they point us to our merchants, our physicians, our statesmen, our artisans, our bankers who are all with one accord apparently looking for what they preposterously call the main chance.

"What can you do *there*?" And then they point us to religious assemblies where superstition and formalism have everything their own way and where because of sacramental rites performed upon unconscious infants, people are told that they are members of Christ, children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven. "What can you do *there*?" And then they point us—alas, how they can point us—to multitudes whose licentiousness and profligacy are gradationally cross and perhaps to quite as many multitudes whose licentiousness is gradationally refined and then they say, "Now look at them, look round and tell us whether such ones will ever be prevailed upon to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world?"

And they take our own utterance, our own Scripture and they say, "You may well enough call them 'dead in trespasses and sins.'" Brethren, we looked at the other case—let us look at this. I own that there are about it indications that ought to make every thoughtful Christian man a great deal more thoughtful and a great deal more Christian, too. Oh, the domination of ungodliness is desperate and its tyranny is terrific and its sagacity is superhuman and its mastery of man is malignant in the last degree.

How one stands sometimes and looks at it dismayed! If it would be content to take what is in itself inherently abominable, it would not be so bad.

But it comes and takes what is in itself inherently *amiable and moral* and with that it tries to do the work of death. It takes our legitimate occupations and makes them a decoy to irreligiosity. It takes the amenities of our social life and perverts them to ungodliness. It takes the great charities of our homes and makes them antagonistic to devotion. Yes, and it goes to the very altar of God and it makes the sacred and solemn ordinances of the Church an opiate—pleasant enough—but dreadfully and fatally poisonous to the soul.

So I look as they bid me look and then think of all the particulars and resources of my case again. And as I do so I say, “Your premises apparently are sound, but your conclusion is altogether unsound. The Church is not always to be second to the world—Christ is not always to be resisted by the devil.” No, no, my Brethren, the Church is to take precedence of the world—Christ is to be triumphant obviously and before the world. Psalms and hymns and songs of praise are to come up into the ascendant and knees are to bow and tongues are to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And for believing like that, in the face of such a case, I offer these as my reasons.

1. With the preaching of Christ, God has formally connected the exertion of His power. “With God all things are possible.” I sometimes apprehend that good men are forgetful of this and they are for lying down and dying as though God had somehow or other ceased to be able to do everything. “With God all things are possible.” And should He gird His sword upon His thigh, should He go about to show Himself strong, I ask what are the world, the flesh and the devil in their worst combinations, then? What adversary would not succumb then—what adversary would not become a friend? “Yes,” you say, “almightiness in action would do all that we require.”

Brethren, I speak of almightiness in action *now*. It is not simply that in this place there will be the message of God. Along with that message there will be God Himself. It is not that the Word will be preached merely, but of His own will God will beget men by the Word. It is not simply that the Gospel will be proclaimed, but that that Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. My Brother will not stand here as the statesman stands in the senate house or the advocate at the bar, or the lecturer on the platform of an Athenaeum. He will stand here, I doubt not, as well-acquainted and well-furnished as they are mentally, intellectually and so on.

But eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures as he or any other man may be, it is neither that eloquence, nor that might which will effect the end. These things and the things like unto them, are the vehicles through which God sends down His blessing, the instrumentalities by which God accomplishes His work, the means and medium by which it pleases God to work. He will stand here a fellow-worker with God, so that the Word will be in demonstration of the Spirit and in power. Mark—the human will be

confirmed by the superhuman, the natural will be accompanied by the preternatural, the earthly will be helped and succored and blessed by the Divine.

With all that may be persuasive or argumentative or pathetic, with all that may be properly and intentionally adapted to commend the Truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God, there will be the energy whereby God is able to subdue all things unto Himself. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." And so in the face of all that seems to be opposed to us we do rejoice and we will rejoice because God's own channel for the communication of His power is the preaching of Christ.

2. Secondly, with the preaching of Christ God has been pleased formally to associate the accomplishment of His purposes. He has His purposes. "God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The Lord told Paul at Corinth when Paul was all but giving way to our common unbelief—He told him to stay there and not to hold his peace. Why? "Because I have much people in this city." And emboldened and encouraged by that, he stayed there a year and six months.

Well, those purposes which thus come out in the Scriptures of Truth which are possessed by us—those purposes are to be accomplished. "By two immutable things in which it is impossible that God should lie, His Son is to see of the travail of His soul until He is satisfied. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

But now how are those purposes accomplished? Mark! "Go into all the world and *preach* the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned." Mark again—"It has pleased God by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe." Mark again—"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed, how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard and how shall they hear without a *preacher*?" Mark again—"There is one mediator between God and man—the Man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be *testified* in due time. Whereof I am ordained a *preacher*."

Do you see my drift? The preaching obviously, demonstratively, stands connected with the purpose, which cannot fail—bound up with the Everlasting Covenant which is ordered in all things and sure. "The Word of the Lord endures forever and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." I think therefore of our friend occupying this place and of other men occupying similar places and I take up with Paul's jubilate again. He will stand here and this will be the plea, "As though God did beseech you by me." That will be the plea, "As though God did beseech you by me." And speak I to men tonight who do not understand as soon as they reflect how such a plea must chasten the preacher—how it must humble and yet dignify him—how, if he has a soul, it must bring out his soul and all that is within?

“God by me beseeching you.” What man so affected and impressed can be careless, heedless, prayerless, selfish? Oh, the plea does wonderful work for the minister. And what does it do for a people who will listen? Why, it arrests them, takes hold upon them, keeps hold of them and God being present with His blessing never lets them go. And what does it do in regard to the Spirit of all grace, the Author and Giver of all the gifts you want? That plea adopted, earnestly and devoutly used will bring the preacher into the fullest sympathy with the Holy Spirit of promise, as he stands here pleading, exhorting, comforting, encouraging, warning. With the plea moving everything within him and everything around him, the Divine purposes are recollected and they are accomplished—until he and the brotherhood will have to say, “Who has begotten us these? the young men and maidens, the old men and children and the strangers that are within your gates.”

Yes, and let us hope that some of you who have heard all the sermons up to now and have never surrendered yourselves to Christ—that you will be given to them in answer to their prayer. Not the units but the groups, not the individuals but the many, born “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Oh, what will this place be then? Brethren, the angels will have large employment in this Tabernacle. Heaven will have much to do in what is passing here. “For God is not a man that He should lie nor the son of man that He should repent. Has He said it and shall He not do it, has He spoken and shall He not make it good?” Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. And He will come and stand by our Brother here, proving Himself to be “God over all, blessed for evermore.”

3. Then, lastly—God has been pressed formally to identify the preaching of Christ with the manifestation of His sympathies.

Why, we could tell of much already—we could tell of much which has been done in our own time and not upon a small scale either. But let us rather remember what God did in the earlier times of our evangelical history. What happened at Jerusalem? Believers were the more added unto the Lord, multitudes both of men and women and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. What happened at Ephesus? The name of the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified and the men who had used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men and they counted the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

What happened all through Macedonia? “God makes us,” said the Apostle, “to triumph everywhere in Christ.” And what happened upon the larger scale through proud and philosophic Greece and through lordly and domineering Rome? Why, we have it on the testimony of our enemies that the preaching turned the world upside down. The preaching did, mind you! Before the preacher came, everything was earthly and sensual and Devilish—after the preacher came, there was the alteration, the improvement, the renovation of which we speak. Not by the preacher’s unassisted, original, independent effort—the excellency of the power was of God and not of man.

Mighty through God were the preachers throughout Greece and Rome and Asia Minor and mighty, too, through God will be the preacher here. Say that London is as corrupt as Corinth was, that it is as worldly as Rome was, that it is as rationalistic as Athens was, that it is as dead set against Christ and His Gospel as Jerusalem was and you cannot very well say more than that. Yet He that stood by the preacher in those places and in those times will stand by the preacher here. "Go, go, stand and speak in the temple all the words of this life." On Sabbath mornings he will hear that and at other times besides and when his courage and his heart may fail, he will hear besides "Go,"—"for I have much people in this city."

And so sent he goes and so going, what ensues? Participation of the Divine nature is vouchsafed unto the people. Sympathy with the Divine purposes is induced within the people. Communications of Divine grace are given to the people. Life everlasting becomes possessed by the people. "Heirs of God" are they and "joint-heirs in Jesus Christ." Brethren, I speak boldly as I ought to speak. It is a vile and wicked calumny that our doctrines of grace lead to licentiousness. Never was there anything more palpably contrary to the Truth. And all the history of the Church being my proof tonight—where Christ is preached as He ought to be preached, after the apostolic manner—neither licentiousness nor wickedness of any kind, will abound there. No, there will be honest dealing, kindly neighborhood, patriotic loyalty, world-wide philanthropy, truth-telling speech. There will be a race of men loving God with all their hearts and *therefore* their neighbor as themselves.

You cannot alter that order. You will never get a man to love his neighbor as himself till he has loved God first of all. And what we are looking for and hoping and praying for being done that order will supervene here. Loving the Lord their God with all their hearts, therefore the people will love their neighbors as themselves. And not being the amended ones but the regenerated ones, not being the improved ones but the twice-born ones, not being the corrected ones but the newly-created ones—the Law will have no need to arm itself for them, justice will never need to be on the alert for them, humanity will never need to tremble for them. No, and the purest chastity will never need to blush for them.

Their bodies will be the temples of the Holy Spirit and their members will be the members of Christ, sacred to His service in every way in which they can be employed. The tree having been made good, there will be fruit unto holiness and the end of that shall be everlasting life.

Well then, who does *not* rejoice? Everybody responds, "I rejoice." We all rejoice because of what will be done by the preaching of Christ here. We know that this place will be the birthplace of precious souls through successive generations. We know that this place will be like a great big human heart, throbbing, pulsating with beneficence and benevolence obtained directly from the Cross of Christ. And this great big human heart will be propelling far and near a thousand influences which shall be for "glory to God in the highest, for peace on earth and good will towards

men.” It will be none other than the house of God and the very gate of Heaven.

If indeed the preaching were of another kind from what we know it will be, it would be a very different thing. If I thought the preaching here was to be the preaching of Christ robbed of His divinity—the pure and perfect man to admiration, but not the co-equal and the co-eternal Son of God—I should not rejoice. But I know that it will be preaching in which Christ’s proper deity will be spoken out unambiguously and unequivocally and systematically. I know that He will be declared here to be the friend that “sticks closer than a brother” and at the same time our Lord and our God. If I thought that the preaching here was to be the preaching of Christ as an example merely and not as a sacrifice, or as a sacrifice in some vague, indeterminate, rationalistic, deceitful, false sense of submitting His own will to His Father’s, I should not rejoice. But I believe that it will be the preaching of Christ’s propitiatory sacrifice, as a proper sin-offering and that these words will bring out the aspect of the case as presented here—

***“He bore that we might never bear
His Father’s righteous ire.”***

If I thought that the preaching here was to be the preaching of Christ with any hesitancy as to His power, or His readiness to save the transgressor I should not rejoice. But I believe that there will be no approach to such hesitancy, that it will be Christ with His precious blood cleansing from all sin, Christ able to save even to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. If I believed that it would be the preaching of Christ independently or apart from His jurisdiction. If I thought it would be represented here that Christ had nothing to do with the lives and the conduct of His people—I should not rejoice. But I believe on the contrary that His royal and kingly Character will be insisted upon and that every believer will be told, “At your peril do you make Christ the minister of sin.”

If I believed that the preaching here was about to be at variance with the scholarship, the thoughtfulness, the uprightness, the spiritual-mindedness, of the past ages of the Church I should not rejoice. I believe, on the contrary, that it will be preaching in strictest harmony with the sound evangelical scholarship and with the lofty evangelical integrity and with the concordant evangelical orthodoxy of all the ages that are past. I stand here as I would stand in some other places that I know to resent the imputation and to show cause, if need be, for the resentment that in preaching Christ as we do we have no scholarship, no talent, no honesty, no spiritual-mindedness on our part. Brethren, it is not so. I speak unto wise men and ask you to judge what I say.

If I believed that the preaching here would regard all godly mystery as a scandal and all godly boldness as a calamity and all godly aggressiveness as a nuisance and all godly joyfulness as an offense, I certainly could not rejoice. But I believe that the preaching here will hold all godly mystery in veneration, will strengthen and enforce all godly boldness, will honorably vindicate all godly aggressiveness and will give, on behalf of godly joyfulness, the conclusive argumentation and the kindly and the pathetic ap-

peal. And so believing, I ask again whether we shall not close our gathering, our service tonight, with one great song and Psalm of thanksgiving to the Lord our God.

The maxim, the watchword, the war cry here will be Revelation, not Intuition. Faith, not imagination. The Scriptures, not tradition. The Gospel, not philosophy. The Person, not the proxy. Grace, not merit. The Cross, not the crucifix. The Savior, not the Church. I, believing that and knowing that—hearing indeed from all the brotherhood constituting the Church here, a great, unanimous, hearty, irrepressible AMEN, as I am thus speaking on their behalf—let us, I say, take the cup of salvation and let us call upon the name of the Lord. There may be others, I dare say there are, who have to sing the melancholy dirge—we have to sing the exultant Psalm. They may, if they will, chant the lamentable elegy—we mean to chant the triumphant canticle.

They may go and perform, if they must, the service for the dead—we come here to celebrate the great festival of a living Gospel, a living Church and a living Savior—

***“Let the vain world pronounce its shame,
And fling their scandals on Your cause;
We come to boast our Savior’s name
And make our triumphs in His Cross.
“With joy we tell a scoffing age,
He that was dead has left the tomb;
He lives above their utmost rage,
And we are waiting till He come.”***

Christ is preached! Therein do I rejoice and therein I will rejoice! And now, Brethren, let us have the rejoicing in a joyous collection. I catch that response of yours and I catch it as an honest man with his eye upon honest men. And if you go—in the main, at all events—with what I have been saying now, I ask you that you will give the evidence of your sympathy with me. And then and thereby the evidence of your sympathy with our Brethren, in making your collection tonight the outward and the visible sign of a gladness of your inmost soul, which amounts, approximately at least, to the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.

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OPENING SERVICES

NO. 371

Tuesday Evening, March 26, 1861

MEETING OF THE CONTRIBUTORS.

On Tuesday evening, March 26th, the first of the Public Meetings in connection with the opening of the Tabernacle took place. It was limited exclusively to the Contributors to the Building Fund, of whom more than three thousand were present. Up to the moment Sir HENRY HAVELOCK took the Chair the platform below the pulpit presented a busy scene, as it was here the collecting cards had to be turned in. Some half-dozen gentlemen officiating as clerks were for about an hour unceasingly engaged in receiving and recording the contributions handed in by some hundreds of volunteer collectors, the respective amounts varying from a few pence up to many pounds. Rich and poor vied with each other and it would be hard to say which excelled. The whole matter seemed to awaken a personal interest in each individual.

When the period arrived for commencing the business of the meeting Mr. SPURGEON gave out the third hymn, which had been composed expressly for the occasion —

***“Sing to the Lord with heart and voice,
You children of His sovereign voice;
The work achieved, the temple raised,
Now be our God devoutly praised.
For all the treasure freely brought—
For all the toil in gladness worked —
For warmth of zeal and purpose strong—
Wake we today the thankful song.
Lord of the temple! Once disowned,
But now in worlds of light enthroned—
Your glory let Your servants see
Who dedicate this house to You.
What if the world still disallows —
Our corner and our top-stone You!
Your shame and death and risen joy,
Shall here our ceaseless thought employ.
Be Your dear name like ointment shed
O'er every soul, on every head.
Make glorious, oh our Savior King,
The place where thus Your chosen sing.
More grand the temple and the strain
More sweet, when we Your Heaven shall gain
And bid, for realms where angels dwell,
Our Tabernacles here, farewell!”***

After offering up a few words of prayer and reading portions of the 35th and 36th of Exodus, descriptive of the offerings brought to the Tabernacle

by the Jews in the wilderness, he briefly introduced Sir Henry Havelock, the Chairman for the evening.

The CHAIRMAN said he hoped he should be excused if he were at a loss how to address such a meeting as this, because he supposed that a similar assembly in a building like this had never been addressed before in England. The kind way in which they had greeted him gave him encouragement and was sufficient to enable him to give utterance to thoughts, which, but for their hearty welcome he would hardly have power to express. He had been expressing a doubt to a friend near him that he should not be able to get through the duties which devolved upon him satisfactorily, but his friend remarked to him that this was not an occasion when speaking was required, for the occasion spoke for itself. He thought it did speak for itself. They could not look around that magnificent building without feeling that it was entirely of God's doing. The progress which had been made in that work of God was the most extraordinary thing in modern Church history.

It began two and a half years ago with fear and trembling. But from the first they had been triumphantly advancing and they had seen the work grow larger and larger, until now they saw it completed. It was impossible to come to any other conclusion but that God had worked mightily with His people. Then let them look at their pastor and at the different phases through which he had passed and they would agree with him that God had been with him in each of them. At one time it was said the work would break down in a month but it did not come to pass. It was also said that it was a passing *excitement* and would soon come to an end, but he thought their appearance there did not look like passing excitement.

What excitement there might be before the end of the meeting, he could not foretell. But if they were really mad, as some people said, there was certainly a great deal of "method in their madness." He was no orator and they should not expect a long address from him but he thought they ought to thank God for the blessings which He had showered upon that building at each stage of its erection. There had been nothing like it accomplished before. Let them hope it was but the beginning of many such undertakings destined to be carried to a similarly successful end.

Their pastor, in speaking to him of the building, pointed out some deficiencies in the inner room. He said that everything was not as yet quite comfortable and remarked that it was like a newly married couple coming to a new house. Now, he (the Chairman) hoped the simile would be carried a little further and that the church would not only be like the newly married couple in a new house, but like the noble matron who had become the mother of many children. They had heard that the small sum of £3,000 was required for the complete payment of every liability connected with past expenditure and from what he saw there that night he felt convinced that all would be speedily given.

And when no more should be needed, that need not prevent them from displaying their liberality in the cause which they had at heart. They had just had a precedent in Scripture brought before them where the people of

old were told they need not bring any more to the tabernacle. But they had not been told so there. He therefore hoped they would still contribute to the work until they had accomplished everything which they desired. It was intended that after the building itself had been paid for, the remainder of the money which might be raised should be devoted to the education of young men intended for the ministry.

In addition to that there was accommodation beneath the church for about two thousand scholars. And he was sure that was a purpose for which their contributions would still be given, even though the money might not be wanted for the mere bricks and mortar of the structure. He trusted they would excuse him saying more. But he could not conclude without thanking them kindly for so patiently listening to the remarks he had made.

The REV. C. H. SPURGEON said they were all aware that there was a happy contest between himself and his congregation. It was a very bad thing certainly for a newly married couple to fall out, especially in the scarcely furnished home but it so happened that the contest in their case was as to which should bring the better dowry to stock the house with. The minister should in every case do his share of the work, or how could he with any conscience appeal to his flock?

Now, he had undertaken that he would bring in £1,000 between the month of January and the opening of the building. He had fulfilled his pledge. In fact, he had gone somewhat beyond it. They might remember that on the last occasion they left off with a drawn battle. Having two or three bankers behind him who generously came to his aid, he had outstripped the congregation by some thirty shillings. However he considered it an undecided battle and if they could beat him tonight he should be very glad.

He then read over a list of the various contributions he had received, amounting to £1,170 14s. There was still, he said, a shot or two in the locker to win the victory with even should their industry and zeal excel in their results what he had accomplished. They might say the amount was £1,200 and it was matter of wonder and thankfulness that the bazaar had realized a clear £1,200. He ought to state and he should not be saying more than should be said, that there were many ladies in the congregation who had been working very, very hard and had always been at the side of his beloved wife whenever there had been a meeting for work. Still the main anxiety and arrangement had rested upon her and had it not been for those ladies, who, like the women of Israel, brought the labor of their hands the work could never have been so singular a success.

Of old it was written (Exo. 35:25, 26)—“And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands and brought that which they had spun, both of blue and of purple and of scarlet and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats’ hair.” So now they did the same. Thus had the willing-hearted people of God, each in their own way, brought an offering unto the Lord of gold and silver and copper and blue and purple and scarlet so that the house of the Lord

might be completed. So large a sum as had been realized spoke well, both with respect to individual co-operation and to the sympathy of the Christian public.

The result which they had attained was exceedingly satisfactory because almost every farthing which they required had been raised. He would not say the whole of it. But they would, no doubt, have the amount in a few minutes. The top-stone would soon be brought forth with shouts of praise. How had such a result been attained? The reply was, that there had been three main elements in it. The first was *faith in God*. At the beginning of the year, they wanted £4,000 and an entry to this effect would be found in the Church book, signed by himself and the deacons—"This Church needs rather more than £4,000 to enable it to open the New Tabernacle, free of all debt. It humbly asks this temporal mercy of God and believes that for Jesus' sake the prayer will be heard and the gift bestowed, as witness our hands."

As for himself he never had a doubt about the opening of that place free from debt since he attached his name to that entry. The work in which they had been engaged had been a work of faith from the beginning to the end. The Lord has fulfilled His promise to the letter—for according to our faith has it been done to us. Why not have faith in God for temporals? Will He ever allow His own cause to lag for lack of means? In this case, as the need grew, the supply increased. As the proportions of the project were enlarged, the liberality of the Christian public increased. And even during the last three or four weeks he had been amazed at the contributions which he had received. Contributions had come by post varying in amount from pounds to a few shillings. They had come from America, from Australia and from almost every country in the world, from men of all ranks and persons of every denomination.

Universal sympathy had been strewn and most of the donations from readers of the weekly sermons were accompanied by letters so affectionate and encouraging that it was a happy thing that such an opportunity had been given for the utterance of up to now unknown Christian love. Faith in God had done much of that which had been accomplished and unto a faithful God be glory. But "faith without works is dead"—very dead indeed in chapel building! One must *work* there and he could say he had toiled as hard as any man could to accomplish his purpose.

The house had been built for God and his sole object with regard to its future income was that it might be applied to the tuition and training of young men as ministers—that thus the Church in the Tabernacle might be a helper to many of the Churches of Christ. But besides individual energy there had been a third thing, *combination of numbers* laboring with one aim. Many poor persons had brought offerings which they could ill afford to spare and no one should ever know how many of them had received back, indirectly from himself, the amount they had given, but which they would have been grieved if he had refused. He publicly thanked all his generous friends throughout the world for their co-

operation and he would thank them all, individually if it were possible to do so.

Before the Chairman sat down Mr. Spurgeon paid a warm tribute to the memory of General Havelock, the Chairman's father. They might not, he said, be aware that there were only two dissenting lords and those two were Baptists. There were only two dissenting baronets and those two were Baptists also. Both of them had earned their titles fairly—those were Sir Samuel Morton Peto and Sir Henry Havelock. The one the king of spades and the other the savior of our empire in India. He was sure the country would for many years remember the name of Havelock.

As a Christian minister, he was no apologist for war, but it was a righteous cause in which Havelock was engaged. It was rather to save than to subdue—to rescue women and children than to slaughter men. But he was sure that when his fame as a warrior should cease to be heard, his name as a Christian would live. He was glad to see Sir Henry Havelock with his father's people in a Baptist Tabernacle. He hoped they would see him for years to come and that the blessing of the God of his father might richly rest upon him.

Mr. MUIR said there was no one who attended the last meeting held two months ago but must have felt a desire to do all they could to show their zeal in raising that building and he was very glad the wish had now been accomplished. At the time to which he referred it was his intention to take a journey to the north and he thought he would do what he could to further the work. He accordingly took a number of cards with him in order to collect contributions. Some of his friends gave very liberally, although he must confess that he had more difficulty in obtaining contributions from others. He then read his list of contributions, which amounted to £123 14s. The REV. F. TUCKER of Camden Road Chapel, said he could echo every word that had fallen from Mr. Spurgeon with regard to the gentleman who occupied the chair that evening.

Long, long indeed would it be before to any Baptist, or to any Christian, or to any Englishman, the name of Havelock would be a common or indifferent word. He had himself come there that evening partly from sympathy for he knew what it was to have to do with a chapel debt. And although the debt upon his chapel was only about one-tenth part of that which rested upon theirs, he only hoped it would cost him one-tenth part of the trouble. One of the most difficult things in the world to deal with was the tail of a debt. They might bury the body of the animal, but if the tail still was above ground—it was like the tail of the rattlesnake—it made a great and formidable and alarming noise although the body had been safely interred.

Now, that night, he understood they intended to bury the rattlesnake, tail and all and over that grave no one might write "*Resurgam*." He had come, however, personally to congratulate them. It was not the first time that he had stood within these walls. He was at the first public meeting held in that place some few months ago. It was then in its *deshabille* and yet he looked around the place with admiration and he felt, as he told his

Brother Spurgeon, as he supposed the captain of some ordinary seafaring steamer must have felt when he first stood in the hold of the Great Eastern.

The Great Eastern was now on the Gridiron in Milford harbor. They intended tonight to float their magnificent vessel off the Gridiron and might God grant her a long and prosperous voyage. He congratulated them not merely on the size of the great building, but also on its beauty. He did not think it was anything too large. His own chapel would seat about eleven hundred persons and it was large enough for him. But if John Bunyan were on the earth, should they like to confine him to a little company of eleven hundred persons?

If George Whitfield were on the earth, should they like to limit him to a little company of eleven hundred? Now they had got Charles Spurgeon on earth, should they shut him up in a little company of eleven hundred? As to the beauty of the building, no words he could use could adequately describe it. He did, from his heart, congratulate them on the size and beauty of the edifice. But he had also to congratulate them upon another matter—upon the doctrines that would be preached in that grand building. He was not there to give account of every word that his Brother Spurgeon had ever uttered, nor of every aspect of every doctrine which he had presented. But as an older man than his Brother, he was sure he would not be thought impertinent if he said that he, with many of his Brethren throughout the country, had watched Mr. Spurgeon's course with intense and prayerful interest.

They could see his growth and development towards a liberality and a symmetry of creed which had filled all their hearts with gratitude and joy. Just as dear Jonathan George—dear sainted Brother—just as he had at the meeting to which he (the speaker) had referred, there were some people who wanted to keep the eagle in a very small cage. But he said it was no use doing that—the eagle would either break his wings or break the cage. Well, they rejoiced that night that it was not the wings of the eagle which had been broken, but the cage. And they now saw the noble bird careening through the firmament in the shining light of the Sun of Righteousness.

He looked upon his Brother Spurgeon as one who upheld the sovereignty of God and who, on the other hand, declared the responsibility of man. He preached that never could the sinner repent without the aid of the Holy Spirit and yet he called upon every sinner to repent and believe the Gospel. Especially did his Brother make prominent the grand doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ and the kindred doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of the Lord and Savior. He took it that the central object which would be exhibited by his Brother in that place would be the Cross and nothing but the Cross. The central object would not be the roll of the eternal decrees, not the tables of the moral Law, not the laver of baptism, not the throne of judgment—the central object would be the Cross of the Redeemer.

Right and left they would find the roll of the eternal decrees, the tables of the law, the laver of baptism and the judgment throne, but the CROSS of Jesus would stand in the midst, shedding its pure and harmonizing light over all besides. There was many a building in the Established Church of this land where they might enter and they would hear as clear an exposition of Gospel Truth as they would from Mr. Spurgeon, but in many another building of the Established Church, all was priestly power and sacramental efficacy. In many another all that was preached was reason, intuition, the wisdom of man and not of God. And yet all those men had subscribed to the same articles, all those men belonged to the same Church.

Come within this building, whenever they might, he believed they would hear nothing of sacramental efficacy on the one side, or of man's reason or intuition on the other. But their dear Brother would say that he had determined not to know anything among them but Christ and Him crucified. One word more and he had done. They were living in the days of "Essays and Reviews"—living in the days of a Nationalism, which, for his own part, he considered far more unscriptural than any Romanism. He wished to explain himself. He meant to say for himself that he would rather be a poor humble-minded member of the Church of Rome, believing too much, than he would be one of those modern philosophers, too wise to believe anything at all. With this modern philosophy he had no patience!

The Bible, according to those men, was an old-fashioned book which had its value two thousand years ago, but now its value was diminished by all the length of those two thousand years. They had now out shot the Bible, said these men—they had got ahead of the Bible. They were now more intelligent and more wise than the Bible. Well let them take it as those men said and then he (the speaker) would add, let the venerable Book have fair play after all. If by it those men were so much wiser than they would have been, then, he said, it was only fair that they should strip themselves of all they had learned from the Bible—with regard to the attributes of God, the origin of the universe, the standard of morals, the destiny of spirits beyond the grave—and if they did that he could fancy he saw them peeling off coat after coat, like an onion and getting "small by degrees" but not "beautifully less," and he did not know what would remain of them.

Why, in ancient Greece there were intellects as subtle and spirits as profound as any in modern times. He believed that on some lines of philosophical inquiry none had been able to surpass them. But when those men entered on the doctrines of theology, how far did they get? Why, just as far as this, "the world by wisdom knew not God." That was as far as they got. The youngest Sunday-School child, he was going to say, knew more about God than Socrates and Plato. And if these men knew more about God than Socrates and Plato, where did they get their knowledge, except where the little Sunday-scholar got his, from the Scriptures. It was easy to stand on the Mount of Revelation and then to spurn the ground

upon which they stood. But let them cut that ground from under them and down they would go into the pit.

There was, he continued in ancient Athens an old cynic who went into the marketplace with his lantern kindled in the full blaze of day and said, in the Market of Athens, "I am come to look for an honest man." And all Athens smiled at the satire. But suppose he had said, "I have come here at noon-day with my lantern to light up the scenery, to bring to view those grand hills and this glorious city and that blue sky?" Would not the cry have rung through Athens, "Diogenes is mad"? What then is the insanity of the men who, in the full noon-day of the Gospel illumination, bring forward the little lamp of their own intuition and say, while turning their back upon the Sun of Righteousness shining in His strength, "See what our little lantern can show? See what a vast circumference it illuminates?"

But oh, let that sun but withdraw his shining and the pall of night come down upon the scenery and what a very twinkle would their lantern be in that abyss of darkness!

The REV. J. BIGWOOD said he could not fail to express his deep gratitude to God that He had permitted such a building as the present to be erected in which the glorious Gospel in all its purity and simplicity would be preached. He had been wondering why it should be called a tabernacle—a tent—a place that was to pass away. Surely if there was a *mansion* in London, this was the one which would remain when all others had passed away. Was it not rather a temple than a tabernacle? Regarded in an ecclesiastical point of view, it was a marvel that such a building should be built and opened *free from debt*. What was the secret? It was the faith which the pastor and Church had exhibited in the mighty power and goodness of God. The minister was not alone. God was with him and he with God. He walked with God and relied upon His power and God had granted him the desire of his heart. He congratulated them with his whole heart upon what they had accomplished and he hoped that God's blessing would rest upon them and that thousands might there be born again to God.

The REV. J. RUSSELL congratulated Mr. Spurgeon and his friends on the completion of the Metropolitan Tabernacle at Newington. Its being erected so near the Borough made him feel a deep interest in it, for he was born in the Borough and knew the whole neighborhood well. Close by, in former days, there stood the Fishmongers' Alms-houses with their pretty gardens and there his beloved fisher used to go and speak to some of the aged inmates of the love of Christ. And he hoped the members of this church would visit the poor all round and make known to them the glad tidings of mercy through Christ. It was called a Tabernacle, which curiously enough in its derivation meant a little wooden house—*taberna*, a wooden house, *tabernaculum*, its diminutive—but the general sense is an habitation and its sense in Scripture, the habitation of God.

They had erected a large and magnificent house, but its size, its splendor, its elegance, its beautiful columns would avail nothing if it were not the habitation of God. But he believed it would be and that would be its

glory. He rejoiced that a place of that size had been erected. There were large theatres, large Roman Catholic chapels, why should there not be large chapels where great numbers of people might be brought together to hear the Gospel? He hoped there would be others like this. They had showed great zeal and liberality. It was a coincidence rather singular that it was computed the poll-tax on the children of Israel, for the erection of the tabernacle in the wilderness, amounted to about £35,000 and the cost of their tabernacle was not much less.

It was entitled to the name of Metropolitan, for it drew its hearers from all quarters and the results of this great effort will affect not only the metropolis, but the world. The numerous Sunday-School children there instructed would grow up and carry with them to many distant parts the good Seed of the kingdom. He thanked God for what Mr. Spurgeon and his friends had been enabled to accomplish and he trusted they would have the continual and abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Mr. SPURGEON said they might get their hymn books ready. But he would first give them a statement of the liabilities that had been sent up to him. They wanted for the builder, £3,000. For the architect, £200. For gas, £160, for the gates and boundaries, £300. For the treasurer, £100, matting, carpets, etc., £350, for fittings, furniture, etc., about £100—which made £4,200, or thereabouts. These calculations were made so that they would meet all demands. But the pledge he made to the public was that they should enter that place free of debt and that would be accomplished when rather more than £3,000 had been paid in, for the other matters could wait awhile and would not be undertaken until the funds were in hand to warrant their being done.

He read additional lists of contributions received from various sources and gave the following abstract of the whole—he had brought in over £1,500, his wife and her lady friends, £1,200 the people that night, about £771. Clear proceeds of the lecture by Mr. Layard £100. The collection on the previous day amounted to rather more than £120, making a total of £3,700. Mr. Spurgeon then called upon the whole assembly to sing the Doxology, the congregation immediately rose and sang with great fervor those words of praise to the God of Heaven and repeated them with enthusiasm at the request of the rejoicing pastor.

The REV. C. STOVEL was then called upon. They had maintained, he said their operations with a constant living zeal and he wished them to receive the affectionate assurance of his joy in their success. Yet he could not join in any flattery that should lead them from the point where zeal, care and discretion would be required. Not a little would it require of personal effort and of wisdom to maintain the institutions in this place in due order and in effective operation. Not a little would be required of patient reliance upon God before the agencies committed to their trust should have been brought out for use. They must become learners at the feet of Jesus and while they kept the Cross in the center, as Mr. Tucker had reminded them and promised in their behalf, they were to remember that

above that Cross—the Cross never to be forgotten—there would be a living Savior before whom they must all bow.

Reference had been made to some of the features of their own time. He wished not himself to enter the Establishment and define its various features. He had read the book, or nearly the whole of it, to which reference had been made. He besought them not to turn to that book to awaken a theological odium about it, but to study practically in the testing house of daily life the points which it threw out into public light. His impression was that there was more to be dealt with than at first sight might be suspected and they might be assured, that in the present time they stood in a position where the docility of a learner was much required to bring the Truth of Heaven home to the direction of our present affairs.

If they would take his advice—he presented it only for what it was worth—it was that they should entangle themselves as little as possible with the theories of the past, or with the speculations of the present—but to keep themselves in thought, in heart and in action free to follow the commandments of Him who lived and ruled forever. For his part he could not help thinking that the personality of our Christianity was precisely the point on which their thoughts should ever rest. The reverend gentleman enlarged upon this topic and concluded by assuring the meeting that they had the most tender and sincerest desires of his heart for their spiritual welfare.

Mr. SPURGEON then stated that while the last speaker had been addressing them Sir Henry Havelock had been compelled by his camp duties to retire and Mr. Moore of the eminent firm of Copestake and Moore had occupied the chair at his request. He should by the chairman's leave, depart from the ordinary rules of public meetings by putting two or three motions to them. The first was that their hearty and sincere thanks should be tendered to Sir Henry Havelock for presiding over them, coupled with their kindest wishes and earnest prayers for his esteemed mother, Lady Havelock and the whole family. The motion was carried by acclamation.

Mr. SPURGEON then proposed a vote of thanks to the architect and the builder for their joint skill and liberality. The builder, he was happy to tell them, had become a deacon of the church. And in referring to the architect he remarked that the chapel would be a model for others, whether large or small. The motion was carried in the midst of loud applause.

Mr. POCOCK, the architect and Mr. HIGGS, the builder, both returned thanks and were warmly applauded.

Mr. SPURGEON said he wished them to signify their hearty recognition of the splendid Christian liberality of which they had been partakers by proposing a vote of thanks to the contributors to that magnificent building. The motion was carried by acclamation.

Mr. Spurgeon: Now, my Friends, I would ask you tonight to offer one more prayer for me than you have offered before. What am I to do with such a work as this upon me? It is not the getting up of this building, it is not the launching of the vessel—it is keeping her afloat. Who is sufficient

for these things? How shall I, a young man, a feeble child, go in and out before this people? Blessed be God, there is a glorious answer to this question. "My strength is sufficient for you, My strength shall be made perfect in your weakness." That arm which has upheld us up to now shows no sign of palsy. That eye which has smiled upon us until now has not grown dim. The promise has not failed.

We have had this day another pledge of His faithfulness and another foretaste of His future goodness. In the name of the Lord would I set up my banner tonight. He has been Jehovah-Jireh here, now, tonight we would call this place Jehovah-Nissi—for here has the Lord's banner been displayed. But, Brethren, as to the future we must ask for the blessing or we shall not have it. If you ever prayed for me before, pray for me tonight. Oh, my dear Brothers and Sisters, upon whose hearts I have been borne so long—you who have listened to me so patiently and have sometimes had your souls comforted, do not forget me.

Of all men the most *pitiable* if you take away your prayers and if, in consequences, God take away His Spirit—of all men the most *happy* if you will bear me in your arms, if the Lord shall still be my Strength and my Shield. More than I have done to advance His Gospel I cannot promise to do, for God knows I have preached beyond my strength and worked and toiled as much as one frame could do. But I hope that in answer to your prayers I may become more prayerful, more faithful and have more power to wrestle with God for man and more energy to wrestle with man for God. I pray you, as though I asked it of you for my very life, do this night commend me to God.

If you have ever been edified, encouraged, or comforted through me I beseech you carry me before God. And especially you that are my spiritual sons and daughters, begotten of me by the power of the Holy Spirit—you who have been reclaimed from sin, you who were wanderers in the wild waste until Jesus met with you in the Music Hall, in Exeter Hall, or in Park Street—you, above all—you *must* pray for me.

Oh, God, we pray You, let multitudes of the vilest of the vile here be saved. I had rather die this night, on this spot and end my career than lose your prayers—y aged members, deacons and elders, will you not be more earnest than ever? My younger Brothers and Sisters, my co-equals in age, comrades in battle, you, young men and women, who are strong to overcome the Wicked One, stand up with me, shoulder to shoulder and give me your help. Let no strife and no division creep in among us. Let no vain glory mar our deeds. Let nothing be done which could drive away the sacred dove and rob us of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Brethren, pray for us, in the name of all the ministry, I say, pray Brethren, pray for us. But I think the ministers here would rise as one man and say with me, standing as I do in the most perilous of positions "Brethren pray for me." For oh, if I fall, what dishonor to the Holy Church at large? If your pastor sins what shame! If this Church become a failure, what dishonor! Great God, we lay hold upon Your promise tonight. We did pray last Sabbath evening, "If Your spirit go not with us carry us not up

hence.” And now we grasp the promise and by faith would we believe in its fulfillment—“My presence shall go with you and I will give you rest.”

Mr. SPURGEON concluded by proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Moore, who occupied the chair and it was also carried by acclamation.

Mr. MOORE, in returning thanks, said, he had never seen a sight so thoroughly charming as the one before him. Speaking in sober earnest and as a Churchman he must say that this was a magnificent sight. Mr. Spurgeon had done the Church of England more good than any clergyman in it, in his opinion. He had watched his career ever since he came to London, when he was supposed to be not quite so sane as he was now. He had listened to his sermons and he had considered his success a miracle.

He believed that Mr. Spurgeon was a miracle raised up by Almighty God to advance His kingdom. He had had something to do with selling that plot of land, as he was one of the Fishmongers’ Company and he must say that he had been astonished how they had raised the money. It would have taken churchmen ten years. It was a thing almost unexampled in the Christian church. There was no one who sympathized with them more than he did and he believed that that Church would be instrumental in bringing many to Christ.

He would just say one thing further in reference to the miraculous influence which the preaching of Mr. Spurgeon had had on the Christian world. He had said a hundred times that they should never have had St. Paul’s nor Westminster Abbey, nor the Theatres opened for Sunday preaching if it had not been for such influence. He hoped Mr. Spurgeon’s appeal for their prayers would be listened to and he prayed God himself that their minister might never be left to disgrace the position in which he was placed.

Mr. SPURGEON then pronounced the benediction and the proceeding closed with the Doxology.

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MEETING OF THE NEIGHBORING CHURCHES NO. 372

**AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE NEWINGTON,
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1861.**

THE invitation to the ministers and members of neighboring churches, to show their support in the opening of the new Tabernacle, by attending especially at a meeting held this evening was most cordially accepted and the number present proved the heartiness of the response. An audience approaching four thousand in number assembled on the occasion, while on the platform and pulpit were a goodly array of ministerial Brothers.

The CHAIR was occupied by the Rev. Dr. Steane.

The fourth hymn, given out by Mr. SPURGEON and described as a hymn of welcome and fellowship, was first sung.

The Rev. WILLIAM ROBINSON, of York Road Chapel, offered prayer.

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, said two days ago that magnificent edifice for the first time resounded with the proclamation of the Gospel and its lofty dome thrilled with the notes of prayer and praise. Then, with an appropriate and becoming solemnity it was consecrated and set apart to the worship of Jehovah, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the God of our salvation. He had not the privilege of being present on that occasion, but then, as now, he most affectionately and cordially sympathized with his Christian Brother who was henceforth to minister there in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He said that by Rev. Spurgeon's godly zeal and untiring diligence, sustained by the whole Christian public, the magnificent structure had been reared.

And now, the pastors, the deacons and the members of the neighboring churches, without regard to denomination, without distinction of name, without reference to varieties of judgment and opinion, had been by him and his friends invited to gather together in that great concourse. That invitation had been accepted with the deep affectionate Christian sincerity with which they believed it to have been given. And they were there to offer to Mr. Spurgeon and to the Church over which he presided their affectionate congratulations. As they surveyed that splendid structure—the largest sanctuary which had ever been reared by such churches as theirs to the service and glory of God—they were filled with adoring reverence and gratitude and exclaimed, "What has God worked!"

He wished on that occasion to be commissioned by the meeting to assure Mr. Spurgeon and the church itself of the entire cordiality, of the affectionate respect, of the brotherly love with which the sister churches in the neighborhood regarded them all. He did not want that expression to be the individual expression of his own heart, but of the hearts of the pastors and members of the churches present. Perhaps he should proceed in a novel and unexpected way, but he should ask if his Brethren, the pastors of the churches, would entrust him with the commission to commu-

nicate their congratulations and affectionate love, to signify it by rising. (*Here the ministers rose at once*). If the meeting would commission him to tell Mr. Spurgeon how much they loved him and how devoutly and unanimously they wished him "God speed," they would signify that by rising. (*Everyone in the building at once rose*).

Nothing could have been more prompt, more unanimous and more delightful and he now begged to offer to Mr. Spurgeon the right hand of brotherly fellowship. (*This was done in the most hearty manner*). He had no intention when he entered the building of proceeding in the manner that he had done. But was it not a good, a wise and happy suggestion? He trusted that his dear Brother would live to be the pastor of that church for a far longer period than any of the Brethren present had ministered in their respective churches. Long might he live with God's blessing to labor there. He desired devoutly to thank the Providence of God which had brought Mr. Spurgeon among them.

That Providence might have brought a Brother who would have been an element of strife and discord—but God's grace had brought a *Brother* among them, with whom they were one in feeling, one in doctrine, one in heart, one in sympathy and one in Christ. There were present the representatives of many Churches, yet they were one Church—a part of the general assembly and church of the First-born. They were not two churches, if they spoke of the church of the redeemed in Heaven and the church of the blood-bought on earth. They were not two churches but one body of which Christ was the ever-living and glorified Head.

He trusted, through the grace of the Lord Jesus pervading all members of that one body, they should henceforth be still more united than in past time they had been and exhibit that unity in the face of a scoffing, infidel and ungodly world. He trusted they would spend a happy evening, the recollection of which would never be erased from their memories and when, in that upper and better sanctuary, the true Tabernacle, not made with hands like this, through the infinite riches of Divine mercy, they should be worshippers together, it might be among the sweetest and hallowed reminiscences of their life on earth, that on the present occasion they were gathered together a united assembly of Brothers and Sisters in the Lord.

Mr. SPURGEON did not know what he could say in answer to the affectionate expressions of his Brethren. They would excuse him if he did not attempt to express his gratitude on his own account, for his heart was too full. It had been singularly his lot to be placed in a position where he had the kindest Brethren for neighbors that ever gathered round any man. It was not easy for people to love *him*, for he sometimes said very strong things. When he meant to say a thing that should take effect, he felt that he ought to say it in a strong manner in an age like this so shallow and so careless. Yet he had the love and esteem of his Brethren far more than if he had attempted to speak smoothly.

He believed he was everybody's debtor. He did not know that anybody owed him anything, but he owed something to everybody. For all his friends had kindly helped in the present effort. While his own Church had

to do the most, yet there had hardly been a place from which they had not received some aid. He could scarcely look round London upon any Church of Christ where he could not find some dear Brother who had taken as large an interest in the work as themselves. He could only say on behalf of his own Church that they were heartily at one with all Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ who held their common faith in that neighborhood and he hoped in the future they would have better opportunities of testing their willingness to assist all efforts carried on by their Brethren.

Next week there was to be a meeting, called a meeting of denominations which would be addressed by members of all denominations upon the Scriptural Unity of the Church. They, as a Church, had ever been distinctly Baptists, but he hoped it would be their pleasure yet more and more in the future to bear upon their banner the motto of "Union in Christ," which was the true light in which to see the union of all the saints. He hoped they should have meetings for fellowship and mutual encouragement at least every quarter and thus the pastors of the district would become more intimate and more cordial, by joining their prayers and by mingling their efforts.

The Rev. WM. HOWIESON, of Walworth said he had come there that evening to bid his Brother Spurgeon, "God speed," in his new and enlarged sphere of labor. He believed he was his nearest ministerial neighbor and if his coming to Newington should affect the attendance at other places of worship in the neighborhood, he (Mr. Howieson) would be very likely to suffer himself. Still whatever might be the consequences to him in that respect, he did most heartily welcome Mr. Spurgeon to Newington and he prayed that his most sanguine expectations as to the success of his ministry might be more than realized.

A short time after the site for the building had been secured he had some conversation with a Baptist minister, from the West of England, respecting it. He was asked, "What do you and the other ministers in the neighborhood of the Elephant and Castle mean to do now that Mr. Spurgeon's tabernacle is to be built there?" He did not understand the question. "Well," said the gentleman, "you will find Brother Spurgeon a very potent neighbor and if you do not do something, you will find you will not hold your own." He wanted to know what they were to do and asked his friend what he had to suggest.

The reply was—"You must do as they were accustomed to do in the old coaching days. When a new opposition coach had been put upon the road, the people connected with the old Evangelist said one to another, 'If we mean to stand our ground, we must horse the old coach better.' So, said he, you and your Brethren must preach better—horse the coach better." He trusted that this would be one of the effects of Mr. Spurgeon's coming there—that they should all preach better. There was no doubt much room for improvement. And perhaps that improvement was needed more in the spiritual than in the intellectual qualifications for their work.

The Chairman had been nearly forty years a pastor of the same church and he was sure he could not have been so long a pastor, "without having become acquainted with the peculiar temptations to which they as minis-

ters were exposed.” He knew they were in danger of neglecting their own hearts, while they were professedly taking care of the souls of others. He knew that they were tempted to substitute a critical study of the Scriptures as ministers for a devout and daily perusal of them as Christians. That they were apt to perform or discharge the duties of their office in a professional sort of way, instead of feeling themselves the power of those Truths which they declare to others. That they were in danger of resting satisfied with a fervor and elevation of soul in public, instead of a calm and holy communion with God in private.

He said if they gave way to those things, then as the result of diminished spirituality there would be a barren ministry. For it was only as they were living near to God themselves that they could be the means of blessing to others—it was only by feeding on His Truth themselves that it became spirit and life to those that heard it. It was only as they were living and preaching in the spirit of prayer that the weapons of their warfare were mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Happy then would it be for them as ministers and happy for their respective churches if the coming of Mr. Spurgeon to Newington should drive them all to their knees in prayer and should lead them to cry mightily to God for the help of His Spirit and should impress upon their minds more than it had ever been—that a minister’s life was the life of his ministry.

But he demurred to one representation of his West of England friend, for this was not an *opposition* coach. It was doubtless opposed to something, for it was opposed to Satan and all his works, but it was not opposed to him nor to his Church nor to any minister in that neighborhood who preached Christ and Him crucified. What was his Brother Spurgeon’s object in the building of that large place of worship? Was it merely to gather round him a large and influential congregation? Was it merely that he might be admired and applauded? Was it that he might commend the Gospel to the tastes rather than the consciences of his hearers? Oh, no! It was that he might not cease to teach and preach in that place Jesus Christ and that a great number might believe and turn unto the Lord!

Then their hearts, their Master and their success were one. There were “diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” There were “differences of administration, but the same Lord.” There were “diversities of operations, but it was the same God which worked in all.” When, therefore, he looked round upon that beautiful structure and tried to imagine its future history, he could not but rejoice to think of what would take place within its walls. *There*, hearts would be broken by the power of God’s Spirit and then healed again by the restoring power of Christ’s precious blood. *There*, multitudes of conversions would be worked by regenerating grace and then these multitudes trained up for glory. *There* backsliders would be reclaimed, mourners comforted, believers established. *There*, there would be many triumphs of faith over temptation, of love over selfishness and of hope over the fear of death.

There, there would be workings of devout emotion—now sinking down in the dust of penitence, now soaring to Heaven in praise—sometimes earnestly wrestling in supplication and sometimes pouring forth the

strains of adoring gratitude. One hour weeping before the Savior's Cross, another exulting before the Savior's Throne. Oh, when he thought of the probable history of that magnificent place of worship, he was compelled as a Christian man to pray, "The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as you are and bless you as He has promised."

The Rev. PAUL TURQUAND said he was the nearest independent minister to Mr. Spurgeon and perhaps the first of that denomination who had spoken in that place of worship. He did not wish to bring them before him as a Christian Church and utter the language of flattery, nor did he wish to stand before the minister of that noble place of worship and swing the censer of adulation and cover him with that perfume. But he should like to utter the language of heartfelt praise. The minister and the congregation had done well, nobly, magnificently, triumphantly and he did not think he was praising them unduly when he gave expression to those words. They had taught others by the success which had crowned their efforts that they ought to hope for nobler things and dare greater things than they had up to now done.

They had proved there was a latent power in the Christian Church which only needed circumstances fully to evoke it. Their friends had shown them when the Christian Church had a good purpose before it, resolution to accomplish it and faith in God to accomplish it, that their work would be sure to be crowned with success. He was exceedingly glad that this admirable edifice had received the name of "Tabernacle." It was a word which carried them back to the structure erected in the wilderness. It told them of the brazen altar on which the substitutionary victim was laid. It brought before them the brazen laver in which the water typifying the influence of the Holy Spirit was held and as his Brother, Mr. Howison, had said, just as it was *there* so should it be *here*—that God's work and power should be greatly manifested.

His prayer for them and their minister was, "Clothe Your ministers with the garments of salvation, abundantly bless the provision of Your house, satisfy Your poor with bread, so we, Your people will give You thanks and show forth Your praise from day to day." He was very glad the Tabernacle had been placed in the midst of *London*. Some country Brother told him that it would be a good thing if it had been placed in Pekin or St. Petersburg. He himself should not have been sorry if it had been built in Paris, or better still, in Rome. What would the Pope have thought of it? If he had been consulted, he should perhaps have recommended that it should be erected on the other side of the water.

As, however, it was in Newington, he would say it was in a very good place indeed. He was glad that it was placed in the middle of *London*, for there was no city in the wide world that had so much influence as London and if they acted upon London they acted upon the whole world. He was pleased to think that the Tabernacle was in his own neighborhood, but still some prophets of evil put the question, how would it act upon their churches? It might perhaps cause some vacant seats—perhaps some members of their churches might leave. Well, there was no garden but

what wanted occasionally to be weeded. And they might depend upon it—the garden of the Lord occasionally wanted weeding.

“What is a weed?” was asked of a celebrated botanist. And he said, “a weed is a flower out of its right place,” and Mr. Spurgeon very likely would take some of those weeds and by planting them in their right places, cause them to become flowers in the garden of the Lord. He had a powerful and eloquent voice and was well able to arouse the indifferent and to make those who were careless and unconcerned thoughtful with regard to their souls. If there had been one burden upon his (Mr. Turquand’s) spirit, it was this—that in that neighborhood indifference seemed to have gathered like a cloud on the people.

He did not think they were more immoral than in other parts of London, but he did think they were more indifferent. If, however, they would come to hear Mr. Spurgeon they might be led to go and hear others and he hoped a spirit of hearing would be diffused among them. Why, in such a case, when the congregations grew larger, the preacher would grow more eloquent and possibly the Paul of York Street might become an Apollos. At any rate, when a noble boat was stranded and men were perishing, it was a high crime to quarrel about the manning of the life boat! Let us hasten to the rescue and be as willing to take the oar as to stand at the helm.

As the representative of his congregation, he could say they had always had a friendly spirit towards Mr. Spurgeon and had done something to help him. They had but one object in view—the conversion of souls and the glory of their Master. When an army stood in phalanx before the foe, they did not regret that some general great in battle was coming to their help and should they not rejoice that another had come to assist them in the tremendous struggle, whose watchword was—“to the help of the Lord against the mighty”?

A hymn was here sung, after which the CHAIRMAN introduced the Rev. George Rogers as the gentleman who had the educational superintendence of the young men who were in training for the ministry, under Mr. Spurgeon.

The Rev. GEORGE ROGERS, after speaking in terms of congratulation, said he had been told the building was an extravagant affair—a nine-days’ wonder—and that before many months had passed it would be converted into a penny theater. A man’s prophecy was often the intimation of his desire. The wish was father to the thought. Such a remark might apply, if it had been a simple speculation, erected for an untried object. But he believed it to be the result of a gradual and solid growth. A giant infancy and a giant youth required a habitation of its own when it came to manhood. He felt and all must feel, that that magnificent structure had been raised as a public homage to the doctrines which Mr. Spurgeon preached and to the earnest manner in which he had proclaimed them.

This house was built, not for him, but for the God whom he serves. Not for him, but for the Savior whom he loves. Not for him, but for the Spirit on which he relies. Not for him, but for the Church over which he presides. Not for him, but for the souls by which he is encompassed. It was a

noble memorial of the unseen realities of the faith of the Gospel. To every passer-by it would be a witness that the tabernacle of God was with man and that He would dwell among them. To every eye it would tell of the liberty and the independence which Protestant dissenters could claim in this land and of the readiness of the Christian public to support doctrines of such a nature, when earnestly preached.

Some ascribed it to the infatuation of the people. Why, Englishmen were not such fools as to give their money away without consideration and without an approval of the object. Some time ago, in a continental city, the priest of a certain cathedral got up a subscription for a golden crown to be put on the head of the Virgin. A solemn festival was held on the occasion of the coronation, at which the king and his courtiers were present. But one man retired from the scene to weep and when asked why he wept, said, "They put a golden crown upon the Virgin, but there is no crown for the infant Jesus."

But here, what they had done had been to put a crown upon the head of Christ and as they would often sing in that place, to "Crown Him Lord of All." The building gave the lie to those who said the doctrines of grace were inimical to good works. Their friend Mr. Spurgeon preached all the doctrines of grace. Election, Particular Redemption, came from his lips in trumpet tones. He saw the love of Christ to His Church and of the Church to Christ overflowing in sweet nectar in the song of Solomon. Some said those doctrines were destructive of all good works—that people who listened to such doctrines did nothing. His answer to these objectors was, let them look at this building.

Election would never have built it, except by seeking to make their calling and election sure. Particular Redemption would never have built it without the particular love which it was calculated to inspire. The doctrine of Perseverance would never have built it without the act of perseverance. Faith would never have built it without works. One of his students, who came late one morning, said his clock did not go right. He replied to him it was an antinomian clock—it was without good works. The creed of Mr. Spurgeon was not antinomian and that building was a witness to it. Nor would works without faith have built it. No tree could grow without being well watered at the roots. And if they wished this tree of theirs to grow and bear much fruit, they must bring down the rains and dew of Heaven by their prayers.

Why were they, the neighboring ministers and Churches there, but to show that the object was not to set up altar against altar, It was to publish the same doctrine. The God whom we all honor is to be honored in this place. The Savior whom we love is to be exalted in this place. The Gospel which we love is to be preached here. The atonement on which we rest our hope is to be the open fountain here for sin and for uncleanness. He, therefore, felt an interest in the building and all his Brethren in the ministry must have a common interest in it. Although one star might differ from another star in glory, it was their combined rays that guided the pilgrim on the desert and the mariner upon the wave. They had done a good work and had worked long and hard and unitedly.

What was next to be done? They had now no more to do with begging, with bricks and mortar and with bazaars. Let them turn all their energies into spiritual channels. Let the hands that had been stretched out to labor be lifted up in prayer. Let the feet that had borne them to the houses of the rich to collect gold now carry them to the habitations of the poor to give them that consolation whose price was far above rubies. Having such a start, great things were expected from them. The eyes of the Church and of the world were upon them. There was much grace needed and it was to be had with faith and prayer. He came to that meeting from the bed of an aged lady and when he told her he was coming to Mr. Spurgeon's tabernacle she said, "May it be a house in which thousands shall be turned to God." That was his wish and he was sure it was the wish of them all.

The CHAIRMAN called upon the Rev. Mr. BETTS, of Peckham, whom he introduced as the successor of the well-known Dr. Collier.

The Rev. R. W. BETTS said, like William Jay of Bath, he was not born under the platform dispensation, but, when he received the hearty letter from his Brother, Mr. Spurgeon, asking him as a neighboring minister to come and give them a few words of greeting upon taking possession of that magnificent edifice, he felt it altogether impossible for him to refrain and therefore he had come as a neighboring minister to bid them welcome and God speed. He was perfectly astonished at that beautiful and that magnificent structure. After some remarks upon the name of the building, he proceeded.

As he was coming from Westminster the other evening on an omnibus, there were two large buildings which he passed and he could not help remarking the contrast presented by the outward aspects of those buildings. The one was St. George's Cathedral, the other was the "Metropolitan Tabernacle." The one was dimly lighted, with a group of some dozen miserable people standing outside the gate and the whole thing seemed enshrined in gloom. But in the Tabernacle, the light was brilliantly streaming from the windows and the whole place seemed full of life and vigor. If he had been a stranger in London, he should not have needed anyone to tell him the difference of those buildings—the one all darkness, the other all light.

The one full of the light of Christianity, the other a hollow empty sepulcher of rites and ceremonies. In the one the living personal Christ, preached as the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, in the other His glory eclipsed by rites and ceremonies and all taken away that is vital and essential in the Gospel of our Lord and Savior. There was another thing that struck him about those two buildings—the incompleteness of the one and the beautiful perfection of the other. The spire of the one structure—where was it? It was nowhere. Although so many years had elapsed since that structure was commenced, yet the faithful did not seem to be ready with their offerings. The needful was not exactly forthcoming.

What was the case with the Tabernacle? Within a year or two the magnificent sum of £30,000 had been subscribed for its erection. He looked upon that as a token of the earnest Protestantism of our Savior—of the love of the people of England for the simple Gospel of our Lord and Savior.

He supposed that the spire of St. George's Cathedral would one day be completed, but whether completed or not, Roman Catholicism as a system must fall. It was founded in the sands of human tradition and priestly ordinances. And when the waves of our Gospel salvation and the winds of Divine Truth shall have beaten upon it a little more, it will fall and great will be the fall of it—and God speed that day!

But he did not come to tell them that. He came there simply as a neighboring minister to bid Mr. Spurgeon and his friends a hearty welcome and God speed to that locality. He did so because they came in his Master's name. In conclusion, he urged them, as there only remained £500 to completely finish the edifice, to see if they could subscribe it that night and then in future the meetings would be free.

“All hail the power of Jesus' name,” was then sung.

The Rev. NEWMAN HALL congratulated the congregation and the pastor upon the successful termination of their arduous labors and upon their being able to meet in a building free from debt—a building not raised by taxes wrung from the community at large, willing or unwilling, but a structure raised by the free-will offerings of God's people—of those who, recognizing the spiritual gifts with which God had endowed their friend and were desirous that a building should be retired capable of holding as many thousands as could be conveniently reached by his rich voice.

He need not say to them, what, no doubt, they were saying to themselves, “Be not high-minded on account of what you see.” He knew they felt it to be a matter not of pride, but of deep humble gratitude to God, who condescended to permit unworthy sinners in any way to be engaged in advancing the interests of His kingdom. He knew their earnest prayer was that the old words might be continually verified—“What house will you build for Me? I dwell in the high and holy place, but with this man will I dwell, who is of an humble and contrite spirit and who trembles at My word.”

For some time, Surrey Chapel had been the largest Christian sanctuary south of the Thames. He hoped there was not a worthy member of Surrey Chapel who did not rejoice that there was a sanctuary raised more than twice as large. And even should it lead to a decrease of the number of worshippers at Surrey Chapel, yet, if on the whole the cause of God were more advanced, it would be their duty and their pleasure to say—“Herein do I rejoice, yes and will rejoice.” Envy, jealousy, pitiful everywhere, were monstrous in connection with the work of God. What? Regret if others are doing more than we? Regret that others are more useful than we? Is it not all one business—one interest? Are not all things ours? Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas—all are ours. We are rowing the same boat against the strong tide—each of us doing our best. Shall I regret if others in the crew with stronger arms and more vigorous strokes are helping to send the boat more strongly against the tide and bringing it more quickly into port?

Our house is on fire, we are bringing water to extinguish the flames—shall I be sorry if my brother can handle a larger bucket and throw a greater volume of water upon them? We are engaged in one grand warfare and if we are each of us standing in the place our Captain has bid us oc-

cupy and fighting bravely for Him, shall we regret it if others are more advanced in the fight and with heavier blows and surer aim are making greater havoc among the enemy? It might sound anomalous, but it was most true, in great enterprises every man must do his best to excel his Brethren and when he had done his best he must rejoice that many of his Brethren excelled himself.

They might excel Surrey Chapel in the size of the building and in the number of the congregation, but they did not and could not be expected to excel it in the machinery they employed for evangelization. This was the work of his revered predecessors, Rowland Hill and James Sherman and therefore he could refer to it without any supposition of arrogance or boasting. In connection with Surrey Chapel, they had eighteen Sunday evening services conducted by members of the congregation in various courts and lanes in the district—five Evangelists were maintained to go about and instruct the poor and comfort the sorrowful.

They had twelve Sunday-Schools with four thousand five hundred children and four hundred teachers—four week-day schools, three sets of secular lectures going on week by week, in different parts, for the benefit of the working classes. They had benevolent societies distributing about £400 a year in addition to the money collected at the Sacrament for poor members and they had the Temperance Society helping all. He sincerely hoped the time was not far distant when they would exceed Surrey Chapel in all these instrumentalities and labors, when they would have thirty-six Sunday evening services, ten Evangelists, twenty-four schools with their nine thousand children and eight hundred teachers, eight week-day schools and half a dozen sets of lectures.

And he trusted that this sanctuary would soon be opened for the advocacy, if the glorious temperance principle which had rescued so many from vice and ruin, let them ever bear in mind what a Church was. It was not an institution the members of which had nothing to do but to come on Sunday and hear comfortable sermons and go home and discuss it, weigh the doctrines in it and criticize the preacher. He knew their minister would be the last to encourage them in a namby-pamby sort of religion of that kind. No, the churches were to be arsenals where the weapons of love were stored with which they were to attack the enemy round about—grand depositories of Christian enterprise. A glorious propaganda, every member a member of the society of Jesus—not leaving it to the pastor to be the only Evangelist, but every man saying to his neighbor, “Know you the Lord God.”

What an interesting sight was the opening of a new sanctuary! How one's thoughts looked forward! What important events would take place in this sanctuary in the course of years!—events that might not be chronicled in the history of this world, but in which angels would take the very deepest interest. Here the people of God, worn and jaded by the toils and cares of life, will come to be refreshed with the heavenly manna and the invigorating streams of the River of Life. Here the sorrowful and downcast will feel their burdens lightened and be able to say to an old Yorkshire

working man, a friend of mine, "Ah, it is blessed work, Cross-bearing, when its tied on with love."

Here those who come tormented with doubts and fears will see the clouds dispersed and feel their anxieties removed. Here the tempted, carried down headlong by the tide of peril, will see the hand of love stretched out and grasping it by the hand of faith will be drawn up unto the firm land of salvation. Here souls dead in trespasses and sins will hear the voice of Jesus, Come forth! There will be many a cry, "What must I do to be saved?" There will be many a prayer heard, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me!" Here the saints of God will be trained for a better sanctuary. Angels will often hover over this spot and carry up the glad tidings, "Behold, he prays."

I seem to see the ladder that Jacob beheld let down from Heaven—angels are coming up and down, blessings are descending and prayers and praise are ascending. And Jesus the Redeemer is above, seated at the right hand of Power, making all-prevalent intercession for His people. Oh, may this be the consecration that shall hallow this Tabernacle! Never may *Ichabod* be written on these walls. Never may there cease to be preached here and loved here, the pure, the simple, the all-glorious Gospel of the grace of God—the grace of God revealed to all transgressors.

The size of the building seems to me in glorious harmony with the glorious character of the redemption that we preach. It seems impossible to speak of a straitened and limited theology in a spacious building so vast as this. No, as Dr. Chalmers says, "In the commission we have received to preach the Gospel to every creature there is no frozen limitation, but a munificence of mercy boundless as space, free and open as the expanse of the firmament." I am persuaded that never will there be so great a multitude gathered together here that your minister will hesitate to proclaim a Christ for every man, declaring that all who believe shall be saved and that none shall be lost except those to whom it is said, "You will not come unto Me that you might have life!"

Christ—Christ crucified, the only foundation of the sinner's hope, the only secret of the believers' life and joy. This, my Friends, is the true palladium of the Church. "Here," as old Oliver Cromwell says in one of his letters, "here rest I would and here only." It is not our sect, however we may prefer it—Episcopacy, or Independency, or Presbyterianism, or Methodism. It is not the having a Liturgy, or the having free prayer. It is not a gorgeous ceremony and it is not a Scriptural simplicity. It is not much water or little water—it is not the adult immersion or the infant sprinkling. No, it is Jesus exhibited in the pulpit, honored in the worship, manifested in the lives of all the people that is the glory of the Church. And without that there is no glory.

It is not the splendor of architecture, nor your glorious portico and majestic columns—not this graceful roof and these airy galleries and these commodious seats so admirably arranged for worship and for hearing. It is not the towering dome, or the tapering spire emulating the skies. It is not clustering columns and intersecting arches through which a dim religious light may wander—it is not all these—though I do not despise the

beauties of architecture—which is the glory of the Church. Nor is it the splendor of the pew, though wealth and fashion and learning may be there and overflowing numbers crowd the sanctuary.

It is not the splendor of the pulpit—the eloquence that can wave its magic wand over a delighted audience till every eye glistens and every heart beats with emotion—the erudition that from varied stores of learning can cull its illustrations to adorn the theme—the novelty of thought and sentence and argument that can captivate the intellect and satisfy the reason—the fancy that can interweave with the discourse the fascinations of poetry and the beauties of style. No, it is not any one of these, nor all of these together. But it is Christ in His real and glorious divinity. Christ in His true and proper humanity. Christ in the all and sole sufficiency of His atonement. Christ in His in-dwelling Spirit and all-prevailing intercession.

This is the glory. And without this, though we had all other things, *Ich-abod* must be written on the walls of any church. This is the true ark before which alone Dagon falls prostrate. This it is that gives us a glory greater than that which the temple of Solomon ever possessed. For here we have the living manna upon which we may feed. Here we have the true mercy seat. Here we have the real sacrifices—He that takes away the sins of the world. Here we have constant miracles. What? will they tell us there are no such things as miracles possible? There are miracles—actual, glorious miracles taking place continually, verifying the Truth of our Christian system.

The eyes of the blind are still being opened. The ears of the deaf are still being unstopped. And the lame man still leaps as a hart and the dead man sepulchered in his sin comes forth to live a life of holy obedience and grateful love. Because I know this Gospel of Christ crucified is preached and will be preached and manifested here, therefore I say there is no enchantment against Israel, there is no divination against Jacob. “How goodly are your tents, O Israel and your tabernacles, O Jacob.”

Peace be within these walls and prosperity within these palaces. For my Brethren and companion’s sake, we all of us now say, “Peace be with you.”

Mr. SPURGEON proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman and to the various ministers, observing that large as the place was and preaching as he did a great redemption, yet every pillar was made of iron, firmly fixed and immovable and he hoped to preach a sure, settled covenant Gospel and not a frail and failing one. The thanks were carried by acclamation. The Doxology was sung and the meeting separated.

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THE MINISTER'S PLEA

NO. 1139

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 2, 1873,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”
Philippians 1:19.*

THE Apostle was in prison, in great jeopardy of his life. He was much troubled by many who had begun to preach Jesus Christ but did not preach Him in a proper spirit. He was often depressed by that which came daily upon him, the care of all the Churches. Yet, while he looked in the face the evils which surrounded him, he was able to see beyond them and to believe that the consequences of all his trials would be a real and lasting good. He felt sure that it was a good thing for him to be in prison, that it would be a good thing even if he had to die there. He felt that it was well that many were preaching Christ—even though some did it for the wrong reasons—for Christ was still being preached and the result could not be evil. And he felt that the troubles and trials of the Churches were good, for somehow or other they would be overruled for God's Glory.

Let us learn from him to look at the end as well as at the beginning of things. The bud of our present trouble may have no beauty in it, but fair will be the flower which will ultimately develop from it. The clouds hang heavily above our heads, but let us not, like little children, be alarmed at their blackness, but remember that they are—

***“Big with mercy and will break
With blessings on our head.”***

Whatever happens to the true servant of the Lord will turn out for the furtherance of the Gospel. Therefore will we rejoice in tribulations and accept God's will, whatever it may be. But observe that the Apostle did not expect that good would arise out of everything, apart from *prayer*. He believed that it would be through the prayer of his beloved friends at Philippi, and the supply of the Spirit, that everything which happened to him would work to promote his salvation, his spiritual advantage and his success as a minister of Christ.

He looked for the transformation of the evil into good by that sacred alchemy of Heaven which can transmute the basest metal into purest gold. But he did not expect this to happen apart from the ordained methods and ordinary institutions of Grace. He counted upon the result because he saw two great agents at work, namely, prayer and the supply of the Spirit. Whoever else may be foolish enough to look for effects apart from causes, the Apostle was not of their mind. This morning my sermon will be mainly upon my own behalf and on the behalf of my Brothers in the

ministry. We ought, sometimes, to have a sermon for ourselves, for we preach a great many for others. And we may the more boldly become pleaders on our own account, inasmuch as what we ask for is really intended for the profit of our people and for the good of Christ's cause.

My real subject will be, "Brethren, pray for us." The end to which I shall drive at will be to excite you to be much in prayer, both for myself and all ministers of Christ Jesus, so that everything that is occurring abroad and happening personally to any one of us may be turned to the best account, "Through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit." Let us speak, first of all, upon the prayer of the Church. And then concerning the supply of the Spirit. The two matters are closely connected and cannot be separated.

I. THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH. The Apostle evidently expected to be prayed for. He had the fullest confidence that his Brothers and Sisters at Philippi were praying for him. He does not ask for their prayers so much as *assumes* that he is already receiving them. And truly I wish that all pastors could always, without doubt, assume that they enjoyed the perpetual prayers of those under their charge. Some of us are very rich in this respect and this is our joy and comfort, the reward of our labor and the strength of our hands. We have abundant evidence that we live in the hearts of our people.

But I am afraid that there are many of my brother ministers who are sad because they hear not their people's loving intercessions. They are weak because they are not prayed for and unsuccessful because they have not so gained their people's affections that they are borne upon their hearts at the Mercy Seat. Unhappy is that minister who dares not take it for granted that his people are praying for him! Paul exceedingly valued the prayers of the saints. He was an Apostle, but he felt he could not do without the intercessions of the poor converts at Philippi. He valued Lydia's prayers and the prayers of her household. He valued the jailer's prayers and the prayers of his family. He desired the prayers of Euodias and Syntyche, and Clement and the rest—the most of them, probably, persons of no great social standing as the world has it—yet he valued their supplications beyond all price—and he was as grateful for their prayers as for those temporal gifts whereby the Philippians had again and again ministered to his necessities.

If the Apostle thus felt indebted to the pleadings of the brethren, how much more may we, who are so far inferior to him! He expected great results from the prayers of the Church. That is certain from the text. He expected evil to be turned to good and himself to be helped onward in the Divine life. Beloved, my heart has no deeper conviction than this, that prayer is the most efficient spiritual agency in the universe next to the Holy Spirit. He is Omnipotent and does as He wills. But next to the Omnipotence of the in-dwelling Spirit is the power of prayer. "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."

This great charter of the Church of Jesus Christ confers upon her powers which are almost, if not quite, Omnipotent. And if a Church will but pray, it shall set in motion the second most potent agent under Heaven. The Apostle knew the power of prayer and we know it, too, and hope to prove it more and more. Paul expected the people at Philippi to be praying for him all the more because his troubles were, just then, more heavy than usual. He was sure that this would excite their sympathy and so make them plead more eagerly. Truly, if ever there were times when the people of God should pray for their ministers, these are the times, for the minister of Christ is beset by legions of evils of all kinds and has to cut his way through perpetual opposition. The Church is sailing, now, like a vessel in the Arctic Sea when the frost is setting in and is turning the sea into plates of iron—and each wave into an iceberg to block up the vessel's path. These are evil days, almost beyond any age that has gone before, and therefore we may exhort the Church to pray more importunately, because her prayers are more than ever needed.

Plunging into the middle of my subject, I would say, first, that ministers may justly claim the prayers of their Brethren. Every Christian should be prayed for. We have each a claim upon the other for loving intercession. The members of the body of Christ should have a care for one another, but especially should the *minister* receive the prayers of his flock. I have, sometimes, heard his duties called arduous, but that word is not expressive enough. The works in which he is occupied lie quite out of the region of human power. The minister is sent to be God's messenger for the quickening of the dead. What can he do in it? He can do *nothing* whatever unless the Spirit of God is with him through the prayers of his Brothers and Sisters.

He is sent to bring spiritual food to the multitude, that is to say, he is to take the loaves and fishes and with them, few as they are, he is to feed the thousands! An impossible commission! He cannot perform it. Apart from Divine help, the enterprise of a Christian minister is only worthy of ridicule. Apart from the power of the Eternal Spirit, the things which the preacher has to do are as much beyond him as though he had to weld the sun and moon into one, light up new stars, or turn the Sahara into a garden of flowers. We have a work to do concerning which we often cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and if we are put to this work but have not your prayers, and in consequence have not the supply of the Spirit, we are, of all men, the most miserable.

Remember, also, that in addition to extraordinary duties, the minister is burdened by remarkable responsibilities. All Christians are responsible for their gifts and opportunities, but peculiar responsibilities cluster around the preacher of the Word. "If the watchman warns them not, they shall perish; but their blood will I require at the watchman's hands." When I look at Paul laboring night and day, weeping, praying, pleading, pouring out his soul in his ministry, I feel his example to be such that I

cannot attain to it, and yet I shall never feel satisfied with anything below that standard. The responsibilities resting upon one minister are the same as those which press upon another, in proportion to his sphere and capacity of service. Oh, unhappy men, if we are found unfaithful!—of criminals, the chief—murderers of immortal souls! If we have not preached the pure Gospel, we shall be wholesale poisoners of the bread of men, the bread which their souls require! We, if we are not true to God, are the choice servants of Satan. Judas, himself, was not more the Son of Perdition than the man who calls himself an ambassador for Christ and yet dares to be unfaithful to the souls of men! Brothers and Sisters, we claim your prayers by the solemnity of the responsibility which rests upon us!

Remember, too—what I think is not often noticed—that every true minister of Christ who is sent to men's souls, has an experience singular and by itself. A physician who has to treat the diseases incident to our flesh need not have personally suffered from the sicknesses with which he deals. But a physician of souls never handles a wound well unless he has felt a like wound himself. The true shepherds who really feed the sheep, must, themselves, have gone through the experiences of the flock. Did you ever read the life of Martin Luther? Then you must have observed the mental storms and spiritual convulsions which shook the man. He could not have been so influential with his fellow men if he had not felt within himself a sort of aggregation of all their sorrows and their struggles.

You can not bring forth God's living Word to others till first you have eaten the roll and it has been in your own stomach like gall for bitterness, and yet at times like honey for sweetness. Every successful farmer in the Lord's vineyard must, first, have been a partaker of the fruit. Yes, and of each kind of fruit, too. Therefore it often happens, that to comfort yonder desponding heart, we must have been, ourselves, despondent. To console yonder downcast, despairing spirit, we must have been despairing, too. To direct the perplexed we must, ourselves, have been in dilemma. To ride the whirlwind and come as God's messenger to the help of those who are in the storm, we must have, ourselves, been tossed with tempest and not comforted.

David could not have written his Psalms, which, as in a mirror, reflect all changes of the human mind, if he had not, himself, been the epitome of the lives of all men. And in proportion as God qualifies His minister, really and effectually, to feed the souls of His people, that minister must go through the whole of their experience. And I ask you, whether in such a case, he does not have a claim, and should not have, the prayers of the Church of God? Remember, too, that the temptations of those who serve God in the public ministry are subtle, numerous and peculiar. Do you suppose that when a man attracts thousands to listen to him. That when he conducts large agencies successfully. That when he wins souls to Christ and edifies the household of faith, that the temptation to *pride* never crosses his soul? Have you not seen men who have been set upon a

pinnacle of eminence, and their heads have been turned, fall, to their own disgrace and to the Church's sorrow?

Do you wonder at it? If you do, you know not what is in men. And do you wonder that ministers are often tempted to grow formal in service? Here, so many times in the year, must I come and speak to you, whether I am fit to do so or not. How can I always be zealous when even the weather has an effect upon nerves and brain? Are you always earnest in your hearing? Do you wonder, therefore, that sometimes the preacher does not find it easy to be earnest in his speaking? And yet he would loathe himself if he dared speak to you what he did not feel and would think himself accursed if he dared to preach with cold and chilly lips those matchless Truths of God which have been bedewed by the bleeding heart of Jesus! We, who would instruct others, must keep up our spiritual life to a high point! And yet the temptation is, from our familiarity with holy things, to become mechanical in our service and to lose the freshness and ardor of our first love.

I might give many instances of temptations which are peculiar to us, but the recital might be of no benefit to you. Suffice it to say that there are such. And if by your choice, you place any man, in the name of God, in a place where he is so peculiarly assailed by the enemy, surely you will not be so ungenerous as to leave him without the perpetual support of your extraordinary prayers! Fail not your standard-bearer, but form around him a bodyguard of valiant intercessors!

And then, mark you, if any man shall lead the way in the Church of God, he will be the main object of the assaults of the enemy. The private Christian will have some persecution, but the minister must expect far more. His words will be misrepresented and tortured into I know not what of evil. And his actions will be the theme of slander and falsehood. If he shall speak straight out and boldly, fearless of man, and only fearful lest he should grieve his God, he will stir the kennels of Hell and make all the hounds of Satan howl at his heels! And he may count himself *happy* if he shall do so, for who is he that wants to be on good terms with this evil generation which cares nothing whatever for God's Truth, but sets up, for its own church, a church which has made a league with Antichrist and a compromise between the Gospel and idolatry, so that it may drag down this nation into the deeps of Romanism?

I say, who cares to have honor from this adulterous generation? And yet, if a man once dares to provoke its wrath by his faithfulness, he needs the prayers of those who believe with him, that he may be sustained. Many are the archers who sorely shoot at us and grieve us. Pray, therefore, that our bow may abide in strength and that the arms of our hands may be made strong by the Mighty God of Jacob! One plea more and I will not further add to the points of my argument. Among the worst trials of the ministry are the discouragements of it. I do not, just now, refer to discouragements from the outside world. We expect opposition from that

quarter and are not discouraged by it. If the world hates us, we remember that it hated the Lord before it hated us.

But our saddest discouragements arise from within the Church and congregation. There are those whom we hoped to see converted who go back to their old sins and disappoint us. And others who are a little impressed, relapse into their natural indifference. There are those who are, we hope, right at heart, who nevertheless live inconsistently—for many walk so far from Jesus that they pierce us with sorrow. And then there are others who were great things and united themselves with the Church of God, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ! They shame us! They make the world ask, "Is this your religion?" They open the mouths of atheists and infidels and ungodly men of all sorts against the precious Christ, Himself, so that He is wounded in the house of His friends and put to an open shame by those who ought rather to have laid down their lives to promote His cause and Kingdom.

Oh, if you are called of the Lord to shepherd His flock. And if you bear in your bosom the Church of God and the cause of Christ, and live for it with all your heart and soul, you shall not live many days without many heartbreaking trials! And you will greatly need the supply of the Spirit in answer to the prayers of the people of God! Now, having stated the case and pleaded not for myself, only, but for all my Brothers, let me say, next, that the prayers which are needed are the prayers of the *entire* Church. From some other labor some of you might be exempted, but from this service not a single one can be excused. "Your prayer," says the Apostle, and he means the prayer of *all* the faithful. My Brothers and Sisters, my fellow worker, you of the Sunday school, you of the Evangelistic Society, you who visit from house to house—I need your prayers, my Brethren!

You can sympathize with us. You know something of this way. You can, therefore, bear us up with hands that have been exercised in the same warfare. We need your prayers, also, who are not workers in any public capacity—you who feel you have not the ability or the opportunity. If there are such among us, you ought to pray doubly for those who are working, and so, in some measure, make amends for your own lack of energy. If you feel laid aside from actual service yourselves, so that you have to abide by the staff, let your prayers go up doubly for those who go down to the battle. Hold up their hands, I pray you, if you can do nothing else! We ask the prayers of all who profit by our ministry. If you feed upon the Word, pray to God that we may feed others, also. If your hearts are ever made glad within you by the Word of God we speak, do plead for us that we may have the power of God resting upon us yet further.

If you do not profit we have an equal claim upon you. We beseech you pray that you *may* profit. If we are not suited to teach you, pray the Lord to *make us* suitable. If you discover some lack or deficiency which mars our ministry, do not unkindly go and speak of it everywhere, but tell the

Lord about it. You will be doing more good and acting more after the mind of Christ. And—who knows?—the very ministry which is flat and unprofitable to you, now, may yet become a great blessing to you when you have prayed concerning it.

Some of you are our spiritual children, begotten unto God by us. Surely we don't need to take *you* by the hand and say, "Brothers and Sisters, children, pray for us"? There is between us and you a tie which neither life nor death can break. We shall recognize it in eternity. When fathers, mothers, husbands and wives will find all human relationship forgotten, the relationship which exists between the spiritual father and his children shall last on! Therefore, as you feel the tie, yield to its gentle persuasions and let your pastor have a very warm place in your prayers. You aged men and matronly women, you of experience, you of power with God, you who are mighty in your private wrestling—we need your prayers! And you young Christians with your new-born zeal—in the freshness and vigor of your spiritual life—we need your entreaties, too.

My little children, you who have been added to the Church while yet you are boys and girls, there are no intercessions more precious than yours! Do not forget your minister when you say, "Our Father which are in Heaven." God will hear the petitions of little children who love Him. As for those who are not, and could not be here this morning, my voice will reach them through the press, and therefore let me say to them—You cannot come up to the House of God, but are appointed to lie tossing upon the bed of pain. And yet, from you, also, we ask intercessory prayer. You are, especially, set to do this service for the Church. If you cannot appear in the public assembly, you may in secret wrestling bring down power upon that assembly. You keep the watches of the weary night when pain forbids your eyelids to find rest—let each weary hour be cheered for yourselves and enriched for us—by prayers for the Church of God and prayers for us.

Perhaps to this end some among the Saints are always sick, that pleaders for the hours of night may not be lacking. The sleepless sufferers change guard before the Mercy Seat, lest, perhaps, there should be an hour in the night unhallowed by a prayer in which the world should pass away beneath the unrestrained wrath of God. Prayer must be kept up like the quenchless fire on Israel's altar. We must belt and girdle the world with prayer—and the sick ones are they to whom much of the sacred work is allotted. I believe in the efficacy of united prayer, but each one must pray.

There would be no clouds unless the drop of dew from each blade of grass were exhaled by the sun. Each drop ascending in vapor falls, again, in the blessed shower which removes the drought. So the Grace that trembles upon each one of you, my Brothers and Sisters, must exhale in prayer, and a blessing will come down upon the Church of God. Let me suggest for a moment, in passing on, that the prayers of God's people

ought to go up for the minister in many forms. I think it should be *daily* work. I was pleased to hear one of our Brethren say, the other day, what I am sure was true, and true of a great many beside himself, that he never did pray for himself without praying for me. That he never bowed his knee, morning or night, without remembering the work carried on in this place. It ought to be so with us all.

Besides that, if we expect a blessing on our families through the ministry, we should, as a family, ask God to bless that ministry. When we come around the family altar, among the petitions never to be forgotten should be this—that he who is set to feed our souls may, himself, receive the bread of Heaven. Then there are our Prayer Meetings, our public gatherings for intercession. Ah, Beloved! I may well glory in our Prayer Meetings, for I know not where the like have been found continuously, year after year!

Still, though I may glory, I am not sure that all of you could. For as I look around upon you today I cannot help remarking that I see some faces on the Sunday which I have never had the pleasure of seeing on the Monday evening. Or, if ever I did, I remember it very well, because it has not been so common an occurrence that it is likely to slip out of my mind. I know there are some who could not come and would be neglecting family duties if they did. Their duty and their calling keep them from it. At the same time, there are others to whom a gentle hint may be serviceable. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together for earnest prayer, as the manner of some is. Beside the Prayer Meetings, there ought to be meetings very frequently of Christian friends who gather by appointment for this very purpose.

When they come together, professors often waste time in idle talk which would be used to great profit if they spent it in prayer. When two Christians meet together for united prayer, among their other supplications should be one that the Lord would bless throughout all England the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus. Oh, dear Friends, we need, more than anything else, to have the Gospel preached with power! God forbid we should criticize severely those who may be doing their best, but how much preaching is utterly powerless? We need a telling ministry. We need a ministry which cuts like a two-edged sword and goes through into the very heart! O God, send us thousands of men armed with Your Spirit's own sword, endowed with the muscle of Divine Grace and gifted with manliness to use the celestial weapon! Pray for such, often, not at set times only, but at all convenient seasons.

And here, let me remark, should there not be special prayer by each Christian for his own minister before every service, before going up to the House of the Lord, and when he arrives there? Many people have a habit of looking into their hats to see the name of the maker whenever they get inside a place of worship. They are, themselves, the best judges whether it is not a piece of Pharisaic formalism or fashionable hypocrisy. There is a

formalism about it and we are the very last to care about outward forms. Still, what can be a better beginning for a service than secret prayer? Then, during the service, how much of prayer there should be for the preacher—"Lord, help him to speak Your Truth outright. Put Your power into it to send it home to the hearts and consciences of the hearers." It is well to pick out someone in the congregation, and pray, "Lord, bless the Word to him."

You would often find God hearing you in that respect. Then, after the whole service is done, what can be better than to rake in with earnest prayer the good seed which has already been sown? I must not keep you longer on this point. Suffice it to add that the prayers of the Church of God must always be true prayers to be good for anything, and if they are true prayers they will be attended with consistent lives. The man who says, "I pray for the Church and pray for the minister," and then is a thief in his business, or is guilty of some secret vice—why, he is pulling down, not building up! Can unclean hands ever be acceptable in prayer? Consistent living there must be, or prayer will be a vanity of vanities!

And there must be consistent effort, too. If I want God to bless the Church, I must try to bless it myself, by the gift of my substance, by the consecration of my talents, by the laying out of my time for the glory of God. To pray one way and to act another is to be a hypocrite! When the wheel sticks in the mire—to pray to God to help the cart out of it—and never to put my shoulder to the wheel is to mock the Most High. We must *act* as well as pray. And we must *believe* as well as act. We must have faith in the Gospel and faith in prayer! And if, beloved Friends, such prayer as this shall go up from this Church, we shall continue to enjoy the prosperity we have had for many years! And we may hopefully look for an increase of it, though sometimes, I must confess, I can hardly look for an increase, for God has blessed us so much that we have rejoiced and wondered as we have seen that His hand is still stretched out!

II. The Apostle has put in connection with your prayer THE SUPPLY OF THE SPIRIT. "The Spirit of Jesus Christ," does he not say? Yes, because the Spirit we need is the Spirit that rested upon Jesus Christ, the Spirit which gave power to *His* ministry, for He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." That same Spirit we need, even the Spirit who represents Christ on earth, for Jesus is gone, but the Comforter abides with us as His vicegerent. He moves at Jesus Christ's will and operates upon human thought and heart and will, subduing all to God.

Now the Holy Spirit is essential to every true minister. We must have Him. A preacher may save souls without being learned—it is a pity but what he should possess a good education—but he can be useful without it. The preacher can save souls without eloquence—it is well if he is fluent—but even stammering lips may convey the message of life from God. But the man of God is nothing without the Spirit of God. It is the *sine qua non* of a ministry from God that it should be in the power of the Spirit.

The preacher must be, himself, first taught of the Spirit, else how shall he speak? And being taught, he must be led as to which shall be the proper theme for each occasion, for much of the power of true ministry lies in the fitness of the Word to the case of the hearer, so that the hearer perceives that his experience is known and is met at the time by the ministry.

The Spirit of God must teach us the Truth and then guide us as to which Truth of God is to be spoken. Then the Holy Spirit must inflame the minister. The man who never takes fire—how is he sent of God? He who never glows and burns—what knows he of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is also the Baptism of fire? Pray, therefore, for the supply of the Spirit! Without the Spirit every ministry lacks that subtle—I was about to say indescribable—something which is known by the name of *unction*. Nobody here can tell what unction is. He knows that the Spirit of God gives it and he knows when it is in a discourse and when it is absent. Unction is, in fact, the power of God.

There is an old Romish story, that a certain famous preacher was to preach on a certain occasion, but he missed his way and was too late. And the devil, knowing of it, put on the appearance of the minister, took his place and preached a sermon to the people, who supposed they were listening to the famous Divine whom they had expected. The devil preached upon Hell and was very much at home, so that he delivered a marvelous sermon in which he exhorted persons to escape from the wrath to come. As he was finishing his sermon, in came the preacher, himself, and the devil was obliged to resume his own form. The holy man then questioned him, "How dare you preach as you have done, learning to escape from Hell." "Oh," said the Devil, "it will do no hurt to *my* kingdom, for I have no unction."

The story is grotesque, but the truth is in it. The same sermon may be preached and the same words uttered, but without unction there is nothing in it. The unction of the Holy One is true pourer. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, we need your prayers that we may obtain the supply of the Spirit upon our ministry—otherwise it will lack unction—which will amount to lacking heart and soul! It will be a dead ministry and how can a dead ministry be of any service to the people of God? The supply of the Spirit is essential to the edification of the Church of God!

What if the ministry should be the best that ever was produced, its outward form and fashion orthodox and ardent? What if it should be continued with persevering consistency? Yet the Church will never be built up without the Holy Spirit. To build up a Church, *life* is needed—we are living stones of a living temple. Where is the life to come from but from the Breath of God? To build up a Church, there is needed light, but where is the light to come from but from Him who said, "Let there be light"? To build up a Church, there is needed love, for this is the cement which

binds the living stones together. But from where comes true genuine love, but from the Spirit who sheds abroad in the heart the love of Jesus?

To build up a Church, we must have holiness, for an unholy Church would be a den for the devil, and not a temple for God! But from where comes holiness but from the Holy Spirit? There must be zeal, too, for God will not dwell in a cold house. The Church of God must be warm with love, but from where comes the fire except it is the fire from Heaven? We must have the Holy Spirit, for to build up a Church there must be joy—a joyous temple God's temple must always be! But only the Spirit of God produces the fruit of heavenly joy. There must be spirituality in the members, but we cannot have a spiritual people if the Spirit of God, Himself, is not there. For the edification of the saints, then, we must have, beyond everything else, the supply of the Spirit.

And, O Brothers and Sisters, we must have it for the salvation of sinners! Here comes the tug of war, indeed! Who can enlighten the blind eye? Who can bring spiritual hearing into the deaf ear? Yes, who can quicken the dead soul but the eternal, enlightening, quickening Spirit? There it lies before us, a vast valley full of bones. Our mission is to raise them from the dead. Can we do it? No, by no means, of ourselves. Yet we are to say to those dry bones, "Live." Brothers and Sisters, our mission is absurd—it is worthy of laughter unless we have your prayers and the supply of the Spirit with us—and if we have those, the bones shall come to their bones, the skeleton shall be fashioned, the flesh shall clothe the bony fabric, the Holy Spirit shall blow upon the inanimate body and life shall be there and an army shall throng the charnel house!

Let us but invoke the Spirit and go forth to minister in His might and we shall do marvels! And the nation and the world, itself, shall feel the power of the Gospel of Jesus! But we must have the Spirit. And, oh, we must have the Spirit of God just now, I am sure! It is essential to the progress of the Gospel and to the victory of the Truth of God. At this moment the Gospel is on trial. It has had its trials before and has come out of them like gold from the furnace, purified by the heat. But just now they are telling us on all hands that the old-fashioned Gospel is effete. I have found myself dubbed in the public prints by the honorable title of *Ultimus Puritanorum*—"the Last of the Puritans"—the last preacher of a race that is nearly extinct, the mere echo of a departed creed, the last survivor of a race of antiquated preachers!

Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, it is not so! They come, they come, a mighty band, to bear on the Truth of God to future ages and even yet there are among us men who hold the Truth of God and preach it! Yet everywhere we encounter the sneer of the servants of error. They dress themselves out in many colors—in blue and scarlet, and fine linen, and I know not what—and they tell us that the day of our stern, gaunt religion has passed. Then your wise men, the philosophers, the men of thought, the men of culture—they sneer at us. Such preaching of the Gospel as

ours might have been fine 200 years ago—might even, perhaps, have sufficed for Whitefield and Wesley and the Methodists who followed at their heels. But *now*? In this enlightened 19th century? We do not need any more of it!

From this insult we make our appeal to the God of Heaven. O God, the God of Israel, avenge Your own Truth! O You whose mighty hammer can yet break rocks in pieces, You have not changed your hammer. Strike and make the mountains fall before You. O You whose sacred fire burns in Your Word, forever the same flame, You have forbidden us to offer strange fire upon Your altar. And we have not done so, but kept, by Your Grace, the faith and held to Your Truth. Acknowledge it, we beseech You, and prove that it is the Gospel of the blessed God! Let the sacrifice that is now before You in the midst of this great nation be consumed with the flame from Heaven and let the God that answers by fire be God!

The fact is, the Church only lives in the esteem of men by what she does. If she does not convert sinners she has not a reason for existing. The proof of the Gospel is not to be found in theories and problems, or propositions in catechisms or creeds, or even in Scriptural texts alone! The proof of the Gospel lies in what it *does*—and if it does not raise the depressed, if it does not save the sinful, if it does not send light into the dark places of the earth—in fact, if it does not make sinners into saints and transform the nature of men—then let it be thrown on a dunghill, or cast away, for if the salt has lost its savor it is therefore good for nothing! But we cry to God that the savor of our salt may continue in all its pungency, penetrating and preserving power. I ask you to pray that it may be so—that God will bring to the front the old Gospel, the doctrines of Whitefield and Calvin and Paul, the old Gospel of Christ, and once and for all by a supernatural working of the Holy Spirit give an answer to those who, in this age of blasphemy and of rebuke, are reviling the Gospel of the living God, and would have us cast it behind our backs!

By the name of Him who never changes, our Gospel shall never change! By the name of Christ who is gone to Heaven we have nothing to preach but Christ and Him Crucified! By the name of the Eternal Spirit who dwells in us, we know nothing but what the Holy Spirit has revealed. To your knees, my Brothers and Sisters! To your knees and win for us the victory! Feeble as we are and unable as we are to cope with our antagonists in any other field but this, we will vanquish them by the power of prayer through the supply of the Spirit of God! With you I leave it, my own beloved Friends. Through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit all will be well. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 2.

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THE GOOD MAN'S LIFE AND DEATH

NO. 146

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 16, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
Philippians 1:21.***

How ominously these words follow each other in the text—“live,” “die.” There is but a comma between them and surely as it is in the words so is it in reality. How brief the distance between life and death! In fact there is none. Life is but death's vestibule and our pilgrimage on earth is but a journey to the grave. The pulse that preserves our being beats our death march and the blood which circulates our life is floating it onward to the deeps of death.

Today we see our friends in health, tomorrow we hear of their decease. We clasped the hand of the strong man but yesterday and today we close his eyes. We rode in the chariot of comfort but an hour ago and in a few more hours the last black chariot must convey us to the home of all living. Oh, how closely allied is death to life! The lamb that sports in the field must soon feel the knife. The ox that lows in the pasture is fattening for the slaughter. Trees do but grow that they may be felled.

Yes and greater things than these feel death. Empires rise and flourish—they flourish but to decay—they rise to fall. How often do we take up the volume of history and read of the rise and fall of empires. We hear of the coronation and the death of kings. Death is the black servant who rides behind the chariot of life. See life and death is close behind it. Death reaches far throughout this world and has stamped all terrestrial things with the broad arrow of the grave. Stars may even die. It is said that conflagrations have been seen far off in the distant ether and astronomers have marked the funerals of worlds, the decay of those mighty orbs that we had imagined set forever in sockets of silver to glisten as the lamps of eternity.

But blessed be God, there is one place where death is not life's Brother, where life reigns alone. “To live,” is not the first syllable which is to be followed by the next, “to die.” There is a land where death knells are never tolled, where winding-sheets are never woven, where graves are never dug. Blessed land beyond the skies! To reach it we must die. But if after death we obtain a glorious immortality, our text is indeed true—“To die is gain.”

If you would get a fair estimate of the happiness of any man you must judge him in these two closely connected things, his life and his death. The heathen Solon said, "Call no man happy until he is dead. For you know not what changes may pass upon him in life." We add to that—Call no man happy until he is dead. Because the life that is to come, if that is miserable, shall far outweigh the highest life of happiness that has been enjoyed on earth. To estimate a man's condition we must take it in all its length. We must not measure that one thread which reaches from the cradle to the coffin.

We must go further. We must go from the coffin to the resurrection and from the resurrection on throughout eternity. To know whether acts are profitable, I must not estimate their effects on me for the hour in which I live but for the eternity in which I am to exist. I must not weigh matters in the scales of time. I must not calculate by the hours, minutes and seconds of the clock but I must count and value things by the ages of eternity.

Come, then, Beloved. We have before us the picture of a man—the two sides of whose existence will both of them bear inspection. We have his life, we have his death—we have it said of his life, "*to live is Christ.*" Of his death, "*to die is gain.*" And if the same shall be said of any of you, oh, you may rejoice! You are among that thrice happy number whom the Lord has loved and whom He delights to honor.

We shall now divide our text very simply into these two points, *the good man's life and the good man's death.*

I. As to HIS LIFE, we have that briefly described thus—"For me to live is Christ." The Believer did not always live to Christ. When he was first born into this world he was a slave of sin and an heir of wrath, even as others. Though he may have afterwards become the greatest of saints, yet until Divine Grace has entered his heart he is "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." He only begins to live to Christ when God the Holy Spirit convicts him of his sin and of his desperate evil nature—when by grace he is brought to see the dying Savior making a propitiation for his guilt.

From that moment when, by faith, he sees the slaughtered victim of Calvary and casts his whole life on Him, to be saved, to be redeemed, to be preserved and to be blessed by the virtue of His atonement and the greatness of His grace—from that moment the man begins to live to Christ.

And now shall we tell you as briefly as we can what living to Christ means. It means, first, that *the life of a Christian derives its parentage from Christ.* "For me to live is Christ." The righteous man has two lives. He has one which he inherited from his parents. He looks back to an ances-

tral race of which he is the branch and he traces his life to the parent stock. But he has a second life, a life *spiritual*, a life which is as much above mere mental life as mental life is above the life of the animal or the plant. And for the source of this spiritual life he looks not to father or mother, nor to priest nor man, nor to himself but he looks to Christ.

He says, "O Lord Jesus, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, You are my spiritual parent. Unless Your Spirit had breathed into my nostrils the breath of a new, holy and spiritual life, I had been to this day 'dead in trespasses and sins.' I owe my third principle, my spirit, to the implantation of Your grace. I had a body and a soul by my parents. I have received the third principle, the spirit from You and in You I live and move and have my being. My new, my best, my highest my most heavenly life, is wholly derived from You. To You I ascribe it. My life is hid with Christ in God. It is no longer I that lives but Christ that lives in me."

And so the Christian says, "For me to live is Christ," because for me to live is to live a life whose parentage is not of human origin but of Divine, even of Christ Himself. Again he intended to say that *Christ was the sustenance of his life*, the food his newborn spirit is fed upon. The Believer has three parts to be sustained. The body, which must have its proper nutriment. The soul, which must have knowledge and thought to supply it. And the spirit which must feed on Christ. Without bread I become attenuated to a skeleton and at last I die. Without thought my mind becomes dwarfed and dwindles itself until I become the idiot, with a soul that has just life but little more.

And without Christ my newborn spirit must become a vague shadowy emptiness. It cannot live unless it feeds on that heavenly manna which came down from Heaven. Now the Christian can say, "The life that I live is Christ," because Christ is the food on which he feeds and the sustenance of his newborn spirit. The Apostle also meant, that *the fashion of his life was Christ*. I suppose that every man living has a model by which he endeavors to shape his life. When we start in life, we generally select some person, or persons, whose combined virtues shall be to us the mirror of perfection.

"Now," says Paul, "if you ask me after what fashion I mold my life and what is the model by which I would sculpture my being, I tell you it is Christ. I have no fashion, no form, no model by which to shape my being except the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the true Christian, if he is an upright man, can say the same. Understand, however what I mean by the word "*upright*." An upright man means a straight-up man—a man that does not cringe and bow and fawn to other men's feet. A man that does not lean for help on other men but just stands with his head Heavenward, in all the

dignity of his independence, leaning nowhere except on the arm of the Omnipotent.

Such a man will take Christ alone to be his model and pattern. This is the very age of conventionalities. People dare not now do a thing unless everybody else does the same. You do not often say, "Is a thing right?" The most you say is, "Does So-and-So do it?" You have some great personage or other in your family connection who is looked upon as being the very standard of all propriety. And if he does it, then you think you may safely do it. And oh, what an outcry there is against a man who dares to be singular, who just believes that some of your conventionalities are trammels and chains and kicks them all to pieces and says, "I am free!"

The world is at him in a minute. All the bad dogs of malice and slander are at him because he says, "I will not follow your model! I will vindicate the honor of my Master and not take your great masters to be forever my pattern." Oh, I would to God that every statesman, that every minister, that every Christian were free to hold that his only form and his only fashion for imitation must be the Character of Christ. I would that we could scorn all superstitious attachments to the ancient errors of our ancestors. And while some would be forever looking upon age and upon hoary antiquity with veneration, I would we had the courage to look upon a thing, not according to its age, but according to its rightness. And so weigh everything, not by its novelty, or by its antiquity, but by its conformity to Christ Jesus and His holy Gospel.

Then we would reject that which does not conform to Jesus, though it be hoary with years. Then we would believe only that which is—even though it be but the creature of the day and saying with earnestness, "For me to live is not to imitate this man or the other but 'for me to live is Christ.'"

I think, however, that the very center of Paul's idea would be this—*The end of his life is Christ*. You think you see Paul land upon the shores of Philippi. There, by the riverside were ships gathered and many merchant men. There you would see the merchant busy with his ledger and overlooking his cargo as he paused and put his hand upon his brow and said as he griped his moneybag, "For me to live is gold." And there you see his humbler clerk, employed in some plainer work, toiling for his master and he, perspiring with work mutters between his teeth, "For me to live is to gain a bare subsistence."

And there stands for a moment to listen to him, one with a studious face and a sallow countenance and with a roll full of the mysterious characters of wisdom. "Young man," he says, "for me to live is learning." "Aha, aha," says another, who stands by, clothed in mail, with a helmet on his head, "I scorn your modes of life—for me to live is glory." But there walks

one, a humble tent maker, called Paul. You see the lineaments of the Jew upon his face and he steps into the middle of them all and says, "For me to live is Christ."

Oh, how they smile with contempt upon him and how they scoff at him for having chosen such an object! "For me to live is Christ." And what did he mean? The learned man stopped and said, "Christ? Who is He? Is He that foolish, mad Fellow, of whom I have heard, who was executed upon Calvary for sedition?" The meek reply is, "It is He who died, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." "What?" says the Roman soldier, "And do you live for a man who died a slave's death? What glory will you get by fighting His battles?" "What profit is there in your preaching?" chimes in the trader. Ah and even the merchant's clerk thought Paul mad! For he said, "How can he feed his family? How will he supply his wants if all he lives for is to honor Christ?"

Yes, but Paul knew what he meant. He was the wisest man of them all. He knew which way was right for Heaven and which would end the best. But, right or wrong, his soul was wholly possessed with the idea—"For me to live is Christ."

Brothers and Sisters, can you say, as professing Christians, that you live up to the idea of the Apostle Paul? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? I will tell you my opinion of many of you. You join our Churches. You are highly respectable men. You are accepted among us as true and real Christians. But in all honesty and truth I do not believe that for you to live is Christ. I see many of you whose whole thoughts are engrossed with the things of earth. The mere getting of money. The amassing of wealth seems to be your only object. I do not deny that you are liberal, I will not dare to say that you are not generous and that your checkbook does not often bear the mark of some subscription for holy purposes.

But I dare to say, after all, that you cannot in honesty say that you live wholly for Christ. You know that when you go to your shop or your warehouse you do not think, in doing business, that you are doing it for Christ. You dare not be such a hypocrite as to say so. You must say that you do it for self-aggrandizement and for family advantage. "Well!" says one, "and is that a wicked reason?" By no means. Not for you, if you are wicked enough to ask that question—but for the Christian it is. He professes to live for Christ.

Then how IS it that anyone dares to profess to live for his Master and yet does not do so but lives for mere worldly gain? Let me speak to many a lady here. You would be shocked if I should deny your Christianity. You move in the highest circles of life and you would be astonished if I should presume to touch your piety after your many generous donations to religious societies. But I dare to do so. You—what do you do? You rise late

enough in the day—you have your carriage out and call to see your friends, or leave your card by way of proxy. You go to a party in the evening. You talk nonsense and come home and go to bed.

And that is your life from the beginning of the year to the end. It is just one regular round. There comes the dinner or the ball and the conclusion of the day. And then, Amen, so be it, forever. Now you don't live for Christ. I know you go to Church regularly, or attend at some Dissenting Church. All well and good. I shall not deny your piety, according to the common usage of the term. But I deny that you have got to anything like the place where Paul stood when he said, "For me to live is Christ." I, too, my Brethren, know that with much earnest seeking I have failed to realize the fullness of entire devotion to the Lord Jesus.

Every minister must sometimes chasten himself and say, "Am I not sometimes a little warped in my utterances? Did I not in some sermon aim to bring out a grand thought instead of stating a home truth? Have I not kept back some warning that I ought to have uttered because I feared the face of man?" Have we not all good need to chasten ourselves because we must say that we have not lived for Christ as we should have done? And yet there are, I trust, a noble few, the elite of God's elect—a few chosen men and women on whose heads there is the crown and diadem of dedication.

They can truly say, "I have nothing in this world I cannot give to Christ—I have said it and mean what I have said—

***'Take my soul and body's powers,
All my goods and all my hours,
All I have and all I am.'***

Take me, Lord and take me forever." These are the men who make our missionaries. These are the women to make our nurses for the sick. These are they that would dare death for Christ. These are they who would give of their substance to His cause. These are they who would spend and be spent, who would bear ignominy and scorn and shame if they could but advance their Master's interest.

How many of this sort have I here this morning? Might I not count many of these benches before I could find a score? Many there are who do in a measure carry out this principle. But who among us is there (I am sure he stands not here in this pulpit) that can dare to say he has lived wholly for Christ, as the Apostle did? And yet, till there are more Pauls and more men dedicated to Christ, we shall never see God's kingdom come, nor shall we hope to see His will done on earth, even as it is in Heaven.

Now, this is the true life of a Christian, its source, its sustenance, its fashion and its end all gathered up in two words—Christ Jesus. And I

must add, its happiness and its glory is all in Christ. But I must detain you no longer.

II. I must go to the second point, THE DEATH OF THE CHRISTIAN. Alas, alas, that the good should die! Alas, that the righteous should fall! Death, why do you not hew the deadly upas tree? Why do you not mow the hemlock? Why do you touch the tree beneath whose spreading branches weariness has rest? Why do you touch the flower whose perfume has made glad the earth? Death, why do you snatch away the excellent of the earth, in whom is all our delight? If you would use your axe, use it upon the cumber grounds, the trees that draw nourishment but afford no fruit. You might be thanked then. But why will you cut down the cedars, why will you fell the goodly trees of Lebanon?

O Death, why do you not spare the Church? Why must the pulpit be hung in black. Why must the missionary station be filled with weeping? Why must the pious family lose its priest and the house its head? O Death, what are you doing? Touch not earth's holy things! Your hands are not fit to pollute the Israel of God. Why do you put your hand upon the hearts of the elect? Oh stop! Stop! Spare the righteous, Death, and take the evil! But no, it must not be. Death comes and smites the best of us all. The most generous, the most prayerful, the most holy, the most devoted must die. Weep, weep, weep, O Church, for you have lost your martyrs. Weep, O Church, for you have lost your confessors. Your holy men are fallen. Howl, fir tree, for the cedar has fallen! The godly fail and the righteous are cut off.

But stay awhile. I hear another voice. Say you unto the daughter of Judah, spare your weeping. Tell the Lord's flock, cease, cease your sorrow. Your martyrs are dead but they are glorified. Your ministers are gone but they have ascended up to your Father and to their Father. Your Brethren are buried in the grave but the archangel's trumpet shall awake them and their spirits are ever now with God. Hear the words of the text, by way of consolation, "To die is gain." Not such gain as you wish for, you son of the miser. Not such gain as you are hunting for, you man of covetousness and self-love. A higher and a better gain is that which death brings to a Christian.

My dear Friends, when I discoursed upon the former part of the verse, it was all plain. No proof was needed. You believed it, for you saw it clearly. "To live is Christ," has no paradox in it. But "To die is gain," is one of the Gospel riddles which only the Christian can truly understand. To die is not gain if I look upon the merely visible. To die is loss, it is not gain. Has not the dead man lost his wealth? Though he had piles of riches, can he take anything with him? Has it not been said, "Naked came

I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return there"? "Dust you are and unto dust shall you return."

And which of all your goods can you take with you? The man had a fair estate and a goodly mansion. He has lost that. He can no more tread those painted halls, nor walk those verdant lawns. He had abundance of fame and honor. He has lost that, so far as his own sense of it is concerned, though still the harp string trembles at his name. He has lost his wealth and though he may be buried in a costly tomb, yet is he as poor as the beggar who looked upon him in the street in envy. That is not gain, it is loss!

And he has lost his friends—he has left behind him a sorrowing wife and children, fatherless, without his guardian care. He has lost the friend of his bosom, the companion of his youth. Friends are there to weep over him but they cannot cross the river with him. They drop a few tears into his tomb but with him they must not and cannot go. And has he not lost all his learning, though he has toiled ever so much to fill his brain with knowledge? What is he now above the servile slave, though he has acquired all knowledge of earthly things? Is it not said—

***"Their memory and their love are lost
Alike unknowing and unknown"?***

Surely death is loss. Has he not lost the songs of the sanctuary and the prayers of the righteous? Has he not lost the solemn assembly and the great gathering of the people? No more shall the promise enchant his ear, no more shall the glad tidings of the Gospel wake his soul to melody. He sleeps in the dust, the Sabbath-bell tolls not for him. The sacramental emblems are spread upon the table, but not for him. He has gone to his grave. He knows not that which shall be after him. There is neither work nor device in the grave, where we all are hastening. Surely death is loss.

When I look upon you, you clay-cold corpse and see you just preparing to be the palace of corruption and the carnival for worms, I cannot think that you have gained! When I see that your eye has lost light and your lip has lost its speech and your ears have lost hearing and your feet have lost motion and your heart has lost its joy. When I see they that look out of the windows dressed in black and no sounds of the harp wake up your joys, O clay-cold corpse, than have you lost, lost immeasurably. And yet my text tells me it is not so. It says, "To die is gain."

It looks as if it could not be thus and certainly it is not, so far as I can see. But put to your eye the telescope of *faith*—take that magic glass which pierces through the veil that parts us from the unseen. Anoint your eyes with eye salve and make them so bright that they can pierce the ether and see the unknown worlds. Come, bathe yourself in this sea of light and live in holy Revelation and belief. Then look and oh, how

changed the scene! Here is the corpse but there the spirit. Here is the clay but there the soul, here is the carcass but there the seraph. He is supremely blessed—his death IS gain!

Come now, what did he lose? I will show that in everything he lost, he gained far more. He lost his friends, did he? His wife and his children, his Brethren in Church fellowship are all left to weep his loss. Yes, he lost them but, my Brethren what did he gain? He gained more friends than ever he lost. He had lost many in his lifetime but he meets them all again. Parents, brothers and sisters who had died in youth or age and passed the stream before him—all salute him on the further brink. There the mother meets her infant. There the father meets his children. There the venerable Patriarch greets his family to the third and fourth generation!

There brother clasps brother to his arms and husband meets with wife, no more to be married or given in marriage but to live together like the angels of God. Some of us have more friends in Heaven than in earth. We have more dear relations in Glory than we have here. It is not so with all of us but with some it is so—more have crossed the stream than are left behind. But if it is not so, yet what friends we have to meet us there! Oh, I reckon on the day of death it were much gain if it were for the mere hope of seeing the bright spirits that are now before the Throne. To clasp the hand of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. To look into the face of Paul the Apostle and grasp the hand of Peter.

To sit in flowery fields with Moses and David. To bask in the sunlight of bliss with John and Magdalene. Oh how blessed! The company of poor imperfect saints on earth is good. But how much better the society of the redeemed! Death is no loss to us by way of friends. We leave a few, a little band below and say to them, "Fear not little flock," and we ascend and meet the armies of the living God, the hosts of His redeemed. "To die is gain." Poor corpse! You have lost your friends on earth—but no, bright spirit—you have received a hundred-fold in Heaven.

What else did we say he lost? We said he lost all his estate, all his substance and his wealth. Yes but he has gained infinitely more. Though he were rich as Crisus, yet he might well give up his wealth for that which he has attained. Were his fingers bright with pearls and have they lost their brilliance? The pearly gates of Heaven glisten brighter by far. Had he gold in his storehouse? Mark you, the streets of Heaven are paved with gold and he is richer by far. The mansions of the redeemed are far brighter dwelling places than the mansions of the richest here below.

But it is not so with many of you. You are not rich, you are poor. What can you lose by death? You are poor here, you shall be rich there. Here you suffer toil, there you shall rest forever! Here you earn your bread by the sweat of your brow but there, no toil. Here wearily you cast yourself

upon your bed at the week's end and sigh for the Sabbath—but there Sabbaths have no end. Here you go to the house of God but you are distracted with worldly cares and thoughts of suffering. But there, there are no groans to mingle with the songs that warble from immortal tongues. Death will be gain to you in point of riches and substance.

And as for the *means of grace* which we leave behind—what are they when compared with what we shall have hereafter? Oh, might I die at this hour, I think I would say something like this, “Farewell Sabbaths—I am going to the eternal Sabbath of the redeemed. Farewell minister. I shall need no candle, neither light of the sun, when the Lord God shall give me light and be my life forever and ever. Farewell you songs and sonnets of the blessed. Farewell, I shall not need your melodious burst. I shall hear the eternal and unceasing hallelujahs of the beatified.

“Farewell prayers of God's people. My spirit shall hear forever the intercessions of my Lord and join with the noble army of martyrs in crying, ‘O Lord, how long?’ Farewell O Zion! Farewell house of my love, home of my life! Farewell temples where God's people sing and pray! Farewell tents of Jacob, where they daily burn their offering—I am going to a better Zion than you, to a brighter Jerusalem, to a temple that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God!”

O my dear Friends, in the thought of these things, do we not, some of us, wish we could die!—

***“Even now by faith we join our hands
With those that went before,
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
Upon the eternal shore.
One army of the living God,
At His command we bow,
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.”***

We have not come to the margin yet but we shall be there soon—we soon expect to die.

And again, one more thought. We said that when men died they lost their knowledge. We correct ourselves. Oh, no, when the righteous die they know infinitely more than they could have known on earth—

***“There shall I see and hear and know
All I desired or wished below.
And every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy.”***

“Here we see through a glass darkly but there face to face.” There, what “eye has not seen nor ear heard” shall be fully manifest to us. There, riddles shall be unraveled, mysteries made plain, dark texts enlightened, hard providences made to appear wise.

The least soul in Heaven knows more of God than the greatest saint on earth. The greatest saint on earth may have it said of him, "Nevertheless he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." Not our mightiest Divines understand so much of theology as the lambs of the flock of Glory. Not the greatest masterminds of earth understand the millionth part of the mighty meanings which have been discovered by souls emancipated from clay. Yes, Brethren, "To die is gain."

Take away, take away that hearse! Remove that shroud! Come, put white plumes upon the horse's heads and let gilded trappings hang around them! There, take away that fife, that shrill sounding music of the death march. Lend me the trumpet and the drum. O hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah! Why weep we, the saints to Heaven? Why do we need to lament? They are not dead, they are gone ahead. Stop, stop that mourning, refrain your tears, clap your hands, clap your hands!—

***"They are supremely blessed,
Have done with care and sin and woe;
And with their Savior rest."***

What? Weep? Weep for heads that are crowned with garlands of Heaven? Weep? Weep for hands that grasp the harps of gold? What? Weep for eyes that see the Redeemer? What? Weep for hearts that are washed from sin and are throbbing with eternal bliss! What? Weep for men that are in the Savior's bosom? No! Weep for yourselves, that you are *here*. Weep that the mandate has not come which bids *you* to die. Weep that you must tarry. But weep not for them. I see them turning back on you with loving wonder and they exclaim, "Why do you weep?" What? Weep for poverty that it is clothed in riches? Weep for sickness, that it has inherited eternal health? What? Weep for shame, that it is glorified? And weep for sinful mortality, that it has become immaculate?

Oh, weep not but rejoice! "If you knew what it was that I have said unto you and where I have gone, you would rejoice with a joy that no man should take from you." "To die is gain." Ah, this makes the Christian long to die. It makes him say—

***"Oh, that the word were given!
O Lord of Hosts, the wave divide,
And land us all in Heaven!"***

And now, Friends, does this belong to you all? Can you claim an interest in it? Are you living to Christ? Does Christ live in you? For if not, your death will not be gain. Are you a Believer in the Savior? Has your heart been renewed and your conscience washed in the blood of Jesus? If not, my Hearer, I do truly weep for you. I will save my tears for lost friends. There, with this handkerchief I'd staunch my eyes forever for my Beloved that shall die, if those tears could save you. O, when you die, what a day!

If the world were hung in sackcloth, it could not express the grief that you would feel. You *die*.

O Death! O Death! How hideous are you to men that are not in Christ! And yet, my Hearer, you shall soon die. Save me your bed of shrieks, your look of gall, your words of bitterness! Oh that you could be saved from the dread hereafter! Oh, the wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come! Who is he that can preach of it? Horrors strike the guilty soul! It quivers upon the verge of death—no, on the verge of Hell. It looks over, clutching hard to life and it hears there the sullen groans, the hollow moans and shrieks of tortured ghosts, which come up from the pit that is bottomless and it clutches firmly to life, clasps the physician and bids him hold on lest he should fall into the pit that burns.

And the spirit looks down and sees all the fiends of everlasting punishments and back it recoils. But die it must. It would barter all it has to gain an hour. But no, the Fiend has got its grip and down it must plunge. And who can tell the hideous shriek of a lost soul? It cannot reach Heaven. But if it could it might well be imagined that it would suspend the melodies of angels—it might make even God's redeemed weep, if they could hear the wailings of a damned soul.

Ah, you men and women, you have wept. But if you die unregenerate, there will be no weeping like that—there will be no shrieks like that—no wails like that. May God spare us from ever hearing it or uttering it ourselves! Oh, how the grim caverns of Hades startle and how the darkness of night is frightful when the wail of a lost soul comes up from the ascending flames—while it is descending in the pit. “Turn you, turn you. Why will you die, O house of Israel?”

Christ is preached to you. “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Believe on Him and live, you guilty, vile, perishing. Believe and live. But this know—if you reject my message and despise my Master—in that day when He shall judge the world in righteousness by that man, Jesus Christ—I must be a swift witness against you. I have told you—by your soul's peril reject it.

Receive my message and you are saved. Reject it—take the responsibility on your own head. Behold, my garments are clear of your blood. If you are damned, it is not for want of warning. Oh God grant you may not perish!

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“FOREVER WITH THE LORD”

NO. 1136

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 12, 1873,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“To be with Christ, which is far better.”
Philippians 1:23.*

THE Apostle was confined in the guardroom of the Praetorian. It is very probable that he had a soldier chained to his right hand and another to his left. And it is very possible that this position suggested to him the expression, “I am in a strait betwixt two.” He was literally held by two forces and he was mentally in the same condition—exercised with two strong desires—influenced by two master passions, and he did not know to which he should yield. He says, “Between the two I am in perplexity,” or, as some render it, “I am straitened by the pressure of the two things.” Picture yourself sitting in a gloomy dungeon, a captive in the hands of the cruel tyrant, Nero, and under the supervision of the infamous prefect, Tigellinus, the most detestable of all Nero’s satellites.

Conceive yourself as expecting soon to be taken out to death—perhaps to such a horrible death as the refined cruelty of the monster had often devised—as, for instance, to be smeared over with bituminous matter and burned in the despot’s garden to adorn a holiday. What would be your feelings? If you were not a Christian I should expect you to tremble with the fear of death. And even if you were a Believer, I should not marvel if the flesh shrunk from the prospect. Paul was an utter stranger to any feeling of the kind. He had not the slightest dread of martyrdom. He calls his expected death a departure, a loosing of the cable which holds his ship to the shore and a putting forth upon the main ocean.

So far from being afraid to die, he stands fully prepared. He waits patiently and even anticipates *joyfully* the hour when his change shall come. On the other hand, I can readily imagine that amidst the miseries of a wretched prison, subject to frequent insults from rude soldiers, you might be seized with a desire to escape from life. Good men have felt the power of that feeling. Elijah said, “Let me die: I am no better than my fathers.” Job sighed to be hidden in the grave and oftentimes under far less afflictions than those which vexed the Apostle, good men have said, “Would God this life were at an end and these miseries over. I am weary, I am weary—when will Death release me?”

I see nothing of that feeling in the Apostle. He is not restive under the chain. There is not a trace of impatience about him. He admits, and joyfully admits, that to be with Christ is far better. But upon consideration he sees reasons for his remaining here and, therefore, he cheerfully sub-

mits to whatever may be the Lord’s will. He does not choose. His mind is so wrapped up with God and free from self, that he *cannot* choose. What a blessed state of heart to be in! One might be willing to wear Paul’s chain on the wrist to enjoy Paul’s liberty of mind! He is a free man whom the Lord makes free and such a man, Nero, himself cannot enslave. He may confine him in the military prison, but his soul walks at liberty through the earth, yes, and climbs among the stars.

Paul, instead of being either weary of life or afraid of death, sits down and coolly considers his own case as calmly, indeed, as if it had been the case of someone else. Do you observe how he weighs it? He says to depart and to be with Christ is, in itself considered, far better—he therefore *desires* it. But looking round upon the numerous churches which he had formed, which in their feebleness and exposure to many perils needed his care, he says, on the other hand, “To abide in the flesh is more necessary for *you*.” He holds the balance with unquivering hands and the scales quietly vibrate in equilibrium—one rises and then the other—gently swaying his heart by turns. He is in a strait, a blessed strait betwixt two, and he does not say that he knew not which of two things to *avoid*, or which to *deprecate*, but his mind was in such a condition that either to live or to die seemed equally desirable, and he says, “What I shall choose I know not.”

It is a poor choice, to choose to live in a dungeon, and an equally poor business, as men judge it, to choose to die, but the Apostle regards both of them as choice things, so choice that he does not know which to select! He deliberates as coolly and calmly as if he were not at all concerned about it, and, indeed, it is fair to say he was not at all concerned about it. He was moved by a higher concern than any which had to do with himself, for his main object was the Glory of God. He desired the Glory of God when he wished to be with Christ. He desired the same when he was willing to remain with Christ’s people and to labor on.

His mind, as we have seen, hung in an equilibrium between two things, but he is clear enough upon *one* matter, namely, that considering his own interests, only, it would greatly increase his happiness to depart and to be with Christ! He had said the same before, when he declared that, “To die is gain.” He had no doubt that to be loosed from the body and allowed to fly away to Jesus would be a great blessing to him. Of that assurance we will now speak.

I. The first thing to which I shall call your attention is THE APOSTLE’S CERTAINTY CONCERNING THE DISEMBODIED STATE—“Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.” Now, the Apostle was an eminently conscientious man. At the time when he was a Jewish teacher, whatever else he might *not* be, he was very conscientious—he verily thought that he did God service in persecuting the Christians. And throughout the whole of his subsequent career, in every incident of his history we mark him as pre-eminently a man guided by conscience. If he believed a thing to be right, he attended to it. And if anything struck him

as being wrong, he could not be persuaded to countenance it. He would not do or say that which he did not fully believe to be right and true.

It is a grand thing to meet with a witness of this order, for his testimony can be relied on. What such a man affirms we may be quite certain is correct, so far as he knows. And also, the Apostle was eminently cool. He was a man of well-balanced reason. I should think that logic greatly preponderated among his faculties. John has a warm and glowing heart and one does not wonder that he is rather a warm lover of Jesus than a systematic unfold of doctrine. Peter is impulsive and when he writes he writes with force, but it is not the force of reasoning. Paul is calm, collected. You never find him excited beyond the bounds of reason. He is as orderly, correct and argumentative as a Grecian sage. He is enthusiastic to a white heat, but regardless, he still holds himself well in hand.

The coursers of his imagination can outstrip the wind, but he always holds the reins with a strong hand and knows how to turn them, or to make them stand still at his pleasure. It is a great thing to receive the testimony of a man who is both conscientious to tell what he believes to be true and calm and logical to form a clear judgment as to what is really fact. Now this man, Paul, was convinced that there is a future state for Believers. He was quite sure about it and he believed it to be a future *conscious* state which commenced the *moment* one died, and was beyond measure full of blessedness. He did not believe in purgatorial fires through which Believers' souls must pass—much less did he believe the modern and detestable heresy which some have endorsed that, like the body, the soul of the saint dies until the Resurrection.

No, but he was known to speak of being "absent from the body and present with the Lord," and here he speaks about departing not to sleep or to lie in the cold shade of oblivion till the trumpet should awaken him, but to depart and *immediately* to be with Christ, which is far better. What had made this very conscientious and very collected man come to this conclusion? I suppose he would have replied, first, that he had been converted by a sight of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the road to Damascus, while desperately set against the religion of Jesus, the Lord Himself had appeared to him, so that he had seen Jesus with his own eyes and had heard Him speak.

About that sight and sound he had no question. He was sure that he had seen the Lord Jesus and heard His voice. He was so certain of this that he was led to give up his position in society, which was a very elevated one; to lose his reputation, which he greatly valued; to be rejected by his countrymen whom he loved with more than ordinary patriotism and to run continual risk of death for the sake of the Truth to which he was a witness. He was content to be made the offscouring of all things for the love of that once-despised Savior who, out of the windows of Heaven, had looked down upon Him in mercy.

Now, he was quite sure that Jesus Christ came from somewhere and went back to some place or other. He felt sure that there must be a place

where the Man, Jesus Christ, dwelt, and he felt quite certain that wherever that might be it would be a place of happiness and glory. Recollecting the prayer of the Lord Jesus, which John had recorded, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory,” he was quite certain that as soon as saints died they would be where their glorious Lord Jesus was and would share His honors. Remember, also, that this judicious and truthful witness tells us that he had, on other occasions, distinct evidence of the disembodied state. He informs us that he was caught up into the third Heaven and there heard things which it was not lawful for a man to utter.

He observes that he does not understand how he went there, but of the fact, he is quite sure. His body was here on earth still alive and yet his spirit was caught away into Heaven. The question with him was whether he was in the body or out of the body, and I dare say his metaphysical mind often tried to untie that knot. His soul must have remained in the body to keep the body alive, and if so, how could it go up to Heaven? And yet into Heaven he was quite clear that he had entered. At last the Apostle came to the conclusion that whether in the body or out of the body he could not tell, but God knew. This, however, he was sure of—that he had been caught up into Paradise, or the third Heaven—and therefore there *was* a Paradise! He had heard words which it was not possible for him to utter, therefore there was a place where glorious words were to be heard and glorious words to be said! And he was quite sure, not merely as a matter of belief, but as a matter of *observation*, that there was a place into which disembodied spirits go—where they are with Jesus, their Lord—which is far better.

It is clear that it would *not* be far better for a saint to die and sleep till the Resurrection than it would be to work on here. It would be evidently, by far, a better thing for saints to continue in life till Christ came, than to lie dormant in oblivion. Yet he says it is far better for them to depart—and the ground of his judgment lies in the fact that there is a place of real happiness—of intense joy—where it is far better for the disembodied spirit to be than for it to remain here in the body! About this Paul expressed no sort of doubt. There was such a state. It was a state of great joy, so that even to him who was one of the greatest Apostles, the most useful of the saints and the most honored with his Master’s blessing—even to him to depart and to be with Christ would be far better!

I want you to notice, also that he does not express any sort of doubt about his own entrance into a state of felicity so soon as he should depart. He does not say, as I am afraid many here would have done, “It would be far better, certainly, for me to die if I were sure I should be with Christ.” Oh, no! He had risen above such hesitation. Dear Brothers and Sisters, it is a wretched state to be in to be saying, “It would be sweet for me to depart if, indeed, these glories were for me.” He had got beyond all doubt as to whether eternal bliss would be his! He was *sure* of that, and why are

we not sure, too? Why do we hesitate where he spoke so confidently? Had Paul something to ground his confidence upon which we have not?

Do you suppose that Paul reckoned he should be saved because of his abundant labors, his earnest ministry and his great successes? Far from it! Don't you know that he, himself, said, “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”? As for anything that he had ever *done*, he declared that he trusted to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which was of the Law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith. Now, where Paul built we build, if we build aright. Our hope is founded upon the righteousness of Christ, upon the Grace of God, upon the promise of our heavenly Father. Well, I dare to say it—he, the chief of the Apostles, had not a solitary grain of advantage over any one of us as to the basis and essence of his hope! Mercy, Grace, atoning blood, the precious promise—these, alone, he built on—for other foundation can no man lay.

If Paul was sure of eternal bliss, I should be sure of it, too. No, I *am*! Are you, Beloved? Are you equally as sure of being with Christ as Paul was? You should be, for you have the same reason for certainty as the Apostle had, if, indeed, you are believing in the Lord Jesus. God is not a God of perhapses, and ifs, and buts—He is a God of shalls and wills, of faithful Truth and everlasting verities. “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved.” “Who shall lay anything to the charge of”—whom?—Paul, the Apostle? No, but “of God's elect”?

Of all of them, of any one of them whom you shall please to select, however humble, however obscure—they are ALL safe in Jesus! He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, and we may, each one of us, cry, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day.” So much, then, concerning the Apostle's certainty as to the disembodied state, its happiness and his own possession of it before long.

II. It is very interesting to notice THE APOSTLE'S IDEA OF THAT STATE. He says, “To be with Christ.” It is a one-sided idea and it is almost a one-worded description of it. “To be with Christ.” I have no doubt Paul had as enlarged ideas as to what the state of disembodied spirits would be as the most intelligent and best-read Christian that ever lived. I have no doubt he would have said, “Yes, there is fellowship among the saints—we shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. It will certainly be as true in Heaven as it is on earth that we have fellowship one with another.”

I have no doubt he believed that Heaven was a place of a far clearer knowledge than any we possess below. He said so once—“Here I know in part, but there shall I know even as I am known.” Some Christians have entertained the idea that they shall gaze upon the various works of God in distant parts of His universe and enjoy infinite happiness in beholding the

manifold wisdom of God—very possible, and if it will conduce to their happiness—very probable. Perhaps Paul believed all that, but we do not know whether he did or not. Here it is plain that he gives us only *one* idea. He was a man of great mind and much information, but here he gives us only one idea—for my part, one that perfectly satisfies me and I think one which charms and fills to overflowing the heart of every Believer.

He describes the disembodied state as "to be with Christ." A very exclusive idea! No, a very inclusive idea—for it takes in all the Heaven which the largest mind can conceive! It does seem to omit a great many things, but I dare say Paul felt that they were such trifles that it did not matter about forgetting them. Being with Christ is so great a thing that he mentioned only it. I think he did this, first, because his love was so concentrated upon Christ that he could think of nothing else in connection with going away to Heaven.

There is a wife here, perhaps, and her husband has accepted an appointment in India. He has been gone a long time and the years of his forced absence have been weary to her. She has had loving messages from him and kind letters, but often she has sighed and her heart has looked out of the windows towards the east, yearning for his return. But now she has received a letter entreating her to go to her husband and, without hesitation, she has resolved to go. Now, if you ask her what she is going to India for, the reply will be, "I am going to my husband." But she has a brother there. Yes, she will see him, but she does not tell you that—her great thought is that she is going to her husband! She has many old friends and companions there, but she is not drawn to the far-off land by desire for *their* company—she crosses the sea for the sake of her beloved.

But her husband has a handsome estate there and he is wealthy. He has a well-furnished house and many servants. Yes, but she never says, "I am going to see my husband's home," or anything of that kind. She is going to her husband. That is the all-absorbing object. There may be other inducements to make the voyage, but to be with her beloved is the master reason of her journey. She is going to the man she loves with all her soul and she is longing for the country, whatever that country may be, because he is there. It is so with the Christian, only enhanced in a tenfold degree! He does not say, "I am going to the songs of angels and to the everlasting chorales of the sanctified," but, "I am going to be with Jesus!" It would argue unchastity to Christ if that were not the first and highest thought.

To come back to the figure—and it is one which Christ, Himself, would approve of, for He continually uses the metaphor of marriage in relation to Himself and the soul—if that woman did regard as the first thing in that journey out to the East, the sight of some other person, or the mere enjoyment of wealth and possessions—it would argue that she had little love to her husband. It would mean that she was not such a wife as she ought to be. And if it could be so that the Christian should have some higher thought than being with Christ, or some other desire worth mentioning in

the same day with it, it would look as if he had not presented himself as a chaste virgin to Christ, to be His and His alone.

I see, therefore, why Paul calls the disembodied state a being with Christ, because his love was all with his Lord. And, no doubt, there was this further reason among others—he was persuaded that Heaven could not be Heaven if Christ was not there. Oh, to think of Heaven without Christ! It is the same thing as thinking of Hell. Heaven without Christ? It is day without the sun! Existing without life, feasting without food, seeing without light. It involves a contradiction in terms. Heaven without Christ? Absurd! It is the sea without water, the earth without its fields, the heavens without their stars. There cannot be Heaven without Christ! He is the sum total of bliss! He is the fountain from which Heaven flows, the element of which Heaven is composed! Christ is Heaven and Heaven is Christ!

You shall change the words and make no difference in the sense. To be where Jesus is is the highest imaginable bliss and bliss away from Jesus is inconceivable to the child of God. If you were invited to a marriage feast and you were, yourself, to be the bride, and yet the bridegroom were not there—do not tell me about feasting. In vain they ring the bells till the Church tower rocks and reels. In vain the dishes smoke and the red wine sparkles. In vain the guests shout and make merry. If the bride looks around her and sees no bridegroom, the dainties mock her sorrow and the merriment insults her misery. Such would a Christless Heaven be to the saints. If you could gather together all conceivable joys and Christ were absent, there would be no Heaven to His beloved ones. Therefore it is that Heaven is to be where Christ is—

***“To dwell with Christ, to feel His love,
Is the full Heaven enjoyed above.
And the sweet expectation now,
Is the young dawn of Heaven below.”***

And, Beloved, just to be with Christ *is* Heaven—that bare thing. Excuse my using such words, I only want to make the sense stronger. That bare thing—just to be with Christ is all the Heaven a Believer needs! The angels may be there or not, as they will. And the golden crowns and harps present or absent as may be. But if I am to be where Jesus is, I will find angels in His eyes and crowns in every lock of His hair. To me the golden streets shall be my fellowship with Him and the music of the harpers shall be the sound of His voice. Only to be near Him, to be with Him—this is all we need. The Apostle does not say, “to be in Heaven, which is far better.” No, but, “to be *with Christ*, which is far better,” and he adds no description—he leaves the thoughts just as they are—in all their majestic simplicity. “To be with Christ, which is far better.”

But what is it to be with Christ, Beloved? In some sense we are with Christ now, for He comes to us. We are no strangers to Him. Even while we are in this body we have communion with Jesus and yet it must be true that a higher fellowship is to come, for the Apostle says that while we

are present in the body we are absent from the Lord. There is a sense in which, so long as we are here, we *are* absent from the Lord. One great saint used to say upon his birthday that he had been so many years in banishment from the Lord. To abide in this lowland country, so far from the ivory palaces, is a banishment at the very best. All that we can see of Christ here is through a glass darkly. Face to face is true nearness to Him and that we have not reached as of yet.

What will it be, then, to be with Christ? Excuse me if I say it will be, first of all, exactly what it says, namely, to be with Him. I must repeat that word—it is Heaven only to *be* with Him! It is not merely what comes out of being with Him—His company is Heaven. Why, even to have seen Jesus in his flesh was a privilege—

***"I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He took little children like lambs to His fold
I should like to have been with Him then.
I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,
That His arms had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen His kind look when He said,
'Let the little ones come unto Me.'*"**

I think I should have found a little Heaven in gazing on that blessed form!

But our text speaks of a different sort of being with Him, for there were people near Him here in body who were a long way off from Him in spirit. The text speaks of being with Him in the spirit when the soul shall have shaken itself loose of the flesh and blood—and left all its slough behind it—and gone right away to bask in the Glory of Jesus, to participate in the Nature of Jesus and, best of all, to abide near His Person, with the God-Man Mediator, who is Lord of all! Still, there will flow out of that nearness the following things among many others. We shall enjoy, first of all, a clearer vision of Him. Oh, we have not seen Him yet! Our views of Him are too dim to be worth calling sights. The eyes of faith have looked through a telescope and seen Him at a distance and it has been a ravishing vision. But when the eyes of the soul shall really see Him—Him, and not another—Him for ourselves, and not another for us, oh, the sight!

Is not the thought of it a burning coal of joy? The sight of His very flesh will charm us. His wounds, still fresh, the dear memorials of His passion, still apparent. The perception of His soul will also delight us, for our soul will commune with His soul and this is the soul of communion! The sight of His Godhead, so far as created spirit can see it, will also ravish us with joy. And then we shall have a brighter knowledge of Him. Here we know in part—we know the names of His offices, we know what He has worked, we know what He is working for us—but there those offices will shine in their splendor and we shall see all that He did for us in its real weight and value! We shall comprehend, then, the height and depth and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, as we do not know it at this hour.

And with that will come a more intimate communion. Our soul will lean her head on Jesus' bosom, our heart will get into His heart and hide her-

self in His wounds. What must it be to speak to Him, as our soul will speak to Him, as our spirit nature will commune with His inmost *Nature*—His spirit speaking to our spirits without a veil between? We shall not see Him looking down from the windows, but we shall rest in His arms, in a far more intimate communion than any we can enjoy this side the grave. Today I see Him through the grating of my prison windows and my heart is ready to leap out of my body! What will it be when His left hand shall be under my head and His right hand shall embrace me?

And then, Beloved, when we shall be with Him it will be unbroken fellowship. There will be no sin to blind our eyes to His charms, or to entice us away from His love. Blessed be God, there will be no Monday mornings to call us back to the world, but our sacred Sunday will last on forever! Doubts, backslidings and spiritual chills will then be gone forever. No more shall we cry, “Have you seen Him whom my soul loves?” but we shall *hold* Him and never let Him go. There will be no need, ever, for the spirit to fall asleep and so suspend its joy—it will find its true rest in constant communion with Jesus! It is possible to live in fellowship with Jesus here always—possible, but, oh, how few ever reach it! But there we shall *all* have reached it! The very lowest among us—we shall be with the Lord forever!

And then we shall have a sight of His Glory and though I put this after a sight of Himself, yet, remember, our Lord thinks much of it. He prayed, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory.” We have seen something of His *shame* and have been partakers in the *reproach* that is poured upon His Gospel. But we shall see Him, then, with silver sandals on the feet that once were mired by the clay of earth and a crown of gold upon the once thorn-pierced brow! We shall see Him when His hands shall gleam as with gold rings set with beryl, and look no more like a malefactor’s hand nailed to the cruel wood—

**“Then shall we see His body like bright ivory
With sapphires overlaid,
His limbs like marble pillars
In golden sockets stayed.”**

Then, looking on His face we shall understand Solomon’s Song, when he said, “His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; His voice is most sweet, yes, He is altogether lovely.” One would wish to leap right away out of this body to behold Him in His Glory!

And then, Beloved, we shall *share* in the Glory, too, for His joy will be our joy. His honor will be our honor. Our spirits which wrestled hard here below and had to strive against a thousand outward enemies and inward doubts and fears, will then be all light, joy, gladness, full of the life of God and beaming with ecstatic bliss! The Lord grant us to know this in due season, and so we shall, if, indeed, we are Believers in Jesus! So you see Paul’s one idea was that he should be with Jesus. That was all. He cared little for anything else.

III. Very briefly, let us consider THE APOSTLE’S ESTIMATE OF THIS DISEMBODIED STATE. He says, “To be with Christ, which is far better.” Now, the Greek has a triple comparative. We could not say, “far more better,” in our language, but that would be a fair translation. We will therefore read, “It is far rather preferable,” or it is much better to be with Christ away from the body, than it would be to abide here. Now, you must remember that Paul does not claim that the disembodied state is the highest condition of a Believer, or the ultimate crown of his hopes. It is a state of perfection so far as it goes—the *spirit* is perfect—but the entire manhood is not perfect while the body is left to mold in the tomb.

One half of the saint is left behind in the grave. Corruption, earth and worms have seized upon it, and the grand concluding day of our manifestation can only come when the redemption of the body is fully achieved. The fullness of our Glory is the Resurrection, for then the body will be united to our spirit and perfected with it. At present the saints who are with Jesus are without their bodies and are pure spirits. Their humanity is in that respect maimed—only half their manhood is with Jesus—yet even for that, half of their manhood to be with Christ is far better than for the whole of their being to be here in the best possible condition!

Now, the Apostle does not say that to be with Christ is far better than to be here and to be rich, young, healthy, strong, famous, great, or learned—Paul never thinks of putting those petty things into contrast with being with Christ! He had got above all that. There he was sitting chained in the dungeon, the poorest man in the emperor’s dominions, and often, I have no doubt—for he was getting on to be, “such an one as Paul the aged,” and wrote particularly about an old cloak he had left at Troas—often he felt rheumatic pains shooting through him. And he did not find this life to have many attractions of wealth or ease, though he might have had them if he had chosen them as his portion. He had given them all up and counted them as insignificant trifles, not to be mentioned at all, for Jesus’ sake.

He is not speaking of the low joys of this world—he is far above such considerations. He means that to be with Christ is infinitely superior to all the joys of Christians. Anything that the most of Christians know about Christ and heavenly joys and heavenly things is very poor compared with being *with* Christ. But he meant more than that. He meant that the highest joys which the best taught Believer can here possess are inferior to being with Christ. For, let me say, Paul was no obscure Believer. He was a leader among the followers of Christ. Could he not say. “Thanks be unto God, who always makes us to triumph in every place”?

He knew the graces of the Holy Spirit, he had them abundantly. He was head and shoulders above the most brilliant Christian here. He had the highest experience of any man out of Heaven and it was that which he contrasted with being with Christ. And he said that the most that we could get here of heavenly things was not to be compared with being with Christ. That was far, far, far better. And truly, Brothers and Sisters, so it

is. Thanks be to God for all the mercies of the pilgrimage, for all the dropping manna and the following stream, but oh, the wilderness with all its manna, is *nothing* compared with the land that flows with milk and honey! Let the road be paved with mercy—it is not so sweet as the Father's house of the many mansions to which it leads.

It is true that in the battle our head is covered, the wings of angels often protect us, and the Spirit of God, Himself, nerves our arm to use the sword. But who shall say that the victory is not better than the battle? The warrior who has won the most of victory will tell you that the best day will be when the sword rattles back into the scabbard and the victory is won forever. Oh, the wooing of Christ and the soul, this is very sweet—the rapturous joys we have had in the love-making between Christ and us, we would not exchange with emperors and kings—even if they offered us their crowns! But the marriage day will be better by far—the glorious consummation of our soul's highest desire when we shall be with our Well-Beloved where He is.

Far better, said the Apostle, and he meant it. Far better it is. He did not say—and I want you to notice this again—though he might have said it, "We shall be better in condition. No poverty there, no sickness there." He did not say, "We shall be better in character." He might have said it—there will be no sin, no depravity, no infirmity, no temptation there. He did not say, "We shall be better in employment," though surely it will be better to wait on the Master, close at His hand, than to be here among sinners and often among cold-hearted saints. He did not say, "We shall have better society there." Though, truth to tell, it will be better to be with the perfect than with the imperfect. Neither did he say we should see fairer sights there, though we shall see the city that has foundations of jasper, whose light is the light of the Lamb's own Presence! But he did say, "To be with Christ." He summed it up *there*. The bare being with Christ would be far better. And so it will be. Our spirit longs for it!

Yet mark you, for all that, he said he felt a pull the other way. He had a twitch towards staying on earth, as well as a pull towards going to Heaven, for he said, "To abide in the flesh is more necessary for you." How I love Paul for thinking of the churches here when he had Heaven before him! Anthony Farindon says it is like a poor beggar woman outside the door and she carries a squalling child, and someone says, "You may come in and feast, but you must leave the babe outside." She is very hungry and she needs the feast. But she does not like to leave the baby and so she is in a strait betwixt two.

Or, he says again, it is like a wife who has children at home, five or six little ones, and her husband is on a journey. And suddenly there comes a letter which says that he needs her and she must go to him, but she may do as she thinks best. She desires to go to her husband, but who will take care of the last little baby and who is to see to all the rest? And so she is in a strait betwixt two. She loves him and she loves them. So stood the Apostle, and oh, it is blessed to think of a man having such a love for

Christ that for Christ’s sake he loves poor souls well enough to be willing to stay out of Heaven awhile! “Oh,” he says, “it is all gain for me to go to Heaven. For me to die is far better. Yet there are some poor sinners who need to be called, some poor trembling saints to be comforted and I do not know which is the best.” And the Apostle stands puzzled. He does not know which it shall be. There we leave him.

May we get into the same blessed predicament ourselves! The last word shall be this. Concerning our beloved friends gone from us, we do not sorrow as those who are without hope. What is more, we do not sorrow at all. If we chance to sorrow, it is for ourselves, that we have lost their present company. But as for them it is far better with them and if the lifting of our little finger could bring them back again, dear as they are to us, we would not be so cruel as to subject them, again, to the troubles of this stormy sea of life. They are safe! We will go to them. We would not have them return to us.

Then, with regard to ourselves, if we have believed in Jesus we are on our journey Home and all fear of death is now annihilated. You notice the Apostle does not say anything at all about *death*. He did not think it worth mentioning. In fact, there is no such thing to a Christian! I have heard of people being afraid of the pains of death. There are no pains of death—the pain is in life! Death is the end of pain. It is all over. Put the saddle on the right horse. Do not blame Death for what he does not do. It is Life that brings pain! Death to the Believer ends all evil. Death is the gate of endless joy and shall we dread to enter there? No, blessed be God, we will not!

And this points us to the Fountain of bliss while we are here, for if Heaven is to be with Christ, then the nearer we get to Christ, here, the more we shall participate in that which makes the joy of Heaven! If we want to taste Heaven’s blessed dainties while here below, let us walk in unbroken fellowship with Him—so we shall get *two* heavens, a little Heaven below, and a boundless Heaven above when our turn shall come to go Home! Oh, I wish you were all on the way to being with Christ! If you do not go to be with Christ, where can you go? Answer that question and go to Jesus, now, by humble faith, that afterwards He may say, “Come, you did come on earth, now come again, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world.”

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 1

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PAUL'S DESIRE TO DEPART NO. 274

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, SEPTEMBER 11, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.”
Philippians 1:23.***

WE know that death is not the end of our being. By a confident faith we are persuaded that better things await us in another state. We are speeding onwards through our brief life like an arrow shot from a bow and we feel that we shall not drop down at the end of our flight into the dreariness of annihilation, but we shall find a heavenly target far across the flood of death. The force which impels us onwards is too mighty to be restrained by death. We have that within us which is not to be accounted for, if there is not a world to come and especially, as Believers, we have hopes and desires and aspirations, which cannot be fulfilled and which must have been given us purposely to make us miserable and to tantalize us, if there is not a state in which everyone of these shall be satisfied and filled to the brim with joy.

We know, too, that the world into which we shall soon be ushered is one which shall never pass away. We have learned full well by experience that all things here are but for a season. They are things which shall be shaken and, therefore, will not remain in the day when God shall shake both Heaven and earth. But equally certain are we that the inheritance which awaits us in the world to come is eternal and unfailing, and that the cycles of ages shall never move it. The on-flowing of eternity itself shall not diminish its duration. We know that the world to which we go is not to be measured by leagues, nor is the life thereof to be calculated by centuries. Well does it become everyone of us, then, professing the Christian name, to be questioning ourselves as to the view which we take of the world to come.

It may be there are some of you now present who call yourselves Believers, who look into a future state with shuddering and awe. Possibly there may be but few here who have attained to the position of the Apostle, when he could say, that he had a desire to depart and to be with Christ. I take it that our view of our own death is one of the readiest tokens by which we may judge of our own spiritual condition. When men fear death it is not certain that they are wicked, but it is quite certain that if they have faith it is in a very weak and sickly condition. When men desire death we may not rest assured that they are therefore righteous, for they may desire it for wrong reasons. But if for right reasons they are panting to enter into another state, we may gather from this not only that

their minds are right with God, but that their faith is sanctified and that their love is fervent.

I hope that the service of this morning may have the effect of leading every one of us to self-examination. I shall endeavor while preaching to search myself and I pray that each one of you may be led to hear for himself and I beseech you to put home each pertinent and personal question to your own souls, while in a quiet, but I hope in a forcible manner, I shall endeavor to describe the Apostle's feelings in prospect of departure. Three things I shall observe this morning. First of all, the Apostle's description of death. Secondly, his desire for it and thirdly, the reasons which justified such a desire.

I. THE APOSTLE'S DESCRIPTION OF DEATH. We are to understand this, of course, as being a description not of the death of the wicked, but of the death of the righteous. And you will remark the Apostle does not call it an arrest. In the death of the wicked, the sheriff's officer of justice does lay his clay-cold hand upon the man's shoulder and he is his prisoner forever. The sergeant-at-arms in the name of the justice which has been incensed, puts the fetters about his wrists and conducts him to the prison of despair and everlasting torment.

In the Christian's case, however, there is no such thing as an arrest, for there is no one that can arrest him. We sometimes talk of death arresting the Believer in the midst of his career, but we misuse terms. Who shall arrest a man against whom there is neither conviction nor accusation? Who is he that condemns the man for whom Christ has died? No, further, who shall so much as lay anything to the charge of God's elect? How, then, can the Christian be arrested? It is no such thing. It is an arrest of the ungodly, but not of the Believer.

Nor does Paul speak of the Believer's death as being a sudden plunge. This is a proper description of the death of the ungodly. He stands upon the brink of a precipice and beneath him there is a yawning and bottomless gulf. Through thick darkness he must descend and into it his unwilling spirit must take a desperate leap. Not so the Believer. His is no leap downwards—it is a climbing upwards. He has his foot upon the first rung of the ladder and joyful is the hour when his Master says unto him, "Come up higher. Ascend to another guest-chamber and here feast upon richer dainties than those I have given you below." Yes, it is no leap in the dark. It is no plunge into a cold sea—it is simply a departure.

Let me describe what I think the Apostle means by the figure of a departure. Many deaths are preceded by a long season of sickness and then I think we might picture them by the departure of a ship from its moorings. There lies the ship in its haven. There is a friend of yours about to journey away to some distant clime. You will never see his face again in the flesh. He is going to emigrate. He will find a home in another, and he hopes, a happier land. You stand upon the shore. You have given him the last embrace. The mother has given her son the last kiss, the friend has shaken him by the hand for the last time and now the signal is given.

The anchor is taken up. The rope which held the ship to the shore is loosed and lo, the ship is moving and she floats outward towards the sea. You look, you still wave your hand as you see the ship departing. Your friend stands on some prominent spot on the deck and there he waves his handkerchief to the last. But the most sharp-sighted of friends in such scenes must lose sight of one another. The ship floats on. You just now catch a sight of the sails, but with the strongest telescope you cannot discover your friend. He is gone—it is his departure. Weep as you may, you cannot bring him back again. Your sorrowful tears may mingle with the flood that has carried him away, but they cannot entice a single wave to restore him to you.

Now even so is the death of many a Believer. His ship is quietly moored in its haven. He is calmly lying upon his bed. You visit him in his chamber. Without perturbation of spirit he bids you farewell. His grip is just as hearty as he shakes your hand, as ever it was in the best hour of his health. His voice is still firm and his eyes are still bright. He tells you he is going to another and a better land. You say to him, “Shall I sing to you”—

“Be gone unbelief, my Savior is near”?

“Oh, no” says he, “sing me no such a hymn as that—sing me—

“Jerusalem my happy home,

Name ever dear to me,

When shall my labors have an end

In joy and peace and you?”

He bids you a last farewell. You see him for a little season even after that, although he is too far gone again to address you. It may be a partial insensibility seizes hold of him. He is like a ship that is just going out of sight. You look at his lips and as you bow down your ear, you can catch some faint syllables of praise. He is talking to himself of that precious Jesus who is still his joy and hope. You watch him till the last heaving breath has left the body and you retire with the sweet reflection that His Spirit on a glassy sea has floated joyously to its post. Thus the Believer's death is a departure. There is no sinking in the wave. There is no destruction of the vessel—it is a *departure*. He has gone. He has sailed over a calm and quiet sea and he is gone to a better land.

At other times deaths are more sudden and are not heralded by protracted sickness. The man is in health and he is suddenly snatched away and the place which knew him once knows him no more forever. I am about to use a figure which will seem to you extremely homely and certainly could not be classical. I remember to have been once a spectator in a sorrowful scene. A company of villagers, the younger branches of a family, were about to emigrate to another land. The aged mother who had not for some years left her cottage and her fireside, came to the railway station from which they must start on their departure. I stood among the sorrowful group as a friend and minister. I think I see the many embraces which the fond mother gave to her son and daughter and the little ones, her grand-children.

I see them even now folding their arms about her aged neck and then bidding farewell to all the friends in the village who had come to bid them adieu. And well I remember her, who was about to lose the props of her household. A shrill sound is heard, as if it were the messenger of death—it sends a pang through all hearts. In great haste at the small village station the passengers are hurried to their seats. They thrust their heads out of the carriage window. The aged parent stands on the very edge of the platform that she may take the last look. There is a sound from the engine and away goes the train. I remember well the instant when that poor woman leaning on her staff sprang up from the chair with which she had been accommodated and jumping from the platform, rushed alone the railway with all her might, crying, “My children! My children! My children! They are gone and I shall never see them again.”

The figure may not be classical, but nevertheless I have been reminded of it by many a death. When I have seen the godly suddenly snatched away—no time to watch them—they are gone, swift as the wind itself could bear them, as if the hasty waves of the sea had buried them out of sight. It is our affliction and our trouble, and we must stand behind and weep, for they are gone beyond recall. Regardless, there is something pleasant in the picture. It is but a departure. They are not destroyed. They are not blown to atoms, they are not taken away to prison. It is but a departure from one place to another. They still live. They still are blessed.

While we weep they are rejoicing. While we mourn they are singing Psalms of praise. Remember this, my Brethren, in the apparel of mourning and, if you have lost friends of late, this may tend to console your spirits. Death to a Believer is but a departure, yet what a departure it is! Can you and I think calmly of it? The time must come when I must depart from wife and children and from house and home, when I must depart from everything that is dear to me on earth. The time is coming to you, oh rich Christian, when you must depart from all the comforts of your estate, from all the luxuries of your household, from all the enjoyments which your rank confers upon you.

And oh, poor Christian, lover of your home, the time is coming when you must depart from your cot, homely though it is, still dear unto you. You must leave the place of your toil and the sanctuary of your rest. We must mount as on eagle's wings far from this world. We must bid adieu to its green fields as well as its dreary streets. We must say farewell to its blue skies and to its dusky clouds—farewell to foe and friend—farewell to all we have, alike to trial and to joy. But blessed be God, it is not the last look of a criminal condemned to die, it is the farewell of one who departs to another and a happier land.

The Apostle's description of death, however, is not finished. He has here only pictured that which is visible. We now come to notice his description of the invisible part of death—

***“In vain the fancy strives to paint
The moment after death—
The glories which surround the saint***

***When yielding up his breath.
This much—and this is all we know,
They are supremely blest,
Have done with sin and care and woe,
And with their Savior rest.”***

This is precisely the Apostle's description of the state of the Believer after death. They depart—yes, but where? To be with Christ. Just observe how quickly these scenes follow each other. The sail is spread. The soul is launched upon the deep. How long will be its voyage? How many wearying winds must beat upon the sail before it shall be reefed in the port of peace? How often shall that soul be tossed upon the waves before it comes to the sea that knows no storm? Oh tell it, tell it everywhere—yon ship that has just departed is already at its haven. It did but spread its sail and it was there. Like the old ship on the lake of Galilee, there was a storm that tossed it, but Jesus said, "Peace, be still," and immediately it came to land.

Yes, think not that there is a long period between the instant of death and the eternity of glory. There is not so much as space for the intervening of a lightning's flash. One gentle sigh, the fetter breaks, we scarce can say it is gone before the ransomed spirit takes its mansion near the throne. We depart, we are with Christ. More quickly than I can say the words, swifter than speech can express them they become true. They depart and they are with Christ. The same instant they have closed their eyes on earth they have opened them in Heaven.

And what is this invisible part of death? "To be with Christ." Who can comprehend this but the Christian? It is a Heaven which the worldling cares not for. If he could have it, he would not pawn his meanest lust to gain it. To be with Christ is to him a thing of nothing, as gold and silver are of no more value to little children than the pieces of platter with which they will amuse themselves. So Heaven and being with Christ is of no value to the childish sons of earthly mirth. They know not what a mass of glory is crowded into that one sentence, "To be with Christ."

To the Believer who understands it, it means, first, vision. "Your eyes shall see Him." I have heard of Him and though I have not seen His face, unceasingly I have adored Him. But I shall see Him. Yes, we shall actually gaze upon the exalted Redeemer. Think of it! Is there not a young Heaven within it? You shall see the hand that was nailed for you. You shall kiss the very lips that said, "I thirst." You shall see the thorn-crowned head—and bow with all the blood-washed throng—you, the chief of sinners—shall adore Him who washed you in His blood, when you shall have a vision of His glory!

Faith is precious but what must *sight* be? To view Jesus as the Lamb of God through the glass of faith makes the soul rejoice with joy unspeakable. But oh, to see Him face to face, to look into those dear eyes! To be embraced by those Divine arms—rapture begins at the very mention of it! While I speak of Him, my soul is like the chariots of Amminadib and I desire to depart and to be with Him. But what must the vision be when the

veil is taken from His face and the dimness from our eyes and when we shall talk with Him even as a man talks with his friend? It is not only vision, it is *communion*. We shall walk with Him, *He* shall walk with us, He shall speak to us and we shall speak to Him! All that the spouse desired in Solomon's Song, we shall have and ten thousand times more.

Then will the prayer be fulfilled, "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His lips, for His love is better than wine." Then we shall be able to say, "His left hand is under my head and His right hand does embrace me." Then will He tell us His love. Then will He rehearse the ancient story of the Everlasting Covenant, of His election of us by His own true love, of His betrothal of us through His boundless affection, of His purchase of us by His rich compassion, of His preservation of us by His Omnipotence and of His bringing us safe at last to Glory as the result of His promise and His blood. And then will we tell Him of our love, then into His ear will we pour out the song of gratitude, a song such as we have never sung on earth, unmixed and pure, full of serenity and joy, no groans to mar its melody! A song rapt and seraphic, like the flaming sonnets which flash from burning tongues above. Happy, happy, happy day, when vision and communion shall be ours in fullness! "To be with Christ which is far better."

Nor is this all, it means fruition of Christ. Here we look and long to taste, or if we taste, it is but a sip and we long to drink to the full. Here we are like Israel in the wilderness, who had but one cluster from Eschol. There we shall be in the vineyard. Here do we have the manna falling small, like coriander seed—there shall we eat the bread of Heaven and the old corn of the kingdom. We have sometimes on earth, lusts, ungratified desires that lack satisfaction—but there the lust shall be slain and the desire shall be satiated. There shall be nothing we can want. Every power shall find the sweetest employment in that eternal world of joy. There will be a full and lasting fruition of Christ and last of all upon this point there shall be a sharing with Christ in His glory and that forever.

"We shall see Him," yes and let us have the next sentence and "shall be like He when we shall see Him as He is." Oh Christian, predate Heaven for a few years! Within a very little time you shall be rid of all your trials and your troubles—your aching head shall be girt with a crown of glory, your poor panting heart shall find its rest and shall be satisfied with fullness as it beats upon the breast of Christ! Your hands that now toil shall know no harder labor than harp-strings can afford. Your eyes now suffused with tears shall weep no longer. You shall gaze in ineffable rapture upon the splendor of Him who sits upon the Throne. No, more—upon His Throne shall *you* sit. He is King of kings, but *you* shall reign with Him. He is a priest after the order of Melchisedec, but *you* shall be a priest with Him!

Oh rejoice! The triumph of His glory shall be shared by you. His crown, His joy, His Paradise, these shall be yours and you shall be co-heir with Him who is the heir of all things. Does not this very description of the unseen part of death stir up in the heart of the Believer a longing "to depart and to be with Christ which is far better"?

II. I have thus, as well as I was able, spoken upon the first part. And now my Friends, let us consider THE APOSTLE'S DESIRE. How differently do men regard death. We have seen men shriek at the prospect of it. I have seen the man driven to madness when the skeleton king has stared him in the face. Pacing up and down his chamber he has declared with many a curse and imprecation that he would not and could not die—shrieking so that you could scarcely bear his company. He has looked forward to death as the concentration of all despair and agony and he has vainly strived, with all his might, not to die. When he felt at last that death was stronger than he and that he must get a desperate fall in the struggle—then has he began to shriek and to cry in such a strain that scarce demons themselves could excel the despair concentrated in each shriek.

Others have we seen who have met death somewhat more calmly. Biting their lips and setting fast their teeth, they have endeavored to keep up appearances, even in the last moment, but they have endured the inward suffering, betrayed to us most plainly by the staring eyes and the awful look. Others, too, we have seen, who, callous through sin, totally deserted by God's Spirit and given up to a seared conscience—have gone to their death with idiot resignation. They have even played the madman yet more fully and have tried to brag and bully even in the jaws of Hell. Many Christians, have we met—true Believers—who can go so far as to say they were willing to die. Please God, whenever the solemn hour should come, they were prepared to go up to their chamber and stretch themselves upon their bed and say, "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace."

But the Apostle had gone further than they. He said he had a *desire* to depart and the desire was a strong one. The Greek word has much force in it. He pants, he longs to be gone. I might paraphrase it by one of the verses of an old hymn—

***"To Jesus, the crown of my hope,
My soul is in haste to be gone."***

He desired not to get away from earth for he loved to serve his Master, but he desired to be with Christ, which he declared to be far better. I ask you if you were in Paul's condition would not such a desire contain the very fullness of wisdom? There is a ship at sea, fully laden. It has a precious cargo of gold on board. Happy is the kingdom that shall receive the wealth which is contained within its hold. Would you not, if you were a possessor of such a vessel, long to be safe in port? The empty ship needs scarcely fear the water for what has she to lose? If it casts its ballast into the sea, what is it the poorer? But when the ship is full of treasure, well may the captain long to see it safely moored.

Now Paul was full of faith and love. He could say, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." And what wonder, therefore, that he was longing to be safely anchored at home. So the soldier, who in the midst of battle has smitten down foe after foe, knows that a high reward awaits him. He has charged upon the enemy and driven them back in many a desperate struggle. He has already been victor. Do you wonder he wishes

the fight now were over, that his laurels may be safe? If he had played the coward he might long that the campaign should be protracted, that he might redeem his disgrace. But having so far fought with honor he may well desire that the garment rolled in blood, may be rolled up forever.

Yes! And so was it with the Apostle. He had fought a good fight and knew that the crown was laid up for him in Heaven and he anticipated the triumph which Christ would give him. And panting and longing, he said, "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better." Upon this point I am constrained to be brief, because the next division involves the whole matter and upon this, I would be somewhat longer. And may God grant that what I shall say upon it may be impressive.

III. PAUL'S REASONS FOR LONGING TO DEPART. There have been—it is the part of candor to admit it—there have been other men besides Christians who have longed to die. There is the suicide who, mad, from life's history hangs to be hurled, even though Hell receive him. Tired of all life's troubles he thinks he sees a way to escape from his toil and from his sorrow through the grim gate of death. He stains his hand with his own blood and red with his own gore appears before his Maker. Ah Fool, to leap from one evil to a myriad! Ah, Madman, to plunge from little streams of woe into an unfathomable gulf of agony! There can be no more absurd, revolting, and insensible act, than for a man to take away his own life. Setting aside the horrors of crime that surround it, how foolish is the attempt to escape by rushing into the very midst of danger!

The ostrich who buries her head in the sand and when she cannot see the hunter thinks the hunter cannot see her, is sensible and wise compared with such a man, who, rushing into the very thick of the battle hopes in this way to escape from his enemy. How can it be, you foolish man? The stream is too deep for you already and instead of seeking to find a shore by faith in God, do you seek the center of the stream that you may get a firmer footing *there*? Oh foolish generation and unwise, "Put up your sword into your scabbard and do yourself no harm," for harm you will do if you rush into a greater evil to escape the lesser.

There have been other men, who with a so-called philosophic spirit, have desired to die. Some men are sick altogether of mankind. They have met with so many ungrateful and deceitful wretches that they say, "Let me get rid of them all—

***'Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Where rumor of oppression never more
May reach mine ear.'*** "

And they have thought to find this lodge in the wilderness of death. And so they long for the wings of a dove to flee away from the degenerate race of men. Not so this Apostle. He was no such coward as to fly from evils—he sought to better them. The Apostle loved his race. He was no man-hater. He could say that he loved them all and thus he had prayed for them all and had carried them in the heart of Christ continually to the throne of mercy.

Others, too, have thought by getting out of the world they should get rid of their disappointments. They have struggled very hard to get rich, or they have strived for fame and they have not succeeded, in their ambitious designs and then they have said, "Let me die." Now the Apostle was never disappointed in seeking wealth for he never cared for it. He had no desires whatever beyond food and raiment. He wished for nothing more and as for rank, that he utterly despised. He did tread beneath his feet as the mire of the streets all the honors that man could give him. Nor was the Apostle in any sense a disappointed man. He had sought to spread his Master's fame and he had done it. He had a standard to plant and right well had he planted it. He had a Gospel to preach and he did preach it everywhere with all his might. He was a singularly happy man and therefore he had no such cowardly reasons for desiring to depart.

Others, too, have said that they wished to depart because of their great suffering. Now the Apostle thought of no such dastardly flight. He was ready for all weathers. He had been beaten with rods. He had been stoned. He had been shipwrecked. But he could say, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me." He did not wish to escape from persecution. He rejoiced in it. He had often sung a hymn in prison, besides that hymn which he had sung with Silas for his companion. He had often shouted in the prospect of the block or the flames. Nor did he wish to die because of old age, for he was not an aged man when he wrote this Epistle. He was just then, I suppose, in full vigorous health and though in prison I do think that an angel might have ransacked the whole world before he could have found a happier man than the Apostle Paul—for a man's happiness consists not in the wealth which he possesses. In the bare dungeons of Rome, Paul, the tent maker, had a glory about him which Nero never had in all his palaces. And there was a happiness there to which Solomon in all his glory never had attained. So then, the desire of Paul to depart is for these reasons far superior to the desire of the mere philosopher, or of the disappointed worldling.

What, then, made Paul wish to depart? I shall put it thus—the same reasons prompt the desires of every true Believer. But they can have no power whatever with many here, who have no desire to depart—because for you to die would be not happiness and bliss, but an eternal weight of misery. First, the Apostle felt a desire to depart because he knew that in departing and being with Christ he should be clean rid of sin. Paul hated sin. Every true Believer does the same. There have been times with us, Brothers and Sisters, when we could say, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Sin has been our plague. Like righteous Lot in Sodom, the sins of others have vexed us. But, alas, we have had to bear a Sodom in our own hearts, which has vexed us still more. As to the trials and troubles of this world, they are nothing at all to the Believer compared with the annoyance of sin. Could he get rid of his unbelief, of his murmuring disposition, of his hasty temper—could he get rid of the various temptations of Satan, could he be clean and pure and perfect, he would be thoroughly satisfied.

And this made the Apostle long to depart. "Oh," said he to himself, one Baptism in the stream of death and I am perfect—but to pass the chill and dreary stream and I shall stand—without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—before the Throne of God."

The dog of Hell shall follow us to the very edge of Jordan, but he cannot swim that stream. The arrows of temptation will be shot at us as long as we are here, but on the other side of Jordan these darts can never wound us again. Rejoice, then, Believer, in the prospect of death, because in dying you are once and for all clean rid of sin! When I lay down this body I have laid down every infirmity and every lust and every temptation—and when clothed upon with that house which is from Heaven, I have girt about my loins perfection and unsullied purity.

But oh—you that believe not in Christ—you do not desire to die for such a reason as this. For you there is no such a prospect. For you to die will be but to plunge deeper into sin. You sin now and when you die your spirit will descend to Hell, where, in the midst of fit companions, whose guilt is ripened, you shall spend an eternity in oaths and curses and blasphemies. O Sinner! Today you sow your sins in the furrows and when you die you shall reap the harvest. Today you break the clods, today you work in the husbandry of iniquity, then there shall be a shouting of an awful harvest home. When pressed down with the sheaves of your sins, Divine justice shall bring forth the harvest of misery and torment to you. You have reason enough to long to *live*, because for you to die is to reap the reward of your iniquities.

Again—Paul longed to die for another reason, because he knew that as soon as he should depart he would meet his Brethren in faith who had gone before. This desire also prompts you and me. I long to see, though it is but a few hours since we have lost their society, those two sisters and the dear brother who during this week have departed in Christ. Worshipping among us but a few days ago, it seems a strange thing to talk of them as being in Heaven. But there they are, far from the reach of mortal vision. At our departure we shall see them. It was our happiness to see them not long before their departure and to mark it down as one of the notables of our life, that these three, all of them alike died in quiet peace singing themselves into Heaven, never staying their song, so long as memory and breath held out. We shall see them. But we have others we are longing for.

Some of you may remember the departed wife, scarce cold within her grave. Many of you look back to dear little ones taken away in their infancy, carried off to their father's God. Many of you remember aged parents—those that taught you in the way of God. The mother from whose lips you learned the first verse of Scripture and the father upon whose arms you were carried for the first time up to the House of God. They are gone. But the joyous reflection remains that we are going in the same direction and that we shall meet them soon. Some of us can look back through generations and trace our pedigree through the saints and we are longing for the time when the whole band of us, those who have gone in

olden times and those who remain may sing together that new song of praise to our common God. Beloved, we have high joys in prospect—we shall soon join the general assembly and Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven.

Our companions now are but poor and despised, but we shall soon be Brethren with princes. Moses who was king in Jeshurun and David who ruled over Israel, shall not be ashamed to call us Brethren, for the highest himself shall acknowledge us and He that on the Throne does sit shall lead us unto living fountains of waters and in His gracious fellowship shall wipe away all tears from off our faces. I think that the company of Apostles and Prophets and holy martyrs and confessors, who have gone before, will be a very sweet part of the bliss of the redeemed. And all this may make us pant to depart.

But O, you ungodly ones! You who have never been converted and who fear not God, this hope is not for you. You must go to your own place. And where must you go? To your drunk companions damned before you? Must you go down to the pit with harlots and with the profane? Where to, where to, you careless man, you lover of sin? Where are you going when you die? Your answer might well be this doleful ditty—"I am going to be the guest of devils. I am going to feast with fiends. I am going to abide with murderers and whoremongers and adulterers and with such as God has condemned. These must be my companions forever."

Methinks I see the wheat of God standing in the valley every year, about to be gathered into the garner of Heaven in its own place and yonder I see the tares and what is the message for them? "Gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them." And who knows in what bundle you may be? You may be bound up in the same bundle with murderers and suicides. Yes, the men that you despise may be your companions in the bundle of the wicked. The drunkard and the swearer, whom some of you supposedly good people look down upon with scorn, may be your bundle companions, your bed-fellows forever when you make your bed in Hell and abide in everlasting torment.

But last of all, Paul's grand reason for desiring to depart was to be with Christ. Again I say, simple though the words be—*to be with Christ*—have all Heaven condensed in them. Like the sounding of the silver trumpet of jubilee rings this precious sentence, "to be with Christ." Like the harps of the glorified—like the singing of the redeemed, like the hallelujahs of Paradise, does this ring upon my ears, "To be with Christ." Lift up your voices, you seraphim! Tune your hearts anew, you seraphs! Shout for joy you blood-washed—but your loudest strains cannot excel the thundering glory of this magnificent but brief sentence, "to be with Christ, which is far better."

This, my Beloved—this shall well repay the tiresome pilgrimage of life. This reward shall be sufficient for all our contests with temptation, for all the shame we have endured in following Christ, in the midst of a wicked generation. This, this shall be all the Heaven that our largest desires shall crave. This immensity of bliss shall stretch across eternity.

But O unbeliever, what have you to do with such a hope as this? You cannot desire to depart and to be with Christ, for what is Christ to you? Today you despise Him. The Man of Sorrow you esteem not. Jesus of Nazareth you do not regard. He is preached to you every Sabbath Day, but you despise Him. With many tears have I presented Him to you, but you have shut your heart against Him. He has knocked at your door and there He stands shivering even now, but you will not admit Him. Beware, you that despise Jesus, for in another world you shall see Him after another fashion. You, too, shall be with Him, but it shall be but for an instant—summoned before His bar, dragged reluctantly to His dread tribunal, you shall see Him Whom you despise. You shall see Him and not another.

But oh, with what astonishment will you behold Him and what amazement shall seize upon you! You shall see him, but no longer as the humble man! His eyes shall be as flames of fire. Out of His mouth shall go a two-edged sword. About Him shall be wrapped “the rainbow wreath and robes of storm,” and He shall speak in louder tones than the noise of many waters and in great thundering shall He address you, “Depart you cursed into everlasting fire in Hell, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Oh “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little.” Oh, go to your houses. May God the Spirit draw you to your chambers and may you there be led to fall upon your knees, confess your guilt and humbly seek for pardon, through that precious blood which flows freely this day and which will freely give pardon to you if with all your heart you seek it.

May God's Spirit lead you to seek that you may find and may you and I and all of us, in the day of our departure, see the land before us—the happy shore of Heaven. May we know that as our vessel sails from earth it shall only take a hasty voyage “to be with Christ which is far better.” God the Spirit visit you now, God the Son bless you, God the Father remember you, through Jesus. Amen.

[The absence of the regular reporter is the publishers' apology for the incorrectness of this sermon. Mr. SPURGEON has found it utterly impossible to recall the words which he uttered and which many of his hearers declare to have been attended with peculiar power.]

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THE GOSPEL'S POWER IN A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE

NO. 640

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

*“Only let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ.”
Philippians 1:27.*

THE word “conversation” does not merely mean our talk, one with another, but the whole course of our life and behavior in the world. The Greek word signifies the actions and the privileges of citizenship and we are to let our whole citizenship—our actions as citizens of the new Jerusalem—be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ. Observe, dear Friends, the difference between the exhortations of the legalists and those of the Gospel. He who would have you perfect in the flesh exhorts you to *work* that you may be saved, that you may accomplish a meritorious righteousness of your own and so may be accepted before God.

But he who teaches the doctrines of Divine Grace urges you to holiness for quite another reason. He teaches you are saved because you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and he speaks to as many as are saved in Jesus and asks them to make their actions conformable to their position. He only seeks what he may reasonably expect to receive—“Let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ. You have been saved by it, you profess to glory in it, you desire to extend it. Let, then, your conversation be such as becomes it.”

The one, you perceive, bids you to *work* that you may enter Heaven by your working. The other exhorts you to labor because Heaven is yours as the *gift* of Divine Grace and he would have you act as one who is made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Some persons cannot hear an exhortation without at once crying out that we are legal. Such persons will always find this Tabernacle the wrong place for them to feed in. We are delighted to preach good high doctrine and to insist upon it that salvation is of Grace alone! But we are equally delighted to preach good high *practice* and to insist upon it, that that grace which does not make a man better than his neighbors is a grace which will never take him to Heaven, nor render him acceptable before God!

I have already remarked that the exhortation is given in a form which is highly reasonable. The followers of any other religion, as a rule, are conformed to their religion. No nation has ever yet risen above the character of its so-called gods. Look at the disciples of Venus—were they not sunk deep in licentiousness? Look at the worshippers of Bacchus—let their Bacchanalian rebels tell how they entered into the character of their deity. The worshippers to this day of the goddess Kale—the goddess of thieves and murderers—the Thugs—enter most heartily into the spirit of the idol that they worship.

We do not marvel at the crimes of the ancients when we recollect the gods whom they adored—Moloch, who delighted in the blood of little children. Jupiter, Mercury and the like, whose actions stored in the classical dictionary are enough to pollute the minds of youth. We marvel not that licentiousness abounded, for “like gods, like people.” “A people are never better than their religion,” it has often been said—but in most cases they are rather worse. It is strictly in accordance with nature that a man's religion should season his conversation. Paul puts it, therefore, to you who profess to be saved by Jesus Christ, “Let your conversation be as it becomes the Gospel of Christ.”

To get at this we must meditate for two or three minutes upon what the Gospel is, then take up the points in which our conversation ought to be like to the Gospel. And finally, utter a few earnest words to press upon professors of religion here the stern necessity of letting their conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

I. “THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST!” WHAT IS IT? We look at the last two words, “of Christ.” Indeed, if you understand Christ you understand the Gospel. Christ is the Author of it. He, in the council chamber of eternity proposed to become the Surety for poor fallen man! He, in the fullness of time, worked out eternal redemption for as many as His Father had given Him. He is the Author of it as its Architect and as its Builder. We see in Christ Jesus the Alpha and the Omega of the Gospel. He has provided, in the treasury of Grace, all that is necessary to make the Gospel the Gospel of our salvation.

And as He is the Author of it, so He is the matter of it. It is impossible to preach the Gospel without preaching the Person, the work, the offices, the Character of Christ. If Christ is preached, the Gospel is promulgated and if Christ is put in the background, then there is no Gospel declared. “God forbid that I should know anything among you,” said the Apostle, “save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” And so saying, he was carrying out his commission to preach the Gospel both to Jews and to Gentiles. The sum total, the essential, the marrow—what the old Puritans would have called the *quintessence* of the Gospel—is Christ Jesus! So that when we

have done preaching the Gospel we may say, "Now of the things which we have spoken He is the sum," and we may point to Him in the manger, to Him on the Cross, to Him risen, to Him coming in the second advent, to Him reigning as Prince of the kings of the earth—yes, point to Him everywhere—as the sum total of the Gospel.

It is also called "the Gospel of Christ," because it is He who will be the Finisher of it. He will put the finishing stroke to the work as He laid the foundation stone. The Believer does not begin in Christ and then seek perfection in himself. No, as we run the heavenly race we are still looking to Jesus! As His hand first tore away the sin which does so easily beset us and helped us to run the race with patience, so that same hand shall hold out the olive branch of victory, shall weave it into a chaplet of Glory and put it about our brow. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ—His property. It glorifies His Person. It is sweet with the savor of His name. It bears throughout the mark of His artistic fingers. If the heavens are the work of God's fingers and the moon and the stars are by His ordinance, so we may say of the whole plan of salvation—the whole of it, great Jesus, is Your workmanship and by Your ordinance it stands fast!

It is "the Gospel of Jesus Christ," and though hundreds of times this has been explained, it will not be amiss to go over it again. It is the "good-spell," the "good news" of Jesus Christ and it is "good news" emphatically, because it clears away sin—the worst evil on earth. Better still, it sweeps away death and Hell! Christ came into the world to take sin upon His shoulders and to carry it away, hurling it into the red sea of His atoning blood. Christ, the Scapegoat, took the sin of His people upon His own head and bore it all away into the wilderness of forgetfulness, where, if it is searched for, it shall be found no more forever.

This is "good news," for it tells that the cancer at the vitals of humanity has been cured! That the leprosy which rose even to the very brow of manhood has been taken away! Christ has filled a better stream than the river Jordan and now says to the sons of men, "Go, wash and be clean." Besides removing the worst of ills, the Gospel is "good news" because it brings the best of blessings. What does it do but give life to the dead? It opens dumb lips, unstops deaf ears and unseals blind eyes! Does it not make earth the abode of peace? Has it not shut the doors of Hell upon Believers and opened the gates of Heaven to all who have learned to trust in Jesus' name? "Good news?" Why that word "good" has got a double meaning when it is applied to the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Well were angels employed to go and tell it and happy are the men who spend and are spent in the proclamation of such glad tidings of great joy. "God is reconciled!" "Peace on earth!" "Glory to God in the highest!" "Goodwill towards men!" God is glorified in salvation, sinners are delivered

from the wrath to come and Hell does not receive the multitudes of men, but Heaven is filled with the countless host redeemed by blood! It is “good news,” too, because it is a thing that could not have been invented by the human intellect. It was news to angels!—They have not ceased to wonder at it yet! They still stand looking upon the Mercy Seat, desiring to know more of it. It will be news in eternity! We shall—

**“Sing with rapture and surprise,
His loving kindness in the skies.”**

The “good news,” put simply into a few words, is just this—“that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” So much, then, for what the Gospel is.

II. Now I am not going to speak to those who do not welcome the Gospel—I will speak to them another time. I pray God helps them to believe it, but today I have especially to speak to Believers. The text says we are to LET OUR CONVERSATION BE SUCH AS BECOMES THE GOSPEL. What sort of conversation, then, shall we have? In the first place the Gospel is very simple. It is unadorned—no meretricious ornaments to clog the pile. It is simple—“not with enticing words of man’s wisdom.” It is grandly sublime in its simplicity. Let the Christian be such. It does not become the Christian minister to be arrayed in blue and scarlet and fine linen and vestments and robes—these belong to Antichrist and are described in the book of the Revelation as the sure marks of the whore of Babylon.

It does not become the Christian man or the Christian woman to be guilty of spending hours in the adornment of his or her person. Our adornment should be “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.” There should be about our manner, our speech, our dress, our whole behavior that simplicity which is the very soul of beauty. Those who labor to make themselves admirable in appearance, by gaudy ornaments, miss the road. Beauty is its own adornment and, “she is most adorned when unadorned the most.”

The Christian man ought always to be simple in all respects. I think wherever you find him, you ought not to need a key to him. He should not be like certain books that you cannot make out without having somebody tell you the hard words. He should be a transparent man like Nathaniel—“an Israelite, indeed, in whom there is no guile.” The man who catches the spirit of his Master is, like Christ, a child-man, a man-child. You know they called Him, “that holy Child, Jesus.” So let us be, remembering that, “Except we are converted and become as little children,” who are emi-

nently simple and child-like, "we cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

In the next place, if our conversation is such as becomes the Gospel, we shall remember that the Gospel is pre-eminently true. There is nothing in the Gospel which is false—no admixture, nothing put in as an "argumentum ad hominem" to catch the popular ear. It tells the Truth—the naked Truth—and if men dislike it, the Gospel cannot help it. It is gold without dross. It is pure water without admixture. Now such should the Christian be. He should make his conversation true. The saints are men of honor, but sometimes, Brethren, I think that many of us talk too much to speak nothing but the Truth of God.

I do not know how people could bring out broadsheets every morning with so much news if it were all true! I suppose there must be a little padding to fill it up and some of that is very poor stuff. And people that keep on talking, talking, talking, cannot grind all meal—surely it must be, some of it—rather coarse bran. And in the conversation of a good many professing Christians, how much there is that is scandal, if not slander, uttered against other Christians? How much uncharitableness, if not willful falsehood, is spoken by some professors? Too often a rebuke is taken up heedlessly and repeated without any care being taken to ascertain whether it is true or not.

The Christian's lips should speak truth when falsehood drops from the lips of all other men. A Christian man should never need to take an oath because his word is as good as an oath—his, "yes," should be, "yes." And his, "no, no." It is for him to so live and speak that he shall be in good repute in all society—if not for the etiquette of his manners, certainly for the truthfulness of his utterances! Show me a man that is habitually or frequently a liar and you show me a man who will have his portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone!

I do not care to what denomination of Christians he may belong, if a man speaks the thing that is not, I am sure he is none of Christ's. And it is very sad to know that there are some in all fellowships who have this great and grievous fault—that you cannot trust them in what they say. God deliver us from that! Let our conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ and then it will be invariably truthful! Or, if there is error in it, it will always be through misadventure and never on purpose or from carelessness.

In the next place, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a very fearless Gospel. It is the very reverse of that pretty thing called "modern charity." The last created devil is "modern charity." "Modern charity" goes cap in hand round to us all, and it says, "You are *all* right, every one of you! Do not quarrel any longer! Sectarianism is a horrid thing—down with it! Down

with it!" And so it tries to induce all sorts of persons to withhold a part of what they believe—to silence the testimony of all Christians upon points wherein they differ. I believe that that thing called Sectarianism nowadays is none other than true honesty.

Be a Sectarian, my Brother—be profoundly a Sectarian! I mean, by that, hold everything which you see to be in God's Word with a tighter grasp and do not give up even the little pieces of Truth. At the same time, let that Sectarianism which makes you hate another man because he does not agree with you—let that be far from you! But never consent to that unholy league and covenant which seems to be rife throughout our country which would put a padlock on the mouth of every man and send us all about as if we were dumb—which says to me, "You must not speak against the errors of such-and-such a Church." And to another, "You must not reply." We cannot but speak! If we did not, the stones in the street might cry out against us!

That kind of charity is unknown to the Gospel. Now hear the Word of God! "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. He that believes not"—what?—"shall get to Heaven some other way?" NO!—"shall be *damned*"! That is the Gospel. You perceive how boldly it launches out its censure? It does not *pretend*, "you may reject Me and go by another road and at last get safely to your journey's end!" No, no, no!—You "shall be damned," it says! Do you not perceive how Christ puts it? Some teachers come into the world and say to all, "Yes, Gentlemen, by your leave, you are all right. I have a point or two that you have not taught, just make room for me—I will not turn you out. I can stand in the same temple as yourself."

But hear what Christ says—"All that ever came before Me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them." Hear what His servant Paul says, "Though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you,"—what then?—"Let him be excused for his mistake?" No! But, "Let him be accursed"! Now this is strong language, but mark you, this is just how the Christian ought to live! As the Gospel is very fearless in what it has to say, so let the Christian always be. It strikes me that a "living" which becomes the Gospel of Christ is always a bold and fearless kind of living!

Some people go crawling through the world as if they asked some great man's permission to live. They do not know their own minds. They take their words out of their mouths and look at them and ask a friend or two's opinion. "What do you think of these words?" And when these friends censure them they put them in again and will not say them. Like jellyfish, they have no backbone. Now God has made men upright and it is a noble thing for a man to stand erect on his own feet. And it is a nobler thing,

still, for a man to say that in Christ Jesus he has received that freedom which is freedom, indeed, and therefore he will not be the slave of any man.

“O God,” says David, “I am Your servant, for You have loosed my bonds.” Happy is he whose bonds are loosed! Let your eyes be like that of an eagle, yes, let them be brighter still! Let them never be dimmed by the eyes of any other man. Let your heart be like that of the lion, fearless! Say of yourself—

**“Careless, myself a dying man,
Of dying men’s esteem,”**

I must live as in the sight of God, as I believe I should live, and then let man say his best or say his worst—it shall be no more than the chirping of a grasshopper when the sun goes down. “Who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, or the son of man that is but a worm?” Make yourselves like men! Be strong! Fear not! For only so will your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

But again, the Gospel of Christ is very gentle. Hear it speak! “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Here is its spirit in its Founder—“He will not quench the smoking flax. A bruised reed He will not break.” Moreover, bad temper, snapping off of people’s heads, making men offenders for a word—all this is quite contrary to the Gospel. There are some people who seem to have been nursed upon vinegar and whose entire attitude far better suits Sinai than Zion. You might think that they had always come to the mount that might not be touched, which burns with fire, for they seem, *themselves*, to burn with fire. I may say to them that the best of them is sharper than a thorn hedge.

Now, dear Friends, let it never be so with us. Be firm, be bold, be fearless—but be cautious! If you have a lion’s heart, have a lady’s hand. Let there be such a gentleness about your carriage that the little children may not be afraid to come to you and the publican and harlot may not be driven away by your hostility, but invited to goodness by the gentleness of your words and acts. Again, the Gospel of Christ is very loving. It is the speech of the God of Love to a lost and fallen race. It tells us, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

It proclaims in every Word the Divine Grace of Him “who loved us and gave Himself for us.” “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” This same mind which was in Christ Jesus should dwell richly in us. His last command to His disciples was, “Love one another.” He that loves is born of God, while without this Grace, whatever we may think of ourselves, or others may think of us, we are

really, in God's sight, nothing better than sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Is not this an age in which we shall do well to direct our attention to the flower of Paradise? The atmosphere of the Church should foster this heavenly plant to the highest perfection. The world ought to point to us and say, "See how these Christians love one another? Not in word only, but in deed and in truth!"

I care not for that love which calls me a dearly beloved Brother and then if I happen to differ in sentiment and practice, treats me as a schismatic, denies me the rights of the brotherhood, and if I do not choose to subscribe to an arbitrarily imposed contribution to its funds, seizes my goods and sells them in the name of the law, order and Church of Christ! From all such shall our good Lord deliver us! But oh, for more real hearty union and love to all the saints—for more of that realization of the fact that we are *one* in Christ Jesus.

At the same time pray for more love to *all* men. We ought to love all our hearers, and the Gospel is to be preached by us to every creature. I hate sin everywhere, but I love and wish to love yet more and more every day the souls of the worst and vilest of men. Yes, the Gospel speaks of love and I must breathe it forth, too, in every act and deed. If our Lord was Love Incarnate, and we are His disciples, "let all take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of Him."

The Gospel of Christ, again, is the Gospel of mercy and if any man would act as becomes the Gospel, he must be a man of mercy. Do I see him? He is praying. He has been to the sacramental table and he has been drinking the wine which betokens the Savior's blood—what a good man he is! See him on Monday—he has got his hands on his Brother's throat, with—"Pay me what you owe!" Is that such as becomes the Gospel of Christ? There he sits—he will give his subscription to a charity, but he will grind down the needle-woman! He will get fat on her blood and bones! He will take a grasp, if he can, of the poor and sell them and devour them as though they were bread and yet, at the same time, "for a pretense he will make long prayers."

Is this such as becomes the Gospel of Christ? I think not. The Gospel of Christ is mercy, generosity, liberality. It receives the beggar and hears his cry! It picks up even the vile and undeserving and scatters lavish blessings upon them and it fills the bosom of the naked and of the hungry with good things. Let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ! You *miserly* and *stingy* people have not a conversation such as becomes the Gospel of Christ! There might be plenty of money for God's treasury, for God's Church and for God's poor if there were not some who seem to live only to amass and to hoard!

Their life is diametrically opposed to the whole current and spirit of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. Forgive all who offend you! Help all, as far as you are able to do it, live a life of unselfishness! Be prepared, as much as lies in you, to do good unto all men and especially to the household of faith! And so shall your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ. I must not, however, omit to say that the Gospel of Christ is *holy*. You cannot find it excusing sin. It pardons it, but not without an Atonement so dreadful that sin never seems so exceedingly sinful as in the act of mercy which puts it away.

“Holy! Holy! Holy!” is the cry of the Gospel—and such is the cry of cherubim and seraphim. Now, if our conversation is to be like the Gospel, we must be holy, too. There are some things which the Christian must not even name, much less indulge in. The grosser vices are to him things to be hidden behind the curtain and totally unknown. The amusements and pleasures of the world, so far as they may be innocent, are his, as they are other men's. But wherein they become sinful or doubtful, he discards them with disgust, for he has secret sources of joy and needs not, therefore, to go and drink of that muddy river of which thirsty worldlings are so fond. He seeks to be holy, as Christ is holy. And there is no conversation which becomes the Gospel of Christ except that.

III. Dear Friends, I might thus continue, for the subject is a very wide one. But I stop because, unhappily for me, though perhaps happily for your patience, my time has gone. Having just indicated what the Christian life ought to be, I must, in a few words, plead with you that by the power of God's Holy Spirit you will seek to make your lives such. I could mention many reasons—I will only give you one or two.

The first is, if you do not live like this, you will make your fellow members who are innocent of your sin, suffer. This ought to be a very convincing motive. If a Christian man could dishonor himself and bear the blame alone, why he might put up with it, but you cannot! I say, Sir, if you are seen intoxicated, or if you are known to fall into some sin of the flesh, you will make the life of every poor girl in the Church harder than it is. And every poor young man who has to put up with persecution will feel that you have put a sting into the arrows of the wicked which could not otherwise have been there. You sin against the congregation of God's people!

I know there are some of you here that have to suffer a good deal for Christ's sake. The jeer rings in your ears from morning to night and you learn to put up with it manfully. But it is very hard when they can say to you, “Look at So-and-So—he is a Church member! Look at what he did—you are *all* a parcel of hypocrites!” Now, my dear Friends, you know that is not true! You know that there are many in our churches of whom the

world is not worthy—the excellent, the devout, the Christ-like. Do not sin, then, for their sakes, lest you make them to be grieved and sorely vexed.

Again, do you not see how you make your Lord to suffer, for they do not lay your sins at *your* door merely, but they say that springs from your *religion*. If they would impute the folly to the fool I might not care! But they impute it to the wisdom which must have made that fool wise if he could have learned. They will lay it to my door—that does not matter much—I have long lost my character! But I cannot bear it should be laid at Christ's door—at the door of the Gospel.

When I said just now that I had lost my character, I meant just this—that the world loathes me and I would not have it do otherwise! So let it, I say—there is no love lost between us. If the world hates Christ's minister, he can only say he desires that he may never inherit the curse of those who love the world, “in whom the love of the Father is not.” Yet it has ever been the lot of the true Christian minister to be the butt of slander and, nevertheless, to glory in the Cross with all its shame.

But I know, dear Friends, you would not, any of you, wish that I should bear the reproach of your sins and yet I have to do it very often—not very often for many, but for some. There are those, of whom I might tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ. And some others whom we would pluck out of the fire, hating the garment spotted with the flesh—they bring sad dishonor upon us, upon the ministry—upon the Gospel and upon Christ Himself. You do not want to do that! At least, I hope you do not. Then let your conversation be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ!

And then, remember, dear Friends, unless your conversation is such, you will pull down all the witness that you have ever borne for Christ. How can your Sunday school children believe what you tell them when they see your actions contradict your teaching? How can your own children at home believe in your religion when they see the godlessness of your life? The men at the factory will not believe in your going to Prayer Meeting when they see you walking inconsistently among them. Oh, the great thing the Church needs is more holiness! The worst enemies of the Church are not the infidels—really, one does not know who the infidels are nowadays—they are so small a fry and so few of them, that one would have to hunt to find them out!

No, the worst enemies of the Church are the hypocrites, the formalists, the mere professors, the inconsistent walkers. You, if there are any such here—you pull down the walls of Jerusalem, you open the gates to her foes and, as much as lies in you, you serve the devil! May God forgive you! May Christ forgive you! May you be washed from this atrocious sin! May

you be brought humbly to the foot of the Cross to accept mercy, which, until now, you have rejected! It is shocking to think how persons dare to remain members of Christian churches and even to enter the pulpit when they are conscious that their private life is foul! Oh, how can they do it?

How is it that their hearts have grown so hard? What? Has the devil bewitched them? Has he turned them away from being men and made them as devilish as himself that they should dare to pray in public and to sit at the sacramental table and to administer ordinances while their hands are foul and their hearts unclean, and their lives are full of sin? I charge you, if there are any of you whose lives are not consistent, give up your profession, or else make your lives what they should be!

May the eternal Spirit, who still winnows His Church, blow away the chaff and leave only the good golden wheat upon the floor! And if you know yourselves to be living in any sin, may God help you to mourn over it, to loathe it, to go to Christ about it tonight—to take hold of Him, to wash His feet with your tears, to repent unfeignedly—and then to begin anew in His strength a life which shall be such as becomes the Gospel. I think I hear some ungodly person here saying, “Well I do not make any profession, I am all right.”

Now, listen, dear Friend, listen! I have got a word for you. A man is brought up before the magistrates and he says, “Well, I never made any profession of being an honest man.” “Oh,” says the magistrate, “there is six months for you then.” You see, he is a villain outright! And you that say “Oh, I never made any profession,” why, by putting yourselves on *that* ground, you place yourselves among the condemned ones! But some people make a boast of it. “I never made a profession.” Never made a profession of doing your duty to your Maker? Never made a profession of being obedient to the God in whose hands your breath is? Never made a profession of being obedient to the Gospel?

Why, it will be very short work with you, when you come to be tried at last. There will need to be no witnesses, for you never made a profession—you never pretended to be right. What would you think of a man who said, “Well, I never made a profession of speaking the truth.” “Well,” says another, “I never made a profession of being chaste.” Why, you would say, “Let us get out of this fellow’s company, because evidently nothing but evil can come from him for he is not good enough even to make a profession!”

Now I put that strongly that you may remember it! Will you go home and just meditate on this—“I never made a profession of being saved. I never made a profession of repenting of my sins and therefore I am every day making a profession of being God’s enemy—of being impenitent, of being unbelieving! And when the devil comes to look for his own he will

know me, for I make a profession of being one of his by not making a profession of being one of Christ's" ?

The fact is, I pray God to bring us all here first, to be Christ's, and then to make a profession of it. Oh that your heart might be washed in Jesus' blood and then, having given it to Christ, give it to Christ's people! The Lord bless these words of mine for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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CHRIST'S MOTIVE AND OURS

NO. 2232

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
NOVEMBER 29, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For your sakes.”
2 Corinthians 8:9.

“For His sake.”
Philippians 1:29.

The true test of any action lies in its motive. Many a deed which seems to be glorious is really mean and ignoble because it is done with a base intention. While other actions which appear to be poor and paltry, if we truly understood them, would be seen to be full of the glory and beauty of a noble purpose. The mainspring of a watch is the most important part of it. The spring of an action is everything. My sermon from these two texts will be on the motive which inspired Christ's redeeming work and the motive which should inspire our service for Him. He *did all* for our sakes—we should *do all* for His sake. Fix your attention, then, chiefly, not on the deed, but on the *motive* which is its root.

The less of self in any effort, the nobler it is. A great work, undertaken and completed from selfish motives, is much less praiseworthy than the feeble endeavor put forth to help other people. Selfishness is, perhaps, the worst of all meanness, but *spiritual* selfishness is the form of the evil most to be dreaded. With Christ there was no self-seeking. Not for Himself did He come to earth—not for Himself did He suffer. He lived for others and died for others. “For you know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might be rich.” In this glorious unselfishness Christ is not only our Savior, He is also our Example. As He did not live for self, we, too, must learn to deny ourselves and live like He. It is in living and acting, “for His sake,” that we shall most truly “follow His steps.”

We are often told, in these days, that we should live for the good of others, and we ought to heed the call. But there is so little in our fellow men to call forth the spirit of self-sacrifice that if we have no higher motive, we shall soon become tired of our efforts on their behalf. The true way is to live for *Christ* and then, “for His sake,” seek to save our fellow men. With such a constraining power we shall not be weary in well-doing, for though men may fail us, and frequent discouragement meet us in our toil, our impelling force will always be the same. As we whisper it to ourselves again and again, “for His sake,” we shall be made strong to do or to suffer.

If you thus go forth to the service of each day, "for His sake," realizing that He, "for your sakes," gave Himself to toil and agony, and even to death, itself, you will daily grow into sympathy with Christ. His Divine compassion for men will take hold upon you—you will be lifted up above the life of the world and, as you go about doing good, you will be able to touch the sorrow of the earth with a tender hand. You will grow like He you serve.

I have heard of a man who lived in a certain town and while he lived, was greatly misunderstood. It was known that he had a large income, yet he lived a miserly life, and loud were the murmurs at the scanty help he gave to those around him. He stinted himself in many ways and hoarded his money. But when he died, the popular verdict was reversed, for *then* the motive of all his economy was manifested. He left his fortune to build a reservoir and an aqueduct, to bring a constant supply of pure water to the town where he had been despised and misunderstood! This was the chief need of the people and for a long time they had suffered much from drought and disease because of the scanty water supply. All the years that they had misjudged him, he was silently and unselfishly living for their sakes. When they discovered his motive, it was too late to do anything for him further than to hand down to future generations the memory of his noble and generous deed. But *we* can do much, "for His sake," who has brought to us the *living water* and who, though He died for us, is now alive, again, and will live forevermore. If He thus loved me, and lived for me, nothing that I can do is too much for Him—

***"When often, like a wayward child,
I murmur at His will,
Then this sweet word, 'For Jesus' sake,'
My restless heart can still.
I bow my head and gently led,
His easy yoke I take—
And all the day, and all the way,
An echo in my heart shall say—
'For Jesus sake!'"***

Without dwelling on the immediate connection of the words which I have chosen from two familiar and beautiful verses, I would, with these two texts, weave a fabric of love. See what Jesus did for us and then think what we can do for Jesus. "For your sakes" Christ did His deeds of love. "For His sake" we are called upon to live and labor among the sons of men. May His love enkindle ours!

I. First, let us consider THE MOTIVE OF CHRIST'S WORK. "*For your sakes.*" As many of you as have believed in Christ Jesus may know that, "*for your sakes,*" the Lord of Glory stooped to be a suffering, dying Man.

In meditating on the motive that moved the Lord Jesus to come to your rescue, consider, first, *the august Person* who undertook your salvation and died, "for your sakes." He was God. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He made the heavens. "Without Him was not anything made that was made." The angels delighted to do Him homage! Every seraph's wing would fly at His bidding—all the host of Heaven worshipped at His feet. All the powers of Nature were under His control. He needed *nothing* to make Him glorious—all things were His and the power to make

more than all! He might truly say, "If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is Mine and the fullness thereof."

Hymned day without night by all the sacred choristers, He did not lack for praise. Nor did He lack for servants—legions of angels were always ready to do His commands, hearkening unto the voice of His word. It was this God, this Ever-Blessed One who was, from eternity with the Father, and in whom the Father had infinite delight, who looked upon men with the eye of love! He that was born in Bethlehem's manger was the Infinite as well as the Infant. And He that lived, here, the life of a peasant, toiling and suffering, was that same God who made the heavens and the earth, but who deigned to be Incarnate for our sakes. Well might Isaiah, in his prophetic vision, proclaim the royal titles of the "Child" who was to be born and the "Son" who, in the fullness of time, would be given to us and for us—"The government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

Let this Truth of God sink into your souls, that it was *God* who came from Heaven, "for your sakes." It was no inferior being, no one like yourselves, but it was very God of very God who loved you with an everlasting and infinite affection! I have often turned that thought over in my mind, but I have never been able to express it as I have wished. If I were told that all the sons of men cared for me, that would be but as a drop in a bucket compared with Jehovah, Himself, regarding me! If it were said that all the princes of the earth had fallen at some poor man's feet and laid aside their dignities that they might relieve his necessities, it would be counted condescending kindness—but such an act would not be worthy to be spoken of in comparison with that infinite condescension and unparalleled love which brought the Savior from the skies to rescue and redeem such worthless rebels as we were! It is not possible that all the condescension of all the kind and compassionate men who have ever lived should be more than as a small grain that could not turn the scale compared with the everlasting hills of the Savior's wondrous love!

Think, too, of *the insignificant clients* on whom all this wealth of affection was poured. As you remember the Person who came here, "for your sakes," and then, wonderful stoop! consider who you are—who *we* are—for whose sakes He died, do not our hearts melt at the thought? Brothers and Sisters, if we truly know ourselves, we have a very poor opinion of ourselves when compared with Christ! Humility has been rightly said to be a correct estimate of ourselves. What were we but the most insignificant creatures? If our whole race had been blotted out, there need have been no gap in the creation of God, or if there had seemed to be a void for a moment, He had but to speak the word and myriads of creatures, prompt to obey His will, would have filled up the space! How was it that Jesus, the Son of God, should suffer for such insignificant worms—such insects of an hour as we are?

But we are not only insignificant, we are also wicked. "We have sinned with our fathers. We have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly." Even the Lord's children have to confess, "All we, like sheep, have gone

astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way.” But, oh, wonder of love, they can add, “and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all!” As sinners, we deserve nothing but God’s thunderbolts, yet, trusting in His dear Son, we receive nothing but His mercy! Having desperately sinned and broken all His Commandments, if He had said, “Perish forever, you guilty rebels,” He would have spoken only the sentence that strict justice required. Instead of that, He said to His Only-Begotten, “You shall die that they may not die. I will take You, My Son, My Isaac, and offer You upon the altar of sacrifice that through Your death men may live.” This is, indeed, a marvel of Grace! This must be one of the things the angels desire to look into! Our thoughts cannot compass this wondrous work, nor can our words describe it!

Many of us, also, were not only sinful, as the whole race is, but we were peculiarly sinful. Some of us feel inclined to dispute with Saul of Tarsus for the title, “chief of sinners.” It will always remain a wonder to me that the Son of God should have condescended to die *for me*. Were you a drunk and has the Holy Spirit shown you that Jesus died for you? And are you now rejoicing that you are washed in His precious blood? Were you one of the women who, like Mary Magdalene, were rightly called sinners? And have you, like she, washed your robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb? Then you are constrained to exclaim with wonder and gratitude—

**“Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?”**

I fancy that I hear one and another of you adoring God’s matchless mercy and saying, with wonder and surprise, “Is it really true that mercy is brought *to me* by God’s own Son? Could nothing less than the death of the Only-Begotten save my sinful soul? Did He condescend to *die for me*? Well may I admire the Grace thus manifested and raise my glad song of thanksgiving to Him who has done such great things for me!” Each of us can see some peculiarity in his own case. Some of us have not offended so grievously in outward conduct as others have done, but, then, we had better instruction in our childhood and, consequently, our sins were *doubly* heinous, for we sinned against light and knowledge! Some of us have had to violate our conscience terribly in order to sin as we have done. It may be that some of you lived 40 or 50 years as unbelievers and yet, at last, you were brought to bow at the dear feet that were pierced for you. Oh, I am sure you bless His name that ever He shed His blood for you—and I dare say you feel as I do, sometimes, that none in the Glory Land will be able to raise such a song of adoring gratitude as you will when all Heaven shall ring with the grand chorus of those who have been redeemed from among men!

Thus have we considered, first, the august Person who accomplished the great work of our redemption. And, secondly, the poor sinful creatures for whose sake He suffered.

Now let me invite you to consider *the wondrous work* which this master motive inspired. “For your sakes” God became Incarnate—the Son of God

took into union with Himself *our nature*—without which He could not have suffered and died. We read concerning Him, “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.” If we had never heard of that fact, before, our ears and heart would be astonished at the words! At the end of each clause I feel inclined to pause, and say, “Look! Look! Was there ever such a wonder as this—the Infinite became Incarnate! He ate and He hungered! He drank and He thirsted! He needed to be housed from the wintry storm, but He “had not where to lay His head.” He wanted human sympathy, but, “all His disciples forsook Him and fled.” He was the “Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” and all, “for your sakes.”

The words that follow our text tell us that, “He became poor.” You know that, in this world, the poverty of a man is usually reckoned in proportion to the position of affluence from which he has come down. One who was born a pauper is not relatively so poor as the man who was once a king, but has been reduced to beggary, for in the one case there is no experience of the luxury which riches can command, and in the other no adaptability to the shifts and privations of those who have always been in poverty. When the Christ of God, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, was forsaken by His Father, deserted by His friends, and left alone to suffer, “for your sakes,” that was the direst poverty that was ever known!

See your Lord beneath the olives of Gethsemane! Bloody sweat falls to the ground as, being in an agony, He prays more earnestly—“If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me”—but it must not pass from Him. “For your sakes” He must drink it! “For your sakes” every bitter drop must be drained! Then see Him as He stands, without an advocate, before Herod, Pilate and Caiaphas—“taken from prison and from judgment.” Mark His sufferings as they hound Him through the streets of Jerusalem, along the Sorrowful Way! Behold Him as, at last, they fasten His hands and His feet to the cruel wood and lift Him up ‘twixt earth and Heaven, to suffer the death of the Cross! Let those who will, depreciate the sufferings of Christ—I believe there was in the God-Man, Christ Jesus, an infinite capacity for suffering and that His body, so wondrously formed, was able to endure and did endure, infinitely more than human thought can imagine—while, at the same time, the sufferings of His soul were the very soul of His sufferings! Well did the Spirit-taught poet, Joseph Hart, write—

***“Much we talk of Jesus’ blood,
But how little’s understood!
Of His sufferings, so intense,
Angels have no perfect sense.
Who can rightly comprehend
Their beginning or their end?
‘Tis to God and God alone
That their weight is fully known.”***

All this Christ suffered, “for your sakes.” What love and gratitude ought to fill your heart as you think of all that Jesus bore on your behalf! If you had a wife who, when you lay sick, watched you with such anxious care that she undermined her own health and brought herself down to the grave through her devotion to you, oh, with what love you think of her, that she should suffer even unto death for your sake! If you were ever delivered from a watery grave, and the brave fellow who rescued you, him-

self, sank back into the water and was drowned, you can never forget his noble self-sacrifice, but you will always cherish his memory, for he died for your sake!

There is a story I have often read, of an American gentleman who was accustomed to go frequently to a tomb and plant fresh flowers. When someone asked why he did so, he said that when the time came for him to go to the war, he was detained by some business and the man who lay beneath the sod became his substitute, performed his duty and died in the battle. Over that carefully-kept grave, he had the words inscribed, "He died for me!" There is something melting in the thought of another dying for you—how much more melting is it when that One is the Christ of Calvary! Why, you feel, "Here is One of whom I never deserved anything, taking my place! Here is One whom I have badly treated and against whom I have offended—yet *He* suffered for me—He took my place, He bore my sins, He *died* for me! Therefore I will live for Him. I will love Him. I will give myself wholly and unreservedly to Him and to His blessed service." "For your sakes" Christ died. If you believe that, you cannot help loving and serving Him! It is an old theme which I am bringing before your minds, but it is the grandest theme that ever inspired a mortal tongue, or stirred a human heart!

I want you that love the Lord to consider, next, *the comprehensive motive* for which He worked the wondrous work which I have so imperfectly described—"For your sakes." I would have you remember that everything He was and everything He did was, "for your sakes." "For your sakes" the midnight prayer upon the bleak mountain's side. "For your sakes" the scoffing and the jeering that followed Him wherever He went. "For your sakes" the agony in the garden. "For your sakes" the flagellation of the Roman lash. "For your sakes" He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. "For your sakes" the shame and the spitting. "For your sakes," He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Say it, my Brothers and Sisters! Let your hearts say it now and wet the words with tears—"For our sakes He suffered all this."

Think of Him for a moment as He is taken down from the Cross. In fair white linen they wrap that blessed body, covered with its own blood. I think I see Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and Joseph of Arimathea, looking on that poor mangled frame. Those dear eyes, once so bright with love, now closed in death. Those wonder-working hands that multiplied the loaves and fishes, now stiff and cold. And those blessed feet that trod the sea, now all lifeless. O Joseph, and you, Mary, this was for you—"for your sakes"! But also for mine and for the sake of all my Brothers and Sisters who are resting by faith on that finished Sacrifice! They laid the dear body in Joseph's new tomb, the virgin sepulcher wherein never man had lain, and there they left our great Champion sleeping a while in the darkness of death. As He lay there, it was "for your sakes."

Yes, and blessed be His name, when the appointed morning came, He lived again, the stone was rolled away from the sepulcher and He came forth from the tomb! It was, "for your sakes," He rose. The 40 days He lived on earth were "for your sakes." And when from off the brow of Olivet

He ascended to His Father's right hand, it was, "for your sakes." He said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you." There, seated on His Throne of Glory, He holds the scepter and rules all worlds, "for your sakes." There as an Intercessor, He pleads with God, "for your sakes." There is not a gem in His crown but it is there, "for your sakes." There is not a jewel on His breastplate but it is there, "for your sakes." From head to foot He is what He is, "for your sakes." And when He shall come a second time—as soon He will—to judge the world in righteousness, and to "gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other" to usher in the reign of truth and establish His Throne forever, it will be all, "for your sakes," who have believed on His name! "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant Grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."

We might thus continue, but we will not. May God make this thought burn in your heart—All that Christ has done for us is for our sakes! I suppose it is because we are such fallen creatures that these considerations do not move us as they should. Granite is wax compared with our hearts! Oh, that we did but feel the fire of Jesus' love! Like coals of juniper which have a most vehement flame, our hearts should burn within us while we talked of that dear love which brought Him to the grave and took Him from the grave to the heavens—and shall bring Him back from the heavens to take His people up to be with Him where He is and to live with Him forever!

II. Having meditated on the motive which moved Christ in the work He accomplished for us, let us consider THE MOTIVE WHICH SHOULD INSPIRE ALL OUR SERVICE FOR HIM—"For His sake."

This second text is in the Epistle to the Philippians, first chapter, and 29th verse. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." What are we that we should be allowed the high honor of suffering, "for His sake"? It is a great privilege to do, or to be, or to bear *anything* for Him. Our suffering can never be worth a thought when compared with His—and any sacrifice that we could offer, "for His sake," would be small, indeed, when contrasted with the infinite Sacrifice that He has already made for our sakes. If you are rejoicing in the fact that Christ died for you, it will be very easy to prompt in your hearts the desire to do something, "for His sake."

I find in Scripture that the thought expressed in the words, "for His sake," may be enlarged and assume six or seven phases. For instance, in the Gospel of Matthew, fifth chapter, and 10th verse, our Lord puts it, "*for righteousness' sake*"—"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." I understand, then, that if a man suffers as a Christian for doing that which is right, he is suffering for Christ's sake. If he cannot and will not act disreputably and contrary to the commands of God, as others do, the suffering which he willingly bears, the loss which he cheerfully incurs because of his uprightness, is so much borne for Christ's sake.

If a man is out-and-out righteous in this world, he will be sure to be pointed at by certain persons as an oddity. He cannot lie, as others lie,

nor practice tricks in trade as others do—nor frequent their places of amusement, nor indulge in their lusts and, therefore, straightway they say—“He is a hypocrite! He is a cant!” And as they cannot understand the principle which inspires him, they impute to him motives which he abhors. This is how they talk—“He is doing it for the sake of being thought a saint,” “He is paid for it.” “He has some sinister motive or other.” Or else they sum up the whole matter by declaring, “He is a downright impostor.”

Now, if in any of these ways you are made to suffer for that which is right—for speaking the truth and acting the truth—never mind, Brothers and Sisters, but rather rejoice that you are permitted to suffer for Christ's sake! Say within yourself, “If my dear Lord lost all things for me, I may well lose some things for Him. If He was stripped to the last rag for me, I may well be content to be poor, ‘for His sake.’” Set your face like a flint and say, “We can be poor, but we cannot be dishonest. We can suffer, but we cannot sin.” Many men say, when we talk to them thus, “But, you know, we must live.” I do not see that there is any necessity for your living if you cannot live honestly. It would be better to die than to do wrong—any amount of suffering would be better than that we should deny our Lord and Master! Remember Peter's words, “If you suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are you: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,” or, as the Revised Version has the last clause, “Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord.”

In the Word of God, yet another form is given to this suffering or doing for Christ's sake, and it assumes this shape—“*for the Gospel's sake.*” In His first Epistle to the Corinthians, ninth chapter, and 23rd verse, Paul writes of what he did, “for the Gospel's sake,” and our Lord speaks of some who, when there was persecution, “for the Word's sake,” were offended. Now, if you are put to any shame for the sake of the Gospel, you suffer, “for His sake.” And if you labor to spread the Gospel and publish the Word of God—if it is your daily endeavor to tell to others God's way of salvation, you are doing something, “for His sake,” for the Gospel and Christ are so wrapped up together that what is done for the Gospel's sake, is done, “for His sake.”

Yet another view of the subject is given to us when the Apostle, in his letter to the Colossians, first chapter, and 24th verse, speaks of certain saints honoring Christ by suffering, “*for His body's sake, which is the Church.*” That is another form of rendering homage to Christ and doing what we do, “for His sake.” O Brothers and Sisters, we ought to do much more than we do for God's people! They are the body of Christ. We should, everyone of us, feel it an honor to be allowed to unloose the laces of His shoes and to wash His feet—well, poor saints are Christ's feet! When you are feeding them, you are feeding Him, for certainly, if Paul, in persecuting them, persecuted Christ, it is clear that you, when you are helping them for Christ's sake, are doing it for Him! Oh, lay out your lives for His Church's sake! His dear people deserve it at your hands and their Lord deserves it, too.

Then, again, Paul, in His second Epistle to Timothy, second chapter, and 10th verse, uses the phrase, “*for the elect's sakes,*” by which I think he

comprehends, not only those who are in the Church as yet, but those who are to be. Happy is that man who spends all his time in seeking out poor wanderers, that he may bring in God's elect! Happy is he who lays all his talents and all his strength upon the altar of God, consecrated to this aim—that he may find out the chosen of the Father, the redeemed by the blood of Jesus and, in the hand of the Spirit, be the instrument of bringing them back to their Father's house from which they have wandered. When you serve Christ's people, always do it, "for His sake."

Further, we have the expression, "*the Kingdom of God's sake,*" when our Master tells Peter, as recorded in the 18th chapter of Luke, 29th verse, that no one who has left anything for Him and for it, shall fail of present and eternal reward. This is another way in which we can serve Christ our King, by being willing to sacrifice "house, or parents, or brothers and sisters, or wife, or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake."

There is one other remarkable expression used by John in his second Epistle, at the second verse. He there speaks of something done, "*for the Truth's sake,* which dwells in us." Ah, it is not merely the Gospel we are to defend, but we are to defend that living Seed which the Holy Spirit has put into us, that Truth of God which we have tasted, handled and felt—that theology which is not that of the Book, only, but that which is written on the fleshy tablets of our hearts. I hope there are many of you who keep back your hand from sin because the Truth that is in you will not let you touch it—and who put forth *both* your hands to serve the Lord because the Truth that is in you compels you to it! The new nature, that living, incorruptible Seed, constrains you and you judge that if Christ died for you, you must live and, if necessary, you will die for Him. I would ask great things from those for whom Christ has done great things. When you make sin little, and Hell little, you also make Christ little—and then, in consequence, you think you owe Him but little and you will render Him but little. But when you feel the weight of sin and see the preciousness of your Redeemer and feel, in some measure, the obligations under which you are to Him, then you say—

"Oh! what shall I do, my Savior to praise."

There have been, in the Christian Church, at different times, men and women of highly consecrated spirit who seem to have realized what their Lord expected of them. I dare say that they were very dissatisfied with themselves, but as we read their biographies, we are charmed with their consecration of spirit. The Truth of God and especially the Christ, who *is* the Truth, had such influence over their lives, that they truly lived, "for His sake." May we have many such in our ranks! I do not know whether it may be the duty of any of you to go to foreign lands, "for His sake." I only hope there are some young men here who will offer themselves for missionary service, for blessed are they that bear the Gospel into "the regions beyond," carrying their lives in their hands! They shall stand very near to the eternal Throne of God in the day when the King rewards His faithful servants.

I do not know whether there may be any of our Sisters here who are bound to consecrate their lives to the nursing of the sick where fevers are rife, or where pestilence abounds, but they who can do such service to

humanity, for Christ's sake, shall receive no light word of approbation at the Last Great Day. But, probably, the mass of us will have to abide in our calling and, therefore, I would say, if we must do so, let our life be all, "for His sake." I would desire never to come to this platform but, "for His sake." Never to say even a word about the Gospel but, "for His sake." And you, in your home, dear mother, go and bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, "for His sake." Take those dear little ones and present them to Him. Say, "Jesus, I give them to You—accept and save them. I devote them to Your service, as Hannah gave Samuel to the Lord." Then, "for His sake," teach them holiness. "For His sake" be patient with them and, "for His sake," bring them up, always, in the fear of the Lord.

You men of business, go out and labor, "for His sake." I could almost envy some of you who have acquired an adequate income. Keep the warehouse or shop open, "for His sake," and give more largely to His cause. And you who are not in a position of competence, but are struggling for your daily bread, "for His sake," never do a wrong thing. Sometimes, when you are half inclined to yield to the tempter, imagine that your Savior is standing by your side and that He puts His pierced hand upon your shoulder and says, "If you are, indeed, bought with My blood, let there be justice in all your dealings with your fellows. No, more, be generous as well as just, for My sake, for I would have you so act that all men shall know that you are My disciple."

Perhaps some of you, who profess to be Christians, are living altogether for yourselves, instead of living unto God. When you are at home tonight, sitting quietly in your room, alone, I could half wish that the Lord Jesus would enter and say to you, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, and laid down My life for you. What are you doing for Me in return?" Suppose He looked at you with those gentle, yet heart-searching eyes of His, and you looked into that face which was marred more than any man's, what would you say? Oh, I think I should have to cover my face for very shame! And yet I am not living in forgetfulness of Him and I am trying to do Him some humble service. But as for those who do nothing, with the exception of sitting to hear sermons, or sometimes dropping in at a Prayer Meeting, or, now and then, giving a little to the cause of God—perhaps as little as they dare—oh, what would they say in His Presence? You will all be in His Presence, soon! Perhaps sooner than you expect—and among the sorrows that will trouble you on your death-bed, if you are unfaithful to your Lord, will be this—that you have done so little for Him while you had the opportunity.

When sitting by the side of one of our dying members, a poor weak girl, wasted by consumption, I was charmed as she whispered in my ear that when she was brought to Jesus, she had such joy that she had striven to do something for Him but mourned that she could accomplish so little. Poor child! She tried to teach a class of boys and half killed herself in the struggle to keep them quiet. She felt constrained, by love to her Lord, to try to do something for Him, and as there happened to be nothing else to do, she began to teach some rough children who were far too wild for her.

But she did not regret it. Oh, no! I am sure, if she could be raised up, she would take to such work, again, "for His sake." And I am sure that any of you, if you have given of your substance, or given of your time, or given of your abilities, "for His sake," will never have to say, when you are lying as she was, and breathing out your life, "I did too much for my Savior." You will rather bless His name that He accepted the little that you could do! And like our young Sister, mourn that it is so little compared with what He deserves!

I therefore say to each one of you, Brothers and Sisters—If you have, indeed, been washed in the blood of Christ, spend yourself for Him—do not mock Him. If it was in play that you were redeemed and if the Crucifixion was but a sport, then go and trifle with the service of Christ. But if, indeed, the blood-mark of a real Savior is upon you and you have been washed in the fountain filled with His precious blood, go and live really useful, consecrated lives into which you shall throw your whole heart and soul and strength, "for His sake!"

Who shall pile a monument worthy of the Savior who did so much, "for your sakes?" Who shall compose a song sweet enough for the Christ of God who came for our redemption? Who shall sound the trumpets loudly enough for Immanuel, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor? Who shall bring offerings of gold and frankincense rich enough for Him who gave up all for His people? Crown Him, you angels! You seraphim, adore Him! O God, You alone can give Him the recompense of honor which He merits! Glory be to His name forever! Let us take as our motto, from now on, these words, "For His sake." "For His sake," let us put up with poverty, counting it to be richest to be poor if He would have it so. "For His sake," let us cheerfully endure bodily sufferings, being glad if they make us more useful for Him. "For His sake," let us live in toil and die in obscurity, if so we can best glorify Him. Let our song be that of the gifted songstress, of whose hymn I have already quoted one verse—

***"In suffering sore, or toilsome task,
His burden light I'll bear;
'For Jesus' sake' shall sweeten all,
Till His bright home I share.
And then this song more sweet, more strong,
In Heaven my harp shall wake—
Led all the way, till that glad day
Eternally, my heart shall say,
'For Jesus sake.'"***

I will close when I have only added that if any of you have not at present any interest in this sacrifice and this service of which my two texts speak, I have just this word for you. It is, at least, a blessing that you are still permitted to listen to the Gospel. Let me very briefly tell once more, "the old, old story of Jesus and His love." Jesus Christ died in the place of sinners. We deserved to be punished for our sins. Under the Law of Moses there was no pardon for sin except through the blood of a sacrifice. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is *the one Sacrifice* for sins forever, of which the thousands of bullocks and lambs slain under the Law were but types. Every man who trusts to the death of the Lamb of God may know that Jesus Christ was punished in His place, so that God can be just and yet for-

give the guilty. He can, without violating His justice, remit sin and pardon iniquity because a Substitute has been found whose death has an infinite value because of the Divine Nature of the Sufferer. He has borne the iniquities of all who trust Him. "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life." Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall go your way a saved soul, even though you came into this house steeped in sin, or through terrible conviction on the very verge of despair. God grant that many of you may trust in Jesus this very hour, "for His sake!" Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Corinthians 8.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—282, 296, 709.**

TO THE READERS OF MY SERMONS:

MY DEAR FRIENDS—This morning I read in *The Times* that "Mr. Spurgeon is *rapidly* recovering." These words exactly describe what I am *not* doing. The symptoms are the same as when I was at home. I am tossed up and down upon the waves of my disease and what is thought progress, today, is gone tomorrow. I have seasons of utter prostration. Always weak, it seems at times that I have no strength whatever and must altogether collapse. *I shall recover*, for this is the tenor of the prayers which our God has so far answered, but there are no traces or signs of anything *rapid* about my condition. *Emphatically*, any advance I make is *the slowest of all slow things*. I write this at once to prevent disappointment to sanguine friends. I know not why I should be the object of so much tender sympathy, but as I am thus privileged I would have a sensitive regard for the feelings of such benefactors and warn them against statements for which there is no basis in truth. Their friend remains feeble and has no hasty recovery to expect. Please continue prayer. Have great patience. Relieve me of anxiety as to the institutions and praise God for what He has already done.

Your deeply-indebted servant, for Christ's sake,
Mentone, November 21, 1891,

C. H. SPURGEON.

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CONSOLATION IN CHRIST

NO. 348

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 2, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND**

***“If there is therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy.”
Philippians 2:1.***

THE language of man has received a new coinage of words since the time of his perfection in Eden. Adam could scarce have understood the word *consolation* for the simple reason that he did not understand in Eden the meaning of the word *sorrow*. O how has our language been swollen through the floods of our griefs and tribulations! It was not sufficiently wide and wild for man when he was driven out of the Garden into the wide, wide world. After he had once eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as his knowledge was extended so must the language be by which he could express his thoughts and feelings.

But, my Hearers, when Adam first needed the word *consolation*, there was a time when he could not find the fair jewel itself. Until that hour when the first Promise was uttered, when the Seed of the woman was declared as being the coming Man who should bruise the serpent's head Adam might masticate and digest the word *sorrow*. But he could never season and flavor it with the hope or thought of *consolation*—or if the hope and thought might sometimes flit across his mind like a lightning flash in the midst of the tempest's dire darkness—yet it must have been too transient, too unsubstantial, to have made glad his heart, or to soothe his sorrows.

Consolation is the dropping of a gentle dew from Heaven on desert hearts beneath. True consolation, such as can reach the heart, must be one of the choicest gifts of Divine mercy. And surely we are not erring from sacred Scripture when we avow that in its full meaning, consolation can be found nowhere except in Christ who has come down from Heaven and who has again ascended to Heaven to provide strong and everlasting consolation for those whom He has bought with His blood.

You will remember, my dear Friends, that the Holy Spirit, during the present dispensation, is revealed to us as the Comforter. It is the Spirit's business to console and cheer the hearts of God's people. He does convict of sin. He does illuminate and instruct. But still the main part of His business lies in making glad the hearts of the renewed, in confirming the weak and lifting up all those that are bowed down. Whatever the Holy Spirit may not be, He is evermore the Comforter to the Church and this age is peculiarly the dispensation of the Holy Spirit in which Christ cheers us not by His personal presence, as He shall do by-and-by, but by the indwelling and constant abiding of the Holy Spirit the Comforter.

Now, mark—as the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, Christ is the Comfort. The Holy Spirit consoles, but Christ *is the Consolation*. If I may use the

figure, the Holy Spirit is the Physician, but Christ is the Medicine. *He* heals the wound, but it is by applying the holy ointment of Christ's name and grace. He takes not of His own things, but of the things of Christ. We are not consoled today by new revelations, but by the old Revelation explained, enforced and lit up with new splendor by the Presence and power of the Holy Spirit the Comforter. If we give to the Holy Spirit the Greek name of *Paraclete*, as we sometimes do, then our heart confers on our blessed Lord Jesus the title of the *Paraclesis*. If the one is the Comforter the other is the Comfort.

I shall try this morning, first, to show how *Christ in His varied positions is the Consolation of the children of God in their varied trials*. Then we shall pass on, secondly, to observe that *Christ in His unchanging nature is the Consolation to the children of God in their continual sorrows*. And lastly, I shall close by dwelling awhile upon the question as to *whether Christ is a consolation to us*—putting it personally, “Is Christ a present and available consolation for me.”

I. First, CHRIST IN HIS VARIED POSITIONS IS THE CONSOLATION FOR THE MANY ILLS OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

Our Master's history is a long and eventful one. But every step of it may yield abundant comfort to the children of God. If we track Him from the highest Throne of Glory to the Cross of deepest woe and then through the grave up again the shining steeps of Heaven and onward through His mediatorial kingdom, on to the day when he shall deliver up the Throne to God even our Father—throughout every part of that wondrous pathway there may be found the flowers of consolation growing plenteously and the children of God have but to stoop and gather them. “*All His paths drop fatness, all His garments which He wears in His different offices smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby He makes His people glad.*”

To begin at the beginning—there are times when we look upon the past with the deepest grief. The withering of Eden's flowers has often caused a fading in the garden of our souls. We have mourned exceedingly that we have been driven out to till the ground with the sweat of our brow—that the curse should have glanced on us through the sin of our first parent and we have been ready to cry, “Woe was the day in which our parent stretched forth his hand to touch the forbidden fruit.” Would to God that he had rested in unsullied purity, that we his sons and daughters might have lived beneath an unclouded sky, might never have mourned the ills of bodily pain or of spiritual distress.

To meet this very natural source of grief, I bid you consider Christ in old eternity. Open now the eye of your faith, Believer and see Christ as your Everlasting Covenant-head stipulating to redeem you even before you had become a bond-slave, bound to deliver even before you had worn the chain. Think, I pray you, of the eternal council in which your restoration was planned and declared even before the Fall and in which you were established in an eternal salvation even before the necessity of that salvation had begun. O, my Brethren, how it cheers our hearts to think of the anticipating mercy of God! He anticipated our Fall, foreknew the ills which it would bring upon us and provided in His eternal decree of predestinat-

ing love an effectual remedy for all our diseases—a certain deliverance from all our sorrows.

I see You, You fellow of the Eternal, You equal of the Almighty God! Your goings forth were of old. I see You lift Your right hand and engage Yourself to fulfill Your Father's will—"In the volume of the book it is written of Me, 'I delight to do Your will, O God.'" I see You forming, signing and sealing that Everlasting Covenant by which the souls of all the redeemed were there and then delivered from the curse and made sure and certain inheritors of Your kingdom and of Your glory. In this respect Christ shines out as the Consolation of His people.

Again—if ever your minds dwell with sadness upon the fact that we are at this day absent from the Lord because we are present in the body, think of the great Truth that Jesus Christ of old had delights with the sons of men and He delights to commune and have fellowship with His people now. Remember that your Lord and Master appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre under the disguise of a pilgrim. Abraham was a pilgrim and Christ, to show His sympathy with His servant, became a pilgrim, too.

Did He not appear also to Jacob at the brook Jabbok? Jacob was a wrestler and Jesus appears there as a wrestler, too. Did He not stand before Moses under the guise and figure of a flame in the midst of a bush? Was not Moses at the very time the representative of a people who were like a bush burning with fire and yet not consumed? Did He not stand before Joshua—Joshua the leader of Israel's troops and did He not appear to him as the captain of the Lord's host? And do you not well remember that when the three holy children walked in the midst of the fiery furnace, *He* was in the midst of the fire, too—not as a king—but as one in the fire with them?

Cheer then your heart with this consoling inference. If Christ appeared to His servants in the olden time and manifested Himself to them as bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh—in all their trials and their troubles—He will do no less for you today. He will be with you in passing through the fire—He will be your rock, your shield and your high tower. He will be your song, your banner and your crown of rejoicing. Fear not, He who visited His saints of old will surely not be long absent from His children today—His delights are still with His people and still will He walk with us through this weary wilderness. Surely this makes Christ a most blessed Consolation for His Israel.

And now to pursue the Master's footsteps as He comes out of the invisible glories of Deity and wears the visible garment of humanity. Let us view the Babe of Bethlehem, the child of Nazareth, the Son of Man. See Him, He is in every respect a man. "Of the substance of His mother" is He made, in the substance of our flesh He suffers. In the trials of our flesh He bows His head—under the weakness of our flesh He prays and in temptation of our flesh He is kept and maintained by the grace within.

You today are tried and troubled and you ask for consolation. What better can be afforded you than what is presented to you in the fact that Jesus Christ is one with you in your nature? That He has suffered all that

you are now suffering? That your pathway has been aforetime trod by His sacred foot? That the cup of which you drink is a cup which He has drained to the very bottom? That the river through which you pass is one through which He swam and every wave and billow which rolls over your head did in old time roll over Him?

Come! Are you ashamed to suffer what your Master suffered? Shall the disciple be above his Master and the servant above his Lord? Shall He die upon a Cross and will not you bear the Cross? Must He be crowned with thorns and shall you be crowned with laurel? Is He to be pierced in hands and feet and are your members to feel no pain? O cast away the fond delusion, I pray you, and look to Him who “endured the Cross, despising the shame,” and be ready to endure and to suffer even as He did.

And now behold our Master’s humanity. Clothed even as ours has been since the Fall He comes not before us in the purple of a king, in the garb of the rich and the respectable, but He wears a garment in keeping with His apparent origin. He is a carpenter’s son and He wears a garment which becomes His station. View Him, you sons of poverty, as He stands before you in His seamless garment, the common dress of the peasant. And if you have felt this week the load of want—if you have suffered and are suffering this very day the ills connected with poverty, pluck up courage and find a consolation in the fact that Christ was poorer than you are—that He knew more of the bitterness of want than you ever can guess.

You cannot say, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but I have not where to lay my head,” or if you could go as far as that, you have never known a forty day’s fast. You have *some* comforts left to you—you do know at least the sweet taste of bread to the hungry man and of rest to the weary. But these things were often denied to Him. Look at Him and see if there is not to you comfort in Christ.

We pass now, O Jesus, from Your robe of poverty to that scene of shame in which Your garments were rent from You and You did hang naked before the sun. Children of God, if there is one place more than another where Christ becomes the joy and comfort of His people, it is where He plunged deepest into the depths of woe. Come, see Him, I pray you, in the garden of Gethsemane. Behold Him as His heart is so full of love that He cannot hold it in—so full of sorrow that it must find a vent. Behold the bloody sweat as it distils from every pore of His body and falls in gouty drops of gore upon the frozen ground.

See Him all red with His own blood—wrapped in a bloody mantle of His own gore. He is brought before Herod and Pilate and the Sanhedrim. See Him now as they scourge Him with their knotted whips and afresh bloody Him—as though it were not enough for Him to be dyed once in scarlet—but He must again be enwrapped in purple. See Him, I say, now that they have stripped Him naked. Behold Him as they drive the nails into His hands and into His feet. Look up and see the sorrowful image of your dolorous Lord. O mark Him, as the ruby drops stand on the thorn-crown and make it the blood-red diadem of the King of Misery.

O see Him as His bones are out of joint and He is poured out like water and brought into the dust of death. “Behold and see, was there ever sor-

row like unto His sorrow that is done unto Him?" All you that pass by, draw near and look upon this spectacle of grief. Behold the Emperor of Woe who never had an equal or a rival in His agonies! Come and see Him. And if I read not the words of consolation written in lines of blood all down His side then these eyes have never read a word in any book. If there is not consolation in a murdered Christ, there is no joy, no peace to any heart.

If in that finished ransom price, if in that efficacious blood, if in that all-accepted sacrifice there is not joy, you harpers of Heaven, there is no joy in you and the right hand of God shall know no pleasures. I am persuaded, Brothers and Sisters, that we have only to sit more at the Cross to be less troubled with our doubts and our fears and our woes. We have but to see *His* sorrows and lose *our* sorrows. We have but to see His wounds and heal our own. If we would live, it must be by contemplation of His death. If we would rise to dignity it must be by considering His humiliation and His sorrow—

***Lord, Your death and passion give
Strength and comfort in my need,
Every hour while here I live,
On Your love my soul shall feed."***

But come, troubled Heart, and follow the dead body of your Master, for though dead, it is as full of consolation as when alive. It is now no more naked, the loving hands of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and the Magdalene and the other Mary have wrapped it in cerements and have laid it in the new tomb. Come, saints, not to weep but to dry your tears. You have been all your lifetime subject to fear of death—come, break your bonds asunder, be free from this fear. Where your Master sleeps, you may surely find an easy couch. What more could you desire than to lie upon the bed of your royal Solomon?

The grave is now no more a charnel-house or a dark prison—*His* having entered it makes it a blessed retiring-room, a sacred house in which the King's aromas purify their bodies—to make them fit for the embraces of their Lord. It becomes now not the gate of annihilation, but the portal of eternal bliss—a joy to be anticipated, a privilege to be desired. "Fearless we lay us in the tomb and sleep the night away, for You are here to break the gloom and call us back today."

I am certain, Brethren, that all the consolations which wise men can ever afford in a dying hour will never be equal to that which is afforded by Jesus Christ ascending from the tomb. The maxims of philosophy, the endearments of affection and the music of hope will be a very poor compensation for the light of Jesus' grave. Death is the only mourner at Jesus' tomb and while the whole earth rejoices at the sorrow of its last enemy, I would be all too glad to die that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection.

Heir of Heaven! If you would be rid once and for all of every doubting thought about the hour of your dissolution, look, I pray you, to Christ risen from the dead. Put your finger into the print of the nails and thrust your hand into His side and be not faithless but believing. He *is* risen, He

saw no corruption. The worms could not devour Him and as Jesus Christ has risen from the dead He has become the first fruits of them that slept.

Inasmuch as He has risen, you shall rise. He has rolled the stone away not for Himself alone, but for you also. He has unwrapped the grave clothes not for His own sake, but for your sake, too. And you shall surely stand in the latter day upon the earth when *He* shall be here and in your flesh you shall see God.

Time would fail us if we should attempt to track the Master in His glorious pathway after His resurrection. Let it suffice us briefly to observe that having led His disciples out unto a mountain where He had delighted often to commune with them, He was suddenly taken up from them and a cloud received Him out of their sight. We think we may conjecture, by the help of Scripture, what transpired after that cloud had covered Him. Did not the angels—

***“Bring His chariot from on high
To bear Him to His Throne,
Clap their triumphant wings and cry,
His glorious work is done”?***

Do you not see Him, as he mounts His triumphal chariot—

***“And angels chant the solemn lay,
Lift up your heads, you golden gates,
You everlasting doors give way”?***

Behold angels gazing from the battlements of Heaven asking their comrades who escort the ascending Son of Man, “Who is the King of Glory?” And this time those who accompany the Master sing more sweetly and more loudly than before, while they cry, “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O you gates and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.” And now the doors—

***“Loose all their bars of massy light,
And wide unfold the radiant scene,”***

and He enters. “He claims those mansions as His right,” and all the angels rise to “receive the King of Glory in.”

Behold Him as He rides in triumph through Heaven’s streets. See Death and Hell bound at His chariot wheels. Hark to the “Hosannas” of the spirits of the just made perfect! Hear how cherubim and seraphim roll out in thunders their everlasting song—“Glory be unto You. Glory be unto You, You Son of God, for You were slain and You have redeemed the world by Your blood.” See Him as He mounts His Throne and sits near His Father. Behold the benignant complacency of the paternal Deity. Hear Him as He accepts Him and gives Him a name which is above every name.

And I say, my Brethren, in the midst of your trembling and doubts and fears, anticipate the joy which *you* shall have when you shall share in this triumph. Know you not that you ascended up on high in Him? He went not up to Heaven alone, but as the representative of all the blood-bought throng. *You* rode in that triumphal chariot with Him. You were exalted on high and made to sit far above principalities and powers in Him. For we are risen in Him. We are exalted in Christ.

Even at this very day in Christ that Psalm is true—“You have put all things under His feet. You made Him to have dominion over all the works of Your hands.” Come, poor Trembler, you are little in your own esteem

and but a worm and no man! Rise, I say, to the height of your nobility. For you are in Christ greater than angels are, more magnified and glorified by far. God give you grace—you who have faith—that you may now, in the fact of Jesus Christ's exaltation, find consolation for yourself!

But now, today, methinks I see the Master as He stands before His Father's Throne dressed in the garments of a priest. Upon His breast I see the Urim and Thummim glittering with the bejeweled remembrances of His people. In His hand I see still the remembrance of His sacrifice, the nail mark—and there I see still upon His feet the impress of the laver of blood in which He washed Himself not as the priest of old with water but with His own gore. I hear Him plead with authority before His Father's face, "I will that they also whom You have given Me be with Me where I am."

O my poor prayers, you shall be heard! O my faint groans, you shall be answered! O my poor troubled soul, you are safe, for—

***"Jesus pleads and must prevail,
His cause can never, never fail."***

Come, my poor Heart, lift up yourself now from the dunghill. Shake yourself from the dust—ungird your sackcloth and put on your beautiful garments. *He* is our Advocate today, our eloquent and earnest Pleader and He prevails with God. The Father smiles—He smiles on Christ. He smiles on *us* in answer to Jesus Christ's intercession. Is He not here also the Consolation of Israel?

I only remark once more that He who has gone up into Heaven shall so come in like manner as He was seen to go up into Heaven. He ascended in clouds, "Behold He comes with clouds." He went up on high with sound of trumpet and with shout of angels. Behold He comes! The silver trumpet shall soon sound. 'Tis midnight. The hours are rolling wearily along. The virgins wise and foolish are all asleep. But the cry shall soon be heard—"Behold the Bridegroom comes, go forth to meet Him." That same Jesus who was crucified shall come in glory. The hand that was pierced shall grasp the scepter. Beneath His arm He shall gather up all the scepters of all kings. Monarchs shall be the sheaves and *He* shall be the kingly Reaper.

On His head there shall be the many crowns of universal undisputed dominion. "He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth." His feet shall tread on the mount of Olivet and His people shall be gathered in the valley of Jehoshaphat. Lo, the world's great battle is almost begun, the trumpet sounds the beginning of the battle of Armageddon. To the fight, you warriors of Christ! To the fight, for it is your last conflict and over the bodies of your foes you shall rush to meet your Lord—He fighting on the one side by His coming—you on the other side by drawing near to Him.

You shall meet Him in the solemn hour of victory. The dead in Christ shall rise first and you that are alive and remain shall be changed in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye—at the last triumphant sounding of the dread tremendous trump. *Then* shall you know to the full how Christ can console you for all your sorrows—all your shame and all your neglect which you have received from the hand of men. Yes, today there awaits

the recompense of an earthly splendor for your earthly poverty—there awaits earthly dignity for your earthly shame.

You shall not only have spiritual, but you shall have *temporal* blessings. He who takes away the curse will take it away not only from your soul, but from the very ground on which you tread. He who redeems you shall redeem not only your spirit, but your body. Your eyes shall see your Redeemer. Your hands shall be lifted up in acclamation and your feet shall bear your leaping joys in the procession of His glory. In your very body in which you have suffered for Him you shall sit with Him upon the Throne and judge the nations of the earth. These things, I say, are all full of the purest and highest consolation to the children of God.

II. Having taken nearly all my time upon the first point, I can only say a word or two upon the second and on the third. The second point was to be this—CHRIST IN HIS UNCHANGING NATURE. The Consolation for our continual sorrows.

Christ is to His people a *surpassing* Consolation. Talk of the consolations of philosophy? We have all the philosopher can pretend to. But we have it in a higher degree. Speak of the charms of music which can lull our sorrows to a blessed sleep?—

***“Sweeter sounds than music knows,
Charm us in our Savior’s name.
“Jesus, the very thought of You,
With rapture fills my breast.”***

Speak we of the joys of friendship? And sweet they are indeed. But “there is a Friend that sticks closer than a brother”—“a brother born for adversity.” There is One who is better than all friends, more able to cheer than those who are dearest and nearest to our hearts.

Or, speak we of the joys of hope? And certainly hope can console us when nothing else can do it. *He* is our Hope. We cast the anchor of our hope into that which is within the veil where the forerunner has for us entered. The consolations of Christ are unrivalled by any which can be offered by wit, by wisdom, by mirth, by hope itself. They are incomparable and can never be surpassed. Again, the consolations of Christ, from the feet of his unchanging nature, are *unfailing*—

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

Look at Job and see the picture of how Christ can console. The messenger rushes in—“The Sabeans have taken away the oxen and the asses!” “Well, well,” Job might console himself and say, “but the sheep are left.” “But the fire of God has fallen on the sheep! And the Chaldeans have carried away the camels and slain the servants!” “Alas!” the good man might say, “but my children are left and if they are spared then I can still have joy.” “The wind has come from the wilderness and smitten the four corners of the house and all your sons and daughters are dead!”

Ah! Penniless and childless, the Patriarch might weep. But, looking on his wife, he would say, “There still remains one sweet comforter, my well-beloved spouse.” *She* bids him “curse God and die,” speaking as one of the foolish women speaks. Yet might Job say, “Though my wife has failed me, there remains at least three friends. There they sit with me on the dung-

hill and *they* will console me.” But they speak bitterness till he cries, “Miserable comforters are you all.”

Well, at least he has his own body in health, has he not? No. He sits down upon a dunghill and scrapes himself with a potsherd—for his sores have become intolerable. Well, well, “skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life.” He may at least cheer himself with the fact that he lives. “Why should a living man complain?” Yes, but he fears he is about to die. And now comes out the grandeur of his hope: “I know that my Redeemer lives and though the worms devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” All the other windows are darkened. But the sun shines in at the window of redemption. All the other doors are shut but this great door of hope and joy still stands wide open. All other wells are dry. But this flows with an unceasing stream. Brothers and Sisters—when all things else depart—an unchanging Christ shall be your unchanging joy.

Furthermore, the consolations of Christ are *all powerful* consolations. When a poor soul is so deep in the mire that you cannot lift it with the lever of eloquence, nor draw it up with the hands of sympathy, nor raise it with wings of hope, *He* can touch it with His finger and it can spring up from the mire and put its feet upon a rock and feel the new song in its mouth and its goings well established. There is no form of melancholy which will not yield before the grace of God. There is no shape of distress which will not give way before the divine energy of the Holy Spirit the Comforter, when he uses Christ as the Consolation.

Again—this consolation is *everlasting* consolation. It consoled you, O aged sire when as a youth you gave your heart to Christ. It was your joy in the mid-winter of your manhood. It has become your strength and your song in the days of your old age. When tottering on your staff you shall go down to Jordan’s brink He will be your Consolation then. In the prospect of your coming dissolution, yes, when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death you shall fear no evil, for He is with you—His rod and His staff shall comfort you. All other things shall pass away as a dream when one awakes. But this substantial support shall abide with you in the midst of the swellings of Jordan, in the hour of the departure of your spirit from your body.

And then remember that He is the Consolation which is always within the believer’s reach. He is “a very present help in time of trouble.” You may always cheer your heart with Christ when other things are far away. When friends visit you not and your chamber becomes lonely—when spouse has forgotten to speak the kind word to you and children have become ungrateful—He will make your bed in your sickness. He will be your never-failing Friend and abide with you in every dark and gloomy hour, till He brings you into His dear arms where you will be in Heaven forever and ever.

III. I close now with my last point—the grave and serious question, IS CHRIST AN AVAILABLE CONSOLATION FOR ME?

Who are you, Friend? Are you one who needs no consolation? Have you a righteousness of your own? Let me put it in your own words. You are a *good* man, kind to the poor, charitable, upright, generous, holy. You be-

lieve there may be *some* faults in yourself, but they must be very few and you trust that what with your own merits and with God's mercy you may enter Heaven.

In the name of God, I do solemnly assure you that Christ is *not* an available Consolation for you. Christ will have nothing to do with you so long as you have anything to do with yourself. If you are trusting in any measure whatever upon anything that you have ever *done* or *hope to do*, you are trusting in a *lie* and Christ will never be friends with a lie. He will never help *you* to do what He came to do Himself. If you will take His work as it is, as a *finished* work—well and good. But if you must add to it your own, God shall add unto you the plagues which are written in this Book. He shall by no means give to you any of the Promises and the comforts which Christ can afford.

But instead thereof, I will suppose that I address myself this morning to a man who says, "I was once, I think, a believer in Christ. I made a profession of religion, but I fell from it and I have lost for years all the hope and joy I ever had. I think I was a presumptuous man that I pretended to have what I never had and yet at the time I really thought I had it. May I think that there is consolation in Christ for a backslider and a traitor like I? Often, Sir, do I feel as if the doom of Judas must be mine—as if I must perish miserably, like Demas, who loved this present world."

Ah! Backslider, Backslider, God speaks to you this morning and He says, "Return you backsliding children of men, for I am married to you." And if married, there has never been a divorce between Christ and you. Has He put you away? Unto which of His creditors has He sold you? Where do you read in His Word that He has divided from the affection of His heart one whose name was ever written in His Book? Come, come, Backslider, come again to the Cross. He who received you once will receive you again. Come where the blood is flowing. The blood that washed you once can wash you yet once more. Come, come, you are naked and poor and miserable. The raiment which was given to you once shall array you again with beauty. The unsearchable riches which were opened up to you before, shall be yours again—

***"To your Father's bosom pressed,
Once again a child confessed
From His hand no more to roam,
Come, backsliding sinner, come."***

But I hear another say, "I am not a backslider but simply one who desires to be saved. I can say honestly I would give my right arm from its socket if I might but be saved. Why, Sir, if I had ten thousand worlds I would freely cast them away as pebble stones and worthless if I might but find Christ." Poor Soul and does the devil tell you you shall never have Christ? Why you have a warrant to lay hold on Christ today. "No," you say, "I have no right whatever." The fact that you say you have no right should at least comfort the minister in addressing himself freely to you. The right of a sinner to come to Christ does not lie in the sinner nor in any feelings which the sinner may have had, it lies in the fact that Christ *commands* him to come.

If one of you should receive as you went out of yonder door a command to go at once to Windsor and have an interview with the Queen—as soon

as you had received the order and were sure it came from her, you might say, "Well, but if I had known this, I should have put on other clothes." But the order is peremptory, "Come now. Come just as you are." You would, I think, without any very great doubt, though greatly wondering, take your place and ride there at once. When you came to the gate, some tall grenadier might ask you what you were doing. "Why," he might say, "you are not fit to come and see Her Majesty. You are not a gentleman, you have not so many hundreds a year. How can *you* expect to be admitted?"

You show the command and he lets you pass on. You come to another door and there is an usher there. "You are not in a court dress," he says. "You are not properly robed for the occasion." You show the command and he lets you pass on. But suppose when at last you should come into the ante-room you should say, "Now I dare not go in, I am not fit. I feel I shall not know how to behave myself"? Suppose you are silly enough not to go—you would be disobedient and ten times more foolish in disobeying than you could have been by any blunders in behavior if you had obeyed.

Now it is just so with you today. Christ says, "Come unto Me." He does not merely invite you, because He knows you would think you did not deserve the invitation, but He gives the *command* and He bids me say to you, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you." He bids me command you in His name, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Of His grace and mercy He puts it as a command. "*But*," you say. Ah, what right have you to say, "*but*" to the Lord's commands? Again, I say, away with your "buts." What right have you to be "buting" at His Laws and His commands? "But," you say, "do hear me for a moment." I will hear you then. "Sir, I cannot imagine that if such a hard-hearted sinner as I am were really to trust Christ I should be saved."

The English of that is that you call God a liar. He says you shall be and do you think He speaks an untruth? "Ah!" says another, "but it is too good to be true. I cannot believe that just as I am, if I trust in Christ my sin shall be forgiven." Again, I say, the simple English of that is, that you think you know better than God and so you do in fact stand up and say to His promise, "You are false." He says, "Him that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out." "Ah!" you say, "but that does not mean me!" Can any language speak more plainly? "*Him*." What "him"? Why, any "him" in the world.

"Yes," says one "but the invitations are made to *character*—"Come unto Me all you that labor and are *heavy laden*. I am afraid I am not heavy laden enough." Yes, but you will mark while the invitation is given to character, yet the *promise* is not given to the character. It is given to those who come—"Come unto Me and I will give you rest." And while that one invitation may be confined to the weary and heavy laden, yet there are scores of others that stand as wide and free as the very air we breathe. If you have that qualification, do not come even with it, because you are unqualified when you *think* you are qualified. You are unfit when you *think* you are fit.

And if you have a *sense of need* which you think makes you fit to come to Christ—it shows you are *not fit* and do not know your need—for no man knows his need till he thinks he does not know his need and no man is in a right state to come to Christ till he thinks he is *not* in a right state to come to Christ. But he who feels that he has not one good thought or one good feeling to recommend him—*he is the man who may come*. He who says, “But I may not come,” is the very man that is bid to come. Besides, my Friends, it is not what *you think*, or what *I think*—it is what Christ says and is it not written by the hand of the Apostle John, “This is the Commandment, that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent”?

Men who say it is not the duty of sinners to believe I cannot think what they make out of such a text as that—“This is the commandment, that you believe on Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.” Nor that one where God expressly says, “He that believes not is condemned already, *because he believes not*.” Why, I should think I was addressing heathens if I addressed a company of men who thought that God did not I men to repent! For Scripture is so plain upon the point and I say—if God commands you to do it—you may do it.

Let the devil say, “No,” but God says “Yes.” Let him stand and push you back. But say to him, “No, Satan, no, I come here in God’s name.” And as devils fear and fly before the name of Christ, so will Satan and your fears all fly before His command. He *commands* you to believe—that is, to trust Him. Trust him, Soul, trust Him. Right or wrong, trust Him.

But some of you want a great temptation and a great deal of despair before you will trust Him. Well, the Lord will send it to you if you will not trust Him without it. I remember John Bunyan said he had a black temptation and it did him a great deal of good—for, he said, “Before I had the temptation I always questioned God’s Promises saying, ‘May I come, or may I not come?’ Yes, often I felt as if the Lord would refuse my soul forever—I was often as if I had run upon the pike and as if the Lord had thrust at me, to keep me from Him as with a flaming sword.”

Ah, and perhaps you may be driven to that. I pray you may. But I would infinitely rather that the sweet love and grace of God would entice you now to trust Jesus Christ just as you are. He will not deceive you, Sinner. He will not fail you. Trusting Him you shall build on a sure foundation and find Him who is the Consolation of Israel and the joy of all His saints.

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

OUR LORD IN THE VALLEY OF HUMILIATION NO. 2281

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*“And being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”
Philippians 2:8.*

PAUL wishes to unite the saints in Philippi in the holy bands of love. To do this, he takes them to the Cross. Beloved, there is a cure for every spiritual disease in the Cross. There is food for every spiritual virtue in the Savior. We never go to Him too often. He is never a dry well or a vine from which every cluster has been taken. We do not think enough of Him. We are poor because we do not go to the gold country which lies round the Cross. We are often sad because we do not see the bright light that shines from the constellation of the Cross. The beams from that constellation would give us instantaneous joy and rest if we perceived them. If any lover of the souls of men would do for them the best possible service, he would constantly take them near to Christ. Paul is always doing so—and he is doing it here.

The Apostle knew that to create concord, you need, first, to beget lowliness of mind. Men do not quarrel when their ambitions have come to an end. When each one is willing to be least—when everyone desires to place his fellows higher than himself—there is an end to party spirit. Schisms and divisions are all passed away. Now, in order to create lowliness of mind, Paul, under the teaching of the Spirit of God, spoke about the *lowliness of Christ*. He would have us go down and so he takes us to see our Master going down. He leads us to those steep stairs down which the Lord of Glory took His lowly way and Paul bids us stop while, in the words of our text, he points us to the lowly Christ—“Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

Before Paul thus wrote, he had indicated, in a word or two, the height from which Jesus originally came. He says of Him, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” You and I can have no idea of how high an honor it is to be equal with God! How can we, therefore, measure the descent of Christ, when our highest *thoughts* can-

not comprehend the height from which He came? The depth to which He descended is immeasurably below any point we have ever reached—and the height from which He came is inconceivably above our highest thoughts! Do not, however, forget the Glory that Jesus laid aside for a while. Remember that He is very God of very God, and that He dwelt in the highest Heaven with His Father. But, though He was thus infinitely rich, for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be rich.

The Apostle, having mentioned what Jesus was, by another stroke of his pen, reveals Him in our Human Nature. He says concerning Him that, “He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” A great marvel is that Incarnation, that the eternal God should take into union with Himself our human nature, and should be born at Bethlehem, and live at Nazareth, and die at Calvary on our behalf!

But our text does not speak so much of the humiliation of Christ in becoming Man, as of His humiliation after He took upon Himself our Nature. “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.” He never seems to stop in His descent until He comes to the lowest point—obedience unto death and that death the most shameful of all—“even the death of the Cross.” Said I not rightly, that as you cannot reach the height from which He came, you cannot fathom the depth to which He descended? Here, in the immeasurable distance between the Heaven of His Glory and the shame of His death, is room for your gratitude! You may rise on wings of joy, you may dive into depths of self-denial, but in neither case will you reach the experience of your Divine Lord, who thus, for you, came from Heaven to earth, that He might take you up from earth to Heaven!

Now, if strength is given me for the exercise, I want to guide you, first, while we consider *the facts of our Lord’s humiliation*. And, secondly, when we have considered them, I want you to learn, from them, some practical useful lessons.

I. First of all, CONSIDER THE FACTS OF OUR LORD’S HUMILIATION.

Paul speaks first of *the point from which He still descends*—“Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.” My gracious Lord, You have come far enough, already, do You not stop where You are? In the form of God, You were—in the form of Man, You are. That is an unspeakable stoop! Will You *still* humble Yourself? Yes, says the text, “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.” Yet, surely one would have thought that He was low enough! He was the Creator and we see Him here on earth as a creature—the Creator, who made Heaven and earth, without whom was not anything made that was made, and yet He lies in the virgin’s womb! He is born and He is cradled where the horned oxen feed! The Creator is also a Creature! The Son of God is the Son of Man. Strange combination! Could condescension go farther than for the Infinite to be joined to the Infant, and the Omnipotent to the feebleness of a new-born Baby?

Yet, this is not all. If the Lord of Life and Glory must be married to a creature, and the High and Mighty One must take upon Himself the form of a created being, yet why does He assume the form of *man*? There were other creatures brighter than the stars! There were noble spiritual beings, seraphim and cherubim, sons of the morning, presence angels of the eternal Throne of God! Why did He not take *their* nature? If He must be in union with a *creature*, why not be joined to the angels? But, “He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” A man is but a worm, a creature of many infirmities. Death has written on his brow with his terrible finger. He is corruptible and he must die. Will the Christ take that nature upon Him, that He, too, must suffer and die? It was even so! But when He had come so far, we feel as if we must almost put ourselves in the way to stop Him from going farther. Is not this stoop low enough? The text says that it was not, for, “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself,” even then.

What will not Christ do for us who have been given to Him by His Father? There is no measure to His love—you cannot comprehend His Grace. Oh, how we ought to love Him and serve Him! The lower He stoops to save us, the higher we ought to lift Him in our adoring reverence! Blessed be His name. He stoops, and stoops, and stoops and, when He reaches our level and becomes Man, He still stoops, and stoops, and stoops lower and deeper—“Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself.”

Now let us notice, next, the way in which He descended after He became a man—“He humbled Himself.” We must assume that He has stooped as low as our humanity, but His humanity might have been, when born, cradled daintily. He might have been among those who are born in marble halls and clothed in purple and fine linen. But He chose not to be. If it had pleased Him, He might have been born a man and not have been a child. He might have leaped over the period of gradual development from childhood to youth and from youth to manhood—but He did not. When you see Him at home at Nazareth, the apprenticed Son, obedient to His parents, doing the little errands of the house, like any other child, you say, as our text says, “He humbled Himself.” There He dwelt in poverty with His parents, beginning His life as a workman’s boy and, I suppose, running out to play with youthful companions. All this is very wonderful. The apocryphal gospels represent Him as having done strange things while yet a child, but the true Gospels tell us very little of His early days. He veiled His Godhead behind His childhood. When He went up to Jerusalem and listened to the doctors of the law, though He astonished them by His questions and answers, yet He went home with His parents and was subject to them, for, “He humbled Himself.” He was by no means pushing and forward, like a petted and precocious child. He held Himself in, for He determined that, being found in fashion as a Man, He would humble Himself.

He grew up, and the time of His appearing unto men arrived. But I cannot pass over the 30 years of His silence without feeling that here was a marvelous instance of how He humbled Himself. I know young men who think that two or three years' education is far too long for them. They want to be preaching at once—running away, as I sometimes tell them—like chickens with the shell on their heads! They want to go forth to fight before they have buckled on their armor! But it was not so with Christ—30 long years passed over His head and still there was no Sermon on the Mount. When He did show Himself to the world, look how He humbled Himself! He did not knock at the door of the High Priests, or seek out the eminent Rabbis and the learned scribes! No, He took for His companions, fishermen from the lake, infinitely His inferiors, even if we regarded Him merely as a Man! He was full of manly freshness and vigor of mind and they were scarcely able to follow Him, even though He moderated His footsteps out of pity for their weakness. He preferred to associate with lowly men, for He humbled Himself.

When He went out to speak, His style was not such as aimed at the gathering together of the elite—He did not address a few specially cultured folk. *“Then drew near unto Him all the scribes and Pharisees for to hear Him.”* Am I quoting correctly? No, no—*“Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him.”* They made an audience with which He was at home—and when they gathered about Him, and when little children stood to listen to Him—then He poured out the fullness of His heart, for He humbled Himself. Ah, dear Friends, this was not the deepest humiliation of the Lord Jesus! He allowed *Satan* to tempt Him. I have often wondered how His pure and holy mind, how His right royal Nature could bear conflict with the Prince of Darkness, the foul fiend, full of lies. Christ allowed Satan to put Him to the test—and spotless purity had to bear the nearness of infamous villainy! Jesus conquered, for the Prince of this world came and found nothing in Him. But He humbled Himself when, in the wilderness, on the pinnacle of the Temple, and on the exceedingly high mountain, He allowed the devil to assail Him three times.

Personally, in His body, He suffered weakness, hunger, thirst. In His mind He suffered rebuke, contumely, falsehood. He was constantly the Man of Sorrows. You know that when the head of the apostate church is called, “the man of sin,” it is because it is always sinning. And when Christ is called, “the Man of Sorrows,” it is because He was always sorrowing. How amazing it is that He should humble Himself so as to be afflicted with the common sorrows of our humanity, but it was so! “Being found in fashion as a Man,” He consented, even, to be belied, to be called a drunk and a wine-bibber, to have His miracles ascribed to the help of Beelzebub, to hear men say, “He has a devil, and is mad; why do you listen to Him?”

“He humbled Himself.” In His own heart there were, frequently, great struggles. And those struggles drove Him to prayer. He even lost consciousness of God's Presence, so that He cried in sore anguish, “My God,

My God, why have You forsaken Me?" All this was because He still humbled Himself. I do not know how to speak to you upon this great subject! I give you words, but I pray the Holy Spirit to supply you with right thoughts about this great mystery! I have already said that it was condescension enough for Christ to be found in fashion as a Man. But after that, He still continued to descend the stairway of condescending love by humbling Himself yet more and more!

But notice, now, *the rule of His descent*. It is worth noticing—"He humbled Himself, and became *obedient*." I have known persons try to humble themselves by will-worship. I have stood in the cell of a monk, when he has been out of it, and I have seen the whip with which he flagellated himself every night before he went to bed. I thought that it was quite possible that the man deserved all he suffered—and so I shed no tears over it. That was *his* way of humbling himself, by administering a certain number of lashes. I have known persons practice voluntary humility. They have talked in very humble language and have decried themselves in words, though they have been as proud as Lucifer all the while! Our Lord's way of humbling Himself was by *obedience*. He invented no method of making Himself ridiculous! He put upon Himself no singular garb which would attract attention to His poverty. He simply obeyed His Father and, mark you, there is no humility like obedience—"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams." To obey is better than to wear a special dress, or to clip your words in some peculiar form of supposed humility! Obedience is the best humility—laying yourself at the feet of Jesus and making your will active only when you know what is God's will for you. This is to be truly humble!

In what way, then, did the Lord Jesus Christ, in His life, obey? I answer—There was always about Him the spirit of obedience to His Father. He could say, "Lo, I come: in the Volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God: yes, Your law is within My heart." He was always, while here, subservient to His Father's great purpose in sending Him to earth! He came to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. He learned what that will was, partly from Holy Scripture. You constantly find Him acting in a certain way, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." He shaped His life upon the prophecies that had been given concerning Him. Thus He did the will of the Father.

Also, there was within Him the Spirit of God who led and guided Him, so that He could say, "I do always those things that please the Father." Then He waited upon God continually in prayer. Though infinitely better able to do without prayer than we are, yet He prayed much more than we do! With less need than we have, He had a greater delight in prayer than we have, and thus He learned the will of God as Man, and did it, without once omitting, or once transgressing in a single point.

He did the will of God, also, obediently, by following out what He knew to be the Father's great design in sending Him. He was sent to save and He went about saving—seeking and saving that which was lost. Oh, dear

Friends, when we get into unison with God, when we wish what He wishes. When we live for the great objective that fills God's heart. When we lay aside our wishes and whims—and even our lawful desires, that we may do only the will of God, and live only for His glory—then we shall be truly humbling ourselves!

Thus, I have shown you that Jesus did descend after He became man, and I have pointed out to you the way and the rule of His descending. Now, let us look, with awe and reverence, *at the abyss into which He descended*. Where did He arrive, at last, in that dreadful descent? What was the bottom of the abyss? It was *death*—“He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.” Our Lord died willingly. You and I, unless the Lord should come quickly, will die, whether we are willing or not—“It is appointed unto men once to die.” He needed not to die, yet He was willing to surrender His life. He said, “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.” He died willingly, but, at the same time, He did not die by His own hands. He did not take His own life as a suicide—He died *obediently*. He waited till His hour had come, when He was able to say, “It is finished.” Then He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. He humbled Himself, so as to die *willingly*.

He proved the obedience of His death, also, by the meekness of it, as Isaiah said, “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.” He never spoke a bitter word to priest or scribe, Jewish governor or Roman soldier. When the women wept and bewailed, He said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.” He was all gentleness. He had not a hard word even for His murderers. He gave Himself up to be the Sin-Bearer, without murmuring at His Father's will, or at the cruelty of His adversaries. How patient He was! If He says, “I thirst,” it is not the petulant cry of a sick man in His fever—there is a royal dignity about Christ's utterance of the words. Even the, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani,” with the unutterable gall and bitterness it contains, has not even a trace of impatience mingled with it! Oh, what a death Christ's was! He was obedient in it, obedient not only till He came to die, but obedient in that last dread act! His obedient life embraced the hour of His departure.

But, as if death were not sufficiently humbling, the Apostle adds, “even the death of the Cross.” That was the worst kind of death. It was a violent death. Jesus fell not asleep *gently*, as good men often do, whose end is peace. No, He died by murderous hands. Jews and Gentiles combined and, with cruel hands, took Him and crucified and slew Him. It was, also, an extremely painful death of lingering agony. Those parts of the body in which the nerves were most numerous, were pierced with rough iron nails. The weight of the body was made to hang upon the most tender part of the frame. No doubt the nails tore their cruel way through His flesh while He was hanging on the tree. A cut in the hand has often resulted in lockjaw and death, yet Christ's hands were *nailed* to the Cross. He died in

most exquisite pain of body and of soul. It was, also, a death most shameful. Thieves were crucified with Him. His adversaries stood and mocked Him. The death of the Cross was one reserved for slaves and the basest of felons—no Roman citizen could be put to death in such a way as that—hung up between earth and Heaven as if neither would have Him, rejected of men and despised of God! It was, also, a penal death. He died, not like a hero in battle, nor as one who perishes while rescuing his fellow men from fire or flood—He died as a *criminal*. Upon the Cross of Calvary He was hung up. It was an accursed death, too. God Himself had called it so—“Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” He was made a curse for us! His death was penal in the highest sense. He “bore our sins in His own body on the tree.”

I have not the mental, nor the physical, nor the spiritual strength to speak to you aright on such a wondrous topic as that of our Lord in the Valley of Humiliation. There have been times with me when I have only needed a child’s finger to point me to the Christ and I have found enough in a sight of Him without any words of man. I hope that it is so with you tonight. I invite you to sit down and watch your Lord, obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. All this He did that He might complete His own humiliation. He humbled Himself even to this lowest point of all, “unto death, even the death of the Cross.”

II. If you have this picture clearly before your eyes, I want you, in the second place, to LEARN SOME PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM OUR LORD’S HUMILIATION.

The first is, learn to have *firmness of faith* in the atoning Sacrifice. If my Lord could stoop to become Man and if, when He had come as low as that, He went still lower, and lower, and lower, until He became obedient unto *death*, even the death of the Cross, I feel that there must be a potency about that death which is all that I can require. Jesus, by dying, has vindicated law and justice. Look, Brothers and Sisters, if God can punish sin upon His own dear Son, it means far more than the sending of us to Hell! Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, but His blood was shed, so there *is* remission! His wounds let out His life blood. One great gash opened the way to His heart. Before that, His whole body had become a mass of dripping gore, when, in the Garden, His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. My Lord, when I study Your Sacrifice, I see how God can be “just, and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus.” Faith is born at the Cross of Christ! We not only bring faith *to* the Cross, but we *find* it there. I cannot think of my God bearing all this grief in a human body, even to the death on the Cross, and then doubt. Why, doubt becomes harder than faith when the Cross is visible! When Christ is set forth evidently crucified among us, each one of us should cry, “Lord, I believe, for Your death has killed my unbelief.”

The next lesson I would have you learn from Christ’s humiliation is this—cultivate a great *hatred of sin*. Sin killed Christ. Let Christ kill sin. Sin made Him go down, down, down—then pull sin down, let it have no

throne in your heart. If it will live in your heart, make it live in holes and corners, and never rest till it is utterly driven out. Seek to put your foot upon its neck and utterly kill it. Christ was crucified—let your lusts be crucified! And let every wrong desire be nailed up, with Christ, upon the felon's tree. If, with Paul, you can say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world"—with Him you will also be able to exclaim—"From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Christ's branded slave is the Lord's freeman!

Learn another lesson, and that is *obedience*. Beloved, if Christ humbled Himself and became obedient, how obedient ought you and I to be? We ought to stop at nothing when we once know that it is the Lord's will. I marvel that you and I should ever raise a question or seek a moment's delay in our obedience to Christ. If it is the Lord's will, let it be done, and done at once. Should it rend some fond connection, should it cause a flood of tears, let it be done. He humbled Himself, and became obedient. Would obedience humble me? Would it lower me in man's esteem? Would it make me the subject of ridicule? Would it bring contempt upon my honorable name? Should I be elbowed out of the society wherein I have been admired if I were obedient to Christ? Lord, this is a question not worth asking! I take up Your Cross right joyfully, asking Grace to be perfectly obedient by the power of Your Spirit!

Learn next, another lesson, and that is *self-denial*. Did Christ humble Himself? Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us practice the same holy art! Have I not heard of some saying, "I have been insulted. I am not treated with proper respect. I go in and out and I am not noticed. I have done eminent service and there is not a paragraph in the newspaper about me." Oh, dear Friend, your Master *humbled* Himself, but it seems to me that *you* are trying to *exalt* yourself! Truly, you are on the wrong track! If Christ went down, down, down, it ill becomes us to be always seeking to go up, up, up! Wait till God exalts you, which He will do in His own good time. Meanwhile, it behooves you, while you are here, to humble yourself! If you are already in a humble position, should you not be contented with it, for *He* humbled Himself? If you are now in a place where you are not noticed, where there is little thought of you, be quite satisfied with it. Jesus came just where you are—you may well stay where you are—where God has put you. Jesus had to bring Himself down and to make an effort to come down to where you are.

Is not the Valley of Humiliation one of the sweetest spots in all the world? Does not the great geographer of the heavenly country, John Bunyan, tell us that the Valley of Humiliation is as fruitful a place as any the crow flies over and that our Lord formerly had His country house there, and that He loved to walk those meadows, for He found the air was pleasant? Stay there, Brothers and Sisters! "I should like to be known," says one. "I should like to have my name before the public." Well, if you ever had that lot, if you felt as I do, you would pray to be *unknown* and to let

your name drop out of notice, for there is no pleasure in it! The only happy way seems to me, if God would only let us choose, is to be known to nobody, and to glide through this world as pilgrims and strangers, to the land where our true kindred dwell, and to be known there as having been followers of the Lord.

I think that we should also learn from our Lord's humiliation to have *contempt for human glory*. Suppose they come to you and said, "We will crown you king!"? You may well say, "Will you? All the crown you had for my Master was a crown of thorns—I will not accept a diadem from you." "We will praise you." "What? Will you praise *me*, you who spat in His dear face? I need none of your praises." It is a greater honor to a Christian to be maligned than to be applauded. Yes, I do not care where it comes from, I will say this—if he is slandered and abused for Christ's sake—no odes in his honor, no articles in his praise can do him one-tenth the honor! This is to be a true knight of the Cross, to have been wounded in the fray, to have come back adorned with scars for His dear sake! O despised one, look upon human glory as a thing that is tarnished, no longer golden, but corroded because it came not to your Lord.

And, O Beloved, I think when we have meditated on this story of Christ's humbling Himself, we ought to feel our *love to our Lord growing very vehemently!* We do not half love Him as we ought. When I read the sentences of Bernard, half Romanist, but altogether saint, I feel as if I had not *begun* to love my Lord! And when I turn over Rutherford's letters and see the glow of his heart toward his Divine Master, I could smite on my breast to think that I have such a heart of stone where there ought to be a heart of flesh! If you hear George Herbert sing his quaint, strange poetry, suffused with love for his dear Lord, you may well think that you are a rookie in the school of love! Yes, and if you ever drink in the spirit of McCheyne, you may go home and hide your head, and say, "I am not worthy to sing—

"Jesus, lover of my soul,"

for I do not return His love as I ought to do." Come, seek His wounds and let your hearts be wounded! Come, look to His heart that poured out blood and water, and give your heart up to Him! Put your whole being among the sweet spices of His all-sufficient merit, set all on fire with burning affection, and let the fragrance of it go up like incense before the Lord!

Lastly, let us be inflamed with a strong desire *to honor Christ*. If He humbled Himself, let us honor Him. Every time that He seems to put away the crown, let us put it on His head. Every time we hear Him slandered—and men continue to slander Him—let us speak up for Him right manfully—

***"You that are men, now serve Him,
Against unnumbered foes.
Your courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose."***

Do you not grow indignant, sometimes, when you see how Christ's professed Church is treating Him and His Truth? They are still shutting Him out till His head is wet with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night. Proclaim Him King in the face of His false friends! Proclaim Him and say that His Word is infallibly true and that His precious blood, alone, can cleanse from sin! Stand out the braver because so many Judases seem to have leaped up from the bottomless Pit to betray Christ again. Be firm and steadfast, like granite walls, in the day when others turn their backs and fly like cowards.

The Lord help you to honor Him who humbled Himself, who became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross! May He accept these humble words of mine and bless them to His people, and make them to be the means of leading some poor sinner to come and trust in Him! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON **PHILIPPIANS 2:1-18.**

Verses 1, 2. *If there is, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any heart and mercies, fulfill you my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.* Paul did not mean to doubt that there is "any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, any heart and mercies," for no one knew better than he did how those blessings abound to them that are in Christ Jesus. He put it by way of argument. If there is consolation in Christ, since there is consolation in Christ, since there is comfort of love, since there is fellowship of the Spirit, be one in Christ. Be not divided. Love one another—"be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

3. *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory.* "Nothing." Never give to exceed other givers. Never preach that you may be a better preacher than anybody else. Never work in the Sunday school with the idea of being thought a very successful teacher. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory."

3. *But in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.* There is some point in which your friend excels you. Notice that rather than the point in which you excel him! Try to give him the higher seat. Seek for yourself to take the lowest place.

4. *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* Have a large heart, so that, though you care for yourself in spiritual things and desire your own soul's prosperity, you may have the same desire for every other Christian man or woman.

5. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* What an example we have set before us in the Lord Jesus Christ! We are to have the mind of Christ and that in the most Christly way, for here we have Christ set out to the life.

6. *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. For He was equal with God.*

7. *But made Himself of no reputation, emptied Himself of all His honor, of all His glory, of all His majesty. And of all the reverence paid to Him by the holy spirits around the Throne of God.*

7, 8. *And took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself. He had not descended low enough, yet, though He had come down all the way from the Godhead to our manhood—"He humbled Himself."*

8, 9. *And became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him. He stooped, who can tell how low? He was raised, who shall tell how high? "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him."*

9. *And given Him a name which is above every name. He threw away His name. He emptied Himself of His reputation. How high is His reputation now! How glorious is the name that God has given Him as the reward of His redemptive work!*

10, 11. *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Now is He higher than the highest! Now everyone must confess His Divinity! With shame and terror, His adversaries shall bow before Him! With delight and humble adoration, His friends shall acknowledge Him Lord of All—"that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." See how the greatest Glory of Christ is the Glory of the Father. He never desired any other Glory but that. The highest honor you can ever have, O child of God, is to bring honor to your Father who is in Heaven! Do you not think so? I know you do!*

12. *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Get out of self! Work out your salvation from pride, from vainglory, from disputations and strife.*

13. *For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. You may very well work out what God works in. If He does not work it in, you will never work it out—but while He works within your spirit both to will and to do, you may safely go on to will and to do, for your willing and your doing will produce lowliness of spirit and unity of heart with your Brothers and Sisters.*

14. *Do all things without murmuring and disputes. Do not say, "You give me too much to do! You always give me the hard work; you put me in the obscure corner." No, no! "Do all things without murmurings." And do not begin fighting over a holy work, for, if you do, you spoil it in the very beginning—and how can you then hope for a blessing upon it? "Do all things without murmurings and disputes."*

15. *That you may be blameless and harmless.* None finding fault with you and you not finding fault with others—neither harming nor harmed—“blameless and harmless.”

15. *The sons of God, without rebuke.* So that men cannot rebuke you and will have to invent a lie before they can do it—and even then the falsehood is too palpable to have any force in it—“without rebuke.”

15. *In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.* You cannot straighten them, but you can shine. They would destroy you if they could, but all you have to do is to shine. If Christians would give more attention to their shining, and pay less attention to the crooked and perverse generation, much more would come of it. But *now* we are advised to “keep abreast of the times” and to, “catch the spirit of the age.” If I could ever catch that spirit, I would hurl it into the bottomless abyss, for it is a spirit that is antagonistic to Christ in all respects! We are to stay clear of all that and, “shine as lights in the world.”

16. *Holding forth the Word of Life.* You are to hold forth the Word of Life as men hold forth a torch. Your shining is largely to consist in holding forth the Word of Life.

16. *That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.* God’s ministers cannot bear the thought of having labored in vain. And yet if some of us were to die, what would remain of all we have done? I charge you, Brothers and Sisters, to think of what your life-work has been. Will it remain? Will it abide? Will it stand the test of your own departure? Ah, if you have any fear about it, you may well go to God in prayer and cry, “Establish You the work of our hands upon us; yes, the work of our hands, establish You it.” Paul cared much about God’s work, but he did not trouble about *himself*.

17. *Yes, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.* If he might be poured forth as a drink-offering on their behalf, or offered up as a whole burnt-offering in the service of the Savior, he would be glad. He could not bear to have lived in vain—but to spend his life for the glory of his Lord would always be a joy to him.

18. *For the same cause also do you joy, and rejoice with me.* To live and to die for Jesus Christ with the blessing of the Father resting upon us—this is a matter for us to joy in unitedly and continually. God help us so to do!

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THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

NO. 101

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 2, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
Philippians 2:9-11***

I almost regret, this morning, that I have ventured to occupy this pulpit because I feel utterly unable to preach to you for your profit. I had thought that the quiet and repose of the last fortnight had removed the effects of that terrible catastrophe. I feel somewhat of those same painful emotions which well-nigh prostrated me before. You will, therefore, excuse me this morning if I make no allusion to that solemn event, or scarcely any. I could not preach to you upon a subject that should be in the least allied to it. I would be obliged to be silent if I should bring to my remembrance that terrible scene in the midst of which it was my solemn lot to stand. God shall doubtless overrule it. It may not have been so much by the malice of men, as some have asserted. It was, perhaps, simple wickedness—an intention to disturb a congregation—and certainly with no thought of committing so terrible a crime as that of the murder of those unhappy creatures. God forgive those who were the instigators of that horrid act! They have my forgiveness from the depths of my soul. *It shall not stop us, however.* We are not in the least degree daunted by it. I shall preach there, again, yes and God shall give us souls there and Satan’s empire shall tremble more than ever! “God is with us; who is he that shall be against us?” The text I have selected is one that has comforted me and, in a great measure, enabled me to come here today—the single reflection upon it had such a power of comfort on my depressed spirit. It is this—“Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in Heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”—Philippians 2:9-11.

I shall not attempt to preach upon this text. I shall only make a few remarks that have occurred to my own mind. For I could not preach today. I have been utterly unable to study, but I thought that even a few

words might be acceptable to you, this morning, and I trust to your loving hearts to excuse them. Oh, Spirit of God, magnify Your strength in Your servant's weakness and enable him to honor his Lord, even when his soul is cast down within him!

When the mind is intensely set upon one object, however much it may, by different calamities, be tossed to and fro, it invariably returns to the place which it had chosen to be its dwelling place. You have noticed, in the case of David, when the battle had been won by his warriors, they returned flushed with victory. David's mind had doubtless suffered much perturbation in the meantime—he had dreaded, alike, the effects of victory and defeat—but have you not noticed how his mind, in one moment, returned to the darling object of his affections? “Is the young man, Absalom, safe?” he asked, as if it mattered not what else had occurred, if his beloved son were but secure! So, Beloved, is it with the Christian in the midst of calamities, whether they are the wreck of nations, the crash of empires, the heaving of revolutions, or the scourge of war—the great question which he asks himself and asks of others, too, is this—is Christ's Kingdom safe? In his own personal afflictions, his chief anxiety is—will God be glorified and will His honor be increased by it? If it is so, he says, although I am but as smoking flax, yet if the sun is not dimmed, I will rejoice, and though I am a bruised reed, if the pillars of the temple are unbroken, what does it matter if my reed is bruised? He finds it sufficient consolation, in the midst of all the breaking in pieces which he endures, to think that Christ's Throne stands fast and firm and that though the earth has rocked beneath *his* feet, yet Christ stands on a rock which can never be moved! Some of these feelings, I think, have crossed our minds. Amidst much tumult and different rushing to and fro of troublous thoughts, our souls have returned to the darling Object of our desires and we have found it no small consolation, after all, to say, “It matters not what shall become of us—God has highly exalted *Him* and given *Him* a name which is above every name—that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow.”

This text has afforded sweet consolation to every heir of Heaven. Allow me, very briefly, to give you the consolations of it. *To the true Christian, there is much comfort in the very fact of Christ's exaltation.* In the second place, *there is no small degree of consolation in the reason of it.* “Wherefore, also, God has highly exalted Him.” That is because of His previous humiliation. And thirdly, there is no small amount of really Divine solace in the thought of *the Person who has exalted Christ.* “Wherefore God also”—although men despise Him and cast Him down—“God also has highly exalted Him.”

I. First, then, IN THE VERY FACT OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION, THERE IS, TO EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN, A VERY LARGE DEGREE OF COMFORT. Many of you who have no part nor lot in spiritual things, not having love to Christ nor any desire for His Glory, will but laugh when I say that this is a very bottle of cordial to the lips of the weary Christian, that Christ, after all, is glorified. To you it is no consolation, because you lack that condition of heart which makes this text sweet to the soul. To you there is nothing of joy in it—it does not stir your bosom, it gives no sweetness to your life, for this very reason—that you are not joined to Christ's cause, nor do you devoutly seek to honor Him. But the true Christian's heart leaps for joy, even when cast down by different sorrows and temptations, at the remembrance that Christ is exalted—for in that he finds enough to cheer his own heart! Note here, Beloved, that the Christian has certain features in his character which make the exaltation of Christ a matter of great joy to him. First, he has, in his own opinion, but not only in his own opinion, but in reality, *a relationship to Christ*. And, therefore, he feels an interest in the success of his kinsman. You have watched the father's joy when, step by step, his boy has climbed to opulence or fame. You have marked the mother's eyes as they sparkled with delight when her daughter grew up to womanhood and burst forth in all the grandeur of beauty. You have asked why they should feel such interest—you have been told, because the boy was his, or the girl was hers. They delighted in the advancement of their little ones because of their *relationship*. Had there been no relationship, they might have been advanced to kings, emperors, or queens and they would have felt but little delight. But from the feet of kindred, each step was invested with a deep and stirring interest! Now, it is so with the Christian. He feels that Jesus Christ, the glorified Prince of the kings of the earth, is his Brother. While he reverences Him as God, he admires Him as the Man-Christ, bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. He delights in his calm and placid moments of communion with Jesus, to say to Him, "O Lord, You are my Brother." His song is, "My Beloved is mine and I am His." It is his joy to sing—

"In ties of blood with sinners one,"

Christ Jesus is—for He is Man, even as we are—and He is no less and no more Man than we are, save only sin. Surely, when we feel we are related to Christ, His exaltation is the source of the greatest joy to our spirits! We take a delight in it, seeing it is one of our family that is exalted! It is the Elder Brother of the great one family of God in Heaven and earth—it is the Brother to whom all of us are related!

There is also in the Christian, not only the feeling of relationship, but there is a feeling of *unity in the cause*. He feels that when Christ is exalted, it is himself exalted, in some degree, seeing he has sympathy

with His desire of promoting the great cause and honor of God in the world. I have no doubt that every common soldier who stood by the side of the Duke of Wellington felt honored when the commander was applauded for the victory, for, he said, "I helped him. I assisted him. It was but a mean part that I played. I did but maintain my rank. I did but sustain the enemy's fire. But now the victory is gained, I feel an honor in it, for I helped, in some degree, to gain it." So the Christian, when he sees his Lord exalted, says, "It is the Captain that is exalted and in His exaltation, all His soldiers share. Have I not stood by His side? Little was the work I did and poor the strength which I possessed to serve Him, but still, I aided in the labor." And the most common soldier in the spiritual ranks feels that he, himself, is, in some degree, exalted when he reads this—"Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name." A name above every name—"that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow."

Moreover, the Christian knows not only that there is this unity in design, but that there is a *real union* between Christ and all His people. It is a Doctrine of Revelation seldom sung upon, and never too much thought of—the Doctrine that Christ and His members are all One! Know you not, Beloved, that every member of Christ's Church is a member of Christ, Himself? We are "of His flesh and of His bones," parts of His great mystical body! And when we read that our Head is crowned, O rejoice, you members of His! Though the crown is not on you, yet being on your Head, you share the glory, for you are one with Him! See Christ yonder, sitting at His Father's right hand? Believer! He is the Pledge of your glorification! He is the Surety of your acceptance. And, moreover, He is your Representative. The seat which Christ possesses in Heaven, He has not only by His own right, as a Person of the Deity, but He has it, also, as the Representative of His whole Church, for He is their Forerunner and He sits in Glory as the Representative of everyone of them. O rejoice, Believer, when you see your Master exalted from the tomb, when you behold Him exalted up to Heaven! Then, when you see Him climb the steps of light and sit upon His lofty Throne—when you hear the acclamations of a thousand seraphs—when you note the loud pealing choral symphony of millions of the redeemed—think, when you see Him crowned with light—think that you are exalted, too, *in Him*, seeing that you are a part of Himself! Happy are you if you know this, not only in Doctrine but in sweet *experience*, too! Knit to Christ, wedded to Him, grown into His parts and portions of His very Self, we throb with the heart of the body! When the Head, itself, is glorified, we share in the praise. We feel that His glorification bestows an honor upon us! Ah, Beloved, have you ever felt that unity to Christ? Have you ever felt a

unity of desire with Him? If so, you will find this rich with comfort. But if not—if you know not Christ—it will be a source of grief rather than a pleasure to you that He is exalted, for you will have to reflect that He is exalted to *crush* you—He is exalted to *judge* you and *condemn* you. He is exalted to sweep this earth of its sins and pull the curse up by the roots—and you with it—unless you repent and turn to God with full purpose of heart!

There is yet another feeling which I think is extremely necessary to any very great enjoyment of this Truth of God, that Christ is exalted. It is a feeling of *entire surrender of one's whole being to the great work of seeking to honor Him*. Oh, I have strived for that—would to God I might attain unto it! I have now concentrated all my prayers into one and that one prayer is this—that I may die to self—and live wholly to Him! It seems to me to be the highest stage of man—to have no wish, no thought, no desire but Christ! To feel that to die were bliss, if it were for Christ. That to live in penury and woe and scorn and contempt and misery were sweet for Christ. To feel that it did not matter what became of one's self, so that one's Master was but exalted. To feel that though, like a sear leaf, you are blown in the blast, you are quite careless where you are going—as long as you feel that the Master's hand is guiding you according to His will! Or rather to feel that though, like the diamond, you must be cut, that you care not how sharply you may be cut so that you may be made fit to be a brilliant jewel in *His* crown. That you care little what may be done to you, if you may but honor *Him!* If any of you have attained to that sweet feeling of self-annihilation, you will look up to Christ as if He were the sun and you will say of yourself, "O Lord, I see Your beams, I feel myself to be not a beam from You—but darkness, swallowed up in Your light. The most I ask is that You would live in me—that the life I live in the flesh may not be my life, but Your life in me—that I may say with emphasis, as Paul did, 'For me to live is Christ.'" A man that has attained to this never need care what is the opinion of this world! He may say, "Do you praise me? Do you flatter me? Take back your flatteries! I ask them not at your hands—I sought to praise my Master. You have laid the praises at my door. Go, lay them at His and not at mine! Do you scorn me? Do you despise me? Thrice happy am I to hear it, if you will not scorn and despise *Him!*" And if you will, yet know this, that He is beyond your scorn! Therefore smite the soldier for his Captain's sake—yes, strike, strike—but the King you cannot touch! He is highly exalted—and though you think you have gotten the victory, you may have routed one soldier of the army—but the main body is triumphant! One soldier seems to be smitten to the dust, but the Captain

is coming on with His victorious cohorts and shall trample you, flushed with your false victory, beneath His conquering feet!

As long as there is a particle of selfishness remaining in us, it will mar our sweet rejoicing in Christ—till we get rid of it—we shall never feel constant joy. I think that the root of sorrow is self. If we once got rid of that, sorrow would be sweet, sickness would be health, sadness would be joy, penury would be wealth, as far as our feelings with regard to them are concerned. *They* might not be changed, but *our feelings* under them would be vastly different! If you would seek happiness, seek it at the roots of your selfishness. Cut up your selfishness and you will be happy. I have found that whenever I have yielded to the least joy, when I have been praised, I have made myself effeminate and weak. I have then been prepared to feel acutely the arrows of the enemy. But when I have said of the praises of men, “Yes, what are you? Worthless things!”—then I could also say of their contempt—“Come on! Come on! I’ll send you all where I sent the praises. You may go together and fight your battles with one another, but as for me, let your arrows rattle on my mail—they must not, and they shall not reach my flesh!” But if you give way to one, you will to another. You must seek and learn to live wholly on Christ—to sorrow when you see *Christ* maligned and dishonored, to rejoice when you see *Him* exalted. Then you will have constant cause for joy! Sit down, now, O reviled one, poor, despised and tempted one. Sit down, lift up your eyes, see Him on His Throne and say within yourself, “Little though I am, I know I am united to Him! He is my love, my life, my joy! I care not what happens, so long as it is written, ‘The Lord reigns.’”

II. Now, briefly upon the second point. Here, also, is the very fountain and wellspring of joy, in THE REASON OF CHRIST’S EXALTATION. “Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him.” Why? Because, “He, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a Servant and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him.” This, of course, relates to the Manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. As God, Christ needed no exaltation. He was higher than the highest, “God over all, blessed forever.” But the symbols of His Glory, having been for a while obscured, having wrapped His Godhead in mortal flesh—His flesh with His Godhead ascended up on high and the Man-God, Christ Jesus, who had stooped to shame and sorrow and degradation, was highly exalted “far above all principalities and powers”—that He might reign Prince Regent over all worlds, yes, over Heaven itself! Let us consider, for a moment, that depth of degradation to which Christ descended. And then,

my Beloved, it will give you joy to think that for that very reason His Manhood was highly elected. Do you see that Man—

***“The humble Man before His foes,
The weary Man and full of woes?”***

Do you mark Him as He speaks? Note the marvelous eloquence which pours from His lips and see how the crowds attend Him. But do you hear in the distance the growling of the thunders of calumny and scorn? Listen to the words of His accusers! They say He is “a gluttonous Man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.” “He has a devil and is mad.” All the whole vocabulary of abuse is exhausted by abusive censure upon Him. He is slandered, abused, persecuted! Stop! Do you think that He is by this cast down, by this degraded? No, for this very reason—“God has highly exalted Him.” Mark the shame and spit that have come upon the cheeks of yonder Man of Sorrows! See His hair plucked with cruel hands. Mark how they torture Him and how they mock Him. Do you think that this is at all dishonorable to Christ? It is apparently so, but listen to this—“He became obedient” and, therefore, “God has highly exalted Him.” Ah, there is a marvelous connection between that shame and spit and the bending of the knee of seraphs! There is a strange, yet mystic link, which unites the calumny and the slander with the choral sympathies of adoring angels! The one was, as it were, the seed of the other. Strange that it should be, but the black, the bitter seed brought forth a sweet and glorious flower which blooms forever! He suffered and He reigned! He stooped to conquer and He conquered, for He stooped and was exalted, for He conquered!

Consider Him still further. Do you mark Him in your imagination nailed to yonder Cross! Oh yes! Oh, how I mark the floods gushing down His cheeks! Do you see His hands bleeding and His feet, too, gushing gore? Behold Him! The bulls of Bashan gird Him round and the dogs are hounding Him to death! Hear Him! “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabacthani?” The earth is startled with fright! A God is groaning on a Cross! What? Does not this dishonor Christ? No. It honors Him! Each of the thorns becomes a brilliant jewel in His diadem of Glory! The nails are forged into His scepter and His wounds clothe Him with the purple of empire! The treading of the winepress has stained His garments, but not with stains of scorn and dishonor. The stains are embroideries upon His royal robes forever. The treading of that winepress has made His garments purple with the empire of a world—and He is the Master of a universe forever! O Christian! Sit down and consider that your Master did not mount from earth’s mountains into Heaven but from her valleys! It was not from heights of bliss on earth that He strode to eternal bliss, but from depths of woe He mounted up to Glory! Oh, what a stride was that, when, at one mighty step from the grave to the Throne of the Highest, the Man-Christ,

the God, did gloriously ascend! And yet reflect He, in some way, mysterious, yet true, was exalted because He suffered! “Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name.” Believer, there is comfort for you here, if you will take it! If Christ were exalted through His degradation, so shall you be! Count not your steps to triumph by your steps upward but by those which are seemingly downward! The way to Heaven is downhill! He who would be honored forever, must sink in his own esteem and often in that of his fellow men. Oh, think not of you fool who is mounting to Heaven by his own light opinions of himself, and by the flatteries of his fellows, thinks that he shall safely reach Paradise! No, that shall burst on which he rests and he shall fall and be broken in pieces. But he who descends into the mines of suffering shall find unbounded riches there—and he who dives into the depths of grief shall find the pearl of Everlasting Life within its caverns!

Remember, Christian, that you are exalted when you are disgraced. Read the slanders of your enemies as the plaudits of the just. Count that the scoff and jeer of wicked men are equal to the praise and honor of the godly—their blame is censure and their censure praise. Reckon, too, if your body should ever be exposed to persecution, that it is no shame to you, but the reverse. And if you should be privileged, (and you may), to wear the blood-red crown of martyrdom, count it no disgrace to die! Remember that the most honorable in the Church are “the noble army of martyrs.” Reckon that the greater the sufferings they endured, so much the greater is their “eternal weight of glory.” And so do you, if you stand in the brunt and thick of the fight. Remember that you shall stand in the midst of Glory—if you have the hardest to bear, you shall have the sweetest to enjoy! On with you, then—through floods, through fire, through death, through Hell, if it should lie in your path! Fear not. He who glorified Christ because He stooped, shall glorify you! For after He has caused you to endure, awhile, He will give you “a crown of life which fades not away.”

III. And now, in the last place, Beloved, here is yet another comfort for you. THE PERSON WHO exalted Christ is to be noticed. “GOD also has highly exalted Him.” The emperor of all the Russians, crowns himself. He is an autocrat and puts the crown upon his own head—but Christ has no such foolish pride! Christ did not crown Himself. “GOD also has highly exalted Him.” The crown was put upon the head of Christ by God! And there is to me a very sweet reflection in this—that the hand that put the crown on Christ’s head will one day put the crown on ours—that the same Mighty One who crowned Christ, “King of kings and Lord of lords,”

will crown us, when He shall make us “kings and priests unto Him forever.” “I know,” said Paul, “there is laid up for me a crown of glory which fades not away, which God, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day.”

Now, just pause over this thought—that Christ did not crown Himself, but that His Father crowned Him. That He did not elevate Himself to the Throne of Majesty, but that His Father lifted Him there and placed Him on His Throne. Why, reflect thus—man never highly exalted Christ. Put this, then, in opposition to it. “*God* also has highly exalted Him.” Man hissed Him, mocked Him, hooted Him. Words were not hard enough—they would use stones. “They took up stones again to stone Him.” And stones failed. Nails must be used and He must be Crucified. And then there comes the taunt, the jeer, the mockery, while He hangs languishing on His Cross. Man did not exalt Him. Set the black picture there. Now put this with this glorious—this bright scene, side by side with it—and one shall be a foil to the other! Man dishonored Him—“*God* also exalted Him.” Believer, if all men speak ill of you, lift up your head and say, “Man exalted not my Master. I thank him that he exalts not me. The servant should not be above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord, nor he that is sent, greater than He that sent him”—

***“If on my face for His dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be,
I’ll hail reproach and welcome shame—
For He’ll remember me.”***

God will remember me and highly exalt me, after all, though man casts me down.

Put it, again, in opposition to the fact that Christ did not exalt Himself. Poor Christian! *You* feel that you cannot exalt yourself. Sometimes you cannot raise your poor depressed spirits. Some say to you, “Oh, you should not feel like this.” They tell you, “Oh, you should not speak such words, nor think such thoughts.” Ah, “The heart knows its own bitterness and a stranger intermeddles not therewith”—yes, and I will improve upon it, “nor a friend, either.” It is not easy to tell how another ought to feel and how another ought to act. Our minds are differently made, each in its own mold, which mold is broken afterwards and there shall never be another like it. We are all different, each one of us. But I am sure there is one thing in which we are all brought to unite in times of deep sorrow, namely, in a sense of helplessness. We feel that we cannot exalt ourselves. Now remember, our Master felt just like it. In the 22nd Psalm, which, if I read it rightly, is a beautiful soliloquy of Christ upon the Cross, He says to Himself, “I am a worm and no man.” As if He felt Himself so broken, so cast down that instead of being more than a man, as He was, He felt for awhile less than man. And yet, when He

could not lift a finger to crown Himself, when He could scarcely heave a thought of victory, when His eyes could not flash with even a distant glimpse of triumph—then His God was crowning Him! Are you so broken in pieces, Christian? Think not that you are cast away, forever, for, “God also has highly exalted Him” “who did not exalt Himself.” And this is a picture and prophecy of what He will do for you!

And now, Beloved, I can say little more upon this text save that I bid you, now, for a few minutes, meditate and think upon it. Oh, let your eyes be lifted up. Bid Heaven’s blue veil divide. Ask power of God—I mean *spiritual* power from on high—to look within the veil. I bid you not look to the streets of gold, nor to the walls of jasper, nor to the pearly-gated city. I do not ask you to turn your eyes to the white-robed hosts who forever sing loud hallelujahs—but yonder, my Friends, turn your eyes—

***“There, like a man, the Savior sits!
The God, how bright He shines!
And scatters infinite delight
On all the happy minds!”***

Do you see Him?—

***“The head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crowned with glory now!
A royal diadem adorns
That mighty Victor’s brow!
No more the bloody crown,
The Cross and nails no more—
For Hell itself shakes at His frown
And all the heavens adore.”***

Look at Him! Can your imagination picture Him? Behold His transcendent glory! The majesty of kings is swallowed up. The pomp of empires dissolves like the white mist of the morning before the sun, the brightness of assembled armies is eclipsed! He, in Himself, is brighter than the sun, more terrible than armies with banners! Look at Him! Look at Him! Oh, hide your heads, you monarchs! Put away your gaudy pageantry, you lords of this poor narrow earth! His Kingdom knows no bounds. Without a limit His vast empire stretches out itself. Above Him all is His! Beneath Him many a step are angels and they are His. And they cast their crowns before His feet. With them stand His elect and ransomed and *their* crowns, too, are His! And here upon this lower earth stand His saints and they are His and they adore Him! And under the earth, among the infernal, where devils growl their malice, even there is trembling and adoration—and where lost spirits, with wailing and gnashing of teeth forever lament their being—even there, there is the acknowledgement of His Godhead, even though the confession helps to make the fire of their torments hotter! In Heaven, in earth, in Hell, all

knees bend before Him and every tongue confesses that He is God! If not now, yet in the time that is to come this shall be carried out, that every creature of God's making shall acknowledge His Son to be "God over all, blessed forever. Amen." Oh, my soul anticipates that blessed day when this whole earth shall willingly bend its knee before its God. I do believe there is a happy era coming, when there shall not be one knee unbent before my Lord and Master. I look for that time, that latter-day Glory, when kings shall bring presents, when queens shall be the nursing mothers of the Church, when the gold of Sheba and the ships of Tarshish and the camels of Arabia shall, alike, be His. When nations and tribes of every tongue shall—

***"Dwell on His name with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name."***

Sometimes I hope to live to see that all-auspicious era—that tranquil age of this world, so much oppressed with grief and sorrow by the tyranny of its own habitants. I hope to see the time when it shall be said, "Shout, for the great Shepherd reigns and His unsuffering Kingdom now is come"—when earth shall be one great orchestra of praise and every man shall sing the glorious hallelujah anthem of the King of kings! But even now, while waiting for that era, my soul rejoices in the fact that every knee does virtually bow, though not willingly, yet really. Does the scoffer, when he mouths high Heaven, think that he insults God? He thinks so, but his insult dies long before it reaches half-way to the stars. Does he conceive, when in his malice he forges a sword against Christ, that his weapon shall prosper? If he does, I can well conceive the derision of God when He sees the wildest rebel, the most abandoned despiser still working out his great decrees, still doing that which God has eternally ordained—and in the midst of his wild rebellion still running in the very track which in some mysterious way from before all eternity had been marked as the track in which that being should certainly move! "The wild steeds of earth have broken their bridles, the reins are out of the hands of the charioteer"—so some say—but they are not, or if they are, the steeds run the same round as they would have done had the Almighty still grasped the reins! The world has not gone to confusion. Chance is not God. God is still Master and let men do what they will and hate the Truth we now prize, they shall, after all, do what God wills and their direst rebellion shall prove but a species of obedience, though they know it not!

But you will say, "Why do you yet find fault, for who has resisted such a will as that?" "No, but O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why have You made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make

one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction—and that He might make known the riches of His Glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto Glory?” Who is he that shall blame Him? Woe unto him that strives with his Maker! He is God—know that, you inhabitants of the land—and all things, after all, shall serve His will! I like what Luther says in his bold hymn, where, notwithstanding all that those who are haters of Predestination choose to affirm, he knew and boldly declared, “He everywhere has sway and all things serve His might.” Notwithstanding all they do, there is God’s sway, after all! Go on, Reviler! God knows how to make all your reviling into songs! Go on, you warrior against God, if you will. But know this, your sword shall help to magnify God and carve out Glory for Christ—when *you* thought it might slaughter His Church! It shall come to pass that all you do shall be frustrated, for God makes the diviners mad and says, “Where is the wisdom of the scribe? Where is the wisdom of the wise?” Surely, “Him has God exalted and given Him a name which is above every name.”

And now, lastly, Beloved, if it is true, as it is, that Christ is so exalted that He is to have a name above every name and every knee is to bow to Him, will we not bow our knees this morning before His Majesty? You must, whether you will or not, one day bow your knee. O iron-sinewed Sinner, bow your knee now! You will have to bow it, Man, in that day when the lightning shall be loosed and the thunder shall roll in wild fury. You will have to bow your knee, then. Oh, bow it now! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” O Lord of Hosts! Bend the knees of men! Make us all the willing subjects of Your Divine Grace, lest afterward, we should be the unwilling slaves of Your terror—dragged with chains of vengeance down to Hell! O that now those who are on earth might willingly bend their knees, lest in Hell it should be fulfilled, “Things under the earth shall bow the knee before Him.” God bless you, my Friends. I can say no more but that. God bless you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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

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

YOUR OWN SALVATION

NO. 1003

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 30, 1871,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***"Your own salvation."
Philippians 2:12.***

WE select the words, "*your own salvation*," as our text this morning, not out of any singularity, or from the slightest wish that the brevity of the text should surprise you—but because our subject will be the more clearly before you if only these three words are announced. If I had nominally taken the whole verse I could not have attempted to expound it without distracting your attention from the topic which now weighs upon my heart. O that the Divine Spirit may bring home to each one of your minds the unspeakable importance of "your own salvation"!

We have heard it said by hearers that they come to listen to us and we talk to them upon subjects in which they have no interest. You will not be able to make this complaint today, for we shall speak only of "your own salvation." And nothing can more concern you. It has sometimes been said that preachers frequently select very unpractical themes. No such objection can be raised today—for nothing can be more practical than this—nothing more necessary than to urge you to see to "your own salvation."

We have even heard it said that ministers delight in abstruse subjects, paradoxical dogmas, and mysterious surpassing comprehension. But, assuredly, we will keep to plain sailing this morning. No sublime doctrines, no profound questions shall perplex you. You shall only be called on to consider "your own salvation"—a very homely theme, and a very simple one, but for all that—the most weighty that can be brought before you. I shall seek after simple words, also, and plain sentences to suit the simplicity and plainness of the subject, that there may be no thought whatever about the speaker's language, but only concerning this one, sole topic, "your own salvation."

I ask you all, as reasonable men and women who would not injure or neglect yourselves, to lend me your most serious attention. Chase away the swarming vanities which buzz around you, and let each one think for himself upon his "own salvation." O may the Spirit of God set each one of you apart in a mental solitude and constrain you, each one, to face the Truth of God concerning his own state! Each man apart, each woman apart! The father apart, and the child apart—may you now come before the Lord in solemn thought and may nothing occupy your attention but this—"your own salvation."

I. We will begin this morning's meditation by noting THE MATTER UNDER CONSIDERATION—*Salvation!* Salvation! A great word, not always understood, often narrowed down, and its very marrow overlooked. Salvation! This concerns everyone here present. We all fell in our first parent.

We have all sinned personally. We shall all perish unless we find salvation. The word salvation contains within it *deliverance from the guilt of our past sins*. We have broken God's Law, each one of us, more or less flagrantly. We have all wandered the downward road, though each has chosen a different way.

Salvation brings to us the blotting out of the transgressions of the past, acquittal from criminality, purging from all guilt that we may stand accepted before the great Judge. What man in his sober senses will deny that forgiveness is an unspeakably desirable blessing! But salvation means more than that—it includes *deliverance from the power of sin*. Naturally we are all fond of evil and we run after it greedily. We are the bond slaves of iniquity, and we love the bondage. This last is the worst feature of the case. But when salvation comes it delivers the man from the power of sin. He learns that it is evil and he regards it as such—he loathes it—repents that he has ever been in love with it.

He turns his back upon it, becomes, through God's Spirit, the master of his lusts, puts the flesh beneath his feet and rises into the liberty of the children of God. Alas, there are many who do not care for this—if this is salvation they would not give a farthing for it. They love their sins. They rejoice to follow the devices and imaginations of their own corrupt hearts. Yet be assured, this emancipation from bad habits, unclean desires, and carnal passions is the main point in salvation, and if it is not ours, salvation in its other branches is not and cannot be enjoyed by us.

Dear Hearer, do you possess salvation from sin? Have you escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust? If not, what have you to do with salvation? To any right-minded man, deliverance from unholy principles is regarded as the greatest of all blessings. What do *you* think of it? Salvation includes *deliverance from the present wrath of God* which abides upon the unsaved man every moment of his life. Every person who is unforgiven is the object of Divine wrath. "God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, He will whet His sword." "He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

I frequently hear the statement that this is a state of probation. This is a great mistake—for our probation has long since passed. Sinners have been tried and found to be unworthy. They have been "weighed in the balances," and "found wanting." If you have not believed in Jesus condemnation already rests upon you—you are reprieved awhile—but your condemnation is recorded. Salvation takes a man from under the cloud of Divine wrath, and reveals to him the Divine love. He can then say, "O God, I will praise You though You were angry with me. Your anger is turned away and You comfort me."

Oh, it is not Hell hereafter which is the only thing a sinner has to fear—it is the wrath of God which rests upon him now! To be unreconciled to God, now, is an awful thing—to have God's arrow pointed at you as it is at this moment, even though it flies not from the string as yet—is a terrible thing! It is enough to make you tremble from head to foot when you learn that you are the target of Jehovah's wrath—"He has bent His bow, and

made it ready.” Every soul that is unreconciled to God by the blood of His Son is in the gall of bitterness. Salvation at once sets us free from this state of danger and alienation. We are no longer the “children of wrath, even as others,” but are made children of God and joint heirs with Christ Jesus. What can be conceived more precious than this?

And then we, lastly, receive that part of salvation which ignorant persons put first—and make to be the whole of salvation—in consequence of our being delivered from the guilt of sin, and from the power of sin, and from the present wrath of God, we are *delivered from the future wrath of God*. Unto the uttermost will that wrath descend upon the souls of men when they leave the body and stand before their Maker’s bar if they depart this life unsaved. To die without salvation is to enter into damnation! Where death leaves us, there judgment finds us. And where judgment finds us, eternity will hold us forever and ever.

“He which is filthy, let him be filthy still,” and he that is wretched as a punishment for being filthy, shall be hopelessly wretched still. Salvation delivers the soul from going down into the pit of Hell. We, being justified, are no longer liable to punishment because we are no longer chargeable with guilt. Christ Jesus bore the wrath of God that we might never bear it. He has made a full Atonement to the justice of God for the sins of all Believers. Against him that believes there remains no record of guilt. His transgressions are blotted out, for Christ Jesus has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

What a comprehensive word, then, is this—“salvation!” It is a triumphant deliverance from the guilt of sin, from the dominion of it, from the curse of it, from the punishment of it, and ultimately from the very existence of it! Salvation is the death of sin, its burial, its annihilation—yes, and the very obliteration of its memory. For thus says the Lord—“their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Beloved Hearers, I am sure that this is the weightiest theme I can bring before you, and therefore I cannot be content unless I see that it grasps you and holds you fast. I pray you give earnest heed to this most pressing of all subjects.

If my voice and words cannot command your full attention, I could wish to be dumb that some other pleader might, with wiser speech, draw you to a close consideration of this matter. Salvation appears to me to be of the first importance—when I think of what it is in itself—and for this reason I have, at the outset, set it forth before your eyes. But you may be helped to remember its value if you consider that God the Father thinks highly of salvation. It was on His mind before ever the earth was. He thinks salvation a lofty business, for He gave His Son that He might save rebellious sinners.

Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten, thinks salvation most important for He bled, He died to accomplish it. Shall I bide with that which cost Him His life? If He came from Heaven to earth, shall I be slow to look from earth to Heaven? Shall that which cost the Savior a life of zeal and a death of agony be of small account with me? By the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, by the wounds of Calvary, I beseech you be assured that salvation must be worthy of your highest and most anxious thoughts! It could

not be that God the Father and God the Son should, thus, make a common sacrifice—the one giving His Son and the other giving Himself for salvation, and yet salvation should be a light and trivial thing.

The Holy Spirit thinks it no trifle, for He condescends to work continually in the new creation that He may bring about salvation. He is often vexed and grieved, yet He continues, still, His abiding labors that He may bring many sons unto Glory. Despise not what the Holy Spirit esteems, lest you despise the Holy Spirit Himself. The sacred Trinity thinks much of salvation. Let us not neglect it. I beseech you who have gone on trifling with salvation to remember that we who have to preach to you dare not trifle with it.

The longer I live, the more I feel that if God does not make me faithful as a minister, it had been better for me never to have been born. What a thought that I am set as a watchman to warn your souls, and if I warn you not aright, your blood will be laid at my door! My own damnation will be terrible enough, but to have your blood upon my skirts as well! God save any one of His ministers from being found guilty of the souls of men. Every preacher of the Gospel may cry with David, “Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, God of my salvation!”

Do you think, O careless Hearers, that God’s Church considers salvation to be a little matter? Earnest men and women, by thousands, are praying day and night for the salvation of others, and are laboring, too, and making great sacrifices—and are willing to make many more—if they may, by any means, bring some to Jesus and His salvation. Surely, if gracious men, and wise men, think salvation to be so important, you who have, up to now, neglected it, ought to change your minds upon the matter and act with greater care for your own interests.

The angels think it a weighty business. Bowing from their thrones, they watch for repenting sinners. And when they hear that a sinner has returned to his God, they waken anew their golden harps and pour forth fresh music before the Throne, for “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents.” It is certain, also, that devils think salvation to be a great matter for their arch-leader goes about seeking whom he may devour. They never tire in seeking men’s destruction! They know how much salvation glorifies God and how terrible the ruin of souls is. And therefore they compass sea and land if they may destroy the sons of men.

Oh, I pray you, careless Hearer, be wise enough to dread that fate which your cruel enemy, the devil, would gladly secure for you! Remember, too, that lost souls think salvation important. The rich man, when he was in this world, thought highly of nothing but his barns and the housing of his produce. But when he came into the place of torment, then he said—“Father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers: that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”

Lost souls see things in another light than that which dazzled them here. They value things at a different rate from what we do here, where sinful pleasures and earthly treasures dim the mental eye. I pray you,

then, by the blessed Trinity, by the tears and prayers of holy men, by the joy of angels and glorified spirits, by the malice of devils and the despair of the lost—arouse yourselves from slumber, and neglect not this great salvation! I shall not depreciate anything that concerns your welfare, but I shall steadfastly assert that nothing so much concerns any one of you as salvation.

Your health, by all means, let the physician be fetched if you are sick. Care well for diet and exercise, and all sanitary laws. Look wisely to your constitution and its peculiarities. But what matters it, after all, to have possessed a healthy body if you have a perishing soul? Wealth, yes, if you must have it, though you shall find it an empty thing if you set your heart upon it. Prosperity in this world, earn it if you can do so fairly, but, “what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

A golden coffin will be a poor compensation for a damned soul. To be cast away from God’s Presence—can that misery be assuaged by mountains of treasure? Can the bitterness of the man’s death be sweetened by the thought that the wretch was once a millionaire, and that his wealth could affect the politics of nations? No, there is nothing in health or wealth comparable to salvation! Nor can honor and reputation bear a comparison with it. Truly they are but baubles, and yet, for all that, they have a strange fascination for the soul of men. Oh, Sirs, if every harp string in the world should resound your glories, and every trumpet should proclaim your fame, what would it matter if a louder voice should say, “Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”?

Salvation! *Salvation!* SALVATION! Nothing on earth can match it, for the merchandise of it is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold! The possession of the whole universe would be no equivalent to a lost soul for the awful damage it has sustained and must sustain forever. Pile up the worlds, and let them fill the balance—yes, bring as many worlds as there are stars, and heap up the scale on the one side. Then in this other scale place a single soul endowed with immortality, and it outweighs the whole! Salvation! Nothing can be likened unto it. May we feel its unutterable value, and therefore seek it till we possess it in its fullness!

II. But now we must advance to a second point of consideration, and I pray God, the Holy Spirit, to press it upon us, and that is, WHOSE MATTER IS IT? We have seen what the matter is—salvation. Now, consider whose it is. “*Your own* salvation.” At this hour nothing else is to occupy your thoughts but this intensely personal matter—and I beseech the Holy Spirit to hold your minds fast to this one point. If you are saved it will be “your own salvation,” and you yourself will enjoy it. If you are not saved, the sin you now commit is your own sin, the guilt your own guilt. The condemnation under which you live, with all its disquietude and fear, or with all its callousness and neglect is your own—all your own.

You may share in other men’s sins, and other men may become participators in yours, but a burden lies on your own back which none besides can touch with one of his fingers. There is a page in God’s Book

where your sins are recorded unmingled with the transgressions of your fellows. Now, Beloved, you must obtain for all this sin a personal pardon, or you are undone forever! No other can be washed in Christ's blood for you. No one can believe and let his faith stand instead of your faith. The very supposition of human sponsorship in religion is monstrous.

You must *yourself* repent, *yourself* believe, *yourself* be washed in the blood, or else for *you* there is no forgiveness, no acceptance, no adoption, no regeneration. It is all a *personal* matter through and through—"your own salvation" it must be, or it will be your own eternal ruin. Reflect anxiously that you must personally die. No one imagines that another can die for him. No man can redeem his brother or give to God a ransom. Through that iron gate I must pass alone, and so must you.

Dying will have to be our own personal business. And in that dying we shall have either personal comfort or personal dismay. When death is past, salvation is still our "own salvation." For if I am saved, *my* "eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." My eyes shall see Him, and not another on my behalf. No brother's head is to wear your crown. No stranger's hand to wave your palm. No sister's eye to gaze for you upon the Beatific Vision, and no sponsor's heart to be filled as your proxy with the ecstatic bliss. There is a personal Heaven for the personal Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It must be, if you possess it, "your own salvation."

But if you have it not, reflect again, that it will be your own *damnation*. No one will be condemned for you! No other can bear the hot thunderbolts of Jehovah's wrath on your behalf. When you shall say, "Hide me, you rocks! Conceal me, O mountains," no one will spring forward, and say, "You can cease to be accursed, and I will become a curse for you." A Substitute there is, today, for everyone that believes—God's *appointed* Substitute, the Christ of God. But if that Substitution is not accepted by you, there can never be another—and there remains only for you a personal casting away to suffer personal pangs in your own soul and in your own body *forever*.

This, then, makes it a most solemn business. O be wise, and look well to "your own salvation." You may be tempted today and very likely you are to forget your own salvation by thoughts of other people. We are all so apt to look abroad in this matter, and not to look at home. Let me pray you to reverse the process and let everything which has made you neglect your own vineyard be turned to the opposite account and lead you to begin at home, and see to "your own salvation."

Perhaps you dwell among the saints of God, and you have been rather apt to find fault with them, though for my part I can say these are the people I desire to live with and desire to die with—"your people shall be my people, and your God my God." But, O if you live among the saints ought it not to be your business to see to—"your own salvation"? See that you are truly one of them, not merely written in their Church-book, but really engraved upon the palms of Christ's hands. Not a false professor, but a real possessor. Not a mere wearer of the name of Christ, but a bearer of the nature of Christ.

If you live in a gracious family be afraid lest you should be divided from them forever. How could you endure to go from a Christian household to the place of torment! Let the anxieties of saints lead you to be anxious. Let their prayers drive you to prayer. Let their example rebuke your sin and their joys entice you to their Savior. O see to this! But perhaps you live most among ungodly men, and the tendency of your conversation with the ungodly is to make you think as they do of the trifles and vanities and wickedness of this life. Do not let it be so—on the contrary, say, “O God, though I am placed among these people, yet gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men. Let me avoid the sins into which they fall and the impenitence of which they are guilty. Save me, I pray You, O my God! Save me from the transgressions which they commit.”

Perhaps today some of your minds are occupied with thoughts of the dead who have lately fallen asleep. There is a little one unburied at home, or there is a father not yet laid in the grave. Oh, when you weep for those who have gone to Heaven, think of “your own salvation,” and weep for yourselves—for you have parted with them forever unless you are saved. You have said, “Farewell” to those beloved ones, *eternally* farewell, unless you, yourselves, believe in Jesus. And if any of you have heard of persons who have lived in sin and died in blasphemy, and are lost, I pray you think not of them carelessly lest you also suffer the same doom—for what says the Savior—“Suppose you that these were sinners above all the sinners?” “I tell you, No: but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.”

It seems to me as if everything on earth, and everything in Heaven, and everything in Hell, yes—and God Himself—calls upon you to seek “your own salvation” first and foremost, and above all other things. It may be profitable to mention some persons upon whom this theme needs much pressing. I will begin at home. There is great need to urge this matter upon official Christians, such as I am, such as my Brethren, the deacons and elders are. If there are any persons who are likely to be deceived, it is those who are called by their office to act as shepherds to the souls of others. Oh, my Brethren, it is so easy for me to imagine, because I am a minister, and have to deal with holy things, that therefore I am safe!

I pray I may never fall into that delusion, but may always cling to the Cross as a poor, needy sinner resting in the blood of Jesus. Brother ministers, co-workers, and officials of the Church—do not imagine that office can save you. The son of perdition was an Apostle—greater than we are in office—and yet at this hour he is greater in destruction. See to it, you that are numbered among the leaders of Israel, that you, yourselves, are saved! Unpractical doctrinalists are another class of persons who need to be warned to see to their own salvation. When they hear a sermon they sit with their mouths open, ready to snap at half a mistake.

They make a man an offender for a word, for they conclude themselves to be the standards of orthodoxy, and they weigh up the preacher as he speaks with as much coolness as if they had been appointed deputy judges for the Great King Himself. Oh, Sir, weigh yourself! It may be a great thing to be sound in the head, in the faith—but it is a greater thing to be sound in the *heart*. I may be able to split a hair between orthodoxy

and heterodoxy, and yet may have no part nor lot in the matter. You may be a very sound Calvinist, or you may happen to think soundness lies in another direction—but, oh, it is nothing—it is *less* than nothing unless your souls feel the power of the Truth of God, and you yourselves are born again. See to “your own salvation,” you wise men in the letter, who have not the Spirit.

So, too, certain persons who are always given to curious speculations need warning. When they read the Bible it is not to find whether they are saved or not, but to know whether we are under the third or fourth vial, when the millennium is going to be, or what is the battle of Armageddon. Ah, Sir, search out all these things if you have time and skill, but look to your own salvation first! The book of Revelation—blessed is he that understands it—but not unless, first of all, he understands this, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” The greatest doctor in the symbols and mysteries of the Apocalypse shall be as certainly cast away as the most ignorant, unless he has come to Christ and rested his soul in the atoning work of our great Substitute.

I know some who greatly need to look to their own salvation. I refer to those who are always criticizing others. They can hardly go to a place of worship but what they are observing their neighbor’s dress or conduct. Nobody is safe from their remarks—they are such keen judges—and make such shrewd observations. You fault-finders and talebearers, look to “your own salvation.” You condemned a minister the other day for a supposed fault, and yet he is a dear servant of God who lives near his Master. Who are you, Sir, to use your tongue against such a one as he? The other day a poor humble Christian was the object of your gossip and your slander, to the wounding of her heart. Oh, see to yourself, see to yourself!

If those eyes which look outward so piercingly would sometimes look inward they might see a sight which would blind them with horror. Blessed horror if it led them to turn to the Savior who would open those eyes afresh, and grant them to see His salvation! I might also say that in this matter of looking to personal salvation, it is necessary to speak to some who have espoused certain great public designs. I trust I am as ardent a Protestant as any man living, but I know too many red-hot Protestants who are but little better than Romanists. Though the Romanists of old might have burnt them, they would certainly withhold toleration from Romanists today, if they could. And therein I see not a pin to choose between the two bigots.

Zealous Protestants, I agree with you—but I warn you that your zeal in this matter will *not* save you—or stand in the place of personal godliness. Many an orthodox Protestant will be found at the left hand of the Great Judge. And you, too, who are forever agitating this and that public question, I would say to you, “Let politics alone till your own inward politics are settled on a good foundation.” You are a Radical Reformer! You could show us a system of political economy which would right all our wrongs and give to every man his due. Then I pray you right you own wrongs, reform yourself, yield yourself to the love of Jesus Christ—or what will it signify to you, though you knew how to balance the affairs of nations, and

to regulate the arrangement of all classes of society—if you, yourself, shall be blown away like chaff before the winnowing fan of the Lord?

God grant us Grace, then, whatever else we take up with, to keep it in its proper place and make our calling and election sure.

III. And now, thirdly, and O, for Grace to speak aright, I shall try to ANSWER CERTAIN OBJECTIONS. I think I hear somebody say, “Well, but don’t you believe in *predestination*? What have we to do with looking to our own salvation? Is it not all fixed?” You fool! For I can scarcely answer you till I have given you your right title! Was it not fixed whether you should get wet or not in coming to this place? Why, then, did you bring your umbrella? Is it not fixed whether you shall be nourished with food today or shall go hungry? Why, then, will you go home and eat your dinner?

Is it not fixed whether you shall live or not tomorrow? Will you, therefore, cut your throat? No, you do not reason so wickedly, so foolishly from destiny in reference to anything but “your own salvation!” And you know it is not reasoning, it is just mere talk. Here is all the answer I will give you, and all you deserve. Another says, “I have a difficulty about this looking to our own salvation. Do you not believe in *full assurance*? Are there not some who know that they are saved beyond all doubt?”

Yes, blessed be God, I hope there are many such now present! But let me tell you who these are *not*. These are *not* persons who are afraid to examine themselves. If I meet with any man who says, “I have no need to examine myself any more. I know I am saved and therefore have no need to take any further care,” I would venture to say to him, “Sir, you are lost already! This strong delusion of yours has led you to believe a lie.” There are none so cautious as those who possess full assurance, and there are none who have so much holy fear of sinning against God, nor who walk so tenderly and carefully as those who possess the full assurance of faith. Presumption is *not* assurance, though, alas, many think so. No fully assured Believer will ever object to being reminded of the importance of his own salvation.

But a third objection arises. “This is very *selfish*,” says one. “You have been exhorting us to look to ourselves, and that is sheer selfishness.” Yes, so you say. But let me tell you it is a kind of selfishness that is absolutely *necessary* before you can be *unselfish*. A part of salvation is to be delivered from selfishness, and I am selfish enough to desire to be delivered from selfishness. How can you be of any service to others if you are not saved yourself? A man is drowning. I am on London Bridge. If I spring from the parapet and can swim, I can save him. But suppose I cannot swim—can I render any service by leaping into sudden and certain death with the sinking man? I am disqualified from helping him till I have the ability to do so.

There is a school over yonder. Well, the first enquiry of him who is to be the master must be, “Do I know, myself, that which I profess to teach?” Do you call that enquiry selfish? Surely it is a most unselfish selfishness, grounded upon common sense. Indeed, the man who is not so selfish as to ask himself, “Am I qualified to act as a teacher?” would be guilty of

gross selfishness in putting himself into an office which he was not qualified to fill. I will suppose an illiterate person going into the school and saying, "I will be master here, and take the pay," and yet he cannot teach the children to read or write.

Would he not be very selfish in not seeing to his own fitness? But surely it is not selfishness that would make a man stand back and say, "No, I must first go to school myself, otherwise it is but a mockery of the children for me to attempt to teach them anything." This is not selfishness, then, when looked at aright, which makes us see to our own salvation—for it is the basis from which we operate for the good of others.

IV. Having answered these objections, I shall, for a minute, attempt to RENDER SOME ASSISTANCE to those who would gladly be right in the best things. Has the Holy Spirit been pleased to make anyone here earnest about his own salvation? Friend, I will help you to answer two questions. Ask yourself, first, "Am I saved?" I would help you to reply to that very quickly. If you are saved this morning, you are the subject of a work within you. As says the text, "Work out your own salvation. For it is God which works in you." You cannot work it in, but when God works it in you, work it out.

Have you a work of the Holy Spirit in your soul? Do you feel something more than unaided human nature can attain unto? Have you a change worked in you from above? If so, you are saved. Again, does your salvation rest wholly upon Christ? He who hangs anywhere but upon the Cross hangs upon that which will deceive him. If you stand upon Christ, you are on a Rock. But if you trust in the merits of Christ in part, and your own merits in part, then you have one foot on a Rock but another on the quicksand. And you might as well have both feet on the quicksand—for the result will be the same—

***"None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."***

You are not saved unless Christ is All in All in your soul—Alpha and Omega, beginning and ending, first and last. Judge by this, again—if you are saved you have turned your back on sin. You have not left off sinning—would to God we could do so—but you have left off *loving* sin. You sin not willfully, but from infirmity. And you are earnestly seeking after God and holiness. You have respect to God, you desire to be like He, you are longing to be with Him. Your face is towards Heaven. You are as a man who journeys to the Equator. You are feeling more and more the warm influence of the heavenly heat and light.

Now, if such is your course of life—that you walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits of holiness—then you are saved. May your answer to that question be given in great honesty and candor to your own soul. Be not too partial a judge. Conclude not that all is right because outward appearances are fair. Deliberate before you return a favorable verdict. Judge yourselves that you be not judged. It were better to condemn yourself and be accepted of God than to acquit yourself and find your mistake at the last.

But suppose that question should have to be answered by any here in the negative (and I am afraid it must be), then let those who confess that

they are not saved hear the answer to another enquiry—"How can I be saved?" Ah, dear Hearer, I have not to bring a huge volume nor a whole armful of folios to you, and to say, "It will take you months and years to understand the plan of salvation." No, the way is plain, the method simple! You shall be saved within the next moment if you believe!

God's work of salvation is, as far as its commencement and essence is concerned, instantaneous. If you believe "that Jesus is the Christ," you are born of God now! If you do now stand in spirit at the foot of the Cross, and view the incarnate God suffering, bleeding, and dying there—and if as you look at Him your soul consents to have Him for her Savior, and casts herself wholly on Him—you are saved! How vividly there comes before my memory this morning the moment when I first believed in Jesus! It was the simplest act my mind every performed, and yet the most wonderful—for the Holy Spirit worked it in me!

It was, by His Grace, simply to have done with reliance upon myself. To have done with confidence in all but Jesus, and to rest alone my undivided confidence in Him and in what He had done. My sin was in that moment forgiven me, and I was saved, and may it all be so with you, my Friends, even with you, if you also trust the Lord Jesus. "Your own salvation" shall be secured by that one simple act of faith. And from now on, kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, you shall tread the way of holiness till you come to be where Jesus is in everlasting bliss!

God grant that not a soul may go out of this place unsaved! Even you, little children, who are here—you youngsters, you young boys and girls—I pray that you may in early life attend to "your own salvation." Faith is not a Grace for old people only—nor for your fathers and mothers only. If your little hearts shall look to Him who was the holy Child Jesus, if you know but little—yet, if you trust Him—salvation shall be yours. I pray that to you who are young, "your own salvation" may become, while you are yet in your youth, a matter of joy, because you have trusted it in the hands of your Redeemer.

Now I must close—but one or two thoughts press me. I must utter them before I sit down. I would anxiously urge each person here to see to this matter of his own salvation. Do it, I pray you, and in earnest, for no one can do it for you. I have asked God for your soul, my Hearer, and I pray I may have an answer of peace concerning you. But unless you also pray, vain are my prayers. You remember your mother's tears? Ah, you have crossed the ocean since those days, and you have gone into the deeps of sin! But you remember when you used to say your prayers at her knee, and when she would lovingly say "Amen," and kiss her boy and bless him, and pray that he might know his mother's God?

Those prayers are ringing in the ears of God for you, but it is impossible that you can ever be saved unless it is said of you, "Behold, *he* prays!" Your mother's holiness can only rise up in judgment to condemn your willful wickedness unless you imitate it. Your father's earnest exhortations shall but confirm the just sentence of the Judge unless you hearken to them and yourselves consider and put your trust in Jesus. Oh, think,

each one of you—there is but *one* hope, and if that one hope is lost—it is gone forever!

Defeated in one battle, a commander attempts another and hopes that he may yet win the campaign. Your life is your *one* fight, and if it is lost, it is lost forever. The man who was bankrupt yesterday commences again in business with good heart and hopes that he may yet succeed. But in the business of this mortal life, if you are found bankrupt, you are bankrupt forever and ever. I do therefore charge you by the living God, before whom I stand, and before whom I may have to give an account of this day's preaching before another day's sun shall shine—I charge you see to your own salvation!

God help you, that you may never cease to seek unto God till you know by the witness of the Spirit that you have, indeed, passed from death unto life. See to it now, *now*. NOW! NOW! This very day the voice of warning comes to certain of you from God with special emphasis because you greatly need it—for your time is short. How many have passed into eternity during this week! You may yourself be gone from the land of the living before next Sunday.

I suppose, according to the calculation of probabilities, out of this audience there are several who will die within a month. I am not conjecturing now, but according to all probabilities these thousands cannot all meet again, even if all have a mind to do so. Who, then, among us will be summoned to the unknown land? Will it be you, young woman, who has been laughing at the things of God? Shall it be yonder merchant who has not time enough for religion? Shall it be you, my foreign friend, who has crossed the ocean to take a holiday? Will you be carried back a corpse?

I do implore you think of yourselves, all of you. You who dwell in London will remember years ago when the cholera swept through our streets—some of us were in the midst of it and saw many drop around us, as though smitten with an invisible but deadly arrow. That disease is said to be on its way here again. It is said to be rapidly sweeping from Poland across the Continent, and if it comes and seizes some of you, are you ready to depart?

Even if that form of death does not afflict our city, as I pray it may not, yet is death ever within our gates, and the pestilence walks in darkness every night! Therefore consider your ways. Thus says the Lord, and with His Word I conclude this discourse—"Prepare to meet your God, O Israel."

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Hebrews 10:23-39.

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WORKING OUT WHAT IS WORKED IN NO. 820

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 12, 1868,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.
For it is God which works
in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”
Philippians 2:12, 13.***

I HAVE frequently heard these words addressed to an indiscriminate audience and it has always struck me that they have thereby been twisted from their right meaning. These words, as they stand in the New Testament, contain no exhortation to *all* men, but are directed to the people of God. They are not intended as an exhortation to the unconverted. They are, as we find them in the Epistle, beyond all question addressed to those who are already saved through a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

No proof can be needed of this assertion, for the whole Epistle is directed to the saints. It begins, “To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” And the verse before us contains within itself conclusive evidence that Paul was not speaking to unbelievers, for he calls the persons addressed, “my Beloved,” and he says of them, “As you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence.” He was, therefore, writing to persons who had been obedient to the Gospel! And all true obedience springs from saving faith—he was, therefore, addressing those who, through faith in Christ, had been rendered obedient to the Gospel commands.

To obedient Believers he writes, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” It may be right to use a text apart from the connection, and I will not venture to censure those who have dealt so with this passage, but it is never right to attempt to draw authoritative doctrine from a text apart from the context, and therefore nothing can be drawn from the text before us in reference to the *duty* or to the *power* of the *unconverted*—seeing that from its connection it is tied and bound to those who are Believers in Christ Jesus—and to those who were and still continue to be obedient to the Gospel which Paul proclaimed.

If we sometimes looked a little more to the connection of sentences we should be kept from very dangerous errors. The Bible ought to be treated in conformity with common sense, as you would use any other book. If you took the writings of any author, however carefully he might express himself, if you picked out a sentence here, and a sentence there, you might make the man say what he never believed. No, even make him to be the supporter of opinions which he abhors! So it is with the Bible—if you pay no regard to the connection and general run of the passage, you miss the mind of the Spirit of God—and thrust *your* own mind into God's Words than bring out God's mind from the Words of the Holy Spirit.

The exhortation before us is given solely to the people of God and I feel it to be more than my conscience could endure to force it into any other service. To as many as are obedient to the Gospel, the Word of the Holy Spirit comes this morning, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that works in you." In a certain sense, the salvation of every person who believes in Christ is complete—and complete without any working out on his part—seeing that "it is finished," and we are complete in Jesus. Observe that there are two parts of our salvation, the one complete, the other as yet incomplete—though guaranteed to be brought to perfection.

The first part of our salvation consists of a work *for* us. The second, of a work *in* us. The work for us is perfect—none can add to it. Jesus Christ our Lord has offered a complete Atonement for all the offenses of His people. He took His people into union with Himself, and by that union they became entitled to all the merit of His righteousness. They became partakers of His everlasting life, and inheritors of His Glory. Saints are, therefore, saved *completely* so far as substitutionary work is concerned. Such was the meaning of those majestic death-words of our Lord, "It is finished." He had finished transgression, made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. Thus He perfected forever them that are set apart.

Now with the work of Christ we cannot intermeddle—we are never told to work *that* out, but to receive it by faith. The blessing comes "to him that works not, but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly." Justification is not at all by human effort, but by the free gift of God. The second part of salvation consists of a work *in* us—this is the operation of God the Holy Spirit. As many as were redeemed by the blood of Jesus are also, in due time, renewed in the spirit of their minds. The Holy Spirit, in regeneration, descends *into* a man and creates in him a new nature. He does *not* destroy the old that remains still to be battled with and to be overcome.

Though the nature which the Spirit implants is perfect in its kind and in its degree, yet it is not perfect in its development. It is a seed which needs to work itself out into a tree. It is an infant which requires to grow into the stature of a perfect man. The new nature has in it all the elements of entire perfection, but it needs to be expanded—brought out. To use the words of the text, worked out with fear and trembling. God, having first worked it in, it becomes the business of the Christian life to work out the secret inner principle till it permeates the entire system—till it overcomes the old nature—till it, in fact, utterly destroys inbred corruption and reigns supreme in the man's every part—as it shall do when the Lord takes us to dwell with Himself forever.

Understand then, it is not at all to the mediatorial work of Christ—it is not at all with regard to the pardon of our sins, or the justification of our persons that Paul speaks—but only with regard to our inner spiritual life. He says of that, "Work it out with fear and trembling. For it is God that works in you." This morning I am sure I shall have your attention while I shall note, first, the matter to be worked out. Secondly, the model to be

worked to. Thirdly, the spirit in which we are to work. And, fourthly, the great encouragement which is suggested in the text for such working.

I. THE MATTER TO BE WORKED OUT is spoken of in the text as “your own salvation.” Every Christian is to be a worker for the good and salvation of others. It is very doubtful whether a man knows the Lord unless he desires to extend the boundaries of the Master’s kingdom—but on no account is any Christian to think that he can safely neglect the interests of his *own* soul. “Work out your *own* salvation.” Your charity must begin at home.

You ought to seek the spread of the Truth of God, but you must first know the Truth yourself, and you must daily seek to understand it better. You are bound to attempt the reclaiming of the wandering, but you must take heed lest you, yourself, wander, for however unselfish you may become—and God grant that you may have much unselfishness—yet still it is a law of Nature, and equally a law of Divine Grace that you should see to self-preservation. Indeed, if you neglect this, you will become utterly unable to do anything for the salvation of other people. “Work out your own salvation.”

Plowing another man’s field, suffer not your own to lie fallow. Indicating to another the mote in his eye, do not permit a beam to blind yourself. You preach against the sluggard—let not the thorn and the thistle grow in your own garden. You testify of the medicine which Christ can give, but physician, see to it that you are yourself healed! The first business of a Christian man should be to see that all his own Graces are in a vigorous condition—Repentance always weeping for sin, Faith always looking to the Cross, Patience becoming stronger to bear her cross—Hope’s eyes are clear to behold the coming Glory! Then to faith we add courage, and to courage patience, and to patience brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.

We are never to sit down and fold our arms, and say, “My lifework is over. I am saved. I have no pilgrimage to make to the Celestial City. I wage no war for driving out the Canaanites.” O Beloved, the time of rest will come on the other side of the Jordan, but as yet it is for you to press forward like the racer whose prize is not yet won, and to watch like a warrior whose conflict is not ended! Your own salvation is your first concern.

The text speaks of working out “your own salvation.” Now, the matter to be worked *out* is a something which the text tells us is at the same time worked *in*. We may safely defy anybody to work a thing out which is not first in. God, we are told in the second verse of our text, works *in* us. Therefore it is that we are to work the *inward* towards the *outward*. We work out, bring out, educe from within ourselves to our exterior life, that which God constantly works in us in the interior secret recesses of our spiritual being.

An unconverted man cannot work any good thing out, for there is nothing worked in. If he works out that which is within, apart from what God has worked in him, he will naturally work out that which is of his own nature or of the devil—strife, envy, murder, and I know not what. Work out the human heart—work out what Nature has worked in, what the devil

has worked in—and you work out the hideous criminal, or else the proud and self-righteous Pharisee. But, Believer, there are better principles in you, and you are to see to the *education*—perhaps that is the word—to the working out from within your own soul that which God has worked in you.

You have faith, work it out, then—act like a Believer, trust God in daily life. You possess the incorruptible seed—bring it out, then—let your whole conduct be incorruptibly pure and heavenly. You profess that the Holy Spirit dwells in you, and He does so if you are a Christian. Well, then, let your whole conduct be saturated with the sacred influence—let it be yours to lead the heavenly life of one in whom dwells the Lord from Heaven! Be you Christ-like, inasmuch as the Spirit of Christ dwells in you. This is the matter to be attended to, then—the bringing out, the working out, and developing the mine of Divine Grace which God has worked in us.

“Your own salvation,” the text says, and that is correct enough. Holiness is salvation. We are not to work out our salvation from the *guilt* of sin—that has been done by Christ. We have now to work out our salvation from the *power* of sin. God has, in effect, worked that in us—He has broken the yoke of sin in our hearts. It lives, and struggles, and contends—but it is dethroned and our life is to be the continual overthrow and dethronement of sin in our members. A man may be saved from the guilt of sin, and yet at present he may not be altogether saved from the power of pride. For instance, a saved man may be defiled by being purse-proud, or proud of his position, or of his talents.

Now the Believer must, with fear and trembling, work out his salvation from that most intolerable evil. A man may be the subject of a quick and hasty disposition. He may be often angry without a cause. My Brother, your salvation from sin is not *complete* until you are saved from a bad temper. Day by day, with solemn resolution, you should work out your salvation from that. I might take any form of besetting sin or any one of the temptations which come from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and in each case bid you labor for salvation from its bondage.

Our business is to be continually fighting for liberty from sin, contending earnestly that we may not wear the shackles of any infirmity, that we may not be the bond-slaves in any shape or form of the works of the devil. We need to be working out, by vehement efforts, after holiness. We need to be working out our entire deliverance from sin that dwells in us, and from sin that contends without us. This, I believe, is to be the great business of the Christian’s life. I have heard it said that the good sculptor, whenever he sees a suitable block of marble, firmly believes that there is a statue concealed within it and that his business is but to take away the superfluous material and so unveil the “thing of beauty” which shall be “a joy forever.”

Believer, you are that block of marble! You have been quarried by Divine Grace and set apart for the Master’s service. We cannot see the image of Christ in you, yet, as we would wish. True, there are some traces of it, some dim outlines of what it is to be. It is for you, with the chisel and the mallet, with constant endeavor and holy dependence upon God, to work

out that image of Christ in yourself till you shall be discovered to be by all men like unto your Lord and Master! God has sketched the image of His Son in you—in the but slightly carved marble, He has fairly outlined it—and you have but to go on chipping away those sins, infirmities, and corruptions till the fair likeness of the Incarnate God shall be seen by all.

You are this day, Christian, like the seed of Israel in Canaan. You have not to escape from Egypt—you are already free. With a high hand and with an outstretched arm God has set you free from the Pharaoh of your sin. You have already passed through the wilderness of your convictions—the fiery serpents and howling wilderness are all over now—you have crossed the river, and by His Grace you are a saved man! Jesus is the Joshua in command. He reigns and rules in your spirit. You have not to fight your way towards the land—you are *in* it—for we that have believed do enter into rest.

So what have you to do now? Why, you have to extend the kingdom within yourself by routing one nation of sins after another! You have, in the power of the Spirit, to hang up your corruptions before the light of the sun—to destroy them utterly, and let not one escape! Canaan will never be a place of rest to you till you have driven away the Canaanites and live in the land without association with sin. This is the matter, then, to which you are earnestly invited to attend. May the Holy Spirit grant you Grace never to forget it so long as you live.

II. Secondly, what is THE MODEL TO BE WORKED TO? Every artist requires some pattern or idea in his mind to which he is to work. I must beg to refer you to the chapter itself. Taking the text according to its connection, Paul has been urging the people here addressed to be “like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind”—in which four expressions we have the same idea. Paul would have all God’s people to be unanimous. He would have them *think* alike—that is the precise interpretation of the Greek—he would have them hold the same views, receive the same truth, contend for the same faith.

He would have them as much alike in heart as in head. They are to be all found in the same love, not some loving the rest, but each loving *all*, and not even a single person exempted. Every soul flaming with the sacred fire! He would have them knit together in every sacred enterprise, being of one accord, or as the Greek has it, of one soul—as though, instead of a hundred souls enshrined in a hundred persons, they had but one soul incarnate in a hundred bodies! He would have all the people of God to be fused into one race, made to love each other, in *fact*, fervently with a pure heart.

Now by this may we tell whether we are becoming like our Lord. What is our standing, today, towards our fellow Christians? If there are strifes and divisions among you, you are carnal and walk as men. From where come divisions? Come they not from fleshly passions? Brothers and Sisters, if you cannot work with your fellow Believers. If you cannot feel a love towards your fellow members—you may, perhaps, feel justified in keeping aloof from them, and speaking after the manner of *men* and before *men*, your justification may be a good one—but, rest assured, were

you fully developed in the *Divine* life, you would have enough patience to bear with the infirmity of a Brother and to overlook his errors. You would have enough Divine Grace, also, to overcome your own infirmities, which may, after all, be the *real cause* of the division.

Brethren, when we set up different opinions, one of us must be wrong and therefore we are not complete in knowledge. When we set up different policies in a Church, we cannot all be equally wise. Therefore some of us need to be better led of the Spirit of God. But, oh, when a Church marches like the old Roman legion—every man keeping step, and each warrior inspired as with one soul when he saw the eagle brought to the front, and followed it to victory or death—then the Church has life and vigor, and only then! I thank God we have had much of this for many years, and I rejoice in it, but we still want more. There are some hard pieces of metal among us which have not been melted, and, therefore, are not essentially one with the general mass. And I pray God, if at any time we shall begin to be separated in heart from one another, the eternal Spirit would put us in the fire again and melt us down and cast us in the same mold—and may God send the like unity to all Christian Churches.

Melancthon mourned, in his day, the divisions among Protestants and sought to bring the Protestants together by a parable of the war between the wolves and the dogs. The wolves were somewhat afraid, for the dogs were many and strong, and therefore they sent out a spy to observe them. On his return, the scout said, "It is true the dogs are many, but there are not many mastiffs among them. There are dogs of so many sorts one can hardly count them. And as for the most of them," said he, "they are little dogs, which bark loudly but cannot bite. However, this did not cheer me so much," said the wolf, "as this—that as they came marching on, I observed they were all snapping right and left at one another, and I could see clearly that though they all hate the wolf, yet each dog hates every other dog with all his heart."

I fear it is true, still, for there are many professors who snap right and left—at followers of Jesus, too—when they had better save their teeth for the wolves! If our enemies are to be put to confusion, it must be by the united efforts of all the people of God—unity is strength. The Lord send purity and unity to Zion, and then woe be to your gates, O Philistia! The standard of Judah's Lion shall lead the way to certain victory when the divisions of Reuben are healed, and Ephraim ceases to envy her sister. Heal our divisions, O Lord, so we shall tread down our adversaries in Your strength!

The third verse gives us another rule for guidance in our sacred statuary, as I shall call it—it is humiliation. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves." Speak of great works that have been achieved by engineers, bridges cast over ravines, mountains bored? Here is a work far more tremendous and which no man might venture to attempt if it were not for the encouragement that God has already worked it in him! *Nothing* is to be done through strife. But how much of religious service is from top to bottom carried out in strife?

Sometimes one sect will seek to increase itself merely for the sake of becoming larger and more influential than another. Do Sunday school teachers ever try to get good classes and to obtain conversions that they may be more honored than others? Does that ever enter the classroom? Do street preachers ever wish to preach better than others, and only in order that they may win more applause? I know this from experience that the spirit of strife may easily enough come into the pulpit and that the minister may be seeking to outrun his neighbor when he thinks he is filled with zeal for God. The devil has had a finger in the building of many places of worship—the people have strived with one another and then they have separated and built a new chapel, fancying that it has been all for the glory of God! Meanwhile, the devil has felt that it has been for *his* glory, and he has rejoiced therein.

Whenever I serve God out of any motive of emulation or strife, I prove to myself that I have not worked out my salvation, from at least one evil passion, and I have need to fear and tremble—to begin again and labor diligently till the spirit of pride shall be driven out of my soul. “Let nothing,” again, “be done out of vainglory.” But how much is done out of vainglory? How many people dress themselves out of vainglory? The thought is uppermost, “How do I look in this?” How many give to God’s cause out of vainglory, that they may seem to be liberal? How often does a preacher polish his sentences and pick his words that he may be thought to be an able orator and an eloquent preacher? Vainglory! It is a wonder that God accepts us in any of our works at all—in fact He never could if He did not see them washed in the precious blood of Jesus, for in almost everything, from the lowest member up to the most useful minister of Christ, this vainglory will thrust itself in.

Ah, Brethren, you must work out your own salvation from this spirit of vainglory, and do it with fear and trembling, God helping you. It is unworthy of you to be vainglorious. It is dishonorable to God. You must be brought down from it. The Divine arm will aid you in the struggle, and I beseech you, as you have obeyed full many a Gospel precept from our lips, so be obedient now, and strive against all vainglory. Whenever I have noticed it (and I have noticed it among you) I have been greatly pained, and pained because I may have set the example myself. Too often workers are disposed to magnify their own labors and think lightly of the work of others. It is remarked that such an institution is flourishing, but somebody says at once, “Yes, yes, there are many conversions, but I wonder whether they will all last?”

It is a miserable vice of workers to depreciate the work of other workers—it is quite melancholy to see it in the best of people—and I see it everywhere. People will, if they can, pull other people’s work down in order to make their own work appear to be rising rapidly. This vainglory is all wrong! It shows all that we are not yet conformed to the image of that great Model of perfection, Jesus Christ, the Apostle and High Priest of our own profession.

Next, the Apostle says, “In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.” Alas, how far we fall below this standard! How few

have attained this Divine Grace! Bunyan beautifully portrays Christiana and Mercy coming up out of the Interpreter's house. They have had jewels put upon them, and when they are both washed, Mercy says to Christiana, "How comely and beautiful you look!" "No," Christiana said, "My Sister, I see no beauty in myself, but how lovely *you* look! I think I never saw such loveliness." They were both lovely because they could see other people's loveliness!

Your own spiritual beauty may be very much measured by what you can see in other people. When you say, "Ah, there are no saints now," it is to be feared that *you* are not one. When you complain that love is dead in the Christian Church it must be dead in *your* heart, or you would not say so. As you think of others, that *you* are. Out of your own mouth shall you be condemned. Your corn shall be measured with your own bushel. When we come to admire the good in other people that we have not yet attained ourselves, instead of depreciating other people because they have not something which we have—when we get to that—we shall be evidently approaching nearer to Christ!

If the popular preacher can say, "My beloved Brother A has a smaller congregation, and is not a very attractive preacher, yet he visits his flock so carefully, and looks after each individual so well that I admire him greatly, and must endeavor to imitate him." And if the man with the small congregation says, "My Brother B studies to find out acceptable words, and commend himself to the people of God, and he is very earnest, and is a great soul-winner. I wish I were as earnest. I admire it in him."

Why, these interchanges of loving estimate are infinitely more Christ-like than for the minister with the large congregation to say, "Brother A has mistaken his calling. He cannot get above a hundred people to hear him—what is the good of his preaching?" And for the lesser light to reply spitefully, "Ah, B's work is just a flash in the pan—fine words and excitement—there's nothing in it." *Satan* greatly approves of our railing at each other, but God does not! Let us learn, this morning, to esteem others instead of depreciating them—for in proportion as we exhibit a meek and lowly spirit, we shall be working out our own salvation.

The Apostle lingers for one moment more to inculcate as a part of the salvation worked out the development of the spirit of mutual love and charity. "Look not every man on his own interests, but every man also on the interests of others." In temporal matters do not think it to be enough if your own business prospers—have a desire to see your Brethren obtaining a sufficiency. Do not be so greedy as to scrape everything to your own dish, but let other men have some share in your concerns. If they are poor and you wealthy, help them. If they are in straits and you possess abundance, minister to their necessities. Let not Christ be naked and you able but unwilling to clothe Him. Let not Christ be sick and you visit Him not. But if one member suffers, do, as another member, suffer with him.

In spiritual things think it not enough yourself to live near to God—take the cases of others who may have backslidden and lay them before the Throne of Grace, and seek, by loving rebuke or gentle admonition, to restore such as are fallen—remembering yourself, lest you, also, be tempted.

Be anxious for the good of all the members of the Church to which you belong. In fact, so far as you can, seek the soul prosperity of *all* the people of God. Observe then, my Brothers and Sisters, the drift of the Apostle is this—if we are to work out our own salvation it must be by putting self down in the dust and becoming unselfish! In proportion as we are selfish we are sold under sin, but in proportion as we are *unselfish* and live for others for Christ's sake—in proportion as we value others and set a low estimate upon ourselves—in that proportion we are advancing in Divine Grace and are working out our own salvation from sin.

As I said before, here is the work, here is the difficulty. The descent into the crater of sin is easy enough. How many slide into sin as swiftly as travelers sliding down the snowy side of an Alp! But to toil *upward*. To climb the hill of God—this is the work, this is the difficulty. Blessed is that man who, leaning on the eternal arm, works out his own salvation and is permitted to ascend the hill of the Lord and stand in His holy place!

Before the Apostle had done with his subject, he set before the Philippians the best model in the world. Read the next verse and see after what image we are to be fashioned. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

There is your Model! Jesus stoops from Godhead to manhood, from the Throne above the cherubim to the manger, side by side with the cattle! Stoop, my Brother, if you would rise! If you would be great, be little! If you would be high, be low! If you would be exalted, condescend! Yes, and be like the Master was, for you never can be perfect without it—willing even to give up life itself if it is for God's Glory. Renouncing His reputation and being numbered with the transgressors, and crucified with malefactors—He then gave up His life to death—death in its most shameful and painful shape—the death of the Cross! We shall not have thoroughly worked out our salvation from the bondage of this fleshly body till we are willing to give up reputation and honor.

If we may but serve Christ, and are willing to put our neck upon the block, our property to shipwreck, and to give all up for Him, if so He wills it, *then* we shall have thoroughly worked out our salvation! But this is hard work! The roots of our selfishness go very deep. The deadly cancer of self-love has thrust its horrible roots into our souls, intertwisting them with the vital fibers of our heart. I suppose when the last root of pride is torn away we shall ascend to be with God. Until we are wrapped up in our death clothes we shall never have completely worked out our own salvation. The battle ends only with life, but we shall earn the victory, by God's Grace, for His power within us shall help us to bring ourselves down to that heavenly nothingness in which God is All in All.

Only then shall we master our members, subdue our inclinations, conquer our lofty thoughts, lay low our pride—and then, then will God also highly exalt us—as He has His dear Son! And then shall we partake in the

honor which belongs to Him and reign with Him forever and ever. Seeing that we are humbled with Him and willing to die with Him, we shall be exalted with Him and made to live with Him world without end!

I have thus brought before you the Model to which we are to work, as well as the matter which we are to work out.

III. We have, in the third place in the text, THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS MATTER IS TO BE WORKED OUT. First it is to be an energetic spirit. "Work out." From the Greek word for "work" we get our English word "energy." The bringing out of the new nature into actual exposition in our life is a work of superlative difficulty. Some professors appear to have imbibed the notion that the Grace of God is a kind of opium with which men may drug themselves into slumber, and their passion for strong doses of sleepy doctrine grows with that which it feeds on. "God works in us," they say, "therefore there is nothing for us to do."

Bad reasoning! False conclusion! God works, says the text, therefore *we* must work out because God works in. The assistance of Divine Grace is not given to us to put aside our own efforts, but to excite them. God comes to us to work in us—what? To work in us to be indifferent? Ah, no, to work in us to will with resolution and firmness! Does He work in us, having willed, to sit still? Ah, no, He works in us to *do*. The direct effect of the influence of Grace upon the heart is to make a man *active*—and the more Divine Grace he has the more energetic he becomes! A man will never overcome sin except by energy. You cannot get your pride down, I am sure, by merely resolving to do it—you will have to watch that old enemy and keep your eye on him as a detective watches a thief—for when you think, "At last I have really overcome him," you will discover him at work under another shape—and your conflict will commence anew.

So with a hot temper. How some Brethren have had to struggle with it, and when they have thought, "Now I really have mastered it, by the Grace of God," then something has occurred in which the temptation has assailed him from another corner, and the old man has set the tongue on fire again. Yes, our life must be spent in constant watching, and, as we find ourselves tripping, we must add constant *repentance*—perpetually praying to be upheld for the future—unceasingly struggling to attain something yet beyond, pressing forward evermore. Evermore, I say, for to pause is to retreat, to halt is to be driven back.

The text further says, work out your own salvation "with fear." What kind of fear is that? If you read a Romish author, he will tell you, "this is the fear of 'purgatory,' or the fear of Hell." And if you go to an Arminian author, he will assure you that it is the fear of falling from Grace and being ultimately lost. I do not believe that this fear is ever necessary to a child of God at all. This is the fear that genders to bondage. If I am sure that I believe in Jesus, I am no more afraid of being lost than I am afraid that God Himself should die, because we have Christ's word for it: "I give unto My sheep *eternal life*, and they shall *never* perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand."

You do not suppose that Paul, who knew that fear "has torment," and is cast out by perfect love, would tell us to work out our salvation under

so disheartening an influence, do you?! The fear of the text is that which makes a fear to offend so good a God—a hallowed, childlike fear, of which we read—“Blessed is the man that fears always.” A reverential awe of the Most High. A pious dread of offending—this is the fear which is to be cultivated by us. It is *not* the fear which is the enemy of full assurance, but it is the fear which is opposed to carnal security or recklessness.

But the “trembling”—what is that? Is that the slave’s trembling? No, this belongs not to heirs of Divine Grace—they have a trembling which is akin to *joy*, for they “rejoice with trembling.” Before the Lord we do not tremble with fright, but we are moved even to quaking with a holy awe! Under a sense of the Presence of God we tremble lest we should sin, we tremble lest that Presence should leave, lest we should grieve the Spirit and vex the Holy One of Israel. We know what it is to tremble with the exceeding joy and glory of the love of God shed abroad in our souls by the Holy Spirit. Strangers do not understand us, but men of God will.

George Fox was called a Quaker most probably because his whole frame seemed to shiver under the consciousness of the Divine power. We know what it is to contend with sin under a Divine impulse, and to be filled with tremulous anxiety while wrestling with our foe. Sin is to be trembled at, and God also, so that there is a double cause for a solemn awe in the business of the soul’s inner life. It is no child’s play, but an awful weighty business. I pray God we may know more of holy trembling—that the awful majesty of Divine love may be so revealed to us that we may lie prostrate beneath its force, wondering how it is that we are permitted to stand in the midst of such a blaze of love, a bush burning but unconsumed. “Even our God is a consuming fire.”

Many learn by that text that the Lord, out of Christ, is a consuming fire to the wicked, and so indeed He is, but the passage means far more. The Lord is a consuming fire to *us*. “Who may abide the day of His coming? For He shall be as a refiner’s fire!” He will consume in us all that can be consumed. His own Nature in us cannot be consumed, but all of earth and evil will be. What trembling may well seize us as we think of this! Only that which is Himself in us will come forth out of the furnace—that will live and flourish in the very heat of the fire—but all else must go. Every sacrifice must be salted with fire—this is sharp discipline—and well may we tremble at it.

IV. Lastly, without detaining you much longer, let us notice THE SWEET ENCOURAGEMENT WHICH THE TEXT AFFORDS. We are to work out our salvation for this reason—“It is God which works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Here is help in an exercise beyond your power! Here is help all-sufficient for every emergency! Here is help which it ennobles you to receive. Divine help, help which—if Satan shall put on his utmost force, and if your corruptions shall arrive at their utmost power—shall yet be more than equal to the day.

Grace all-sufficient dwells in you, Believer! There is a living well springing up within you! Use the bucket, then! Keep on drawing! You will never exhaust it! There is a living source within. Continue to struggle—you will not exhaust the life-force which God has placed within you. There is a

growing mine of gold. Spend it! Keep on scattering right and left. Inexhaustible, Divine wealth is yours, therefore cease not to work it out! Observe what God works in us—He works in us to *will*—the desire after holiness, the resolution to put down sin, the pang of grief because we have sinned, the stern resolve that we will not fall into that sin again—all, all is of God! And He who gave the desire will surely fulfill it!

But He that gave you the will does not leave you there—He works in you the power to *do*. The power to achieve the victory. The power to smite down the loftiest plume of pride shall come from Him. God is equal to all emergencies, therefore fear not. Though your inner life shall be subject to 10,000 dangers, He will give you power to do the right, the just, the lovely and the true. He works gloriously in you. That which He works in you is pleasing in His sight. Note the words, “according to His good pleasure.” It gives God pleasure to see you holy! It is His delight to see you self-denying—if you conquer yourself it will give Him pleasure.

Depend upon it, then, since He is pleased with the result and has put forth His own strong hand to bring it about. You, as you work, will not work at a perhaps, but in absolute certainty of success. O Brothers and Sisters, my heart glows with the hope of being altogether rid of the power of sin! Oh, what a day that shall be when neither sin nor Satan shall vex the pleasures of our purified spirits! What bliss will it be to see God face to face, because the un-godlike and un-heavenly have been altogether cast out of us! O long expected day, begin! The best Heaven I could wish would be perfectly to be rid of myself! Perfectly to be free from tendencies to evil! Is not this the Heaven you are panting after? If it is, you shall have it. If you have Grace enough to pine after it—Grace enough to labor for it—you shall yet have Grace enough to win it! I have thus addressed God’s people, and I leave the matter with them.

I wish I could have addressed you all as Believers, but, alas, you rebel against the Lord! You will not come to Christ, you will not trust in Jesus! Yet, to you unbelievers I have a message—it is but a sentence, and I have done—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” You have nothing to do with working yet. *Believe* first, and when you have believed, then set to work. But, now, the first Gospel message to you is this, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Then its awful alternative, “He that believes not shall be damned.” God save you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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BELIEVERS—LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

NO. 472

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 28, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Do all things without murmurings and disputing, that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world; holding forth the Word of Life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.”
Philippians 2:14-16.

We shall be very far from the truth if we suppose that Christian precepts have suffered any degeneration of meaning. If we imagine that the precepts of the Gospel were more stern in Apostolic times than in these later ages, we labor under a very gross and dangerous delusion. Fresh from the abominations of heathenism the early converts would naturally be placed under the mildest rules, rather than the more severe. If the Gospel could have known a change, the Apostle would have given its easiest precepts at the first, and then in these better days the whole Revelation would have been brought out and more stringent precepts would have been proclaimed.

Since, however, it is contrary to the genius of the Gospel to be progressive in its Revelation, since it was all revealed at once, we must never imagine that the precepts given by Paul may be toned down and diluted to suit the present age. I say again, Brethren, if these men, fresh from the foul Stygian ditch of heathen abomination and lasciviousness, were nevertheless exhorted to the greatest sublimity of holiness, much more is it incumbent upon us to arrive at a very high state of Christian perfection and walk very near to God and be very close imitators of Christ.

May God help us to hear, this morning, the address which Paul gave to the Church in Philippi. May we feel its full forge in our consciences and embody its full meaning in our lives.

The Apostle says, “*Do all things*”—by which he seems to teach the activity of the Christian Church, for the Christian religion is not mere thinking or feeling but *doing* and working for God. “*Do all things without murmurings,*” without murmuring at *God’s Providence*—which was a common vice of the heathen, who, on their tombstones often recorded their protest against God for having removed their darlings and upbraided Him as cruel and unkind for taking away their relatives.

“*Do all things without murmurings against one another.*” Let your love be so hearty and sincere that you do not envy your richer or more talented Brethren. Let there be no low whispers traveling through your assemblies against those who ought to be esteemed among you. Whatever you do, let no murmuring be mixed with it, but labor with delight and suffer with patience. Let there be no murmurings even against *the ungodly world*. If they

are unjust, bear their injustice in silence. Be not always offering complaints. There are a thousand things which you might speak of, but it is better that, like Aaron, you should hold your peace. To suffer in silence shall dignify you, and make you greater than ordinary manhood—for then you shall become like He—who before His accusers opened not His mouth.

The Apostle continues, do all things without “*disputing*.” Dispute not with God. Let Him do what seems good to Him. Dispute not with your fellow Christians, raise not railing accusations against them. When Calvin was told that Luther had spoken ill of him, he said, “Let Luther call me a devil if he please, I will never say of him but that he is a most dear and valiant servant of the Lord.” Raise not intricate and knotty points by way of controversy. Remember, you have adversaries upon whom to use your swords, and therefore there is little need that you should blunt their edges by dashing at the armor of your fellows.

Dispute not even with the world. The heathen philosophers always sought occasions for debate. Be it yours to testify what God has told you, but court not controversy. Be not ashamed to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, but never do it in a spirit of mere debating—never because you wish to gain a victory, but only because you would tell what God has bid you reveal. “*That you may be blameless.*” Men *will* blame you, but you must seek, as Christians, to lead lives that give no occasion for blame. Like Daniel, compel them to say of you, “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God.”

Erasmus writes of his great adversary, Luther, “Even Luther’s enemies cannot deny but that he is a good man.” Brethren, force this tribute from an unwilling world. Live so that as in Tertullian’s age, men may say as they did in his time, “Such-and-such a man is a good man, even though he is a Christian.” The heathens thought the Christians the worst of men, but were compelled to confess them to be the best, even though they were Christians. “Be you blameless *and harmless*,” says the Apostle. The Greek word might be translated “hornless,” as if you were to be creatures not only that do no harm but *could not* do any.

Like sheep that not only *will not* devour but *cannot* devour, for it were contrary to their nature. For they have no teeth with which to bite, no fangs with which to sting, no poison with which to slay. If you carry arrows, let them be dipped in love. If you bear a sword, let it be the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. But otherwise, be everywhere, even among those that would harm you, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” “*As the sons of God,*” the Apostle goes on to say—as if the dignity of our relationship should beget in us an equally dignified deportment. “Remember,” says the old philosopher—“Remember, O Antigonus, that you are a king’s son!” Remember, O Christian, that you are a son of the King of kings—even God Himself!

Soil not the fingers which are soon to sweep celestial strings. Let not those eyes become the windows of lust which are soon to see the King in His beauty—let not those feet be defiled in miry places, which are soon to walk the golden streets—let not those hearts be filled with pride and bit-

terness which are soon to be filled with Heaven, and to overflow with ecstatic joy. As “the sons of God,” remember that the eyes of all are upon you. More is expected from you than from other men, because you have a higher pedigree, for you are descended from the very highest, Himself, and therefore should be the highest and best in the world.

The Apostle then adds, “*without rebuke.*” Men whom the world cannot rebuke. Men who can stand right straight up and defy their enemies to find any real fault in them. Men who can say without any Phariseeism, as Job did, “Lord, You know that I am not wicked.” My Brethren, I would you were such that men must lie before they can revile you. I would have you men upon whose snow-white garments filth will not stick—who may be, and must be slandered, but cannot be really rebuked. O Beloved, to use Paul’s own words, “Be you sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.”

I have expounded the address of Paul. Permit me to remind you that all the while he is telling us to do this as the means to an end—and what is the end? Why, that we may, “shine as lights in the world in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” The means themselves are precious. To be “holy, harmless and undefiled,” is a glorious matter of itself. But when such a bright thing becomes but a *means*, how excellent must the end be! How desirable that you and I, and each one of us who has named the name of Jesus, should “shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life”!

This brings me to the subject which I want to impress upon your hearts this morning. I would that every Believer here, whether member of this Church or of any of the part of Christ’s family, might see to it, that from now on he should shine as a light in the midst of the darkness of this world, giving light to those that come within the range of his influence. There seems to me to be four things about which I may well speak. First, here is *publicity required*—they cannot shine without it. Here is, secondly, *usefulness intended*. Here is thirdly, *position indicated*—they are “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” And here is, fourthly, *an argument suggested*, that in the day of Christ I may rejoice that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

I. First then, here is A MEASURE OF PUBLICITY REQUIRED. You will note the text says they are to be *lights*. Now how can they be lights without being seen, and of what use would they be if they could be unseen lights? I cannot tell! But then, they are to *shine*, and how can they shine unless there is some radiance proceeding from them, and how this if they live in secret, and if they are never understood to be Christians at all? But then, where does the text say they are to shine as lights?—in their house? No, “*in the world.*” True, they are to be lights in their own family—but moreover if they come up to the full standard of what they should be, they are to be lights *in the world*.

These three words—lights, lights shining, and lights in the world—most positively teach that a Christian must have some degree of publicity, and that it is hardly possible for him to carry out his true character if he lives in such retirement and secrecy as never to be known to be a Christian. Some timid hearts there are, some gentle spirits, that shun altogether the

exposure of their religion. They quote Nicodemus as if they did not know that Nicodemus is rather a beacon than an example. I would be far from crushing a tender spirit, far from laughing at the nervousness which may keep a man in the back rank when he ought to stand in the forefront of the battle.

But if I should, by some Scriptural remarks, lead Christians to see that they are not to be always seeking retirement, but rather they must stand out and avow the Master. And if I can persuade the gentle spirit to bear its willing witness to Christ, thrice happy shall I be! Pharisees of old courted publicity. They could not give away one halfpenny in the street but they must sound a trumpet that everybody might see their splendid charity. They could not pray in their closet, but they must seek some corner of the street that every passerby might hold up his hands in amazement at the man who was so good that he prayed even in the street!

The world has found this trick out. We usually say of ladies, when we find them working at parties, that they do not work at home. And we should surely think of people who pray in the streets, that they pray nowhere else. And of persons who show their charity publicly, that they show all that they have to show. Ostentatious religion nowadays is soon discovered and detected. But while we must be warned against the pride of the Pharisee, we must take care that we run not into another extreme. “Am I always to serve God by stealth? Am I never to speak a good word for Christ lest somebody should say I am proud?”

Your own conscience will be your guide in that matter. If you detect in yourself any desire to glorify yourself—then you are wrong in making your religion public at all. Plainly, if you discover that you are keeping back in order to get an easier path for yourself—then you are grievously wrong in seeking to hide your religion. If it is for God’s honor for you to publish on the housetops what He has told you in the closet, do it. And if it is for Christ’s honor to do only in the closet that which another man would do in the street, do it. Your conscience will always teach you, if it is an enlightened conscience, when you might act boldly and when, on the other hand, you would be cowardly.

I think there is no difficulty in steering between this Scylla and Charybdis. Any man with a little wisdom will soon discern what he ought to do. But do not, I pray you, make the Pharisee’s pride an excuse for your cowardice. Never say, “I do not like to make a profession because there are so many hypocrites!” The more reason why *you* should make a profession that there may be some honest ones. Do not say, “Oh, I would not, for fear people should think I am proud!” Why should you look at the fear of man which brings a snare—is it not yours to obey God, rather than man?

I cannot understand Christ’s words—“You are a city set on a hill which cannot be hid.” Nor these, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” Nor these, “He that with his mouth confesses and with his heart believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.”—I cannot understand these passages, if you are never to avow your faith, but keep your religion hidden up in a secret place and go to Heaven by stealth.

How much publicity, then, do we really think is necessary in a Christian? It is becoming that *he should make a public avowal of his faith*. He should come out from among the world and declare himself to be on the Lord's side. There is an ordinance which God has Himself ordained, which is the proper way in which to make this profession—to be baptized in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—thus openly being buried in water to show our death to the world, and rising out of the water to show that we hope to live a new life as the result of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

If you should differ as to the form in which this profession is to be made, yet the profession should be made. If you would be honest and true, you must in answer to the Master's summons, "Who is on the Lord's side?" come out and say, "Here am I, Lord, I am Your servant and I would serve You even to the end." You should also be *associated constantly with Christian people*. The one act of profession is not enough—it should be continued by union with some visible Church of Christ. We find in the Apostle's days that those who were converted were added to the Church. It is written, "They first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us by the will of God."

Christianity requires you to unite yourselves with those who are united to Christ. If the Church of Christ is the spouse of Jesus, you should seek to be a member of her visibly, as well as invisibly—especially you that are lately converted, for your presence in the Church is for your good, and much for the Church's comfort. The man that was healed stood *with* Peter and John. And it is written, when they saw the man that was healed standing with Peter and John, they could say nothing against them. The gathering together of the converts to sustain the minister is a very great help in the propagation of the Truth of God as it is in Jesus.

Besides this association with Christians, there should be *a daily carrying out of your Christianity in your life*. It is not all that we say that shines. That may be only a flash, a sparkle, a display of fireworks—it is our *daily* acting which is the true shining out of Christ within. Let the servant prove her Christianity by being more attentive than any other. Let the master prove his by being more generous than any other master. Let the rich man shine in his liberality. Let the poor man shine in his patience. Let each in every sphere seek to excel those who are not in Christ, that so everyone may prefer us in our position to the worldling in the same office, and take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and have learned of Him.

But to shine as lights, we must add *the open testimony of our words*. I will not give a rusty nail for your religion if you can be quiet about it. I do not believe you have any. That which is nearest to the heart is generally most on the tongue. You must be constantly bearing your witness by the words of your mouth for Christ, seeking to teach the ignorant, to warn the careless, to reclaim the backsliding and to bring the wanderers to the Cross. You will have many opportunities in the sphere in which you move, avail yourself of them all, and so shall you shine as a light in the *world*.

And there are times when you cannot shine without *a very bold and stern decision for Christ*. When the old Roman senator, in the days of Vespasian, was told by the emperor that he might go into the senate

house but he must hold his tongue, he answered, "I, being a senator, feel impelled to go into the senate house, and being in the senate, it is the part of a senator to speak what his conscience dictates." "Then," said Vespasian, "if you speak you will die." "Be it known to you, O Emperor," said he, "that I never hoped to be immortal, nor did I ever wish to live when I might not speak my mind."

Brave Roman! We must have brave Christians, too, who say, "Being a Christian, it is mine to speak, and if that should cost me all I have, and life itself, I never thought myself immortal, and I wish to die when I may not speak out that which God has written in my heart." There are times, I say, when if we should falter, or delay, we become traitors at once—make sure that in those "crises of your being"—you promptly follow your Lord.

So much of publicity I think is needed then—an open profession, a constant association with the Christian Church, a perpetual living out of godliness, an open declaration of the same, and a deliberate decision when occasion shall present itself. Look you, Sirs, Christians are *soldiers*. If our soldiers were to take it into their heads that they ought never to be seen, a pretty pass things would come to. What were the soldiers worth when they shunned parade, and dreaded battle? Take off your regimentals, and be packing, Sirs! We want not men who must always lie skulking behind a bush, and dare not show themselves to friend or foe.

Christians are *runners*, too and what sort of runners are men who run in the dark? Not so, says the Apostle? He says, we are "encompassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses," and therefore bids us, "lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us." What? Running match and no spectators! Ave Imperator! The champion salutes you! He prays you to dismiss the spectators. Conscript fathers, leave your seats and you knights of the empire retire from the race! You common herd retire, or put your fingers to your eyes—here comes a runner who is so dainty that he cannot be looked at, a swift-footed racer who must be scrutinized by no vulgar eye or he will faint and lose the crown.

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! The mob laughs. "Ah," they say, "these are not the men to make a Roman holiday, these timid fools had better play with babes in the nursery, they are not fit to consort with men." What do you think of Christians who must have the stadium cleared before they can enter the course? Rather, O sons of God, defy all onlookers. Crowd the seats and look on, you angels, and men, and devils, too—and see what you will. What matters it to the Christian, for he is looking unto Jesus! He runs not for you but for the reward—and whether you look or look not—his zeal and earnestness are still the same. Christ is in him, and run he must, look on who will.

II. Secondly, here is in the text, USEFULNESS. "Well" says one, "if I were known to be a Christian what use would it be?" We will soon show you. One remark, however, I will make—the better Christian you are, the more public you will be—but the less will be thought *of you!* You have noticed at night a star, it is only a little spark, but still it is very bright, and everybody says, "Do you see that star?" Yes, but there is a moon, why does not everybody say, "Look what a beautiful moon?" They notice the

star first, because it is not usual to see stars so brilliant. By-and-by, of a moonlight night, you will hear people say, "What a lovely moon!"

Now, in the daylight people do not say, "What a lovely sun!" No. "What a lovely landscape! What a beautiful view! Look at the tints of those trees now the sun is shining!" Just so, the little Christian is like a star, bright in his little sphere. Others are like the moon, they excite admiration and attention to themselves. But a full-grown Christian, who should be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ, though giving more light than either the moon or the star, would not be half so much looked at, for men would be looking at what he shed light upon, rather than upon him. They would look to the doctrine that he taught rather than to how he taught it. They would be looking rather at the lesson of his life than at the life itself. So that if I should urge you to more and more publicity, it will not be for *your* sake, but that you may be more and more forgotten, while the *Truth of God* is the more clearly seen.

But what is the use of lights, what is the use of Christians as lights? The answer is manifold. We use lights to *make manifest*. A Christian man should so shine in his life that those who come near him can see their own character in his life, can see their sins, can see their lost estate. He should so live that a person could not live with him a week without knowing the Gospel. His conversation should be such that all who are about him should perfectly understand the way to Heaven. Things that men will not see and cannot see without him, should be very clear wherever he is.

Men sometimes read their Bibles and they do not understand the Bible because they want light. Like Philip, we should be willing to sit in the chariot and instruct the passerby, making manifest the meaning of God's Word, the power of God's Word, the way of salvation, the life of godliness, and the force of the Truth of God. May I ask each one of you, have you made men understand the Gospel better? "Ah," says one, "I leave that to the minister." Then you have neglected your duty—repent of your great sin and ask God, now, to help you to be making manifest to all persons who come near you their sin and the Savior.

The next use of a light is *to guide*. The mariner understands this. When our sailors, some years ago had a Nore light, they thought they were getting on marvelously. But when they had the Mouse, the Maplin, the Swin Middle, and all the other lights on the sands, they soon found navigation much easier than it had been before. Every Christian should light some part of the voyage of life, and there should not be a channel without its light. Blessed pole star! How many a slave have you guided from the swamps and whips of the South up to the country of the free? Blessed are you, O Christian, if your light has led some soul to Jesus, to the land of the free, where the slave can never wear his fetters again. I hope that you have often, when men have scarcely known it, pointed them the way to Christ, by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God."

Lights are also used for *warning*. On our rocks and shoals a lighthouse is sure to be erected. Christian men should know that there are plenty of false lights shown everywhere in the world. The wreckers of Satan are always abroad, tempting the ungodly to sin under the name of pleasure. We must put up the true light upon every dangerous rock, to point out every

sin and tell what it leads to, so that we may be clear of the blood of all men, shining as lights in the world.

Lights also have a very *cheering* influence, and so have Christians. Late one night we had lost our way in a park not far from the suburbs of London, and we were walking along and wondering where we were. We said, "There is a light over there," and you cannot tell what a source of comfort that candle in a cottage window proved to us. I remember riding in a third class carriage, crowded full of people, on a dark night, when a woman at the end of the carriage struck a match and lit a candle—with what satisfaction was everybody's face lit up, as all turned to see it. A light really does give great comfort. If you think it does not, sit in the dark an hour or two. A Christian ought to be a comforter—with kind words on his lips and sympathy in his heart—he should have a cheering word for the sons of sorrow.

Light, too, also has its use in *rebuking sin*. I think our street gas lamps are the best police we have. If those lamps were out, we should need ten times the number of watchers, and there would be far more crimes. Why is it that thieves do not like the light?—because their dark deeds can only be done in darkness. And how is it ungodly men do not like Christians? Why, because they rebuke them. And just as lights tend to make a city safe, and stop robberies and crime, so Christian men, when they are in sufficient numbers to act upon the commonwealth, will make crime less common—certainly they will compel it to hide its deformity under the shadows of night, whereas, before it might have walked in the blaze of day with approbation.

But the Christian is a light in a very peculiar sense—he is a *light with life in it*. Turn the lantern upon that dead man's face. You can see it cold and white, like the chiseled marble. Shoot the light right into his eyes. He does not see. You cannot make him live by the power of any human light. But the Believer is God's lantern, full of the Holy Spirit—and it happens often that through our testimony God shoots into the eyes of the dead a light which makes them live—so that the darkness of Hades gives way to the brightness of Glory and the midnight darkness of the spirit is made to fly before the rising Sun of righteousness.

We have dwelt long enough upon the uses of these lights, and I may only say, in concluding this point, I wonder what is the good of a Christian who is not thus useful to the world? He has a treasure but he hoards it. What is the good of misers while they live? They are like swine which only eat—they are of no service till they die. Then they are cut up and their estates are pulled into pieces. And perhaps some good may be gotten by those who gets something to eat from them. Vile is the wretch who hoards gold, but what is he who hoards bread? The world is starving and they hoard the Bread of Life. It is like manna—it breeds worms and they cannot eat it themselves, but they will not give it to others.

A religion that is no blessing to others, is no blessing to me—I am just laying up for myself a mass of putridity. It will never do my soul good, or else it would have compelled me to do good to others. But they are hoarding water, the Living Water. They are damming up the stream to keep enough for themselves, and what is it doing? It is covered with rank

weeds. It breeds malaria. It turns foul. All manner of loathsome creatures are in it. They are more foolish still, they are trying to hoard up the light, as if they would have any the less if they let others have it. Hoard up light as if there were only a scant supply.

Infamous! Diabolical! I wish there were a stronger word than that, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha,” says Paul. And I question whether that dreadful anathema does not include within it those who do not love souls, and therefore prove they do not love Christ. For if they loved Christ they must love sinners. If they loved Jesus they must seek to extend His kingdom and to let Him see of the travail of His soul.

III. But time waits not for me and I must proceed to touch with brevity upon the third point—POSITION INDICATED.

“But,” says one, “I cannot shine, it is of no use talking about it, I am not in a position to do any good.” The Apostle anticipates you. He says, “In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” “If I were to remove from this,” says one, “I might serve the Lord’s cause, but I cannot where I am.” But, dear Friend, you are not to get out of it, you are to speak for your Lord where you are.

In the midst of that crooked and perverse nation you are to shine as lights in the world. Your position teaches you three things. First of all, it should be *an incentive to you*. The worse the people are among whom you live, the more need have they of your exertions. If they are crooked, the more necessity that you should set them straight. And if they are perverse, the more need have you to turn their proud hearts to the Truth of God. The worse your position is, the more thankful you ought to be that you are in it. Where should the physician be but where there are many sick? Where is honor to be won by the soldier but in the hottest fire of the battle?

Do not blame your position if you are an unprofitable servant, but lay the blame upon yourself. If you find it hard to do good where you are, it will be harder anywhere else. As the bird that wanders from her nest, so is the man that wanders from his place. Lazy workmen find fault with their tools and employers. If you transplant a tree to make it produce more fruit, you may possibly succeed, but there are nine chances to one that you will kill it altogether.

Again, as you are in such a position, let it *administer a caution* to you. They are a crooked and perverse nation, do not wonder, therefore, if they hate your light and try to blow it out. Be the more anxious not to give them any unnecessary offense. Let your goodness be the only fault they can find in you. Ask the Lord to keep your lamp well trimmed for you. Beseech Him to protect it from their malicious breath. Be the more anxious to cultivate a close acquaintance with Christ, because a crooked nation would decoy you from Him. Do not try to please men—make not the opinion of this generation your rule, for it is very crooked—and if you travel one way you will not please them unless you turn the other way, and then turn again to humor their crooks.

One is often amused to find one’s self publicly abused for doing the very thing the opposite of which one was abused for the week before! And

sometimes in the same newspaper article you will nowadays catch the writer first falling foul with you for doing one thing, and then falling foul with you for not doing it again. It is a crooked and perverse nation—the man who tries to please man shall find himself in a labyrinth of the most mazy kind. He shall be a wretched time server all his life and a detestable hypocrite even to his death. Such a man, to use a rustic simile, is like a toad under a harrow, he will have to be crawling continually to escape the spikes on the right and the iron ties on the left. And he will probably die a miserable death with the iron in his soul at the last. Be cautious, but be particularly cautious against excessive caution. Please the Lord and let men please themselves.

Once more, while the eyes of perverse men should be an incentive and a caution to you, do not forget the *rich consolation* afforded by the fact that all the saints have endured the like trial. Are you in the midst of a crooked people? So was Paul. So was the Church at Philippi—so are all the saints. Remember that as they won their crowns in a strife which was none of their choosing, so must you. They were not carried on beds of down to Heaven, and you must not expect to travel more easily than they. They had to hazard their lives unto the death in the high places of the field, and you shall not be crowned till you also have endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

The road of your pilgrimage will not be smooth if it is the way of the Apostles and Prophets. Soft raiment, delicate nursing, dainty feeding and luxurious ease belong to the palaces of earth—but not to the company without the camp who bear their Lord's reproach. I charge you, O servants of the Lord, and you who are members of this Church especially, stand fast, wait, watch and wrestle. Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

IV. To conclude, there is an ARGUMENT SUGGESTED. It is a very affectionate and touching one which I mean to take the liberty of applying to you, my Beloved flock. "That I may not run in vain, nor labor in vain in the day of Christ." The Apostle was the founder of the Church at Philippi. He had watched over them with all the anxiety of one who had planted and watered, and who looked for the increase. He therefore appealed to the affection which he knew they had for him. "I have run," argues the Apostle, "with all men looking on and gazing—many of them hating and scoffing. I have run with all my might, would you have me run in vain? I have labored, I have labored more than they all," the Apostle could say, "would you have me labor for nothing?"

He knew the answer they would give him would be, "No, Beloved Paul, we would see you win the prize for which you did run, and reap the fruit for which you did labor." "Well," argues the Apostle, "but I cannot, except you shine as lights in the world. You disappoint my hopes, you snatch the prize from my grasp, you fill me with anguish, if you are not holy, heavenly-minded witnesses for Christ." I use the same argument with you. To the stranger here today it will have no force. But with many of you I know it will be an argument of power.

How many out of this congregation first learned of Jesus from my lips? A multitude of you were brought to Christ through the preaching of the

Word here, or in Park Street, or the Surrey Gardens, or Exeter Hall. The Word was feebly preached in rough language, then, as now—but God owned it—not to tens nor twenties, but to hundreds yes, to thousands of you—and, by His Grace, not to you only—but to people in every land and of every kindred. The Lord has made my spiritual children as many as the stars of Heaven for multitude. I rejoice, yes, I must rejoice, when I hear continually of the multitudinous conversions which are worked by the Holy Spirit through the sermons both printed and preached.

God is with us and He does not let one Word fall to the ground. But what if you, as a Church, should be idle? What if your lives should be unholy? What if you should lack zeal and faith to testify for Christ? What then? My best expectations are defeated, my life has been a failure, and all that I have done falls to the ground. I have thought it in my heart, and I earnestly pray to my God that it may come to pass that here, as in a barracks, a great army may find its constant lodging place. That afterwards the Lord may pour you out like a vast conquering host, upon all parts of the world, to teach and testify, and live and labor, and speak for Christ. Surely, my Brothers and Sisters, you would desire this yourselves! I pray for it! Will you unite in desiring it and praying for it with me?

It has happened of late, especially to me, to see God's hand very visibly. Never in my experience have I seen so much spiritual activity as just now, and while it is true of all sections of the Christian Church, it has been peculiarly so of that section over which it is my lot to preside. The sermons have been now for eight years scattered in English, Welsh, French, Dutch, German, Swedish—in fact, in all Protestant languages. At first there were many conversions—there are still. Next I find that those who were regular subscribers to the sermons begin to receive the doctrine of the preacher. The converts to Christ grow and get clear views of the Truth of God. Even in the point of Baptism there are great numbers who are convinced that it is most Scriptural that only Believers should be baptized. Very many have come here, and in the pool beneath, I have baptized them into the name of Christ.

Our denomination does not increase. I am not very anxious that it should, for as it stands at present I have no great love for it. But our principles are spreading marvelously, and in this I must rejoice. As the result of this I have constantly letters like this, “Sir, Sir, I live in a village where the Gospel is not preached. There is a Church, it is true, but we have a Puseyite clergyman. Cannot you do something for us? You have many young men training for the ministry, could you not send a friend to preach in my drawing room?”

Then comes another—“Sir, the Chapel has been shut up in our village a long time, could you not come and help us?” Then there are many of this kind—two Christian men write, wishing to be baptized into Christ—they come, they go back. Within a month there are four more from the same village. They go back and I almost forget them, but they do not forget me. Soon, the whole six will write a letter—this is a common thing—and say, “Could not we be formed into a Church? We will find a room—can you send someone to preach to us?” This happens every week, and your minister feels that as long as ever he has a man, he will say, “I will do it for

you.” And as long as he has any money of his own he will say, “Oh, yes, I will do it for you.”

But every now and then he wishes that he had some who would stand by him in larger attempts. Cheerfully you give week after week for the support of our young ministers, and I think our friends will continue to do this. At any rate, the Lord will provide and friends far away may be moved to assist us. I want still more aid, for the field is ripe, and we want more harvest men to reap it. It grows, the thing grows—every day it increases. It started but as a little flake of snow and now like an avalanche it sweeps the Alps’ sides bare before its tremendous force.

I would not now that you should prove unworthy of the day in which you live, or the work to which God has called us as a Church. Four Churches of Christ have sprung of our loins in one year and the next year shall it not be the same? And the next and the next, if the Holy Spirit is with us, and He has promised to be with us, if we are with Him.

Now, in regard to the particular effort at Wandsworth, for which a collection is to be made. When I was sore sick some three years or more ago, I walked about to recover strength and walked through the town of Wandsworth. I thought, “How few attend a place of worship here. Here are various Churches but there is ample room for one of our own faith and order. Something must be done,” I thought, “If I could start a man here preaching the Word, what good might be done.” The next day, some four friends from the town called to see me, one a Baptist and the three others were desirous of Baptism, “Would I come there and form a Church?”

We took the large rooms at a tavern and preaching has been carried on there ever since. Beginning with four, the Church has increased to one hundred and fifty. I have greatly aided the interest by going there continually and preaching and helping to support the minister. Now, a beautiful piece of ground has been taken, and a Chapel is to be erected, and I firmly believe there will be a very strong cause raised. We have many rising Churches, but this one has just come to such a point, that a House of Prayer is absolutely needed. I should not have asked you for this aid so soon, but the rooms in which they worship are now continually used for concerts on Saturday evenings and are not altogether agreeable on Sunday.

I would just as soon worship in one place as another, for my own part, but I see various difficulties are now in the way, which a new Chapel will remove. I hope you will help them in so doing. Help me in the earnest effort of my soul to hold forth the Word of Life and to let Christ’s kingdom come and His will be done. You that feel no desire to honor the Master—you that care nothing for the spread of His kingdom—you that are satisfied to hold your heads down and not boast and glory in Him—stand back and assist us not.

But you who would help His kingdom—you who love His name—you who are the debtors of His Grace—help the cause everywhere, and help it this day. For Christ’s sake, I ask it of you and by His Grace you will not deny me.

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THE PASTOR'S JOY AND CONFIDENCE

NO. 2154

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 13, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now being confident of this very thing that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, you all are partakers of my grace."
Philippians 3-7.

THE Epistle to the Philippians is the epistle of joy. Bengel sums it up in two Latin words, which, being interpreted, signify, "I rejoice, rejoice you." Here we come to that sweet fruit of the Spirit which we call "Joy." The statement Paul makes about the Philippian Church shows to what a high estate a Church can come. Beloved, we of the Tabernacle never wish to be like the Church in Galatia which was bewitched by false teachers who led away the people from the vital doctrine of justification by faith. Paul had to be very sharp with them and to lay down the grand fundamentals of Free Grace so as to bring them back to the one sure Rock on which they ought to have built. Into that condition, by the Grace of God, we have never fallen.

At the same time I am afraid we have never reached as far as the Philippians went and this morning it is my intense desire that while I show you what they attained, every member of this Church may resolve, in the Holy Spirit, that he will labor to bring us to that happy condition. May God the Holy Spirit fire us with a devout ambition not to be a whit behind the best of the Apostolic Churches! The possibilities of a great Church like this are immeasurable. We may not sit down and *dream* of what we can do. We must feel our heart pulsing with a strong desire that whatever God can do with us and by us may be carried out to the fullest. If in anything there has been a falling short, may each member be determined that the responsibility shall not lie at his door!

I invite you to think, first, that the Apostle speaks of the Church of Philippi as of *a people whom he always remembered with joy*. Secondly, as of *a people whom he regarded with confidence*, for he says of them, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." And thirdly, we perceive that he viewed them as *a people concerning whom he gave all the glory to God alone*. This fact is very conspicuous throughout the whole passage.

I. First, in the Church at Philippi we see A PEOPLE WHOM THE APOSTLE REMEMBERED WITH JOY. This is seen in his declaration that *all his memory of them was happy*—"I thank my God upon every remembrance of

you.” A better rendering is, “I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you.” Taking the long run of his acquaintance with them—remembering them from the time when he preached by the riverside and Lydia was converted—even until the moment of his writing to them as a prisoner in Rome—he knew nothing of them but that which gave him joy. He thought how they had, of their own free, will ministered again and again to his necessities when no other Church was mindful of him.

He says, “Now you Philippians know, also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only.” Their grateful benevolence caused him to thank God. He had no dash of bitter in the cup of his happy memory of them. As long as he remembered their prayers, their courage, their faith, their labor, their unity, their constancy, their zeal, their thoughtfulness and their liberality, he felt unmingled gratitude to the Author of all these excellent things. I trust there are many ministers who, with perhaps some slight reserve, can say of their people, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.”

If any man can say this, I claim to be that man! All have not been faithful to God in the long years of my ministry, but, taking you as a whole, you have been true to the core. This was a great wonder at Philippi, for wanderings from sound doctrine, or noticeable departures from the way of rectitude, or acts of unkindness to their spiritual leader would have destroyed this happy memory of Paul. A consistent life may be marred in any one Christian—and when there are many united in fellowship—what a risk there is to the whole Church from the power for mischief which lies in any one person! One cantankerous, over-bearing, changeable mind, or one hypocritical professor may blot the record of a Church of God. Truly, “one sinner destroys much good.”

It had not been so at Philippi. Again, *all the Apostle's remembrance of them was tender*. I am sure it was so because he does not say, “I thank God,” but, “I thank *my* God upon every remembrance of you.” When his faith was lively and his joy in God was overflowing—when in his closest approaches to the Throne, in his most hallowed familiarities with his great Lord, he could say—“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.” There existed between Paul and the Philippians a loving tenderness. They had been most kind to him personally and most hearty in their cooperation with him in his labor of love so that when he was thanking his own God for His choicest mercies, his mind brought before him these dear people.

Brethren, in the relation of pastor and people I notice in many places an absence of anything like tender affection. And when that is gone the very joy of the Gospel is gone from the preacher and, to a very large extent, from the people. They invite him to take office. They pay him a wage more or less scanty and then they send him about his business because they are tired of him. Can they expect a blessing upon such a hireling ministry from which every element of holy relationship is absent? But in the case in which the pastor is the spiritual father of his Church and a true shepherd of souls, how different is the relationship! When they were

sad, he has cheered them. When they were in difficulties, he has guided them. When their hands hung down, he has strengthened them. And because of all this, there exists a near fellowship and a tender love, as of children to a father, or of brother to brother—so that he rejoices in them and they rejoice in him. May it be so among us forevermore! If it is not so among *us*, where is it so?

Again, *all Paul's memory of Philippi excited gratitude in his mind*. He could not have said of the *Galatians*, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." Oh, no! He said, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?" There were persons of whom he said, "I thank God that I baptized none of you." He was pleased that Believers should be baptized, but he was glad that he had not baptized certain persons who would have made capital out of it and boasted that they were baptized by the hands of Paul! All good people are not equally good. There are some in the world whom we hope to meet in Heaven with whom fellowship is difficult. If they were on the other side of the Atlantic we might love them better than when we see much of them. I know several Christian people with whom I would sooner sit in Heaven throughout all eternity than sit ten minutes with them on a sofa here below—distance—in their case, might add enchantment to the view.

It was not so with the Philippians—Paul thought of them with devout gratitude to his God that there were such people and that he had come into personal contact with them. He knew the ins and outs of them and yet he could thank his God whenever he thought of them. Dear Friends, may it be so with us, that men of God may thank God for the existence and the work of this Church! It is well with a man when he so rejoices in the excellence of others that he thanks God about it and prays about it. It is well with men when there is a something in their lives for which holy men can devoutly thank God. I have seen a good deal of testimony-giving and of public laudation of prominent men—but the happiest condition of things would have arrived if in our heart of hearts we delighted in the holiness of other Christian men and made a point of praising God on that account. To see another to be more gracious than oneself and then to praise God for it—is this common? We pray for those that err—do we praise those who stand firm? It is a beautiful spirit to cultivate. May the Holy Spirit increase it in us all!

Again, *all his prayers for them were joyful*. He says, "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy." For some we have had to pray with tears and sighs and for others with trembling. But the Lord so heard Paul in the past with regard to these Philippians that every time he began to pray he felt liberty in prayer—a joy in bearing their names before the Lord—and a sweet assurance that he was not praying in vain. His was not the cry of anguish but the request of delight! When we pray for those who are our joy and for that which will be *their* joy, we may well mingle joy with earnestness. For these beloved ones Paul approached the Mercy Seat with boldness and confidence—he felt sure of being heard on their account.

In very truth, I can say the same of you all in this place. Never can I pray with greater peace of soul than when I plead for you. I believe, on the other hand, thousands of godly people find a joy in making request for me. So I am constantly told and I have no doubt upon the matter. Now, why was all this joy in the Apostle's mind with regard to the saints in Philippi? This is the point I desire to press upon you. Paul rejoiced because *all along they had been in hearty fellowship with him in the best things.* Observe—"For your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now." There are Churches wherein the minister is nominally the leading officer, but he cannot lead for the Church does not follow. See that young officer, sword in hand, leap the rampart. He looks back, but alas, his troop is yards behind him!

He cries, "Come on! Come on!" But there is no answer. He might as well call to stones. This is poor work. But see another—wherever he advances his soldiers are at his side—they are as eager as he is, the victory is as much for them as for him and they feel it is so. Well may there be an outcry against "the one-man ministry" when the one man is not backed up by all who are in Church fellowship! But, Brothers and Sisters, it need not be so—indeed, it is not so among us! True and hearty have been the efforts of many in this Church. Paul seemed to stand alone when he was with the Galatians, but the Philippians were at his side and all around him, bearing him on from victory to victory by their unanimous fellowship.

For this he thanks God and well he might! They were in fellowship with him concerning his one sole object—"For your fellowship in the Gospel." If you look at the Revised Version it is, "for your fellowship in furtherance of the Gospel." The Apostle longed to spread the Gospel! And so did they. He was earnest to carry it to the regions beyond—so were they. If he preached, they would be there to encourage him. If he held special meetings, they were ready to help. If money was required, every man was ready according to his means, without pressing. Each one felt as earnest about the work as did his minister. They were enthusiastic for the furtherance of the Gospel—they were heartily with him where he most valued their sympathy.

This fellowship began early—"from the first day" of their conversion. I think we can predict what converts will be from what they are at first. Some begin warmly and gradually cool down—and we seldom know them to develop much heat or zeal if they begin in lukewarmness. When we join a Church, it is well that from the first day we enquire of the Lord, "What would You have me do?" The kind of recruits which we desire in Christ's army are those who are in fellowship with us for the furtherance of the Gospel from the very first! I like to see the convert at the Prayer Meeting, the cottage meeting, the Bible-class, or the Ragged-school, or the Sunday school, or the Tract Society doing what he can to help others! He that begins early begins hopefully. Concerning some older Christians, we could not speak of their fellowship in the Gospel from the first day, for they were slow in coming forward—but I hope they will do all the more *now* to make up for it.

I have heard of an advertisement of a burial club which began thus, "Seeing that many persons find it extremely difficult to bury themselves." That is not my experience, for I would have to say, "Seeing that many Church members find it exceedingly *easy* to bury themselves"—we receive them into our number with pleasure but we hear no more of them. We have the distinguished privilege of enrolling their names in our book and that is all. We give them our right hand of fellowship, but they do not give us their right hand of labor. Where are they? Where? Echo answers, *Where?* The Philippians had fellowship in furthering the Gospel from the first day! Then mark that they were men of good wind, who could keep up the running. They were as patient and persevering as they were zealous at the first. "From the first day until now." *Until now.*

Some run well for a time but that time is short. Oh, for the men who will live as long as they live and not die while they are alive! How many who should have been our helpers are lost to us! They have grown indifferent or they have become advanced in years and fancy that they can now do nothing because they cannot do all they once did. We can always do something for Jesus if we are willing! As we are not too old to receive Grace, let us not think ourselves too old to use it—for it is given to be used. The aged are capable of the noblest work which can be performed. Encouragement of the sad and feeble almost necessitates an experience which only age can bring. There is as truly a service in the Church for the most venerable as for the most active. Let no man cut himself off from the privilege of serving the Lord Jesus "from the first day until now."

And what they did appears to have been so general as to be practically unanimous. He speaks of them all as in full fellowship with him in his lifework. When shall we get Churches alive all through? When false doctrine taints a Church it usually sours the whole of it, for "a little leaven leavens the whole lump." But if they are good Churches, I am sorry to say the perfume of consecration does not sweeten every part. In most Churches there are a few who, to a large extent, do everything and give everything—then another portion assist occasionally—so far as they are urged on by the consecrated ones. And after these you find a large number who are practically the baggage of the Church—the lumber which has to be carried by the efficient members. Alas, that we have so many in ambulances when every hand is needed in the fight! A Church is in a poor condition when it is largely so—but it is in fine health when all are hearty in the service of the Lord, as at Philippi.

It was practical fellowship. Some of them preached, all of them prayed. Some of them contributed money and all gave love. Nobody shirked his work—which was not looked upon as a labor—but as a privilege. You will not wonder that Paul rejoiced, for it gives joy to every earnest man to see others earnest! The great cause is as much yours as it is mine. A Church which feels that holy service is not for a few, but for all the members, is a credit to Divine Grace. It is a lovely piece of Divine mosaic work in which jewels of costly price are set about with solid gold and the whole exhibits a design of matchless beauty. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit and fellowship with great saints is a rare jewel—may we each one possess it! I will not

stay longer on this point, for I shall have to return to it when considering our next head.

II. Paul saw in the Philippians A PEOPLE WHOM HE REGARDED WITH THE UTMOST CONFIDENCE—"Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." What was Paul's confidence, then? His confidence was *that the work in their hearts was a Divine work*. The Lord Himself had begun a good work in them! This is a vital matter. Everything turns upon the question, "Is this conversion a Divine work or not?"

The man is altered for the better. The woman is certainly improved. A work has been done—but is it God's work? Or is it the work of the flesh? Ah, dear Friends, a moral change may sometimes look so much like a *spiritual* change that onlookers cannot detect the difference! The child of Nature, finely dressed, is not the living child of Divine Grace—and how are we to tell the one from the other? "By their fruits you shall know them." The Apostle had found the Philippians true in their partnership in the Lord's work. They suffered for their Lord patiently. They defended the faith bravely. They spread it zealously and their lives confirmed it! And so Paul said to himself, "This is the finger of God! The Lord Himself has begun this work." How happy we are when we can have this confidence of every member of the Church—that from the beginning of their religion God has been at work in their hearts!

I pray you, do not be satisfied, any of you, with the most promising religiousness if it is not God's work! If you have undergone a change, take care that it is such a change as only the Creator could have worked in you—a resurrection from the dead, an opening of blind eyes, a turning from darkness to light! If you have not undergone a renewal which betokens heavenly handiwork, be uneasy. Be restless until God Himself, who made you, makes you new in Christ Jesus! My heart silently entreats the Lord to begin this good work in you at once—and may there be signs following which shall give us the joy of knowing that, indeed, and of a truth, the Lord has done it!

Paul could see, in the next place, that *it was a growing work*, for the Lord was still performing it. The work of God is always a *growing* work. If things do not grow they lack one of the chief marks of life. You put into the ground something which looks like a living plant and after it has been there six months you find it just the same, without a single bud or shoot. What do you say of it? Why, you conclude that it is an artificial production devoid of life. If we do not grow better, surely it is because we have no goodness worked in us! If we do not grow in Divine Grace it must be because we have no Divine Grace! Paul saw God carrying on the work in the heart of the Philippians so that they went from strength to strength and about this he was confident.

He was also confident *that God would perfect it*. He says, "He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Shall we be absolutely perfect until then? I think not. Perfection in a modified sense is possible through Divine Grace—but not absolute perfection. Old Master Trapp very well says a Christian may be perfect, but not *perfectly* perfect. Perfection in the

Scriptural use of it is not at all what those make of it who boast of perfection in the flesh! A child is perfect when it is newly born—there is every toe on the tiny foot and its eyes, ears, nose and other organs are all there—but if you tell me that a child is a perfect man, I smile at you. So the Christian may be perfect as to all his parts, “perfect and entire, lacking nothing,” and yet he may not be perfect as to development by a very long way.

One says, “We shall be perfect at death, shall we not?” It is not so written here, but, “He will perform it *until the day of Jesus Christ.*” We may be perfect in death, doubtless, as to the *moral* and *spiritual* Nature—but a man has a *body* as well as a soul—and it needs both parts to make the *perfect* man. While the worms are devouring the body the man is not yet perfect. He will be perfect as to his whole manhood when the Lord shall come and the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible! Paul delights to make the Christian leap over that little rivulet called death and swallow up the thought of dissolution in the far grander fact of the coming of the Lord!

The Second Advent ought to be much more on our minds than the hour of our death! The Lord will perform the work which He has begun until He perfects it in the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall receive His Church unto Himself. Then shall be the general judgment and oh, what a blessing to be found perfect in *that* day of decision! He shall separate the righteous from the wicked as the shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. When that great day is ended, then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun! Our Lord Jesus will be covered with the Infinite splendor of God in that day and then shall we be like He—His Glory will be reflected upon all Believers. You have no idea of what a perfect man will be like. “You see not that body that shall be.” God will give us such a body as it pleases Him and to each one a body of his own.

If you had never seen wheat growing, you would never imagine that the shriveled grain of corn would produce the blade, the ear and the full corn in the ear. Take an example still more striking—many very tiny seeds produce flowers which excel in beauty of form and color—could you have ever guessed that the insignificant seeds could have come to this? Even so, the body is sown in weakness but it is raised in power! It is sown in corruption but it is raised in incorruption! The star of today will be the sun of tomorrow. All glory lies in the bud of our struggling humanity when once Divine Grace has quickened it. O Brothers and Sisters, He that has begun a good work in us will not only give us perseverance until death, but what is even more, He will give us perfection in the day of Christ! It is altogether a more comprehensive thought than the great Truth of God of Final Perseverance—it includes that blessed Truth of God within its sweep, but it also secures eternal glory both to soul and body!

Was Paul justified in being so confident, not only that these people were converted, but that they would be eternally saved? Leave out of the question his writing as an Inspired man—how did he gain his confidence? *His confidence partly arose out of his love*—“Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart.” His love to them was not

the mere glow of Nature, but the flame of Divine Grace! He saw so much of Christ in them that he could not help admiring and loving them. And he felt sure that they were of the sort that never draw back unto perdition, but believe to the salvation of their souls. He perceived that the Grace which was in him was in them, also—and therefore, as he hoped to be kept to the end—he felt that they would, also, be so kept. As he felt sure that the work of Grace in them was of God, and of God alone, so he was confident that they would never fail. A good foundation is a grand security that the house will be substantial. Those we love in the Lord, because of what the Lord has done for them, we feel sure about as to their future.

Furthermore, *their long-continued character confirmed the Apostle in his confidence*, for he adds, “Inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, you all are partakers of my grace.” When he was bound they were not ashamed of his chains. When he was in prison the jailer washed his stripes and refreshed him at his table and this proved an omen of loving liberality throughout life. When Paul was taken away to Rome, the Philippians took care that he should not be left penniless—they sent out of their poverty to his assistance. He felt confidence in a people who could do this. Shame turns many of the weaker sort aside, but the faithful despise it. Those who love holiness when others despise and ridicule it are the people to stand fast. Besides, they were partners with Paul in the defense of the Gospel.

If any Galatian teachers came their way, they gave them the cold shoulder for they would not give up the grand old Gospel to please the wise men of the period. In this way, my Brothers and Sisters, have you also stood by your own minister in those protests against error which have cost him so dear. Your faithfulness gives me great confidence concerning you. The people who can bear the attacks made upon you and the baits held out to you can be relied upon under God. You are not ashamed of my bonds, for you are heartily with me in the defense of the Gospel in this day of falsehood. They were also with the Apostle as to the confirmation of the Gospel. Their lives proved the truth of the Word of Grace. When Paul was preaching, if he wanted to show that the Gospel is the power of God, he pointed to what had been accomplished in Philippi—and none could deny the argument.

A living argument is invincible. Reasoning is very well, but *fact* is overwhelming. Oh, that every Christian would so live as to prove the power of the Gospel! He adds another reason why he was so sure of them, namely, that *they were partakers of his grace*. The same Grace which had saved him saved them. They ascribed their salvation to Sovereign Grace even as he did. The life in them as babes in Grace was the same life which dwelt in him as a father in Israel. Their Gospel and his Gospel were identical—and their spirit and his spirit were cast in the same mold. His Grace was such that he could not be seduced into hoping for salvation by works and nor could they. He believed in Divine Sovereignty, in electing love, in effectual Atonement—and so did they. They were with him in all things—not in a forced union, but in hearty love to the same Truths of God. Besides, he loved the souls of men and was always laboring to lead men to Jesus and

they did the same. He delighted best to preach where Christ had never been made known and not to build upon another man's foundation. And in this they supported him. They were with him in every loving endeavor to spread the Gospel.

Now, it is a grand thing when a minister has great confidence in his people based upon the fact that he sees the Grace of God in them bringing forth fruit unto the Glory of God. Foolish fondness is to be avoided, but a confidence which is justified by evidence is a great solace to the heart. What strength holy living in his people gives to the preacher of the Word of God! A man comes before you and says, "There is, somewhere about here, an invisible lake containing the purest, coolest and most refreshing water that you ever drank. You never saw water so pure and delicious." We ask the gentleman to let us see this lake. No, he cannot show the lake, but he will allow us to examine the streams which flow out of it. That is a fair test and we agree to abide by it.

Here is one of the outflows. We fill a glass from it and hold it up to the light. Why, here are little whales and elephants swimming in it and no end of tiny sea monsters disporting themselves—that lake is hardly the place to drink from unless one would have meat as well as drink at every draught! Our informant assures us that there must be a mistake somewhere. So we hope. This stream has evidently gone wrong—he will take us to another outflow. Again we dip our cup, and lo, it is filled with water of a strange color as if the filth of some great city had run into it. We loathe to drink. Again we are told that there is some failure here, also, and we are begged to try again. After three or four such experiments, we feel quite unable to believe in this crystal lake. Such streams as these have not come out of an expanse of purity—we will keep to our old-fashioned waterworks till we have more reliable information.

See the parallel? If Paul had begun praising the Gospel and the people had said, "Show it to us by its effects," he might have said, "Let us pay a visit to Lydia, the seller of purple." They go to her store and look at her wares. Somehow her purple does not seem to be dyed after the ancient Tyrian fashion. The color is not true or fast. If she tries to pass off a base imitation as the original article we reckon the woman an old cheat and by no means a good evidence of the power of the Gospel! If she uses a trademark which does not belong to her, we conclude that her religion is worthless! Let us call upon the jailer, who is another instance of the work of Grace in Philippi.

When we come to the jail the porter tells us that the jailer is beating the prisoners! And on enquiry we find that the prison is a little Hell and those in it are wretched in the extreme under his tyrannical hand. "He is worse," says the porter, "since Paul came here. He talks a great deal about religion, but we do not see much of it unless it lies in being harsh, suspicious, cruel and selfish." If these things happened, Paul would feel sorry that he brought us to Philippi and he would be unable to preach the Word with boldness. I will not make any application, dear Friends—you can do that for yourselves.

III. My third point is this, that although Paul speaks concerning the excellence of the Philippians, he views them as A PEOPLE FOR WHOM HE GAVE ALL GLORY TO THE GRACE OF GOD. He did not praise them, but the Lord who had saved them. Observe how he began, "I thank my God." *In what was done he sees reason for gratitude to God.* Brothers and Sisters, if we win a single soul, let us humbly thank God for it. If, after years of labor, any one of you should bring but two or three children to Jesus, you will have reason to thank God for all eternity! A friend said to me on Wednesday, when the sun was shining, "We ought to be grateful for this fine weather." I replied, "I go farther than that—I *am* grateful for it."

We should not only acknowledge what we *ought* to do, but we should do it. If God gives you any success in His service, do not say, "I ought to be thankful," but *be thankful* from the bottom of your heart up to the brim of it. I remember a Brother who used to pray, "The Lord has done great things for us, whereof *we desire to be glad.*" The Bible does not say so—the Bible says, "whereof *we are glad.*" Another cries, "The love of Christ ought to constrain us." The Bible does not talk in that fashion. It says, "The love of Christ *constrains us.*" What we ought to do we should do. A Christian's life should be the Decalogue written large and somewhat more.

But Paul also, after he had thanked God, *kept on praying for what was still needed.* "Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request." See, dear Brethren—at Philippi he has not only begun with God, but he goes on with God. He has much more to do but he does not attempt to do it without his Lord. Oh, that all workers were of this mind! We deal with God too little. A person exclaimed, "Let us get up a revival." The revivals which men can get up had better be left alone—we need to get revivals *down.* If we get a revival up it must come from beneath—but if we get a revival down, it comes from above. Lord, revive us! We pray for it and when it comes we will praise You for it. Brothers and Sisters, we must mix up our constant service with more prayer and praise if we desire it to be largely effectual. If the work is worth anything, it is God's work in us and by us—He begins it, carries it on and completes it!

What, then, can we do, if we do not draw near to Him? Our labor must have a constantly distinct reference to God. Sunday school teachers, your work requires you to begin with God—do not dare to go to the class even once without fervent prayer in the Spirit. When you have given the lesson, go straightway and ask God's blessing on it. Do not omit this even once! Paul's way is to thank God and to pray to God—and it must be yours if you would have Paul's joy. As to *his confidence about the future of his converts, it was all in God.* It was not confidence in them apart from the work of God in them. He says God began it and God will carry it on. He does not depend on the strength of their principles, nor the force of their resolutions, nor the excellence of their habits—he relies upon God, who will perform what He has begun.

Did not Paul begin it? No, no! For if he had begun it he would have to carry it on and that could not be. Did not they begin it themselves? Certainly not! Does the sinner take the first step? How can he? He is dead in sin! If he does take the first step apart from the Spirit of God, he can take

all the rest without God. It is with the sinner as with the Romish Saint Denis. You have heard the old fable that when he had his head cut off he picked it up and walked a thousand miles with it in his hand! A scoffer said that the thousand miles' walk was not at all remarkable—it was only the first step that had any difficulty in it.

Just so, when a soul goes to Heaven, if it takes the first step in its own strength, it can walk all the way—and then it will have all the glory. Brothers and Sisters, we may truly sing—

**“No sinner can be
Beforehand with You.”**

God commences the good work, however faint and feeble the beginning may appear. The tiny brook at the riverhead of repentance is of God as much as the broad river of heavenly character. This is a solemn Truth of God. How deeply it should humble us! We cannot even begin—we cannot dig the foundation—how can we bring forth the top stone? All is of Grace from first to last. While the Apostle is so practical, as I have shown him to be, yet see how sound in doctrine he is! He never quits the grand doctrine of free, Sovereign, effectual Grace—“He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

Beloved Friends, I close when I say *the Apostle derives his confidence from a great principle*. The great principle is that what God begins He will perfect. For if He did not do so, where was the wisdom of beginning? It is a word of derision when those who pass by a half-finished building say, “This man began to build and was not able to finish.” We never praise a man for wisdom who makes an attempt which he does not carry through. Could angels rejoice in a work which God began and then left to fall through? It might also suggest a lack of power. If a man is wise in his beginnings, he may break down because, through unforeseen difficulty, he has not sufficient means to complete his design. You often see the carcass of a house and it is never a happy sight—it suggests lack of means.

But can there be any lack of power with *God*? Nothing is impossible with Him. But there might also be lack of perseverance. Some men are always great at beginnings but they have no stay in them—they change their minds. Does the Eternal God suffer change? Is it not said that He is “without variableness or shadow of turning”? Granted an Immutable God we may be sure that Divine Grace will complete what Divine Grace begins. Nor can God forsake the work of His own hands from lack of long-suffering. A man might begin to bless another and that other might be so ungrateful that the benefactor grows impatient and gives up on him. Will God fail in Divine Grace? Assuredly not. “His mercy endures forever.” The top and bottom of it is that our confidence in one another must only be confidence in *God*—and our confidence for ourselves must rest in God or it will be sheer delusion.

But, Beloved, albeit that where God has begun a good work He will carry it on, this does not put prayer aside, for Paul prays for these very people. Neither does this lessen the necessity of a holy life, for Paul is only confident about saints who were hearty “in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel” and partakers of Divine Grace. He felt confident of the ulti-

mate perfection of those only who had a Divine work within them and proved it by their fellowship in the furtherance of the Gospel. How can we profess that Grace is in our hearts by Divine implanting if we live in secret sin? How can we hope to persevere if we have not begun? If we do not join in the prayers and efforts of the Church of God, how can we hope to partake in the reward at the coming of the Lord?

The question as to whether God has begun saving work in us must be answered by our faith and our life—and if it is satisfactorily proved that He has begun it, we can depend upon Him to finish it! If, on the contrary, we have reason to fear that He has not begun it at all, we should not deceive ourselves, but take up our true position. We may still cry to Him as sinners and look to Jesus as the Author of faith. This will be wise and this will be successful, for Jesus says He will cast out none that come to Him. “This Man receives sinners.”

I hope every unconverted person here this morning who sees that salvation is God's work, will say to himself, “I will even look out of myself to Him who is able to begin the work in me. If He begins, carries on and completes salvation, then my lack of strength need not make me despair, for He is able, though I am not. He will work all my works in me and I shall praise His name.”

Oh, that the Spirit of God would lead my hearers to think of these things! Come and trust in Jesus Christ, the only Savior, and the good work will then have begun in you—a work which neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil can destroy! And then in the day of judgment you shall stand perfect in Christ Jesus before the Truth of God.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Philippians 1*.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—427, 742, 739.**

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A BUSINESS-LIKE ACCOUNT NO. 1357

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 3, 1877,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed, I also count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”
Philippians 3:7-9.*

OUR Savior's advice to those who wished to be His disciples was, “Count the cost.” He did not wish to entice any man to enlist in His army by keeping him in ignorance as to the requirements of His service. Again and again He tested professed converts Himself—and He frequently exhorted men to try themselves, lest they should begin a profession and be unable to maintain it. True religion is a matter of enthusiasm, but at the same time its Truths and precepts can endure the severest examination. The exercise of our judgments upon the Gospel is invited, yes, *required!* It is true that many persons are brought to Christ in earnest assemblies, where they are addressed in fervent language. But also, a man may sit down in his study or his counting house with his pen in his hand, and in the coolest possible manner he may calculate and, if under the Holy Spirit's guidance, he shall be led to calculate truthfully—he will come to the conclusion that the cause of the Lord Jesus is worthiest and best.

Do not imagine, as some do, that religion consists in a wild fanaticism which never considers, calculates, judges, estimates, or ponders—for such an imagination will be the reverse of the truth. Ardor, fervor, enthusiasm—these are desirable and we cannot have too much of them—but at the same time, as I have already said, we can justify our attachment to Christ by the most calm logic, by the most patient consideration. We may make a lengthy and deliberate estimate, taking both things temporal and things eternal into review, and yet we may challenge all gainsayers while we declare that it is the wisest and the best thing in all the world to be a disciple of Jesus Christ!

In our text the Apostle gives us the word, “count,” three times over. He was skilled in spiritual arithmetic and very careful in his reckoning. He cast up his accounts with caution and observed with a diligent eye his losses and his gains. In his reckoning he does not ignore any losses that may be supposed to be sustained, or really may be sustained. But he does not, on the other hand, forget for a moment that blessed gain for which he counts it worthwhile to suffer surprising loss. Paul, here, seems to be in a

mercantile frame of mind, adding and subtracting, counting and balancing, with much quiet and decision of mind.

I commend the text to businessmen. I invite them to follow the Apostle's example, to use their best judgments upon eternal things, to sit down, take out their pen and figure as he did, and make out estimates and calculations as to themselves and Christ, their own works and the righteousness of faith. The subject this morning will be, first, the Apostle's calculations and, secondly, our own. The objective being, in the second part, to put questions to ourselves as to whether we estimate things after the Apostolic fashion.

I. First, then, let us consider THE APOSTLE'S CALCULATIONS. Looking at the text, you will notice that he made three distinct counts. They all came to much the same thing, with this difference, that each one, as it succeeded its fellow, was more emphatic in its result. The result was the same, but it was more and more forcibly expressed. And, first, we have his counting at the outset of his Christian life. When he became a Believer, he says of himself, "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." That is to say, at the first and earliest period when, from being Saul the Rabbi, the intense Pharisee, he became Paul the convert and the preacher of the faith which once he destroyed, those things which had seemed very splendid gains all dissolved into one great loss. At that time he says he made a calculation and formed a deliberate opinion that what had appeared to him to be most advantageous was really, so far as Christ was concerned, a positive disadvantage and hindrance to him—the gains were a loss.

Now, you will notice that in this first calculation he dwelt upon the separate items, noting each with great distinctness. The list of the things of which he might glory in the flesh reads like a catalog. "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of Hebrews. As touching the Law, a Pharisee. Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church. Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless." These are the things which were gains to him and the list is very comprehensive, beginning at his birth and circumcision and running right on to the date of his conversion.

He dwells with a high degree of interest upon the items of his Jewish advantages. They had been as precious pearls to him, once, and while he freely renounces them, yet he remembers that they were once dear as the apple of his eye. They had been his pride, his patent of nobility and his daily boast. He felt himself to be, in these respects, far in advance of the most of mankind and second to none, even of his favored race, for even now he says, "If any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I have more." "Circumcised the eighth day"—the rite which introduced him to the outward Covenant of Abraham had been performed exactly when ordained by the Law—he was not one who had been circumcised as proselytes were, late in life, nor at an irregular season on account of ill health, traveling, or parental neglect. But to the moment as the Mosaic ritual required, he had, as a baby, been received into the congregation of Israel.

Next, he was of “the stock of Israel.” He was not one who had been converted to the Israelite faith, nor a descendant of Gibeonites or of proselytized parents—he was of the pure stock of Israel, descended by a clear line which, probably, he was able, genealogically, to trace from that Israel who was a prevailing prince with God. He was proud of this descent and well he might be, for every Jew is of noble lineage. Speak of ancient families who can match the seed of Israel! Theirs is the best blood in the universe, if one blood is better than another.

Paul, also, boasted that he was “of the tribe of Benjamin”—the tribe which Moses called the Beloved of the Lord! The tribe within whose canton the temple stood! The tribe which was descended from the beloved wife of Jacob, even Rachel, and not from the sons of either of the bondwomen. The tribe of Benjamin was that from which the first king of Israel was chosen and he bore the same name as that by which Paul had been known among his Jewish brethren. Paul was, therefore, of the very choicest branch of that vine which the Lord, Himself, brought out of Egypt.

He next adds that he was a “Hebrew of the Hebrews.” He was the cream of the cream, the very pick and choice out of the choice nation and the elect people. If there was any benefit to be had by being of the seed of Abraham, the Hebrew, he had all that benefit in the highest possible degree. Then he had appended to all the advantages of birthright and of nationality that of entering into a peculiar sect, the most orthodox, the most devout—for “as touching the Law, he was a Pharisee,” and belonged to the sect which attached importance to the minutest details of the Law and tithed its mint and its anise, and its cummin. What more could he be?

He was a Jesuit among the Catholics, one who went to the extreme among extremists, one of those initiated into the innermost secrets of the faith! Then, as to personal character, he felt that here, in his natural state, he had something which was gain, for he was so full of zeal that those who appeared to speak against the Law of Moses by declaring the Gospel were counted as his enemies. He hunted them down with all his might—“concerning zeal, persecuting the Church.” This he had done in all honesty of purpose as the result of his thorough self-righteousness. He finishes by saying that he, himself, was, as to every detail of the Law, every little point of ritual and every particular rubric, altogether blameless. This was no small thing to say, but he spoke no more than the truth. These things all put together are what he counted gains, (for the Greek word is in the plural), and I think he dwells somewhat lingeringly upon each separate point, as very well he might, for they had been very dear to him in former days. And these privileges were, in themselves, things of no mean worth.

But now, what was to be set on the other side? Here is a long list on one side, what is to be placed per contra? He says, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for *Christ*.” What? What? Nothing on the other side but one item? One? Only one? And yet there were so many privileges on the other side! There was but one name, one Person in that scale, while in the other there were so many advantages! Why, one begins to think that the calculation will soon come to an end in favor of Saul’s Israelite

descent and the rest of it! But not so—the One outweighed the many! Here I want you to notice that Paul does not say that those he counted loss for *Christianity*, or for the *Church*, or for the orthodox faith. There would have been truth in such a statement, but the *center* of the truth lies here—he counted these things loss for Christ, that is, for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! He thought of that Divine One, blessed be His name, that Brother of our souls who was born at Bethlehem, the Kinsman, Redeemer of His people—Christ! The living, loving, bleeding, dying, buried, risen, ascended, glorified Christ! This was the glorious Person whom he placed on the other side of the balance sheet!

And now see the result. He says, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss.” An amazing result. Not only that after putting the one under the other and making a subtraction, he found that all his carnal advantages were less than Christ, but, far more than this! He found those gains actually transformed into a loss! They were not a plus on that side to stand in proportion to the plus on this side—but they were turned into a minus of actual deficit! He felt that his fleshly advantages, when he came to look at them in regard to Christ, were disadvantages and what he had reckoned to be gains operated rather against him than for him when he began to know Christ!

My Brothers and Sisters, he does not mean that to be a “Hebrew of the Hebrews” was, in itself, a loss, nor that to be of the stock of Israel was a loss, for there was a natural advantage about all this. “What advantage, then, has the Jew?” he says in another place. And he replies, “Much every way.” But he meant that with respect to *Christ*, those things which were naturally an advantage became a *disadvantage* because their tendency had been to keep him from trusting Christ. And their tendency was still to tempt him away from simple faith in Jesus. “Alas,” he seemed to say to himself, “it was because I gloried that I was of the stock of Israel that I rejected the Christ of God! It was because I boasted that as touching the Law I was blameless that, therefore, I refused to accept the glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith. These advantages were scales upon my eyes to keep me from seeing the beauty of my Lord! These privileges were stumbling blocks in my way to prevent my coming as a poor, humble, needy sinner and laying hold on the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus.”

My Brothers and Sisters, it is a grand thing to have led a virtuous life. It is a matter for which to praise God to have been kept in the very center of the paths of morality. But this blessing may, by our own folly, become a curse to us if we place our moral excellences in opposition to the righteousness of our Lord Jesus and begin to dream that we have no need of a Savior! If our character is, in our own esteem, so good that it makes a passable garment for us and, therefore, we reject the robe of Christ’s righteousness, it would have been better for us if our character had been, by our own confession, a mass of rags—for then we should have been willing to be clothed with the vesture which Divine Love has prepared!

Yes, it were better, so far as this matter is concerned, to be like the open sinner who will not readily be tempted that way because he is too foul, too bankrupt to pretend to be righteous before God! I say again, Paul

does not say that these things are not advantages, but that for *Christ*—and when he comes to look at them in the light of *Christ*—he regards them as being a loss rather than a gain! If I had, this day a righteousness of my own, yet would I fling it to the winds to lay hold of the righteousness of Christ, fearing all the while lest so much as the smell of it should cling to my hands! Had I never sinned in one solitary open sin and if but one secret transgression of my heart had ever been committed, yet would I loathe my righteousness as filthy rags and only *tremble* lest my proud spirit should be so foolish as to cling to such a useless thing! Adam fell through *one* sin and lost Paradise, and lost us all—so that one sin suffices to curdle the purest righteousness into utter sourness. Away, then, with the very shadow of self and legal righteousness!

But let us now proceed to notice that Paul gives us his second calculation, which is his estimate for the time then present. “Yet indeed,” he says, “I also count”—not, “I counted”—as he said before, but, “I also count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” We are always anxious to hear what a man has to say about a thing after he has tried it. It is all very well to begin with eagerness, but how does the venture answer after a trial? After 20 years or more of experience, Paul had an opportunity of revising his balance sheet and, looking again at his estimates and seeing whether or not his count was correct.

What was the result of his latest search? How do matters stand at his last stock-taking? He exclaims with very special emphasis, “Yet indeed, I also count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” The two words, “Yet indeed,” are a very strong affirmation. He is speaking very positively as to his present confirmed assurance and established judgment. Look at him, then, again, making his estimate today, after he has been, for some time, a Christian and has been made to suffer as the result of his earnest service. You perceive that He has not forgotten the things that were gains, for, as we have already seen, he has given us a detailed list of them.

On this second occasion he does not repeat the catalog, partly because there was no need for it and partly because he cares less for each item. But mainly because, for fear anything should have been omitted, he succinctly sums up the whole by saying, “all things.” He as good as says—yet indeed, I also count as loss all the advantages of birth, nationality and self-righteousness which once I reckoned to be gains. If I have left out anything of which, as an Israelite I might have gloried, I beg you to insert it in the list, for I mean that all should be included when I say that I count all things loss for Christ’s sake.

So you see he has not altered the original summary. He has even made it more comprehensive—but he stands to the same estimate as always—the gain is still “loss.” But we perceive that now he dwells longer and evidently with greater delight of expression upon the other side, for now he uses not barely the word, “Christ,” but the fuller expression, “for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” Now he has come to *know* the Christ in whom before he trusted. He spoke of Him, before, as one for whom he counted gain as loss, but now he perceives so great an

excellency in Him that even to *know* Him he reckons to be a supereminent blessing! Our Divine Lord is better loved as He is better known! The closer our inspection, the greater is the manifest excellency of His Character.

The words used by the Apostle show us the points upon which he had the fullest knowledge. He knew the Lord as Christ, or as the Messiah, sent and anointed of the Father. He understood more fully than at the first, the fullness, power and exceeding efficacy of the anointing of our Lord which He had received above His fellows. He saw Him to be the woman's promised Seed, the Coming One, the promised Light of Israel, the ordained Prince and Savior of the sons of men! And he saw all His qualifications for this wonderful Character! He perceived His anointing as Prophet, Priest and King. He delighted to see the Spirit of the Lord resting upon Him and descending from Him to His people, as the sacred oil from the head of Aaron distilled to the skirts of his garments.

He saw great excellency in the knowledge of the Lord's Anointed, whose garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia. But this was not all, for he proceeds to call Jesus, Christ Jesus. "You shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." Paul knew Him as the anointed Savior, yes, as the actual Savior who had saved *him*—saved him from the madness for his blasphemy and persecution, saved him from all his past guilt—saved him and made him to be an instrument of the salvation of others. He delights in the title of Savior, as we all do who know the savor of it. How sweetly musical is the name of Jesus! How fragrant is it, even as ointment poured forth! Excellent, indeed, is the knowledge of our Lord in this Character!

How delicious are the Apostle's next words, "my Lord." Not merely the Lord, but, "my Lord." His knowledge was an appropriating knowledge. He knew the Redeemer as anointed for him, as saving him, as Lord over all for him and now, as Lord to him. The honey of the sentence lies in that word, "*my*." I do not know how it seems to your hearts, but to me it is one of the sweetest words that can possibly be used by mortal lips, "the knowledge of Christ Jesus *my* Lord." Whether He is your Lord or not, He is surely mine! Whether He is accepted as Lord by the sons of men or not, He is joyfully acknowledged as Lord to me and Master of my spirit, sole Monarch of my whole nature—"Christ Jesus *my* Lord."

You see, then, how truly, fully, practically and *personally* he knew the Lord Jesus. The text implies that he knew Him by faith. He had *seen* Him in the flesh, but in that he did not glory, for he had now come to value only the things of *faith*, desiring mainly that the righteousness which is of God, by faith, might be imputed unto him. He believed, and therefore he *knew*. There is no knowledge so gracious as the knowledge of faith, for a man may know a great deal in a natural way and yet perish, but that which comes of *faith* is saving. If a man only knows Christ in the head, but does not trust Him with the heart, what is the good of His knowledge? It will rather ruin than save him. So to know the Lord Jesus Christ as to lean your soul's full weight upon Him. To know Him as to experience peace because you trust in Him. To know Him as to feel that you can rest

in Him more and more, from day to day, because He is all your salvation and all your desire—this is to know Him, indeed!

But Paul also knew the Lord by *experience*, for he speaks of knowing Him and “the power of His resurrection.” This is excellent knowledge, indeed, when the power of a fact is realized within and shown in the life. When we are raised from the death of our sin and feel that we are so, then is our knowledge of the risen Christ excellent, indeed. When we feel a new life within us, quickening us unto spiritual things, and know that this springs from the Resurrection of our Lord and is worked in us according to the mighty power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead, then, indeed, can we rejoice in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord!

More than that, Paul knew something of Christ and was aiming to know more by a growing likeness to Him. “That I may know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” He had entered, in some measure, into his Master’s sufferings. He had been persecuted and despised of men for much the same reason as his Master. He had, in a degree, felt Christ’s motives, Christ’s love for man, Christ’s zeal for God, Christ’s self-sacrifice, Christ’s readiness to die on behalf of the Truth of God. This is an excellent knowledge, indeed, and Paul might well esteem it as far more precious than all legal privileges. He spoke of it as supereminent knowledge, for such is his meaning, and he reckoned it to be beyond all price.

Beloved, there is no knowledge in the world which can be compared with such a knowledge of Christ Jesus as I have tried to describe just now, for it is a knowledge which concerns the highest conceivable objective—even the Son of God! To know the science of Nature, to be familiar with rocks, to read the stars, to comprehend all things besides is a comparative *trifle* when we consider what it is to know God in the Person of the Lord Jesus! He in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily is most worthy to be known—and angels and principalities unite with all the saints in thinking so! *One* truth about Christ is more precious than the total of all other knowledge! This is a knowledge which no man has unless it is given him by the Holy Spirit—and therefore is excellence.

We may say to all who know Christ, “Flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you.” Divinely taught must he be who has learned Christ. This science cannot be acquired in schools nor imparted by learned professors, nor even gathered by years of diligent research. To the heart, renewed by the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus must be revealed by the Spirit, Himself, for no man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord but by the Holy Spirit! That is a superlative knowledge which requires, in each case, to be communicated by God, Himself. If you would see the excellency of this knowledge, look at its effects. Some knowledge puffs up, but this knowledge makes us humble and the more we have of it the less are we in our own esteem.

This knowledge sanctifies, purges and delivers from the love of sin. It saves the soul—saves it from present sin and from eternal woe. This knowledge elevates the motives, sweetens the feelings and gives nobility to the entire life, for the man who knows Christ lives after a loftier order of

life than those who are ignorant of Him. This knowledge, indeed, Beloved, is excellent because it can never be lost—it is a knowledge which will continue to *progress*, even in eternity! The most of the subjects which mortals study here will be forgotten in the world to come. The most profound of them will be too trifling to be pursued amid angelic thrones. The honors of classical and mathematical attainments will shine but dimly amidst the glories of Heaven. But the knowledge of Christ Jesus will still be priceless and it will cause those who possess it to shine as the sun! He that knows Christ shall go on to sit at His feet and to learn—and as he learns, he will tell to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God in the Person of Jesus Christ!

See, then, Beloved, that the Apostle, for the sake of the knowledge of Christ Jesus His Lord, still counted all the things that he had once gloried in to be but loss. This was his calculation when he was writing. It was not merely the estimate of his younger days, but it was his present renewed and confirmed judgment. My Friends, is it ours? The great Apostle gives us a third counting which may be regarded as his life estimate. Not of the past only, nor of the present merely, but of the past and present inclusively. Here it is, “For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him.”

Here, Beloved, you see that his estimate sets out with actual test and practical proof. He is sitting down, I suppose, in the guard room of the Praetorian at Rome where he was a prisoner. He has chains on his wrists and if he likes, he needs no blotting paper, but may powder his writing with the rust of his fetters. He has nothing in all the world. He has lost all his old friends. His relations disown him, His countrymen abhor him and even his Christian Brothers and Sisters often distress him. No name made the Jew gnash his teeth more maliciously than did the name of Saul of Tarsus who was adjudged to be the vilest of renegades! He has lost caste and lost all ground of glorying. He has, no longer, a righteousness of his own wherein to glory, but is stripped of every rag of legal hope.

Christ is his All and he has nothing else. He has no worldly property. He has no provision for his most common needs and most true are his words as he writes—“For whom I have suffered the loss of all things.” Let us enter the prison and put a personal question to the good man. Paul, your faith has brought you to absolute penury and friendlessness. What is your estimate of it now? Theory is one thing, but does practice bear it out? The sea looks smooth as glass, but seafaring is more pleasant to talk of than to practice. The embarking was a fine spectacle, but what do you think of a sea voyage when the storm rages? What about it, Paul?

“Well,” he says, “I confess I have suffered the loss of all things.” And do you deeply regret it, Paul? “Regret it?” he asks, “regret the loss of my Phariseism, my circumcision, my Israelite dignity? Regret it? No,” he says, “I am glad that all these are gone, for I count it to be a deliverance to be rid of them.” In his first and second counts he called his former gains loss, but now he sets them down as dung. He could not use a stronger word! He calls all his boasts in the flesh mere *offal*—something to get rid of and no loss when it is gone—but rather a subject for congratulation

that it is removed from him. The word signifies that which is worthless and is used to express the lees and dregs of wine, the settlement which a man finds in his cup and drains out upon the ground when he has drunk his liquor, the refuse of fruit, the dross of metals and the chaff and stubble of wheat.

In fact, the root of the word signifies things cast to dogs—dog’s meat, bones from the plates, crumbs and stale pieces brushed from the table—and such things as one is anxious to be rid of. The Apostle puts down the whole of the fine things which he had enumerated as no better than dung. “Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews,” he shakes out the whole lot for the dogs and is glad to be rid of it all for Christ’s sake! It reminds me of a ship in a storm. When the captain leaves the harbor, he has a cargo on board of which he takes great care to protect. But when a tremendous wind is blowing and the ship labors, being too heavily laden—and there is great fear that she will not ride out the storm—see how eagerly the sailors lighten the ship!

They bring up from the hold, with all diligence, the very things which before they prized! And they seem rejoiced to heave them into the sea! Never were men more eager to get, than these are to throw away! There go the casks of flour, the bars of iron, the manufactured goods. Overboard go valuable bales of merchandise. Nothing seems to be worth keeping! Why is this? Are these things not good? Yes, but not good to a sinking ship! Anything must go to save life, anything to ride out the storm. And so the Apostle says that in order to win Christ and to be found in Him, he flung the whole cargo of his beloved confidences overboard and was as glad to get rid of them as if they were only so much dung! This he did to win Christ—and that fact suggests another picture.

An English warship of the olden times is cruising the ocean and she spies a Spanish galleon in the distance laden with gold from the Indies. Captain and men are determined to overtake and capture her, for they have a relish for prize money, but their vessel sails heavily. What then? If she will not move because of her load, they fling into the sea everything they can lay their hands on, knowing that if they can capture the Spanish vessel the booty will make amends for all they lose and vastly more! Do you wonder at their eagerness to lose the little to gain the great? Sailor, why cast overboard those useful things? “Oh,” he says, “they are nothing compared with that prize over yonder. If we can but get side by side and board her we will soon make up for all that we now throw into the sea.”

And so it is with the man who is in earnest to win Christ and to be found in Him. Overboard go circumcision and Phariseeism and the blamelessness touching the Law and all that, for he knows that he will find a better righteousness in Christ than any which he foregoes, yes, find everything in Christ which he now, for his Lord’s sake, counts but as the slag of the furnace! Now, Beloved, notice how much nearer Paul had got to Christ than he was before, for in his second estimate he spoke of knowing Him, but now he speaks of *winning* Him for his own. The word meant and should have been translated, “gain”—“that I may *gain* Christ”—for the Apostle keeps to the *mercantile* figures all the way through and means

that I may *gain* Christ and know Him as my own. That I may have Him and hold Him and sing with the spouse “My Beloved is mine.” For this cause we may wisely count all things but dung, that we may have the Lord Jesus in everlasting possession!

Then Paul adds, “and be found in Him.” He longs to be hidden in Jesus and to abide in Him as a bird in the air, or a fish in the sea. He pants to be one with Christ and so to be in Him as a member is in the body. He desires to get into Christ as a fugitive shelters himself in his hiding place. He aspires to be so in Christ as never to come out of Him, so that whenever anyone looks for Jesus, he may find *him* in Jesus, and that when the Great Judge of All calls for him at the Last Great Day, He may find *him* in Christ! It would be ill to be found where Adam was, shivering under the trees of the garden with his fig leaves. But to be found beneath the Tree of Life, wearing the robe of His righteousness—this will be bliss, indeed! We are lost out of Christ but we are found *in* Him! Once met with by the Great Shepherd, we are found *by* Him, but when safely folded in His love, we are found *in* Him.

Notice how Paul sticks to what he began with, namely, the unrobing himself of his sins in the flesh and His aligning himself with Christ. He desires to be found in Christ, but he adds, “not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law.” No, he will have nothing to do with *that*. He has already despised it as loss and thrown it overboard as dross. Now he will not have it or call it his own at all. It is strange for a man to say, “not having my own,” but he does. He disowns his own righteousness as eagerly as other men disown their sins and he highly esteems the righteousness which Christ has worked out for us, which becomes ours by faith! He calls it “the righteousness which is of God by faith,” and he sets great store by it. Yes, it is all he desires.

My Brothers and Sisters, this is the thing we ought to be seeking after—to be more and more conscious that we have Christ, to abide in Him more continually, to be more like He is, even in His sufferings and in His death, and to feel the full power of His resurrection-life within ourselves. May God grant us Grace to do this, and the more we do it the more we shall coincide with the Apostle in his slight esteem for everything else. This matter is like a balance, if one scale goes down, the other must go up. The weightier Christ’s influence, the lighter will be the world and self-righteousness—and when Christ is All in All—then the world and self will be nothing at all!

II. I shall not weary you, I hope, by taking a few minutes for the last head, which is OUR OWN CALCULATIONS. First, do we join in Paul’s earliest estimate? At the outset of his spiritual life he saw all his own natural advantages and excellences and he counted them loss for Christ. Every true Christian here remembers the time when he, also, counted all in which he had formerly trusted to be of no value whatever and betook himself to Jesus. But perhaps I speak to some who have never done so. You are, at this time, my Friend, still confident that you never did anybody any harm. You think that your life has been amiable and upright, that you

have been just, charitable and kind. And you think that all this certainly qualifies you for Heaven.

You count your natural virtues to be great gains. I spoke but three days ago to an old man, more than 80, and when he told me of his great age I said, "I hope that when you die you will go to Heaven." "Ah, Master," he said, "I never did anything why I should go anywhere else." There are multitudes who believe that creed—they do not speak it out quite so plainly as the aged peasant did—but they mean it, all the same. Ah, dear Friends, you *must* be brought out of that delusion and all these moral excellences and virtues must be loss to you, that Christ's righteousness may be your only gain! May the Holy Spirit teach you this distasteful Truth of God! I wish your heart would sing—

***"No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done!
I quit the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of Your Son.
Yes, and I must and will esteem
All things but loss for Jesus' sake!
O may my soul be found in Him,
And of His righteousness partake."***

You will never be saved till you lose all your legal hopes.

Now, secondly, after years of profession which many of you have made, do you still continue in the same mind and make the same estimate? I have known, I am sorry to say, some professors who have, by degrees, settled down upon something other than Christ. Beloved, are you resting, right now, upon your years of manifest improvement since conversion? Are you beginning to depend upon the regularity of your attendance at the means of Grace, upon your private prayer, upon what you have given, or upon your preaching or anything else? Ah, it will not do! We must continue to stand where we stood at first, saying, "Yet indeed, I also count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Come now, Christian, if you could go back, would you begin at the Cross? If you could retrace your steps, would you begin, again, by resting upon Christ and by taking Him to be your All in All? I will tell you *my* answer—I have no other Foundation upon which I could begin, I must rest on my Lord—

***"To whom or where should I go
If I should turn from You?"***

Lone Refuge of my spirit, sole Port of my poor laboring boat, to you I fly today, if never I did so before! Or if before, to you I fly anew! Do you say the same, Brothers and Sisters? I am sure you do! Now, again, you cannot join Paul in the third calculation and say, "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things," but still, I must put it to you—do you think you *could have* suffered the loss of all things if it had been required of you for Christ's sake?

If it had come to this, that you must be banished or renounce your Savior, would you go into banishment? If the alternative were the spoiling of your goods, would you let all go rather than renounce your Lord? Your

forefathers did so and, what the Spirit worked in them, I doubt not He would have worked in you had the times been of a severer character. But I will ask you a more practical question—since you have not had to suffer the loss of all things, do you hold all things at God’s disposal? Are you ready to part with comfort and honor for Him? Can you take up the social Cross and join with the most despised sect for the Truth of God’s sake?

Can you lose the respectability which attaches to popular creeds and can you cast in your lot with the despised Redeemer when religion no more walks in her silver slippers, but travels barefooted through the mire? Can you be content to share with the, “despised and rejected of men”? If you can, then you could, also, suffer the loss of all things—but see to it that it is, indeed, so. Let me ask another practical question. You have not suffered the loss of all things, but seeing God has left your worldly comforts to you, have you used all things for His sake? Have you given to His cause all that cause might fairly ask? I hope you can say, “Yes, I hope I have and, as the world judges, vastly more, for I have said in my soul—

***‘And if I must make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great
That I would give Him all.’”***

Well, then, you, also, may make your estimate as the Apostle did. Though you have not had, practically, to endure the loss of all things, yet you do count them but dung for Christ’s sake. But one thing more. Beloved, if Christ is so to you that all things else in comparison to Him are dross and dung, do you not want Him for your children? Do you not desire Him for your friends? Do you not wish all your kinsfolk to have Him? Whatever a man values for himself, he values for others. You want your boy to follow your trade if you believe it to be a very good one. You desire to see your children well placed in life—but what position in life can be equal to being found in Christ—and what under Heaven can be compared with winning Christ?

You may judge your own sincerity by the measure of your desire for the salvation of others and I earnestly entreat you be not afraid to tell others the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord! And be not slow to impress upon them the absolute necessity of being found in Him. Loathe the idea of having a righteousness of your own, but grasp with all your faith the righteousness of Jesus Christ! I commend to you Christians that you give your whole selves to Christ, that from this day forward you serve Him with spirit, soul and body, for after all, there is nothing worth living for, nothing worth even giving a single tear for if you lose it, nor worth a smile if you gain it, save only that which comes from Christ, and can be used for Christ, and is found in Christ. Christ is ALL! May He be so to you. Amen.

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“That I may win Christ.”
Philippians 3:8.

THE very high value that the Apostle Paul set upon the Savior is most palpable when he speaks of *winning* Him. This shows that the Savior held the same place in Paul's esteem as the crown did in the esteem of the runner at the Olympic games. To gain that crown, the competitor strained every nerve and sinew, feeling as though he were content to drop down dead at the goal if he might but win it. Paul felt that were he to run with all his might, if that were the way of winning Christ—were he to strain soul and body to win Him, He would be well worth the effort. He shows his value of Christ by speaking of Him as the prize he panted to win. He uses the very same words which the soldier would use concerning the victory when, with garments rolled in blood, amidst confused noise and clouds of smoke, he counts all things but little if he may but hear the shout of triumph. So, Paul, regarding Christ as more glorious and excellent than mountains of prey, considered such a prize to be worth all the fighting, even though he should agonize and sweat with blood! He would be well worth dying to win. I take it that he speaks of Christ here as though he felt that He was the very climax of his desire, the summit of his ambition. If he might but get Christ, he would be perfectly satisfied—but if he could not get Him—whatever else he might have, he would still remain unblest.

I would to God that you all felt the same. I wish that the ambition of every one of my fellow creatures here assembled—and, indeed, the wide world over—were this, that they might win Christ! Oh, if they did but know His preciousness, if they did but understand how happy and how blessed He makes those to be who gain Him, they, too, would give up everything else for this one desire—that they may win Christ! I hope that, perhaps, a few words of mine may be blessed of God the Spirit to stir up such a desire in the hearts of the congregation now assembled. How, then, shall I begin?

I. WHILE YOU HAVE NOT CHRIST, YOU ARE IN A VERY BAD CONDITION—SHOULD NOT THIS MAKE YOU LONG FOR HIM?

Consider, my dear Hearer, you who are Christless tonight, *what you are and where you are*. You are a sinner—that you know. Without Christ you are an unpardoned sinner, a condemned sinner and, before long you will be a sinner judged, sentenced and cast into Hell! Do you not know that? You are a diseased sinner. Sin is the leprosy which is in you and, without Christ, you are sick without a physician. For you there is no balm in Gilead, no physician there. Your sickness is mortal! It will certainly be your ruin, for you have no Savior. You are a mortal—you cannot doubt it. You will soon die and can you tell what it will be to die without Christ? Have you ever formed an idea of what it will be to pass into the realm of separate spirits with no rod to lean on and no staff to comfort you in the dark valley? Man, you are an *immortal* being! You know that, too! You will not cease to be when you die. You will live again—and what will it be to live again without Christ? It will be to live the life of a condemned spirit, withered by the wrath of God, scathed by the lightning of Divine Justice! Can you think of that without dismay?—

***“Sinner, is your heart at rest?
Is your bosom void of fear?
Are you not by guilt oppressed?
Speaks not conscience in your ear?
Can this world afford you bliss?
Can it chase away your gloom?
Flattering, false, and vain it is—
Tremble at the worldling’s doom!”***

Why, even now, I think I can see you. You are like the ship upon the lake of Gennesaret, tempest-tossed. The winds howl about her, every timber creaks, the sail is torn to pieces and the mast is going by the board! And for you there is no Savior to come and walk the billows, and to say, “It is I, be not afraid!” At the helm of your ship there sleeps no Savior who can arise and say to the waves, “Peace, be still!” You are a ship in a storm, with none to rescue you, seeing that you have no Savior. The devil has scuttled you. There are holes bored through and through your spirit’s hope and confidence—and it will go down, before long, in depths of unutterable woe!

I think I see you again. You are like Lazarus in the grave, and by this time you are foul and noxious, for you have been dead these 30 or 40 years and that death has festered into putrid corruption. Yes, there you are, and you have no Christ to say, “Roll away the stone.” You have no Christ to say, “Lazarus, come forth!” No Savior to bid your friends loosen you and let you go! I think I see you yet again. You have been singing of the dying thief. We often sing of him. And you will die as the thief died, *only*—only there will be no Christ hanging on the Cross from whom you shall hear the words—“This day shall you be with Me in Paradise.”

Unto what shall I liken you and with what shall I compare you? A soul without Christ! Why, it were better for you that you had never been born

if you continue so! You would be better off with the millstone about your neck and cast into the sea, if that would make an end of you! You would be far happier, then, than you now are without Christ, for without Christ you are without God and without hope in the world! You are a sheep lost on the mountains and no Shepherd to find you—a soul wandering in the blackness of darkness, and no lamp to guide your wandering footsteps! And soon you will be a desolate spirit, without a ray of comfort, without a home, shut out in the blackness of darkness forever! Does not that make you long for Christ? It would if I could make you feel what I can only say! I can only deal with your outward ears—my Master must deal with your hearts—and I do pray Him, by His Almighty Spirit, to make you feel so wretched without Christ that you will not dare to sleep tonight until you have sought Him, laid hold upon Him and said to Him, “I will not let You go, except You bless me.”

O you souls out of Christ, I could, with half a moment’s thought, stop and burst into tears and say no more! But I must command myself, for I must speak to you—and I do pray you, by the living God, unless you are beside yourselves, if you have any love to your own souls, fly to Christ! Seek the Lord! Try to lay hold upon Him, for as you now are, your position is perilous in the extreme!—

***“Come, guilty souls, and flee away
Like doves to Jesus’ wounds!
This is the welcome Gospel-Day,
Wherein Free Grace abounds!
God loved the Church and gave His Son
To drink the cup of wrath.
And Jesus says He’ll cast out none
That come to Him by faith.”***

II. We will now change the strain, but not the objective. Remember that ALL THE THINGS IN THE WORLD ARE VAIN WITHOUT CHRIST.

The world’s goods, its substance, its riches, its pleasures, its pomp, its fame—what are all these without Christ? They are a painted pageantry to go to Hell in! They are a mockery to an immortal spirit! They are a mirage of the wilderness, deluding the traveler, but not yielding to his desires one substantial drop of joy! There have been those in this world who have tried it, and they say, “It sounds, it sounds, it sounds, because it is empty and hollow as a drum.” It is—

***“False as the smooth, deceitful sea,
And empty as the whistling wind.”***

There is nothing in it all—

***“Honor’s a puff of noisy breath,
And gain a heap of yellow clay.”***

And what is even power itself, but anxiety and care? Solomon knew the world at its best and his verdict upon her was, “Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” Without Christ, Sinner, you

will find the world to be unsatisfactory. When you have tried it at its best, you will turn from it and say, "I have been deceived! I have eaten the wind and I am not satisfied. I am like one that feasts in a dream, and wakes and, lo—he is hungry!" Without Christ you will not even find this world to be comfortable. Perhaps there are none so unhappy as those who are surrounded with what we think to be the means of happiness. I know this—if I had to find the extreme of wretchedness, I should not go to the dens of poverty, but I should go among men surrounded with the trappings of wealth and find your hearts broken with anguish and spirits wrung with griefs which they could not tell! Oh, yes, the world is a heap of chaff! The only solid treasure is to be found in Christ! But if you neglect Him, you neglect all that is worth having!

Besides, *all this world must soon pass away*. See how it melts! Or, if it melts not from you, you must melt from it. Down goes the ship! She floated gaily but an hour before, but she foundered and she is gone! And now, merchant, what will you do? Your vessel has gone down with all your treasure on board and you are left penniless! Oh, happy are they who lay up their treasure in Christ, for no shipwreck need they fear! But, oh!—

"This world's a dream, an empty show"—

which cannot satisfy an immortal soul!

Further than this, let me remind you, my dear Hearer, that if you have not Christ, nothing else will be of use for you. A profession of religion will only be a sort of respectable pall to throw over the corpse of your dead soul! No, a profession of religion, if you have not Christ in it, will be a swift witness against you to condemn you! What right have you to profess to be a follower of Christ unless Christ is, in you, the hope of Glory? And to have listened to the ministry of the Word will be of no use to you if you do not get Christ. Alas, alas, what can our poor sermons do? Our prayers, our hymns—what are they? Ah, and what will your Baptism be—and what will the Lord's Supper be unless by faith you grasp a Savior? These ordinances, though ordained by God, Himself, are wells without water and clouds without rain unless they get us Christ, who is the sum and substance of them all! It will be of no use to you that you were regular in your private prayers, that you were good to the poor, that you were generous to the Church, that you were constantly in attendance upon the outward means of Grace. I say, as I said before, that all these are but a painted pageantry for your soul to go to Hell in, unless you have Christ! You may as surely go down to the Pit by the religious road as by the irreligious. If you have not Christ, you have not salvation, whatever else you may have—

"Give me Christ, or else I die"—

should be your daily and nightly prayer, for all else will destroy you if you have not the Savior!

And let me tell you, dear Hearer, that your repentance, if it does not lead you to Christ, will need to be repented of! And your faith, if it is not based upon His atoning Sacrifice, is a faith that is not the faith of God's elect! And all your convictions of sin—all the visions that have scared you, all the fears that have haunted you—will only be a prelude to something worse unless you get Christ! There is one door and if you go not through that, climbing up some other way, though it is never so tedious, will not answer your turn. You must go down to Hell after all your efforts, all your repentings, all your believing, unless your soul can say—

***“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness!
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name—
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand!”***

Oh, how this ought to make you long for Christ, when you think that everything else is but a bauble when compared with Him! And think what a state you are in as long as you are destitute of Him!

III. I must not tarry, so let me remind you, my dear Hearer, though you cannot possibly know how anxious I am to speak so that you may feel what I say, that **NOTHING CAN MAKE AMENDS TO YOU FOR LOSING CHRIST.**

I know how it is with some of you. *You say you cannot afford to follow Christ.* Your trade—your wicked trade—you would have to give that up, for it happens to be an ungodly calling. Well now, Friend, let me take you by the button-hole a minute. Which had you better be—a beggar and go to Heaven, or a duke—and go to Hell? Come, now, which had you better do—go to Heaven with an empty pocket or go down to the Pit with a full one? All you who worship Mammon, I know how you will answer, but you who have souls above earth, I hope you will reply, “Nothing in the form of wealth will compensate us for losing our souls.” Men have been known, on their dying beds, to have their money-bags brought to them—and they have put them to their hearts and have said, “This won't do,” and they have taken up another and put it to their palpitating hearts, and said again, “This won't do.” Ah, no, it cannot cure a heartache! What can it do for a soul in eternity? Is it not a painful thing to attend upon some men who die rich in ill-gotten gain? What are they the better for their wealth? They only have it said of them, “He died worth so much.” That is all, but they sleep in the same earth and the same worms devour them! There is more fighting over their graves among the heirs who divide the plunder *and* more joy because they are gone! While oftentimes the poor man has the honest tears of his children shed upon a coffin which they have had to contribute to purchase out of their little savings and the grave, itself, has been prepared by the charity of some who found in their father's

character the only patrimony which he had to bequeath. Oh, may God grant you Grace to perceive that all the riches you can ever get would never make up for losing Christ!

Some lose Christ for the sake of fame. It is not a fashionable thing to be a Christian. To be a Christian after the world's sort, I grant you—is but after the sort of the New Testament, it is not! And many say, “Well, it is not fashionable,” and they bend to the fashion. And many do the same in another way, for young men are laughed out of going to the House of God and young women are decoyed from attending the means of Grace by the laughter, jeers and jokes of their companions. Remember that they can laugh you into Hell, but they can never laugh you out again! And that though their jokes may shut the door, their jokes can never open that door again. Oh, is this all? Will you sell your souls to escape from a fool's laughter? Then, what a fool you must be! What? Are you so thin-skinned that you cannot bear to be questioned, or to be asked whether you are a follower of the Lord Jesus? Ah, Sir, you shall have that thin skin of yours tormented more than enough in the world to come, when *shame*, which you dread so much, shall be your everlasting portion! O Soul, how can you sell Christ for the applause of men? How can you give Him up for the laughter of fools?

Some give Jesus Christ up for the pleasures of the world, but can the giddy dance for a few minutes of this life be worth the torments of the world to come? Oh, weigh, like wise men—as merchants weigh their goods against the gold—I pray you, weigh your souls against the pleasures of this world! Oh, where is the pleasure? Even Tiberius, in his desert island, when he had ransacked the world to find a new joy, could not, if he could give us all the mirth he knew, tell us of anything that would be worth the casting away of the soul! This pearl is too priceless for the world to attempt to purchase! I pray you, be wise enough to feel that nothing can compensate you for this loss! Seek Jesus and may you find Him tonight!

IV. A fourth observation upon which I shall not enlarge, is this—**DEPEND UPON IT, THAT WHATEVER YOU LOSE FOR CHRIST'S SAKE WILL BE A BLESSED LOSS FOR YOU!**

Gregory Nazianzen, a foremost father of the Christian Church, rejoiced that he was well versed in the Athenian philosophy—and why do you think he rejoiced in that? Because he had to give it all up when he became a Christian! And he said, “I thank God that I had a philosophy to throw away.” He counted it no loss, but a gain, to be a loser of such learned lumber when he found a Savior! An old Divine said, “Who would refuse to give up a whole sky full of stars if he could buy a sun with them? And who would refuse to give up all the comforts of this life if he could have Christ at so goodly a price?” That grand old Ignatius, one of the earliest of the Church fathers, said, “Give me burning, give me hang-

ing, give me all the torments of Hell if I may but get my Savior! I would gladly be content to bear them all as a price." And so might we! Did I not tell you of the martyrs sitting and singing in old Bonner's damp coal-hole, and one of them writing, "There are six brave companions with me in this paradise, and we do sit and sing in the dark all day"? Ah, yes, they were no losers! Did not Rutherford say when he declared that he had but one eye and his enemies had put that out—for that one eye was the preaching of the Gospel, an eye to the glory of God—and his enemies had made him silent in Aberdeen, so that he used to weep over his dumb and silent Sabbaths? Yet did he not say, "But how mistaken they are! They thought they sent me to a dungeon, but Christ has been so precious to me that I thought it to be the king's parlor and the very Paradise of God"?

And did not Renwick say that oftentimes, when he had been out among the bogs on the Scotch mountains, hunted over the mosses, with the stars of God looking down upon the little congregation, that they had far more of God's fellowship than bishops had ever had in cathedrals, or than they, themselves, had ever had in their circles when, in brighter days, they had worshipped God in peace? The dragoons of Claverhouse and the uniformity of Charles II were incapable of quenching the joy of our Puritan and Covenanting forefathers! Their piety drew its mirth from deeper springs than kings could stop, or persecution could dry up. The saints of Christ have given Christ their all—and when they have given all, they have felt that they were the richer for their poverty and the happier for their sorrows! And when they have been in solitude for Christ, they have felt that they have had good company, for He has been with them to be their strength and their joy. You may have Christ at whatever price you will, but you will make a good bargain of it! I charge you, my dear Hearer, if it should come to this—that if you should have to sell your house and your home, if the wife of your bosom should become your enemy, if your children should refuse to know their own father or to look him in the face, if you should be banished from your country, if there should be a halter for your neck, and no grave for your body—you would make a good bargain in taking up my Lord and Master, for oh, He will claim you in the day when men disown you—and in the day when He comes, there shall be none so bright as those who have suffered for Him—

***"And they who, with their Leader,
Have conquered in the fight,
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of white!"***

Yes, if you suffer with Him, you shall also be glorified together! God grant you Grace to feel this to be true and to make any sacrifice as long as you can but "win Christ, and be found in Him."

V. IF EVER YOU GET CHRIST, YOU WILL FIND HIM ALL GAIN AND NO LOSS!

The Apostle says, "That I may *win Christ*." It is all winning and no losing. Why, *if you get Christ, you will get life!* Does He not give life and immortality to those that have Him? Yes, for He says, "he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." *If you get Christ, you will get light.* He said, "I am the light of the world: he that follows Me shall not walk in darkness." The Sun of Righteousness shall arise upon you! *Get Christ and you shall get health*—your soul shall leave her sicknesses with Him who bore her sickness in the days of His flesh. *Get Christ and you shall get riches*, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." You may be poor, perhaps, outwardly, but you shall be rich, yourselves, and be able to make many others rich—rich in faith, giving glory to God! Get Christ and prosperity shall not hurt you—your feet shall be like hinds' feet, to stand upon your high places. Get Christ and He will turn your bitter Marahs into sweet Elims. He is the Tree which, when put into the brackish water, makes it sweet to the taste. Affliction is no longer affliction when Christ is with us! Then the furnace glows, not with heat, alone, but with a golden Radiance, a present Glory when Christ treads the burning coals!

Get Christ, Beloved, and you have got all your soul can wish for. Now may you stretch your capacious powers to the utmost and, with a holy covetousness and a sacred greediness, desire all you can! You may open your mouth wide, for Christ will fill it. You may enlarge your desires, but the infinite riches of Christ will satisfy them at their largest and widest stretch. Get Christ and you have Heaven on earth, and shall have Heaven forever! Get Christ, and angels shall be your servitors! The wheels of Providence shall grind for your good, the chariot of God, which brings on the events prophesied in apocalyptic vision, shall bring only joy and peace to you—and you shall hear it said, both in time and in eternity—

"Tis with the righteous well."

Get Christ and you have nothing to fear, and everything to hope for. Get Christ and sin is buried in the Red Sea of Jesus' blood, while you are arrayed in the spotless righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ—Jehovah Tsidkenu, Himself! Get Christ and—what more shall I say? Then may you swim in seas of bliss! Then may you walk Elysian fields of holy joy even here on earth! Get Christ and you need not envy the angels! Get Christ and you may count yourselves to be raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places with Him!

Surely all this ought to make the sinner's mouth water to get Christ! It ought to make his heart ache till he gets Christ! It ought to set his soul a-hungering and a-thirsting till he gets Jesus! It ought to make him resolve that he will not be kept back till at last he gets a firm hold upon the Crucified!

VI. My last remark shall be this—WE SHALL UNDERSTAND ALL THIS A GREAT DEAL BETTER VERY SOON.

There is a curtain, but it is lifting, it is lifting, it is lifting—and when it is lifted, what do I see? The spirit world! 'Tis death that lifts the curtain and when it is lifted, these present things will vanish, for they are but shadows. The world of eternity and reality will then be seen. I would summon a jury of the spirits that have passed that curtain and they would not be long debating about the question whether Christ is worth the winning! I care not where you select them from—whether from among the condemned in Hell, or from among the beatified in Heaven. Let them sit, let *even those who are in Hell* sit and judge upon the matter. And if they could for once speak honestly, they would tell you that it is a dreadful thing to despise Christ, now that they have come to see things in a true light—now that they are lost forever, forever, forever—now that they are crushed with knowledge and feeling which have come too late to be profitable—now they wish that they had listened to the ministrations of the Truth of God, to the proclamations of the Gospel! If they could have a sane mind back again, they would shriek, “Oh, for one more Sabbath! Oh, to listen once more to an honest preacher, though his words might be clumsy and uncouth! Oh, to hear a voice once more say, ‘Come to Jesus while the Day of Mercy lasts!’ Oh, to be once more pressed to come to the marriage feast—once more bid to look to Jesus and to live!” I tell you Sirs, some of you who make so light of Sundays and think preaching is but a pastime, so that you come here to hear us as you would go to hear some fiddler on a weeknight—I tell you, Sirs, the lost in Hell reckon these things at a very different rate! And so will you before long, when another preacher, with skeleton fingers, shall talk to you upon your deathbed. Ah, then you will see that we were in earnest and you were the players—then you will comprehend that what we said to you demanded earnest, immediate attention, though, alas, you would not give it—and so played false to your own soul, committed spiritual suicide and went your way like a bullock to the slaughter—to be the murderers of your own spirits!

But suppose I summoned a jury of bright spirits from Heaven? Ah, they would not need to consider, but I am sure they would unanimously say to you, if they might, “Seek you the Lord while He may be found! Seek the Lord and His strength. Seek the Lord and His face always—put your trust in Jesus, for He is sweet beyond all sweetness.” May you do this and may you sing—

***“Oh, spread Your savor on my frame,
No sweetness is so sweet!
Till I get up to sing Your name
Where all Your singers meet.”***

Pray that prayer. Ask Him to save you and may the Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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

Verse 1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* Let this be the end of everything, before you get to the end of it. And when you do get to the end of it, “rejoice in the Lord.” It is incumbent upon us, as Christians, to rise out of our despondencies. Joy should be the normal state of the Christian. What a happy religion is ours in which it is a duty to be happy! “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.”

1. *To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe.* To go over the same old Truths again and again, to proclaim the same precepts and teach the same Doctrines is not grievous to us, and it is safe for you to hear these things again and again. If they have not made their due impression upon you, already, perhaps they will do so when they are repeated in your hearing. At any rate, it is safe for you to hear or read over and over again the old, old story with which you are already familiar.

2. *Beware of dogs.* Contentious persons—persons of coarse and corrupt habits. “Beware of dogs.”

2. *Beware of evil workers.* However prettily they may talk, if they are workers of evil, beware of them. “By their fruits you shall know them.” Their speech may be clever, but if their lips are unclean, beware of them.

2. *Beware of the concision.* Beware of the cutters off, those who excommunicate and cut off others because they do not happen to agree with them in certain rites and ceremonies.

3. *For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* This is the real circumcision which is of the spirit and not of the flesh. The men who have abandoned all confidence in themselves. The men who have come to rely upon Christ, alone. The men who “rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,” those who care not for outward rites and ceremonies, but who worship God in the spirit—these are the true circumcision!

4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.* “If any man might trust in outward religion, I might,” said Paul, yet he was the very man who would not do so, and who warned others against doing it!

4-6. *If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.* So that if anybody could have boasted of what he was by birth, what he was by profession, what he was by the display of religious zeal—Paul could have boasted as boldly as anyone could, for in all those

respects he was second to nobody! You know that it is a very easy thing, or it ought to be a very easy thing, for some people to be humble, for they have nothing to be proud of—but here is a man who had much of which he might have been proud! According to the letter of the Law, he was a diamond of the first water, yet see what a different verdict he gives after Divine Grace has opened his eyes!

7-9. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes, indeed, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* [See Sermon #1357, Volume 23—A BUSINESS-LIKE ACCOUNT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Everything else must go in order to secure that. Paul thinks that to be righteous by faith is infinitely better than all the righteousness that can come by works and ceremonies. He therefore utterly despises that which he once thought to be more precious than gold! And he takes possession of, as his greatest treasure, that which he once trampled in the mire. Now his great desire is—

10-12. *That I may know Him, and the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made comfortable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.* You, perhaps, suppose that Paul's present satisfaction arises out of a consciousness of personal perfection, but it is not so. He has not won the race yet—his joy arises from the fact that he is on the right course and that he is running in the right direction! “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.”

12. *But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* [See Sermon #2315, Volume 39—PAUL APPREHENDED AND APPREHENDING—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] “I want to lay hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of me. He has grasped me in order to make me perfect and I want to grasp that perfection. He has laid hold of me to rid me of my sin and I want to lay hold of a clean riddance of sin, apprehending that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

13-15. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are mature, be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.* If you are a true Believer in Jesus, be of this mind—always to be pressing forward to something higher and better.

If God has given you one form of maturity, press onward to a much higher form. Seek continually to rise. The eagle's motto is, "Higher, Higher!" Let it be your motto, too. Many of God's people do not believe that He can make them what He means to make them, or, at least, they act as if they did not believe that He can. They apparently are not conscious of what their privileges really are and are living far below where they might live in the happy enjoyment of peace and power and usefulness! May God help us, by His gracious Spirit, to know all of Christ that we can and to be as much like Christ as we can.

16-18. *Nevertheless, to the degree we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example. (For many walk)*—I suppose Paul is referring to many even in the Church of his day. "For many walk"—

18. *Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.* [See Sermons #102, Volume 2—FALSE PROFESSORS SOLEMNLY WARNED and #2553, Volume 44—THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] The worst enemies that the Cross of Christ has are the enemies inside the professing Church of Christ!

19. *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.* They call themselves spiritual, yet they live for earthly things, indulging their appetites, living for self, yet pretending to be Christians, whereas selfishness is the very reverse of Christianity.

20, 21. *For our conversation is in Heaven; from where also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.* [See Sermon #973, Volume 17—THE POWER OF CHRIST ILLUSTRATED BY THE RESURRECTION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

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

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

NO. 2080

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BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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***“That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.”
Philippians 3:10.***

PAUL, in the verses before the text, had deliberately laid aside his own personal righteousness. “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law.” It is insinuated in these days that a belief in the righteousness of faith will lead men to care little for good works—that it will act as a sedative to their zeal, and therefore they will exhibit no ardor for holiness. The very reverse is seen in the case of the Apostle and in the case of all who cast aside the righteousness of the Law—that they may be clothed with that righteousness “which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

Paul made a list of his advantages as to confidence in the flesh and they were very great. But he turned his back upon them all for Christ's sake. Accepting Christ to be everything to him, did he, therefore, sit down in self-content and imagine that personal character was nothing? By no means! A noble ambition fired his soul—he longed to know Christ—the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. If by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead, he became a holy walker and a heavenly runner—because of what he saw in Christ Jesus.

Be sure of this—the less you value your own righteousness—the more will you seek after true holiness. The less you think of your own beauty, the more ardently will you long to become like the Lord Jesus. Those who dream of being saved by their own good works are usually those who have no good works worth mentioning. Those who sincerely lay aside all hope of salvation by their own merits are fruitful in every virtue to the praise of God. Nor is this a strange thing. For the less a man thinks of himself, the more he will think of Christ and the more will he aim at being like He is. The less esteem he has of his own past good works, the more earnest will he be to show his gratitude for being saved by Divine Grace through the righteousness of Christ. Faith works by love, purifies the soul and sets the heart running after the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. Therefore it is a purifying and active principle, and by no means the inert thing which some suppose it to be.

What, then, was the great object of the Apostle's ardor? It was, “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.” Paul already knew the Lord Jesus by faith. He knew so much of Him as to be able to teach oth-

ers. He had looked to Jesus and known the power of His death. But he now desired that the vision of his faith might become still better known by *experience*. You may know a man and have an idea that he is powerful. But to know him *and his power over you*, is a stage further. You may have read of a man so as to be familiar with his history and his character and yet you may have no knowledge of him and of his personal influence over yourself.

Paul desired intimate acquaintance with the Lord Jesus—personal communion with the Lord to such a degree that he should feel His power at every point and know the effect of all that He had worked out in His life, death and resurrection. He knew that Jesus died and he aspired to rehearse the history in his own soul's story—he would be dead with Him to the world. He knew that Jesus was buried and he would gladly be “buried with Him in Baptism unto death.” He knew that Jesus rose and his longing was to rise with Him in newness of life. Yes, he even remembered that his Lord had ascended up on high and he rejoiced to say, “He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

His great desire was to have reproduced in himself the life of Jesus so as to know all about Him by being made like He is. The best Life of Christ is not by Canon Farrar, or Dr. Geikie—it is written in the experience of the saint by the Holy Spirit.

I want you to observe, at the very outset, that all Paul desired to know was always in connection with our Lord, Himself. He says, “That I may know HIM and the power of His resurrection.” Jesus first, and then the power of His resurrection. Beware of studying doctrine, precept, or experiences apart from the Lord Jesus, who is the soul of all. Doctrine without Christ will be nothing better than His empty tomb. Doctrine with Christ is a glorious high throne—with the King sitting on it. Precepts without Christ are impossible commands. But precepts from the lips of Jesus have a quickening effect upon the heart. Without Christ you can do nothing. But abiding in Him you bring forth much fruit.

Always let your preaching and your hearing look towards the personal Savior. This makes all the difference in preaching. Ministers may preach sound doctrine by itself and be utterly without unction. But those who preach it in connection with the Person of the blessed Lord have an anointing which nothing else can give. Christ Himself, by the Holy Spirit, is the savor of a true ministry.

This morning we will confine our thoughts to one theme and unite with the Apostle in a strong desire to know our Lord in connection with the power of His resurrection. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus was, in itself, a marvelous display of power. To raise the dead body of our Lord from the tomb was as great a work as the *creation*. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each worked this greatest miracle. I need not stay to quote the texts in which the resurrection of our Lord is ascribed to the Father—who brought again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep.

Nor need I mention Scriptures in which the Lord is said to have been quickened by the Holy Spirit. Nor those instances in which that great

work is ascribed to the Lord Jesus, Himself. But assuredly the Sacred Writings represent the Divine Trinity in Unity as gloriously co-operating in the raising again from the dead the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was, however, a especial instance of our Lord's own power. He said, "Destroy this Temple and in three days *I* will raise it up." He also said, concerning His life, "I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again."

I do not know whether I can convey my own thought to you. What strikes me very forcibly is this—no mere man going to his grave could say, "I have power to take my life again." The departure of life leaves the man necessarily *powerless*—he cannot restore himself to life. Behold the sacred Body of Jesus embalmed in spices and wrapped about with linen. It is laid within the sealed and guarded tomb—how can it come back to life? Yet Jesus said, "I have power to take My life again." And He proved it. Strange power—that spirit of His which had traveled through the under lands and upwards to the eternal Glory—had power to return and to re-enter that holy Thing which had been born of the virgin and to revivify that flesh which could not see corruption.

Behold the dead and buried One makes Himself alive again! Herein is a marvelous thing. He was master over death, even when death seemed to have mastered Him—He entered the grave as a captive but left it as a conqueror. He was compassed by the bonds of death but He could not be held by them. Even in His burial garments He came to life—from those wrappings He unbound Himself—from the sealed tomb He stepped into liberty. If, in the extremity of His weakness He had the power to rise out of the sepulcher and come forth in newness of life, what can He not accomplish now?

I do not think, however, that Paul is here thinking so much of the power displayed in the resurrection as of the power which comes out of it—which may most properly be called, "the power of His resurrection." This the Apostle desired to apprehend and to know. This is a very wide subject and I cannot encompass the whole region. But many things may be said under four heads. The power of our Lord's resurrection is an evidencing power, a justifying power, a life-giving power and a consoling power.

I. First, the power of our Lord's resurrection is AN EVIDENCING POWER. Here I shall liken it to a seal which is set to a document to prove its authenticity. Our Lord's resurrection from the dead was a proof that He was the Messiah. That He had come upon the Father's business. That He was the Son of God, and that the Covenant which Jehovah had made with Him was henceforth ratified and established. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Thus said Paul at Antioch—"The promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He has raised up Jesus again. As it is also written in the second Psalm, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You."

Nobody witnessing our Lord's resurrection could doubt His Divine Character and that His mission upon earth was from the eternal God.

Well did Peter and John declare that it was the Prince of Life that God had raised from the dead. Our Lord had given this for a sign unto the mocking Pharisees—that as Jonah lay in the deep till the third day and then came forth—even so would He, Himself, lie in the heart of the earth till the third day and then arise from the dead. His rising proved that He was sent of God and that the power of God was with Him.

Our Lord had entered into a Covenant with the Father before all worlds, wherein He had, on His part, engaged to finish redemption and make atonement for sin. That He had done this was affirmed by His rising again from the dead—the *resurrection* was the attestation of the Father to the fulfillment on the part of the Second Adam of His portion in the Everlasting Covenant. His blood is the blood of the Everlasting Covenant and His resurrection is the seal of it. “Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father” as the witness of the Eternal God to the glory of the Son.

So much is the resurrection the proof of our Lord’s mission that it falls to the ground without it. If our Lord Jesus had not risen from the dead, our faith in Him would have lacked the cornerstone of the foundation on which it rests. Paul writes most positively—“If Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain.” He declares that the Apostles would have been found false witnesses of God, “Because,” he says, “we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.” “If Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.” The resurrection of Jesus is the keystone of the arch of our holy faith. If you take the resurrection away, the whole structure lies in ruins.

The death of Christ, albeit that it is the ground of our confidence for the pardon of sin, would not have furnished such a foundation had He not risen from the dead. Were He still dead, His death would have been like the death of any other person—and would have given us no assurance of acceptance. His life, with all the beauty of its holiness, would have been simply a perfect example of conduct but it could not have become our righteousness if His burial in the tomb of Joseph had been the end of all. It was essential for the confirmation of His life-teaching and His death-suffering, that He should be raised from the dead. If he had not risen but were still among the dead, you might as well tell us that we preach to you a cunningly devised fable.

See, then, the power of His resurrection—it proves without a doubt the faith once delivered to the saints. Supported by infallible proofs it becomes itself the infallible proof of the authority, power and glory of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God.

I beg you further to notice that this proof had such power about it in the minds of the Apostles that they preached with singular boldness. These chosen witnesses had seen the Lord after His resurrection—one of them had put his finger into the print of the nails and others had eaten and drunk with Him. They were sure that they were not deceived. They knew that He was dead, for they had been present at His burial—they knew that He lived again, for they had heard Him speak and had seen Him eat a piece of a broiled fish and honeycomb. The fact was as clear to

them as it was wonderful. Peter and the rest of them, without hesitation, declared, "this Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

They were sure that they saw the man who died on Calvary alive again and they could not but testify what they had heard and seen. The enemies of the faith wondered at the boldness with which these witnesses spoke. Theirs was the accent of conviction—for they testified what they knew of as fact. They had no suspicion lurking in the background. They were sure that Jesus had risen from the dead and this unquestionable certainty made them confident that He was, indeed, the Messiah and the Savior of men. The power of this fact upon those who believe it is great. But upon those who saw it as eyewitnesses it must have been inconceivably mighty!

I wonder not that they defied contradiction, persecution and even death. How could they disbelieve that of which they were so certain? How could they withhold their witness to a fact which was so important to the destiny of their fellow men? In the Apostles and the first disciples we have a cloud of witnesses to a fact more firmly attested than any other recorded in history—and that fact is the witness to the truth of our religion. Honest witnesses, in more than sufficient number, declare that Jesus Christ who died on Calvary and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, did rise again from the dead. In the mouth of many witnesses the fact is established—and this fact established proves other blessed facts.

If the cloud of witnesses might not seem sufficient in itself, I see that cloud tinged with crimson. Reddened as by the setting sun, the cloud of witnesses in life becomes a cloud of martyrs in death. The disciples were put to cruel deaths asserting still the fact that Jesus had risen from the grave. They and their immediate followers, never doubting, "counted not their lives dear to them," that they might witness to this Truth of God. They suffered the loss of all things—were banished and were accounted the offscouring of all things—but they could not, and would not, contradict their faith.

They were nailed to crosses and bound to stakes to be burned. But the enthusiasm of their conviction was never shaken. Behold an array of martyrs reaching on through the centuries! Behold how they are all sure of the Gospel, because sure of their Lord's endless life! Is not this a grand evidence of "the power of His resurrection"? The Book of Martyrs is a record of that power. The resurrection of Christ casts a sidelight upon the Gospel by proving its reality and literalness. There is a tendency in this generation to spirit away the Truth and in so doing lose both the Truth and its Spirit.

In these evil days fact is turned into myth and truth into opinion. Our Lord's resurrection is a literal fact—when He rose from the dead He was no specter, ghost, or apparition. But as He was a real Man who died the cruel death of the Cross, so He was a real Man who rose again from the dead, bearing in His body the marks of the crucifixion. His appearance to His familiar companions was to them no dream of the night—no fevered imagination of enthusiastic minds. Jesus Christ took pains to make them sure of His real Presence and that He was really among them in His proper Person—

***“A Man there was, a real Man,
Who once on Calvary died,
That same blest Man arose from death—
The mark is in His side!”***

There was as much reality about the rising of our Lord as about His death and burial. There is no fiction here. This literal fact gives reality to all that comes from Him and by Him. Justification is no mere easing of the conscience—it is a real arraying of the soul in righteousness. Adoption into the family of God is no fancy, but brings with it true and proper sonship. The blessings of the Gospel are substantial facts and not mere theological opinions. As the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead was a plain visible matter of fact—so are the pardon of sin and the salvation of the soul matters of actual experience and not the creatures of religious imagination.

Brethren, such is the evidencing power of the resurrection of Christ, that when every other argument fails your faith, you may find safe anchorage in this assured fact. The currents of doubt may bear you towards the rocks of mistrust. But when your anchor finds no other hold, it may grip the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. This must be true. The witnesses are too many to have been deceived. And their patient deaths on account of their belief proved that they were not only honest men but good men who valued the Truth of God more than life. We know that Jesus rose from the dead—whatever else we are forced to question, we have no question on that score.

We may be tossed about upon the sea in reference to other statements, but we step to shore again and find terra firma in this unquestionable, firmly-established Truth—“The Lord is risen, indeed.” Oh, that any of you who are drifting may be brought to a resting place by this fact! If you doubt the possibility of your own pardon, this may aid you to believe—for Jesus lives. I read the other day of one who had greatly backslidden and grievously dishonored his Lord. But he heard a sermon upon the resurrection of Christ from the dead and it was life to him. Though he had known and believed that Truth before, yet he had never realized it vividly. After service he said to the minister, “Is it so, that our Lord Jesus has really risen from the dead and is yet alive? Then He can save me.”

By His Grace! A living Christ can say assuredly to you, “Your sins are forgiven you.” He is able now to breathe into you eternal life. The Lord is risen indeed—in this see the evidence of His power to save to the uttermost. From this first solid stone of the resurrection you may go, step by step, over the streams of doubt till you land on the other side fully assured of your salvation in Christ Jesus.

Thus, you see, there is an evidencing power in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that you may feel it now. You cannot have too much holy confidence. You cannot be too sure. He that died for you is alive and is making intercession for sinners. Believe that firmly and realize it vividly. Then you will be filled with rest of heart and will be bold to testify in the name of your Lord. The timid by nature will become lion-like in witnessing when the resurrection has borne to them overwhelming evidence of their Redeemer’s mission and power.

II. We will dwell next UPON THE JUSTIFYING POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION. Under the first head I compared the resurrection to a seal. Under this second head I must liken it to a note of acquittal, or a receipt. Our Lord's rising from the dead was a discharge in full from the High Court of Justice and from all those liabilities which He had undertaken on our behalf.

Observe, first, that our Lord must have fully paid the penalty due to sin. He was discharged because He had satisfied the claim of justice. All that the Law could possibly demand was the fulfillment of the sentence, "The soul that sins, it shall die." There is no getting away from that doom—life must be taken for sin committed. Christ Jesus is our Substitute and Sacrifice. He came into the world to vindicate the Law and He has achieved it by the offering of Himself. He has been dead and buried and He has now risen from the dead because He has endured death to the fullest and there remains no more to be done. Brothers and Sisters, consider this and let your hearts be filled with joy—the penalty which has come upon you through breaches of the Law is paid.

Yonder is the Receipt. Behold the Person of your risen Lord! He was your Hostage till the Law had been honored and Divine authority had been vindicated—that being done, an angel was sent from the Throne to roll back the stone and set the Hostage free. All who are in Him—and all are in Him who believe in Him—are set free by His being set free from the prison of the sepulcher—

***"He bore on the tree the ransom for me,
And now both the sinner and Surety are free"***

Our Lord has blotted out the record which was against us and that in a most righteous way. Through the work of Jesus, God is just and the Justifier of him that believes. Jesus *died* for our sins but *rose again* for our justification. As the rising of the sun removes the darkness, so the rising of Christ has removed our sin. The power of the resurrection of Christ is seen in the justifying of every Believer. For the justification of the Representative is the virtual justification of all whom He represents.

When our Lord rose from the dead it was certified that the righteousness, which He came to work out, was finished. For what remained to be done? All was accomplished, and therefore He went up unto His Father's side. Is He toiling there to finish a half-accomplished enterprise? No, "This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God." Our righteousness is a finished one, for Jesus quit the place of humiliation and arose to His reward. He cried upon the Cross, "It is finished!"—and His Word is true. The Father endorsed His claim by raising Him from the dead. Put on, therefore, O you faithful, this matchless robe of perfect righteousness! It is more than royal—it is Divine.

It is for you that this best robe is provided. Wear it and be glad. Remember that in Christ Jesus you are justified from all things. You are, in the sight of God, as righteous as if *you* had kept the Law. For your Covenant Head kept it. You are as justified as if you had been obedient unto death—for Jesus Christ obeyed the Law on your behalf. You are this day justified by Christ who is "the end of the Law for righteousness to every-

one that believes.” Because He is delivered from the tomb, we are delivered from judgment and are sent forth as justified persons. “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”

Oh, that a deep peace, profound as the serenity of God, may fall upon all our hearts as we see Jesus risen from the dead! His resurrection did not only prove our pardon and our justification but it proved our full acceptance. “He has made us accepted in the Beloved.” Christ is never separated from His people, and therefore, wherever He is they are in Him. He is the Head. And as the Head, such are the members. I will suppose that a dead body lies before us. See, the head comes to life. It opens its eyes. It lifts itself. It rises from the ground. It moves to the table. I need not tell you that the arms, the feet and the whole body must go with the head. It cannot be that there shall be a risen head and yet the members of the body shall still be dead!

When God accepted Christ, my Head, He accepted *me*. When He glorified my Head, He made me a partaker of that glory through my Representative. The infinite delight of the Father in His Only-begotten is an infinite delight in all the members of His mystical body. I pray that you may feel the power of His resurrection in this respect and become flooded with delight by the conviction that you are accepted, beloved, and delighted in by the Lord God. The resurrection will make your heart dance for joy if you fully see the pardon, justification and acceptance which it guarantees you. Oh that the Holy Spirit may now take of the things of Christ’s resurrection and apply them to us with justifying power!

III. Thirdly, let us now notice THE LIFE-GIVING POWER OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

This will be seen if we perceive that our Lord has life in Himself. I showed you this earlier—in the fact that He raised Himself from the dead. He took up the life which He laid down. *He only* has immortality—essential and underived. Remember how He said, “I am the resurrection and the life”? Do not say, “I believe in Christ and desire life.” You have it. Christ and life are not two things. He says, “I am the resurrection and the life.” If you have Jesus Christ, you have the resurrection. Oh, that you might now realize what power lies in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life! All the power there is in Christ is there for His people.

“It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell,” and “of His fullness have all we received.” Christ has a life in Himself and He makes that life flow into every part of His mystical body according to His own word, “Because I live, you shall live also.” Triumph, therefore, that you possess as a Believer this day, that same life which is inherent in the Person of your glorious Covenant Head.

Moreover, our Lord has power to quicken whom He will. If the Lord Jesus Christ will, this morning, speak to the most cold heart in this assembly, it will glow with heavenly life. If the salvation of souls depended upon the *preacher*, nobody would be saved. But when the preacher’s Master comes with him—however feeble his utterance—the life flashes forth and the dead are raised. See how the dry bones come together! Behold how, at the coming of the Divine Wind they stand upon their feet an exceeding

great army! Our risen Redeemer is the Lord and Giver of life. What joy to Christian workers is found in the life-giving power of the resurrection! The warrant of Jesus will run through the domain of death and set dead Lazarus free. Where is he this morning? Lord, call him!

This life, whenever it is imparted, is *new* life. In reading the four Evangelists have you ever noticed the difference between Jesus after resurrection and before? A French Divine has written a book entitled "The Life of Jesus Christ in Glory." When I bought it, I hardly knew what the subject might be. But I soon perceived that it was the life of Jesus on earth after He was risen from the dead. That was, indeed, a glorious life. He feels no more suffering, weakness, weariness, reproach, or poverty—He is no more mocked or opposed by men. He is in the world but He scarcely seems to touch it and it does not at all touch Him.

He was of another world and only a temporary sojourner on this globe to which He evidently did not belong. When we believe in Jesus we receive a *new life* and rise to a higher state. The spiritual life owes nothing to the natural life—it is from another source and goes in another direction. The old life bears the image of the first and earthy Adam. The second life bears the image of the second and heavenly Adam. The old life remains, but becomes to us a kind of death—the new life which God gives is the true life, which is part of the new creation and links us to the heavenly and Divine. To this, I say, the old life is greatly opposed. But that evil life, by God's Grace, does not get the upper hand.

Wonderful is the change worked by the new birth! Faculties that were in you before are purged and elevated. But at the same time, new spiritual faculties are conferred and a new heart and a right spirit are put within you. Wonder at this—that the risen Christ is able to give us an entirely new life! May you know, in this respect, the power of His resurrection! May you know the peace, the repose, the power of your risen Lord! May you, like He, be a stranger here, soon expecting to depart unto the Father! Before His death our Lord experienced stress because His work was unaccomplished—after His death He was at ease—because His work was done.

Brethren, we may enter into His rest, for we are complete in Him! We are working for our Lord as He was for His Father during the forty days. But yet the righteousness in which we are accepted is finished and therefore we find rest in Him.

Once more—the resurrection of Christ is operating at this present time with a quickening power on all who hear the Word aright. The sun is, to the vegetable world, a great source of growth. In this month of April he goes forth with life in his beams and we see the result. The buds are bursting, the trees are putting on their summer dress, the flowers are smiling and even the seeds which we buried in the earth are beginning to feel the vivifying warmth. They see not the lord of day but they feel his smile. Over what an enormous territory is the returning sun continually operating! How potent are his forces when he crosses the line and lengthens the day!

Such is the risen Christ. In the grave He was like the sun in His winter solstice but He crossed the line in His resurrection. He has brought us all

the hopes of Spring and is bringing us the joys of Summer. He is quickening many at this hour and will yet quicken myriads. This is the power with which the missionary goes forth to sow. This is the power in which the preacher at home continues to scatter the seed. The risen Christ is the great Producer of harvests. By the power of His resurrection men are raised from their death in sin to eternal life.

I said eternal life, for wherever Jesus gives life, it is everlasting life. "Christ being risen from the dead, dies no more. Death has no more dominion over Him." And as we have been raised in the likeness of His resurrection, so are we raised into a life over which death has no more dominion. We shall not die again but the water which Jesus gives us shall be in us a well of water springing up into *everlasting life*.

I wish I could venture further to unveil this secret force and still more fully reveal to you the power of our Lord's resurrection. It is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the energy upon which you must depend when teaching or preaching. It must all be "according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." I want you to feel that power today. I would have you feel eternal life throbbing in your bosoms, filling you with glory and immortality!

Are you feeling cast down? Are your surroundings like those of a morgue? When you return will you seem to go home to endure the rottenness and corruption of profanity and lewdness? Your remedy will lie in eternal life flooding you with its torrents and bearing you above these evil influences. May you not only have life but have it more abundantly and so be vigorous enough to throw off the baneful influences of this evil world!

IV. The last point is THE CONSOLING POWER OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

This consoling power should be felt as to all departed saints. We are often summoned to the house of mourning in this Church. We seldom pass a week without one or two deaths of beloved ones. Here is our comfort—Jesus says, "Your dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise."

***"As the Lord our Savior rose
So all His followers must."***

He is the first fruits from among the dead. The cemeteries are crowded, precious dust is closely heaped together. But as surely as Jesus rose from the tomb of Joseph all those who are in Him shall rise also. Though bodies may be consumed in the fire, or ground to powder, or sucked up by plants and fed upon by animals. Though they are made to pass through ten thousand changeful processes—yet there are no difficulties where there is a God. He that gave us bodies when we had none can restore those bodies when they are pulverized and scattered to the four winds. We sorrow not as those that are without hope. We know where the souls of the godly ones are—they are "forever with the Lord." We know where their bodies *will be* when the clarion blast shall wake the dead and the sepulcher shall give up its spoils. Sweet is the consolation which comes to us from the empty tomb of Jesus. "God has both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us by His own power."

Here, too, is comfort in our inward deaths. In order that we should know the resurrection of Christ we must be made conformable unto His death. Have we not to die many deaths? Have you ever felt the sentence of death in yourself that you might not trust in yourself? Have you not seen all your fancied beauty decay and all your strength wither “like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown”? Have not all your carnal hopes perished and all your resolves turned to dust? If any of you are undergoing that process today, I hope you will go through with it till the sword of the Spirit has slain you.

You must die before you can be raised from the dead. If you are undergoing the process of crucifixion with Christ—which means a painful, lingering death within—remember that this is the needful way to resurrection. How can you know your Lord’s resurrection except by knowing His death? You must be buried with Him to rise with Him. Is not this sweet consolation for a bitter experience?

I think there is here great consolation for those of us who mourn because the cause of Christ seems to be in an evil case. I may say to the enemy, “This is your hour and the power of darkness.” Alas, I cry with the holy woman, “They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him.” In many a pulpit the precious blood no longer speaks. They have taken the heart out of the doctrine of propitiation and left us nothing but the name of it. Their false philosophy has overlaid the Gospel and crushed out its life, so far as they are concerned. They boast that we are powerless—our protest is despised, error shows her brazen forehead and seizes the strongholds of truth.

Yet we despair not—no, we do not even fear. If the cause of Christ were dead and buried—and the wise men had fixed the stone and set their seal and appointed their guards—regardless, at the appointed hour, the Lord’s Truth would rise again. I am not uneasy about ultimate issues. It is the mischief of the time being that grieves me. But the Lord will yet avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him. Jesus must live if they kill Him. He must rise if they bury Him—herein lies our consolation. This Truth affords choice consolation to persecuted saints.

In Paul’s day to be a Christian was a costly matter. Imprisonment was the lightest of their trials—stripes and tortures of every kind were their portion. “Christians to the lions!” was the cry heard in the amphitheatre. And nothing pleased the people better unless it was to see saints of God smeared with pitch from head to foot and set on fire. Did they not call themselves the lights of the world? Such were the brutal pleasantries of the Romans. Here was the backbone of saintly comfort—they would rise again and share in the glory of their Lord forever! Though they might find a living grave between a lion’s jaws, they would not be destroyed—even the body would live again—for Jesus lived again—even the Crucified One in whom they trusted.

My Brethren, my text is like a honeycomb dripping with honey. It has in it comfort for the ages to come. There will be a living issue for these dead times. Do you see that train steaming along the iron way? See, it plunges into a cavern in yonder hill! You have now lost sight of it. Has it

perished? As on an angel's wing you fly to the top of the hill and you look down on the other side. There it comes steaming forth again from the tunnel, bearing its living freight to its destination. So, whenever you see the Church of God apparently plunging into a cavern of disaster or a grave of defeat, think not that the spirit of the age has swallowed it up!

Have faith in God! His Truth will be uppermost yet—

***“The might with the right,
And the right with the might shall be—
And, come what there may
To stand in the way,
That day the world shall see.”***

The opposition of men might have proved a dark den in which the cause of God should have been hopelessly buried. But in the resurrection of our Lord we see a cavern turned into a tunnel and a way pierced through death itself. “Who are you, O great mountain?” The Alps are pierced—God's way is made clear. He triumphs over all difficulties. “The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together—for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.”

That is my close. I desire that you should feel resurrection power. We have many technical Christians who know the *phrases* of godliness but know not the *power* of godliness. We have ritualistic Christians who treasure the outward but know not the power. We have many moral religionists, but they also know not the power. We are pestered with conventional, regulation Christians. Oh, yes, no doubt we are Christians. But we are not enthusiasts, fanatics, nor even as this bigot. Such men have a name to live and are dead. They have a form of godliness but deny the power of it.

I beseech you, my Hearers, be not content with a Truth of God till you feel the force of it. Do not praise the spiritual food set before you, but eat of it till you know its power to nourish. Do not even talk of Jesus till you know His power to save. God grant that you may know the powers of the world to come, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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DO YOU KNOW HIM?

NO. 552

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 31, 1864,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“That I may know Him.”
Philippians 3:10.*

THE object of the Apostle's life—that for which he sacrificed everything—country, kindred, honor, comfort, liberty and life itself, was that he might know Christ. Observe that this is not Paul's prayer as an unconverted man—that he may know Christ and so be saved—for it follows upon the previous supplication that he might win Christ and be found in Him. This is the desire of one who has been saved, who enjoys the full conviction that his sins are pardoned and that he is in Christ. It is only the regenerated and saved man who can feel the desire, “That I may know Him.” Are you astonished that a saved man should have such a desire as this? A moment's reflection will remove your astonishment.

Imagine for a moment that you are living in the age of the Roman emperors. You have been captured by Roman soldiers and dragged from your native country. You have been sold for a slave, stripped, whipped, branded, imprisoned and treated with shameful cruelty. At last you are appointed to die in the amphitheatre, to make holiday for a tyrant. The populace assemble with delight. There they are, tens of thousands of them, gazing down from the living sides of the spacious Coliseum.

You stand alone and naked, armed only with a single dagger—a poor defense against gigantic beasts. A ponderous door is drawn up by machinery and there rushes forth the monarch of the forest—a huge lion. You must slay him or be torn to pieces. You are absolutely certain that the conflict is too stern for you and that the sure result must and will be that those terrible teeth will grind your bones and drip with your blood. You tremble. Your joints are loosed. You are paralyzed with fear, like the timid deer when the lion has dashed it to the ground. But what is this? O wonder of mercy!—a deliverer appears!

A great unknown leaps from among the gazing multitude and confronts the savage monster. He quails not at the roaring of the devourer, but dashes upon him with terrible fury, till, like a whipped cur, the lion slinks towards his den, dragging himself along in pain and fear. The hero lifts you up, smiles into your bloodless face, whispers comfort in your ears and bids you be of good courage, for you are free. Do you not think that there would arise at once in your heart a desire to know your deliverer? As the guards conducted you into the open street, and you breathed the cool, fresh air, would not the first question be, “Who was my deliverer, that I may fall at his feet and bless him?”

You are not, however, informed, but instead of it you are gently led away to a noble mansion, where your many wounds are washed and healed with salve of rarest power. You are clothed in sumptuous apparel. You are made to sit down at a feast. You eat and are satisfied. You rest upon the softest down. The next morning you are attended by servants who guard you from evil and minister to your good. Day after day, week after week, your wants are supplied. You live like a courtier. There is nothing that you can ask which you do not receive.

I am sure that your curiosity would grow more and more intense till it would ripen into an insatiable craving. You would scarcely neglect an opportunity of asking the servants, "Tell me, who does all this, who is my noble benefactor, for I must know him?" "Well, but," they would say, "is it not enough for you that you are delivered from the lion?" "No," you say, "it is for that very reason that I pant to know him." "Your wants are richly supplied—why are you vexed by curiosity as to the hand which gave you the gift? If your garment is worn out, there is another. Long before hunger oppresses you, the table is well loaded. What more do you want?" But your reply is, "It is because I have no wants, that, therefore, my soul longs and yearns even to hungering and to thirsting that I may know my generous loving friend."

Suppose that as you wake up one morning, you find lying on your pillow a precious love-token from your unknown friend, a ring sparkling with jewels and engraved with a tender inscription, a bouquet of flowers bound about with a love-motto? Your curiosity now knows no bounds. But you are informed that this wondrous being has not only done for you what you have seen, but a thousand deeds of love which you did not see, which were higher and greater still as proofs of his affection. You are told that he was wounded and imprisoned and scourged for your sake, for he had a love to you so great that death itself could not overcome it—you are informed that he is every moment occupied in your interests, because he has sworn by himself that where he is, there you shall be.

His honors you shall share and of his happiness you shall be the crown. Why, I think you would say, "Tell me, men and women, any of you who know him, tell me who he is and what he is." And if they said, "But it is enough for you to know that he loves you and to have daily proofs of his goodness," you would say, "No, these love-tokens increase my thirst. If you see him, tell him I am sick of love. The flagons which he scuds me and the love-tokens which he gives me, they stay me for awhile with the assurance of his affection, but they only impel me onward with the more unconquerable desire that I may know him. I must know him! I cannot live without knowing him. His goodness makes me thirst and pant, and faint and even die, that I may know him."

Have I imagined emotions which would not be natural? I think not. The most cool and calculating would be warmed with desires like these. I think what I have now pictured before you will wake the echoes in your breasts and you will say, "Ah, it is even so! It is because Christ loved me and gave Himself for me that I want to know Him. It is because He has

shed His blood for me and has chosen me that I may be one with Him forever that my soul desires a fuller acquaintance with Him. "Now may God the Holy Spirit, very graciously lead me onward that I may also quicken in you the desire to know Him.

I. Beloved, let us PASS BY THAT CROWD OF OUTER-COURT WORSHIPPERS WHO ARE CONTENT TO LIVE WITHOUT KNOWING CHRIST.

I do not mean the ungodly and profane! We will not consider them just now—they are altogether strangers and foreigners to Him—I mean children of God—the visible saints. How many there are of these whom I must call outer-court worshippers, for they are strangers to this panting to know Him. They can say with Paul, "That I may win Him and be found in Him"—that they do want. But this higher wish, "That I may *know* Him," has not stirred their hearts. How many Brothers and Sisters we know who are content to know Christ's historic life! They read the Evangelists and they are charmed with the perfect beauty of the Savior's history. "Never man spoke like this Man," they say. And they confess that never man acted with such love as He did.

They know all the incidents of His life, from His manger to His Cross. But they do not know *Him*. They are as men who have read "Caesar's Commentaries," but who have never seen Caesar. They know the battles which Caesar fought. They can even recognize the mantle which Caesar wore "that day he overcame the Nervii," but they do not know Caesar himself. The Person of the Lord Jesus is as much hidden from their eyes as the golden pot of manna when concealed in the ark. They know the *life* of Christ, but not Christ the Life. They admire His way among men, but they see Him not as the Way.

Others there are who know Christ's doctrine and prize it, too, but they know not Him. All which He taught is dear to them. Orthodoxy—for this they would burn at Smithfield, or lay down their necks at Tower Hill! Many of them are well-instructed and Divinely-illuminated in the doctrine of Christ. And the wonder is that they should stop there, because, Beloved, it does seem to me when I begin to know a man's teaching, that the next thing is the desire to know his person. Addison, in one of the "Spectators," tells us that the reason why so many books are printed with the portraits of the authors is just this—that as a man reads a book, he feels a desire to know what sort of appearance the author had.

This, indeed, is very natural. If you have ever been refreshed under a minister's printed sermons. If you have at any time received any benefit from his words, I know you have said, "I would like to see that man. I would like to hear the truth flow hot and fresh from his living lips. I would like to know just how he said that sentence, and how that passage sounded as it came from his earnest heart."

My Beloved, surely if you know the doctrine of Jesus, if you have so been with Christ as to sit at His feet and hear what He has to say, you must, I hope, have had some longings to know Him—to know His Person. And if you have, you will have had to pass by multitudes of followers of

Jesus who rest satisfied with His words, but forget that He is, Himself, "THE WORD."

Beloved, there are others—and against them I bring no complaint. They go as far as they can—they are delighted with Christ's example. Christ's Character is in their esteem the mirror of all perfection. They desire to walk in His footsteps. They listen to His Sermon upon the Mount. They are enchanted with it—as well they may be. They pray to be obedient in all things to Christ, as their Master and their Lord. They do well. Mark, I am finding no fault with any of these who prize the history, or who value the doctrine, or who admire the precept. But I want more. I do want, Beloved, that you and I should "know HIM."

I love His precepts, but I love HIM better! Sweet is the water from Bethlehem's well. And well worth the struggle of the armed men to win but a bucket from it. But the well *itself* is better and deserves all Israel's valor to defend it. As the source is ever more valuable than the stream, so is Christ ever better than the best words of His lips, or the best deeds of His hands. I want to know Him. I do care for His actions—my soul would sit down and admire those masterly works of holy art—His miracles of humiliation, of suffering, of patience and of holy charity. But better far I love the hands which worked these master-works, the lips which spoke these goodly Words and the heart which heaved with that matchless love which was the cause of all. Yes, Beloved, we must get farther than Immanuel's achievements, however glorious—we must come to "KNOW HIM."

Most Believers rest perfectly at ease with knowing Christ's *Sacrifice*. They see Jesus as the great High Priest, laying a great Sacrifice upon the altar for their sins and with their whole heart they accept His Atonement. By faith they know that all their sins are taken away by precious blood. This is a most blessed and hallowed attainment, I will grant you. But it is not every Christian who perceives that Christ was not only the Offerer of a sacrifice, but was Himself the Sacrifice, and therefore loves Him as such. Priest, Altar, Victim—Christ was everything! He gathers up all in Himself and when I see that He loved me and gave Himself for me, it is not enough to know this fact—I want to know Him, the glorious Person who does and is all this.

I want to know the Man who thus gave Himself for me. I want to behold the Lamb once slain for me. I want to rest upon the bosom which covers the heart which was pierced with the spear. I pray Him to kiss me with the kisses of that mouth which cried, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" I love Calvary, the scene of woe, but I love Christ better, the great Object of that agony. And even His Cross and all His sufferings, dear though these must ever be to the Christian mind, only occupy a second place—the first seat is for Himself—His Person, His Deity and Humanity.

Thus, you see, we have to leave a great many Believers behind. Nor have we enumerated all, for I believe that even some of those saints who have received Grace to look for the coming of Christ, yet in their vision of His coming too much forget Him. Is it not possible for men to pant for the Second Advent as to lose sight of Him who is to make that advent? So to

long for a millennium that I may forget Him who is to reign King of kings? So to pant after that Glory of Israel that I may forget Him who is Israel's Glory? Anywhere short of knowing Him, I would not have you stop, Beloved. And even when you know Him, I would urge you still to be impelled with the same desire and to press forward, crying with the Apostle, "That I may know Him."

Beloved, how many there are who have heard of Christ and read about Christ and that is enough for them! But it is not enough for me and it should not be enough for you. The Apostle Paul did not say, "I have heard of Him, on whom I have believed," but, "I *know* whom I have believed." To hear about Christ may damn you—it may be a savor of death unto death to you. You have heard of Him with the ear—but it is essential that you *know* Him in order that you may be partakers of eternal life. My dear Hearers, be not content unless you have this as your soul's present portion.

Others there are who have been persuaded by the judgment and encouragement of others that they know something about the great Redeemer. They do not know Him, but still they are persuaded by others that they have an interest in Him. Let me warn you of second-hand spirituality! It is a rotten, soul-deceiving deception. Beware of all esteeming of yourself according to the thoughts of others or you will be ruined.

Another man's opinion of me may have great influence over me—I have heard of a man in perfectly good health killed by the opinion of others. Several of his friends had foolishly agreed to play a practical trick on him, whereupon one of them met him and said, "How ill you look this morning." He did not feel so. He was very much surprised at the remark. When he met the next, who said to him, "Oh, dear, how bad you look," he began to think there might be something in it. And as he turned round the corner, a third person said to him, "What a sight you are! How altered from what you used to be!" He went home ill, he took to his bed and died.

So goes the story and I should not marvel if it really did occur. Now, if such might be the effect of persuasion and supposed belief in the *sickness* of a man, how much more readily may men be persuaded into the idea of spiritual health! A Believer meets you and by his treatment seems to say, "I welcome you as a dear Brother"—and he means it, too. You are baptized and received into Church fellowship and so everybody thinks that you must be a follower of Christ. And yet you may not know Him. Oh, I do pray you—do not be satisfied with being persuaded into something like an assurance that you are in Him but do not know Him—know Him for yourself.

There are many who I hope will be saved before long. But I am in great doubt of them, because they can only say they half think they know Christ. They do not quite believe in Him, but they do not disbelieve in Him. They halt between two opinions. Ah, dear Hearer, that is a very dangerous place to stand! The borderland is the devil's hunting ground. Undecided souls are fair game for the great fowler. God give you once and for all the true decision by which, through Grace, you shall know Him. Do not

be satisfied with *thinking* you know Him. *Hoping* you know Him, but *know* Him.

Oh, it is nothing to have *heard* about Him, to have *talked* about Him, to have eaten and have drank with Him, to have *preached* Him, or even to have *worked miracles* in His name. To have been charmed by His eloquence, to have been stirred with the story of His love, to have been moved to imitate Him—this shall gain you nothing unless you win Him and are found in Him. Seek with the Apostle, to give up everything of your own righteousness and all other objects and aims in life and say, “This I seek after, that I may know Him.” Thus much, on the first point. Leaving those behind who do not know Him, let us make an advance.

II. Secondly, let us DRAW CURTAIN AFTER CURTAIN WHICH SHALL ADMIT US TO KNOW MORE OF CHRIST.

Did you ever visit the manufactory of splendid porcelain at Sevres? I have done so. If anybody should say to me, “Do you know the manufactory at Sevres?” I should say, “Yes, I do and no, I do not. I know it, for I have seen the building. I have seen the rooms in which the articles are exhibited for sale and I have seen the museum and model room. But I do not know the factory as I would like to know it, for I have not seen the process of manufacture and have not been admitted into the workshops, as some are.”

Suppose I had seen, however, the process of the molding of the clay and the laying on of the rich designs? If anybody should still say to me, “Do you know how they manufacture those wonderful articles?” I should very likely still be compelled to say, “No, I do not, because there are certain secrets, certain private rooms into which neither friend nor foe can be admitted, lest the process should be open to the world.” So, you see, I might say I knew, and yet might not half know. And when I half knew, still there would be so much left that I might be compelled to say, “I do not know.” How many different ways there are of knowing a person—and even so there are all these different ways of knowing Christ, so that you may keep on all your lifetime, still wishing to get into another room and another room, nearer and nearer to the great secret, still panting to “know Him.”

Good Rutherford says, “I urge upon you a *nearer* communion with Christ and a *growing* communion. There are curtains to be drawn by, in Christ, that we never shut and new foldings in love with Him. I despair that ever I shall win to the far end of that love. There are so many plies in it. Therefore, dig deep and set by as much time in the day for Him as you can—He will be won by labor.”

To begin with. We know a person when we recognize him. You know the Queen. Well, I do. I recollect seeing her and if I were to see any quantity of ladies, I think I should know which was the Queen and which was not. You may say honestly that you know her to that extent. Beloved, every Christian must in this sense know Christ. You must know Him by a Divine illumination so as to know who He is and what He is. When Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Whom do you say that I am,” he said, “You are the

Christ, the Son of the living God.” And the Lord replied, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you.”

It is an early step in this knowledge of Christ, to know and to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. To know that Christ is God, Divine to me. That Christ is Man—Brother to me—bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. And that as such He is a sin-subduing Savior. That He is for me an Intercessor, pleading before the Throne. That He is my Prophet, Priest and King—in this sense I trust that most of you know Him. If you do not, breathe the silent prayer now, “Lord, help me that I may know Him.” But this knowledge of recognition is comparatively a low attainment, one of the lowest rounds of the ladder of light.

In the second place, a Believer knows Christ to a higher degree when he knows Him by practical experience at acquaintance with what He does. For instance, I know Christ as a Cleanser. They tell me He is a Refiner, that He cleanses from spots. He has washed me in His precious blood and to that extent I know Him. They tell me that He clothes the naked—He has covered me with a garment of righteousness and to that extent I know Him. They tell me that He is a Breaker and that He breaks fetters—He has set my soul at liberty and therefore I know Him. They tell me that He is a King and that He reigns over sin—He has subdued my enemies beneath His feet and I know Him in that Character.

They tell me He is a Shepherd—I know Him, for I am His sheep. They say He is a Door—I have entered in through Him and I know Him as a Door. They say He is Food—my spirit feeds on Him as on the Bread of Heaven and, therefore, I know Him as such. You know if anyone says, “Do you know doctor So-and-So?” it is a very satisfactory answer if you can reply, “Oh, yes, I know him, for he attended me the last time that I was ill.” There is more knowledge in that, than if one could only say, “Oh, yes, I know him—he wears such-and-such a hat,” or “he is a man of such-and-such an appearance.” So, Christian, there is a second and higher step to know Christ—when you have experienced in your own soul that He is just what God has revealed Him to be.

But we know a man in a *better* sense than this when we are on *speaking terms* with him. “Do you know So-and-So?” “Yes,” you say, “I not only know him by name, so as to recognize him. I not only know him as a tradesman having dealt with him, but I know him because when we pass each other in the morning, we exchange a word or two. And if I had anything to say upon matters—any request to make—I should feel no difficulty about asking him.” Well now, the Christian knows His Lord in this sense, too. He has, every day, official communication with Christ, He is on speaking terms with Him.

There may be persons here, perhaps, who know the Queen in a sense in which I do not know her—perhaps they speak to her. They have so done—I have never done that. They go beyond me there. But you see, dear Friends, this is not a very great thing because you may be on speaking terms with a man—you may not know much of him for all that. So you may be in the habit of daily prayer and you may talk with Christ every

morning and every evening—but you may know exceedingly little of Him. You are on speaking terms with Him. But there is something beyond this, very far beyond this! I might say that I know a man merely because I meet him every day and ask him for what I want and understand that he is kind and generous. But how shallow is such an acquaintance, for I do not know his private character nor his inward heart. Even so a Believer may have constant dealings with Christ in his prayers and in his praises and yet, for all that, he may have only gone a certain distance and may have need still to pray, “That I may know Him.”

But you are said to know a person better still when he invites you to his house. At Christmas time there is a family party and a romp—and he asks you there and you are like one of his children and enter into all their sports around the fireside. And you indulge, as they do, in the genialities of social life. You are asked again. You go there pretty often. In fact, if there is a happy evening in that house they generally expect to see friend So-and-So there. Well, now, that is better. We are getting now into something like knowing a man.

And I do trust there are many of you, Beloved, who have got as far as this with regard to your Divine Lord. Christ has entertained you with some rare visits from His gracious Presence. He brought you into His banqueting house and His banner over you was love. When He manifested Himself, He did it unto you as He did not unto the world. He was pleased in the majesty of His condescension, to take you aside and show you His hands and His side. He called you “Friend.” He treated you as such and permitted you to enjoy your sweets of being one of the family. Ah, but you may go into a man’s house as a constant visitor and yet you may not know him—that is to say, not in the *highest* sense.

You speak to the man’s wife and say, “Your husband is a marvelously charming man. What a cheerful, joyful, spirited man he is! He never seems to have any depressions of spirit and experiences no changes whatever.” She shakes her head, and she says, “Ah, you do not know him, you do not know him as I do.” Because she sees him at all times and at all hours she can read the very heart of the man. That Christian has grown much in Grace who has advanced not only to be the friend of Christ, having occasional fellowship with Him, but who comes to recognize his marriage union with the Person of his Lord and of whom it can be said, “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. And He will show them His Covenant.” *Now* we have the intimacy of love with its perfect frankness, nearness, sweetness, joyousness, delight! The rending away of every separating veil makes the communion to be as near as it well can be this side of the black river. But a Christian may get farther than this!

Even the spouse may not know her husband. The most loving wife who ever entered into the cares of her husband must have discovered that there is a something which separates his experience from her powers of comprehension. Luther’s wife, Catherine, was, of all women, the wife for Luther. But there were times in Luther’s gigantic tribulations when he must leave Kate behind. There were extraordinary times within him—

times both of ecstatic joy—when, like a great angel, he stretched his mighty wings and flew right up to Heaven! And there were times of awful misery when he seemed to sink down to the very depths of Hell. And in either case, no other heart could keep pace with him.

Then it was Christ alone who had communion with him. And a Christian may so grow in Grace as to become *identified* with Christ, a member of His body—not so much married to Him as a *part* of Him. He becomes a member of the great body of Christ so that he suffers with Christ. He sympathizes with Jesus. His heart beats to the same dolorous tune. His veins swell with the same floods of grief—or else his eyes sparkle with that same gleam of joy, according to the Master’s Word—“That My joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full.”

Well, have not you waded out of your depth, some of you? I have certainly got out of my own. I feel as if the Master might come on this platform, look round on many of us and say, “Have I been so long a time with you, and yet have you not known Me, Philip?” For truly, even in the minor sense, though I trust we are saved, though we have believed in Jesus, yet we have not reached the height of this great text—“That I may know Him.”

III. Having taken you so far, let us SIT DOWN A FEW MINUTES AND CONSIDER WHAT SORT OF KNOWLEDGE THIS KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST IS—“That I may know Him.” Then it is clear, if I know Him I shall have a very vivid sense of His Personality. “That I may know Him.” He will not be to me a myth, a vision, a spirit, but a Person, a real, solid Person, as much real as I am myself, or as my dearest friend can be to me. My Soul, never be satisfied with a shadowy Christ. My Heart, never be content until He has embraced your soul and proved to you that He is the lover of His people.

This knowledge, then, must be a knowledge of Him in His Personality. Then, Beloved, it must be a *personal* knowledge on our part. I cannot know Christ through another person’s brains. I cannot love Him with another man’s heart and I cannot see Him with another man’s eyes. Heaven’s delight is, “My eyes shall see Him and not another.” These eyes shall behold the King in His beauty. Well, Beloved, if this is Heaven, we certainly cannot do without a personal sight of Christ here. I am so afraid of living in a second-hand religion. God forbid that I should get a biographical experience! Lord save us from having borrowed communion. No, I must know Him myself! O God, let me not be deceived in this! I must know Him without fancy or proxy. I must know Him on my own account.

And now these few thoughts upon what sort of knowledge we must have. It must be an *intelligent* knowledge—I must know Him. I must know His Natures, Divine and Human. I must know His offices—I must know His attributes—I must know His works—I must know His shame—I must know His Glory—for I do not know Him if He is merely a subject of passion and not of intellect. I must let my head consciously meditate upon Him until I own something like an idea of Him that I may, “Comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length and depth and height. And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge.”

Then I must have an *affectionate* knowledge of Him. And indeed, if I know Him at all, I must love Him. As it is said of some men that there is such a charm about them that if you once get into their company you cannot criticize any longer, but must admire—so you feel with Christ. It is said of Garibaldi, that if you are in his society he charms all, so that even malice and slander must be silent in his presence. Infinitely, supremely, so is it with Christ! Being near Him, His love warms our hearts till we glow with intense love to Him.

Then I shall find, if I know Christ, that this is a *satisfying* knowledge. When I know Christ my mind will be full to the brim—I shall feel that I have found that which my spirit panted after. “This is that Bread whereof if a man eats he shall never hunger.” At the same time it is an *exciting* knowledge. The more I know of Christ, the more I shall want to know. The deeper I plunge, the greater the deeps which will be revealed. The higher I climb, the loftier will be the summits which invite my eager footsteps. I shall want more as I get more. My spiritual thirst will increase, though in another sense it will be entirely quenched.

And this knowledge of Christ will be a most *happy* one! In fact, so happy that sometimes it will completely bear me up above all trials, doubts and sorrows. And it will, while I enjoy it, make me something more than, “Man that is born of a woman who is of few days and full of trouble,” for it will fling about me the immortality of the ever-living Savior and gird me with the golden girdle of His eternal happiness. To be near to Christ is to be near to the pearly gates of the golden-streeted city. Say not, “Jerusalem, my happy home, my labors have an end in you,” but say, “Jesus, You are my Rest and when I have You, my spirit is at peace.” I might thus keep on speaking in praise of this knowledge, but I will not.

Only permit me to say what a *refreshing*, what a *sanctifying* knowledge is this, to know Him! When the Laodicean Church was neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, how did Christ seek her revival? Did He send her precious doctrines? Did He send her excellent precepts? Mark you, He came Himself, for thus it is said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will sup with him, and he with Me.” That is a cure for it all, you see. No matter how lukewarm, though God may say, “I will spew you out of My mouth,” yet, if Christ comes, that is the cure! The Presence of Christ with His Church puts away all her sicknesses.

When the disciples of Christ were at sea in a storm, do you remember how He comforted them? Did He send them an angel? No. “It is I, do not be afraid.” And when they knew Him they had no more fears. They were assembled one night, “the doors being shut for fear of the Jews.” How did He comfort them? Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and said, “Peace be unto you.” There was Thomas, full of doubts and fears. How did Jesus Christ take away his doubts? “Reach here your finger and behold My hands. And reach here your hand and thrust it into My side.” Oh, it is Christ, it is Christ who cures all!

The company of Christ is the only thing which a Christian wants. I will undertake that if his heart is like an iceberg, as soon as Jesus comes, it shall flame like Vesuvius. His spirit shall be dead and like a rotten corpse. But if Jesus comes he shall leap like a hart and become strong as a young unicorn. Your Presence makes me like the chariots of Amminadib! Now do not think I am talking what I do not know. Do not imagine that I am talking mere fanatical slip-slop which I cannot prove. I do assert (and God who searches all hearts knows how true this is)—I do assert that from the depths of doubt, of dullness, of worldliness—I have leaped in one moment into love and life and holy enthusiasm when Jesus Christ has manifested Himself to me.

I cannot describe the difference between my spirit, water-logged, worm-eaten, ready to sink to the bottom without Christ—and that same spirit like a strong staunch ship, with sails full, with favorable wind, speeding into harbor with a golden freight. Like yon poor little bird which some cruel boy has torn from the nest and almost killed—it is not fledged yet and cannot fly—and it lies down to die. It is soon trampled in the mire in the streets—that is my heart without Christ.

But see that other bird! The cage door is opened, its wings vibrate, it sings with all its might and flies up to talk with the sun—that is my heart when I have the conscious Presence of my Lord Jesus Christ! I only bring in my own consciousness because I do not know yours. But I think I will now venture to say that every Believer here will admit it is the same with him—

***“Midst darkest shades if He appears
My dawning is begun!
He is my soul’s bright morning star,
And He my rising sun.”***

IV. I shall close by *urging* you, dearly Beloved, who know the Lord to take this desire of the Apostle, and by *exhorting* you—make it your own, “That I may know Him.” I wish I had time this morning—time will fly—I wish I had time to urge and press you Believers onward to seek to know Him. Paul, you see, gave up everything for this—you will be seeking what is worth having. There can be no mistake about this. If Paul will renounce all, there must be a reward which is worthy of the sacrifice. If you have any fears—if you seek Christ and find Him—they will be removed. You complain that you do not feel the guilt of sin, that you cannot humble yourself enough. The sight of Christ is the very best means of setting sin in its true colors. There is no repenting like that which comes from a look from Christ’s eyes—the Lord turned and looked upon Peter and he went out and wept bitterly. So it is not a sight of the Law—it is the sight of Christ looking upon us which will break our hearts.

There is nothing like this to fill you with courage. When Dr. Andrew Reed found some difficulties in the founding of one of his orphan asylums, he sat down and drew upon a little piece of paper the Cross, and then he said to himself, “What? Despair in the face of the Cross?” And then he drew a ring round the Cross and wrote in it, “nil desperandum!” and took

it for his coat of arms. Oh, there cannot be any despair in the presence of the Cross! Dying Lamb, did You endure the Cross, despising the shame—and shall I talk of difficulties when Your Glory is in the way? God forbid!

O holy Face bedewed with bloody sweat, I pledge myself in Your solemn and awful Presence, that though this face of mine should be bedewed with sweat of the like sort to accomplish any labor upon which You shall put me! By Your will and in Your strength, I will not shrink from the task. A sight of Christ, Brethren, will keep you from despondency and doubts and despair. A sight of Christ!

How shall I stir you to it? It will fire you to duty. It will deliver you from temptation. It will, in fact, make you like He. A man is known by his company. And if you have become acquainted with Christ, and know Him, you will be sure to reflect His light. It is because the moon has converse with the sun that she has any light for this dark world's night. And if you talk with Christ, the Sun, He will shine on you so gloriously, that you, like the moon, shall reflect His light and the dark night of this world shall be enlightened by your radiance. The Lord help us to know Him!

But I do seem, this morning, to have been talking to you about Him and not to have brought Him forward. O that I knew how to introduce you to Him! You who do not love Him—O that I could make you seek after Him! But you who do love Him and have trusted in Him—O that I could make you hunger and thirst until you were filled with Him! There He is, nailed to His Cross—suffering—oh how much He suffers for you! There He is, risen, ascended, pleading before the Throne of God for you. Here He is—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Here He is, waiting to be comforted with your company, desiring communion with you, panting that His sister, His spouse, would be no longer a stranger to Him. Here He is, waiting to be gracious, saying, “Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” Come, Christian, come! Let this be your desire, “That I may know Him.” And you who do not know Him and have not loved Him, I pray you will breathe this prayer with me, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.” O Sinner, He is a gentle Christ! He is a loving Savior and they that seek Him early shall find Him! May you seek and find Him, for His name's sake. Amen.

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PAUL APPREHENDED AND APPREHENDING NO. 2315

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 2, 1893.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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***“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected;
but I press on, that I may apprehend that for which also I am
apprehended of Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 3:12.***

OBSERVE the Apostle's condition when he wrote these words. I do not think that either you or I will be found to be in a better one. If any are, or think they are, I would suggest a question. I, for my part, would be satisfied to be just as Paul was.

He was in a position of conscious safety. He was a saved man. He knew that he was saved, for he rejoiced in Christ Jesus and had no confidence in the flesh. He knew that he was justified by faith in Christ Jesus and he counted all his own works, which formerly were his ground of trust, to be as dross and dung, that he might win Christ. He was a saved man and he knew it! I do not think that he often had doubts about that point, but yet he was in a state of conscious imperfection—“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected.” He had not yet reached his own ideal of what a Christian might be. He had not yet obtained from Christ all that he expected to obtain. He was not sitting down to rest and be thankful, but he was still hurrying on, reaching after something which was yet beyond him. He could not say, “Soul, take your ease, you have much goods laid up for many years,” but he still felt his own spiritual poverty, and he cried, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected.”

But, Beloved, let not that thought be any kind of solace to you, for I would remind you that though consciously imperfect, Paul was zealously making progress. He says, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” I know many who say that they are imperfect and they seem to be quite satisfied to be so. That was never the case with the Apostle—as long as any trace of a sinful nature or a sinful tendency remained in him, it made him cry out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” It was not because he was dead in sin that he cried in that way. It would be a new thing in this world for a sinner dead in sin to cry so, but because he was already largely delivered from sin and the reigning power of it had been broken! Therefore he felt the burden of any sort of contact with sin. A man who is in the sea, taking a plunge deep down under the water, does not feel the

weight of the water. But bring him out on the shore, put a great tub of water on his head—and see what a weight that is to him! So, while a man is in sin as his element, it is no burden to him, but when he is out of it, and not under its power, then he feels the weight of it, he grows weary under it and would gladly be rid of every particle of it.

The Apostle, I say, was conscious of imperfection, but he was also conscious that he was making progress, that he was running towards a mark, that he was leaving much behind him, and was pressing toward that which was before him. He was also in a state of anxious aspiration. He desired that he might be found in Christ, that he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead, that he might, in a word, grasp that for which Christ had grasped him. I am going to talk about that double grasp, tonight—“That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus,”

Notice that there are two forces here mentioned which are at work in every gracious man. There is Christ’s power by which He apprehends us and then there is the new power, the new life of God-given faith, by which we, in our turn, seek to apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended us. Christ has apprehended us for a purpose—we wish to realize that purpose even to the fullest. That is the intent of the Apostle’s words. Let us consider them in detail.

I. First, let us think of PAUL’S APPREHENSION BY CHRIST JESUS.

We do not often use the word, “apprehended,” now, in the sense in which it is here used. The only instance that I remember is when we speak of a policeman apprehending a person, that is, *laying hold* upon him, seizing him. At his conversion, Paul had been apprehended by his Lord. Take the word, “apprehend,” in the sense of arresting him, and it stands true of Saul of Tarsus. I need not repeat the story—you all know how that desperate rebel was going down to Damascus to persecute the saints of God. Nothing was further from his mind than the thought of becoming a Christian, but while he was riding the high horse and Damascus lay below him, just like a sheep within reach of a wolf, the Lord Jesus Christ stepped in and laid His hand on his shoulder—

**“Thus the eternal counsel ran,
‘Almighty Grace, arrest that man!’”**

And almighty Grace arrested him! He fell to the earth at the first blow. He was blinded with the second. No, not so much by a blow as by the greatness of the Light of God that shone round about him! And there he lay prostrate, broken in heart and blind in eyes—he had to be led into the city—and one of those poor men whom he had determined to haul to prison had to come and pray for him, that his eyes might be opened, that he might be baptized, and that he might thus make his confession of faith in Christ! He well says that he was “apprehended of Christ Jesus.” The King sent no sheriff’s officer to arrest him, but *He* came, *Himself*, and took him into Divine custody, laid him by the heels for three days in the dark—and then let him out into glorious liberty, an altogether changed man—to go forth to preach that faith which before he had sought to destroy!

You may not all be able to remember any special day when you were apprehended by Christ, but some of us do. We remember when we, who had been formerly carried captive by the devil at his will, found ourselves arrested by One stronger than Satan. We managed, by Divine Grace, to escape from the clutches of the devil, but we could not escape from that dear pierced hand when once it was laid upon us! We surrendered ourselves prisoners. There was no resisting, any longer, when His mighty Grace came in to arrest us. I say that some of us remember that day. Other days, notable for great events, have been forgotten, but the day when we were apprehended of Christ Jesus is stamped upon our memory, and always must be, even throughout eternity!

Since then, dear Friends, we have always felt that grip, just as *Paul always felt himself in Christ's grasp*. We have never got away from that one arrest. It was not the work of a few minutes to be remembered and to be then ended, and all over. No, at this moment we feel the same Divine hand upon us! We are prisoners, this day, unto Christ, who alone has set us free by capturing us! There was a legend among the heathen of old times, that if persons saw certain spirits in the woods, they became, from that moment, wonderfully changed—they became possessed by the spirit which they saw! They had, as we say in our language, a twist. I remember when—

***“I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His Cross I stood”***

and I have had a twist ever since! I never got over it and never expect to. I hope that twist will get a more and more powerful hold over me. It turned everything upside down. It changed the right into the left. It made the bitter sweet and the sweet bitter—the light darkness, and the darkness light. It was a wonderful twist and, as I say again, that twist still continues! When it has once been experienced, there is no escaping from it. We can say not only, “I was apprehended,” but as the text has it, “I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” He still binds us with the fetters of His love. We still sit at His dear feet, enthralled by His beauties. We are still under the Omnipotent fascination of His altogether lovely face. We could not depart from Him if we would and we could not if we could! If we went away from Christ, to whom would we go? He has the Words of eternal life! His love holds and binds us faster than fetters of brass. We must forever be apprehended by Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, Beloved, *this arrest of Paul by Christ was the force and motive of his whole later life*. Because Paul had been apprehended by Christ, he began to live differently from what he had ever lived before. He had an apprehension that he had lived amiss. He had an apprehension that his evil life would end in eternal destruction. He fled away from all his apprehensions of the wrath to come, to the Christ who had apprehended him in quite another sense! He had thus been apprehended, pressed into the service of Christ and made, by that pressure, to become a volunteer, for here there is a paradox—all Christ's soldiers are pressed men and volunteers, too! There are two senses, the one in which Grace constrains them, and

the other in which their will, being made truly free, runs delightfully after Christ! But having once been apprehended, the Apostle never shook off Christ's grasp—he began to live as an apprehended man. He said to himself, "I cannot follow the world, for Christ has apprehended me. I cannot go after false doctrine, for Christ has apprehended me and crucified me with Himself. I cannot cease to preach the Gospel. I cannot become a self-seeker. I cannot do anything but live for Him who died for me, for the Master has apprehended me. He has put me under parole to keep close to Him forever and I must not, cannot, dare not, would not leave Him! I am His apprehended one henceforth and even forever."

I want your hearts to talk over this first part of the sermon. Never mind my faltering tongue—let your own hearts speak. If Christ has never apprehended you, well then, you have nothing to do with this matter, and you may leave it alone. But if He has arrested you, acknowledge the soft impeachment, tonight. Say in your heart, "Yes, He has, indeed, laid hold on me, and my heart's desire is that He would bring every thought into captivity to Him. From henceforth I would be led in triumph by Him, His captive all the days of my life, to show the power of His illustrious love, the victories of His Grace!" Oh, that we might, each one, say with Paul, "I am apprehended of Christ Jesus"!

Ah, dear Souls, you who have never been apprehended of Him, I hope that you will be, tonight! I pray God that you may run away from your old master, the devil, and not give him even five minutes' notice, but just start off directly! And while you are a runaway slave, may my Divine Master come and lay His hand upon you and say, "You are Mine. You never did really belong to your old master and even though you promised and swore that you would be his, thus says the Lord, 'Your Covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand.' I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are Mine, and now I only take what I bought on the tree. I take by power, by might, by main force, by Grace, what I purchased with the blood of My hands and feet and heart. I will have you, for you are Mine." Lord, will You thus arrest some sinner, tonight, to the praise of the glory of Your Grace?

II. Now let us notice PAUL'S DESIRE TO APPREHEND THAT FOR WHICH THE LORD HAD APPREHENDED HIM.

Well, why did Christ apprehend Paul? First, it was *to convert him completely*—to make a new man of him, to turn him from all his old ways and pursuits—and put him on quite a different road. Now, Brothers and Sisters, that is why the Lord apprehended us—to make us new creatures in Christ Jesus! Let us pray God to carry out that design to the fullest, to make us altogether new creatures. Do not let us be satisfied while there are any remains of the old nature—let us cry to the Lord to drive the Canaanites out—and though they have chariots of iron, let us, by Divine Grace, drive them all out! Pray, "Lord Jesus, You have come to turn me from every sin—turn me and I shall be turned! You have provided medicine for every disease—Lord, heal me and I shall be healed!"

Do not be satisfied, any of you, with half a conversion! I am afraid that there are a great many who have not much more than half a conversion. I

know a man—I hope he is converted, but I wish that the Lord would convert his temper. He prays very nicely, but you should see him when he is red in the face with anger at his wife! I know a man—I hope he is a Christian, it is not for me to judge—but I wish that the Lord would convert his pocket. It needs a button taken off, for it is very difficult to get it open! It is very easy to put something in, but hard to get anything out for any good purpose. I know a great many professing Christians who do not seem to have had what we might call a thorough conversion. We need the power which has arrested us to do its work completely—till there is not any part of us but what has been renewed by Grace and sanctified to the service and Glory of God. Brethren, seek to apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended you, namely, a thorough conversion, a turning of yourself from every evil way!

But the Lord apprehended each one of His people, in the next place, *to make them like to Christ*. This is the great design of electing love—“Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” That is the great objective of the very first act of Divine Love—and whatever the Holy Spirit does in us, He does it with this aim to make us like unto the Firstborn among many brethren. This will be our satisfaction in eternity—“I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.” Come, then, Beloved, if Christ has arrested us to make us like Himself, let us not rest till we have become more like He! Perhaps the Lord has made you like Christ in some respects, but not in all. Or if you are like Christ in all respects, yet the likeness is dim, shadowy, rather in outline than in filling-up. Though we may be likenesses of Christ, there is not one of us who does not need many touches before we shall be good likenesses! Some, I fear, are *caricatures* of Christ. May the Lord have pity upon us if that is the case, and go on with His work, and take out all the blotches and blemishes, and paint the true portrait till, at last, everybody who sees us will say, “There is Christ in that man—he is a likeness of Christ”!

We may not all be paintings on ivory. We may not all be taken on a sheet of silver, but the Lord’s portrait, even though it is on a piece of clay, has still great beauties in it. And as He intends to make us like Christ, O Beloved, let us aspire to this! Come, get it into your voice and get it into your heart! You are to be like Christ and as you are to be so, and this is the very reason why Christ has arrested you, pine after it, thirst after it, labor after it! Trust God to work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure, and while He is doing that, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling because it is God that works in you!

If you turn to Paul’s description of his own conversion, which he gave to Agrippa, you will find that the Lord said to him that He had appeared to him to *make him a witness* of that which he had seen, and of that which He would afterwards reveal to him. So, in the third place, we have been apprehended of Christ that we may be *witnesses* for Him, first *seeing* a great deal and then *telling* what we have seen, which is the other sense of the word, “witness.” A witness sees or hears and then he tells in court what he has seen or heard and so he becomes a witness to others as once he was a witness to himself. Now, the Lord has apprehended every Chris-

tian, here, to see their Savior, to see His Grace, to see His love, to see His power, to see all the wonders which the Holy Spirit works among men—and then to go and talk of these things to others, that they, also, hearing from the lips of a witness, may be led to believe by the power of the Holy Spirit!

Beloved, if the Lord Jesus Christ has apprehended you that you may be a witness, be on the lookout! Keep your eyes open! See all that you can see. Every Prophet of olden times was called a Seer. You cannot prophesy to others until you have been a *seer* yourself! Pray that you may see all that is in the Word. Cry, “Open You my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.” Pray that you may see the movements of God in Providence, and may see the hand of God in your own heart and your own experience. Pray God, first, to make you a witness, an observer—and then tell out to others what you have tasted and handled and felt of the Word of life—and be a faithful witness for your Lord and Master all your days. Do not some professing Christians, who are here, tonight, feel a little uncomfortable? You have not yet seen all that you should see and have you not kept very much to yourselves what you have seen? I would that you could apprehend that for which also you are apprehended of Christ Jesus, seeing what He means you to see and then, telling out what He means you to tell. May the Lord instruct us more and more that we may fulfill all His good pleasure!

But, next, we were converted in order *to be the instruments of the conversion of others*. Paul, when he was speaking to Agrippa, expressly mentioned how the Lord said, “Delivering you from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send you, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.” So, you see, there was a certain number of souls for whom Paul was apprehended that he might be the instrument of their salvation! Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed, “Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You: as You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”

Now, that power Christ distributes among His people. There is a certain number of persons who will receive eternal life through my ministry. There is a certain number who will receive eternal life through another man’s ministry. I wonder how many have, in this way, been appointed to you, that you might be the means of their salvation? You were not saved that you might only go to Heaven—you were saved that you might take others there with you! In the olden days, when a man needed pigeons, he used to take a dove of his own and smear its wings all over with perfume, and then, when it was very sweet to smell, he threw it up into the air and it went into other dovecots, and all the pigeons went after it. And when it came back, it brought them home to its master. That was a roguish trick, but it is a blessed method of bringing poor flying doves to Christ! When your wings are sweet with Christ’s love. When every time that you move,

you perfume the air with holiness and mercy and Grace, others will flock around you and fly with you like doves to their windows!

I like to think of the many that God has appointed me to bring to Him. I cannot tell you how many I have met during the past week—they have made my heart dance for joy. Last Tuesday, when we had a large company of deacons of our Metropolitan Churches here, one would steal up to me, as I sat there shaking hands, and say, “On such a day, I heard you preach from such a text. I was a careless young man, but you brought me to the Savior.” Another would come and say, “God bless you, Sir! I remember when you were the means of leading me to the Savior.” One took my hand with a ferocious grip and could not say a word till he had shed many a tear. These things make us very happy and my heart’s desire is that I may get all that Christ means me to get, that I may apprehend all that, or *them*, for which He apprehended me!

I want every Christian Brother and Sister, here, to feel the same. There is somebody in the world whom you have to bring to Christ. I do not know where he is, or who he is, but you had better look out for him. Come, seek now. Say, “I would not lose a single pearl, though it lies deep under the waves of the sea, if my great Lord intends me to dive for it, and bring it up into the Light.” Get to your searching after the hidden treasures and be intent, day and night, in the power of the Spirit, that you may apprehend that measure of usefulness for which you were apprehended of Christ Jesus! It will be a high honor to appear, at last, as a winner of souls! Kings might doff their diadems and forget that they ever wore them, in comparison with that crown which God will give to those who turn many to righteousness, for they shall shine “as the stars forever and ever!” Aspire to this, my dear Friends, and lose none of those for which you have been apprehended of Christ Jesus your Lord.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the Lord said to Ananias about Paul, “I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” Well, now, some of you were apprehended on purpose *that you might suffer for Christ’s sake*. Did I see you wince at that word? Well, but if usefulness by labor is an honor, usefulness by suffering is a still greater honor! In Heaven, the brightest crown that any saint wears is that which is set with the rubies of martyrdom. When I have read the stories of those holy men and women who died in Roman amphitheatres, or were burned to death over at Smithfield, yonder, I must confess that I have envied them. To preach Christ seems so little compared with having Grace enough to suffer for His name’s sake! As one reads of their intense suffering, one naturally shrinks from it and says, “I thank God that I am not called to endure that trial.” But yet, if we were called to it, we would have *Grace given to us to bear it!* What an honor it was for them, for the sake of the Prince of martyrs, the Leader of the sacramental hosts of God’s elect, to be able and willing to give themselves up to death!

Well, you may be called to suffer for Christ’s sake, but, at any rate, you *are* called to this—to lay your all upon His altar, to devote yourself, your substance, all that you are and all that you have, to His honor and Glory! You are apprehended of Christ Jesus for this purpose—try to apprehend

it. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us resolve to live wholly unto Christ! Let us bid Him take our hands, feet, heart, eyes, brain and every faculty of our being! May God get as much glory as He can, out of us, or reflect as much of His Glory as is possible through even our weakness and infirmities! But this is why we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus, that we may be wholly and only the Lord's, "For the love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." Here is the prize of your high calling—are you ready to run for it? God help you to do so, to apprehend, in personal self-sacrifice, all that for which Christ has apprehended you!

But that is not all. Paul said that he regarded himself as having been arrested by Christ that he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. Oh, when that trumpet peals out and the righteous arise, shall I arise? Or shall I lie rotting in the tomb another thousand years? And when He calls His saints together, when—

***“East and west, and south and north,
Speeds each glorious angel forth,
Gathering in with glittering wings
Zion’s saints to Zion’s King,”***

shall we be there? Shall we behold the splendor of Christ's appearing? Shall we sit upon the Throne of God with Him, judging mankind? Shall we be forever with the Lord? It is for this that we are apprehended. Are you getting ready for this? Are you preparing, by His Grace, for that eternal future? I believe that all the saints will get to Heaven, but every saint ought to aspire not only to get there, but to carry, there, with him, that which will make his Heaven more glorious to God than it otherwise would be. Part of the joy of Heaven will be to remember what the Lord did by us. We are not going there to go to bed forever—we are going there to do some glorious work for Christ. How does He describe it? He says that if His servants have been faithful and diligent, He will say to one, "Have authority over ten cities," and another shall be ruler over five cities. As we have proved our ability, such will be the dominion that Christ shall give us throughout the ages to come! And a little failing, today, as it were the loss of a penny, may mean the loss of thousands of pennies in the world to come. You shall be as full as the greatest vessel, but you shall have smaller capacity. Look to that matter, now.

I believe that every action in this mortal life thrills through eternity. Time and eternity are like one tremulous mass of jelly—if you touch one particle of it here, it trembles right through, and right throughout the ages. Not a word is spoken but the echo of it shall be heard when time shall be no more. Not a deed is done that dies, especially the deeds of quickened men and women! They know not what they do—they will be astonished to find, at the Last Great Day—what they have done, for the Lord will evidently surprise His people when He says, "I was hungry, and you gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink." They will say, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You? Or thirsty, and gave You drink?" And if you apprehend to the fullest the great purpose of Christ in

apprehending you, that it is not of debt, but of Grace—not of works, but of faith, yet, in the ages to come, you shall be surprised to find how the little that you did shall bring you great reward! God gives His people good works and then rewards them for them! He works in us to will and to do, and then we will and do and He gives us a reward for willing and doing!

I wish, dear Friends, that in Heaven we might feel, “Well, I did as God helped me. I apprehended that for which my Master apprehended me.” You have no idea what you are going to do in Glory. I expect, one day, to preach to an assembled universe concerning my Lord and Master, to tell to principalities and powers what Christ has done—not to sit with a lot of you good people, some listening to me, and some, perhaps, not—but to have angels, and principalities, and powers to be my congregation! And I want to learn to preach well, here, that they may be attentive to me. Each one of you who has served your Lord shall be a monument of His love and His mercy—and the angels shall stop and read what is inscribed on you! Oh, that there might be some good letters written on you, that when Gabriel stops to read, he may clap his hands and then fly with swifter flight, as he says, “Bless the Lord for what He did for that poor man, for what He worked in that poor woman! His Grace is conspicuous there.” As you are to be seen throughout all eternity, may you be fit to be seen! May the Lord, of His Grace, work in you that which shall be to the praise of His Glory!

III. I have done when I just take a minute or two to show THE LESSONS WHICH PAUL IS TEACHING US BY THIS TEXT.

The first is this, *make sure of your apprehension by Christ Jesus*, so that you can talk like Paul about it, “That for which I am apprehended.” Pray the Lord that you may feel His hand on your shoulder, that you may feel His Grace in your heart, His blessed fetters on your feet, His Divine manacles upon your wrists. Pray that you may have no doubt about it, but may know beyond all doubt that the Lord has arrested you.

This being known, *do not let it make you idle*. Do not say, “Christ has arrested me; I am saved; nothing more is needed.” No. Why has He arrested you? He has a purpose in it. That arrest was but the beginning of a great lifework. Let it not make you idle, but let it be your encouragement. If Christ has arrested you to be holy, He will make you holy. If Christ has arrested you for usefulness, be confident in seeking it. If Christ has arrested you to make you an eternal monument of His Grace, believe that you will be, and press forward to the mark for the prize of your high calling!

Finally, let this lead *you to hope for the salvation of others*. Go forward hopefully in your service for others. Teach that Sunday school class with a firm belief that you were apprehended on purpose that John and Tom might be converted! Go and teach the girls and say, “I was apprehended to bring Mary, and Jane, and Louisa to Christ—and do not be at all doubtful about it.” This is the purpose of God—expect it to be worked out! Go to your street corner, my beloved Brother, and preach away—even when the mob disturbs you! Go from door to door with your tracts, even though they may be cast in your face. Go, city missionaries and Bible-women, to

your holy and righteous toil. Go, each one of you, to the work for which God has apprehended you, for as the Lord has apprehended you, it is for a purpose! And rest not until that purpose is fully established.

May the Lord arrest some sinners, tonight! Pray, as you go down the aisles, "Lord, arrest them! Bring them to Your dear feet and save them this night, for Jesus' sake!" Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. PHILIPPIANS 3.

The Holy Spirit indited this Epistle by the pen of His servant, Paul. May He also write it on our hearts!

Verse 1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* When you get to, "finally." When you are very near the end of your journey, still, "rejoice in the Lord." "Finally," says Paul, as if this were the end of his Epistle, the conclusion of all his teaching—"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." But never do it finally! Never come to an end of it! Rejoice in the Lord and yet, again, rejoice, and yet, again, rejoice—and as long as you live, rejoice in the Lord.

1. *To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe.* Some hearers are like the Athenian academicians—they want continually to hear something new. The Apostle says, "To have the same things written to you, is safe." So is it for you, dear Friends, to have the same Gospel, the same Jesus, the same Holy Spirit made known to you, is safe. New doctrine is dangerous doctrine!

2. *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers.* They are like dogs. If they fawn upon you, they will dirty you, if they do not bite you.

2, 3. *Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* There were some who had confidence in circumcision, who greatly troubled Paul. The Apostle says that they were, "the concision," the cutters off, of whom he would have the Philippians beware.

4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has of which he might trust in the flesh, I more.* If any man might have had confidence in the flesh, truly Paul might.

5, 6. *Circumcised the eighth day, the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.* So that I do not know what more he could have had. If a Jew had tried to select a man who had something to glory in, he could not have picked any man to stand in the front of Paul! He was truly a Jew. He had received the initiatory rite and on the right day. He was born of Law of God to the extreme. He tithed his mint and his cummin. Nobody could have anything to glory in which Paul had not.

7. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* So that, when we come to Christ, whatever we have to trust to, we must put away. We must write it on the other side of the ledger. We had entered it

as a gain—now we must set it down as a loss—it is of no value, whatever! It is a loss if it shall tempt us to trust any less in Christ.

8. *Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* Those are sweet words, “my Lord.” Remember how Thomas cried, in ecstasy, “My Lord and my God”? Paul, by faith putting his finger into the prints of the nails, says, “My Lord.”

8, 9. *For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him.* Oh, what a precious place to be found in, “in Him,” trusting in Him, hidden away in Him, a member of His body, as it were, losing myself in Him!

9. *Not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law.* He does not say, not *trusting* it, but not even *having* it, not counting it, not *thinking* it worthwhile to put down among his possessions that which he once prized so much.

9, 10. *But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him.* Paul means, “That I may know Him more than I now do,” for he knew Him and delighted in Him, but he felt as if he had not really begun to know Christ. He was like a child at school who has learned to read and to write, and knows so much that he begins to want to know more.

10, 11. *And the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* He knew that all the dead would rise again, but he aspired to the *first* resurrection—“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”

12, 13. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* Brethren, I count not myself to have *apprehended*. He did count himself as saved—he knew that he was Christ’s—but he did not count himself as having realized all that Christ meant to do for him and by him. He did not reckon that he had reached as far as he could reach, or learned all that he could learn, or done all that he could do.

13, 14. *But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* You have seen a man running very fast. How he leans forward, as though he would send his heart before him and go quicker than his legs can carry him! So did the Apostle, “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

15, 16. *Let us, therefore, as many as are mature, be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.* Let us keep all the good that we have received. Let us not give up the Truth of God that we have learned. Let us not leave the way along which we have traveled so far—and let us keep together—let perfect unanimity prove that the work of Grace is going on in one as well as in another.

17. *Brethren, be followers together of me.* In these days, certain people find fault with Paul and speak of him as if he were not Inspired, and not to be followed as Christ was, But here he expressly says what no man like Paul would ever say unless moved of the Holy Spirit, for he was modest and, by no means, anxious to push himself forward—“Brethren, be followers together of me.”

17. *And mark them which walk so as you have us for an example.* Mark them, but do not follow them. See how they walk, but do not imitate them—“Have us for an example.”

18. *(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.* I lay a stress upon the article—“They are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” Professors of religion who get into the Church and yet lead ungodly lives, are the worst enemies that the Cross of Christ has! These are the sort of men who bring tears into the minister’s eyes! These are they who break his heart! They are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.

19. *Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things).* “Who mind earthly things”—even when they profess to be minding *spiritual* things—pretending to be followers of Christ up to Heaven and yet really making a gain of the things of God here below.

20. *For our conversation is in Heaven.* Can you say that, dear Friend? Is your citizenship in Heaven? Is your conversation there? Do you often commune with your Lord upon the Throne? Judge yourselves whether it is so or not. It is a very poor thing to have a name to be in Heaven and yet never to have any converse with Heaven! I wish that we could all say that we talk more to God than we do to men, and have more business upward than we have here below.

20. *From whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.* He is coming! He is coming! Are we looking for Him? This is the true position of the Christian—looking for the appearing of his Lord!

21. *Who shall change our vile body.* “The body of our humiliation.” We have only part of the redemption while we are here. The soul is regenerated, newly-born, but the *body* is not. “The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” The redemption of the purchased possession will be perfect at the resurrection. The resurrection will be, to the body, what regeneration is to the soul! We sometimes wonder why we are sick when Christ could make us well in a moment—but the reason is that, as yet, He has not fully brought His Divine Power to bear upon the body.

21. *That it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.* May He show some part of that blessed power in us tonight! Amen.

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

PAUL APPREHENDED AND APPREHENDING NO. 2315

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 2, 1893.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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***“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected;
but I press on, that I may apprehend that for which also I am
apprehended of Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 3:12.***

OBSERVE the Apostle's condition when he wrote these words. I do not think that either you or I will be found to be in a better one. If any are, or think they are, I would suggest a question. I, for my part, would be satisfied to be just as Paul was.

He was in a position of conscious safety. He was a saved man. He knew that he was saved, for he rejoiced in Christ Jesus and had no confidence in the flesh. He knew that he was justified by faith in Christ Jesus and he counted all his own works, which formerly were his ground of trust, to be as dross and dung, that he might win Christ. He was a saved man and he knew it! I do not think that he often had doubts about that point, but yet he was in a state of conscious imperfection—“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected.” He had not yet reached his own ideal of what a Christian might be. He had not yet obtained from Christ all that he expected to obtain. He was not sitting down to rest and be thankful, but he was still hurrying on, reaching after something which was yet beyond him. He could not say, “Soul, take your ease, you have much goods laid up for many years,” but he still felt his own spiritual poverty, and he cried, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected.”

But, Beloved, let not that thought be any kind of solace to you, for I would remind you that though consciously imperfect, Paul was zealously making progress. He says, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” I know many who say that they are imperfect and they seem to be quite satisfied to be so. That was never the case with the Apostle—as long as any trace of a sinful nature or a sinful tendency remained in him, it made him cry out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” It was not because he was dead in sin that he cried in that way. It would be a new thing in this world for a sinner dead in sin to cry so, but because he was already largely delivered from sin and the reigning power of it had been broken! Therefore he felt the burden of any sort of contact with sin. A man who is in the sea, taking a plunge deep down under the water, does not feel the

weight of the water. But bring him out on the shore, put a great tub of water on his head—and see what a weight that is to him! So, while a man is in sin as his element, it is no burden to him, but when he is out of it, and not under its power, then he feels the weight of it, he grows weary under it and would gladly be rid of every particle of it.

The Apostle, I say, was conscious of imperfection, but he was also conscious that he was making progress, that he was running towards a mark, that he was leaving much behind him, and was pressing toward that which was before him. He was also in a state of anxious aspiration. He desired that he might be found in Christ, that he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead, that he might, in a word, grasp that for which Christ had grasped him. I am going to talk about that double grasp, tonight—“That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus,”

Notice that there are two forces here mentioned which are at work in every gracious man. There is Christ’s power by which He apprehends us and then there is the new power, the new life of God-given faith, by which we, in our turn, seek to apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended us. Christ has apprehended us for a purpose—we wish to realize that purpose even to the fullest. That is the intent of the Apostle’s words. Let us consider them in detail.

I. First, let us think of PAUL’S APPREHENSION BY CHRIST JESUS.

We do not often use the word, “apprehended,” now, in the sense in which it is here used. The only instance that I remember is when we speak of a policeman apprehending a person, that is, *laying hold* upon him, seizing him. At his conversion, Paul had been apprehended by his Lord. Take the word, “apprehend,” in the sense of arresting him, and it stands true of Saul of Tarsus. I need not repeat the story—you all know how that desperate rebel was going down to Damascus to persecute the saints of God. Nothing was further from his mind than the thought of becoming a Christian, but while he was riding the high horse and Damascus lay below him, just like a sheep within reach of a wolf, the Lord Jesus Christ stepped in and laid His hand on his shoulder—

**“Thus the eternal counsel ran,
‘Almighty Grace, arrest that man!’”**

And almighty Grace arrested him! He fell to the earth at the first blow. He was blinded with the second. No, not so much by a blow as by the greatness of the Light of God that shone round about him! And there he lay prostrate, broken in heart and blind in eyes—he had to be led into the city—and one of those poor men whom he had determined to haul to prison had to come and pray for him, that his eyes might be opened, that he might be baptized, and that he might thus make his confession of faith in Christ! He well says that he was “apprehended of Christ Jesus.” The King sent no sheriff’s officer to arrest him, but *He* came, *Himself*, and took him into Divine custody, laid him by the heels for three days in the dark—and then let him out into glorious liberty, an altogether changed man—to go forth to preach that faith which before he had sought to destroy!

You may not all be able to remember any special day when you were apprehended by Christ, but some of us do. We remember when we, who had been formerly carried captive by the devil at his will, found ourselves arrested by One stronger than Satan. We managed, by Divine Grace, to escape from the clutches of the devil, but we could not escape from that dear pierced hand when once it was laid upon us! We surrendered ourselves prisoners. There was no resisting, any longer, when His mighty Grace came in to arrest us. I say that some of us remember that day. Other days, notable for great events, have been forgotten, but the day when we were apprehended of Christ Jesus is stamped upon our memory, and always must be, even throughout eternity!

Since then, dear Friends, we have always felt that grip, just as *Paul always felt himself in Christ's grasp*. We have never got away from that one arrest. It was not the work of a few minutes to be remembered and to be then ended, and all over. No, at this moment we feel the same Divine hand upon us! We are prisoners, this day, unto Christ, who alone has set us free by capturing us! There was a legend among the heathen of old times, that if persons saw certain spirits in the woods, they became, from that moment, wonderfully changed—they became possessed by the spirit which they saw! They had, as we say in our language, a twist. I remember when—

***“I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His Cross I stood”***

and I have had a twist ever since! I never got over it and never expect to. I hope that twist will get a more and more powerful hold over me. It turned everything upside down. It changed the right into the left. It made the bitter sweet and the sweet bitter—the light darkness, and the darkness light. It was a wonderful twist and, as I say again, that twist still continues! When it has once been experienced, there is no escaping from it. We can say not only, “I was apprehended,” but as the text has it, “I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” He still binds us with the fetters of His love. We still sit at His dear feet, enthralled by His beauties. We are still under the Omnipotent fascination of His altogether lovely face. We could not depart from Him if we would and we could not if we could! If we went away from Christ, to whom would we go? He has the Words of eternal life! His love holds and binds us faster than fetters of brass. We must forever be apprehended by Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, Beloved, *this arrest of Paul by Christ was the force and motive of his whole later life*. Because Paul had been apprehended by Christ, he began to live differently from what he had ever lived before. He had an apprehension that he had lived amiss. He had an apprehension that his evil life would end in eternal destruction. He fled away from all his apprehensions of the wrath to come, to the Christ who had apprehended him in quite another sense! He had thus been apprehended, pressed into the service of Christ and made, by that pressure, to become a volunteer, for here there is a paradox—all Christ's soldiers are pressed men and volunteers, too! There are two senses, the one in which Grace constrains them, and

the other in which their will, being made truly free, runs delightfully after Christ! But having once been apprehended, the Apostle never shook off Christ's grasp—he began to live as an apprehended man. He said to himself, "I cannot follow the world, for Christ has apprehended me. I cannot go after false doctrine, for Christ has apprehended me and crucified me with Himself. I cannot cease to preach the Gospel. I cannot become a self-seeker. I cannot do anything but live for Him who died for me, for the Master has apprehended me. He has put me under parole to keep close to Him forever and I must not, cannot, dare not, would not leave Him! I am His apprehended one henceforth and even forever."

I want your hearts to talk over this first part of the sermon. Never mind my faltering tongue—let your own hearts speak. If Christ has never apprehended you, well then, you have nothing to do with this matter, and you may leave it alone. But if He has arrested you, acknowledge the soft impeachment, tonight. Say in your heart, "Yes, He has, indeed, laid hold on me, and my heart's desire is that He would bring every thought into captivity to Him. From henceforth I would be led in triumph by Him, His captive all the days of my life, to show the power of His illustrious love, the victories of His Grace!" Oh, that we might, each one, say with Paul, "I am apprehended of Christ Jesus"!

Ah, dear Souls, you who have never been apprehended of Him, I hope that you will be, tonight! I pray God that you may run away from your old master, the devil, and not give him even five minutes' notice, but just start off directly! And while you are a runaway slave, may my Divine Master come and lay His hand upon you and say, "You are Mine. You never did really belong to your old master and even though you promised and swore that you would be his, thus says the Lord, 'Your Covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand.' I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are Mine, and now I only take what I bought on the tree. I take by power, by might, by main force, by Grace, what I purchased with the blood of My hands and feet and heart. I will have you, for you are Mine." Lord, will You thus arrest some sinner, tonight, to the praise of the glory of Your Grace?

II. Now let us notice PAUL'S DESIRE TO APPREHEND THAT FOR WHICH THE LORD HAD APPREHENDED HIM.

Well, why did Christ apprehend Paul? First, it was *to convert him completely*—to make a new man of him, to turn him from all his old ways and pursuits—and put him on quite a different road. Now, Brothers and Sisters, that is why the Lord apprehended us—to make us new creatures in Christ Jesus! Let us pray God to carry out that design to the fullest, to make us altogether new creatures. Do not let us be satisfied while there are any remains of the old nature—let us cry to the Lord to drive the Canaanites out—and though they have chariots of iron, let us, by Divine Grace, drive them all out! Pray, "Lord Jesus, You have come to turn me from every sin—turn me and I shall be turned! You have provided medicine for every disease—Lord, heal me and I shall be healed!"

Do not be satisfied, any of you, with half a conversion! I am afraid that there are a great many who have not much more than half a conversion. I

know a man—I hope he is converted, but I wish that the Lord would convert his temper. He prays very nicely, but you should see him when he is red in the face with anger at his wife! I know a man—I hope he is a Christian, it is not for me to judge—but I wish that the Lord would convert his pocket. It needs a button taken off, for it is very difficult to get it open! It is very easy to put something in, but hard to get anything out for any good purpose. I know a great many professing Christians who do not seem to have had what we might call a thorough conversion. We need the power which has arrested us to do its work completely—till there is not any part of us but what has been renewed by Grace and sanctified to the service and Glory of God. Brethren, seek to apprehend that for which Christ has apprehended you, namely, a thorough conversion, a turning of yourself from every evil way!

But the Lord apprehended each one of His people, in the next place, *to make them like to Christ*. This is the great design of electing love—“Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.” That is the great objective of the very first act of Divine Love—and whatever the Holy Spirit does in us, He does it with this aim to make us like unto the Firstborn among many brethren. This will be our satisfaction in eternity—“I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness.” Come, then, Beloved, if Christ has arrested us to make us like Himself, let us not rest till we have become more like He! Perhaps the Lord has made you like Christ in some respects, but not in all. Or if you are like Christ in all respects, yet the likeness is dim, shadowy, rather in outline than in filling-up. Though we may be likenesses of Christ, there is not one of us who does not need many touches before we shall be good likenesses! Some, I fear, are *caricatures* of Christ. May the Lord have pity upon us if that is the case, and go on with His work, and take out all the blotches and blemishes, and paint the true portrait till, at last, everybody who sees us will say, “There is Christ in that man—he is a likeness of Christ”!

We may not all be paintings on ivory. We may not all be taken on a sheet of silver, but the Lord’s portrait, even though it is on a piece of clay, has still great beauties in it. And as He intends to make us like Christ, O Beloved, let us aspire to this! Come, get it into your voice and get it into your heart! You are to be like Christ and as you are to be so, and this is the very reason why Christ has arrested you, pine after it, thirst after it, labor after it! Trust God to work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure, and while He is doing that, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling because it is God that works in you!

If you turn to Paul’s description of his own conversion, which he gave to Agrippa, you will find that the Lord said to him that He had appeared to him to *make him a witness* of that which he had seen, and of that which He would afterwards reveal to him. So, in the third place, we have been apprehended of Christ that we may be *witnesses* for Him, first *seeing* a great deal and then *telling* what we have seen, which is the other sense of the word, “witness.” A witness sees or hears and then he tells in court what he has seen or heard and so he becomes a witness to others as once he was a witness to himself. Now, the Lord has apprehended every Chris-

tian, here, to see their Savior, to see His Grace, to see His love, to see His power, to see all the wonders which the Holy Spirit works among men—and then to go and talk of these things to others, that they, also, hearing from the lips of a witness, may be led to believe by the power of the Holy Spirit!

Beloved, if the Lord Jesus Christ has apprehended you that you may be a witness, be on the lookout! Keep your eyes open! See all that you can see. Every Prophet of olden times was called a Seer. You cannot prophesy to others until you have been a *seer* yourself! Pray that you may see all that is in the Word. Cry, “Open You my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.” Pray that you may see the movements of God in Providence, and may see the hand of God in your own heart and your own experience. Pray God, first, to make you a witness, an observer—and then tell out to others what you have tasted and handled and felt of the Word of life—and be a faithful witness for your Lord and Master all your days. Do not some professing Christians, who are here, tonight, feel a little uncomfortable? You have not yet seen all that you should see and have you not kept very much to yourselves what you have seen? I would that you could apprehend that for which also you are apprehended of Christ Jesus, seeing what He means you to see and then, telling out what He means you to tell. May the Lord instruct us more and more that we may fulfill all His good pleasure!

But, next, we were converted in order *to be the instruments of the conversion of others*. Paul, when he was speaking to Agrippa, expressly mentioned how the Lord said, “Delivering you from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send you, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me.” So, you see, there was a certain number of souls for whom Paul was apprehended that he might be the instrument of their salvation! Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed, “Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You: as You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”

Now, that power Christ distributes among His people. There is a certain number of persons who will receive eternal life through my ministry. There is a certain number who will receive eternal life through another man’s ministry. I wonder how many have, in this way, been appointed to you, that you might be the means of their salvation? You were not saved that you might only go to Heaven—you were saved that you might take others there with you! In the olden days, when a man needed pigeons, he used to take a dove of his own and smear its wings all over with perfume, and then, when it was very sweet to smell, he threw it up into the air and it went into other dovecots, and all the pigeons went after it. And when it came back, it brought them home to its master. That was a roguish trick, but it is a blessed method of bringing poor flying doves to Christ! When your wings are sweet with Christ’s love. When every time that you move,

you perfume the air with holiness and mercy and Grace, others will flock around you and fly with you like doves to their windows!

I like to think of the many that God has appointed me to bring to Him. I cannot tell you how many I have met during the past week—they have made my heart dance for joy. Last Tuesday, when we had a large company of deacons of our Metropolitan Churches here, one would steal up to me, as I sat there shaking hands, and say, “On such a day, I heard you preach from such a text. I was a careless young man, but you brought me to the Savior.” Another would come and say, “God bless you, Sir! I remember when you were the means of leading me to the Savior.” One took my hand with a ferocious grip and could not say a word till he had shed many a tear. These things make us very happy and my heart’s desire is that I may get all that Christ means me to get, that I may apprehend all that, or *them*, for which He apprehended me!

I want every Christian Brother and Sister, here, to feel the same. There is somebody in the world whom you have to bring to Christ. I do not know where he is, or who he is, but you had better look out for him. Come, seek now. Say, “I would not lose a single pearl, though it lies deep under the waves of the sea, if my great Lord intends me to dive for it, and bring it up into the Light.” Get to your searching after the hidden treasures and be intent, day and night, in the power of the Spirit, that you may apprehend that measure of usefulness for which you were apprehended of Christ Jesus! It will be a high honor to appear, at last, as a winner of souls! Kings might doff their diadems and forget that they ever wore them, in comparison with that crown which God will give to those who turn many to righteousness, for they shall shine “as the stars forever and ever!” Aspire to this, my dear Friends, and lose none of those for which you have been apprehended of Christ Jesus your Lord.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the Lord said to Ananias about Paul, “I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” Well, now, some of you were apprehended on purpose *that you might suffer for Christ’s sake*. Did I see you wince at that word? Well, but if usefulness by labor is an honor, usefulness by suffering is a still greater honor! In Heaven, the brightest crown that any saint wears is that which is set with the rubies of martyrdom. When I have read the stories of those holy men and women who died in Roman amphitheatres, or were burned to death over at Smithfield, yonder, I must confess that I have envied them. To preach Christ seems so little compared with having Grace enough to suffer for His name’s sake! As one reads of their intense suffering, one naturally shrinks from it and says, “I thank God that I am not called to endure that trial.” But yet, if we were called to it, we would have *Grace given to us to bear it!* What an honor it was for them, for the sake of the Prince of martyrs, the Leader of the sacramental hosts of God’s elect, to be able and willing to give themselves up to death!

Well, you may be called to suffer for Christ’s sake, but, at any rate, you *are* called to this—to lay your all upon His altar, to devote yourself, your substance, all that you are and all that you have, to His honor and Glory! You are apprehended of Christ Jesus for this purpose—try to apprehend

it. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let us resolve to live wholly unto Christ! Let us bid Him take our hands, feet, heart, eyes, brain and every faculty of our being! May God get as much glory as He can, out of us, or reflect as much of His Glory as is possible through even our weakness and infirmities! But this is why we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus, that we may be wholly and only the Lord's, "For the love of Christ constrains us because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." Here is the prize of your high calling—are you ready to run for it? God help you to do so, to apprehend, in personal self-sacrifice, all that for which Christ has apprehended you!

But that is not all. Paul said that he regarded himself as having been arrested by Christ that he might attain unto the resurrection from among the dead. Oh, when that trumpet peals out and the righteous arise, shall I arise? Or shall I lie rotting in the tomb another thousand years? And when He calls His saints together, when—

***"East and west, and south and north,
Speeds each glorious angel forth,
Gathering in with glittering wings
Zion's saints to Zion's King,"***

shall we be there? Shall we behold the splendor of Christ's appearing? Shall we sit upon the Throne of God with Him, judging mankind? Shall we be forever with the Lord? It is for this that we are apprehended. Are you getting ready for this? Are you preparing, by His Grace, for that eternal future? I believe that all the saints will get to Heaven, but every saint ought to aspire not only to get there, but to carry, there, with him, that which will make his Heaven more glorious to God than it otherwise would be. Part of the joy of Heaven will be to remember what the Lord did by us. We are not going there to go to bed forever—we are going there to do some glorious work for Christ. How does He describe it? He says that if His servants have been faithful and diligent, He will say to one, "Have authority over ten cities," and another shall be ruler over five cities. As we have proved our ability, such will be the dominion that Christ shall give us throughout the ages to come! And a little failing, today, as it were the loss of a penny, may mean the loss of thousands of pennies in the world to come. You shall be as full as the greatest vessel, but you shall have smaller capacity. Look to that matter, now.

I believe that every action in this mortal life thrills through eternity. Time and eternity are like one tremulous mass of jelly—if you touch one particle of it here, it trembles right through, and right throughout the ages. Not a word is spoken but the echo of it shall be heard when time shall be no more. Not a deed is done that dies, especially the deeds of quickened men and women! They know not what they do—they will be astonished to find, at the Last Great Day—what they have done, for the Lord will evidently surprise His people when He says, "I was hungry, and you gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink." They will say, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You? Or thirsty, and gave You drink?" And if you apprehend to the fullest the great purpose of Christ in

apprehending you, that it is not of debt, but of Grace—not of works, but of faith, yet, in the ages to come, you shall be surprised to find how the little that you did shall bring you great reward! God gives His people good works and then rewards them for them! He works in us to will and to do, and then we will and do and He gives us a reward for willing and doing!

I wish, dear Friends, that in Heaven we might feel, “Well, I did as God helped me. I apprehended that for which my Master apprehended me.” You have no idea what you are going to do in Glory. I expect, one day, to preach to an assembled universe concerning my Lord and Master, to tell to principalities and powers what Christ has done—not to sit with a lot of you good people, some listening to me, and some, perhaps, not—but to have angels, and principalities, and powers to be my congregation! And I want to learn to preach well, here, that they may be attentive to me. Each one of you who has served your Lord shall be a monument of His love and His mercy—and the angels shall stop and read what is inscribed on you! Oh, that there might be some good letters written on you, that when Gabriel stops to read, he may clap his hands and then fly with swifter flight, as he says, “Bless the Lord for what He did for that poor man, for what He worked in that poor woman! His Grace is conspicuous there.” As you are to be seen throughout all eternity, may you be fit to be seen! May the Lord, of His Grace, work in you that which shall be to the praise of His Glory!

III. I have done when I just take a minute or two to show THE LESSONS WHICH PAUL IS TEACHING US BY THIS TEXT.

The first is this, *make sure of your apprehension by Christ Jesus*, so that you can talk like Paul about it, “That for which I am apprehended.” Pray the Lord that you may feel His hand on your shoulder, that you may feel His Grace in your heart, His blessed fetters on your feet, His Divine manacles upon your wrists. Pray that you may have no doubt about it, but may know beyond all doubt that the Lord has arrested you.

This being known, *do not let it make you idle*. Do not say, “Christ has arrested me; I am saved; nothing more is needed.” No. Why has He arrested you? He has a purpose in it. That arrest was but the beginning of a great lifework. Let it not make you idle, but let it be your encouragement. If Christ has arrested you to be holy, He will make you holy. If Christ has arrested you for usefulness, be confident in seeking it. If Christ has arrested you to make you an eternal monument of His Grace, believe that you will be, and press forward to the mark for the prize of your high calling!

Finally, let this lead *you to hope for the salvation of others*. Go forward hopefully in your service for others. Teach that Sunday school class with a firm belief that you were apprehended on purpose that John and Tom might be converted! Go and teach the girls and say, “I was apprehended to bring Mary, and Jane, and Louisa to Christ—and do not be at all doubtful about it.” This is the purpose of God—expect it to be worked out! Go to your street corner, my beloved Brother, and preach away—even when the mob disturbs you! Go from door to door with your tracts, even though they may be cast in your face. Go, city missionaries and Bible-women, to

your holy and righteous toil. Go, each one of you, to the work for which God has apprehended you, for as the Lord has apprehended you, it is for a purpose! And rest not until that purpose is fully established.

May the Lord arrest some sinners, tonight! Pray, as you go down the aisles, "Lord, arrest them! Bring them to Your dear feet and save them this night, for Jesus' sake!" Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON. PHILIPPIANS 3.

The Holy Spirit indited this Epistle by the pen of His servant, Paul. May He also write it on our hearts!

Verse 1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* When you get to, "finally." When you are very near the end of your journey, still, "rejoice in the Lord." "Finally," says Paul, as if this were the end of his Epistle, the conclusion of all his teaching—"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." But never do it finally! Never come to an end of it! Rejoice in the Lord and yet, again, rejoice, and yet, again, rejoice—and as long as you live, rejoice in the Lord.

1. *To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe.* Some hearers are like the Athenian academicians—they want continually to hear something new. The Apostle says, "To have the same things written to you, is safe." So is it for you, dear Friends, to have the same Gospel, the same Jesus, the same Holy Spirit made known to you, is safe. New doctrine is dangerous doctrine!

2. *Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers.* They are like dogs. If they fawn upon you, they will dirty you, if they do not bite you.

2, 3. *Beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* There were some who had confidence in circumcision, who greatly troubled Paul. The Apostle says that they were, "the concision," the cutters off, of whom he would have the Philippians beware.

4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has of which he might trust in the flesh, I more.* If any man might have had confidence in the flesh, truly Paul might.

5, 6. *Circumcised the eighth day, the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.* So that I do not know what more he could have had. If a Jew had tried to select a man who had something to glory in, he could not have picked any man to stand in the front of Paul! He was truly a Jew. He had received the initiatory rite and on the right day. He was born of Law of God to the extreme. He tithed his mint and his cummin. Nobody could have anything to glory in which Paul had not.

7. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* So that, when we come to Christ, whatever we have to trust to, we must put away. We must write it on the other side of the ledger. We had entered it

as a gain—now we must set it down as a loss—it is of no value, whatever! It is a loss if it shall tempt us to trust any less in Christ.

8. *Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.* Those are sweet words, “my Lord.” Remember how Thomas cried, in ecstasy, “My Lord and my God”? Paul, by faith putting his finger into the prints of the nails, says, “My Lord.”

8, 9. *For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him.* Oh, what a precious place to be found in, “in Him,” trusting in Him, hidden away in Him, a member of His body, as it were, losing myself in Him!

9. *Not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law.* He does not say, not *trusting* it, but not even *having* it, not counting it, not *thinking* it worthwhile to put down among his possessions that which he once prized so much.

9, 10. *But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know Him.* Paul means, “That I may know Him more than I now do,” for he knew Him and delighted in Him, but he felt as if he had not really begun to know Christ. He was like a child at school who has learned to read and to write, and knows so much that he begins to want to know more.

10, 11. *And the power of His Resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* He knew that all the dead would rise again, but he aspired to the *first* resurrection—“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”

12, 13. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* Brethren, I count not myself to have *apprehended*. He did count himself as saved—he knew that he was Christ’s—but he did not count himself as having realized all that Christ meant to do for him and by him. He did not reckon that he had reached as far as he could reach, or learned all that he could learn, or done all that he could do.

13, 14. *But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* You have seen a man running very fast. How he leans forward, as though he would send his heart before him and go quicker than his legs can carry him! So did the Apostle, “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

15, 16. *Let us, therefore, as many as are mature, be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.* Let us keep all the good that we have received. Let us not give up the Truth of God that we have learned. Let us not leave the way along which we have traveled so far—and let us keep together—let perfect unanimity prove that the work of Grace is going on in one as well as in another.

17. *Brethren, be followers together of me.* In these days, certain people find fault with Paul and speak of him as if he were not Inspired, and not to be followed as Christ was, But here he expressly says what no man like Paul would ever say unless moved of the Holy Spirit, for he was modest and, by no means, anxious to push himself forward—“Brethren, be followers together of me.”

17. *And mark them which walk so as you have us for an example.* Mark them, but do not follow them. See how they walk, but do not imitate them—“Have us for an example.”

18. *(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.* I lay a stress upon the article—“They are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” Professors of religion who get into the Church and yet lead ungodly lives, are the worst enemies that the Cross of Christ has! These are the sort of men who bring tears into the minister’s eyes! These are they who break his heart! They are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.

19. *Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things).* “Who mind earthly things”—even when they profess to be minding *spiritual* things—pretending to be followers of Christ up to Heaven and yet really making a gain of the things of God here below.

20. *For our conversation is in Heaven.* Can you say that, dear Friend? Is your citizenship in Heaven? Is your conversation there? Do you often commune with your Lord upon the Throne? Judge yourselves whether it is so or not. It is a very poor thing to have a name to be in Heaven and yet never to have any converse with Heaven! I wish that we could all say that we talk more to God than we do to men, and have more business upward than we have here below.

20. *From whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.* He is coming! He is coming! Are we looking for Him? This is the true position of the Christian—looking for the appearing of his Lord!

21. *Who shall change our vile body.* “The body of our humiliation.” We have only part of the redemption while we are here. The soul is regenerated, newly-born, but the *body* is not. “The body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” The redemption of the purchased possession will be perfect at the resurrection. The resurrection will be, to the body, what regeneration is to the soul! We sometimes wonder why we are sick when Christ could make us well in a moment—but the reason is that, as yet, He has not fully brought His Divine Power to bear upon the body.

21. *That it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.* May He show some part of that blessed power in us tonight! Amen.

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A THREEFOLD SLOGAN

NO. 3536

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

“One thing is necessary.”
Luke 10:44.

“One thing I know.”
John 9:25.

“One thing I do.”
Philippians 3:13.

[The original title of this sermon was A THREEFOLD MOTTO.]

I HAVE “one thing” in view—“one thing” on which I want to rivet your attention. Forbear with me if I detain you a few minutes before announcing a text. It has been said that a man of one book is terrible in the force of his convictions. He has studied it so well, digested it so thoroughly and understands it so profoundly, that it is perilous to encounter him in controversy. No man becomes eminent in any pursuit unless he gives himself up to it with all the powers and passions of his nature—body and soul. Michelangelo had never been so great a painter if his love of art had not become so enthusiastic that he frequently did not take off his garments to sleep by the week together—nor had Handel ever been such a great musician if his ardor for celestial sounds had not led him to use the keys of his harpsichord till, by constant fingering, they became the shape of spoons. A man must have one pursuit and consecrate all his powers to one purpose if he would excel or rise to eminence among his fellows.

When streams of water divide themselves into innumerable streams, they usually create a swamp which proves dangerous to the inhabitants of the neighborhood. Could all those streams be dammed up into one channel, and made to flow in one direction, they might resolve themselves into a navigable river, bearing commerce to the ocean and enriching the people who dwelt upon its banks. To obtain one thing, one comprehensive blessing from Heaven, has been the objective of many a saintly prayer, like that of David, “Unite my heart to fear Your name.” The advice of Paul was, “Set not your affection upon things on earth,” not, “your affections,” as it is often misquoted. The Apostle would have all the affections tied up into one affection—and that one concentrated affection not set upon earthly things—but upon things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God! The concurrence of all our powers and capacities with one single impulse, to obtain one objective and to produce one result, is one great aim of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

The “one thing” concerning which I am now about to talk very seriously to you will require three texts to elucidate it. There are three pithy passages of Holy Scripture which I shall endeavor to press home on your heart and conscience.

I. ONE THING NECESSARY.

Our first text is to be found in the Gospel according to Luke 10:44, “One thing is necessary.” This one thing, according to this passage, is *faith in Christ Jesus*, the sitting down at the Master’s feet, the drinking in of His Word. If I may expand for a minute the “one thing,” without seeming to make 20 things of that which is but one, I will refer it to the possession of a new life. This life is given to us when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are created anew in Christ Jesus. And it develops itself in a simple confidence in Jesus, in a hearty obedience to Jesus, in a desire to be like Jesus and in a constant yearning to be near to Jesus. “One thing is necessary”—that one thing is *salvation*—worked in us by the Holy Spirit, through faith which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. The new heart, the right spirit, a filial fear of God, love to Jesus—this is the “one thing necessary.” How I trust you all know how to distinguish things essential from things convenient, and that you are more concerned about necessary things than about things merely attractive, or, at most, but an accessory to your welfare! The little child may admire the field which is covered with red and blue flowers. The farmer cares nothing for these flowers—he delights in the wheat that is ripening for the sickle. So our childish minds are often fascinated with the flaunting flowers of fortune and fashion—craving after wealth, fame and worldly distinction—but our better reason, if it is allowed to speak, will prefer the necessary things, the things which we must have, or else must perish. We may do without earthly goods, for thousands have been happy in life and triumphant in death without any of the luxury which riches can purchase. The heart’s love of his fellow creatures has been fairly won by many a humble man who never courted popular applause. The patience of the poor has often counted for fine gold, while the pride of the affluent has passed for nothing but foul dross. Even lack of health, Heaven’s priceless blessing to mortals here below, has not hindered some precious sufferers from serving their generation, glorifying God in a martyrdom of pain and bequeathing treasures of piety to a grateful posterity. Ten thousand things are convenient. Thousands of things are desirable. Hundreds of things are to be sought for, but there is one thing, only *one thing*, the one thing we have described to you, of which our Savior speaks as the “one thing necessary.”

And, oh, how necessary it is! Necessary for your children—they are growing up about you and much joy they give you—for you can see in them many budding excellences. To your partial eyes they give promise of goodness, if not of greatness! They will be the comfort of your declining

years. You have carefully watched their education. Not a whit of their moral habits have you failed to overlook. To give them a fair start in the world has been your fond desire till their portion is the fruit of your providence. From perils you would protect them. Lest they should have to rough it, perhaps, as much as their father before them, you would pilot them through the straits. Good! But, dear parents, do remember that “one thing is necessary” for your children, that they may commence life, continue in life and close life honorably. It is well that they should be educated. It is well that morality should be instilled into them, but this is not enough! Alas, we have seen many leave the purest parental influences to plunge into the foulest sins! Their education has become but a tool for iniquity, and the money with which they might have helped themselves to competence has been squandered away in vice. “One thing is necessary” for that bright-eyed boy! Oh, if you can take him to the Savior, and if the blessing of the Good Shepherd shall alight upon him and renew him while yet a child, the best will have been done for him—yes, his one chief need supplied! And if that dear girl, before she comes to womanhood, shall have been led to that blessed Savior who rejects none that come to Him, she will have received all she shall need for time and for eternity! Quicken your prayers, then, dear parents. Think of your children, to seek their welfare more intelligently. Be more importunate in intercession on their behalf! Truly, this is the one thing necessary for them.

One thing, too, is necessary for that young man just leaving home to go out as an apprentice and learn his trade. That is a trying time for an untried hand. The heart may well flutter as one, young and inexperienced, reflects that he is now about to sail, not on a coasting voyage, but to put fairly out to sea. Before long it will be seen whether those fair professions had the Truths of God as a foundation. He will get to London—many of you have passed through this ordeal! The Metropolis, what a maze it seemed to you at first, and with what amazement you surveyed it! What with propensities within your breast, and profuse attractions outside—temptation held you spell-bound! What could not be done in the village—what you dared not *think* of in the little market town, seems easy to be done unobserved in the great city! Hundreds of fingers point you to the haunts of pleasure, the home of vice, the path to Hell! Ah, mother and father, you present the Bible as your parting gift. You write the youth’s name on the flyleaf. You offer your prayers and you shed your tears for him. Steals there not over you the conviction that the one thing he needs you cannot pack in his trunk, nor can you send it up to him by a post office order? The one thing necessary is that Christ should be formed in his heart the hope of glory! With that he would begin life well. A sword of the true Jerusalem metal, that will not break in the heat of the conflict, will be serviceable all his journey through. Do I address

some young man who has not forgotten his mother's kind remarks when he left home? Let me just echo them, and say to him, One thing you lack! Oh, seek it, seek it now! Before going out of this house, seek till, through Grace, you obtain this one thing necessary which shall bear you safely to the skies!

But "one thing is necessary," not merely for those youngsters at home, or for those about to go abroad in the world. One thing is necessary *for the business man*. "Ah," he says, "I need a great many things." But what, I ask, is the one thing? You speak of "the necessary." You call ready cash "*the indispensable*." "Give me this," says the man of the world, "and I don't care about anything else! Recommend your religion to whom you please, but let me have solid gold and silver, and I will be well content." Ah, Sirs, you delude yourselves with phantoms! You fondly dream that wealth in your hands would count for more than it has ever done for your fellows. You must have seen some men make large fortunes whom you knew to be very miserable. They have retired from business to get a little rest, and yet they could find no rest in their retirement! You must have known others who, the more they got, the more they have wanted, for they have swallowed a horseleech, and it has cried, "Give, give!" Of course, you never suspected that the money did the mischief, or that the precious metal poisoned the heart. But are you in quest of happiness? It lies not in investments, whether in government bonds or mortgages, or stocks or debentures, or gold or silver. These properties are profitable. They can be used to promote happiness. As accessories to our welfare, they may often prove to be blessings, but if accredited with intrinsic worth they will eat as does a canker! Money circulated is a medium of public benefit, while money hoarded is a means of private discomfort! A man is but a muckraker who is forever seeking to scrape everything to himself. A miser is bound to be miserable. Before high Heaven, he is an object to make the angels weep! One thing is necessary for you merchants, brokers and warehousemen to keep you from sinking under your anxieties and losses, or to preserve you from becoming sordid and selfish through your successes and lest your greed should increase with your gains! One thing is necessary that your life may be a true life, or else, when it comes to its end, all that can be said of you will amount to this, "He died worth so much." Must that be your only memorial? When you depart from this world, the poor and needy will not miss you. Widow and orphans will not grieve for you! The Church militant will not mourn! The bright spirits above will not be waiting to greet you. The grand climax of your career—a will! A testament sworn under a very large sum! What shall it profit any man what fortune he may have amassed, if he loses his soul?

Do you think that riches possessed in this world will procure any respect in the nether regions? I have heard that in the old Fleet Prison, the

thief who was put into jail for stealing ten thousand pounds thought himself a gentleman in comparison with those common fellows who were put in for some paltry debt of 20 or 25 pounds! There are no such distinctions in Hell! You who can boast your talents of gold and talents of silver, if cast away, shall be as complete wrecks as those who never had copper or silver, but lived and died in privation and poverty! You need one thing, and if you get this one thing, your wealth shall prove a blessing—otherwise it will be a curse! With this one thing your sufficiency for the day guaranteed to you by promise shall make you as one of Heaven's favorites, fed by the hand of God, always needy, but never neglected. You aged folk—there are some such here—shall I have to remind any of you that one thing is necessary—yes, most necessary to you? Death has already put his bony palm upon your head and frozen your hair to the whiteness of that winter in which all your strength must fail, and all your beauty fade. Oh, if *you* have no Savior! You will soon have to quit these transitory scenes. The young may die, but the old *must*. To die without a Savior will be dreary and dreadful! Then, after death, the judgment! Brave old man, how will your courage stand that outlook, if you have none to plead your cause? Oh, aged woman, you will soon be in the scales—very soon must your character be weighed. If it is said of you, "Tekel, she is weighed in the balances and found wanting," there will be no opportunity to get right or adjust your relations to God or to your fellow creatures. Your lamp will have gone out. There will be no chance of rekindling it! If lost, forever lost—forever in the dark—forever cast away! Little enough will it avail you, then, that you have nourished and brought up children. It will not suffice you, then, that you paid your debts honestly. Vain the plea that you attended a place of worship and were always respected in the neighborhood! ONE THING is necessary! Lacking that, you will turn out to have been a fool! Notwithstanding many opportunities and repeated invitations, you have rejected the one thing—the one only thing—what an irreparable mistake! Oh, how you will weep as one disappointed! How you will gnash your teeth as do those who upbraid themselves! You will mourn forever, and your self-reproach shall know no end!

I wish I could move you, as I desire, to feel as I feel, myself—that this one thing is necessary to every unconverted person here present. Some of you have already got this one choice thing that is so necessary. Hold it fast! Never let it go! Grace gave it to you—Divine Grace will keep it for you—Grace will hold you true to it. Never be ashamed of it. Prize it beyond all cost! But as for you who have it not—I think I hear your funeral knell pealing in my ears, and as you speed away, your spirits made to fly for very fear, right into the arms of Justice, I think I hear your bitter cry, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended and we are not saved!" I would gladly pluck you by the skirts, if I could, and say to you, "Why

not seek the one thing necessary without more ado? Get it now! It will not in any way hurt you. It will make you happy, here, and blessed hereafter." It is as necessary for this life as for the next, as necessary for the exchange as for the sick chamber, as necessary for the street and for the shop as for the dying bed and for the Day of Judgment. One thing—one thing is necessary! And now allow me to stop before taking you a stage further. Allow me, as it were, to change horses. I must take another text—

II. ONE THING KNOWN.

It is in the Gospel according to John, the 9th Chapter, and the 25th verse, and these are the words, "One thing I know."

The man who was born blind, whose eyes were opened at the pool of Siloam, said, "One thing I know." This simple statement I want to turn into a pointed question. Among the many things, dear Friends, that you are acquainted with, do you know the one thing that this poor man knew, "Whereas I was blind, now I see"? Here is a wealth of self-knowledge in this single avowal. Little enough, I daresay, he knew about other people, but he knew a great deal about himself! He was well aware that he once was blind—and he was quite positive that he now could see. Oh, can you say it with sincerity, "I know that I was once blind—I could see no beauty in Christ, though I thought I saw great beauties in the world. Then I could not love God. I did not hate sin. I had no repentance, nor had I any faith. I was blind, but now—oh, blessed change—now I see my sin and weep over it! Now I see a Savior, and I trust Him! Now I see His beauties and I admire Him! Now I see His service and I delight to spend my strength in it! One thing I know." What a marvelous experience of a marvelous change this implies! Nor can its importance be overrated. There is no going to Heaven unless you undergo a change which shall make you entirely new and make all things entirely new to you. A young convert once said, "I do not know what is happening—either the world is changed, or else I am, for nothing seems to me to be the same as once it was." Ah, this old Bible, what a dry Book it used to be, but, oh, how it abounds in marrow and fatness now! Prayer—what a tedious duty, once, but what a delightful exercise now! The going up to God's House on the Sabbath—used it not to be a weariness of the flesh? How much better to be in the fields! Yet now, how delightful we feel, to assemble with the Lord's saints! With what pleasure we hail the festal morn! All things are altered. Behold, all things are become new! What we once hated, we love, and what we loved, we hate! Is it so, dear Hearer—is it so with you?

Do not, I pray you, be content with mere reformation. Were you before a drunk, and are you now a teetotaler? Good—very good! Yet, good as it is, it will not save your soul! Dishonest and knavish you once were, but truthful and trustworthy you may now be—yet rely not upon it for salvation! In former days, unchaste—by stern resolve you may have given up

the favorite lust—but even that will not save you! Those who never fell into your foul sloughs need the change, too. “You must be born-again.” You must have an entire renewal—a radical change! It is not cutting off the limbs of a tree, nor shifting it to another place, that will convert a bramble into a vine. The sap must be changed. The heart must be renewed. The inner man must be made completely new. Is it so with you? Why, I think if some of us were to meet our old selves walking down the street, we would hardly know ourselves! ‘Tis true, old self has taken good care to knock at our door pretty often since. Of all the knocks we hear, not even excepting that of the devil, there is none we dread so much! The knock of the old man when he says, “Let me in with my corruptions and lusts, and let me reign and have my own way.” No, old man, you were once ourselves, but go your way, for we have put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man—we cannot know you, for one thing we know now that we knew not before—whereas we were blind, now we see!

Need I linger any longer upon this point? Let it suffice if I leave it as a kind of awakening question upon the heart and conscience. There are not 20 things, but there is ONE THING you have to enquire about. Do you know for sure this one thing—that you are not now what you used to be? Do you know that Jesus has made the difference? That Jesus has opened the eyes that were once without sight? That you now see Jesus, and seeing, you love Him? Our third subject is—

III. ONE THING DONE.

The text is in the 3rd Chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, at the 13th verse. There the Apostle Paul says, “One thing I do.”

Pray observe that I did not introduce “*doing*” first. That would not be appropriate. We do not begin with *doing*. The one thing necessary is not doing. Coming to Christ and trusting Him, must take the lead. Not until after you have got the one thing necessary, and know that you have got it, and are conscious that, whereas you were blind, now you see, can you be fit to take the next step—“one thing I do.” And what is that one thing? “Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” It seems, then, that the Apostle gave his whole mind up to the glorifying of God by his spiritual life. He was never content with what he was. If he had a little faith, he sought for more. If he had a little hope, he aimed to obtain more. If he had some degree of virtue, he coveted more. Oh, Christians, never be satisfied with being merely saved! Up with you! Away! Off! Go onward to the high mountains, to the clearer light, to the brighter joy! If saved and brought, like the shipwrecked mariner, to shore—is that enough? Yes, for the moment it is enough to guarantee the purest satisfaction and the warmest congratulations. But the mariner must seek a livelihood as long as he lives. He must put forth his energies. Whatever avocations open up before him, he

must vigorously seek such favors of fortune as may possibly be within his reach. Just so, let it be with you. Saved from the deep which threatened to swallow you up, rejoice that you are preserved from death, but resolve that the life vouchsafed to you shall be active, earnest, vigorous, fruitful in every good deed and work! Be diligent as your traders are! See how they wake their servants up in the morning, how they scold them if they are not diligent. This man must be hurried to one place, and that man to another. How sharp they speak! How quickly they move about! They will do their business and they spare no pains to increase it. Oh, that we were half as diligent in the service of God! Here we are driveling away our time. We do not put out all our talents, augment our faith, or enlarge our coast. Why are we so indolent in going to that great giver of every good and perfect gift for fresh supplies? Why do we not wait upon Him to be enriched? Would to God that we were as diligent in spiritual as we are in temporal things! Oh, that we were burning with a holy covetousness for the best gifts God can bestow and the choicest blessings saints can receive!

Paul was anxious to do more good, to get more good, to be more good. He sought to win souls. He needed to make Christ's name known. An ardent passion inflamed him! A high enthusiasm inspired him. Tent-making, it is true, was his trade, but tent-making did not monopolize quite all his heart, and soul, and strength! Does your secular vocation absorb all your thoughts? Though Paul was proud of his industry, and could say conscientiously, "My own hands have ministered to my necessities," yet preaching was the one thing he pursued as his life-work. He was a workman, just as many of you are—but where were his tools? They were ready to hand when he needed them. And did they, do you think, ever creep up into his heart? I believe never. "For us to live," said he, "is Christ." That was as true, I will guarantee you, when he was tent-making, or picking up sticks on the island of Malta, as when he was talking heavenly wisdom to the worldly-wise, addressing the Athenians on Mars' Hill or when he discoursed touching the resurrection of the dead to the Jews, or when he expounded the way of justification to the Gentiles! He was a man of one idea, and that one idea had entirely possessed him! In the old pictures they put a halo around the head of the saints. But, in fact, that halo encircles their hearts and penetrates every member of their bodies. The halo of disinterested consecration to Christ should not be about their brows, alone, to adorn their portraits, for it encompassed their entire being, their spirit, soul and body! It environed them, their whole being. "This one thing I do," was the slogan of early saints. Let it be your slogan!

Beloved, I address you as the saints of this generation. My earnest desire is that you should not come behind in Grace or in gifts. When the Believers of all ages muster, and are marshaled, may you be found

among the faithful and true. If not among the first or second class of worthies in the army of the Son of David, yet good soldiers of Jesus Christ! Our God is a loving Father. He likes to praise His people. To this end do be clear about the one thing you need, the one thing you know, and the one thing you do! So will you stand well in that day. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 9.**

Verses 1-3. *And as Jesus passed by He saw a man who was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.* We are not to look upon such afflictions as any indication of special sin on the part either of the person or the parent. Of course, sin lies at the root of all our suffering as a great generic fact, but not so that we may attribute such an affliction to any one sin. The disciples, you see, dear Friends, are thinking about difficult problems. Their Master is thinking about how, practically, to meet the difficulty, and to this day there are a large number of Christians, professors and even ministers who occupy their time about questions which really are to no profit. If they could be answered, nobody would be the holier or the better! What does it matter to us what is the origin of evil? Far more important to turn the evil out than it is to find out how it came in! Very frequently, you know, after there is a terrible calamity or accident, we have an inquiry as to how it was done, and then we think the thing is all attended to. It would have been better, perhaps, to have an inquiry, before it was done, as to how it could be prevented. Our Lord has that wisdom—that practicalness. He begins to deal with the evil rather than to raise questions about it. Yes, and He sees in that evil a good coming out of it! He says that this man was blind, that the works of God might be made manifest in him.

4-7. *I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.* Our Lord used instrumentality. It did not appear, however, to be very likely to achieve His purpose. The clay seemed more likely to blind than to give sight, yet if the Lord chooses to use the poor and weak instruments that seem nothing better than dust and spittle, He has the glory of the grand result! If He takes the humble ministry of His servants and uses it in the pulpit, or in the Sunday school, or anywhere else, He

has all the more Glory and is the less likely to be robbed of it because He uses such unlikely means.

8, 9. *The neighbors therefore, and they who before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he—We are sure of it.*

9. *Others said, He is like he—They were cautious bodies.*

9. *But he said, I am he. He knew there was no mistaking his witness!*

10, 11. *Therefore said they unto him, How were your eyes opened? He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.* Very straightforward, very concise, very accurate—and when we make answer about our conversion, it is always well to take this for a copy—not too many flourishes, no coloring. He even leaves out about the spittle, but he gives it all as he can recollect it. So when you are talking about the Lord's love to you and His way of converting you, it is quite sufficiently remarkable, without any touch of rouge. Let it be given just as it is.

12. *Then said they unto him, Where is He? He said I do not know.* Enough for him to know what he did know—that his eyes were opened and how it was done! So sometimes I have known persons come upon the new convert with a question which has rather baffled him, and he has been troubled because he could not answer it. Do not let it trouble you! You are not expected to know everything. The very best and most honest thing is to say, "I do not know"

13-14. *They brought to the Pharisees him that before was blind. And it was the Sabbath Day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.* So you may be sure that the Pharisees would be down upon Him for that, because, according to the Rabbis, the making of the clay to put upon this man's eyes would be a kind of brick-making—and they would bring Him in guilty of brick-making directly! So did these men pervert things and make men guilty where no offense had been committed whatever.

15. *Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and do see.* He is shorter with them. Some tales grow in telling. His gets shorter. Besides, he has to deal with captious people—and then the least said, the sooner mended—and this shrewd man thought so.

16, 17. *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This Man is not of God, because He keeps not the Sabbath. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They said unto the blind man, again, What say you of Him, that He has opened your eyes? He said, He is a Prophet.* He could see that.

18-24. *But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who you*

say was born blind? How, then, does he now see? His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But by what means he now sees, we know not; he is of age; ask him. He shall speak for himself. These words spoke his parents because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was the Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this Man is a sinner. How piously these Pharisees can talk—and generally in the name of God, all sorts of mischief begins. When men are persecuting the Son of God, yet still they take the name of God upon their lips. Did they not burn the martyrs to the glory of God? Oh, yes, and so did these men thus slander Christ by saying, “We know that this Man is a sinner,” and yet they spoke about giving God praise!

25. *He—Our shrewd friend of the opened eyes.*

25-27. *Answered and said, Whether He is a sinner or not, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you did not hear: therefore would you hear it again? Will you also be His disciples? The man is sharp, acute, cutting.*

28, 29. *Then they reviled him and said, You are His disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples. We know that God spoke unto Moses: as for this Fellow, we know not from where He comes. The word, “fellow,” is supplied by the translators. There is no such word there because they did not know a word bad enough with which to express their scorn.*

30-33. *The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that you know not from where He comes and yet He has opened my eyes. Now we know that God hears not sinners: but if any man is a worshipper of God, and does His will, him He hears. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing. He proves! He administrates! The thing is as clear as possible, and yet they refuse to see it.*

34. *They answered and said unto him, You were altogether born in sins. It is the old rule, “Abuse the plaintiff.” Nothing could be said. Now abuse the man! He has answered you and his arguments are too difficult for you. Now throw hard words at him. “You were altogether born in sins.”*

34. *And do you teach us? Wonderful, that, “us.” “Do you teach us?” Folly, ignorance and pride go together. This man, in the simplest and most unaffected manner, had told his tale and urged his argument—and now they abuse him and exalt themselves. “Do you teach us?” No, great Pharisees, he does not teach you, for you will not learn!*

34. *And they cast him out.* That is the last argument. Out with him! Now we have defeated him.

35. *Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when He had found him.* What a blessed thing to be cast out, if Christ finds us! Many and many have been put out of the synagogue and treated with contempt, but then outside Jerusalem they found their Lord, for there He died outside the camp, and His people need not be ashamed to go after Him bearing His reproach. “When He had found him.”

35-38. *He said unto him, Do you believe in the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe in Him? And Jesus said unto him, You have both seen Him, and it is He who is talking with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.* He does not appear to have been a Unitarian, therefore, and if those persons had their eyes opened, they would do the same. “He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.”

39. *And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.* Christ is the turner of the tables. Did not the virgin mother sing, “He has put down the mighty from their seats, and He has exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He has sent away empty”? So He always does.

40. *Jesus said unto them, If you were blind—*Really could not see.

41. *You would have no sin.* If you really did not know better, were totally and altogether without knowledge—then you would have no sin compared with what you now have.

41. *But now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains.* You acknowledge that you have sinned with your eyes open and, therefore, your sin is all the greater.

—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.**

ONWARD!

NO. 1114

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 25, 1873,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 3:13, 14.*

SO far as his acceptance with God is concerned, a Christian is complete in Christ as soon as he believes. Those who have trusted themselves in the hands of the Lord Jesus are saved—and they may enjoy holy confidence upon the matter, for they have a Divine warrant for so doing. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” To this salvation the Apostle had attained. But while the work of Christ for us is perfect and it were presumption to think of adding to it, the work of the Holy Spirit in us is not perfect—it is continually carried on from day to day—and will need to be continued throughout the whole of our lives.

We are being “conformed to the image of Christ,” and that process is in operation as we advance towards Glory. The condition in which a Believer should always be found is that of progress. His motto must be, “Onward and upward!” Nearly every figure by which Christians are described in the Bible implies this. We are plants of the Lord’s field, but we are sown that we may grow—“First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.” We are born into the family of God, but there are babes, little children, young men, and fathers in Christ Jesus. Yes, and there are none who are perfect or fully developed men in Christ Jesus. It is always a growing process.

Is the Christian described as a pilgrim? He is no pilgrim who sits down as if rooted to the place. “They go from strength to strength.” The Christian is compared to a warrior, a wrestler, a competitor in the games—these figures are the very opposite of a condition in which nothing more is to be done. They imply energy, the gathering up of strength and the concentration of forces in order to the overthrowing of adversaries. The Christian is also likened to a runner in a race and that is the figure now before us in the text. It is clear that a man cannot be a runner who merely holds his ground, content with his position—he only runs aright who each moment nears the mark. Progress is the healthy condition of every Christian and he only realizes his best estate while he is growing in Divine Grace, “adding to his faith virtue,” “following on to know the Lord,” and daily receiving Grace for Grace out of the fullness which is treasured up in Christ Jesus.

Now, to this progress the Apostle exhorts us—no, he does more than exhort—he *allures* us. He stands among us. He does not lecture us, “ex

cathedra,” standing like a learned master far above his disciples, but he puts himself on our level. And though not a whit behind the very chief of the Apostles, he says, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.” He does not give us the details of his own imperfections and deficiencies, but in one word he confesses them in the gross. And then he declares that he burns with eager desire for perfection, so that it is the one passion of his soul to press onward towards the great goal of his hopes, the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. We cannot desire to have a better instructor than a man who sympathizes with us because he humbly considers himself to be of the same rank as ourselves. Teaching us to run, the Apostle, himself, runs. Wishing to fire our holy ambition, he bears testimony to that same ambition flaming within his own spirit.

Paul’s statements in the text call us to look at him under four aspects—first, as forming a just estimate of his present condition—“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.” Secondly, as placing his past in its proper position—“forgetting the things which are behind.” Thirdly, as aspiring eagerly to a more glorious future—“reaching forth unto those things which are before.” And fourthly, as practically putting forth every exertion to obtain that which he desired—“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

I. First, admire our Apostle as **PUTTING A JUST ESTIMATE UPON HIS PRESENT CONDITION.** He was not one of those who consider the state of the Believer’s heart to be a trifling matter. He was not indifferent as to his *spiritual* condition. He says, “I count”—as if he had taken stock, had made a careful estimate and had come to a conclusion. He is not a wise man who says, “I am a Believer in Christ and therefore it little matters what are my inward feelings and experience.” He who so speaks should remember that keeping the heart with all diligence is a precept of Inspiration and that a careless walk usually comes to a very sorrowful ending.

The Apostle took account. And when he had done so he was dissatisfied—“I count not myself to have apprehended.” Nor was that dissatisfaction to be regretted. It was a sign of true Grace, a conclusion which is always arrived at when saints judge themselves rightly. Most weighty is that word of Chrysostom, “He who thinks he has obtained everything, has nothing.” Had Paul been satisfied with his attainments he would never have sought for more. Most men cry, “hold,” when they think they have done enough. The man who can honestly write, “I press forward,” you may be quite sure is one who feels that he has not yet apprehended all that might be gained. Self-satisfaction rings the death-knell of progress. There must be a deep-seated discontent with present attainments, or there will never be a striving after the things which are yet beyond.

Now, Beloved, mark that the man who in our text tells us that he had not apprehended was a man vastly superior to any of us. Among them that were born of women there has never lived a greater than Paul the Apostle. In sufferings for Christ, a martyr of the first class. In ministry for Christ an Apostle of foremost degree. Where shall I find such a man for Revelations? He had been caught up into the third Heaven and heard words which it was not lawful for him to utter! Where shall I find his

match for character? A character splendidly balanced, as nearly approaching that of that Divine Master as we expected to see in mortal men. Yet, after having duly considered the matter, this notable saint said, "I count not myself to have apprehended."

Shame, then, on any of us poor dwarfs if we are so vain as to count that we *have* apprehended! Shame upon the indecent self-conceit of any man who congratulates himself upon his own spiritual condition when Paul, himself, said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." The injury which self-content will do a man would be hard to measure—it is the readiest way to stunt him and the surest method to keep him weak. I should be sorry, indeed, if I should be addressing one who imagines that he has apprehended, for his progress in Divine Grace is barred from this time forth! The moment a man says, "I have it," he will no longer try to obtain it. The moment he cries, "It is enough," he will not labor after more.

Yet, Brothers and Sisters, far too often, of late, have I come across the path of those who speak as if they *have* apprehended—Brethren whose own lips praise themselves, who sing upon their own fullness of Grace with an unction rather too exaggerated for my taste. I am not about to condemn them. I cannot say I am not about to *censure* them, for I intend to do so, from a deep sense of the necessity that they *should be* censured. These friends assure us that they have reached great heights of Grace and are now in splendid spiritual condition. I should be very glad to know that it is so if it were true. But I am grieved to hear them act as witnesses for themselves, for then I know that their witness is not true. If it *were* so, they would be the *last* men to publish it abroad.

There are Brethren abroad whose eminent graciousness is not very clear to others, but it is very evident to themselves—and equally as vivid is their apprehension of the great inferiority of most of their Brethren. They talk to us, not as men of like passions with ourselves and Brethren of the same stock, but as demigods, thundering out of the clouds—giants discoursing to the little men around them! If it is true that they are so superior, I rejoice! Yes, and *will* rejoice. But my suspicion is that their glorying is not good and that the spirit which they manifest will prove a snare to them. I meet, I say, sometimes with Brothers and Sisters who feel content with their spiritual condition. They do not ascribe their satisfactory character to themselves, but to the Grace of God. But for all that, they feel that they are what they ought to be and what others ought to be but are not.

They see in themselves a great deal that is good, very much that is commendable and a large amount of excellence which they can hold up for the admiration of others. They have reached the "higher life" and are wonderfully fond of telling us so—and explaining the phenomena of their self-satisfied condition. Though Paul was compelled to say, "In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing," their flesh appears to be of a better quality. Whereas he had spiritual conflicts and found that without were fights and within fears, these very superior persons have already trod Satan under their feet and reached a state in which they have little else to do but to divide the spoil.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, whenever we meet with persons who can congratulate themselves upon their personal character, or whenever we get into the state of self-content ourselves, there is an ill savor about the whole concern. I do not know what impression it makes upon you, but whenever I hear a Brother talk about himself, and how full he is of the Spirit of God and all that, I am distressed for him. I think I hear the voice of that stately professor, who said, "God, I thank you that I am not as other men are." I feel that I would prefer to listen to that other man, who said, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and went down to his house justified rather than the other.

When I hear a man crow about himself, I think of Peter's declaration—"Though all men should deny You, yet will not I," and I hear another cock crow. Self-complacency is the mother of spiritual declension. David said, "My mountain stands firm: I shall never be moved." But before long the face of God was hidden and he was troubled. In the presence of a professor who is pleased with his own attainments, one remembers that warning text—"Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." Great I! Great I! Wherever you are, you must come down! Great I is always opposed to great Christ. John the Baptist knew the Truth when he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." There is no room in this world for God's Glory and man's glory. He who is less than nothing magnifies God, but he "who is rich, and increased in goods, and has need of nothing," dishonors God. And he "is naked and poor and miserable."

Furthermore, we have observed that the best of men do not talk of their attainments. Their tone is self-depreciation, not self-content. We have known some eminently holy men, who are now in Heaven, and in looking back upon their lives we note that they were never conscious of being what we all thought them to be. Everybody could see their beauty of character except themselves. They lamented their imperfections while we admired the Grace of God in them. I remember a minister of Christ, now with God—I will not mention his name—if I did, it would be as familiar to your ears as household words. It was proposed by some of us, when he left the ministry in his old age, that we should hold a meeting to bid him farewell and testify our esteem for him.

It was my duty to propose the fraternal act, but I hesitated as I saw the blush mantle his cheek and I paused when he rose and besought us never to think of such a thing, for he felt himself to be one of the most unworthy of all the servants of the Lord. Every man of the associated ministers, that day assembled, felt that our venerable friend was by far the superior of us all—and yet his own estimate of himself was lowest of the lowly. He had sacrificed much, but I never heard him speak of his sacrifices. He lived in habitual fellowship with God, but I never heard him declare it, much less glory in it. Shallow streams brawl and babble, but deep waters flow on in silence! Of all the departed saints whom it has been my lot to esteem highly in love for their works' sake, I do not remember one who dared to praise himself, though I can remember several poor little spiritual babes who did so to their own injury.

If ever true saints speak of what God has done by them, they do it in such a modest way that you might think they were talking of someone 500 miles away, rather than of themselves. They have scrupulously laid all their crowns at the Savior's feet, not in word only, but in spirit. When I remember these sacred names of the great departed, I feel it hard to have patience with the unspiritual, unholy boastings of personal holiness and high spirituality which are getting common in these days. Drums make much noise, but we know by observation that it is not their fullness which makes the sound.

Again, we have noticed that we, ourselves, in our own holiest moments, do not feel self-complacent. Whenever we get near to God and really enter into fellowship with Him, the sensations we feel are the very reverse of self-congratulation. Job, in this, was the type of every believing man. Till he saw God he spoke up for his innocence and defended himself against the charges of his friends. But when the Lord revealed Himself to him, he said, "My eyes see You, therefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." We never see the beauty of Christ without, at the same time, perceiving our own deformity. When we neglect prayer and self-examination we grow into mighty vain fellows, but when we live near to God in private devotion and heart-searching, we put off our ornaments from us. In the light of God's Countenance we perceive our many flaws and imperfections, and instead of saying, "I am clean," we cry out, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips!"

Now if this is our own experience, we infer from it that those who think well of themselves must know little of that revealing light which humbles all who dwell in it. My observation of personal character has been somewhat wide and I cannot help bearing my testimony that I am greatly afraid of men who make loud professions of superior sanctity. I have had the misfortune to have known, on one or two occasions, superfine Brethren, who were, in their own ideas, far above the rest of us and almost free from human frailties. I confess to have felt very much humbled by their eminent goodness until I found them out. They talked of complete sanctification, of a faith which never staggered, of an old nature entirely dead until I wondered at them. But I wondered more when I found that all the while they were rotten at the core, were negligent of common duties while boasting of the loftiest spirituality and were even immoral while they condemned others for comparative trifles.

I have now become very suspicious of all who cry up their own wares. I had rather have a humble, timid, fearful, watchful, self-depreciating Christian to be my companion than any of the religious exquisites who crave our admiration. These great-winged eagles who fly so loftily will, I fear, turn out to be unclean birds. The excessive verdure of a super finely flourishing religiousness often covers a horrible bog of hypocrisy. Let me add, once more, that whatever shape self-satisfaction may assume—and it bears a great many—it is at bottom nothing but a shirking of the hardship of Christian soldierhood. The Christian soldier has to fight with sins every day and if he is a man of God and God's Spirit is in him, he will find he

needs all the strength he has, and a great deal more, to maintain his ground and make progress in the Divine life.

Now, self-contentment is a shirking of the battle, I do not care how it is come by. Some people shirk watchfulness, repentance and holy care by believing that the only sanctification they need is already theirs by imputation. They use the work of the Lord Jesus for them as though it could thrust away the necessity of the Spirit's work in them. Personal holiness they will not hear of—it is *legal*. If they come across such a text as, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," or, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows that shall he also reap," they straightway force another meaning upon it, or else forget it altogether.

Another class believe that they have perfection in the flesh, while a third attain to the same complacent condition by the notion that they have overcome all their sins by believing that they have done so—as if believing your battles to be won was the same thing as winning them! This, which they call faith, I take the liberty to call a lazy, self-conceited presumption. And though they persuade themselves that their sins are dead, it is certain that their carnal security is vigorous enough and highly probable that the rest of their sins are only keeping out of the way to let their pride have room to develop itself to ruinous proportions. You can reach self-complacency by a great many roads. I have known enthusiasts reach it by sheer intoxication of excitement, while Antinomians come at it by imagining that the Law is abolished and that what is sin in others is not sin in saints.

There are theories which afford an evil peace to the mind by throwing all blame of sin upon *fate*. And others which lower the standard of God's demands so as to make them reachable by fallen humanity. Some dream that a mere dead faith in Jesus will save them, let them live as they like. And others that they are already as good as need be. Many have fallen into the same condition by another error, for they have said, "Well, we cannot conquer all sin and therefore we need not aim at it. Some of our sins are constitutional and will never be gotten rid of." Under these evil impressions they sit down and say, "It is well, O Soul, you are in an excellent condition. Sit still and take your ease, there is little more to be done, there is no need to attempt more."

All this is evil to the last degree. I have used few theological terms, because it does not matter how we get to be self-satisfied, whether by an orthodox or a heterodox mode of reasoning—it is a mischievous thing in any case. The fact is, my Brothers and Sisters, the Lord calls us to this high calling of contending with sin within and without until we die! It is of no use of our mincing the matter—we must fight if we would reign—our sins will have to be contended till our dying day and probably we shall have to fight upon our death-bed. Therefore, every day we are bound to be upon our watchtower against sin around and within us. It is of no use our deluding ourselves with pretty theories which act only as spiritual opium to cause unhealthy dreams.

Sin is a real thing with each one of us and must be daily wrestled with—there is an evil heart of unbelief within us and the devil without

us—and we must watch, and pray, and cry mightily, and strive, and struggle, and admit that we have not yet apprehended. If we dream that we are at the goal already, we shall stop short of the prize. The full soul loathes the honeycomb. A man full of self cares for nothing more. Shake off these slothful bands, my Brethren! Be strong. You are as weak as others and as likely to sin. Watch, therefore, and pray lest you enter into temptation.

What is it, at bottom, that makes men content with themselves? It may be, first of all, a forgetfulness of the awful holiness of the Law of God. If the Law of the Ten Commandments is to be read only as its letter runs, I could imagine a man's judging himself and saying, "I have apprehended." But when we know that the Law is *spiritual*, how can we be self-complacent? My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you think you have reached its perfect height, I ask you to hear these words—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself."

Can you say, in the sight of a heart-searching God, "I have fulfilled all that"? If you can, I am staggered at you and think you the victim of a strong delusion which leads you to believe a lie! Brethren who can take delight in themselves must have lost sight of the heinousness of sin. The least sin is a desperate evil—an assault upon the Throne of God—an insult to the majesty of Heaven. The simple act of plucking the forbidden fruit cost us Paradise. There is a bottomless pit of sin in every transgression, a Hell in every iniquity. If we keep clear of sins of action and if our tongue is so bridled that we avoid every hasty and unadvised speech, yet do we not know that our *thoughts* and *imagination*s, our looks and longing of heart, have in them an infinity of evil?

If, after having learned that sin can only be washed out by the death of the Son of God, and that even the flames of Hell cannot make atonement for a single sin, a man can then say, "I am content with myself," it is to be feared that he has made a fatal mistake as to his own character. Is there not a failure, in such cases, to understand the highest standard of Christian living? If we measure ourselves among ourselves, there are many Believers here who might be pretty well satisfied. You are as generous as other Christians are, considering your income. You are as prayerful as most other professors and as earnest in doing good as any of your neighbors. If you are worldly, yet you are not more worldly than most professors, nowadays, and so you judge yourself not to be far below the standard. But what a standard! Let us seek a better!

Brothers, it is a very healthy thing for us who are ministers to read a biography like that of M'Cheyne. Read that through, if you are a minister, and it will burst many of your windbags. You will find yourselves collapse most terribly. Take the life of Brainerd among the Indians, or of Baxter in our own land. Think of the holiness of George Herbert, the devoutness of Fletcher, or the zeal of Whitfield. Where do you find yourself after reading their lives? Might you not peep about to find a hiding place for your insignificance? When we mix with dwarfs we think ourselves giants. But in the presence of giants we become dwarfs. When we think of the saints de-

parted and remember their patience in suffering, their diligence in labor, their ardor, their self-denial, their humility, their tears, their prayers, their midnight cries, their intercession for the souls of others, their pouring out their hearts before God for the glory of Christ—why, we shrink into less than nothing and find no word of boasting on our tongue!

If we survey the life of the only perfect One, our dear Lord and Master, the sight of His beauty covers our whole countenance with a blush. He is the lily and we are the thorns. He is the sun and we are as the night. He is all good and we are all evil. In His Presence we bow in the dust, we confess our sins and count ourselves unworthy to unloose His shoe laces. It is to be feared that there is springing up in some parts of the Christian Church a deceitful form of self-righteousness which leads even good people to think too highly of themselves. It is a fashionable form of fanaticism, very pleasing to the flesh, very fascinating and very deadly. Many, I fear, are not really living so near to God as they think they are—neither are they as holy as they dream.

It is very easy to frequent Bible readings, conferences and excited public meetings, and to fill one's self with the gas of self-esteem. A little pious talk with a sort of Christian who always walks on high stilts will soon tempt you to use the stilts yourself. But indeed, dear Brothers and Sisters, you are a poor, unworthy worm and a nobody—and if you get one inch above the ground you get just that inch too high. Remember, you may think yourself to be very strong in a certain direction because you do not happen to be tried on that point. Many of us are exceedingly good-tempered when nobody provokes us. Some are wonderfully patient because they have a sound constitution and have no racking pains to endure. And others are exceedingly generous because they have more money than they need.

A ship's seaworthiness is never quite certain till she has been out at sea. The grand thing will be to be sound before the living God in the day of trial. I pray every Believer here to get off his high horse and to remember that he is, "naked and poor and miserable" apart from Christ—and only in Jesus Christ is he anything at all! And if he thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself, but does not deceive God.

II. In the second place, look at Paul as PLACING THE PAST IN ITS TRUE LIGHT. He says, "Forgetting those things which are behind." What does he mean? Paul does not mean that he forgot the mercy of God which he had enjoyed. Far from it! Paul does not mean that he forgot the sins which he had committed. Far from it—he would always remember them to humble him. We must follow out the figure which he is using and so read him.

When a man ran in the Grecian games, if he had run half way and passed most of his fellows, and had then turned to look round and to rejoice over the distance which he had already covered, he would have lost the race. Suppose he had commenced singing his own praises and said, "I have come down the hill, along the valley, and up the rising ground on this side. See, there are one, two, three, four, five, six runners far behind me." While thus praising himself he would lose the race. The only hope for

the runner was to forget all that was behind and occupy his entire thoughts with the piece of ground which lay in front! Never mind though you have run so far—you must let the space which lies between you and the goal engross all your thoughts and command all your powers.

It must be so with regard to all the sins which we have overcome. Perhaps at this moment you might honestly say, "I have overcome a very fierce temper," or, "I have bestirred my naturally indolent spirit." Thank God for that! Stop long enough to say, "Thank God for that," but do not pause to congratulate yourselves as though some great thing had been done, for then it may soon be undone. Perhaps the very moment you are rejoicing over your conquered temper it will leap back upon you like a lion from the covert, and you will say, "I thought you were dead and buried, and here you are roaring at me again." The very easiest way to give resurrection to old corruptions is to erect a trophy over their graves—they will at once lift up their heads and howl out, "We are still alive!"

It is a great thing to overcome any sinful habit, but it is necessary to guard against it, still, for you have not conquered it so long as you congratulate yourself upon the conquest. In the same light we must regard all the Grace we have obtained. I know some dear friends who are mighty in prayer and my soul rejoices to join in their supplications. But I should be sorry, indeed, to hear them praise their own prayers. We love yonder Brother for his generosity, but we hope he will never tell others that he is liberal. Yonder dear friend is very humble, but if he were to boast of it, that would be the end of it. Self-esteem is a moth which eats the garments of virtue. Those flies, those pretty flies of self-praise, must be killed, for if they get into your pot of ointment they will spoil it all.

Forget the past! Thank God who has made you pray so well. Thank God who has made you kind, gentle, or humble. Thank God who has made you give liberally. But forget it all and go forward since there is yet very much land to be possessed! And so with all the work for Jesus which we have done. Some people seem to have very good memories as to what they have performed. They used to serve God wonderfully when they were young! They began early and were full of zeal! They can tell you all about it with much pleasure. In middle life they worked marvels and achieved great wonders. But now they rest on their oars. They are giving other people an opportunity to distinguish themselves! Their own heroic age is over.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, as long as ever you are in this world forget what you have already done and go forward to other service! Living on the past is one of the faults of old Churches. We, for instance, as a Church, may begin to congratulate ourselves upon the great things God has done by us, for we shall be sure to put it in that pretty shape, although we shall probably mean the great things *we* have done ourselves. After praising ourselves thus, we shall gain no further blessing, but shall decline by little and little. The same is true of denominations. What acclamations are heard when allusion is made to what our fathers did! Oh, the name of Carey, Knibb, and Fuller! We Baptists think we have nothing to do now but to go upstairs and go to bed, for we have achieved eternal glory through the names of these good men! And as for our Wesleyan friends,

how apt they are to harp upon Wesley, Fletcher, Nelson and other great men!

Thank God for them! They were grand men! But the right thing is to forget the past and pray for another set of men to carry on the work. We should never be content, but, "On, on, on," should be our cry! When they asked Napoleon why he continually made wars, he said, "I am the child of war. Conquest has made me what I am and conquest must maintain me." The Christian Church is the child of *spiritual* war. She only lives as she fights and rides forth conquering and to conquer. God deliver us from the self-congratulatory spirit, however it may come, and make us long and pine after something better!

III. And now the third point. Paul, having put the present and past into their right places, goes on to the future, **ASPIRING EAGERLY TO MAKE IT GLORIOUS**, for he says, "reaching forth unto those things which are before." Does he not here give us the picture of a runner? He reaches forth. The man, as he runs, throws himself forward, almost out of the perpendicular. His eyes are already at the goal. His hands are far in advance of his feet. His whole body is leaning forward—he runs as though he would project himself to the end of the journey before his legs can carry him there. That is how the Christian should be—always throwing himself forward after something more than he has yet reached—not satisfied with the rate at which he advances. His soul always going at 20 times the pace of the flesh.

John Bunyan gives us a little parable of the man on horseback. He is bid by his master to ride in a hurry to fetch the physician. But the horse is a sorry jade. "Well," says Bunyan, "if his master sees that the man on the horse's back is whipping and spurring, and pulling the bridle and struggling with all his might, he judges that the man would go if he could." That is how the Christian should always be, not only as devout, earnest and useful as he can be, but panting to be a great deal more so—spurring this old flesh and striving against this laggard spirit—if perhaps he can do more. Brothers and Sisters, we ought to be reaching forward to be like Jesus! Never may we say, "I am like So-and-So, and that is enough." Am I like Jesus? Perfectly like Jesus? If not—away, away, away from everything I am or have been! I cannot rest until I am like my Lord.

The aim of the Christian is to be *perfect*—if he seeks to be anything less than perfect, he aims at an object lower than that which God has placed before him. To master every sin and to have and possess and exhibit every virtue—this is the Christian's ambition. He who would be a great artist must not follow low models. The artist must have a perfect model to copy—if he does not reach to it, he will reach far further than if he had an inferior model to work by. When a man once realizes his own ideal, it is all over with him. A great painter once had finished a picture and he said to his wife with tears in his eyes, "It is all over with me. I shall never paint again, I am a ruined man." She enquired, "Why?" "Because," he said, "that painting contents and satisfies me. It realizes my idea of what painting ought to be and therefore I am sure my power is gone, for that power lies

in having ideals which I cannot reach, something yet beyond me which I am striving after.”

May none of us ever say, “I have reached my ideal, now I am what I ought to be, there is nothing beyond me.” Perfection, Brothers and Sisters, absolute perfection—may God help us to strive after it! That is the model, “Be you perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” “Shall we ever reach it?” asks one. Thousands and millions have reached it—there they are before the Throne of God—their robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb! And we shall possess the same, only let us be struggling after it by God’s good help. Let every Believer be striving that in the details of common life, in every thought, in every word, in every action, he may glorify God. This ought to be our objective—if we do not reach it, it is that which we must press for—that from morning light to evening shade we shall live unto God. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

This is what we are to seek after, praying always in the Holy Spirit to be sanctified wholly, spirit, soul and body. “It is a wonderfully high standard,” says one. Would you like me to lower it, Brother? I should be very sorry to have it lowered for myself. If the highest degree of holiness were denied to any one of us, it would be a heavy calamity. Is it not the joy of a Christian to be perfectly like his Lord? Who would wish to stop short of it? To be obliged to live under the power of even the least sin forever would be a horrible thing! No, we never can be content short of perfection! We will reach forward towards that which is before.

IV. And now the Apostle is our model, in the fourth place, because he PUTS FORTH ALL HIS EXERTIONS TO REACH THAT WHICH HE DESIRES. He says, “This one thing I do,” as if he had given up all else and addicted himself to one sole object—to aim to be like Jesus Christ! There were many other things Paul might have attempted, but he says, “this one thing I do.” Probably Paul was a poor speaker—why did he not try to make himself a rhetorician? No. He came not with excellency of speech. But you tell me Paul was busy with his tent making. I know he was—what with tent-making, preaching, visiting and watching night and day, he had more than enough to do! But all these were a part of his pursuit of the one thing—he was laboring to serve his Master perfectly and to render himself up as a whole burnt offering unto God.

I invite every soul that has been saved by the precious blood of Christ to gather up all its strength for this one thing—to cultivate a passion for Divine Grace and an intense longing after holiness. Ah, if we could but serve God as God should be served, and be such manner of people as we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness, we should see a new era in the Church. The greatest need of the Church at this day is holiness. Why did Paul pursue holiness with such concentrated purpose? Because he felt God had called him to it. He aimed at the prize of his high calling. God had elected Paul to be a champion against sin. Selected to be Jehovah’s champion, he felt that he must play the man.

Moreover, it was “God in Christ Jesus” who was the choice, and as the Apostle looked up and saw the mild face of the Redeemer and marked the

crown of thorns of the King of Sorrows, he felt he must overcome sin. He could not let a single evil live within him and, though he had not yet apprehended, he felt he must press forward till he had apprehended that to which God in Christ had called him. Moreover, the Apostle saw his crown, the crown of life that fades not away, hanging bright before his eyes. "What," said he, "shall tempt me from that path of which yon crown is the end? Let the golden apples be thrown in my way, I cannot even look at them, nor stay to spurn them with my feet. Let the sirens sing on either side and seek to charm me with their evil beauty to leave the holy road, but I must not, and I will not. Heaven! Heaven! Heaven! Is not this enough to make a man dash forward in the road there? The end is glorious, what if the running is laborious? When there is such a prize to be had, who will grudge a struggle?"

Paul pressed forward towards the mark for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. He felt he was a saved man and he meant, through the same Grace, to be a *holy* man. He longed to grasp the crown and hear the, "Well done, good and faithful servant," which his Master would award him at the end of his course. Brothers and Sisters, I wish I could stir myself and stir you to a passionate longing after a gracious, consistent, godly life! Yes, for an eminently, solidly, thoroughly devoted and consecrated life. You will grieve the Spirit if you walk inconsistently. You will dishonor the Lord that bought you. You will weaken the Church. You will bring shame upon yourself. Even though you are "saved so as by fire," it will be an evil and a bitter thing to have in any measure departed from God. But to be always going onward, to be never self-satisfied, to be always laboring to be better Christians, to be aiming at the rarest sanctity—this shall be your honor, the Church's comfort and the glory of God!

May the Lord help you to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Philippians 3.

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FALSE PROFESSORS SOLEMNLY WARNED

NO. 102

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 24, 1856,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”
Philippians 3:18, 19.***

PAUL was the very model of what a Christian minister should be. He was a *watchful* shepherd over the flock. He did not simply preach to them and consider that he had done all his duty when he had delivered his message. His eyes were always upon the churches, marking their spiritual welfare, their growth in Divine Grace, or their declension in godliness. He was the unsleeping guardian of their spiritual welfare. When he was called away to other lands to proclaim the everlasting Gospel, he always seems to have kept an eye upon those Christian colonies which he had founded in the midst of heathen darkness. While lighting other lamps with the torch of Truth, he did not fail to trim the lamps already burning. Here you observe he was not indifferent to the character of the little Church at Philippi, for he speaks to them and warns them.

Note, too, that the Apostle was a very *honest* pastor—when he marked anything amiss in his people, he did not blush to tell them. He was not like your modern minister, whose pride is that he never was personal in his life and who thus glories in his shame. For if he were honest, *he would be personal*, for he would deal out the Truth of God without deceitfulness and would reprove men sharply, that they might be sound in the faith. “I tell you,” says Paul, “because it concerns you.” Paul was very honest—he did not flinch from telling the whole Truth and telling it often, too, though some might think that once from the lip of Paul would be of more effect than a hundred times from anyone else. “I have told you often,” says he, “and I tell you yet again that there are some who are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

And while faithful, you will notice that the Apostle was, as every true minister should be, extremely *affectionate*. He could not bear to think that any of the members of the Churches under his care should swerve from the Truth. He wept while he denounced them—he knew not how to

wield the thunderbolt with tearless eyes. He did not know how to pronounce the threat of God with a dry and husky voice. No—while he spoke terrible things, the tears were in his eyes and when he reproved sharply, his heart beat so fast with love that those who heard him denounce so solemnly were yet convinced that his harshest words were dictated by affection! “I have told you often, and I tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

Beloved, I have a message to deliver tonight which is to the same effect as that of the Apostle Paul and I am afraid it is as necessary, now, as it was in his time. There are many now among us, as there were then, who walk in such a manner that we recognize them at once as the “enemies of the Cross of Christ.” I fear that the evil, instead of having decreased, has multiplied and grown in danger! We have more profession, now, than there was in the age of Paul and, consequently, we have more hypocrisy. It is a crying sin with our Churches that there are many in their midst who never ought to be there—who would be fit members of an ale-house or any favorite resort of the merry and frivolous, but who never ought to sip the sacramental wine or eat the holy bread, the emblems of the sufferings of our Lord! We have—O Paul, how would you have said it, tonight, and how would you have wept while saying it!—we have many in our midst who are the “enemies of the Cross of Christ,” because “their god is their belly, they mind earthly things,” and their life is not consistent with the great things of God!

I shall endeavor, for a short time, tonight, to tell you the reason of the Apostle’s extraordinary sorrow. I never read that the Apostle wept when he was persecuted. Though they plowed his back with furrows, I believe that never was a tear seen to gush from his eyes while the soldiers scourged him! Though he was cast into prison, we read of his singing, never of his groaning! I do not believe he ever wept on account of any sufferings or dangers to which he, *himself*, was exposed for Christ’s sake. I call this an extraordinary sorrow because the man who wept was no soft piece of sentiment and seldom shed a tear even under grievous trials! He wept for three things—he wept on account of *their guilt*—on account of *the ill effects of their conduct* and on account of *their doom*.

I. First, Paul wept on account of the GUILT of those persons who, having a name to live, were dead. While uniting themselves with a Christian Church, they were not walking as they should among men and before God. Notice the sin with which he charges them. He says, “Their god was their belly.” By this I understand that *they were sensual persons*. There were those in the early Church who, after they sat at God’s Table, would go away and sit at the feasts of the heathen and there indulge in gluttony

and drunkenness. Others indulged in lusts of the flesh, enjoying those pleasures (so miscalled) which, afterwards, bring unutterable pain even to the body, itself, and are disgraceful to men—much more to professors of religion! Their god was their belly. They cared more about the dress of their body than the dress of their soul. They regarded more the food of the outward carcass than the life of the inner man. Ah, my Hearers—are there not many everywhere in our churches who still bow before their belly-god and make themselves their own idols? Is it not notorious, in almost every society, that professing men can pamper themselves as much as others?—I mean not all, but some. Yes, I have heard of drunken professors. Not men who positively reel through the street, who are drunk in midday, or intoxicated before their fellow men, but men who go to the very verge of drunkenness in their social parties. Men who take so much that while it would be an insult to their respectability to call them intoxicated, it would equally be an insult to the truth to call them sober! Have we not some men in our Churches (it is idle to deny it) who are as fond of the excesses of the table and of the good things of this life as any other class of men? Have we not persons who spend a very fortune upon the dress of their bodies, adorning themselves far more than they adorn the Doctrine of their Savior—men whose perpetual business it is to take good care of their bodies, against whom flesh and blood never had any cause to complain—for they not only serve the flesh, but make a god of it? Ah, Sirs, the Church is not pure! The Church is not perfect—we have scabbed sheep in the flock. In our own little communion, now and then, we find them out and then comes the dread sentence of excommunication, by which they are cut off from our fellowship. But there are many of whom we are not aware, who creep like snakes along the grass and are not discovered till they inflict a grievous wound upon religion and do damage to our great and glorious cause. Brothers and Sisters, there are some in the Church (both Established and Dissenting)—let us say it with the deepest sorrow—“whose god is their belly.”

Another of their sins was that they *did mind earthly things*. Beloved, the last sentence may not have touched your consciences, but this is a very sweeping assertion! I am afraid that a very large proportion of Christ's Church are verily guilty here. It is an anomaly, but it is a fact that we hear of ambitious Christians. Although Christ has told us that he who would be exalted, must humble himself, there are among the professed followers of the humble Man of Galilee men who strive to gain the topmost round of the ladder of this world! Their aim is not to magnify Christ, but to magnify themselves at any cost. It had been thought at one time that a Christian would be a holy, a humble and contented man—

but it is not so nowadays! We have (oh, shame on you Churches!) mere professors—men who are as worldly as the worldliest and have no more of Christ's Holy Spirit in them than the most carnal who never made a profession of the Truth of God. Again, it is a paradox, but it stares us in the face every day, that we have covetous Christians. It is an inconsistency. We might as well talk of unholy seraphim, of perfect beings subject to sin, as of covetous Christians! Yet there are such men—whose purse strings were never intended to slide, at least at the cry of the poor—who call it *prudence* to amass wealth and never use it in any degree in the cause of Christ. If you want men that are hard in business, that are grasping after wealth, that seize upon the poor debtor and suck the last particle of his blood—if you want the men who are grasping and grinding, that will skin the flint and take away the very life from the orphan, you must come—I blush to say it, but it is a solemn truth—you must sometimes come to our Churches to find them! Some such there are among the highest of her officers, who “mind earthly things” and have none of that devotion to Christ which is the mark of pure godliness! These evils are *not* the fruits of religion—they are the diseases of mere profession! I rejoice that the remnant of the elect are kept pure from these, but the “mixed multitude” are sadly possessed therewith.

Another character which the Apostle gives of these men is that they *gloried in their shame*. A professing sinner generally glories in his shame more than anyone else. In fact, he miscalls it. He labels the devil's poisons with the names of Christ's medicines! Things that he would reckon vices in any other man, are virtues with himself. If he could see in another man the same action which he has just performed—if another could be the mirror of himself—oh, how he would thunder at him! He is the very first man to notice a little inconsistency. He is the very strictest of Sabbatarians. He is the most upright of thieves. He is the most tremendously generous of misers. He is the most marvelously holy of profane men. While he can indulge in his favorite sin, he is forever putting up his glass to his eye to magnify the faults of others. *He* may do as he pleases, *he* may sin with impunity—and if his minister should hint to him that his conduct is inconsistent, he will make a storm in the Church and say the minister was personal and insulted him! Reproof is thrown away upon him. Is he not a member of the Church? Has he not been so for years? Who shall dare to say that he is unholy? O Sirs, there are some of your members of Churches who will one day be in Hell! We have some united with our churches who have passed through Baptism and sit at our sacramental tables, who, while they have a name to live, are dead as corpses in their graves as to anything spiritual! It is an easy thing to

palm yourself off for a godly man, nowadays. There is little self-denial, little mortification of the flesh, little love to Christ. Oh, no. Learn a few religious hymns—get a few phrases and you will deceive the very elect! Enter into the Church, be called respectable and if you cannot make all believe you, you will yet smooth your path to destruction by quieting an uneasy conscience! I am saying harsh things, but I am saying true things. My blood sometimes boils when I meet with men whom I would not acknowledge, whom I would not sit with anywhere and yet, who call me, “Brother.” They can live in sin and yet call a Christian, “Brother.” God forgive them! We can feel no brotherhood with them—nor do we wish to do so until their lives are changed and their conduct is made more consistent!

You see, then, in the Apostle’s days there were some who were a disgrace to godliness and the Apostle wept over them because he knew their guilt. Why, it is guilt enough for a man to make a god of his belly without being a professor—but how much worse for a man who knows better? Worse, even, for one who even sets up to teach other people, still to go on and sin against God and against his conscience by making a solemn profession, which is found, in his case, to be a lie. Oh, how dreadful is such a man’s guilt! For him to stand up and say—

**“‘Tis done! The great transaction’s done!
I am the Lord’s and He is mine,”**

and yet to go and sin like others—to use the same conversation, to practice the same chicanery, to walk in as ungodly a manner as those who have never named the name of Christ—ah, what guilt is here! It is enough to make us weep if we have been guilty, ourselves! Yes, to weep tears of blood that we should so have sinned against God!

II. But the Apostle did not so much weep for them as for THE MISCHIEF THEY WERE DOING, for he says, emphatically, that they are, “The enemies of the Cross of Christ.” “*The enemies.*” As much as to say, the infidel is *an* enemy. The curser, the swearer, the profane man, is *an* enemy. Herod, yonder, the persecutor, is *an* enemy—but these men are the chief soldiers—the lifeguards in Satan’s army! “*The enemies of the Cross of Christ*” are Pharisaic professors, bright with the whitewash of outside godliness, while they are rotten within. Oh, I think there is nothing that should grieve a Christian more than to know that Christ has been wounded in the house of His friends! Look, there comes my Savior with bleeding hands and feet. O my Jesus, my Jesus, who shed that blood? Where did You get that wound? Why do You look so sad? He replies, “I have been wounded, but guess where I received the blow?” Why, Lord, surely You were wounded in the gin palace. You were wounded where sinners meet, in the seat of the scornful. You were wounded in the

infidel hall. “No, I was not,” says Christ, “I was wounded in the house of My friends. These scars were made by those who sat at My Table and bore My name and talked My language. *They* pierced Me and crucified Me afresh and put Me to an open shame.” Far worst of sinners, they that pierce Christ thus, while professing to be friends! Caesar wept not until Brutus stabbed him. Then it was that he was overcome and exclaimed, “*Et tu, Brute?*” And you, “Have *you* stabbed Me?” So, my Hearers, might Christ say to some of you. “What? You and you and you, Professors, have you stabbed Me?” Well might our Savior muffle up His face in grief, or rather bind it in clouds of wrath and drive the wretches away who have so injured His cause!

If I must be defeated in battle, let me be defeated by my enemies, but let me not be betrayed by my friends! If I must yield the citadel which I am willing to defend, even to the death, then let me yield it and let my foes walk over my body. But oh, let not my friends betray me! Let not the warrior who stands by my side open the gate and admit the enemy! That were enough to break one’s heart twice—once for the defeat and the second time at the thought of treachery!

When a small band of Protestants were striving for their liberties in Switzerland, they bravely defended a pass against an immense host. Though their dearest friends were slain and they, themselves, were weary and ready to drop with fatigue, they stood firm in the defense of the cause they had espoused. All of a sudden, however, a cry was heard—a dread and terrible shriek! The enemy was winding up a steep acclivity and when the commander turned his eye to see, O how his brow gathered with storm! He ground his teeth and stamped his foot, for he knew that some coward Protestant had led the blood-thirsty foe up the goat track to slay his friends! Then turning to his friends, he said, “On!” and like a lion on his prey, they rushed upon their enemies—ready, now, to die—for a friend had betrayed them. So feels the bold-hearted Christian when he sees his fellow member betraying Christ, when he beholds the citadel of Christianity given up to its foes by those who pretended to be its friends! Beloved, I would rather have a thousand devils out of the Church, than have one in it. I do not care about all the adversaries outside. Our greatest cause of fear is from the crafty “wolves in sheep’s clothing” that devour the flock! It is against such that we would denounce in holy wrath the solemn sentence of Divine indignation and for such we would shed our bitterest tears of sorrow. They are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

Now, for a moment, let me show you how it is that the wicked professor is the greatest enemy to Christ’s Church.

In the first place, *he grieves the Church more than anyone else*. If any man in the street were to pelt me with mud, I believe I would thank him for the honor, if I knew him to be a bad character and knew that he hated me for righteousness' sake. But if one who called himself a Christian should injure the cause with the filthiness of his own licentious behavior—ah, that were more injurious than the stakes of Smithfield, or the racks of the Tower! The deepest sighs the Christian has ever heaved have been fetched from him by carnal professors. I would not weep a tear if every man should curse me who was a hater of Christ. But when the professor forsakes Christ and betrays His cause—ah, that, indeed, is grievous—and who is he that can keep back the tears on account of so vile a deed?

Again—*nothing divides the Church more*. I have seen many divisions in journeying through the country and I believe almost every division may be traced to a deficiency of piety on the part of some of the members. We would be more one, if it were not for cant that creep into our midst. We would be more loving to each other, more tender-hearted, more kind, but that these men, so deceptive, coming into our midst, render us suspicious. Moreover, they, themselves, find fault with those who walk worthily in order to hide their own faults against God and against justice. The greatest sorrows of the Church have been brought upon her, not by the arrows shot by her foes, not by the discharge of the artillery of Hell—but by fires lit in her own midst by those who have crept into her in the guise of good men and true—but who were spies in the camp and traitors to the cause!

Yet again—*nothing has ever hurt poor sinners more than this*. Many sinners coming to Christ would get relief far more easily and find peace far more quickly if it were not for the evil lives of false professors. Now let me tell you a story, which I remember telling once before—it is a very solemn one. I hope to feel its power, myself, and I pray that all of you may do the same. A young minister had been preaching in a country village and the sermon apparently took deep effect on the minds of the hearers in the congregation. There was a young man who felt acutely the Truth of the solemn words to which the preacher had given utterance. He sought the preacher after the service and walked home with him. On the road, the minister talked of every subject except the one that had occupied his attention in the pulpit. The poor soul was under great distress and he asked the minister a question or two, but they were put off very coolly, as if the matter was of no great importance. Arriving at the house, several friends were gathered together and the preacher commenced very freely to crack jokes, to utter his funny expressions and to set the company in

a roar of laughter. That, perhaps, might not have been so bad, had he not gone even farther and uttered words which were utterly false and verged upon the licentious. The young man suddenly rose from the table—and though he had wept under the sermon and had been under the deepest apparent conviction—he rose up and went outside the door. Stamping his foot, he said, “Religion is a lie! From this moment I abjure God, I abjure Christ and if I am damned I will be damned, but I will lay the charge at that man’s door, for he preached, just now, and made me weep, but now see what he is! He is a liar and I will never listen to him, again!” He carried out his threat. And some time afterwards, as he lay dying, he sent word to the minister that he wanted to see him. The minister had moved to a distant part, but had been brought there by Providence, I believe purposely, to chasten him for the great sin he had committed. The minister stepped into the room with a Bible in his hand to do as he was accustomed—to read a Chapter and to pray with the poor man. Turning his eyes on him, the man said, “Sir, I remember hearing you preach once.” “Blessed be God,” said the minister, “I thank God for it,” thinking, no doubt, that he was a convert and rejoicing over him. “Stop,” said the man, “I do not know that there is much reason for thanking God, at any rate, on my part! Sir, do you remember preaching from such-and-such a text on such-and-such an evening?” “Yes, I do.” “I trembled then, Sir—I shook from head to foot. I left with the intention of bending the knee in prayer and seeking God in Christ, but do you remember going to such-and-such a house and what you said there!” “No,” said the minister, “I cannot.” “Well, then, I can tell you and mark you—through what you said that night, my soul is damned and as true as I am a living man, I will meet you at God’s bar and lay it to your charge.” The man then shut his eyes and died. I think you can scarcely imagine what must have been the feeling of that preacher as he retired from the bedside. He must always carry with him that horrid, that terrible incubus, that there was a soul in Hell who laid his blood to his charge!

I am afraid there are some in the ranks of the Church who have much guilt at their doors on this account. Many a young man has been driven from a solemn consideration of the Truth by the harsh and censorious remarks of Scribes and Pharisees. Many a careful seeker has been prejudiced against sound Doctrine by the evil lives of its professors. Ah, you Scribes and Pharisees, you enter not in, yourselves, and they who would enter in, you hinder! You take the key of knowledge, lock up the door by your inconsistencies and drive men away by your unholy living!

Again—they are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ,” because *they give the devil more theme for laughter* and the enemy more cause for joy, than

any other class of Christians. I do not care what all the infidel lecturers in the world like to say. They are very clever fellows, no doubt, and they have to be good to prove an absurdity and “make the worse appear the better reason.” But we care little what they say. They may say what they like against us that is false, but it is when they can say anything that is true about us that we do not like it. It is when they can find a real inconsistency in us and then bring it to our charge, that they have got stuff to make lectures of! If a man is an upright Christian, he never need fear what others say of him. They will get but little fun out of him if he leads a holy, blameless life. But let him be sometimes godly and at other times ungodly—then he may grieve—for he has given the enemy cause to blaspheme by his unholy living! The devil gets much advantage over the Church by the inconsistency of professors. It is when Satan makes hypocrites that he brings the great battering ram against the wall. “Your lives are not consistent”—ah, that is the greatest battering ram that Satan can use against the cause of Christ! Be careful, my dear Friends, be very careful that you do not dishonor the cause you profess to love by living in sin and walking in iniquity! And let me say a word to those of you who, like myself, are strong Calvinists. No class of persons are more maligned than we. It is commonly said that our Doctrine is licentious. We are called Antinomians. We are cried down as *hypers*. We are reckoned the scum of Creation! Scarcely a minister looks on us or speaks favorably of us because we hold strong views upon the Divine Sovereignty of God and His Divine electing and special love towards His own people. In many towns, the legal ministers will tell you that there is a nasty nest of people there, who, they say, are Antinomians—such a strange set of creatures! Very likely, if a good minister enters the pulpit, when he has finished his sermon, up comes some man and grasps his hand and says, “Ah, Brother, I am glad to see you down here. Sixteen ounces to the pound, today—our minister gives us nothing but milk and water.” “Where do you go?” he asks. “Oh, I attend a little room where we labor to exalt Free Grace alone.” “Ah, then you belong to that nasty set of Antinomians our minister was telling us of just now.” Then you begin to talk with him and you find that if he is an Antinomian, you should very much like to be one yourself! Very possibly he is one of the most spiritual men in the village. He knows so much of God that he really cannot sit down under a legal ministry. He understands so much of Free Grace that he is obliged to turn out, or else he would be starved to death! It is common to cry down those who love God, or rather, who not only *love* God, but love all that God has said and who hold the Truth firmly! Let us then, not as Christians, only, but as being a peculiar class of Christians, take care that we

give no handle to the enemy but that our lives are so consistent that we do nothing to disgrace that cause which is dear to us as our lives and which we hope to maintain faithfully unto death!

III. Lastly, Paul wept BECAUSE HE KNEW THEIR DOOM. “Their end is destruction.” Mark—the end of a professing man who has been a hypocrite will be *emphatically destruction*. If there are chains in Hell more heavy than others—if there are dungeons in Hell more dark than others—if there are racks that shall more fearfully torment the frame—if there are fires that shall more tremendously scorch the body—if there are pangs that shall more effectually twist the soul in agonies, *PROFESSING Christians* must have them if they are found rotten, at last! I had rather die a profligate than die a lying professor! I think I had rather die the worse sweeping of the street than die a hypocrite! Oh, to have had a name to live and yet to have proved insincere! The higher the soar the greater the fall. This man has soared high, how low must he tumble when he finds himself mistaken! He who thought to put to his mouth the nectared cup of Heaven, finds, when he quaffs the bowl, that it is the very draught of Hell. He who hoped to enter through the gates into the city finds the gates shut and he, himself, bid to depart as an unknown stranger! Oh, how terrible is that sentence, “Depart from Me, I never knew you!” I think I had rather hear it said to me, “Depart accursed, among the rest of the wicked,” than to be singled out and to have it said, after exclaiming, “Lord, Lord”—“Depart from Me. I know you not. Though you ate and drank in My courts, though you came to My sanctuary, you are a stranger to Me and I am a stranger to you.” Such a doom, more horrible than Hell, more direful than fate, more desperate than despair—will be the inevitable lot of those—“whose god is their belly,” who have “gloried in their shame,” and “minded earthly things.”

Now I dare say most of you will say, “Well, he has stirred the Churches up tonight! If he has not spoken earnestly, he has spoken harshly, at any rate.” “Ah,” says one, “I dare say it is very true. They are all a set of cants and hypocrites. I always thought so. I shall not go among them, none of them are genuine.” Stop a bit, my Friend, I did not say they were *all* so! I would be very wicked if I did. The very fact that there are hypocrites proves that all are not so! “How is that?” you ask. Do you think there would be any bad bank notes in the world if there were no good ones? Do you think anyone would try and circulate bad sovereigns if there were no really good ones? No, I think not. It is the good bank note that makes the bad one, by prompting the wicked man to imitate it and produce a forgery. It is the very fact that there is gold in the world that makes another try to imitate the metal and so to cheat his neighbor. If there were no

true Christians, there would be no hypocrites. It is the excellence of the Christian character which makes men seek after it and, because they have not the real heart of oak, they try to grain their lives to look like it. Because they have not the real solid metal, they try to gild themselves to imitate it! You must have a few brains left and those are enough to tell you that if there are hypocrites, there must be some who are genuine! "Ah," says another, "quite right. There are many genuine ones and I can tell you, whatever you may think, I am genuine enough. I never had a doubt or fear. I know I was chosen of God. And though I do not exactly live as I would wish, I know if I do not go to Heaven, very few will ever have a chance! Why, Sir, I have been a deacon the last ten years and a member twenty. And I am not to be shaken by anything you say. As for my neighbor, there, who sits near me, I do not think he ought to be so sure. But I have never had a doubt for 30 years." Oh my dear Friend, can you excuse me? *I will doubt for you.* If you have no doubt, yourself, I begin to doubt. If you are quite so sure, I really must suspect you. For I have noticed that true Christians are the most suspicious in the world—they are always afraid of themselves. I never met with a truly good man but he always felt he was not good enough. And as you are so particularly good, you must excuse me if I cannot quite endorse your security. You may be very good, but if you will take a trifle of my advice, I recommend you to "examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith," lest, being puffed up by your carnal fleshly mind, you fall into the snare of the Wicked One. "Not too sure," is a very good motto for the Christian. "Make your calling and election sure" if you like—but do not make your opinion of yourself so sure!

Take care of presumption. Many a good man in his own esteem has been a very devil in God's eyes. Many a pious soul in the esteem of the Church has been nothing but rottenness in the esteem of God. Let us then try ourselves. Let us say, "Search us, O God, and try our hearts; see if there is any wicked way in us and lead us in the way everlasting." If you shall be sent home with such a thought, I shall bless God that the sermon was not altogether in vain. But there are some here who say that it does not matter whether they are in Christ or not. They intend to still go on trifling, despising God and laughing at His name. Mark this, Sinner—the cry that does for one day won't do forever. And though you now talk of religion as if it were a mere trifle, mark you, men—you will need it, by-and-by. You are on board ship and you laugh at the lifeboat because there is no storm. You will be glad enough to leap into it if you are able when the storm shall come! Now you say Christ is nothing because you do not need Him. But when the storm of vengeance comes and Death

lays hold upon you, mark me—you will howl for Christ! Though you will not pray for Him, now, you will shriek for Him, then! Though you will not call for Him, now, your heart will burst for Him, then. Though you will not even desire Him, now, “Turn you, turn you. Why will you die, O house of Israel.” The Lord bring you to Himself and make you His true and genuine children, that you may not know destruction, but that you may be saved now and saved forever! 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 ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST NO. 2553

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 23, 1898.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER. 26 1884.

*“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.
Philippians 3:18, 19.*

IT would seem, dear Friends, that there have been trials and difficulties connected with the Church of Christ in every age. We dream that our temptations are worse than those of our fathers, but they are not. We fancy that the Church is subject to worse diseases than in her early days, but it is not so. Paul had to complain that even in the Church at Philippi, which was about as good as any, and in some respects much better than most of the Churches, there were false teachers, and false-living men, who professed to be followers of Christ, but who were, in fact, the worst enemies of the Cross of Christ. One thing I wish and that is that, instead of brooding over our present difficulties, we would take them to the Lord in prayer and faith—and so triumph over them. But, at the same time, I wish that we had the same tenderness of heart for the Glory of God which was felt by the Apostle. That we were as sensitive as he was of anything that reflected upon the Divine honor, as jealous as he was, even to tears, lest any who professed to be the friends of the Cross should, by their lives, turn out to be its worst enemies. Oh, for more of Paul's zeal for God as the great motive power of our life, so that we might feel that it mattered little how anything else went so long as the Grace of Christ triumphed, men were saved and God's name was glorified! The Lord bring us to that state of mind! We shall then feel the sins of today even more acutely than we do at present—and we shall the more confidently trust in God as we seek to overcome them.

I am not going to confine the text to its immediate connection with the church at Philippi, but I shall take it on a somewhat larger scale. Is it not startling to read of, “enemies of the Cross of Christ”? One would naturally have supposed that a remedy so wondrous and so effectual as the Atonement would have been gladly received by souls sick unto death with sin. It might have been predicted by any man who judged, concern-

ing the future, that no sooner would the Son of God descend from Heaven to earth—and die to put away human sin—than men would come flocking by millions to adore Him—and would feel as if they could not give Him a sufficiently hearty welcome! Yes, but the fact that there ever was a Cross shows how depraved is the human heart, how great the Fall that needed such a Sacrifice, how deep the depravity that committed such a murder as that of Calvary! Man, you are beside yourself, indeed, and gone back out of the way and, therefore, it is not far-fetched that you should be an enemy of the Cross of Christ! Yet it seems very startling to me as I picture the scene—a bleeding Christ and enemies gathered about the Cross whereon He dies for them! Then, a weeping Apostle warning the Church of God—the messenger of Christ in tears as he delivers the warning—yet Christ’s enemies still unmoved, perhaps pretending to be His friends, but remaining hostile to Him all the while. It is a strange conglomerate of amazing things—a Savior full of love and man full of hate—a preacher with a heart so broken that he rather weeps than preaches, and a congregation with hearts so hard that, though he has told them the Truth of God again and again, they do not regard it!

Let that striking mixture of opposing elements stand before you, now, while I begin to expound the text.

I. First, let us enquire, WHAT IS THIS CROSS OF CHRIST to which some men are sadly said to be enemies?

Of course, it *is not the material cross*. It is not anything made in the shape of the cross. There are some who can fall down and adore a cross of wood, or stone, or gold, but I cannot conceive of a greater wounding of the heart of Christ than to pay reverence to anything in the shape of a cross, or to bow before a crucifix! I think the Savior must say, “What? What? Am I the Son of God and do they make even *Me* into an idol? I who have died to redeem men from their idolatries, am I, Myself, taken and carved, and chiseled, and molten, and set up as an image to be worshipped by the sons of men?” When God says, “You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: you shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them,” it is a strange fantasy of human guilt that men should say, “We will even take the image of the Son of God, or some ghastly counterfeit that purports to be His image, and will bow down and worship it, as if to make the Christ of God an accomplice in an act of rebellion against the commandment of the holy Law.” No, it is not the material cross to which Paul alludes—we have nothing to do with those outward symbols! We might have used them much more, but they have been so perverted to idolatry that some of us almost shudder at the very sight of them!

What is the Cross of Christ, then? Well, first, it is that doctrine which is the center of His holy religion, *the Doctrine of the Atonement*. By the Cross we mean that the Son of God did actually and literally die, nailed

to a Roman gibbet as a malefactor—numbered with the transgressors—doing this because He had, of His own voluntary will, taken upon Himself the sin of His people and, being found with that sin upon Him, He must expiate it by His death. He must lay down His life, “the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.” As it is written, “He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Now, they who oppose this doctrine are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ, and they who accept this Atonement and repose their entire confidence upon it, are the friends of the Cross of Christ. They think of that Sacrifice on Calvary with reverence linked with love. They never know how sufficiently to speak of it with adoring gratitude that ever such a Victim should have been presented—the Father, Himself, giving Him—and that such a Victim should ever have been slain, the Lord resigning His life for us! Oh, it is amazing and more than amazing—a miracle that carries every other miracle within itself—greater and more Divine than all the deeds whereof poets have sung, even though they are the deeds of God, Himself, for in this He has excelled Himself—

**“God, in the Person of His Son,
Has all His mightiest works outdone.”**

They are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ” who try to belittle this great Atonement and to make it out to be a very small affair, next to nothing in importance. As I have often said of some preachers, they teach that Jesus Christ did something or other, which in some way or other, is in some measure or other connected with our salvation. We do not teach any such hazy ideas as that! We say that He laid down His life for the sheep and that for those sheep He has made a perfect, complete and effectual Redemption by which He has delivered them from the wrath to come. Blessed is he who rejoices in that Doctrine of the Cross of Christ!

But by the Cross is sometimes meant, in Scripture, *the Gospel which is the outflow of that central doctrine*. And what is that Gospel? Why, that, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” And that, “He has committed unto us the word of reconciliation,” which word of reconciliation is this, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” This is the Gospel which we proclaim—“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.” As we preach this Gospel to the sons of men, we hear Christ crying to them through us, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” It is a promise of free, instantaneous, perfect, irreversible, everlasting pardon to all who will believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for He is—mark this word—“the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”

Other salvation there is none than that which lies in His hands, but He has opened His hands upon the Cross and to-day He supplies the needs of every sinner who comes and trusts Him. He who quarrels with that Doctrine is an enemy of the Cross of Christ! Whether he makes Baptism to be the *modus* of salvation, or sets up any rite or ceremony whatever, whether Divinely-appointed or humanly-invented, he is an enemy of the Cross of Christ! Circumcision was venerable, it pertained to the fathers and was the seal of the ancient Covenant—but even *it* became an evil thing when the false teachers would have had the Gentile converts to be circumcised that they might escape from bearing the Cross of Christ—and might trust in circumcision instead of in Christ, alone! “For,” says Paul, “in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” The Doctrine of Justification by Faith is the Gospel—I know no other, and I wish to know no other. “Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses.” But, alas, there are still many who are enemies of that Doctrine, and so are, “enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

The Cross of Christ is sometimes put in Scripture for *the life which is the result of faith in Christ*. What kind of life should that be? Well, first, a life of self-denial. No man who is the friend of the Cross of Christ will give license to his passions, or indulgence to his appetites. If he does so, he proves that he is the enemy of the Cross of Christ. No man will seek honor for himself who has known that Christ has bought him with His blood. He will not, he cannot, he dare not live for himself, either in the accumulating of wealth, or the getting of fame, or the enjoyment of pleasure. His first, chief, master thought is, “For Jesus Christ all things—all things in Him, and for Him, and to Him, seeing that He has redeemed us with His precious blood.” They who shirk His service, who take no interest in holy enterprises, who just try to live to themselves—your eaters and your drinkers, your hoarders and your men and women who are always adorning the body, but never consecrating their souls to God—these are they who are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” It galls their shoulders and they will not bear it, so they turn aside to ways of their own.

II. Now, secondly, WHY ARE MEN ENEMIES OF THIS CROSS OF CHRIST?

Frankly, I think that *some do not know why they are*. “Let me tell you the Gospel,” says a kind friend. “I do not want to hear it.” “Here is a little book which has been very useful to many.” “I do not want your books.” Do you not know the liberal-minded people that we have in the world now? When they speak, or when they write, it is all about charity and liberality—they hate bigots! Dear, dear, dear, is it not amazing that they do not hate themselves because they will not tolerate the very notion of

true religion? “Why!” says one, “that Book is not true.” Did you ever read it? “No.” I thought so. We almost always find that the men who reject the New Testament never read it through and never mean to do so. Nicodemus wisely asked, “Does our Law judge any man before it hears him?” Our lawless ones do! And there are multitudes of men who ought to think themselves as mean as dirt because they never gave Christ a hearing—yet they thrust Him from them. “Oh!” says one, “I should never go inside any of those canting Methodist places.” No, you are such a wonderful man that you think you can see through a stone wall and judge of what goes on inside—you do not need to be taught because you imagine you already know everything! I believe that in London there is a vast amount of prejudice against true religion which is based upon nothing at all. The people do not know what the Gospel is and, in part, this is our hope, for if we can but bring the blessed Truth of Christ to bear upon some of these men, it will be like plowing up virgin soil in the western states of America—we may hope to reap a glorious harvest. God grant that we may!

But there are some who are “enemies of the Cross of Christ” for reasons which they would not like to confess. Some, *because the Cross of Christ hurts their pride*. Why should they need to be pardoned? They have done nothing amiss—they are as good as most people and a great deal better than many! You speak to one of them and he says, “Do not talk to me as if you thought I was going to be lost. I do not know anybody who can find fault with me. I really think that I am an example to others.” Just so and, therefore, of course you hate the Cross of Christ! No man who is well likes medicine—how we laugh at the doctors when we feel all right! What jests we make about their calling! It is only when we begin to feel strange that we send for a medical man. And it is just so with men spiritually—as long as they are whole, they need not the Great Physician. While they think they are righteous, they reject the righteousness of Christ.

Others, too, abhor the Cross of Christ *because the Gospel is so simple*. They belong to a club and they take in a Quarterly Review. And though they do not know very much about any one thing, yet they know a little about a great many things. They just get a smattering of various kinds of knowledge and they think they are wonderfully clever. Do you not notice the development of their foreheads? You cannot expect that *they* would have anything to do with the Gospel that would suit a servant girl! The religion that fits Jack, Tom and Harry is not grand enough for them. Why, they actually had a distant relative who was connected with a Baronet, so of course we cannot expect such gentlemen as they are to be saved simply by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ! The Gospel is too plain, too easy, for them. O Sirs, would you like to have it made difficult, that all the poor ignorant people in the world might perish just to please you? Let me remind you that such a man as Sir Isaac Newton, who had

one of the greatest of all human minds, gloried in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and felt it all too great for him. And in our days, such a truly scientific man as Faraday bowed meekly before the Divine Savior and looked up and found everything in Him. Yet some foolish people think they know better than the eternal God so they hate the Cross of Christ. Self-conceit is the reason of much of the opposition of men to Christ.

Besides, although the Cross of Christ is lifted high, as the one hope for guilty sinners, *it is the most terribly holy thing beneath the cope of Heaven.* That Cross, blood red from His dear wounds, frightens away sin, though it draws sinners near itself. That Christ of God, making Atonement with bloody sweat, pierced hands and anguished cry of, “Why have You forsaken Me?” is the most powerful preacher of godly living whose voice was ever heard among the sons of men! Not only do sins acknowledged to be black by society in general flee from the light of the Cross, but even secret sins fly before the blaze of God’s mingled vengeance and love upon the accursed tree! The Cross is the birthplace of Puritans—the men who must be clean, who will not touch your filthy world and its amusements and nine-tenths of its engagements. These are the men who have sat beneath the midday midnight of a dying Savior’s griefs and heard Him cry, “I thirst,” as He bore the guilt of sinners. But, alas, multitudes of men do not want holiness—they want their harlots, they want their wine, they want their carnivals of vice, they want their selfishness and they want everything that Christ does not give, so they cry, “Not this Man, but Barabbas,” and they make the awful choice of sin as they neglect their Lord! These are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

III. I cannot go further into that painful part of the subject, for time fails me, and I want next, to enquire, **WHAT ARE THE MARKS OF THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH?**

Paul is evidently alluding here to some who professed to be followers of Christ, but who were really “the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” I do believe, Brothers and Sisters, that the description given of them is true of many in our day. Here is what the Apostle said of them, “Whose God is their belly.” That surely means *self-indulgence* and applies to professing Christians who never restrain their appetites, or their desires, or their passions—who are sensual while they boast of being spiritual—who are altogether given up to self-indulgence and yet claim to be followers of the Man of Sorrows who gave up everything for the good of others. That is the first kind of “enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

Next are those who are the subjects of *shameful pride*—“whose glory is in their shame.” That is to say, they boast of things of which they ought to be ashamed. Do you not know some who can grind down the wages of their employees and boast that they have done a clever and business-like thing—and then go and “take the sacrament”? Think of the poor starving needlewomen who, if they sew their souls away, cannot get bread enough to appease their hunger! I do not know who it is who oppresses them so

cruelly, but I should not wonder if their taskmasters do not even think that they will go to Heaven—I shall be surprised if they are not very greatly mistaken! Then there are others who are the prey of avarice, and they boast of what they can save. They never give anything to the poor, they seem to think that it is wrong to do so. They even found a Society to stop it! God gives to the evil as well as to the good, but they give to no one! They call their methods, “political economy,” and glory that they save so much which others would have given away. As to the cause of God, one wretched creature boasted that his soul did not cost him a shilling a year! Somebody said that such a sum would be too great an expense for such a miserable soul as his, and we hardly wonder at the sarcasm of the remark. Alas, that there should be those who glory in that kind of thing—pinching, grinding, money-loving wretches! Some of these are even called Christians, but all the while “they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

There are others who profess to be Christians who go about talking to young people and trying to indoctrinate them with false views. Sometimes they even cause the faith of the old to stagger—and they draw one and another aside to this novelty and to that, which is not according to the Scripture. I believe that such people are the worst “enemies of the Cross of Christ.” When the devil is in the pulpit, he is a devil! When we get bad doctrine proclaimed by ministers of Christ, themselves, then have we, indeed, “the enemies of the Cross of Christ,” and there are, nowadays, plenty of them of whom I would speak, even weeping, as I say that, “they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.”

Paul adds one other description of these “enemies of the Cross of Christ,” that is, *worldliness*—“who mind earthly things.” This is a very close home-thrust to many professing Christians. Do they ever help the Sunday school? Oh, no, no! Sunday school? They hope somebody or other attends to it, but it is no concern of theirs. Do they ever aid in a Mission? A Mission? Why, they do not get the shutters closed till so late at night that they cannot help in mission work—they have enough to do to look after themselves. But are they doing nothing at all for Christ? No, nothing! And for 20 years together, nothing. What are they minding, then? Well, I do not know. Only I am sure that they cannot be minding anything but “earthly things.” That is all. This is the catechism that they go through every day—“What shall we eat? What shall we drink? With what shall we be clothed?” That is all they live for.

Now, do not be deceived! If this is true concerning you, you are no friend of Christ, for those who belong to Christ admit that they are not their own, but they are bought with a price and they have some higher and nobler objective than that which takes up the lives of worldlings. They are living for God and for eternity, for Christ and for the good of men! And their great wish is to lay themselves out for the Glory of God and the benefit of the human race. God grant that we may not be found

among these characters, “whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things”!

IV. For, next, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THESE PEOPLE?

We are told that their “end is destruction.” There will be *a total destruction of their profession*. There will be *a destruction of all their hopes*. There will be *a destruction of all their happiness*. There will be *destruction of themselves* and they shall stand forever as destroyed and ruined things, ghastly exhibitions of what sin can do—and what must follow upon a false profession, or any other form of enmity to the Cross of Christ.

V. Now, lastly, How SHOULD WE ACT IN THIS MATTER? If there are still such people as the Apostle describes, what have you and I to do concerning them?

Well, first, some of us have to *give frequent warning*—“Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.” O Friends, there are so many outside the professing Church who are “the enemies of the Cross of Christ” that it might break one’s heart to think of them! But those who are *inside* the Church, professors who never knew Christ, who have often come to the Communion Table, but have never had fellowship with *Christ*—who are quite satisfied with their outward religion while their hearts are rotten through and through—it is an awful and a dreadful thing that there should be such! But we are bound to keep on exhorting one another and warning one another because there are such “enemies of the Cross of Christ” even inside His nominal Church.

And, let me add, if exhortations are frequently to be given, the *warnings ought to be as frequently taken*. How you and I ought often to pass the Apostolic question round, “Lord, is it I?” Suppose He stood on this platform and lifted up those pierced hands and said in majestic sorrow, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, one of you shall betray Me”? Would not that question stir us all to anguish? Well, let it do so! See to it that you make sure work for eternity, my Brothers and Sisters, and while I talk to you—I am talking to myself as well—oh, see to it that you do not have a flimsy profession, a name to live when you are really dead! What is religion worth if it is not in the heart? It is like the pageantry which surrounds the grave—the pomp, the pall, the hearse—death decently covered up! May God, of His infinite mercy, save us from having a dead profession, for, as the Lord lives, He will not endure dead professors! “He is not the God of the dead, but of the living,” and He will one day say, “Bury My dead out of My sight.” These “enemies of the Cross of Christ” shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of His power.

But while we speak of these people, *it becomes us to be very tender*, for the Apostle says, “of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping.” Why weeping? Because it is an awful thing for men to hear the

Divine and final sentence, "Depart, you cursed." I would not like to think of anybody here who will have that for his portion at the Day of Judgment! And I would be a gross traitor to your souls if I did not also add that I cannot help fearing that this will be the lot of some of you! You have never come to Christ. Perhaps you have professed to do so, or, possibly, you have neither done it nor professed to do it, but you are openly and avowedly antagonistic to the Cross of Christ. May God's Grace convert you! Otherwise we may well weep over you that you should die in your sins.

But we have further tears because of the mischief that such sinners do. "Enemies of the Cross of Christ" do a world of damage to wife and children, neighbors and friends. "One sinner destroys much good." One graceless life is a great robbery of the treasury of God. One life spent in distinct opposition to the Gospel of Jesus is a terrible thing. A Scotchman took some thistle seed to Australia that he might see a thistle grow on his farm. He only wanted one or two rare old Scotch thistles to make him think that he was at home. But now, thousands of acres are covered with this horrible weed which nobody can destroy and which has become the most gross nuisance of the region! One seed of sin may cover a continent with crime! God save us, then, from being numbered with "the enemies of the Cross of Christ"! Why should we not all come to the Cross now? The best homage we can pay to Jesus is to come and receive Him as our Savior. Let us do so! Let us sing this verse while we do it—

***"Just as I am—without one plea
But that Your blood was shed for me,
And that You bid me come to You,
O Lamb of God, I come"***

Let those who can truly sing it, do so, even if they never sang it before. God bless you all, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PHILIPPIANS 3.

Verse 1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* As much as to say, "If this were the last sentence that I should write to you, I would say, 'Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.' It is your privilege, it is your duty to rejoice in God—not in your health, your wealth, your children, your prosperity, but in the *Lord*." There is the unchanging and unbounded source of joy. It will do you no harm to rejoice in the Lord! The more you rejoice in Him, the more spiritually-minded will you become. "Finally, my brethren." That is, even to the end, not with you, the bitter end, but even to the end of life, rejoice in the Lord. Make this the *finis* of everything, the end of every day, the end of every year, the end of life. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." Blessed is that religion in which it is a duty to be happy!

1. *To write the same things to you, to me, indeed, is not grievous, but for you it is safe.* Saying the same thing over and over again is safe, for your minds do not catch the Truth of God at the first hearing, and your memories are slippery.

2. *Beware of dogs.*—Men of a doggish, captious, selfish spirit. In Paul's day, there were some who were called Cynics, that is to say, dogs. "Beware of dogs."

2. *Beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.* By which Paul meant those Jews who made a great point of circumcision. He calls them here "the cutters," for they mangled and cut the Church of God in pieces. "Beware of the concision."

3. *For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* These are three marks of the true Israel of God. Have you all of them—worshipping God in the spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus and having no confidence in the flesh?

4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh.* If anybody might, Paul might. If birth, if education, or if external religiousness could have saved anybody in the world, it would have saved Saul of Tarsus!

4, 5. *If anyone thinks that he may have confidence in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day.* The ritual was observed even to the hour in his case.

5. *Of the stock of Israel.* Not an Edomite or a Samaritan, but, "of the stock of Israel" and of the very center of that stock.

5. *Of the tribe of Benjamin.* Which remained with Judah, faithful, long after the ten tribes had gone aside.

5. *An Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee.* That is, one who observed all the minutiae and details of the Ceremonial Law and a good deal more—the traditions of the elders which hung like moss about the old stone of Jewish ceremonialism. Paul had observed all that.

6. *Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church!* He was most zealous in the cause that he thought right. Bitterly, cruelly, even to the death, did he persecute the believers in Jesus.

6. *Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless.* Paul had been kept from the vices into which many fell. In his young days, he had been pure. And all his days, he had been upright and sincere. As far as he knew, to the best of his light, he had observed the Law of God. In another place, he calls himself the chief of sinners. And so he was because he persecuted the Church of God. But, in another sense, I may say of him that there is no man who stood so good a chance of being justified by works as Paul did, if there could have been any justification in that way.

7. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* His faith in Jesus reversed all his former estimates, so that his gains he counted to be losses. He thought it so much the worse, concerning zeal,

to have persecuted the Church, and so much to his injury to have imagined that he was blameless in the Presence of God.

8. *Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung.—Offal, refuse, garbage—*

8. *That I may win Christ.* He had every opportunity of advancement. He was a fine scholar and might have reached the highest degree in connection with the Sanhedrim and the synagogue, but he thought nothing of all that—he threw it all away as worthless and declared that *this* was his ambition—“That I may win Christ.”

9. *And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* It must be more glorious to be justified by God than by ourselves. It must be more safe to wear the righteousness of Christ than to wear our own. Nothing can so dignify our manhood as to have Christ, Himself, to be “the Lord our Righteousness.” This Paul chose in preference to everything else.

10, 11. *That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* See to what Paul is looking forward—resurrection—and therefore he lets this life go as of secondary importance. He is willing to suffer as Christ suffered and to die as Christ died. You and I may never be called to make that great sacrifice, but if we are true followers of Christ, we shall be prepared for it. If ever it should happen that Christ and our life shall be put in competition, we must not deliberate for a moment, for Christ is all, and we must be ready to give up all for Christ.

12. *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.* He does not say that anybody has been perfect, but he does say that *he was not so himself*, and I should think that any man who believed himself to be better than Paul would thereby prove at once that he was not perfect, for he must be sadly lacking in humility.

12. *But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* “All that Christ meant me to be, I want to be. All that Christ meant to give me, I want to have. All that He meant me to do, I want to do, to apprehend, to lay hold of that for which I am laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”

13. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended.* That is Paul’s judgment concerning himself—he has not yet attained to the full all that the religion of Christ can give him.

13, 14. *But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Always making progress—throwing himself into it, having the reward be-

fore him, the prize of perfection in Christ—and running towards it with all his might.

15. *Let us, therefore, as many as are mature. Or, “would be perfect.”*

15. *Be thus minded: and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.* I admire that sentence. If any Brother has not reached a full knowledge of the Truth of God, let us not condemn him, or cast him out of our company, but say to him, “God shall reveal even this unto you.”

16. *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.* There are some points upon which we are all agreed. There is some standing ground where the babe in Grace may meet with the man in Christ Jesus. Well, as far as we see eye to eye, let us co-operate with one another, let us have our hearts knit together in a holy unanimity. “Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” There are some people who are always looking out for points of difference—their motto seems to be, “If we differ in anything, let us split away from one another.” Their great idea is that by dividing we shall conquer! The fact is that by separating ourselves from one another, we shall miss all hope of strength and play into the hands of the adversaries.

17. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example.* For the true servant of Christ teaches by his life as much as by his words.

18-20. *(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things). For our conversation. Or, citizenship—*

20, 21. *Is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body.* Vile so far that it has been defiled by sin. Vile in comparison with that body which shall be—“Who shall change our vile body,” the body of our humiliation.

21. *That it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—289, 649, 642.

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**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY
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CITIZENSHIP IN HEAVEN

NO. 476

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 12, 1862,
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“For our conversation is in Heaven; from where also we look
for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”
Philippians 3:20.*

THERE can be no comparison between a soaring seraph and a crawling worm. Christian men ought so to live that it were idle to speak of a comparison between them and the men of the world. It should not be a comparison but a contrast. No scale of degrees should be possible. The Believer should be a direct and manifest contradiction to the unregenerate. The life of a saint should be altogether above and out of the same list as the life of a sinner.

We should compel our critics not to confess that moralists are good, and Christians a little better. But while the world is darkness, we should manifestly be light. And while the world lies in the Wicked One, we should most evidently be of God, and overcome the temptations of that Wicked One. Wide as the poles asunder are life and death, light and darkness, health and disease, purity and sin, spiritual and carnal, Divine and sensual. If we were what we profess to be, we should be as distinct a people in the midst of this world, as a white race in a community of Ethiopians. There should be no more difficulty in detecting the Christian from the worldling than in discovering a sheep from a goat, or a lamb from a wolf.

Alas, the Church is so much adulterated, that we have to abate our glorying, and cannot exalt her character as we would. “The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!” O for the time when “our conversation shall be in Heaven,” and the ignoble life of the man, whose god is his belly, and whose end is destruction, shall be rebuked by our unworldly, unselfish character. There should be as much difference between the worldling and the Christian as between Hell and Heaven, between destruction and eternal life.

As we hope at last that there shall be a great gulf separating us from the doom of the impenitent, there should be here a deep and wide gulf between us and the ungodly. The purity of our character should be such that men must take knowledge of us that we are of another and superior race. God grant us more and more to be most clearly a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that we may show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Brethren, tonight I exhort you to holiness, not by the precepts of the Law—not by the thunder from Sinai—not by the perils or punishments which might fall upon you if you are unholy. But by the privileges to which you have been admitted. Gracious souls should only be urged by

arguments from Divine Grace. Whips are for the backs of fools, and not for heirs of Heaven. By the honorable citizenship which has been bestowed upon you, I shall beseech you to let your conversation be in Heaven. And I shall urge that most prevailing argument, that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming, and therefore we should be as men that watch for our Lord, diligently doing service unto Him, that when He comes He may say unto us, "Well done, good and faithful servants." I know that the Grace which is in you will freely answer to such a plea.

Our text, I think, might be best translated thus—"Our *citizenship* is in Heaven." The French translation renders it, "As for us, our burghership is in the heavens." Doddridge paraphrases it, "But we converse as citizens of Heaven, considering ourselves as denizens of the New Jerusalem and only strangers and pilgrims upon earth."

I. The first idea which is suggested by the verse under consideration is this—if our citizenship is in Heaven, then WE ARE ALIENS HERE. We are strangers and foreigners, pilgrims and sojourners in the earth, as all our fathers were. In the words of Sacred Writ, "Here we have no continuing city," but, "we desire a better country, that is an heavenly." Let us illustrate our position. A certain young man is sent out by his father to trade on behalf of the family—he is sent to America, and he is just now living in New York.

A very fortunate thing it is for him that his citizenship is in England. Though he lives in America and trades there, yet he is an alien and does not belong to that afflicted nation. For he retains his citizenship with us on this side of the Atlantic. Yet there is a line of conduct which is due from him to the country which affords him shelter, and he must see to it that he does not fail to render it. Since *we* are aliens, we must remember to behave ourselves as aliens should, and by no means come short in our duty. We are affected by the position of our temporary country.

A person trading in New York or Boston, though a freeman of the city of London, will find himself very much affected by the trade of the United States—when the merchants of his city suffer, he will find himself suffering with them, the fluctuations of their money market will affect his undertakings and the stagnation of commerce will slacken his progress. But if prosperity should happily return, he will find that when the coffers of their merchants are getting full, his will be the better. And the happy development of trade will give buoyancy to his own ventures.

He is not of the nation, and yet every trembling of the scale will affect him. He will prosper as that nation prospers, and he will suffer as that nation suffers. That is to say, not as a citizen, but as a trader. And so we, in this country, find that though we are strangers and foreigners on earth, yet we share all the inconveniences of the flesh. No exemption is granted to us from the common lot of manhood. We are born to trouble, even as others, and have tribulation like the rest. When famine comes we hunger. And when war rages we are in danger.

We are exposed to the same climate, bearing the same burning heat, or the same freezing cold. We know the whole train of ills, even as the citizens of earth know them. When God in mercy scatters liberally with both His hands the bounties of His Providence, we take our share. Though we

are aliens, yet we live upon the good of the land, and share the tender mercies of the God of Providence. Therefore we have to take some interest in it. And the good man, though he is a foreigner, will not live even a week in this foreign land without *seeking to do good* among the neighbors with whom he dwells.

The good Samaritan sought not only the good of the Samaritan nation but of the Jews. Though there was no sort of kinship among them (for the Samaritans were not, as we have often heard erroneously said, first cousins or relations to the Jews. Not a drop of Jewish blood ever ran in the Samaritans' veins. They were strangers brought from Assyria. They had no relation to Abraham whatever), yet the good Samaritan, finding himself traveling between Jericho and Jerusalem, did good to the Jew, since he was in Judea. The Lord charged His people by His servant Jeremiah, "Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall you have peace."

Since we are here, we must seek the good of this world. "To do good, and to communicate, forget not." "Love you your enemies and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again. And your reward shall be great, and you shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

We must do our utmost while we are here to bring men to Christ, to win them from their evil ways, to bring them to eternal life, and to make them, with us, citizens of another, and a better land. For, to tell the truth, we are here as recruiting sergeants for Heaven. Here to give men the enlisting money, to bind upon them the blood red colors of the Savior's service, to win them to King Jesus, that, by-and-by, they may share His victories after having fought His battles.

Seeking the good of the country as aliens, we must also remember that it behooves aliens to *keep themselves very quiet*. What business have foreigners to plot against the government, or to intermeddle with the politics of a country in which they have no citizenship? An Englishman in New York had best be without a tongue just now. If he should criticize the courage of the generals, the accuracy of their dispatches, or the genius of the President, he might meet with rather rough usage. He will be injudicious, indeed, if he cannot leave America to the Americans.

So, in this land of ours, where you and I are strangers, we must be orderly sojourners, submitting ourselves constantly to those that are in authority, leading orderly and peaceable lives, and, according to the command of the Holy Spirit through the Apostle, "honoring all men, fearing God, honoring the King." "Submitting ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." I cannot say that I delight in political Christians. I fear that party strife is a serious trial to Believers, and I cannot reconcile our heavenly citizenship with the schemes of the hustling and the riot of the polling-booth.

You must follow your own judgment here, but for my part, I am a foreigner even in England, and as such I mean to act. We are simply passing through this earth and should bless it in our transit but never yoke ourselves to its affairs. An Englishman may happen to be in Spain—he

wishes a thousand things were different from what they are, but he does not trouble himself much about them—says he,” If I were a Spaniard I would see what I could do to alter this government but, being an Englishman, let the Spaniards see to their own matters. I shall be back in my own country by-and-by, and the sooner the better.”

So with Christians here. They are content very much to let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Their politics concern their own country, they do not care much about any other. As *men* they love liberty and are not willing to lose it even in the lower sense. But, spiritually, their politics are spiritual, and as citizens they look to the interest of that Divine republic to which they belong. They wait for the time when, having patiently borne with the laws of the land of their banishment, they shall come under the more beneficent sway of Him who reigns in Glory, the King of kings and Lord of lords. If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men, and serve your day and generation still, but build not your soul's dwelling place here, for all this earth must be destroyed at the coming of the fiery day.

Again, let us remember that as aliens *we have privileges as well as duties*. The princes of evil cannot draft us into their regiments. We cannot be compelled to do Satan's work. The king of this world may make his vassals serve him, but he cannot raise a conscription upon aliens. He may order out his troops to this villainy, or to that dastardly service, but the child of God claims an immunity from all the commands of Satan. Let evil maxims bind the men that own their sway—we are free and own not the prince of the power of the air. I know that men of this world say we must keep up appearances. We must be respectable. We must do as others do. We must swim with the tide. We must move with the crowd.

But not so the upright Believer—“No,” says he, “Do not expect me to fall in with your ways and customs. I am in Rome, but I shall not do as Rome does. I will let you see that I am an alien, and that I have rights as an alien, even here in this foreign land. I am not to be bound to fight your battles, nor march at the sound of your drums.” Brethren, we are soldiers of Christ. We are enlisted in *His* army. And as aliens here, we are not to be constrained into the army of evil. Let lords and lands have what masters they will, let us be free, for Christ is our Master still. The seventy thousand whom God has reserved, will not bow the knee to Baal. Be it known unto you, O world, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the image which you have set up. Servants of God we are, and we will not be in bondage unto men.

As we are free from the conscription of the State, we must remember, also, that we are not eligible to its honors. I know you will say that is not a privilege. But it is a great benefit if looked at aright. An Englishman in New York is not eligible for the very prickly throne of the President. I suppose he could not well be made a governor of Massachusetts or any other State, and, indeed, he may be well content to renounce the difficulties and the honor, too. So also, the Christian man here is not eligible to this world's honors. It is a very ill omen to hear the world clap its hands and say, “Well done,” to the Christian man. He may begin to look to his stand-

ing and wonder whether he has not been doing wrong when the unrighteous give him their approbation.

“What, did I do wrong,” said Socrates, “that yonder villain praised me just now?” And so may the Christian say, “What, have I done wrong, that So-and-So spoke well of me, for if I had done right, he would not? He has not the sense to praise goodness—he could only have applauded that which suited his own taste. Christian Brothers and Sisters, you must never covet the world’s esteem. The love of this world is not in keeping with the love of God. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Treat its smiles as you treat its threats, with quiet contempt. Be willing rather to be sneered at than to be approved, counting the Cross of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

O harlot world, it were a sad dishonor to be your favorite! Tire your head and paint your face, you Jezebel, but you are no friend of ours, nor will we desire your hollow love. The men of this world were mad to raise us to their seats of honor, for we are aliens and citizens of another country. When the Pope sent a noted Protestant statesman a present of some silver goblets, he returned them with this answer—“The citizens of Zurich compel their judges to swear twice in the year that they will receive no presents from foreign princes, therefore take them back.” More than twice in the year should the Christian resolve that he will not accept the smiles of this world and will do no homage to its glory.

“We fear the Greeks even when they bear gifts.” Like the Trojans of old, we may be beguiled with presents even if unconquered in arms. Forswear then, the grandeur and honor of this fleeting age. Say in life, what a proud cardinal said in death, “Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you.” Pass through Vanity Fair without trading in its vanities, crying, in answer to their “What will you buy?”—“We buy the Truth of God.” Take up the pilgrim’s song and sing it always—

***“The things eternal I pursue,
And happiness beyond the view
Of those who basely pant
For things by nature felt and seen.
Their honors, wealth and pleasures mean,
I neither have nor want.
Nothing on earth I call my own—
A stranger to the world unknown,
I all their goods despise.
I trample on their whole delight,
And seek a country out of sight—
A country in the skies.”***

Furthermore, as aliens, *it is not for us to hoard up this world’s treasures.* Gentlemen, you who know the exchange of New York, would you hoard up any extensive amount of Mr. Chase’s green-backed notes? I think not. Those stamps which officiate in the States in lieu of copper coinage I should hardly desire to accumulate. Perhaps the fire might consume them, or if not, the gradual process of wear and tear which they are sure to undergo might leave me penniless before long. “No, Sir,” says the British trader, “I am an alien. I cannot very well accept payment in these bits of paper. They are very well for you, perhaps.

“They will pass current in your state but my riches must be riches in England, for I am going there to live directly. I must have solid gold, old English sovereigns, nothing else but these can make me rich.” Brethren, so it is with us. If we are aliens, the treasures of this world are like those bits of paper, of little value in our esteem. And we should lay up our treasure in Heaven, “where neither moth nor rust does corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” The money of this world is not current in Paradise. And when we reach its blissful shore, if regret can be known, we shall wish that we had laid up more treasure in the land of our fatherhood, in the dear fatherland beyond the skies.

Transport your jewels to a safer country than this world. Be rich toward God rather than before men. A certain minister collecting for a Chapel, called upon a rich merchant, who generously gave him fifty pounds. As the good man was going out with sparkling eye at the liberality of the merchant, the tradesman opened a , and he said, “Stop a minute, I find by this letter, I have lost this morning a ship worth six thousand pounds.” The poor minister trembled in his shoes, for he thought the next word would be, “Let me have the fifty pound check back.”

Instead of it, it was “Let me have the check back a moment,” and then taking out his pen he wrote him a check for five hundred pounds. “As my money is going so fast, it is well,” said he, “to make sure of some of it, so I will put some of it in God’s bank.” The man, you doubt not, went his way astonished at such a way of dealing as this, but indeed that is just what a man should do, who feels he is an alien here and his treasure is beyond the sky—

***“There is my house and portion fair;
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home—
For me my elder Brethren stay,
And angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come.”***

II. It is our comfort now to remind you that although aliens *on earth*, WE ARE CITIZENS IN HEAVEN.

What is meant by our being citizens in Heaven? Why, first that *we are under Heaven’s government*. Christ, the king of Heaven, reigns in our hearts. The laws of Glory are the laws of our consciences. Our daily prayer is, “Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” The proclamations issued from the Throne of Glory are freely received by us. The decrees of the Great King we cheerfully obey. We are not without Law to Christ. The Spirit of God rules in our mortal bodies. Divine Grace reigns through righteousness, and we wear the easy yoke of Jesus. O that He would sit as king in our hearts, like Solomon upon his throne of gold. Yours are we, Jesus, and all that we have, You rule without a rival.

As citizens of the New Jerusalem, *we share Heaven’s honors*. The glory which belongs to beatified saints belongs to us, for we are already sons of God, already princes of the blood imperial. Already we wear the spotless robe of Jesus’ righteousness. Already we have angels for our servitors, saints for our companions, Christ for our Brother, God for our Father, and a crown of immortality for our reward. We share the honors of citizenship, for we have come to the general assembly and Church of the

First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He is. For we shall see Him as He is.”

As citizens, *we have common rights in all the property of Heaven*. Those wide extensive plains we sung of just now are ours. Ours the yonder harps of gold and crowns of glory. Ours the gates of pearl and walls of chrysolite. Ours the azure light of the city that needs no candle nor light of the sun. Ours the river of the Water of Life, and the twelve manner of fruits which grow on the trees planted at the side thereof. There is nothing in Heaven that belongs not to us, for our citizenship is there. “Things present, or things to come, all are ours. And we are Christ’s. And Christ is God’s.”

And as we are thus under Heaven’s government, and share its honors and partake of its possessions, so we today *enjoy its delights*. Do they rejoice over sinners that are born to God—prodigals that have returned? So do we. Do they chant the glories of triumphant Grace? We do the same. Do they cast their crowns at Jesus’ feet? Such honors as we have, we cast there, too. Do they rejoice in Him? So, also, do we. Do they triumph, waiting for His second advent? By faith we triumph in the same. Are they tonight singing, “Worthy the Lamb”? We also have sung the same tune, not to such glorious notes as theirs, but with as sincere hearts. With minstrelsy not quite so splendid, but we hope as sincere, for the Spirit gave us the music which we have, and the Spirit gave them the thunders of their acclamations before the Throne. “Our citizenship is in Heaven.”

Brethren, we rejoice to know, also, that as the result of our being citizens, or rather I ought to have said as the *cause* of it, our *names are written in the roll* of Heaven’s freemen. When, at last, the list shall be read, our names, by His Grace, shall be read, too. For where Paul and Peter, where David and Jonathan, where Abraham and Jacob shall be found, we shall be found, too. Numbered with them we were in the Divine purpose, reckoned with them we were in the purchase on the Cross, and with them shall we sit down forever at the tables of the blessed. The small and the great are fellow citizens and of the same household.

The babes and the perfect men are recorded in the same great registry, and neither death nor Hell can erase a single name. Our citizenship, then, is in Heaven. We have not time to expand that thought. John Calvin says of this text, “It is a most abundant source of many exhortations, which it were easy for anyone to elicit from it.” We are not all Calvin. But even to our smaller capacities, the subject appears to be one not readily exhausted, but rich with unfathomable joy.

III. We must now come to our third point, which is OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN. Our walk and acts are such as are consistent with our dignity *as citizens of Heaven*. Among the old Romans, when a dastardly action was proposed it was thought a sufficient refusal to answer, “Romanus sum—I am a Roman.”

Surely it should be a strong incentive to every good thing if we can claim to be freemen of the Eternal City. Let our lives be conformed to the glory of our citizenship. In Heaven they are holy, so must we be—so *are*

we if our citizenship is not a mere presence. They are happy, so must we be rejoicing in the Lord always. In Heaven they are obedient—so must we be, following the faintest monitions of the Divine will. In Heaven they are active, so should we be, both day and night praising and serving God. In Heaven they are peaceful, so should we find a rest in Christ, and be at peace even now.

In Heaven they rejoice to behold the face of Christ, so should we be always meditating upon Him, studying His beauties, and desiring to look into the Truths of God which He has taught. In Heaven they are full of love, so should we love one another as Brethren. In Heaven they have sweet communion, one with another. So should we, who though many, are one body, be every one members one of the other. Before the Throne they are free from envy and strife, ill-will, jealousy, emulation, falsehood, anger. So should we be—we should, in fact, seek while we are here, to keep up the manners and customs of the good old fatherland, so that, as in Paris, the Parisian soon says, “There goes John Bull,” so they should be able to say in this land, “there goes a heavenly citizen, one who is with us and among us but is not of us.”

Our very speech should be such that our citizenship should be detected. We should not be able to live long in a house without men finding out what we are. A friend of mine once went across to America, and landing, I think, at Boston, he knew nobody. But hearing a man say, when somebody had dropped a cask on the quay, “Look out there, or else you will make a Coggeshall job of it,” he said, “You are an Essex man I know, for that is a proverb never used anywhere but in Essex—give me your hand.” And they were friends at once.

So there should be a ring of true metal about our speech and conversation, so that when a Brother meets us, he can say, “You are a Christian, I know, for none but Christians speak like that, or act like that.” “You also were with Jesus of Nazareth, for your speech betrays you.” Our holiness should act as a sort of beacon by which we know how to give the grip to the stranger, who is not a real stranger, but a fellow citizen with us, and of the household of faith.

Oh, dear Friends, wherever we wander, we should never forget our beloved land. In Australia, on the other side the world, or in the Cape of Good Hope, or wherever else we may be exiled, surely every Englishman’s eye must turn to this fair island—and with all her faults, we must love her still. And surely let us be where we may, our eyes must turn to Heaven, the happy land unstained by shadow of fault. We love her still and love her more and more, praying for the time when our banishment shall expire, and we shall enter into our Fatherland to dwell there forever and ever.

Shenstone says, “The proper means of increasing the love we bear our native country is to reside some time in a foreign land.” Sure am I that we who cry, “Woe is me, for I dwell in Mesech and sojourn in the tents of Cedar!” are sure to add, “O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.”

IV. The text says, “Our conversation is in Heaven,” and I think we may also read it, as though it said, “OUR COMMERCE IS IN HEAVEN.” We are

trading on earth, but still the bulk of our trade is with Heaven. We trade for trinkets in this land but our gold and silver are in Heaven.

We commune with Heaven and how? Our trade is with Heaven by *meditation*, we often think of God, our Father, and Christ, our Brother. And, by the Spirit, the Comforter, we are brought in contemplative delight to the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven. Brethren, do not our *thoughts* sometimes burn within us, when we trade with that blessed land? When I have sent the ships of understanding and consideration to that land of Ophir, which is full of gold, and they have come back again laden with all manner of precious things, my thoughts have been enriched—my soul has longed to journey to that good land.

Black and stormy are you, O sea of death, but I would cross you to reach that land of Havilah, which has dust of gold. I know that he who is a Christian will never have his mind long off that better land. And do you know we sometimes trade with Heaven in our *hymns*? They tell us of the Swiss soldiery in foreign countries, that there is a song which the band is forbidden to play, because it reminds them of the cowbells of their native hills. If the men hear it, they are sure to desert, for that dear old song revives before their eyes the wooden chalets and the cows and the pastures of the glorious Alps and they long to be away.

There are some of our hymns that make us homesick, until we are hardly content to stop, and therefore, well did our poet end his song—

***“Filled with delight, my raptured soul,
Can here no longer stay.
Though Jordan’s waves around us roll,
Fearless we launch away.”***

I feel the spirit of Wesley, when he said—

***“O that we now might see our Guide!
O that the word were given!
Come, Lord of Hosts, the waves divide,
And land us all in Heaven.”***

In times of high, hallowed, heavenly harmony of praise, the songs of angels seem to come astray and find their way down to us. And then our songs return with them, hand in hand, and go back to God’s Throne, through Jesus Christ.

We trade with Heaven, I hope, too, not only thus by meditation and by thought, and by song, but *by hopes and by loves*. Our love is toward that land. How heartily the Germans sing of the dear old fatherland. But they cannot, with all their Germanic patriotism, they *cannot* beat the genial glow of the Briton’s heart, when he thinks of his fatherland, too. The Scotchman, too, wherever he may be, remembers the land of “brown heath and shaggy wood.” And the Irishman, too, let him be where he will, still thinks the “Emerald Isle” the first gem of the sea.

It is right that the patriot should love his country. Does not our love fervently flame towards Heaven? We think we cannot speak well enough of it, and, indeed, here we are correct, for no exaggeration is possible. When we talk of that land of Eschol, our mouths are watering to taste its clusters. Already, like David, we thirst to drink of the well that is within the gate. And we hunger after the good corn of the land. Our ears are wanting to have done with the discords of earth, that they may open to the harmo-

nies of Heaven. And our tongues are longing to sing the melodious sonnets, sung by flaming ones above. Yes, we do love Heaven, and thus it is that we prove that our commerce is with that better land.

Brethren, just as people in a foreign land that love their country always are glad to have plenty of letters from the country, I hope we have much *communication with the old fatherland*. We send our prayers there as letters to our Father, and we get His letters back in this blessed volume of His Word. You go into an Australian settler's hut, and you find a newspaper. Where from, Sir? A gazette from the south of France, a journal from America? Oh no, it is a newspaper from England, addressed to him in his old mother's handwriting, bearing the postage stamp with the good Queen's face in the corner.

And he likes it, though it is only a newspaper from some little pottering country town, with no news in it. Yet he likes it better, perhaps, than the "Times" itself, because it talks to him about the village where he lived, and consequently touches a special string in the harp of his soul. So must it be with Heaven. This book, the Bible, is the newspaper of Heaven, and therefore we must love it. The sermons which are preached are good news from a far country. The hymns we sing are notes by which we tell our Father of our welfare here, and by which He whispers into our soul His continued love to us. All these are, and must be pleasant to us, for our commerce is with Heaven.

I hope, too, we are sending a good deal home. I like to see our young fellows, when they go out to live in the bush, remember their mother at home. They say, "She had a hard struggle to bring us up when our father died, and she scraped her little together to help us to emigrate." John and Tom mutually agree, "the first gold we get at the diggings we will send home to mother." And it goes home. Well, I hope you are sending a great many things home.

Dear Friends, I hope as we are aliens here, we are not laying up our treasure here, where we may lose it, but packing it off as quickly as we can to our own country. There are many ways of doing it. God has many banks. And they are all safe ones. We have but to serve His Church, or serve the souls which Christ has bought with His blood, or help His poor, clothe His naked, and feed His hungry—and we send our treasures beyond sea in a safe ship. And so we keep up our commerce with the skies.

V. Time has gone. Those clocks will strike when yours ought not. There is a great reason why we should live like aliens and foreigners here, and that is because CHRIST IS COMING SOON. The early Church never forgot this. Did they not pant and thirst after the return of their ascended Lord? Like the twelve tribes, day and night they instantly watched for Messiah.

But the Church has grown weary of this hope. There have been so many false prophets who tell us that Christ is coming, that the Church thinks He never will come. And she begins to deny, or to keep in the background the blessed doctrine of the second advent of her Lord from Heaven. I do not think the fact that there have been many false prophets should make us doubt our Lord's true word. Perhaps the very frequency of these mistakes may show that there is truth at the bottom.

You have a friend who is ill, and the doctor says he cannot last long. He must die. You have called a great many times expecting to hear of his departure but he is still alive. Now the frequent errors of the physicians do not prove that your friend will not die one of these days, and that speedily, too. And so, though the false prophets have said, “Lo, here,” and “Lo, there,” and yet Christ has not come—that does not prove that His glorious appearing will never arrive.

You know I am no prophet. I do not know anything about 1866. I find quite enough to do to attend to 1862. I do not understand the visions of Daniel or Ezekiel. I find I have enough to do to teach the simple word such as I find in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Epistles of Paul. I do not find many souls have been converted to God by exquisite dissertations about the battle of Armageddon, and all those other fine things. I have no doubt prophesying is very profitable, but I rather question whether they are so profitable to the hearers, as they may be to the preachers and publishers.

I conceive that among religious people of a certain sort, the abortive explanations of prophecy issued by certain doctors gratify a craving which irreligious people find its food in novels and romances. People have a panting to know the future. And certain divines pander to this depraved taste, by prophesying for them and letting them know what is coming by-and-by. I do not know the future and I shall not pretend to know. But I do preach this, because I know it, that *Christ will come*, for He says so in a hundred passages.

The Epistles of Paul are full of the advent, and Peter’s, too, and John’s letters are crowded with it. The best of saints have always lived on the hope of the advent. There was Enoch—he prophesied of the coming of the Son of Man. So there was another Enoch who was always talking of the coming, and saying, “Come quickly.” I will not divide the house tonight by discussing whether the advent will be premillennial or postmillennial, or anything of that. It is enough for me that *He will come*, and, “in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man will come.”

Tonight He may appear, while here we stand. Just when we think that he will not come, the thief shall break open the house. We ought, therefore, to be always watching. Since the gold and silver that you have will be worthless at His advent. Since your lands and estates will melt to smoke when He appears. Since, *then* the righteous shall be rich and the godly shall be great, lay not up your treasure *here*, for it may at any time vanish, at any time disappear, for Christ at any moment may come.

I think the Church would do well to be always living as if Christ might come today. I feel persuaded she is doing ill if she works as if He would not come till 1866, because He may come before, and He may come this moment. Let her always be living as if He would come *now*, still acting in her Master’s sight, and watching unto prayer. Never mind about the last vials—fill your own vial with sweet odors and offer it before the Lord. Think what you like about Armageddon. But forgot not to fight the good fight of faith. Guess not at the precise era for the destruction of Antichrist, go and destroy it yourself, fighting against it every day. But be looking forward and hastening unto the coming of the Son of Man. And let this be

at once your comfort and excitement to diligence—that the Savior will soon come from Heaven.

Now, I think you foreigners here present—and I hope there are a great many true aliens here—ought to feel like a poor stranded mariner on a desolate island. You have saved a few things from the wreck and built yourself an old log hut. You have a few comforts round about you, but for all that you long for home. Every morning you look out to sea and wonder when you shall see a sail. Many times while examining the wide ocean to look for a ship, you have clapped your hands, and then wept to find you were mistaken. Every night you light a fire that there may be a blaze, so that if a ship should go by, they may send relief to you.

Ah, that is just the way we ought to live. We have heard of one saint who used to open his window every morning when he woke, to see if Christ had come. It might be fanaticism, but better to be enthusiastic than to mind earthly things. I would have us look out each night, and light the fire of prayer, that it may be burning in case the ships of Heaven should go by—that blessings may come to us poor aliens and foreigners who need them so much. Let us wait patiently till the Lord's convoy shall take us on board, that we may be carried into the glories and splendor of the reign of Christ.

Let us always hold the log hut with a loose hand and long for the time when we shall get to that better land where our possessions are, where our Father lives, where our treasures lie, where all our Brethren dwell. Well said our poet —

***“Blest scenes,
Through rude and stormy seas
I onward press to You.”***

My Beloved Friends, I can assure you it is always one of the sweetest thoughts I ever know, that I shall meet with you in Heaven. There are so many of you members of this Church, that I can hardly get to shake hands with you once in a year. But I shall have plenty of time, then, in Heaven. You will know your pastor in Heaven better than you do now. He loves you now, and you love him. We shall then have more time to recount our experience of Divine Grace, and praise God together, and sing together, and rejoice together concerning Him by whom we were helped to plant and sow, and through whom all the increase came—

***“I hope when days and years are past,
We all shall meet in Heaven,
We all shall meet in Heaven at last,
We all shall meet in Heaven.”***

But we shall not all meet in Glory. Not all, unless you repent. Some of you will certainly perish, unless you believe in Christ. But why must we be divided? Oh, why not all in Heaven? “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved but he that believes not shall be damned.” Trust Christ, Sinner, and Heaven is yours and mine, and we are safe, by His Grace, forever. Amen.

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

THE POWER OF CHRIST ILLUSTRATED BY THE RESURRECTION NO. 973

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 29, 1871,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“For our conversation is in Heaven; from where we also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself,”
Philippians 3:20, 21.*

I should mislead you if I called these verses my text, for I intend only to lay stress upon the closing expression, and I read the two verses because they are necessary for its explanation. It would require several discourses to expound the whole of so rich a passage as this.

Beloved, how intimately is the whole of our life interwoven with the life of Christ! His first coming has been to us salvation, and we are delivered from the wrath of God through Him. We live still because He lives, and never is our life more joyous than when we look most steadily to Him. The completion of our salvation in the deliverance of our body from the bondage of corruption, in the raising of our dust to a glorious immortality—that also is wrapped up with the Personal Resurrection and quickening power of the Lord Jesus Christ. As His first advent has been our salvation from sin, so His second advent shall be our salvation from the grave.

He is in Heaven, but, as the Apostle says, “We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” We have nothing, we are nothing, apart from Him. The past, the present, and the future are only bright as He shines upon them. Every consolation, every hope, every enjoyment we possess, we have received and still retain because of our connection with Jesus Christ our Lord. Apart from Him we are naked, and poor, and miserable.

I desire to impress upon your minds, and especially upon my own, the need of our abiding in Him. As zealous laborers for the glory of God I am peculiarly anxious that you may maintain daily communion with Jesus, for as it is with our Covenant blessings, so is it with our work of faith and labor of love—everything depends upon Him. All our fruit is found in Jesus. Remember His own words, “Without Me you can do nothing.” Our power to work comes wholly from *His* power. If we work effectually, it must always be according to the effectual working of His power in us and through us.

Brethren, I pray that our eyes may be steadfastly turned to our Master at this season when our special services are about to commence. Confessing our dependence upon Him, and resorting to Him in renewed confidence, we shall proceed to our labor with redoubled strength. May we re-

member where our great strength lies, and look to Him and Him alone, away from our own weakness and our own strength, too—finding all in Him in our work for others as we have found all in Him in the matter of the salvation of our own souls. When the multitudes were fed, the disciples distributed the bread, but the central source of that Divine commissariat was the Master's own hand.

He blessed, He broke, He gave to the disciples, and then the disciples to the multitude. Significant, also, was one of the last scenes of our Lord's conversation with His disciples before He was taken up. They had been fishing all night, but they had taken nothing. It was only when He came that they cast the net on the right side of the ship, and then the net was filled with a great multitude of fishes. Ever must it be so—where He is, souls are taken by the fishers of men, but nowhere else. Not the preaching of His servants alone, not the Gospel of itself alone—but His Presence with His servants is the secret of success.

“The Lord working with them.” His cooperating Presence in the Gospel—this is it which makes it “the power of God unto salvation.” Lift up your eyes then, my Brethren, confederate with us for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom, to the Savior, the Lord Jesus, who is the Captain of our salvation. It is through Him and Him alone by whom all things shall be worked to the honor of God, but without whom the most ardent desires, and the most energetic efforts must most certainly fail. I have selected this text with no less a design than this—that every eye may, by it, be turned to the Omnipotent Savior before we enter upon the hallowed engagements which await us.

In the text notice, first of all, *the marvel to be worked by our Lord at His coming.* And then gather from it, in the second place, helps to the consideration of *the power which is now at this time proceeding from Him and treasured in Him.* And then, thirdly, *contemplate the work which we desire to see accomplished,* and which we believe will be accomplished on the ground of the power resident in our Lord.

I. First, we have to ask you to CONSIDER, BELIEVINGLY, THE MARVEL WHICH IS TO BE WORKED BY OUR LORD AT HIS COMING. When He shall come a second time He will change our vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body. What a marvelous change! How great the transformation! How high the ascent! Our body in its present state is called in our translation a “vile body.” But if we translate the Greek more literally it is much more expressive, for there we find this corporeal frame called “the body of our humiliation.” Not “this humble body”—that is hardly the meaning—but the body in which our *humiliation* is manifested and enclosed.

This body of our humiliation our Lord will transform until it is like unto His own. Here read not alone “His glorious body,” for that is not the most literal translation, but “the body of His glory.” The body in which He enjoys and reveals His glory. Our Savior had a body here in humiliation. That body was like ours in all respects except that it could see no corruption, for it was undefiled with sin. That body in which our Lord wept, and sweat great drops of blood, and yielded up His spirit, was the body of His humiliation.

He rose again from the dead, and He rose in the same body which ascended up into Heaven, but He concealed its glory to a very great extent, else He had been too bright to be seen of mortal eyes. Only when He passed the cloud, and was received out of sight, did the full glory of His body shine forth to ravish the eyes of angels and of glorified spirits. Then was it that His countenance became as the sun shining in its strength.

Now, Beloved, whatever the body of Jesus may be in His Glory, our present body which is now in its humiliation is to be conformed unto it—Jesus is the standard of man in Glory. “We shall be like He is, for we shall see him as He is.” Here we dwell in this body of our humiliation, but it shall undergo a change—“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” Then shall we come into our glory, and our body being made suitable to the Glory state, shall be fitly called the body of Glory.

We need not curiously pry into the details of the change, nor attempt to define all the differences between the two estates of our body. For “it does not yet appear what we shall be,” and we may be content to leave much to be made known to us hereafter. Yet though we see through a glass darkly, we nevertheless do see *something*, and would not shut our eyes to that little. We know not yet as we are known, but we do know in part, and that part knowledge is precious. The gates have been ajar at times, and men have looked awhile, and beheld and wondered.

Three times, at least, human eyes have seen something of the body of Glory. The face of Moses, when he came down from the mount, shone so that those who gathered around him could not look upon it, and he had to cover it with a veil. In that lustrous face of the man who had been forty days in high communion with God, you behold some gleams of the brightness of glorified manhood.

Our Lord made a yet clearer manifestation of the glorious body when He was transfigured in the presence of the three disciples. When His garments became bright and glistening, whiter than any fuller could make them, and He Himself was all aglow with Glory, His disciples saw and marveled. The face of Stephen is a third window, as it were, through which we may look at the Glory to be revealed, for even his enemies, as they gazed upon the martyr in his confession of Christ, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Those three transient gleams of the morning light may serve as tokens to us to help us to form some faint idea of what the body of the Glory of Christ and the body of our own glory will be.

Turning to that marvelous passage in Corinthians, wherein the veil seems to be more uplifted than it ever had been before or since, we learn a few particulars worthy to be rehearsed. The body while here below is corruptible, subject to decay. It gradually becomes weak through old age and at last it yields to the blows of death, falls into the ground, and becomes the food of worms.

But the new body shall be incorruptible! It shall not be subject to any process of disease, decay, or decline. It shall never, through the lapse of ages, yield to the force of death. It shall be the immortal companion for the immortal spirit. There are no graves in Heaven, no knell ever saddened the New Jerusalem. The body here is weak—the Apostle says, “it is

sown in weakness.” It is subject to all sorts of infirmities in life, and in death loses all strength. It is weak to perform our own will, weaker still to perform the heavenly will. It is weak to do and weak to suffer—but it is to be “raised in power, all infirmity being completely removed.”

How far this power will be physical and how far spiritual we need not speculate—where the material ends and the spiritual begins we need not define. We shall be as the angels, and we have found no difficulty in believing that these pure spirits “excel in strength,” nor in understanding Peter, when he says that angels are “greater in power and might.” Our body shall be “raised in power.”

Here, too, the body is a natural or soulish body—a body fit for the soul, for the lowest faculties of our mental nature. But according to the Apostle in the Corinthians, it is to be raised a *spiritual* body, adapted to the noble portion of our nature, suitable to be the dwelling place and the instrument of our new-born Grace-given life. This body at present is no assistance to the spirit of prayer or praise. It rather hinders than helps us in spiritual exercises. Often the spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.

We sleep when we ought to watch, and faint when we should pursue. Even its joys as well as its sorrows tend to distract devotion—but when this body shall be transformed, it shall be a body suitable for the highest aspirations of our perfected and glorified humanity—a spiritual body like unto the body of the Glory of Christ. Here the body is sinful, its members have been instruments of unrighteousness. It is true that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but, alas, there are traces about it of the time when it was a den of thieves!

The spots and wrinkles of sin are not yet removed. Its materialism is not yet so refined as to be an assistance to the Spirit. It gravitates downwards, and it has a bias from the right line. But it awaits the last change, and then it shall be perfectly sinless, as alabaster white and pure upon which stain of sin did never come. Like the newly driven snow, it will be immaculately chaste. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

Being sinless, the body, when it shall be raised again, shall be painless. Who shall count the number of our pains while in this present house of clay? Truly we that are in this tabernacle do groan! Does it not sometimes appear to the children of sickness as if this body were fashioned with a view to suffering? As if all its nerves, sinews, veins, pulses, vessels, and valves were parts of a curious instrument upon which every note of the entire gamut of pain might be produced? Patience, you who linger in this shattered tenement—a house not made with hands awaits you!

Up yonder no sorrow and sighing are met with. The chastising rod shall fall no longer when the faultiness is altogether removed. As the new body will be without pain, so will it be superior to weariness. The Glory body will not yield to faintness, nor fail through lethargy. Is it not implied that the spiritual body does not need to sleep, when we read that they serve God day and night in His temple? In a word, the bodies of the saints, like the body of Christ, will be perfect!

There shall be nothing lacking and nothing faulty. If saints die in the feebleness of age they shall not rise thus. Or if they have lost a sense or a limb or are halt or maimed, they shall not be so in Heaven—for as to body

and soul, “they are without fault before the Throne of God.” “We shall be like He,” is true of all the saints, and hence none will be otherwise than fair, and beautiful, and perfect. The righteous shall be like Christ, of whom it is still true that not a bone of Him shall be broken, so not a part of our body after its change shall be bruised, battered, or otherwise than perfect.

Put all this together, Brethren, and what a stretch it is from this vile body to the glorious body which shall be! Yet when Christ comes this miracle of miracles shall be worked in the twinkling of an eye! Heap up epithets descriptive of the vileness of this body. Think of it in all its weakness, infirmity, sin, and liability to death. Then admire our Lord’s body in all its holiness, happiness, purity, perfection, and immortality. And know assuredly that, at Christ’s coming, this change shall take place upon every one of the elect of God.

All Believers shall undergo this marvelous transformation in a moment. Behold and wonder! Imagine that the change should occur to you now. What a display of power! My imagination is not able to give you a picture of the transformation. But those who will be alive, and remain at the coming of the Son of God will undergo it, and so enter Glory without death. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,” and therefore the bodies of living Believers shall in the twinkling of an eye pass from the one state into the other. They shall be transformed from the vile to the glorious, from the state of humiliation into the state of Glory, by the power of the coming Savior.

The miracle is amazing if you view it as occurring to those who shall be alive when Christ comes. Reflect, however, that a very large number of the saints, when the Lord shall appear a second time, will already be in their graves. Some of these will have been buried long enough to have become corrupt. If you could remove the mold and break open the coffin, what would you find but foulness and putrefaction? But those moldering relics are the body of the saint’s *humiliation*—and that very body is to be transformed into the likeness of Christ’s glorious body! Admire the miracle as you survey the mighty change!

Look down into the loathsome tomb, and, if you can endure it, gaze upon the putrid mass. This, even this, is to be transformed into Christ’s likeness! What a work is this! And what a Savior is He who shall achieve it! Go a little further. Many of those whom Christ will thus raise will have been buried so long that all traces of them will have disappeared! They will have melted back into the common dust of earth, so that if their bones were searched for, not a vestige of them could be found—nor could the keenest searcher after human remains detect a single particle. They have slept in quiet through long ages in their lonely graves—till they have become absorbed into the soil as part and parcel of mother earth.

No, there is not a bone, nor a piece of a bone left. Their bodies are as much one with earth as the drop of rain which fell upon the wave is one with the sea—yet they shall be raised! The trumpet call shall fetch them back from the dust with which they have mingled, and dust to dust, bone to bone, the anatomy shall be rebuilt and then refashioned. Does your wonder grow? Does not your faith accept with joy the marvel, and yet feel it to be a marvel none the less?

Son of man, I will lead you into an inner chamber more full of wonder yet! There are many thousands of God's people to whom a quiet slumber in the grave was denied. They were cut off by martyrdom, were sawn asunder, or cast to the LIONS. Tens of thousands of the precious bodies of the saints have perished by fire. Their limbs have been blown in clouds of smoke to the four winds of Heaven, and even the handful of ashes which remained at the foot of the stake, their relentless persecutors have thrown into rivers to be carried to the ocean, and divided to every shore.

Some of the children of the resurrection were devoured by wild beasts in the Roman amphitheaters or left a prey to buzzards and ravens on the gallows. In all sorts of ways have the saints' bodies been hacked and hewn, and, as a consequence, the particles of those bodies have, no doubt, been absorbed into various vegetable growths, and having been eaten by animals have mingled with the flesh of beasts. But what of that?

"What of that?" you say, "how can these bodies be refashioned? By what possibility can the selfsame bodies be raised again?" I answer it needs a miracle to make any of these dry bones live, and a miracle being granted, impossibility vanishes. He who formed each atom from nothing can gather each particle again from confusion. The omniscient Lord of Providence tracks each molecule of matter, and knows its position and history as a shepherd knows his sheep. And if it is necessary to constitute the identity of the body, to gather every atom, He can do it. It may not, however, be necessary at all, and I do not assert that it will be, for there may be a true identity without sameness of material.

Even as this, my body, is the same as that in which I lived twenty years ago, yet, in all probability there is not a grain of the same matter in it. God is able, then, to cause that the same body which on earth we wear in our humiliation, which we call a vile body, shall be fashioned like unto Christ's body. No difficulties, however stern, that can be suggested from science or physical law, shall for a single instant stand in the way of the accomplishment of this transformation by Christ the King.

What marvels rise before me! Indeed, it needs faith, and we thank God we have it. The resurrection of Christ has forever settled in our minds, beyond all controversy, the resurrection of all who are in Him. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so they, also, which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Still it is a marvel of marvels, a miracle which needs the fullness of the Deity. Of whom but God, very God of very God, could it be said that He shall change our bodies, and make them like unto His glorious body?

I know how feebly I have spoken upon this sublime subject, but I am not altogether regretful of that, for I do not wish to fix your thoughts on my words for a single moment. I only desire your minds to grasp and grapple with the great thought of the *power of Christ*—by which He shall raise and change the bodies of the saints.

II. We will now pass on. Here is the point we aim at. Consider, in the second place, that THIS POWER WHICH IS TO RAISE THE DEAD IS RESIDENT IN CHRIST AT THIS MOMENT. So says the text, "according to the working whereby *He is able* to subdue all things unto Himself." It is not some *new* power which Christ will take to Himself in the latter days and then for the first time display. No, the power which will arouse the

dead is the same power which is in Him at this moment—which is going forth from Him at this instant in the midst of His Church and among the sons of men. I call your attention to this, and invite you to follow the track of the text.

First, notice that all the power by which the last transformation will be worked is ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ now *as the Savior*. “We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus.” When Christ raises the dead it will be as a Savior, and it is precisely in that capacity that we need the exercise of His power at this moment. Fix this, my Brethren, in your hearts. We are seeking the salvation of men, and we are not seeking a hopeless thing—for Jesus Christ is able, as a Savior, to subdue all things to Himself. So the text expressly tells us. It does not merely say that as a raiser of the dead He is able to subdue all things, but as the SAVIOR, the Lord Jesus Christ.

His titles are expressly given. He is set forth to us as the Lord, the Savior, the Anointed—and in that capacity is said to be able to subdue all things to Himself. Happy tidings for us! My Brethren, how large may our prayers be for the conversion of the sons of men! How great our expectations, how confident our efforts! Nothing is too hard for our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing in the way of saving work is beyond His power. If, as a Savior, He wakes the dead in the years to come, He can quicken the spiritually dead even now! These crowds of dead souls around us in this area and in these galleries—He can awaken by His quickening voice and living Spirit.

The resurrection is to be according to the working of His mighty power, and that same energy is in operation now. In its fullness the power dwells in Him. Let us stir Him up! Let us cry unto Him mightily, and give Him no rest till He puts forth that selfsame power now! Think not, my Brethren, that this would be extraordinary and unusual. Your own conversion, if you have truly been raised from your spiritual death, was by the same power that we desire to see exerted upon others.

Your own regeneration was, indeed, as remarkable an instance of Divine power as the resurrection itself shall be. Yes, and I venture to say it, your spiritual life this very day or any day you choose to mention, is, in itself a display of the same working which shall transform this vile body into its glorious condition. The power of the resurrection is being put forth today—it is pulsing through the quickened portion of this audience! It is heaving with life each bosom that beats with love to God! It is preserving the life-courses in the souls of all the spiritual, so that they go not back to their former death in sin. The power which will work the resurrection will be wonderful, but it will be no new thing. It is everywhere to be beheld in operation in the Church of God at this very moment by those who have eyes to see it.

And herein I join with the Apostle in his prayer, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened. That you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in

the heavenly places far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills All in All.”

Note next that the terms of our text imply *that opposition may be expected to this power*, but that all resistance will be overcome. That word “subdue” supposes a force to be conquered and brought into subjection. “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” Herein is a great wonder! There will be no opposition to the resurrection. The trumpet sound shall bring the dead from their graves, and no particle shall disobey the summons. But to *spiritual* resurrection there is resistance—resistance which only Omnipotence can vanquish.

In the conversion of sinners natural depravity is an opposing force. For men are set upon their sins and love not the things of God. Neither will they hearken to the voice of Mercy. My Brethren, to remove all our fears concerning our Lord’s ability to save, the word is here used, “He is able”—not only to raise all things from the dead, but “*to subdue all things to Himself.*” Here again I would bid you take the encouragement the text presents you. If there is opposition to the Gospel, *He* is able to subdue it. If in one man there is a prejudice, if in another man the heart is darkened with error.

If one man hates the very name of Jesus, if another is so wedded to his sins that he cannot part from them—if opposition has assumed in some a very determined character—does not the text meet every case? “He is able to subdue *all things,*” to conquer them, to break down the barriers that interpose to prevent the display of His power, and to make those very barriers the means of setting forth that power the more gloriously.

“He is able even to subdue all things.” O take this to the Mercy Seat, you who will be seeking the souls of men this month! Take it to Him and plead this Word of the Holy Spirit in simple, childlike faith. When there is a difficulty you cannot overcome, take it to Him, for He is “able to subdue.”

Note next that the language of our text *includes all supposable cases.* He is able to “subdue *all things* unto Himself.” Not here and there one, but “*all things.*” Brethren, there is no man in this world so fallen, debased, depraved, and willfully wicked, that Jesus cannot save him—not even among those who live beyond the reach of ordinary ministry. He can bring the heathen to the Gospel, or the Gospel to them. The wheels of Providence can be so arranged that salvation shall be brought to the outcasts.

Even war, famine, and plague, may become messengers for Christ, for He, too, rides upon the wings of the wind. There lived some few years ago in Perugia, in Italy, a man of the loosest morals and the worst conceivable disposition. He had given up all religion. He loathed God, and had arrived at such a desperate state of mind that he had conceived an affection for the devil, and endeavored to worship the Evil One. Imagining Satan to be the image and embodiment of all rebellion, free-thinking, and lawlessness, he deified God in his own mind and desired nothing better than to be a devil, himself.

On one occasion, when a Protestant missionary had been in Perugia preaching, a priest happened to say in this man's hearing, that there were Protestants in Perugia and the city was being defiled by heretics. "And who do you think Protestants are?" said he. "They are men who have renounced Christ and worship the devil." A gross and outrageous lie was this, but it answered far other ends than its author meant. The man, hearing this, thought, "Oh, then, I will go and meet with them, for I am much of their mind."

And away he went to the Protestant meeting, in the hope of finding an assembly who propagated lawlessness and worshipped the devil. He there heard the Gospel and was saved! Behold in this and in ten thousand cases equally remarkable, the ability of our Lord to subdue all things unto Himself. How can any man whom God ordains to save escape from that eternal love which is as Omnipresent as the Deity itself? "He is able to subdue all things to Himself." If His sword cannot reach the far-off ones, His arrows can—and even at this hour they are sharp in His enemy's hearts.

No boastful Goliath can stand before our David. Though the weapon which He uses today is but a stone from the brook, yet shall the Philistine be subdued. If there should be in this place a Deist, an Atheist, a Romanist, or even a lover of the devil—if he is but a man, mercy yet can come to him. Jesus Christ is able to subdue him unto Himself. None have gone too far, and none are too hardened. While the Christ lives in Heaven we need never despair of any that are still in this mortal life—"He is able to subdue all things unto Himself."

You will observe in the text that *nothing is said concerning the unfitness of the means*. My fears often are lest souls should not be saved by our instrumentality because of faultiness in us. We fear lest we should not be prayerful enough or energetic or earnest enough. Or that it should be said, "He could not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief." But the text seems to obliterate *man* altogether—"He is able to subdue all things unto Himself"—that is to say, Jesus does it, *Jesus* can do it, will do it all.

By the feeblest means He can work mightily, can take hold of us. Unfit as we are for service, He can make us fit, can grasp us in our folly and teach us wisdom—take us in our weakness and make us strong. My Brethren, if we had to find resources for ourselves, and to rely upon ourselves, our enterprise might well be renounced. But since *He* is able, we will cast the burden of this work on Him. We will go to Him in believing prayer, asking Him to work mightily through us to the praise of His glory, for, "He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

Note that *the ability* is said in the text to be *present with the Savior* now. I have already pointed that out to you, but I refer to it again. The resurrection is a matter of the future, but the working which shall accomplish the resurrection is a matter of the present. "According to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself," Jesus is as strong now as He ever will be, for He changes not. At this moment He is as able to convert souls as at the period of the brightest revival, or at Pentecost itself.

There are no ebbs and flows with Christ's power. Omnipotence is in the hand that once was pierced, permanently abiding there. Oh, if we could but rouse it! If we could but bring the Captain of the host to the field again, to fight for His Church, to work His servants! What marvels should we see, for He is able. We are not straitened in Him, we are straitened in ourselves if straitened at all.

Once more, for your comfort let it be remembered that the fact of there having been, as it were, a considerable time in which few have been converted to Christ, is no proof that His power is slackening. For it is well known to you that very few have as yet been raised from the dead, only here and there one like Lazarus and the young man at the gates of Nain. But you do not, therefore, doubt the Lord's power to raise the dead. Though He tarries we do not mistrust His power to fulfill His promise in due time.

Now the power which is restrained, as it were, so that it does not work the resurrection yet, is the same which may have been restrained in the Christian Church for awhile—but which will be as surely put forth before long in conversion as it will be in the end of time to accomplish the resurrection. Let us cry unto our Lord, for He has but to will it and thousands of sinners will be saved. Let us lift up our hearts to Him who has but to speak the word and whole nations shall be born unto Him.

The resurrection will not be a work occupying centuries, it will be accomplished at once. And so it may be in this House of Prayer, and throughout London, and throughout the world, Christ will do a great and speedy work to the amazement of all beholders. He will send forth the rod of His strength out of Zion, and rule in the midst of His enemies. He will unmask His batteries, He will spring His mines, He will advance His outworks. He will subdue the city of His adversaries, and ride victoriously through the Bozrah of His foes. Who shall stay His hand? Who shall say unto Him, "What are You doing?"

I wish we had time to work out the parallel which our text suggests, between the resurrection and the subduing of all things. The resurrection will be worked by the Divine power, and the subduing of sinners is a precisely similar instance of salvation. All men are dead in sin, but He can raise them. Many of them are corrupt with vice, but He can transform them. Some of them are, as it were, lost to all hope—like the dead body scattered to the winds—desperate cases for whom even pity seems to waste her sighs. But He who raises the dead of all sorts, with a word can raise sinners of all sorts by the selfsame power.

And as the dead, when raised, are made like Christ, so the wicked, when converted, are made like Jesus, too. Brilliant examples of virtue shall be found in those who were terrible instances of vice. The most depraved and dissolute shall become the most devout and earnest. From the vile body to the Glory body—what a leap! And from the sinner, damnable in lust—to the saint bright with the radiance of sanctity—what a space! The leap seems very far, but Omnipotence can bridge the chasm.

The Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ is able to do it. He is able to do it in ten thousand thousand cases—able to do it at this very moment. My anxious desire is to engrave this one thought upon your hearts, my Brothers and Sisters, yes, to write it on the palms of those hands with which you

are about to serve the Lord. Learn it and forget it not—almighty power lies with Jesus to achieve the purpose upon which our heart is set, namely, the conversion of many unto Himself.

III. I said I would ask you to consider, in the third place, THE WORK WHICH WE DESIRE TO SEE ACCOMPLISHED. I will not detain you, however, with that consideration farther than this. Brethren, we long to see the Savior subduing souls *unto Himself*. Not to our way of thinking. Not to our Church. Not to the honor of our powers of persuasion, but “*unto Himself*.” “He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

O Sinner, how I wish you were subdued to Jesus! To kiss those dear feet that were nailed for you, to love in life, Him who loved you to the death! Ah, Soul, it were a blessed subjection for you. Never subject of earthly monarch so happy in his king as you would be. God is our witness, we who preach the Gospel—we do not want to subdue you to *ourselves*—as though we would rule you and be lords over your spirits. It is to Jesus, to Jesus only, that we would have you subdued.

O that you desired this subjection! It would be liberty, and peace, and joy to you! Notice that this subjection is eminently to be desired, since it consists in transformation. Catch the thought of the text. He transforms the vile body into His glorious body, and this is a part of the subjection of all things unto Himself. But do you call that subjection? Is it not a subjection to be longed after with an insatiable desire—to be so subdued to Christ that I, a poor, vile sinner, may become like He—holy, harmless, undefiled?

This is the subjection that we wish for you, O unconverted ones! We trust we have felt it ourselves. We pray you may feel it, too. He is able to give it to you. Ask it of Him at once. Now breathe the prayer, now believe that the Savior can work the transformation even in you—in you at this very moment. And, O my Brethren in the faith, have faith for sinners now. While they are pleading, plead for them that this subjection which is an uplifting, this conquering which is a liberating, may be accomplished in them!

For, remember again, that to be subjected to Christ is, according to our text, to be fitted for Heaven. He will change our vile body and make it like the body of His Glory. The body *of* the Glory is a body fitted *for* Glory, a body which participates *in* Glory. The Lord Jesus can make you, Sinner, though now fitted for Hell, fitted for Heaven, fitted for Glory, and breathe into you now an anticipation of that Glory, in the joy and peace of mind which His pardon will bring to you.

It must be a very sad thing to be a soldier under any circumstances. To have to cut and hack and kill and subdue, even in a righteous cause, is cruel work. But to be a soldier of King Jesus is an honor and a joy. The service of Jesus is a grand service. Brethren, we have been earnestly seeking to capture some hearts that are here present, to capture them for Jesus. It has been a long and weary siege up till this hour. We have summoned them to surrender, and opened fire upon them with the Gospel, but as yet in vain. I have strived to throw a few live shells into the very heart of their city, in the form of warning and threat and exhortation.

I know there have been explosions in the hearts of some of you, which have done your sins some damage, killed some of the little ones that

would have grown up to greater iniquity. You have been carefully blockaded by Providence and Divine Grace. Your hearts have found no provision for joy in sin, no helps to peace in unrighteousness. How I wish I could starve you out until you would yield to my Lord, the Crown Prince, who again, today, *demand*s that you yield to Him. It is dreadful to compel a city to open its gates unwillingly—to let an enemy come in. For however gentle the enemy is, his face is an unwelcome sight to the vanquished.

But oh, how I wish I could burst open the gates of a sinner's heart today for the Prince Emmanuel to come in! He who is at your gates is not an alien monarch, He is your rightful prince. He is your Friend and Lover. It will not be a strange face that you will see, when Jesus comes to reign in you. When the King, in His beauty, wins your soul, you will think yourselves a thousand fools that you did not receive Him before. Instead of fearing that He will ransack your soul, you will open all its doors and invite Him to search each room.

You will cry, "Take all, You blessed Monarch, it shall be most mine when it is Yours. Take all, and reign and rule." I propound terms of capitulation to you, O sinner. They are but these—yield up yourself to Christ. Give up your works and ways, both *good* and bad, and trust in Him to save you. Be His servant henceforth and forever. While I thus invite you, I trust He will speak through me to you and win you to Himself. I shall not plead in vain, the Word shall not fall to the ground. I fall back upon the delightful consolation of our text, "He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." May He prove His power this morning. Amen and Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Philippians 3*.

MESSRS, PASSMORE AND ALABASTER, Paternoster Row, beg to inform the sermon readers that the second volume of MR. SPURGEON'S GREAT WORK UPON THE PSALMS is receiving the most favorable notice of the reviewers. The first edition of Vol. I is nearly exhausted, and a second edition will be issued. The large volumes, unusually crowded with matter, are published at 8s. each, a price far below the usual charge for such books. The following extract is from the *Baptist Magazine*—"It seems to us that Mr. Spurgeon has got himself not only to the devout and scholarly exposition of the Psalms, but also to the rendering of his work positively fascinating by its many charms...In the possession of this book the young will find themselves at college, with the learned and the good of all ages for their tutors, and maturer Christians will have the largest spiritual knowledge increased, and its richest experiences strengthened."

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THE WATCHWORD FOR TODAY— “STAND FAST” SERMON NO. 1959

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 17, 1887,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“For our citizenship is in Heaven, from where, also, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved.”
Philippians 3:20, 21; 4:1.*

EVERY doctrine of the Word of God has its practical bearing. As each tree bears seed after its kind, so does every Truth of God bring forth practical virtues. Hence you find the Apostle Paul very full of “therefore”—his therefores being the conclusions drawn from certain statements of Divine Truth. I marvel that our excellent translators should have divided the argument from the conclusion by making a new chapter where there is least reason for it.

Last Lord’s Day I spoke with you concerning the most sure and certain Resurrection of our Lord Jesus [#1958—*The First Appearance of the Risen Lord to the Eleven*—now there is a practical force in that Truth of God which constitutes part of what is meant by, “the power of His Resurrection.” Since the Lord has risen and will surely come a second time—and will raise the bodies of His people at His coming—there is something to wait for and a grand reason for steadfastness while thus waiting. We are looking for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ from Heaven and that He shall “fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His Glory.” Therefore let us stand fast in the position which will secure us this honor. Let us keep our posts until the coming of the great Captain shall release the sentinels. The glorious resurrection will abundantly repay us for all the toil and travail we may have to undergo in the battle for the Lord. The Glory to be revealed even now casts a light upon our path and causes sunshine within our hearts! The hope of this happiness makes us even now strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Paul was deeply anxious that those in whom he had been the means of kindling the heavenly hope might be preserved faithful until the coming of Christ. He trembled lest any of them should seem to draw back and prove traitors to their Lord. He dreaded lest he should lose what he hoped he had gained, by their turning aside from the faith. Hence he beseeches

them to "stand fast." He expressed in the sixth verse of the first chapter his conviction that He who had begun a good work in them would perform it, but his intense love made him exhort them, saying, "Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." By such exhortations, final perseverance is promoted and secured.

Paul has fought bravely and, in the case of the Philippian converts, he believes that he has secured the victory, but he fears lest it should yet be lost. He reminds me of the death of that British hero, Wolfe, who, on the heights of Quebec, received a mortal wound. It was just at the moment when the enemy fled and when he knew that they were running, a smile was on his face—and he cried, "Hold me up. Let not my brave soldiers see me drop. The day is ours. Oh, do keep it!" His sole anxiety was to make the victory sure! Thus warriors die and thus Paul lived. His very soul seems to cry, "We have won the day. Oh, do keep it!"

O my beloved Hearers, I believe that many of you are "in the Lord," but I entreat you to "stand fast in the Lord." In your case, also, the day is won, but oh, do keep it! There is the pith of all I have to say to you this morning—may God the Holy Spirit write it on your hearts! Having done all things well up to now, I entreat you to obey the injunction of Jude, to, "keep yourselves in the love of God," and to join with me in adoring Him who alone is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before His Presence with exceedingly great joy. Unto Him be glory forever! Amen.

In leading out your thoughts I will keep to the following order—

First, it seems to me from the text that *the Apostle perceived that these Philippian Christians were in their right place*—they were, "in the Lord," and in such a position that he could safely bid them, "stand fast" in it. Secondly, *he longed for them that they should keep their right place*—"Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." And then, thirdly, *he urged the best motives for their keeping their place*. These motives are contained in the first two verses of our text, upon which we will enlarge further on.

I. Paul joyfully perceived that his BELOVED CONVERTS WERE IN THEIR RIGHT PLACE. It is a very important thing, indeed, that we should begin well. The start is not everything, but it is a great deal. It has been said by the old proverb, that, "Well begun is half done," and it is certainly so in the things of God. It is vitally important to enter in at the strait gate—to start on the heavenly journey from the right point. I have no doubt that many slips and falls and apostasies among professors are due to the fact that they were not right at first—the foundation was always upon the sand and when the house came down, at last, it was no more than might have been expected. A flaw in the foundation is pretty sure to be followed by a crack in the superstructure! See to it that you lay a good foundation. It is better to have no repentance than a repentance which needs to be repented of! It is better to have no faith than a false faith! It is better to make no profession of religion than to make an untruthful one! God give us Grace that we may not make a mistake in learning the alphabet of godliness, or else in all our learning we shall blunder on and increase in error. We should learn early the difference between Grace and merit, between the purpose of God and the will of man, between trust in God and confidence in the flesh. If we do not start aright, the further we

go, the further we shall be from our desired end and the more thoroughly in the wrong shall we find ourselves. Yes, it is of prime importance that our new birth and our first love should be genuine beyond all question.

The only position, however, in which we can begin aright is to be, "in the Lord." This is to begin as we may safely go on. This is the essential point. It is a very good thing for Christians to be in the Church, but if you are in the Church before you are in the Lord, you are out of place! It is a good thing to be engaged in holy work, but if you are in holy work before you are in the Lord, you will have no heart for it, neither will the Lord accept it! It is not essential that you should be in this Church or in that Church—but it *is* essential that you should be, "in the Lord!" It is not essential that you should be in the Sunday school, nor in the Working Meeting, nor in the Tract Society—but it *is* essential to the last degree that you should be in the Lord! The Apostle rejoiced over those that were converted at Philippi because he knew that they were in the Lord. They were where he wished them to remain and, therefore, he said, "Stand fast in the Lord."

What is it to be, "in the Lord"? Well, Brothers and Sisters, *we are in the Lord vitally and evidently when we fly to the Lord Jesus by repentance and faith* and make Him to be our refuge and hiding place. Is it so with you? Have you fled out of *self*? Are you trusting in the Lord, *alone*? Have you come to Calvary and beheld your Savior? As the doves build their nests in the rocks, have you thus made your home in Jesus? There is no shelter for a guilty soul but in His wounded side! Have you come there? Are you in Him? Then stay there. You will never have a better refuge! In fact, there is no other. No other name is given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved. I cannot tell you to stand fast in the Lord, unless you are there—hence my first enquiry is—Are you in Christ? Is He your only confidence? In His life, His death and His Resurrection do you find the grounds of your hope? Is He, Himself, all your salvation and all your desire? If so, stand fast in Him.

Next, these people, in addition to having fled to Christ for refuge, were now *in Christ as to their daily life*. They had heard Him say, "Abide in Me" and, therefore, they remained in the daily enjoyment of Him, in reliance upon Him, in obedience to Him, and in the earnest copying of His example. They were Christians! That is to say, persons upon whom was named the name of Christ. They were endeavoring to realize the power of His death and Resurrection as a sanctifying influence, killing their sins and fostering their virtues. They were laboring to reproduce His image in themselves so that they might bring glory to His name. Their lives were spent within the circle of their Savior's influence. Are you so, my dear Friends? Then stand fast! You will never find a nobler example! You will never be saturated with a more Divine spirit than that of Christ Jesus your Lord! Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, let us do all in the name of the Lord Jesus and so live in Him.

These Philippians had, moreover, realized that they were *in Christ by a real and vital union with Him*. They had come to feel, not like separated individualities, copying a model, but as members of a body made like their Head. By a living, loving, lasting union, they were joined to Christ as their

Covenant Head. They could say, "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord?" Do you know what it is to feel that the life which is in you is first in Christ and still flows from Him, even as the life of the branch is mainly in the stem? "I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me." This is to be in Christ! Are you in Him in this sense? Forgive my pressing the question. If you answer me in the affirmative, I shall then entreat you to "stand fast" in Him. It is in Him and in Him, only, that spiritual life is to be sustained, even as only *from* Him can it be received! To be engrafted into Christ is salvation—but to *abide in* Christ is the full enjoyment of it! True union to Christ is eternal life. Paul, therefore, rejoiced over these Philippians because they were joined unto the Lord in one spirit!

This expression is very short, but very full. "In Christ." Does it not mean that we are in Christ as the birds are in the air which buoys them up and enables them to fly? Are we not in Christ as the fish are in the sea? *Our Lord has become our element*—vital and all surrounding! In Him we live, move and have our being. He is in us and we are in Him. We are filled with all the fullness of God because all fullness dwells in Christ and we dwell in Him. Christ to us is all. He is in all and He is All in All! Jesus to us is everything in everything. Without Him we can *do* nothing and we *are* nothing! Thus are we emphatically *in* Him. If you have reached this point, "stand fast" in it! If you dwell in the secret place of the tabernacles of the Most high, abide under the shadow of the Almighty! Do you sit at His table and eat of His dainties? Then prolong the visit and think not of removal. Say in your soul—

**"Here would I find a settled rest,
While others go and come;
No more a stranger, or a guest,
But like a child at home."**

Has Jesus brought you into His green pastures? Then lie down in them. Go no further, for you will never fare better. Stay with your Lord, however long the night, for only in Him have you hope of morning!

You see, then, that these people were where they should be—in the Lord—and this was the reason why the Apostle took such delight in them. Kindly read the first verse of the fourth chapter and see how he loves them and joys over them. He heaps up titles of love! Some dip their morsel in vinegar, but Paul's words were saturated with honey. Here we not only have sweet words, but they *mean* something—his love was real and fervent! The very heart of Paul is written out large in this verse—"Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand fast in the Lord my dearly beloved."

Because they were in Christ, first of all they were Paul's *Brothers and Sisters*. This was a new relationship, not earthly, but heavenly. What did this Jew from Tarsus know about the Philippians? Many of them were Gentiles. Time was when he would have called them dogs and despised them as the uncircumcised. But now he says, "My brethren." That poor word has become very hackneyed. We talk of brethren without particularly much of brotherly love, but true Brothers and Sisters have a love for one another which is very unselfish and admirable—and so there is be-

tween real Christians a brotherhood which they will neither disown, nor dissemble, nor forget! It is said of our Lord, "For this cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." And surely they need never be ashamed to call one another brethren! Paul, at any rate, looks at the jailor, that jailor who had set his feet in the stocks—and he looks at the jailor's family, at Lydia and many others—in fact, at the whole company that he had gathered at Philippi and he salutes them lovingly as, "My brethren." Their names were written in the same family register because they were in Christ and, therefore, had one Father in Heaven!

Next, the Apostle calls them, "my *dearly beloved*." The verse almost begins with this word and it quite finishes with it. The repetition makes it mean, "My *doubly* dear ones." Such is the love which every true servant of Christ will have for those who have been begotten to the faith of Christ by his means. Oh, yes, if you are in Christ, His ministers *must* love you! How could there be a lack of affection in our hearts towards you, since we have been the means of bringing you to Jesus? Without cant or display we call you our "dearly Beloved."

Then the Apostle calls them his "*longed for*," that is, his most desired ones. He first desired to see them converted. After that he desired to see them baptized. Then he desired to see them exhibiting all the Graces of Christians. When he saw holiness in them, he desired to visit them and commune with them. Their constant kindness created in him a strong desire to speak with them face to face. He loved them and desired their company because they were in Christ! So he speaks of them as those for whom he longed. His delight was in thinking of them and in hoping to visit them. Then he adds, "My joy and crown." Paul had been the means of their salvation and when he thought of that blessed result, he never regretted all that he had suffered—his persecutions among the Gentiles seemed light, indeed, since these priceless souls were his reward! Though he was nothing but a poor prisoner of Christ, yet he talks in right royal style—they are his *crown*.

They were his *stephanos*, or crown given as a reward for his life-race. This, among the Greeks, was usually a wreath of flowers placed around the victor's brow. Paul's crown would never fade. He writes as he felt the amaranth around his temples—even now he looks upon the Philippians as his chaplet of honor! They were his joy and his crown! He anticipated, I do not doubt, that throughout eternity it would be a part of his Heaven to see them amid their blessedness and to know that he helped to bring them to that felicity by leading them to Christ! O Beloved, it is, indeed, our highest joy that we have not run in vain, neither labored in vain—you who have been snatched as "brands from the burning" and are now living to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ—you are our prize, our crown, our joy!

These converts were all this to Paul simply because they were "in Christ." They had begun well; they were where they should be and he, therefore, rejoiced in them.

II. But secondly, it was for this reason that HE LONGED THAT THEY SHOULD STAY THERE. He entreated them to stand fast. "So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." The beginning of religion is not the whole of it. You must not suppose that the sum of godliness is contained within

the experience of a day or two, or a week, or a few months, or even a few years. Precious are the feelings which attend conversion, but dream not that repentance, faith and so forth are for a season and then all is done with! I am afraid there are some who secretly say, "Everything is now complete. I have experienced the necessary change, I have been to see the Elders and the Pastor. I have been baptized and received into the Church—now all is right forever."

That is a false view of your condition! In conversion you have started in the race, but you must run to the end of the course. In your confession of Christ you have carried your tools into the vineyard, but the day's work now begins. Remember, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Godliness is a life-long business. The working out of the salvation which the Lord, Himself, works *in* you is not a matter of certain hours, or of a limited period of life. Salvation is unfolded throughout all our sojourn here. We continue to repent and to believe—and even the process of our conversion continues as we are changed more and more into the image of our Lord. Final perseverance is the necessary evidence of genuine conversion!

In proportion as we rejoice over converts, we feel an intense bitterness when any disappoint us and turn out to be merely temporary camp-followers. We sigh over the seed which sprang up so speedily, but which withers so soon because it has neither root nor depth of earth. We were ready to say—"Ring the bells of Heaven"—but the bells of Heaven did not ring because these people talked about Christ and said they were in Christ, but it was all a delusion! After a while, for one reason or another, they went back. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Our Churches suffer most seriously from the great numbers who drop out of their ranks and either go back to the world, or else must be pursuing a very secret and solitary path in their way to Heaven, for we hear no more of them. Our joy is turned to disappointment; our crown of laurel becomes a circle of faded leaves and we are weary at the remembrance of it. With what earnestness, therefore, would we say to you who are beginning the race, "Continue in your course. We beseech you turn not aside, neither slacken your running till you have won the prize!"

I heard an expression yesterday which pleased me much. I spoke about the difficulty of keeping on. "Yes," answered my friend, "and it is harder, still, to keep on keeping on." So it is. There is the pinch. I know lots of fellows who are wonders at the start. What a rush they make! But then there is no stay in them—they soon lose breath. The difference between the spurious and the real Christian lies in this staying power. The real Christian has a life within him which can never die—an incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever—but the spurious Christian begins after a fashion, but ends almost as soon as he begins! He is esteemed a saint, but turns out a hypocrite. He makes a fair show for a while, but soon he quits the way of holiness and makes his own damnation sure. God save you, dear Friends, from anything which looks like apostasy! Hence I

would, with all my might, press upon you these two most weighty words—"Stand fast."

I will put the exhortation thus—"Stand fast *doctrinally*." In this age all the ships in the waters are pulling up their anchors! They are drifting with the tide. They are driven about with every wind. It is your wisdom to put down more anchors. I have taken the precaution to cast four anchors out of the stern, as well as to see that the great bower anchor is in its proper place. I will not budge an inch from the old doctrine for any man! Now that the cyclone is triumphant over many a bowing wall and tottering fence, those who are built upon the One Foundation must prove its value by standing fast! We will listen to no teaching but that of the Lord Jesus! If you see a Truth to be in God's Word, grasp it by your faith—and if it is unpopular, grapple it to you as with hooks of steel! If you are despised as a fool for holding it, hold it the more! Like an oak, take deeper root, because the winds would tear you from your place. Defy reproach and ridicule and you have already vanquished it. Stand fast, like the British squares in the olden times. When fierce assaults were made upon them, every man seemed transformed to rock. We might have wandered from the ranks a little in more peaceful times, to look after the fascinating flowers which grow on every side of our march—but now we know that the enemy surrounds us—so we keep strictly to the line of march and tolerate no roaming. The watchword of the host of God just now is—"Stand fast!" Hold to the faith once delivered to the saints. Hold fast the form of sound words and deviate not one jot or tittle from them. Stand fast doctrinally!

Practically, also, abide firm in the right, the true, the holy. This is of the utmost importance. The barriers are broken down—they would amalgamate Church and world—yes, even Church and *stage*. It is proposed to combine God and devil in one service! Christ and Belial are to perform on one stage! Surely now is the time when the lion shall eat straw like the ox and very dirty straw too. So they say. But I repeat to you this Word of God, "Come out from among them, and be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing." Write, "holiness unto the Lord," not only on your altars, but upon the bells of the horses! Let everything be done as before the living God. Do all things unto holiness and edification. Strive together to maintain the purity of the disciples of Christ! Take up your cross and go outside the camp bearing His reproach. If you have already stood apart in your decision for the Lord, continue to do so. Stand fast! In nothing be moved by the laxity of the age. In nothing be affected by the current of modern opinion. Say to yourself, "I will do as Christ bids me to the utmost of my ability. I will follow the Lamb wherever He goes." In these times of worldliness, impurity, self-indulgence and error, it becomes the Christian to gather up his skirts and keep his feet and his garments clean from the pollution which lies all around him. We must be more Puritan and precise than we have been. Oh, for Grace to stand fast!

Mind also that you stand fast *experimentally*. Pray that your inward experience may be a close adhesion to your Master. Do not go astray from His Presence. Neither climb with those who dream of perfection in the flesh, nor grovel with those who doubt the possibility of present salvation. Take the Lord Jesus Christ to be your sole treasure and let your heart be

always with Him. Stand fast in faith in His Atonement, in confidence in His Divinity, in assurance of His Second Advent. I pine to know within my soul the power of His Resurrection and to have unbroken fellowship with Him. In communion with the Father and the Son let us stand fast! He shall fare well whose heart and soul, affections and understanding are wrapped up in Christ Jesus and in no one else. Concerning your inward life, your secret prayer, your walk with God, here is the watchword of the day—"Stand fast."

To put it very plainly, "Stand fast *in the Lord*," *without wishing for another trust*. Do not desire to have any hope but that which is in Christ. Do not entertain the proposition that you should unite another confidence to your confidence in the Lord. Have no hankering after any other fashion of faith except the faith of a sinner in his Savior. All hope but that which is set before us in the Gospel and brought to us by the Lord Jesus is a poisoned delicacy—highly colored, but by no means to be so much as *tasted* by those who have been fed upon the Bread of Heaven! What do we need more than Jesus? What way of salvation do we seek but that of Grace? What security but the precious blood? Stand fast and wish for no other rock of salvation save the Lord Jesus!

Next, stand fast *without wavering in our trust*. Permit no doubt to worry you. Know that Jesus can save you and, what is more, know that He *has* saved you! So commit yourself to His hands that you are as sure of your salvation as of your existence! The blood of Jesus Christ cleans us from all sin this day—His righteousness covers us and His life quickens us into newness of life. Tolerate no doubt, mistrust, suspicion, or misgiving. Believe in Christ up to the hilt! As for myself, I will yield to be lost forever if Jesus does not save me! I will have no other string to my bow, no second door of hope, or way of retreat. I could risk a thousand souls on my Lord's Word and feel no risk. Stand fast, without wishing for another trust and without wavering in the trust you have.

Moreover, stand fast *without wandering into sin*. You are tempted this way and that way—stand fast! Inward passions rise. Lusts of the flesh rebel. The devil hurls his fearful suggestions. The men of your own household tempt you. Stand fast! Only so will you be preserved from the torrents of iniquity. Keep close to the example and spirit of your Master and, having done all, still stand.

As I have said, stand fast without wandering, so next I must say stand fast *without wearying*. You are a little tired. Never mind, take a little rest and brush up again. "Oh," you say, "this toil is so monotonous." Do it better and that will be a change. Your Savior endured His life and labor without this complaint, for zeal had eaten Him up. "Alas," you cry, "I cannot see *results*!" Never mind. Wait for results, even as the farmer waits for the precious fruits of the earth. "Oh, Sir, I plod along and make no progress." Never mind, you are a poor judge of your own success. Work on, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not. Practice perseverance. Remember that if you have the work of faith and the labor of love, you must complete the trio by adding the patience of *hope*. You cannot do without this last. "Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

I am reminded of Sir Christopher Wren, when he cleared away old St. Paul's to make room for his splendid pile. He was compelled to use battering rams upon the massive walls. The workmen kept on battering and battering. An enormous force was brought to bear upon the walls for days and nights, but it did not appear to have made the least impression upon the ancient masonry. Yet the great architect knew what he was doing—he bade them keep on incessantly and the ram fell again and again upon the rocky wall till, at length, the whole mass was disintegrating and coming apart—and then each stroke began to tell. At a blow it reeled! At another it quivered! At another it moved visibly. At another it fell over amid clouds of dust! These last strokes did the work!

Do you think so? No, it was the *combination of blows*, the first as truly as the last! Keep on with the battering ram. I hope to keep on until I die. And, mark you, I may die and I may not see the errors of the hour totter to their fall, but I shall be perfectly content to sleep in Christ, for I have a sure expectation that this work will succeed in the end! I shall be happy to have done my share of the work, even if I personally see little apparent result. Lord, let Your work appear unto Your servants and we will be content that Your Glory should be reserved for our children. Stand fast, my Brothers and Sisters, in incessant labors, for the end is sure!

And then, in addition to standing fast in that respect, stand fast *without warping*. Timber, when it is rather green, is apt to go this way or that. The spiritual weather is very bad, just now, for green wood—it is one day damp with superstition, and another day it is parched with skepticism. Rationalism and Ritualism are both at work. I pray that you may not warp! Keep straight; keep to the Truth of God, the whole Truth of God and nothing but the Truth, for in the Master's name we bid you, "Stand fast in the Lord."

Stand fast, for there is great need. Many walk of whom I have told you, often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ!

Paul urged them to stand fast because even in his own case, spiritual life was a struggle. Even Paul said, "Not as though I had already attained." He was pressing forward. He was straining his whole energy by the power of the Holy Spirit. He did not expect to be carried to Heaven on a feather bed! He was warring and agonizing. You, Beloved, must do the same. What a grand example of perseverance did Paul set to us all! Nothing enticed him from his steadfastness. "None of these things move me," he said, "neither count I my life dear unto me." He has entered into his rest because the Lord his God helped him to stand fast, even to the end. I wish I had power to put this more earnestly, but my very soul goes forth with it. "Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly Beloved."

III. Thirdly, THE APOSTLE URGED THE BEST MOTIVES FOR THEIR STANDING FAST.

He says, "Stand fast *because of your citizenship*." Read the twentieth verse—"For our citizenship is in Heaven." Now, if you are what you profess to be, if you are in Christ, you are citizens of the New Jerusalem. Men ought to behave themselves according to their citizenship and not dishonor their city. When a man was a citizen of Athens, in the olden time,

he felt it incumbent upon him to be brave. Xerxes said, "These Athenians are not ruled by kings: how will they fight?" "No," said one, "but every man respects the law and each man is ready to die for his country." Xerxes soon knew that the same obedience and respect of law ruled the Spartans and that these, because they were of Sparta, were all brave as lions!

He sends word to Leonidas and his little troop to give up their arms. "Come and take them," was the courageous reply! The Persian king had myriads of soldiers with him, while Leonidas had only 300 Spartans at his side—yet they kept the pass and it cost the eastern despot many thousands of men to force a passage! The sons of Sparta died rather than desert their post! Every citizen of Sparta felt that he must stand fast—it was not for such a man as he to yield. I like the spirit of Bayard, that "knight without fear and without reproach." He knew not what fear meant. In his last battle, his spine was broken and he said to those around him, "Place me up against a tree, so that I may sit up and die with my face to the enemy." Yes, if our backs were broken, if we could no more bear the shield or use the sword, it would be incumbent upon us, as citizens of the New Jerusalem, to die with our faces towards the enemy! We must not yield! We dare not yield if we are of the city of the great King! The martyrs cry to us to stand fast! The cloud of witnesses bending from their thrones above beseech us to stand fast! Yes, all the hosts of the shining ones cry to us, "Stand fast!" Stand fast for God, the truth, holiness—and let no man take your crown.

The next argument that Paul used was *their outlook*. "Our citizenship is in Heaven; from where, also, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Brethren, Jesus is coming! He is even now on the way. You have heard our tidings till you scarcely credit us, but the Word of God is true and it will surely be fulfilled before long. The Lord is coming, indeed! He promised to come to die and He kept His Word—He now promises to come to reign and you may be sure that He will keep His tryst with His people. He is coming! Ears of faith can hear the sound of His chariot wheels! Every moment of time, every event of Providence is bringing Him nearer. Blessed are those servants who shall not be sleeping when He comes, nor wandering from their posts of duty! Happy shall they be whom their Lord shall find faithfully watching and standing fast in that great day!

To us, Beloved, He is coming, not as Judge and Destroyer, but as Savior. We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, if we do look for Him, let us "stand fast." There must be no going into sin, no forsaking the fellowship of the Church, no leaving the Truth, no trying to play fast and loose with godliness, no running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. Let us stand so fast in singleness of heart that whenever Jesus comes, we shall be able to say, "Welcome, welcome, Son of God!"

Sometimes I wait through the weary years with great comfort. There was a ship, some time ago, outside a certain harbor. A heavy sea made the ship roll fearfully. A dense fog blotted out all buoys and lights. The captain never left the wheel. He could not tell his way into the harbor and no pilot could get out to him for a long time. Eager passengers urged him to be courageous and make a dash for the harbor. He said, "No. It is not

my duty to run so great a risk. A pilot is required, here, and I will wait for one if I wait a week." The truest courage is that which can bear to be charged with cowardice! To wait is much wiser than when you cannot hear the foghorn and have no pilot and steam on and wreck your vessel on the rocks! Our prudent captain waited his time and, at last, he spied the pilot's boat coming to him over the boiling sea. When the pilot was at his work, the captain's anxious waiting was over. The Church is like that vessel—she is pitched to and fro in the storm and the dark—and the Pilot has not yet come. The weather is very threatening. All around, the darkness hang like a pall. But Jesus will come, walking on the water, before long! He will bring us safely to the desired haven. Let us wait with patience. Stand fast! Stand fast! Jesus is coming and in Him is our sure hope!

Further, there was another motive. *There was an expectation.* "He shall change our vile body," or rather, "body of our humiliation." Only think of it, dear Friends! No more headaches or heartaches, no more feebleness and fainting, no more inward tumor or consumption! The Lord shall transfigure this body of our humiliation into the likeness of the body of His Glory. Our frame is now made up of decaying substances—it is of the earth, earthy. "So to the dust, return we must." This body groans, suffers, becomes diseased and dies. Blessed be God, it shall be wonderfully changed and then there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain!

The natural appetites of this body engender sad tendencies to sin and, in this respect, it is a "vile body." It shall not always be so! The great change will deliver it from all that is gross and carnal. It shall be pure as the Lord's body! Whatever the body of Christ is now, our body is to be like it. We spoke of it last Sunday, you know, when we heard Him say, "Handle Me." We are to have a real, corporeal body as He had, for substance and reality! And, like His body, it will be full of beauty, full of health and strength. It will enjoy peculiar immunities from evil and special adaptations for good. That is what is going to happen to me and to you! Therefore let us stand fast. Let us not willfully throw away our prospects of Glory and immortality. What? Relinquish resurrection? Relinquish Heaven? Relinquish likeness to the risen Lord? O God, save us from such a terrible piece of apostasy! Save us from such immeasurable folly! Suffer us not to turn our backs in the day of battle, since that would be to turn our backs from the crown of life that fades not away!

Lastly, the Apostle urges us to stand fast because of *our resources.* Somebody may ask, "How can this body of ours be transformed and transfigured until it becomes like the body of Christ?" I cannot tell you anything about the process! It will all be accomplished in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. But I can tell you by what power it will be accomplished. The Omnipotent Lord will lay bare His arm and exercise His might, "according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." O Brothers and Sisters, we may well stand fast since we have infinite power at our backs! The Lord is with us with all His energy, even with His all-conquering strength which shall yet subdue all His foes! Do not let us imagine that any enemy can be too strong for

Christ's arm. If He is able to subdue all things unto Himself, He can certainly bear us through all opposition. One glance of His eyes may wither all opposers, or, better still, one word from His lips may turn them into friends!

The army of the Lord is strong in reserves. These reserves have never yet been fully called out. We, who are in the field, are only a small squadron holding the fort. But our Lord has at His back 10,000 times ten thousands who will carry war into the enemy's camp! When the Captain of our salvation comes to the front, He will bring His heavenly legions with Him. Our business is to watch until He appears upon the scene, for when He comes, His infinite resources will be put in marching order!

I like that speech of Wellington, (who was so calm amid the roar of Waterloo), when an officer sent word, "Tell the Commander-in-Chief that he must move me, I cannot hold my position any longer, my numbers are so thinned." "Tell him," said the great general, "he *must* hold his place! Every Englishman today must die where he stands, or else win the victory." The officer read the command to stand and he did stand till the trumpet sounded victory! And so it is now. My Brothers and Sisters, we must die where we are rather than yield to the enemy! If Jesus tarries, we must not desert our posts. Wellington knew that the heads of the Prussian columns would soon be visible, coming in to ensure the victory—and so by faith we can perceive the legions of our Lord approaching—in serried ranks His angels fly through the opening Heaven! The air is teeming with them! I hear their silver trumpets. Behold, He comes with clouds! When He comes, He will abundantly recompense all who stood fast amid the rage of battle. Let us sing, "Hold the fort, for I am coming!"

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Philippians 3.*
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—
672, 674, 670 AND, "HOLD THE FORT."

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JOY, A DUTY

NO. 2405

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, MARCH 24, 1895.

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 20, 1887.**

***"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."
Philippians 4:4***

THERE is a marvelous medicinal power in joy. Most medicines are distasteful, but this, which is the best of all medicines, is sweet to the taste and comforting to the heart. We noticed, in our reading, that there had been a little tiff between two sisters in the Church at Philippi—I am glad that we do not know what the quarrel was about. I am usually thankful for ignorance on such subjects—but, as a cure for disagreements, the Apostle says, "Rejoice in the Lord always." People who are very happy, especially those who are very happy in the Lord, are not apt either to give offense or to take offense. Their minds are so sweetly occupied with higher things that they are not easily distracted by the little troubles which naturally arise among such imperfect creatures as we are. Joy in the Lord is the cure for all discord. Should it not be so? What is this joy but the concord of the soul, the accord of the heart, with the joy of Heaven? Joy in the Lord, then, drives away the discords of earth.

Further, Brothers and Sisters, notice that the Apostle, after he had said, "Rejoice in the Lord always," commanded the Philippians to be careful for nothing, thus implying that joy in the Lord is one of the best preparations for the trials of this life. The cure for care is joy in the Lord! No, my Brother, you will not be able to keep on with your fretfulness. No, my Sister, you will not be able to weary yourself, any longer, with your anxieties if the Lord will but fill you with His joy! Then, being satisfied with your God, yes, *more than satisfied*, and overflowing with delight in Him, you will say to yourself, "Why are you cast down, O my Soul? And why are you disquieted in me? Hope you in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His Countenance."

What is there on earth that is worth fretting for, even, for five minutes? If one could gain an imperial crown by a day of care, it would be too great an expense for a thing which would bring more care with it. Therefore, let us be thankful, let us be joyful in the Lord. I count it one of the wisest things that, by rejoicing in the Lord, we commence our Heaven here below. It is possible to do so—it is profitable to do so—and we are commanded to do so!

Now I come to the text, itself, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice."

I. It will be our first business at this time to consider THE GRACE COMMANDED, this Grace of joy. "Rejoice in the Lord," says the Apostle.

In the first place, *this is a very delightful thing*. What a gracious God we serve, who makes delight to be a duty and who commands us to rejoice! Should we not at once be obedient to such a command as this? It is intended that we should be happy. That is the meaning of the precept, that we should be cheerful—more than that, that we should be thankful! More than that, that we should rejoice! I think this word, “rejoice,” is almost a French word—it is not only joy, but it is joy over again, *re-joyce*! You know *re* usually signifies the re-duplication of a thing, the taking of it over, again. We are to joy, and then we are to re-joy. We are to chew the cud of delight—we are to roll the dainty morsel under our tongue till we get the very essence out of it!

“Rejoice.” Joy is a delightful thing. You cannot be too happy, Brothers and Sisters! No, do not suspect yourself of being wrong because you are full of delight. You know it is said of the Divine Wisdom, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” Provided that it is joy in the Lord, you cannot have too much of it! The fly is drowned in the honey, or the sweet syrup into which he plunges himself, but this heavenly syrup of delight will not drown your soul or intoxicate your heart! It will do you good, not evil, all the days of your life. God never commanded us to do a thing which would harm us and, when He bids us rejoice, we may be sure that this is as delightful as it is safe, and as safe as it is delightful! Come, Brothers and Sisters, I am inviting you, now, to no distasteful duty when, in the name of my Master, I say to you, as Paul said to the Philippians under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

But, next, *this is a demonstrative duty*—“Rejoice in the Lord.” There may be such a thing as a dumb joy, but I hardly think that it can keep dumb long. Joy! Joy! Why, it speaks for itself! It is like a candle lighted in a dark chamber—you need not sound a trumpet and say, “Now light has come.” The candle proclaims itself by its own brilliance and, when joy comes into a man, it shines out of his eyes, it sparkles in his countenance! There is a something about every limb of the man that betokens that his body, like a well-tuned harp, has had its strings put in order! Joy—it refreshes the marrow of the bones, it quickens the flowing of the blood in the veins—it is a healthy thing in all respects. It is a speaking thing, a demonstrative thing and, I am sure that joy in the Lord ought to have a tongue! When the Lord sends you affliction, Sister, you generally grumble loudly enough. When the Lord tries you, my dear Brother, you generally speak fast enough about that.

Now, when, on the other hand, the Lord multiplies His mercies to you, speak about it! Sing about it! I cannot remember, since I was a boy, ever seeing in the newspapers, columns of thankfulness and expressions of delight about the prosperity of business in England. It is a long, long time since I was first able to read newspapers—a great many years, now—but I do not remember the paragraphs in which it was said that everybody was getting on in the world and growing rich. But as soon as there was any depression in business, what gloomy articles appeared concerning the dreadful times which had fallen upon the agricultural interest and every other interest! Oh, my dear Brothers and Sisters, from

the way some of you grumble, I might imagine you were all ruined if I did not know better! I knew some of you when you were not worth two-pence—and you are pretty well-to-do now. You have got on uncommonly well for men who are being ruined! From the way some people talk, you might imagine that everybody is bankrupt and that we are all going to the dogs together! But it is not so and what a pity it is that we do not give the Lord some of our praises when we have better times! If we are so loud and so eloquent over our present woes, why could we not have been as eloquent and as loud in thanksgiving for the blessings that God formerly granted to us? Perhaps the mercies buried in oblivion have been to Heaven and accused us to the Lord and, therefore, He has sent us the sorrows of today. True joy, when it is joy in the Lord, must speak—it cannot hold its tongue—it must praise the name of the Lord!

Further, *this blessed Grace of joy is very contagious*. It is a great privilege, I think, to meet a truly happy man, a graciously happy man. My mind goes back, at this moment, to that dear man of God who used to be with us, years ago, whom we called, “Old Father Dransfield.” What a lump of sunshine that man was! I think that I never came into this place with a heavy heart, but the very *sight* of him seemed to fill me with exhilaration, for his joy was wholly in his God! An old man and full of years, but as full of happiness as he was full of days! He was always having something to tell you to encourage you. He constantly made a discovery of some fresh mercy for which we were again to praise God! O dear Brothers and Sisters, let us rejoice in the Lord that we may set others rejoicing! One dolorous spirit brings a kind of plague into the house—one person who is always wretched seems to stop all the birds singing wherever he goes! But, as the birds sing to each other and one morning songster quickens all the rest, and sets the groves ringing with harmony, so will it be with the happy cheerful spirit of a man who obeys the command of the text, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” This Grace of joy is contagious!

Besides, dear Brothers and Sisters, *joy in the Lord is influential for good*. I am sure that there is a mighty influence wielded by a consistently joyous spirit. See how little children are affected by the presence of a happy person! There is much more in the tone of the life than there is in the particular fashion of the life. It may be the life of one who is very poor, but oh, how poverty is gilded by a cheerful spirit! It may be the life of one who is well read and deeply instructed, but, oh, if there is a beauty of holiness and a beauty of happiness added to the learning, nobody talks about “the blue stocking,” or, “the bookworm” being dull and heavy! Oh, no, there is a charm about holy joy! I wish we had more of it! There are many more flies caught with honey than with vinegar and there are many more sinners brought to Christ by happy Christians than by doleful Christians! Let us sing unto the Lord as long as we live and, perhaps some weary sinner who has discovered the emptiness of sinful pleasure, will say to himself, “Why, after all, there must be something real about the joy of these Christians! Let me go and learn how I may have it.” And when he comes and sees it in the light of your gladsome countenance, he will be likely to learn it, God helping him, so as never to forget it. “Rejoice in the Lord always,” says the Apostle, for joy is a most

influential Grace, and every child of God ought to possess it in a high degree.

I want you to notice, dear Friends, that *this rejoicing is commanded*. It is not a matter that is left to your option. It is not set before you as a desirable thing which you can do without—it is a positive precept of the Holy Spirit to all who are in the Lord—“Rejoice in the Lord always.” We ought to obey this precept because joy in the Lord makes us like God. He is the happy God—ineffable bliss is the atmosphere in which He lives and He would have His people to be happy. Let the devotees of Baal cut themselves with knives and lancets, and make hideous outcries if they will, but the servants of Jehovah must not even mar the corners of their beard! Even if they fast, they shall anoint their head and wash their face, that they appear not unto men to fast, for a joyous God desires a joyous people!

You are commanded to rejoice, Brothers and Sisters, because this is for your profit. Holy joy will oil the wheels of your life’s machinery. Holy joy will strengthen you for your daily labor. Holy joy will beautify you and, as I have already said, give you an influence over the lives of others. It is upon this point that I would most of all insist—we are commanded to rejoice in the Lord. If you cannot speak the Gospel, *live* the Gospel by your cheerfulness, for what is the Gospel? Glad tidings of great joy and you who believe it must show, by its effect upon you, that it is glad tidings of great joy to you! I believe that a man of God—under trial and difficulty and affliction, bearing up, and patiently submitting with holy acquiescence, and still rejoicing in God—is a real preacher of the Gospel, preaching with an eloquence which is mightier than words can ever be and which will find its secret and silent way into the hearts of those who might have resisted other arguments! Oh, do, then, listen to the text, for it is a command from God—“Rejoice in the Lord always!”

May I just pause, here, and hand this commandment round to all of you who are members of this Church, and to all of you who are truly members of Christ? You are bid to rejoice in the Lord always! You are not allowed to sit there and fret and fume! You are not permitted to complain and groan. Mourner, you are commanded to put on beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning! For this purpose your Savior came—the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him for this very end, that He might make you rejoice! Therefore, sing with the Prophet, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”

II. Now we come to the second head, on which I will speak but briefly, that is, THE JOY DISCRIMINATED—“Rejoice *in the Lord*.”

Notice *the sphere of this joy*. “Rejoice in the Lord.” We read in Scripture that children are to obey their parents “in the Lord.” We read of men and women being married “only in the Lord.” Now, dear Friends, no child of God must go outside that ring, “in the Lord.” There is where you are, where you ought to be, where you *must* be. You cannot truly rejoice if you get outside that ring and, therefore, see that you do nothing which

you cannot do “in the Lord.” Mind that you seek no joy which is not joy in the Lord. If you go after the poisonous sweets of this world, woe be to you! Never rejoice in that which is sinful, for all such rejoicing is evil. Flee from it—it can do you no good. That joy which you cannot share with God is not a right joy for you. No! “In the Lord” is the sphere of your joy.

But I think that the Apostle also means that *God is to be the great Object of your joy*. “Rejoice in the Lord.” Rejoice in the Father, your Father who is in Heaven, your loving, tender, unchangeable God! Rejoice, too, in the Son, your Redeemer, your Brother, the Husband of your soul, your Prophet, Priest and King! Rejoice, also, in the Holy Spirit, your Quickener, your Comforter, in Him who shall abide with you forever. Rejoice in the one God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—in Him delight yourselves, as it is written, “Delight yourself, also, in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” We cannot have too much of this joy in the Lord, for the great Jehovah is our exceeding joy! Or if, by, “the Lord,” is meant the Lord Jesus, then let me invite, persuade, *command* you to delight in the Lord Jesus, Incarnate in your flesh, dead for your sins, risen for your justification, gone into Glory claiming victory for you, sitting at the right hand of God interceding for you, reigning over all worlds on your behalf and soon to come to take you up into His Glory that you may be with Him forever! Rejoice in the Lord Jesus! This is a sea of delight—blessed are they that dive into its utmost depths!

Sometimes, Brothers and Sisters, you cannot rejoice in anything else, but you can rejoice in the Lord. Then rejoice in Him to the fullest. Do not rejoice in your temporal prosperity, for riches take to themselves wings and fly away. Do not rejoice, even, in your great successes in the work of God. Remember how the 70 disciples came back to Jesus and said, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Your name,” and He answered, “Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven.” Do not rejoice in your privileges—I mean, do not make the great joy of your life to be the fact that you are favored with this and that external privilege or ordinance—but rejoice in God! He changes not. If the Lord is your joy, your joy will never dry up! All other things are but for a season, but God is forever and ever. Make Him your joy, the *whole* of your joy, and then let this joy absorb your every thought! Be baptized into this joy! Plunge into the deeps of this unutterable bliss of joy in God!

III. Thirdly, let us think of THE TIME APPOINTED for this rejoicing—“Rejoice in the Lord *always*.”

“Always.” Well, then, that begins at once, certainly. So let us now begin to rejoice in the Lord. If any of you have taken a gloomy view of religion, I beseech you to throw that gloomy view away at once. “Rejoice in the Lord always,” therefore, rejoice in the Lord *now*! I recollect what a damper I had, as a young Christian, when I had but lately believed in Jesus Christ. I felt that, as the Lord had said, “He that believes in Me has everlasting life,” I, having believed in Him, had everlasting life and I said so, with the greatest joy and delight and enthusiasm, to an old Christian man. And he said to me, “Beware of presumption! There are a great many

who think they have eternal life, but who have not got it.” That was quite true, but, for all that, is there not more presumption in *doubting* God’s promise than there is in *believing* it?

Is there any presumption in taking God at His Word? Is there not gross presumption in hesitating and questioning as to whether these things are so or not? If God says that they are so, then they are so, whether I feel that they are so or not—and it is my place, as a Believer—to accept God’s bare Word and rest on it. “We count checks as cash,” said one who was making up accounts. Good checks are to be counted as cash and the promises of God, though as yet unfulfilled, are as good as the blessings, themselves, for God cannot lie, or make a promise that He will not perform! Let us, therefore, not be afraid of being glad, but begin to be glad, at once, if we have, up to now, taken a gloomy view of true religion and have been afraid to rejoice.

When are we to be glad? “Rejoice in the Lord always.” That is, *when you cannot rejoice in anything or anyone but God*. When the fig tree does not blossom, when there is no fruit on the vine and no herd in the stall. When everything withers and decays and perishes. When the worm at the root of the gourd has made it die, then rejoice in the Lord! When the day darkens into evening and the evening into midnight—and the midnight into a sevenfold horror of great darkness—rejoice in the Lord! And when that darkness does not clear, but becomes more dense and Egyptian. When night succeeds night and neither sun nor moon nor stars appear, still rejoice in the Lord always! He who uttered these words had been a night and a day in the deep. He had been stoned, he had suffered from false brethren. He had been in peril of his life and yet, most fittingly do those lips cry out to us, “Rejoice in the Lord always!” Yes, at the stake, itself, martyrs have fulfilled this Word of God—they clapped their hands amid the fire that was consuming them! Therefore, rejoice in the Lord when you cannot rejoice in any other.

But also take care that you *rejoice in the Lord when you have other things to rejoice in*. When He loads your table with good things and your cup is overflowing with blessings, rejoice in *Him* more than in *them*. Forget not that the Lord, your Shepherd, is better than the green pastures and the still waters—rejoice not in the pastures or in the waters in comparison with your joy in the Shepherd who gives you all! Let us never make gods out of our goods! Let us never allow what God gives us to supplant the Giver. Shall the wife love the jewels that her husband gave her more than she loves him who gave them to her? That were an evil love, or no love at all! So, let us love God, first, and rejoice in the Lord always when the day is brightest and multiplied are the other joys that He permits us to have.

“Rejoice in the Lord always.” That is, *if you have not rejoiced before, begin to do so at once*. And *when you have long rejoiced, keep on at it*. I have known, sometimes, that things have gone so smoothly that I have said, “There will be a check to this prosperity! I know that there will. Things cannot go on quite so pleasantly always.”—

**“More the treacherous calm I dread
Than tempests lowering overhead.”**

One is apt to spoil his joy by the apprehension that there is some evil coming. Now listen to this—"He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." "Rejoice in the Lord always." Do not anticipate trouble. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Take the good that God provides you and rejoice not merely in it, but in Him who provided it. So may you enjoy it without fear, for there is good salt with that food which is eaten as coming from the hand of God.

"Rejoice in the Lord always." That is, *when you get into company, then rejoice in the Lord*. Do not be ashamed to let others see that you are glad. *Rejoice in the Lord, also, when you are alone*. I know what happens to some of you on Sunday night. You have had such a blessed Sabbath and you have gone away from the Lord's Table with the very flavor of Heaven in your mouths! And then some of you have had to go home where everything is against you. The husband does not receive you with any sympathy with your joy, or the father does not welcome you with any fellowship in your delight. Well, but still, "Rejoice in the Lord *always*." When you cannot get anybody else to rejoice with you, still continue to rejoice! There is a way of looking at everything which will show you that the blackest cloud has a silver lining. There is a way of looking at all things in the Light of God which will turn into sweetness that which otherwise had been bitter as gall!

I do not know whether any of you keep a quassia cup at home. If you do, you know that it is made of wood, and you pour water into the bowl and the water turns bitter, directly, before you drink it. You may keep this cup as long as you like, but it always embitters the water that is put into it. I think that I know some dear Brothers and Sisters who always seem to have one of these cups handy. Now, instead of that, I want you to buy a cup of another kind that shall make everything sweet, whatever it is! Whatever God pleases to pour out of the bowl of Providence shall come into your cup and your contentment, your delight in God, shall sweeten it all! God bless you, dear Friends, with much of this holy joy!

IV. So now I finish with the fourth head, which is this, THE EMPHASIS LAID ON THE COMMAND—"Rejoice in the Lord always: *and again I say, Rejoice*." What does that mean, "Again I say, Rejoice"?

This was, first, *to show Paul's love for the Philippians*. He wanted them to be happy. They had been so kind to him and they had made him so happy, that he said, "Oh, dear Brothers, do rejoice! Dear Sisters, do rejoice! I say it twice over to you, 'Be happy, be happy,' because I love you so much that I am anxious to have you, beyond all things else, rejoice in the Lord always."

I also think that, perhaps, he said it twice over to suggest the *difficulty of continual joy*. It is not so easy as some think to always rejoice. It may be for you young people, who are yet strong in limb, who have few aches and pains and none of the infirmities of life. It may be an easy thing to those placed in easy circumstances, with few cares and difficulties. But there are some of God's people who need great Grace if they are to rejoice in the Lord always. And the Apostle knew that, so he said, "Again I say, Rejoice." He repeats the precept, as much as to say, "I know it is a diffi-

cult thing and so I the more earnestly press it upon you. Again I say, Rejoice.”

I think, too, that he said it twice over, *to assert the possibility of it*. This was as much as if he had said, “I told you to rejoice in the Lord always. You opened your eyes and looked with astonishment upon me, but, ‘Again I say, Rejoice.’ It is possible, it is practicable! I have not spoken unwisely. I have not told you to do what you never can do, but with deliberation I write it down, ‘Again I say, Rejoice.’ You can be happy! God the Holy Spirit can lift you above the doldrums of the flesh, and of the world, and of the devil—and you may be enabled to live upon the mountain of God beneath the shinings of His face! ‘Again I say, Rejoice.’”

Do you not think that this was intended, also, *to impress upon them the importance of the duty?* “Again I say, Rejoice.” Some of you will go and say, “I do not think that it matters much whether I am happy or not. I shall get to Heaven, however gloomy I am, if I am sincere.” “No,” says Paul, “that kind of talk will not do! I cannot have you speak like that. Come, I must have you rejoice! I really conceive it to be a Christian’s bounden duty and so, ‘Again, I say, Rejoice.’”

But do you not think, also, that Paul repeated the command *to allow for special personal testimony?* “Again, I say, Rejoice. I, Paul, a sufferer to the utmost extent for Christ’s sake, even now an ambassador in bonds, shut up in a dungeon—I say to you, Rejoice.” Paul was a greatly-tried man, but he was a blessedly happy man. There is not one of us but would gladly change conditions with Paul, if that were possible, now that we see the whole of his life written out. And tonight, looking across the ages, over all the scenes of trouble which he encountered, he says to us, “Brothers and Sisters, rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

Did you ever notice how full of joy this Epistle to the Philippians is? Will you spare me just a minute while I get you to run your eyes through it to observe what a joyful letter it is? You notice that, in the first chapter, Paul gets only as far as the fourth verse when he says, “Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” Now he is in his right vein! He is so glad because of what God has done for the Philippians that when he prays for them, he mixes joy with his prayer! In the 16th verse he declares that he found joy, even, in the opposition of those who preached Christ in order to rival him. Hear what he says—“The one preaches Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in presence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.”

And he does not finish the chapter till, in the 25th verse, he declares that he had joy, even, in the expectation of not going to Heaven just yet, but living a little longer to do good to these people—“And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.” You see it is joy, joy, joy, joy! Paul seems to go from rung to rung of the ladder of the Light of

God, as if he were climbing up from Nero's dungeon into Heaven, itself, by way of continual joy! So he writes, in the second verse of the second chapter, "Fulfill you my joy, that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." When he gets to the 16th verse, he says, "That I may rejoice in the Day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."

But I am afraid that I should weary you if I went through the Epistle thus, slowly, verse by verse. Just notice how he begins the third chapter—"Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, rejoice in the Lord." The word is sometimes rendered "farewell." When he says, "Rejoice," it is the counterpart of, "welcome." We say to a man who comes to our house, "Salve"—"Welcome." When he goes away, it is our duty to "speed the parting guest" and say, "Farewell." This is what Paul meant to say here. "Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, fare you well in the Lord. Be happy in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord." And I do not think that I can finish up my sermon better than by saying on this Sabbath night, "Finally, my Brothers and Sisters, fare you well, be happy in the Lord."—

***"Fare you well! And if forever,
Still forever, fare you well."***

May that be your position, to so walk with God that your fare shall be that of angels! May you eat angels' food, the manna of God's love! May your drink be from the Rock that flows with a pure stream! So may you feed and so may you drink until you come unto the mountain of God, where you shall see His face unveiled and, standing in His exceeding brightness, shall know His Glory, being glorified with the saved! Till then, be happy. Why, even—

***"The thought of such amazing bliss,
Should constant joys create."***

Be happy! If the present is dreary, it will soon be over. Oh, but a little while and we shall be transferred from these seats below to the thrones above! We shall go from the place of aching brows to the place where they all wear crowns! From the place of weary hands to where they bear the palm branch of victory! From the place of mistake and error and sin, and consequent grief, to the place where they are without fault before the Throne of God, for they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb!

Come, then, let us make a solemn league and covenant together in the name of God, and let it be called, "The Guild of the Happy," for the—

***"Favorites of the Heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad."***

No, they *must* speak their joys abroad! Let us endeavor to do so, always, by the help of the Holy Spirit. Amen and Amen!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PHILIPPIANS 4.

This Epistle was written by Paul when he was in prison with iron fetters about his wrists, yet there is no iron in the Epistle. It is full of light, life, love and joy—blended with traces of sorrow—yet with a holy delight that rises above his grief.

Verse 1. *Therefore, my Brothers and Sisters dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.* See how the heart of the Apostle is at work! His emotions are not dried up by his personal griefs. He takes a delight in his friends at Philippi! He has a lively recollection of the time when he and Silas were shut up in prison, there, and that same night baptized the jailor and his household—and formed the Church at Philippi!

2. *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.* These two good women had fallen out with one another. Paul loves them so much that he would not have any strife in the Church to mar its harmony and he, therefore, beseeches both of these good women to end their quarrel, and to, “be of the same mind in the Lord.” You cannot tell what hurt may come to a Church through two members being at enmity against each other. They may be unknown persons. They may be Christian women, but they can work no end of mischief and, therefore, it is a most desirable thing that they should speedily come together, again, in peace and unity.

3. *And I entreat you, also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.* He tenderly thinks of all those who had helped the work of the Lord and, in return, he would have all of them helped, and kindly remembered, and affectionately cherished. May we always have this tender feeling towards one another—especially towards those who work for the Lord with us! May we always delight in cheering those who serve our Lord!

4, 5. *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.* We have come to understand this word, “moderation,” in a sense not at all intended here. The best translation would probably be, “forbearance.” Do not get angry with anybody. Do not begin to get fiery and impetuous—be forbearing, for the Lord is at hand. You cannot tell how soon He may appear. There is no time to spare for the indulgence of anger. Be quiet. Be patient and if there is anything very wrong, well, leave it. Our Lord Jesus will come very soon, therefore be not impatient.

6. *Be careful—That is, be anxious—*

6. *For nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* See how the Apostle would bid us throw anxiety to the winds—let us try to do so. You cannot turn one hair white or black, fret as you may. You cannot add a cubit to your stature, be you as anxious as you please. It will be for your own advantage and it will be for God’s Glory for you to shake off the anxieties which otherwise might overshadow your spirit. Be anxious about nothing, but prayerful about everything—and be thankful about everything as well! Is not that a beautiful trait in Paul’s character? He is a prisoner at Rome and likely soon to die—yet he mingles thanksgiving with his supplication and asks others to do the same! We have always something for which to thank God, therefore let us also obey the Apostolic injunction.

7, 8. *And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, Brothers and Sisters, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things.* If there is any really good movement in the world, help it, you Christian people! If it is not purely and absolutely religious, yet if it tends to the benefit of your fellow men, if it promotes honesty, justice, purity, take care that you are on that side and do all you can to help it forward.

9. *Those things, which you have both learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.* Paul was a grand preacher to be able to say that—to hold up his own example, as well as his own teaching as a thing which the people might safely follow!

9. *And the God of peace shall be with you.* In the seventh verse, we had the expression, “the peace of God.” In this ninth verse, we have the mention of, “the God of peace.” May we first enjoy the peace of God and then be helped by the Spirit of God to get into a still higher region where we shall be more fully acquainted with the God of peace!

10. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me has flourished again; wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity.* “I rejoiced.” So Paul was, himself, in a happy mood! These saints in Philippi had sent to him in prison a gift by the hand of one of their pastors, and Paul, in his deep poverty, had been much comforted by their kind thoughtfulness about him.

11. *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.* That was not an easy lesson to learn, especially when one of those states meant being in prison at Rome. If he was ever in the Mammertine, those of us who have been in that dungeon would confess that it would take a deal of Grace to make us content to be there! And if he was shut up in the prison of the Palatine Hill, in the barracks near the morass, it was, to say the least, not a desirable place to be. A soldier chained to your hand day and night, however good a fellow he may be, does not always make the most delightful company for you, nor you for him—and it takes some time to learn to be content with such a companion. But, says Paul, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”

12. *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.* These are both hard lessons to learn. I do not know which is the more difficult of the two. Probably it is easier to know how to go down than to know how to go up. How many Christians have I seen grandly glorifying God in sickness and poverty when they have come down in the world, and ah, how often have I seen other Christians *dishonoring* God when they have grown rich, or when they have risen to a position of influence among their fellow men! These two lessons, Grace, alone, can fully teach us.

13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.* What a gracious attainment! There is no boasting in this declaration. Paul only spoke what was literally the truth.

14, 15. *Notwithstanding you have done well, that you did communicate with my affliction. Now you Philippians know, also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you, only.* The Philippians were the only Christians who had sent any help to this great sufferer for Christ's sake in the time of his need.

16-18. *For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.* I do not suppose that they sent him very much, but he knew the love that prompted the gift—he understood what they meant by it. I always had a fancy that Lydia was the first to suggest that kind deed. She, the first convert of the Philippian Church, thought of Paul, I doubt not, and said to the other Believers, “Let us take care of him as far as we can. See how he spends his whole life in the Master's service, and now he may, at last, die in prison for lack of even common necessities. Let us send a present to him in Rome.” How grateful is the Apostle for that gift of love! What gladness they had put into his heart! Now he says—

19. *But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* “You have supplied my need out of your poverty. My God shall supply all your need out of His riches. Your greatest need shall not exceed the liberality of His supplies.”

20, 21. *Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.* The religion of Christ is full of courtesy and it is full of generous thoughtfulness. I do not think that he can be a Christian who has no knowledge nor care about his fellow Church members.

21. *The Brothers and Sisters which are with me greet you.* They saw that he was writing a letter and they, therefore, said, “Send our love to the Philippians.”

2. *All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.* Only think of saints in the household of Nero, saints in the service of such a demon as he was, and saints who were first in every good thing! “Chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.”

23. *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—136, 720, 870.

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

PRAYER PERFUMED WITH PRAISE

NO. 1469

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 20, 1879,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known unto God.”
Philippians 4:6.***

ACCORDING to the text we are, both by prayer and supplication, to make known our requests unto God. If any distinction is intended here, I suppose that by prayer is meant the general act of devotion and the mention of our usual needs. And by supplication I think would be intended our distinct entreaties and special petitions. We are to offer the general prayer common to all the saints and we are to add the special and definite petitions which are peculiar to ourselves. We are to worship in prayer, for God is to be adored by all His saints, and then we are to beseech His favors for ourselves according to the words of the text, letting our requests be made known unto God.

Do not forget this second form of worship. There is a good deal of generalizing in prayer and, God forbid that we should say a word against it, so far as it is sincere worship. But we need to have more of specific, definite pleading with God, asking Him for such-and-such things with a clear knowledge of what we ask. You will hear prayers at Prayer Meetings in which everything is asked in general but nothing in particular and yet the reality and heartiness of prayer will often be best manifested by the putting up of requests for distinct blessings.

See how Abraham, when he went to worship the Lord, did not merely adore Him and in general pray for His Glory, but on a special occasion he pleaded concerning the promised heir. At another time he cried, “O that Ishmael might live before You,” and on one special occasion he interceded for Sodom. Elijah, when on the top of Carmel, did not pray for all the blessings of Providence in general, but for *rain*, for rain then and there. He knew what he was driving at, kept to his point and prevailed.

So, my beloved Friends, we have many needs which are so pressing as to be very distinct and definite and we ought to have just as many clearly defined petitions which we offer to God by way of supplication and for the Divine answers to these we are bound to watch with eager expectancy so that when we receive them we may magnify the Lord. The point to which I would draw your attention is this—whether it is the general prayer or the specific supplication—we are to offer either or both, “with thanksgiving.” We are to pray about everything and with every prayer we must blend our thanksgivings.

Therefore it follows that we ought always to be in a thankful condition of heart since we are to pray without ceasing and are not to pray without thanksgiving! It is clear that we ought to be always ready to give thanks unto the Lord. We must say with the Psalmist, “Thus will I bless You while I live, I will lift up my hands in Your name.” The constant tenor and spirit

of our lives should be adoring gratitude, love, reverence and thanksgiving to the Most High. This blending of thanks with devotion is always to be maintained.

Always must we offer prayer and supplication *with* thanksgiving. No matter though the prayer should struggle upward out of the depths, yet must its wings be silvered over with thanksgiving. Though the prayer were offered upon the verge of death, yet in the last few words which the trembling lips can utter there should be notes of gratitude as well as words of petition. The Law says, "With all your sacrifices you shall offer salt," and the Gospel says with all your prayers you shall offer praise. "One thing at a time" is said to be a wise proverb, but for once I must venture to contradict it and say that *two* things at a time are better when the two are *prayer* and *thanksgiving*.

These two holy streams flow from one common source—the Spirit of Life which dwells within us—and they are utterances of the same holy fellowship with God. Therefore it is right that they should mingle as they flow and find expression in the same holy exercise. Supplication and thanksgiving so naturally run into each other that it would be difficult to keep them separate! Like kindred colors, they shade off into each other. Our very language seems to indicate this, for there is small difference between the words, "to pray," and, "to praise."

A Psalm may be either prayer or praise, or both, and there is yet another form of utterance which is certainly prayer, but is used as praise and is really both. I refer to that joyous Hebrew word which has been imported into all Christian languages, "Hosanna." Is it a prayer? Yes. "Save, Lord." Is it not praise? Yes, for it is tantamount to, "God save the King," and it is used to extol the Son of David. While we are here on earth we should never attempt to make such a distinction between prayer and praise that we should either praise without prayer or pray without praise—but with every prayer and supplication we should mingle thanksgiving and thus make known our requests unto God.

This commingling of precious things is admirable. It reminds me of that verse in the Canticles where the king is described as coming up from the wilderness in his chariot, "like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant." There is the myrrh of prayer and the frankincense of praise! So, too, the holy incense of the sanctuary yielded the smoke of prayer which filled the Holy Place, but with it there was the sweet perfume of choice spices which may be compared to praise.

Prayer and praise are like the two cherubim on the ark—they must never be separated. In the model of prayer which our Savior has given us, saying, "After this manner pray you," the opening part of it is rather praise than prayer—"Our Father which are in Heaven, hallowed be Your name," and the closing part of it is praise where we say, "For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen." David, who is the great tutor and exemplar of the Church as to her worship, being at once her poet and her preacher, takes care in almost every Psalm, though the petition may be agonizing, to mingle exquisite praise.

Take, for instance, that Psalm of his after his great sin with Bathsheba. There, one would think, with sighs and groans and tears so multiplied, he

might have almost forgotten or have feared to offer thanksgiving while he was trembling under a sense of wrath! And yet before the Psalm that begins, "Have mercy upon me, O God," can come to a conclusion, the Psalmist has said, "O Lord, open You my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise," and he cannot pen the last word without beseeching the Lord to build the walls of Jerusalem, adding the promise, "then shall You be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar."

I need not stop to quote other instances, but it is almost always the case that David, by the fire of prayer, warms himself into praise. He begins low, with many a broken note of complaining, but he mounts and glows and, like the lark, sings as he ascends! When at first his harp is muffled, he warbles a few mournful notes and becomes excited till he cannot restrain his hand from that well-known and accustomed string which he had reserved alone for the music of praise. There is a passage in the 18th Psalm, at the third verse, in which, indeed, he seems to have caught the very idea which I need to fix upon your minds this morning—"I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies."

He was in such a condition that he says, "The sorrows of death compassed me and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of Hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me." Driven by distress, he declares that he will call upon the Lord, that is, with utterances of prayer. But he does not only regard his God as the object of prayer, but as One who is to be praised. "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised" and then, as if inspired to inform us of the fact that the blending of thanksgiving with prayer renders it Infallibly effectual, as I shall have to show you it does, he adds, "So shall I be saved from my enemies."

Now, if this habit of combining thanksgiving with prayer is found in the Old Testament saints, we have a right to expect it yet more in New Testament Believers who, in clearer light, perceive fresh reasons for thanksgiving. But I shall give you no instance except that of the writer of my text. Does he not tell us in the present chapter that those things which we have seen in him we are to do, for his life was agreeable with his teaching? Now, observe how frequently he commences his Epistles with a blending of supplication and thanksgiving. Turn to Romans and note in the first chapter, at the eighth and ninth verses, this fusion of the precious metals—"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."

There is, "I thank my God" and, "I make mention of you always in my prayers." This was not written with a special eye to the precept of our text—it was *natural* to Paul so to thank God when he prayed! Look at the Epistle to the Colossians, in the first chapter, at the third verse, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you." To the same effect we read in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter one, verse two—"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers." Look also at Second Timothy, 1:3—"I

thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of you in my prayers night and day.”

And if it is so in other Epistles, we are not at all surprised to find it so in the Philippian Epistle itself, for so we read when we turn to its first chapter, at the third and fourth verses—“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.” Nor need I confine you to the language of Paul’s Epistle, since it is most noteworthy that in Philippi, (and those to whom he wrote must have remembered the incident), Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God at midnight, so that the prisoners heard them. It is clear that Paul habitually practiced what he here enjoins. His own prayers had not been offered without thanksgiving—what God has joined together he had never put asunder!

With this as a preface, I invite you to consider, carefully and prayerfully, first, *the grounds of thanksgiving in prayer*. Secondly, *the evil of its absence* and, thirdly, *the result of its presence*.

I. First, then, there are REASONS FOR MINGLING THANKSGIVING WITH PRAYER. In the nature of things it ought to be so. We have abundant cause, my Brethren, for thanksgiving at all times. We do not come to God in prayer as if He had left us absolutely penniless and we cried to Him like starving prisoners begging through prison bars. We do not ask as if we had never received a single farthing from God before and hardly thought we should obtain anything now. But on the contrary, having been already the recipients of immense favors, we come to a God who abounds in loving kindness, who is willing to bestow good gifts upon us and waits to be gracious to us.

We do not come to the Lord as slaves to an unfeeling tyrant craving for a gift, but as children who draw near to a loving father, expecting to receive abundantly from his liberal hands. Thanksgiving is the right spirit in which to come before the God who daily loads us with benefits. Think for a while what cause you have for thanksgiving in prayer. And first you have this, that such a thing as prayer is possible—that a finite creature can speak with the infinite Creator—that a sinful being can have audience with the thrice holy Jehovah! It is worthy of thanksgiving that God should have commanded prayer and encouraged us to draw near unto Him and that, moreover, He should have supplied all things necessary to the sacred exercise. He has set up a Mercy Seat, sprinkled blood and He has prepared a High Priest, always living to make intercession. And to these He has added the Holy Spirit to help our infirmities and to teach us what we should pray for as we ought.

Everything is ready and God waits for us to enquire at His hands! He has not only set before us an open door and invited us to enter, but He has given us the right spirit with which to approach. The Grace of supplication is poured out upon us and worked in us by the Holy Spirit. What a blessing it is that we do not attempt prayer with a, “perhaps,” as if we were making a doubtful experiment! Nor do we come before God as a forlorn hope, desperately afraid that He will not listen to our cry. But He has *ordained* prayer to be the ordinary commerce of Heaven and earth and sanctioned it in the most solemn manner. Prayer may climb to Heaven, for God has Himself prepared the ladder and set it down just by the head of

His lonely Jacob so that though that head is pillowed on a stone, it may rest in peace.

Lo, at the top of that ladder is the Lord Himself in His Covenant capacity, receiving our petitions and sending His attendant angels with answers to our requests! Shall we not bless God for this? Let us praise His name, dear Friends, especially that you and I are still spared to pray and permitted to pray. What if we are greatly afflicted, yet it is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed! If we had received our just deserts we should not now have been on praying ground and pleading terms with Him. But let it be for our comfort and to God's praise that we may still stand with bowed head and cry, each one, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Still we may cry like sinking Peter, "Lord save, or I perish!" Like David, we may be unable to go up to the temple, but we can still go to our God in prayer! The prodigal has lost his substance, but he has not lost his power to supplicate! He has been feeding swine, but as yet he is still a man and has not lost the faculty of desire and entreaty. He may have forgotten his Father, but his Father has not forgotten him. He may arise and he may go to Him and he may pour out his soul in His Father's bosom. Therefore, let us give thanks unto God that He has nowhere said unto us, "Seek you My face in vain."

If we find a trembling desire to pray within our soul and if, though almost extinct, we feel some hope in the promise of our gracious God—if our heart still groans after holiness and after God though she has lost her power to pray with joyful confidence as once she did—yet let us be thankful that we can pray even if it is but a little! In the will and power to pray there lies the capacity for infinite blessedness—he who has the key of prayer can open Heaven—yes, he has access to the heart of God! Therefore, let us bless God for prayer.

And then, Beloved, beyond the fact of prayer and our power to exercise it, there is a further ground of thanksgiving in that we have already received great mercy at God's hands. We are not coming to God to ask favors and receive them for the first time in our lives. Why, blessed be His name, if He never granted me another favor, I have enough for which to thank Him as long as I have any being! And this, moreover, is to be remembered—whatever great things we are about to ask, we cannot possibly be seeking for blessings one-half so great as those which we have already received if we are, indeed, His children!

If you are a Christian, you have life in Christ! Are you about to ask for meat and raiment? That life is more than these. You have already obtained Christ Jesus to be yours, then He that spared Him not will deny you nothing! Is there, I was about to say, anything to compare with the infinite riches which are already ours in Christ Jesus? Let us perpetually thank our Benefactor for what we have while we make requests for something more. Should it not be so? Shall not the abundant utterances of the memory of His great goodness run over into our requests till our petitions are baptized in gratitude? While we come before God, in one aspect, empty handed to receive of His goodness, on the other hand we should never appear before Him empty, but come with the fat of our sacrifices offering praise and glorifying God.

Furthermore, there is this to be remembered, that when we come before God in the hour of trouble, remembering His great goodness to us in the past and, therefore, thanking Him, we ought to have faith enough to believe that the present trouble, about which we are praying, is sent in love. You will win with God in prayer if you can look at your trials in this light—"Lord, I have this thorn in the flesh. I beseech You, deliver me from it, but meanwhile I bless You for it, for though I do not understand the why or the wherefore of it, I am persuaded there is Your love within it. Therefore, while I ask You to remove it, so far as it seems evil to me, yet wherein it may to Your better knowledge work my good, I bless You for it and I am content to endure it so long as You see fit." Is not that a sweet way of praying?

"Lord, I am in need, be pleased to supply me but, meanwhile, if You do not, I believe it is better for me to be in need, and so I praise You for my necessity while I ask You to supply it. I glory in my infirmity, even while I ask You to overcome it. I triumph before You in my affliction and bless You for it even while I ask You to help me in it and to rescue me out of it." This is a royal way of praying—such a mixture of prayer and thanksgiving is more precious than the gold of Ophir! Furthermore, Beloved, whenever we are on our knees in prayer, it becomes us to bless God that prayer has been answered so many times before. "Here Your poor petitioner bends before You to ask again, but before he asks he thanks You for having heard him so many times before. I know that You always hear me, therefore do I continue to cry to You. My thanksgivings urge me to make fresh petitions, encouraging me in the full confidence that You will not send me away empty."

Why, many of the mercies which you possess today and rejoice in, are answers to prayer! They are dear to you because, like Samuel, whom his mother so named because he was, "asked of God," they came to you as answers to your supplications! When mercies come in answer to prayer they have a double delight about them, not only because they are good in themselves, but because they are certificates of our favor with the Lord. Well, then, as God has heard us so often and we have the proofs of His hearing, should we ever pray with murmurings and complaints? Should we not rather feel an intense delight when we approach the Throne of Grace—rapture awakened by sunny memories of the past?

Again, we ought to pray with thanksgiving in its highest of all senses by thanking God that we have the mercy which we seek. I wish we could learn this high virtue of faith. When I was conversing lately with our dear friend George Muller, he frequently astonished me with the way in which he mentioned that he had for so many months and years asked for such-and-such a mercy and praised the Lord for it. He praised the Lord for it as though he had actually obtained it. Even in praying for the conversion of a person, as soon as he had begun to intercede he began, also, to praise God for the conversion of that person! Though I think he told us he had in one instance already prayed for 30 years and the work was not yet done, yet all the while he had gone on thanking God because he knew the prayer would be answered! He believed that he had his petition and commenced to magnify the Giver of it.

Is this unreasonable? How often do we antedate our gratitude among the sons of men? If you were to promise some poor person that you would pay his rent when it came due, he would thank you directly, though not a farthing had left your pocket! We have enough faith in our fellow men to thank *them* beforehand—surely we may do the same with our Lord! Shall we not be willing to trust God for a few months ahead? Yes, and for years beforehand if His wisdom bids us wait. This is the way to win with Him! When you pray, believe that you receive the gifts you ask and you shall have them! “Believe that you have it,” says the Scripture, “and you shall have it.”

As a man’s note of hand stands for the money, so let God’s promise be accounted as the performance! Shall not Heaven’s bank notes pass as cash? Yes, verily, they shall have unquestioned currency among Believers! We will bless the Lord for giving us what we have sought, since our having it is a matter of absolute certainty! We shall never thank God in faith and then find that we were fooled—He has said, “All things whatever you shall ask in prayer, *believing* you shall receive.” And therefore we may rest assured that the thanksgiving of faith shall never bring shame into the face of the man who offers it.

Once again, and then I will say no more upon these grounds of thanksgiving. Surely, Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord does not answer the prayer which we are offering, yet still He is so good, so supremely good, that we will bless Him whether or not. We ought even to praise Him when He does not answer us, yes, and bless Him for refusing our desires. How devoutly might some of us thank Him that He did not answer our prayers when we sought for evil things in the ignorance of our childish minds! We asked for flesh and He might have sent us quails in His anger—and while the flesh was yet in our mouths His wrath might have come upon us—but in love He would not hear us. Blessed be His name for closing His ears in pity!

Let us adore Him when He keeps us waiting at His doors. Let us thank Him for rebuffs and bless Him for refusals, believing always that Ralph Erskine spoke the truth when he said—

***“I’m heard when answered soon or late,
Yes, heard when I no answer get.
Yes, kindly answered when refused,
And treated well when harshly used.”***

Faith glorifies the love of God, for she knows that the Lord’s roughest usage is only love in disguise! We are not so sordid as to make our songs depend upon the weather, or on the fullness of the olive press and the wine vat. Blessed be His name, He must be right even when He seems at cross purposes with His people! We are not going to quarrel with Him or awake silly babes with their nurses because He does not happen to grant us every desire of our foolish hearts. Though He slays us, we will trust in Him, much more if He decline our requests!

We ask Him for our daily bread and if He withholds it, we will praise Him. Our praises are not dependent upon His answers to our prayers. If the labor of the olive should fail and the field should yield no fruit. If the flocks should be cut off from the fold and the herd from the stall, yet still would we rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of our salvation! Blessed

Spirit, raise us to this state of Grace and keep us there! Of that which we have spoken this is the sum—under every condition and in every necessity, draw near to God in prayer, but always bring thanksgiving with you. As Joseph said to his brothers, “You shall not see my face unless your younger brother is with you,” so may the Lord say to you, “You shall not receive My smile unless you bring thankfulness with you.”

Let your prayers be like those ancient missals which one sometimes sees in which the initial letters of the prayers are gilded and adorned with a profusion of colors, the work of cunning writers. Let even the general confession of sin and the litany of mournful petitions have at least one illuminated letter! Illuminate your prayers! Light them up with rays of thanksgiving all the way through! And when you come together to pray, forget not to make melody unto the Lord with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

II. Secondly, I shall drive at the same point while I try to show THE EVIL OF THE ABSENCE OF THANKSGIVING in our prayers. First and foremost we would be chargeable with ingratitude. Are we to be always receiving and never to return thanks? Aristotle rightly observes, “a return is required to preserve friendship between two persons,” and as we have nothing else to give to God except gratitude, let us abound in it! If we have no fruit of the field, let us at least render to Him the fruit of our lips. Have you no thanks to bring? How, then, can you expect further favors? Does not liberality, itself, close its hand when ingratitude stands in the way? What? Never a word of gratitude to Him from whom all blessings flow! Then may even the ungodly despise you!

Next, it would argue great selfishness if we did not combine praise with prayer. Can it be right to think only of ourselves—to pray for benefits and never honor our Benefactor? Are we going to import the detestable vice of avarice into spiritual things and only care for our own soul’s good? What? No thought for God’s Glory! No idea of magnifying His great and blessed name! God forbid that we should fall into a spirit so mean and narrow! Healthy praise and thanksgiving must be cultivated because they prevent prayer from becoming overgrown with the mildew of selfishness. Thanksgiving also prevents prayer from becoming an exhibition of the lack of faith, for, indeed, some prayer is rather a manifestation of the absence of faith than the exercise of confidence in God.

If when I am in trouble I still bless the Lord for all I suffer, my faith is seen. If before I obtain the mercy, I thank God for the Grace which I have not yet tasted, my faith is manifest. What? Is our faith such that it only sings in the sunshine? Have we no nightingale music for our God? Is our trust like the swallow which must leave us in winter? Is our faith a flower which needs the conservatory to keep it alive? Can it not blossom like the flower at the foot of the frozen glacier where the damp and chill of adversity surround it? I trust it can! It ought to do so and we ought to feel that we can praise and bless God when outward circumstances appear rather to demand sighs than songs. Not to thank God in our prayers would argue willfulness and lack of submission to His will. Must everything be ordered according to *our* mind? To refuse to praise unless we have our own way is great presumption and shows that like a naughty child we will sulk if we cannot be master.

I might illustrate the willfulness of many a supplication by that of a little boy who was very diligent in saying his prayers, but was, at the same time, disobedient, ill-tempered and the pest of the house. His mother told him that she thought it was mere hypocrisy for him to pretend to pray. He replied, "No, Mother, indeed it is not, for I pray God to lead you and Father to like my ways better than you do." Numbers of people want the Lord to like their ways better, but they do not intend to follow the ways of the Lord! Their minds are contrary to God and will not submit to His will and, therefore, there is no thanksgiving in them. Praise in a prayer is indicative of a humble, submissive, obedient spirit—and when it is absent we may suspect willfulness and self-seeking.

Very much of the prayer of rebellious hearts is the mere growling of an angry obstinacy, the whine of an ungratified self-conceit. God must do this and He must do that, or else we will not love Him. What baby talk! What spoiled children such are! A little whipping will do them good. "I have never believed in the goodness of God," said one, "ever since He took my dear mother away." I knew a good man whose child was on the verge of the grave. When I went to see her, he charged me not to mention death to her, "For," he said, "I do not believe God could do such an unkind action as take my only child away." When I assured him that she would surely die within a few days and that he must not quarrel with the will of the Lord, he stood firm in his rebellion.

He prayed, but he could not bless God and it was no marvel that his heart sank within him and he refused to be comforted when, at last, his child died, as we all felt sure she would. He became afterwards resigned, but his lack of acquiescence cost him many a smart. This will not do! This quarrelling with God is poor work! Resignation comes to the heart like an angel unawares and when we entertain it, our soul is comforted. We may ask for the child's life, but we must also thank the Lord that the dear life has been prolonged so long as it has been—and we must put the child and everything else into our Father's hands and say—"If You should take all away, yet still will I bless Your name, O Most High."

This is acceptable prayer because it is not soured by the leaven of self-will, but salted with thankfulness. We must mingle our thanksgivings with our prayers or else we may fear that our mind is not in harmony with the Divine will. Remember, dear Friends, that prayer does not alter the mind of God—it never was the intent of prayer that it should attempt anything of the kind! Prayer is the shadow of the decrees of the Eternal. God has willed such a thing and He makes His saints to will it and express their will in prayer. Prayer is the rustling of the wings of the angels who are bringing the blessing to us. It is written, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desire of your heart." It is not said that He will give the desire of their heart to every Tom, Dick and Harry, but you must first *delight* in the Lord, and when your mind finds all her joy in God, then it is clear that God and you, as far as it can be, are standing on the same plane and moving in the same direction—and now you shall have the desire of your heart because the desire of your heart is the desire of God's heart!

Character, as much as faith, lies at the basis of prevalence in prayer. I do not mean in the case of the prayer of the sinner when he is seeking

mercy, but I mean in the habitual prayers of the godly. There are some men who cannot pray so as to prevail, for sin has made them weak and God walks contrary to them because they walk contrary to Him. He who has lost the light of God's Countenance has also lost much of the prevalence of his prayers. You do not suppose that every Israelite could have gone to the top of Carmel and opened the windows of Heaven as Elijah did! No, he must first be Elijah, for it is the effectual, fervent prayer, not of *every* man, but of a *righteous man*, that avails much. And when the Lord has put your heart and my heart into an agreement with Him, then we shall pray and prevail!

What did our Lord say—"If you abide in Me and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you." Doubtless many lose power in prayer because their lives are grievous in the sight of the Lord and He cannot smile upon them. Will any father listen to the requests of a child who has set himself up in opposition to parental authority? The obedient, tender, loving child who would not wish for anything which you did not think right to give is he whose requests you are pleased to consider and fulfill. Yes, more—you even *anticipate* the wishes of such a child and before he calls, you answer him. May we be such children of the great God!

III. And now, in the third place, let us consider THE RESULT OF THE PRESENCE OF THIS THANKSGIVING IN CONNECTION WITH PRAYER. According to the context, the presence of thanksgiving in the heart, together with prayer, is productive of *peace*. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Now that peace, that conscious calm, that Divine serenity which is described as the peace of God is not produced by prayer, alone, but by prayer with thanksgiving!

Some men pray and they do well. But for lack of mixing thanksgiving with it, their prayer agitates them and they come away from the closet even more anxious than when they entered it. If they mingled in their petitions that sweet powder of the merchants which is called *praise* and mixed it after the art of the apothecary, in due proportions, the blessing of God would come with it causing repose of heart! If we bless our gracious Lord for the very trouble we pray against. If we bless Him for the very mercy which we need, as though it had already come. If we resolve to praise Him whether we receive the gift or not—learning in whatever state we are to be content, then, "the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus." Brethren, as you value this Divine rest of spirit—as you prize constant serenity of soul—I beseech you mingle praises with your prayers!

The next effect of it will be this—the thanksgiving will often warm the soul and enable it to pray. I believe it is the experience of many who love secret devotion that at times they cannot pray, for their heart seems hard, cold, dumb and almost dead. Do not pump up unwilling and formal prayer, my Brothers and Sisters! But rather take down the hymnbook and sing! While you praise the Lord for what you have, you will find your rocky heart begin to dissolve and flow in rivers! You will be encouraged to plead

with the Lord because you will remember what you have before received at His hands!

If you had an empty wagon to raise to the mouth of a coal pit, it might be a very difficult task for *you*—but the work is managed easily by the common sense of the miners. They make the full wagons, as they run down, pull the empty wagons up the incline. Now, when your heart is loaded with praise for mercy received, let it run down the incline and draw up the empty wagon of your desires and you will thus find it easy to pray! Cold and chill prayers are always to be deplored and, if by so simple a method as entreating the Lord to accept our thanksgiving, our hearts can be warmed and renewed, let us, by all means, take care to use it!

Lastly, I believe that when a man begins to pray with thanksgiving he is upon the eve of receiving the blessing. God's time to bless you has come when you begin to praise Him as well as pray to Him. God has His set time to favor us and He will not grant us our desire until the due season has arrived. But the time has come when you begin to bless the Lord. Now, take an instance of this in the second Book of Chronicles, 20th chapter and 20th verse. Jehoshaphat went out to fight with an exceedingly great army and mark how he achieved the victory. "They rose early in the morning and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe His Prophets, so shall you prosper.

"And when he had consulted with the people he appointed"—what? Warriors? Captains? No, that was all done, but he, "appointed singers unto the Lord, that they should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endures forever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the children of Ammon, Moab and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." Victory came when they began to sing and to praise! You shall get your answers to prayer when you multiply your thanksgivings in all your prayers and supplications—rest you sure of that! Our thanksgiving will show that the reason for our waiting is now exhausted—that the waiting has answered its purpose and may now come to a joyful end.

Sometimes we are not in a fit state to receive a blessing, but when we reach the condition of *thankfulness*, then is the time when it is safe for God to indulge us. A professing Christian came to his minister once and said, "Sir, you say we should always pray." "Yes, my Friend, undoubtedly." "But then, Sir, I have been praying for 12 months that I might enjoy the comforts of religion and I am no happier than before. I have made that my one perpetual prayer—that I might enjoy the comforts of religion—but I do not feel joy nor even peace of mind. In fact, I have more doubts and fears than I ever had." "Yes," said his minister, "and that is the natural result of such a selfish prayer. Why, dear Friend," he said, "come and kneel down with me and let us pray in another manner. Father, glorify Your name! Your kingdom come! Now," he said, "go and offer those petitions and get to work to try to make it true and see if you do not soon enjoy the comforts of religion."

There is a great deal in that fact—if you will but desire God to be glorified and aim at glorifying Him yourself—then shall the joys of true *godliness* come to you in answer to prayer. The time for the blessing is when you begin to praise God for it! Brothers and Sisters, you may be sure that when you put up thanksgiving on the ground that God has answered your prayer, you really have prevailed with God! Suppose you had promised to some poor woman that you would give her a meal tomorrow? You might forget it, you know. But suppose when the morning came she sent her little girl with a basket for it? I think she would be likely to get it! But suppose that she sent, in addition, a little note in which the poor soul thanked you for your great kindness? Would you have the heart to say, “My dear girl, I cannot attend to you today. Come another time”? Oh dear no, if the cupboard were bare you would send out to get something because the good soul so believed in you that she had sent you thanks for it *before* she received your gift!

Well, now, trust the Lord in the same manner! He cannot run back from His Word, my Brethren. Believing prayer holds Him, but believing thanksgiving *binds* Him! If it is not in your own heart, though you are evil, to refuse to give what you have promised when that promise is so believed that the person rejoices as though he had it—then depend upon it—the good God will not find it in His heart to refuse you! The time for reception is fully come because thanksgiving for that reception fills your heart. I leave the matter with you. If you *are enabled* to pray in that fashion, great good will come to yourselves, to the Church of God and to the world at large by such prayers.

Now, I think I hear in this audience someone saying, “But I cannot pray so. I do not know how to pray. Oh, that I knew how to pray! I am a poor, guilty sinner. I cannot mix any thanksgiving with my supplications.” Ah, my dear Soul, do not think about that just now. I am not so much preaching to you as I am preaching to the people of God. For you, it is quite enough to say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” And yet I will venture to say that there is praise in such a petition. You are implicitly praising the justice of God and you are praising His mercy by appealing to Him. When the prodigal returned and he began his prayer by saying, “I am not worthy to be called your son,” there was, in that confession, a real *praise* of the father’s goodness, of which he was unworthy to partake.

But you need not think about this matter at present, for you have to find Jesus and eternal life in Him. Go and plead the merit of Jesus and cast yourself upon the love and mercy of God in Him and He will not cast you away! And then another day, when you have found and known Him, take care that the thanksgiving for your salvation never ceases. Even when you are most hungry, poor and needy in the future, continue to bless your saving Lord, and say, “This poor man cried and the Lord heard him! And because the Lord inclined His ear unto me I will praise His name as long as I live.” God bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

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PRAYER, THE CURE FOR CARE

NO. 2351

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, MARCH 11, 1984.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, JANUARY 12, 1888.**

***“Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:6, 7.***

We have the faculty of forethought, but, like all our faculties, it has been perverted, and it is often abused. It is good for a man to have a holy care and to pay due attention to every item of his life, but, alas, it is very easy to make it into an unholy care and to try to wrest from the hand of God that office of Providence which belongs to Him and not to ourselves. How often Luther liked to talk about the birds and the way God cares for them! When he was full of his anxieties, he used to constantly envy the birds because they led so free and happy a life. He talks of Dr. Sparrow, Dr. Thrush and others that used to come and talk to Dr. Luther and tell him many a good thing! You know, Brothers and Sisters, the birds out in the open, yonder, cared for by God, fare far better than those that are cared for by man. A little London girl, who had gone into the country, once said, “Look, mamma, at that poor little bird. It has not got any cage!” That would not have struck me as being any loss to the bird—and if you and I were without *our* cage, and the box of seed, and glass of water, it would not be much of a loss if we were cast adrift into the glorious liberty of a life of humble dependence upon God!

It is that cage of carnal trust and that box of seed that we are always laboring to fill, that makes the worry of this mortal life. But he who has Grace to spread his wings and soar away—and get into the open field of Divine trustfulness—may sing all the day and always have this for his tune—

***“Mortal, cease from toil and sorrow;
God provides for the morrow.”***

Here, then, is the teaching of the text—“Be careful for nothing.” The word, “careful,” does not now mean exactly what it did when the Bible was translated. At least it conveys a different meaning to me from what it did to the translators. I would say that we should be careful. “Be careful,” is a good lesson for boys and young people when they are starting in life, but, in the sense in which the word, “care-full,” was understood at the time of the translators, we must not be careful, that is, full of care. The text means, be not *anxious*—be not constantly thinking about the needs of this

mortal life. I will read it again, stretching the word out a little, and then you will get the meaning of it—"Be care-full for nothing." Oh, that God might teach us how to avoid the evil which is here forbidden, and to live with that holy carelessness which is the very beauty of the Christian life—when all our care is cast on God, and we can joy and rejoice in His Providential care of us!

"Ah," somebody says, "I cannot help caring." Well, the subject, tonight, is to help you to leave off caring or worrying and, first, consider, here, *the substitute for care*. Be careful for nothing, but be prayerful for everything—that is the substitute for care, "prayer and supplication." Secondly, note *the special character of this prayer* which is to become the substitute for anxiety—"In everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." And then I hope we shall have a few minutes left in which to consider *the sweet effect of this prayer*—"The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

I. To begin, then, here is, first, THE SUBSTITUTE FOR CARE OR ANXIETY.

I suppose it is true of many of us that *our cares are numerous*. If you once become careful, anxious, fretful, you will never be able to *count* your cares, even though you might count the hairs of your head. And cares are apt to multiply to those who are care-full and when you are as full of care as you think you can be, you will be sure to have another crop of cares growing up all around you. The indulgence of this evil habit of anxiety leads to its getting dominion over life, till life is not worth living by reason of the care we have about it. Cares are numerous and, therefore, let your *prayers* be as numerous. Turn everything that is a care into a prayer. Let your cares be the raw material of your prayers and, as the alchemists hoped to turn dross into gold, so you, by a holy alchemy, actually turn what naturally would have been a care into spiritual treasure in the form of prayer! Baptize every anxiety into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—and so make it into a blessing!

Have you a care to get? Take heed that it does not get you! Do you wish to make gain? Mind you do not lose more than you gain by your gains. I beseech you, have no more care to gain than you dare turn into a prayer! Do not desire to have what you dare not ask God to give you. Measure your desires by a spiritual standard and you will thus be kept from anything like covetousness. Cares come to many from their losses—they lose what they have gained. Well, this is a world in which there is the tendency to lose. Ebbs follow floods and winters crush out summer flowers. Do not wonder if you lose as other people do, but pray about your losses. Go to God with them—and instead of fretting, make them an occasion for waiting upon the Lord and saying—"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. Show me why You contend with me, and deliver Your servant, I pray You, from ever complaining of You, whatever You permit me to lose!"

Perhaps you say that your care is neither about your gaining nor your losing, but about your daily bread. Ah, well, you have promises for that, you know! The Lord has said, "So shall you dwell in the land, and verily

you shall be fed.” He gives you sweet encouragement when He says that He clothes the grass of the field—and shall He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? And the Lord Jesus bids you consider the fowls of Heaven, how they sow not, neither do they gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Go, then, to your God with all your cares! If you have a large family, a slender income and much ado to make ends meet, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men, you have so many excuses for knocking at God’s door—so many more reasons for being often found at the Throne of Grace! I beseech you, turn them to good account. I feel free to call upon a friend when I really have some business to do with him—and you may be bold to call upon God when necessities press upon you. Instead of caring for anything with anxious care, turn it at once into a reason for renewed prayerfulness.

“Ah,” one says, “but I am in perplexity. I do not know what to do.” Well, then, dear Friend, you should certainly pray when you cannot tell whether it is the right hand road, or the left hand, or straight on, or whether you should go back! Indeed, when you are in such a fog that you cannot see the next lamp, *then* is the time that you must pray. The road will clear before you very suddenly. I have often had to try this plan, myself—and I bear witness that when I have trusted to *myself*, I have been a gigantic fool! But when I have trusted in God, then He has led me straight on in the right way, and there has been no mistake about it! I believe that God’s children often make greater blunders over simple things than they do over more difficult matters. You know how it was with Israel, when those Gibeonites came, with their old shoes and clothes, and showed the bread that was moldy, that they said they took fresh out of their ovens. The children of Israel thought, “This is a clear case. These men are strangers, they have come from a far country, so we may make a league with them.” They were certain that the evidence of their *eyes* proved that these were no Canaanites, so they did not consult God! The whole matter seemed so plain that they made a league with the Gibeonites, which was a trouble to them ever afterwards! If we would, in everything, go to God in prayer, our perplexities would lead us into no more mistakes than our simplicities—and in simple things and difficult things we should be guided by the Most High.

Perhaps another friend says, “But I am thinking about the future.” Are you? Well, first, I beg to ask you what *you* have to do with the future? Do you know what a day will bring forth? You have been thinking about what will become of you when you are old, but are you sure that you will ever *be* old? I knew one Christian woman who used to worry herself about how she would get buried. That question never troubled me and there are many other matters about which we need not worry ourselves. You can always find a stick with which to beat a dog and, if you need a care, you can generally find a care with which to beat your own souls! But that is a poor occupation for any of you. Instead of doing that, turn everything that might be a subject of care into a subject of *prayer*. It will not be long before you have a subject of care, so you will not be long without a subject of prayer. Strike out that word, “care,” and just write in the place of it this

word, “prayer”—and then, though your cares are numerous, your prayers will also be numerous.

Note, next, dear Friends, that *undue care is an intrusion into God’s province*. It is making yourself the father of the household instead of being a child—it is making yourself the master instead of being a servant for whom the master provides his rations. Now, if, instead of doing that, you will turn care into prayer, there will be no intrusion, for you may come to God in prayer without being charged with presumption. He invites you to pray. No, here, by His servant, He bids you, “in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Once more, *cares are of no use to us, and they cause us great damage*. If you were to worry as long as you wished, you could not make yourself an inch taller, or grow another hair on your head, or make one hair white or black! So the Savior tells us and He asks, if care fails in such little things, what can care do in the higher matters of Providence? It cannot do anything! A farmer stood in his fields and said, “I do not know what will happen to us all. The wheat will be destroyed if this rain keeps on. We shall not have any harvest at all unless we have some fine weather.” He walked up and down, wringing his hands, fretting and making his whole household uncomfortable. And he did not produce one single gleam of sunlight by all his worrying—he could not puff any of the clouds away with all his petulant speech, nor could he stop a drop of rain with all his murmurings.

What is the good of it, then, to keep gnawing at your own heart, when you can get nothing by it? Besides, it weakens our power to help ourselves and especially our power to glorify God. A care-full heart hinders us from judging rightly in many things. I have often used the illustration (I do not know a better) of taking a telescope, breathing on it with the hot breath of our anxiety, putting it to our eye and then saying that we cannot see anything but clouds! Of course we cannot, and we never shall while we breathe upon it. If we were but calm, quiet, self-possessed and God-possessed, we would do the right thing. We would be, as we say, “all there,” in the time of difficulty. That man may expect to have presence of mind who has the Presence of God. If we forget to pray, do you wonder that we are all in a fidget and a worry, and we do the first thing that occurs to us—which is generally the worst thing—instead of waiting till we saw what would be done and then trustfully and believingly doing it as in the sight of God? Care, or worry, is injurious, but if you only turn this care into prayer, then every worry will be a benefit to you.

Prayer is wonderful material for building up the spiritual fabric. We are, ourselves, edified by prayer. We grow in Grace by prayer and if we will but come to God every moment with petitions, we shall be fast growing Christians! I said to one this morning, “Pray for me, it is a time of need,” and she replied, “I have done nothing else since I awakened.” I have made the same request of several others and they have said that they have been praying for me. I felt so glad, not only for my own sake, who had received benefit from their prayers, but for *their* sakes, because they are sure to grow thereby! When little birds keep flapping their wings, they are learning to fly. The sinews will get stronger and the birds will leave the nest be-

fore long. That very clapping of their wings is an education—and the attempting to pray—the groaning, the sighing, the crying of a prayerful spirit, is, itself, a blessing! Leave off, then, this damaging habit of worry and take to this enriching habit of prayer! See how you will thus make a double gain—first, by avoiding a loss, and secondly, by getting that which will really benefit you and others, too!

Then, again, *cares are the effect of forgetfulness of Christ's closeness to us*. Did you notice how the context runs? “The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing.” The Lord Jesus Christ has promised to come again and He may come tonight. At any moment He may appear! So Paul writes, “The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Oh, if we could but stand on this earth as upon a mere shadow! If we could but live as those who will soon have done with this poor transient life! If we held every earthly thing with a very loose hand, then we would not be caring, and worrying, and fretting—but we would take to praying, for thus we would grasp the real, and the substantial, and plant our feet upon the invisible, which is, after all, the eternal! Oh, dear Friends, let the text, which I have read to you over and over again, now drop into your hearts as a pebble falls into a mountain lake and, as it enters, let it make rings of comfort upon the very surface of your soul!

II. Now we need to look into the text a little more closely to see, in the second place, THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THIS PRAYER. What sort of prayer is that which will ease us of care?

Well, first, it is *a prayer which deals with everything*. “In everything” “let your requests be made known unto God.” You may pray about the smallest thing and about the greatest thing—you may not only pray for the Holy Spirit, but you may pray for a new pair of boots. You may go to God about the bread you eat, the water you drink, the garment you wear and pray to Him about *everything*. Draw no line and say, “So far is to be under the care of God.” Dear me, then, what are you going to do with the rest of life? Is that to be lived under the withering blight of a sort of atheism? God forbid! Oh, that we might live in God as to the whole of our being, for our being is such that we cannot divide it! Our body, soul and spirit are one, and while God leaves us in this world and we have necessities which arise out of the condition of our bodies, we must bring our bodily necessities before God in prayer. And you will find that the great God will hear you in these matters. Say not that they are too little for Him to notice—*everything* is little in comparison with Him! When I think of what a great God He is, it seems to me that this poor little world of ours is just one insignificant grain of sand on the seashore of the universe—and not worth any notice at all. The whole earth is a mere speck in the great world of Nature and, if God condescends to consider it, He may as well stoop a little lower and consider us! And He does so, for He says, “Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Therefore, in *everything* let your requests be made known unto God.

The kind of prayer that saves us from care is prayer that is repeated—“In everything, by prayer and supplication.” Pray to God and then pray again—“by prayer *and* supplication.” If the Lord does not answer you the

first time, be very grateful that you have a good reason for praying again! If He does not grant your request the second time, believe that He loves you so much that He wants to hear your voice again! And if He keeps you waiting till you have gone to Him seven times, say to yourself, "Now I know that I worship the God of Elijah, for Elijah's God let him go, again, seven times before the blessing was given." Count it an *honor* to be permitted to wrestle with the Angel of God! This is the way God makes His princes! Jacob had never been Israel if he had obtained the blessing from the Angel at the first asking—but when he had to keep on wrestling till he prevailed, then he became a prince with God! The prayer that kills care is prayer that is continued and importunate.

Next, it is *intelligent prayer*—"Let your requests be made known unto God." I heard of a Muslim who spent, I think, six hours in prayer each day and, lest he should go to sleep when on board a ship, he stood upright and only had a rope stretched across, so that he might lean against it. And if he slept, he would fall. His objective was to keep on for six hours with what he called prayer. "Well," I said to one who knew him, and who had seen him on board his boat on the Nile, "What sort of prayer was it?" "Why," my friend replied, "he kept on repeating, 'There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God,' the same thing over, and over, and over again." I said, "Did he *ask* for anything?" "Oh, no!" "Was he pleading with God to *give* him anything?" "No, he simply kept on with that perpetual repetition of certain words, just as a witch might repeat a charm."

Do you think there is anything in *that* style of praying? If you go on your knees and simply repeat a certain formula, it will be only a mouthful of words. What does God care about that kind of praying? "Let your requests be made known unto God." That is true prayer! God knows what your requests are, but you are to pray to Him as if He did not know. You are to make known your requests, not because the Lord does not know, but, perhaps, because *you* do not know. And when you have made your requests known to Him, as the text tells you, you will more clearly have made them known to yourself. When you have asked intelligently, knowing *what* you have asked, and knowing *why* you have asked it, you will, perhaps, stop and say to yourself, "No, I must not, after all, make that request." Sometimes, when you have gone on praying for what God does not give you, it may be that there will steal over your mind the conviction that you are not on the right track and *that* result of your prayer will, in itself, do you good, and be a blessing to you.

But you are to pray making your requests known unto God. That is, in plain English, say what you need, for this is true prayer. Get alone and tell the Lord what you need—pour out your heart before Him. Do not imagine that God needs any fine language! No, you need not run upstairs for your prayer book, and turn to a collect—you will be a long time before you find any collect that will fit you if you are really praying! Pray for what you need just as if you were telling your mother or your dearest friend what your need is. Go to God in that fashion, for that is *real prayer*, and that is the kind of prayer that will drive away your cares.

So, dear Friends, again, the kind of prayer that brings freedom from care is *communion with God*. If you have not spoken to God, you have not

really prayed. A little child has been known (I daresay your children have done it) to go and put a letter down the grating of a drain and, of course, there was never any reply to a letter posted in that way. If the letter is not put into the postbox, so that it goes to the person to whom it is addressed, what is the use of it? So, prayer is real communication with God. You must realize that He *is* and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, or else you cannot pray. He must be a reality to you, a living reality, and you must believe that He hears prayer, and then you must speak with Him and believe that you have the petition that you ask of Him—and so you shall have it. He has never yet failed to honor believing prayer. He may keep you waiting for a while, but delays are *not* denials, and He has often answered a prayer that asked for silver by giving gold! He may have denied earthly treasure, but He has given heavenly riches of ten thousand times the worth—and the suppliant has been more than satisfied with the exchange! “Let your requests be made known unto God.”

I know what you do when you are in trouble—you go to your neighbor, but your neighbor does not want to see you quite so often about such business. Possibly you go to your brother, but there is a text that warns you not to go into your brother’s house in the day of your calamity. You may call on a friend too often when you are hard up—he may be very pleased to see you till he hears what you are after! But if you go to your God, He will never give you the cold shoulder. He will never say that you come too often. On the contrary, He will even chide you because you do *not* come to Him often enough!

There is one word which I passed over, just now, because I wanted to leave it for my last observation on this point—“By prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving*, let your requests be made known unto God.” Now what does that mean? It means that the kind of prayer that kills care is *a prayer that asks cheerfully, joyfully, thankfully*. “Lord, I am poor. Let me bless You for my poverty and then, O Lord, will You not supply all my needs?” That is the way to pray. “Lord, I am ill. I bless You for this affliction, for I am sure that it means some good thing to me. Now be pleased to heal me, I beseech You!” “Lord, I am in a great trouble, but I praise You for the trouble, for I know that it contains a blessing though the envelope is black-edged! Lord, help me through my trouble!” That is the kind of prayer that kills care—“supplication, with thanksgiving.” Mix these two things well! One drachma—no, two drachma of prayer—prayer and supplication, then one drachma of thanksgiving! Rub them together and they will make a blessed cure for care. May the Lord teach us to practice this holy art of the apothecary!

III. I finish with this third point, THE SWEET EFFECT OF THIS PRAYER—“And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

If you can pray in this fashion, instead of indulging evil anxiety, the result will be that *an unusual peace* will steal over your heart and mind. Unusual, for it will be “the peace of God.” What is God’s peace? The unruffled serenity of the infinitely happy God, the eternal composure of the absolutely well-contented God! This shall possess your heart and mind. Notice how Paul describes it—“The peace of God, which passes all under-

standing.” Other people will not understand it. They will not be able to make out how you can be so quiet. What is more, you will not be able to tell them, for if it surpasses all *understanding*, it certainly passes all expression! And what is even more amazing—you will not understand it yourself!

It will be such a peace that it will be to you, *unfathomable and immeasurable*. When one of the martyrs was about to burn for Christ, he said to the judge who was giving orders to light the pile, “Will you come and lay your hand on my heart?” The judge did so. “Does it beat fast?” enquired the martyr. “Do I show any sign of fear?” “No,” said the judge. “Now lay your hand on your own heart and see whether you are not more excited than I am.” Think of that man of God, who, on the morning he was to be burned, was so soundly asleep that they had to shake him to wake him—he had to get up to be burned! And yet knowing that it was to be so, he had such confidence in God that he slept sweetly. *This* is “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” In those old Diocletian persecutions, when the martyrs came into the amphitheatre to be torn by wild beasts—when one was set in a red-hot iron chair, another was smeared with honey to be stung to death by wasps and bees—they never flinched!

Think of that brave man who was put on a gridiron to be roasted to death, who said to his persecutors, “You have done me on one side. Now turn me over to the other.” Why this peace under such circumstances? It was “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” We do not have to suffer like that, nowadays, but if it ever comes to anything like that, it is wonderful what peace a Christian enjoys! After there had been a great storm, the Master stood up in the prow of the vessel and said to the winds, “Be still.” And we read, “there was a great calm.” Have you ever felt this? You feel it tonight if you have learned this sacred art of making your requests known unto God in everything and the peace of God which passes all understanding is keeping your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

This blessed peace keeps our hearts and minds—it is *a guardian peace*. The Greek word implies a garrison. Is it not an odd thing that a military term is used here and that it is *peace* that acts as a guard to the heart and to the mind? It is the peace of God that is to protect the child of God—strange but beautiful figure! I have heard that fear is the house-keeper for a Christian. Well, fear may be a good guardian to keep dogs out, but it has not a full cupboard! But peace, though it seems weakness, is the essence of strength and, while it guards, it also feeds us and supplies all our needs.

It is also *a peace which links us to Jesus*—“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds.” That is, your affections and your thoughts, your desires and your intellect—your heart—so that it shall not fear. Your mind, so that it shall not know any kind of perplexity—“the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” It is all, “through Christ Jesus” and, therefore, it is doubly sweet and precious to us!

O my dear Hearers, some of you come in here on Thursday nights and you do not know anything about this peace of God and, perhaps, you

wonder why we Christian people make such a fuss about our religion! Ah, if you knew, you would, perhaps, make more fuss about it than we do, for if there were no hereafter—and we know that there is—yet the blessed habit of going to God in prayer and casting all our care upon Him helps us to live most joyfully, even in this life! We do not believe in secularism, but if we did, there would be no preparation for the earthly life like this living unto God and living *in* God! If you have a sham god and you merely go to Church or Chapel and carry your prayer book or your hymn book with you and, therefore, think you are Christians, you are deceiving yourselves! But if you have a living God and you have real fellowship with Him and constantly, as a habit, live beneath the shadow of the wings of the Almighty, then you shall enjoy a peace that shall make others wonder and make you, yourself, marvel, too, even, “the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” God grant it to you, my beloved Hearers, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
*Philippians 4.***

Verse 1. *Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, do stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.* You know that the Church at Philippi was very dear to the Apostle’s heart. He could never forget the time when he and Silas prayed with the women at the riverside and afterwards prayed and sang praises unto God in the prison, when the prisoners heard them. Lydia and her household and the Philippian jailor were among the first fruits of Paul’s work at Philippi and there was always a very intimate love between him and the members of the Church in that place. They cared for him and he cared for them. Twice in this one verse he speaks of them as his, “dearly beloved.” He says that he “longed for them, longed to come and see them face to face, longed that they might be happy in the Lord to the very highest degree. So he says, “my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy.” It was such a joy to him, even, to think of them as his spiritual children and especially to see after what a godly and generous fashion they behaved themselves. Yes, and he calls them his, “crown”—a garland which he had won in spiritual wrestling! The Christian’s converts are his joy, here, and they will be his crown forever in Heaven. Paul bade these Philippians, “stand fast in the Lord.” It looks like a very simple thing to stand fast, but they who try to do it know how difficult a task it is.

2. *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.* Only two women who had fallen out with one another, but the Apostle is so anxious for perfect unity that he puts in a, “beseech,” for each of them. He does not say which was right and which was wrong, but he would have them, “of the same mind in the Lord.” Little differences, even between obscure members of the Church, may hinder the work of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is like a dove—and doves love quiet places—they do not come where there is noise and strife. Oh, let us cultivate love towards one another! And if in anything we have disagreed at any time, let us think that we hear Paul saying, tonight, “I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the

Lord.” Make up, my Sisters! Make up, my Brothers! Whatever the quarrel is, end it and, “be of the same mind in the Lord.” Bought with the same precious blood, robed in the same perfect righteousness, on the way to the same Heaven, “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

3. *And I entreat you also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.* We do not know who this “true yokefellow” was. Very likely it was Epaphroditus who carried this Epistle to Philippi. Whoever it was, it was someone who had worked with Paul shoulder to shoulder. If two bullocks bear the same yoke and yet do not agree, they make it very uncomfortable for one another. If one tries to lie down and the other wants to stand up, or if one goes faster than the other, the yoke becomes doubly galling. Paul speaks of somebody here as having been his “true yokefellow”—and he says to him, “Help those women which labored with me in the Gospel.”

What an eminent place women have always held in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ and here Paul speaks of them as laboring with him in the Gospel! Surely Lydia must have been one of those. “With Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.” According to some learned commentators, a man’s name may be in the Book of Life for a time, but it may be removed. If their teaching is true, that book will be very much scratched and blotted. I thank God that I do not believe in any such book as that! If the Lord Jesus Christ has written my name in the Book of Life, in the great family register of the redeemed, I defy all the devils of Hell to ever get it erased!

4. *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.* If you *ever* rejoice in the Lord, you may *always* rejoice in the Lord, for He is always the same, and always gracious! There is as much reason for rejoicing in God at one time as at another, since He never changes.

5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men.* The word, “moderation,” in the Greek, is a very difficult word to translate into English. It does not mean moderation in the sense in which some people use the word, for they make it, as I think, almost an accursed one. “Let your moderation”—your *gentleness*, your *willingness*, your *forbearance*—“be known unto all men.” That is what it means. Do not push your own rights too far—stop short of what you might fairly demand and when you feel, at any time, a little vehement in temper, check yourself—hold yourself in, bear and forbear. Go not as far as you may, nor even as far as some think that you ought, in defending your own rights. Let your gentleness, your yieldingness, be known unto all men.

5. *The Lord is at hand.* Christ is coming—why do you put yourself out? The Lord is near you to help you—why are you so excessively anxious? Why are you so carried away with the present temporary trial? “The Lord is at hand.”

6. *Be careful for nothing.* Be anxiously careful for nothing! Sing, with Faber—

***“I have no cares, O blessed Lord,
For all my cares are Yours.”***

6-8. *But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things.* Everything of this kind concerns you, therefore help it as far as you can. Be on the side of every cause that may be thus described. If it vindicates truth, uprightness, reverence, religion, chastity, holiness—be on that side. If there is anything the reverse of this, do not have anything to do with it, but if there is any movement in the world that will help forward things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, “think on these things,” and so think upon them as to increase their influence among the sons and daughters of men!

9. *Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do.* It is well when a preacher can speak like that—when he has not to say, “Do as I say and not as I do,” but when, like the Apostle, he can say—“those things, which you have both learned, received, heard and seen in me, do.”

9. *And the God of Peace shall be with you.* The God of Peace is always with those who receive His dear Son and who help His Gospel. It is one of the privileges of true Believers that the God of Peace shall be constantly with them.

10. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me has flourished again; wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity.* Paul was in prison at Rome and these Philippians had made a contribution. And they had sent Epaphroditus with it to relieve the Apostle in his poverty, so he said to them, “You cared for me before; but for a time you had not the opportunity of helping me, and now you have thought of me, again, therefore I rejoice in the Lord greatly.”

11. *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.* Is not that a splendid piece of learning? Paul was a learned man and so are you, if you have learned this lesson! You may not be able to put D.D., or LL.D., after your name, but you are a learned man if you can say, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”

12. *I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound.* These are two grand things to learn. There are some who know the first, but who do not know the second. I have known several of God’s children who seemed quite eminent for piety when they were abased, but they were never worth anything after they grew rich. They did not know how to abound—they became top-heavy and far too great for their britches! It was not so with the Apostle, for he could truthfully say, “I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound.”

12. *Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.* Was he not a true Master of Arts? He had mastered the art of being hungry without murmuring, the art of being full without boasting, the art of suffering need without impa-

tience, the art of abounding without setting his affection on worldly things. He was, indeed, a Master of Arts of the very highest order!

13. *I can do all things*—That looks like bragging, does it not? Finish the sentence.

14. *Through Christ which strengthens me.* There is no improper boasting, here, for Paul could do all things through Christ's mighty power! It has been well said that the angels excel in strength, but the saints excel in their weakness. When we are most weak, and Christ strengthens us, then are the most excellent virtues produced.

14-17. *Notwithstanding, you have done well, that you did communicate with my affliction. Now you Philippians know, also, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you, only. For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desired a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* Their liberality was set down to their account in God's book.

18, 19. *But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.* It is Paul's God who took care of the Philippians and it is Paul's God who will take care of you and me! "My God," says Paul, "shall supply all your needs—not as you have supplied mine, out of your poverty, but according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus"! Do not imagine that you will ever exhaust God's riches in Glory, or drain the national treasury of all-sufficiency—that cannot be.

20. *Now unto God and our Father be Glory forever and ever. Amen.* He blesses us, let us bless Him! He supplies all our needs according to His riches in Glory—let us extol his Glory forever and ever.

21. *Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.* Give him a shake of the hand. Say, "How are you, my Brother? I wish you well." These hearty salutations ought to be common in every Christian assembly. I always deprecate that wonderful respectability that exists in some places of worship where nobody knows anybody else. They are too respectable to become acquainted with their brethren. If you are in Christ Jesus, get to know one another! "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus."

21, 22. *The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.* I suppose most of these were only slaves in the imperial household. There may have been one or two, perhaps, of a higher class, but, in all probability, the Gospel first reached the slaves in the Roman palace, that pandemonium of vice, where lust and cruelty abounded. There were saints even there—and God still has some of His jewels lying on dunghills!

23. *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

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THE PEACE OF GOD

NO. 1397

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 6, 1878,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep
your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:7.***

“PEACE” is a heavenly word. When at the advent of our Lord angels came to sing among men a midnight sonnet, their second note was “Peace on earth.” Would God the shining ones would chant that song again till yonder Balkans heard the strain and shook off the sulfurous cloud which now hangs around them. Those who have ever seen war, or even come near the trail of its bloody march, will be thankful to God for peace. I am almost of his mind who said that the worst peace is preferable to the very best war that was ever waged—if best there can be where all is bad as bad can be. Peace is most pleasant when religion sits beneath its shade and offers her joyful vows to Heaven.

How grateful we ought to be that we can meet together to worship God after that form which best satisfies our consciences without any fear of being hunted down by the authorities of the land. We have no watchman on the hilltops looking out for Claverhouse’s dragoons. We put none at the front door of our conventicle to watch lest the constable should come to take off worshipper and minister, that they may suffer imprisonment or fine. We worship God in unlimited liberty and we ought to be exceedingly glad of the privilege and infinitely more grateful for it than we are. Do we not sit, every man under his own vine and fig tree, none making us afraid? Blessed is the land in which we dwell and blessed are the days in which we live, when in all peace and quietness we worship God in public and sing His high praises as loudly as we please. Great God of Peace, You have given us this peace, and in remembrance of our hunted forefathers we bless You with our whole hearts!

We have met tonight for the purpose of hearing the Gospel of peace and many of us are afterwards coming to that sacred festival which celebrates peace and is to all time the memorial of the great peace-making between God and man. And yet it may be that even all Believers here are not quite at peace. Possibly you did not leave your family in peace this afternoon. Wars occur even among loving hearts. Alas, even Sabbaths are sometimes disturbed, for evil tempers cannot be bound over to keep the peace, but are riotous even on this sweet restful day! Do Christian men ever permit angry feelings to rise within them? If they do, I am sure that even in coming away from home to the House of God, they come with a disturbed mind.

Ah, how insignificant a matter will mar our peace of mind—some little thing that happened in getting to your pew—some trifling incident even while you are in it waiting for worship to begin, may, like dust in your eye,

cause you the greatest distress. Such poor creatures are we that we may lose our peace of mind even by a word or a look! Peace, in the form of perfect calm and serenity, is a very delicate and sensitive thing and needs more careful handling than a Venice glass. It is hard for the sea of our heart to remain long in a smooth and glassy state—it may be rippled and ruffled by an infant's breath. Perhaps, too, some of my Brothers and Sisters here have not been walking near to God—and if so, their peace will not be perfect.

It may be, my Brother, that during the week you have backslidden somewhat from your true standing and, if so, your peace has fled. Your heart is troubled and though you are believing in Christ for salvation and are, therefore, safe, yet for all that your inward rest may be broken. Therefore would I turn the text into a prayer and pray for myself and for every Believer in Jesus Christ—that the peace of God which passes all understanding may now keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. May you all know the text by *experience*. He who wrote it had felt it—may we who read it feel it, too. Paul had oftentimes enjoyed the brightness of peace in the darkness of a dungeon and he had felt living peace in prospect of a sudden and cruel death. He loved peace, preached peace, lived in peace, died in peace and, behold, he has entered into the fruition of peace and dwells in peace before the Throne of God!

Looking at the text and thinking how we might handle it best to our profit, I thought we would notice, first of all, the unspeakable privilege—“the peace of God, which passes all understanding.” Then, secondly, I thought that we might gather, from its connection, the method of coming at it, for the preceding sentences are linked to our text by the word, “and,” which is not an incidental conjunction, but is placed there with a purpose. Paul means to say that if we do what he bids us do in the 4th, 5th and 6th verses, then the peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds. When we have looked at that matter for a few minutes, I shall need your careful attention, in the third place, to the power of its operation—for the peace of God “shall keep your hearts and minds.”

And then we shall close, in the fourth place, by noticing the sphere of its action, namely, “in Christ Jesus.” The word should have been, “in,” rather than, “through”—“shall keep your hearts and minds *in* Christ Jesus.” May the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Peace, now lead us into the center and secrets of our text.

I. First, then, here is AN UNSPEAKABLE PRIVILEGE—one which is very hard to speak of because it passes all understanding and, therefore, you may be sure it must pass all description! It is one of those things which can be more readily experienced than explained. Good Joseph Stennett was right when he spoke of those who—

***“Draw from Heaven that sweet repose
Which none but he that feels it knows.”***

We may talk about inward rest and dilate upon the peace of God. We may select the most choice expressions to declare the delicacy of its enjoyment, but we cannot convey to others the knowledge second hand—they must *feel* it or they cannot understand it. If I were speaking to little children, I

would illustrate my point by the story of the boy at one of our mission stations who had a piece of sugar cube given him one day at school.

He had never tasted such essence of sweetness and when he went home to his father, he told him that he had eaten something which was wonderfully sweet. His father said, "Was it as sweet as such-and-such a fruit?" "It was far sweeter than that." "Was it as sweet as such-and-such a food?" which he mentioned. "It was much sweeter than that. But Father," he said, "I cannot explain it." He rushed out of the house back to the mission house, begged a piece of sugar out of it and brought it back. He then said, "Father, taste and see, and then you will know how sweet it is." So I venture to use that simple illustration and say, "O taste and see that the peace of God is good," for in very deed it surpasses all the tongues of men and of angels to set it forth!

What is the peace of God? I would describe it, first, by saying it is, of course, peace *with* God. It is peace of conscience, actual peace with the Most High through the atoning Sacrifice. Reconciliation, forgiveness, restoration to favor there must be—and the soul must be aware of it—there can be no peace of God apart from justification through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ *received* by faith. A man conscious of being guilty can never know the peace of God till he becomes equally conscious of being forgiven. When his consciousness of pardon shall become as strong and vivid as his consciousness of guilt had been, then will he enter into the enjoyment of the peace of God which passes all understanding!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ—you that have believed in Jesus—there is perfect peace between you and God now—"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Your sin was the ground of the quarrel, but it has gone. It has ceased to be! It is blotted out! It is cast into the depth of the sea! As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us! Our Divine Scapegoat has carried our iniquities into the wilderness. Our Lord and Master has finished transgression, made an end of sin. He has brought in everlasting righteousness. The cause of offense is gone and gone forever—Jesus has taken our guilt, has suffered in our place, has made full compensation to the injured Law and vindicated Justice to the very highest—and now there is nothing which can excite the anger of God towards us, for our sin is removed and our unrighteousness is covered.

We are reconciled to God by Christ Jesus and accepted in the Beloved. Now this actual reconciliation brings to the heart a profound sense of peace. O that all of you possessed it! O that those who know it knew it more fully! Remember, O Soul, if Christ did, indeed, suffer in your place and was made a curse for you, Justice can never require at your hands the penalty which your Surety has discharged, for this would be to dishonor His Sacrifice by making it of no effect! If Jesus stood as your Substitute and bore what God required as the vindication of His Law, then you are clear, beyond all doubt clear forever, saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation!

If it were not so, why was there a Substitute permitted? Did God design to tantalize mankind by permitting an ineffectual substitution? What did

He accomplish if He did not save those for whom He died? What meaning is there in the Gospel if it does not reveal an effectual Atonement? But truly the Lord Jesus was made sin for us and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are saved! Here the soul rests! At the foot of the Cross it finds a peace it never could have found elsewhere. I hope that many of you are now able to sing—

***“Jesus was punished in my stead,
Outside the gate my Surety bled
To expiate my stain.
On earth the Godhead deigned to dwell,
And made of Infinite avail
The sufferings of the man.
And was He for such rebels given?
He was! The Incarnate King of Heaven
Did for His foes expire!
Amazed, O earth, the tidings hear
He bore, that we might never bear
His Father’s righteous ire.”***

There take your full of peace, for by this Sacrifice a Covenant of Peace is now established between you and your God—and it is sealed by atoning blood.

“The peace of God, which passes all understanding” also takes a second form, namely, that of a consequent peace in the little kingdom within. When we know that we are forgiven and that we are at peace with God, things within us come to a sudden and delightful change. By nature everything in our inner nature is at war with itself—it is a cage of evil beasts all tearing and devouring each other. Man is out of order—out of order with God, with the universe and with himself. The machinery of manhood has fallen into serious disorder—its cogs and wheels do not work in due harmony, but miss their touch and stroke. The passions, instead of being ruled by reason, often demand to hold the reins. Reason, instead of being guided by the knowledge which God communicates by His Word, chooses to obey a depraved imagination and demands to become a separate power and to judge God Himself!

There is not a faculty of our nature which is not in rebellion against God and, consequently, in a state of confusion with regard to the rest of our system. A cruel internal war often rages among our mental powers, animal instincts and moral faculties causing distress, fear and unhappiness. There is no cure for this but restoring Grace. O Man, *you* cannot get your heart right! *You* cannot get your conscience right! *You* cannot get your understanding right! *You* cannot bring your various powers to their bearings and make them act in true harmony till first you are right with God! The King must occupy the throne and then the estate of Mansoul will be duly settled—but till the chief authority has due eminence—rebellion and riot will continue.

When the Lord breathes peace into a man and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove to dwell within the soul, then is there quiet—where all was chaos, order appears, the man is created anew and becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. And though rebellious lusts still try to get the mastery, yet there is now a ruling power which keeps the man in order so that within him there is “the peace of God, which passes all

understanding.” This leads on to peace in reference to all outward circumstances by reason of our confidence that God orders them all rightly and arranges them all for our good. The man who believes in Jesus and is reconciled to God has nothing outside of him that he needs to fear. Is he poor? He rejoices that Christ makes poor men rich! Does he prosper? He rejoices that there is Divine Grace to sanctify his prosperity lest it become intoxicating to him!

Does there lie before him a great trouble? He thanks God for His promise that as his day his strength shall be. Does he apprehend the loss of friends? He prays that the trial may be averted, for he is permitted so to pray, even as David begged for the life of his child. But, having so done, he feels sure that God will not take away an earthly friend unless it is with kind intent to gather up our trust and confidence more fully to Himself. Does there lie before him the prospect of speedy death? The hope of resurrection gives peace to his dying pillow! He knows that his Redeemer lives and he is content to let his body sleep in the dust awhile. Is he reminded by Scripture of a Day of Judgment when all hearts shall be revealed? He has peace with regard to that dread mystery and all that surrounds it, for he knows whom he has believed and he knows that He will protect him in that day.

Whatever may be suggested that might alarm or distress the Believer, deep down in his soul he cannot be disturbed because he sees his God at the helm of the vessel holding the rudder with a hand which defies the storm. This is peculiarly advantageous in days like these when all things wear a dreary aspect. The storm signals are flying, the clouds are gathering, flashes of lightning and sounds of distant thunder are all around us. If you read the papers, wars and rumors of wars are incessant! Your eyes light upon narratives of famine and drought. You see distress here, slackness of business there and poverty and starvation in many places—and the fear creeps over you that there are dark days yet to come and seasons in which faces will grow pale and hands hang heavy.

Brothers and Sisters, it is for the Believer, in such a case, to feel no dismay, for our God is in the heavens and He does not forsake the Throne. His purposes will be fulfilled and good will come out of evil, for at this very moment God sits in the council chambers of kings and orders all things according to the counsel of His will. We are not children whose father has gone to sea and left us at home without a guardian. We read just now the words, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you,” and we believe that gracious Word of God! God is most near us and we are most safe. Though we cannot see the future and do not wish to pry between the folded leaves of the book of destiny, we are absolutely certain that *nothing* is written upon the unopened page of the future which can contradict the Divine faithfulness so conspicuous in the past. We are sure that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose—and therefore our soul, as to all external circumstances, casts anchor and enjoys the peace of God which passes all understanding.

Nor is this all. God is pleased to give to His people peace in reference to all His commands. While the soul is unregenerate, it rebels against the

mind and will of God. If God forbids, the unrenewed heart longs for the forbidden thing. If God commands, the natural mind, for that very reason, refuses to do it! But when the change takes place and we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, then, Beloved, we drop into the same line with God and our deepest desire is to abide in full harmony with Him. His will becomes our delight and our only sorrow is that we cannot be perfectly conformed to it. There is no precept of God which is grievous to a gracious heart. His statutes are our songs in the house of our pilgrimage. We also feel perfect peace with regard to God's providential doings because we believe that they are helping us to arrive at conformity with Him—and that is just what we want.

Oh that we could never have a thought or wish, from now on, that would be disagreeable to the Lord! We love Him, we love His ways, we love His people, we love His Word, we love His Day, we love His promises, we love His Laws—we are altogether agreed with Him through His rich Grace—and in this sense we have a peace towards God which passes all understanding. What a wonderful description that is of this peace—it “passes all understanding.” It is not only beyond a *common* understanding, but it passes *all* understanding. Some have said it means that the ungodly man cannot understand it. That statement is true, but it is not a tenth of the whole meaning, for even he who enjoys it cannot understand it! It is deeper, it is broader, it is sweeter, it is more heavenly than the joyful saint, himself, can tell. He enjoys what he cannot understand! What a mercy that such a thing is possible, for otherwise our joys would be narrow, indeed! Reason has limits far more narrow than joy. Truly this peace is hid from the eyes of the ungodly and the unbelieving—it is far above, out of their sight.

Now, there are kinds of peace in the world which the ungodly man *can* understand. There were the Stoics who schooled themselves to apathy—they would not feel and so they attained a senseless peace—their secret is easily discovered, it does not pass understanding. Many a Red Indian has been as stolid as the greatest Stoic and has, perhaps, surpassed him in hardening himself so that he would not groan if pierced with arrows or burned with fire. Some men have had such mastery over themselves that it has seemed a matter of perfect indifference whether they suffered pain or not.

But Christianity does not teach us stoicism, nor does it point in that direction. It cultivates tenderness, not insensibility. Its influence tends to make us sensitive rather than callous and gives us a peace consistent with the utmost delicacy of feeling, yes, with a sensitiveness more intense than other men know since it makes our conscience more tender and causes the mind to be deeply distressed by the slightest frown of Heaven. Our peace is not the peace of apathy, but one of a far nobler sort. Others have aimed at the peace of levity, which the world can readily understand. They count it one of the wisest things to drive dull care away and whatever happens of ill they drown reflection of it in the flowing bowl and laugh over it—making mirth when misery devours their souls.

Christians do not attempt to get rid of the trials of life in that fashion. The world, therefore, cannot understand the Believer's peace since he is

neither apathetic nor frivolous. From where does this peace come? The jaunty answer of many a worldling is, "Oh, it comes from some fanatical delusion." But, indeed, we are not deluded. The grounds of a Christian's peace are rational, logical and well grounded. They are to be justified by common sense. A person who has been in debt and who is still in debt, ought not to be at peace. But suppose a man is found to be perfectly at his ease—who can blame him if he can say, "I have a right to be so, for my debt is paid"? No one can challenge such an argument!

He who believes that Christ Jesus suffered in his place that which was due to God's justice has a rational argument for being at peace which he may plead anywhere he pleases. God has forgiven, for Christ's sake, all his iniquity—why should he not be at peace? And if it is, indeed, so—that the Christian has become the child of God—ought he not to be at peace? If God his Father rules all things for his good, ought he not to be at peace? If for him there remains no danger of eternal death—if for him there is prepared a glorious resurrection—and if he is ultimately to shine with Christ in eternal Glory, why should not the man have peace? It is far more difficult, I should think, to rationally blame him for his happiness than it would be to justify him if he were in alarm. We are not victims of delusion but speak the words of the Truth of God and soberness when we claim to be the most favored of mankind! The folly and the fanaticism lie with those who neglect God, eternity and make a mockery of sin. And so the worldling does not understand our peace and frequently sneers at it because he is puzzled by it.

Even the Christian is sometimes surprised at his own peacefulness. I know what it is to suffer from terrible depression of spirit at times, yet at the very moment when it has seemed to me that life was not worth one single bronze coin, I have been perfectly peaceful with regard to all the greater things. There is a possibility of having the surface of the mind lashed into storm while yet down deep in the caverns of one's inmost consciousness all is still—I know this by experience. There are earthquakes upon this earth and yet our globe pursues the even tenor of its way and the same is true in the little world of a Believer's nature. Why, sometimes a Christian will feel himself to be so flooded with a delicious peace that he could not express his rapture! He is almost afraid to sing, lest even the sound of his voice should break the spell. But he says to himself—

"Come, then, expressive silence, muse His praise."

Satan has breathed a whisper into the mind—"It is too good to be true," but the spirit, firmly believing in the truthfulness of God, has repelled the insinuation and rested in the faithfulness of God, in the Eternal Covenant, in the finished work of Christ, in the love of God manifested towards His people in Christ Jesus. This is the peace of God. "So He gives His beloved sleep." It is a rest with an emphasis—rest in Jesus' sense when He said—"Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." His rest in the most golden sense that we can ever give to the word and much more! It passes understanding, but it does not surpass experience! Do you know it? I pray you will answer the question, each one for himself, for I must come back

to where I started from. It is not to be described—it must be tested to be known.

II. Now, I must, in the second place, with very much brevity, indicate, beloved Friends, HOW THIS PEACE IS TO BE OBTAINED. Now, mark you, the Apostle was addressing himself only to Believers in the Lord Jesus and I must beg you to take heed to the limitation. I am not addressing myself to the ungodly—I speak only to Christians. You are always at peace with God though you do not always enjoy the sense of it. If you wish to realize it, how are you to do so? The connection tells you. In the 4th verse Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice.” If you want to have peace of mind, make God your *Joy* and place all your joy in God!

You cannot rejoice in yourself, but you ought to rejoice in God. You cannot always rejoice in your circumstances, for they greatly vary, but the Lord never changes. “Rejoice in the Lord always.” If you have rejoicing in earthly things you must indulge it moderately. But rejoicing in the Lord may be used without the possibility of excess, for the Apostle adds, “Again I say, Rejoice”—rejoice and rejoice again! Delight yourselves in the Lord. Who has such a God as you have? “Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges.” Who has such a Friend, such a Father, such a Savior, such a Comforter as you have in the Lord your God? To think of God as our exceeding Joy is to find “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

Go on to the 5th Verse, where the Apostle says, “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” That is to say, While all your joy is in God, deal with all earthly things on the principle of caution. If any man praises you, do not exult. If, on the contrary, you are censured, do not let your spirit sink. If you have prosperity, thank God for it, but do not be assured that it will continue. If property is yours, use it, but do not let it become your treasure or the chief consideration of your mind. Do you suffer adversity? Pray God to help you, but do not be so cast down as to despair. Drink of earthly cups by sips—do not be foolish like the fly which drowns itself in sweets. Use the things of time as not abusing them. Do not wade far out into the dangerous sea of this world’s comfort. Take the good that God provides you, but say of it, “It passes away,” for, indeed, it is but a temporary supply for a temporary need. Never suffer your goods to become your god. Rejoice only in God and as for all else, come or go, rise or fall, let it neither distress you nor make you exult. Take matters quietly and calmly and if you do that you will have peace. If you idolize any earthly good, your peace will depart. Keep the world under your feet and the peace of God shall keep your heart and mind.

Three rules are then added by the Apostle which you will be sure to remember. He tells us to be careful for *nothing*, to be prayerful for *everything* and to be thankful for *anything*. Anyone who can keep these three rules, with the other two, will be quite sure to have a peaceful mind. “Be careful for nothing.” That is, leave your care with God. Having done your best to provide things honest in the sight of all men, take no distressing, disturbing, anxious thought about anything, but cast your burden on the Lord. Then pray about everything, little, as well as great—

joyous, as well as sad. "In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God." That which you pray over will have the sting taken out of it if it is evil and the sweetness of it will be sanctified if it is good. The tribulation which you pray over will become bearable even if it is not changed into a subject for rejoicing. A trouble prayed over is a dead lion with honey in the carcass!

And then we are bid to be thankful for anything, for the Apostle says, "In everything, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Thankfulness is the great promoter of peace—it is the mother and nurse of restfulness. Doubtless our peace is often broken because we receive mercies from God without acknowledging them—neglected praises sour into unquiet forebodings. If we render to the Lord the fragrant incense of holy gratitude we shall find our soul perfumed with the sweet peace of God. Take those five things, then, as the connection sets them before you. Pile up all your joy into the sacred storehouse of your God and be glad in the Lord.

Next, leave, as much as you can, the things of this world alone—touch them with a light finger—"Let your moderation be known unto all men." And then pray much, care for nothing and bless God from morning to night! In such an atmosphere shall peace grow as rare flowers and fruits bloom beneath sunny skies in well-watered gardens. May the Holy Spirit work these things in us and cause us to rest.

III. This brings me to the third point of our subject tonight, which is THE OPERATION OF THIS BLESSED PRIVILEGE UPON OUR HEARTS. It is said that the peace of God will keep our hearts and minds. The Greek word is *phroureo*, which signifies keeping guard, keeping as with a garrison so completely and so effectually does the peace of God keep our hearts and minds. Look, then—our hearts need keeping, keeping from sinking, for our poor spirits are very apt to faint, even under small trials. They also need keeping from wandering, for how soon are they beguiled! What feeble charms are able to attract us away from the altogether lovely One! Our hearts need keeping up and keeping right.

The way to keep the heart, according to the text, is to let it be filled with the peace of God which passes all understanding. A quiet spirit—calm, restful, happy—is one that will neither sink nor wander—how can it? If the peace of God is in you, what can cause you distress? You will be like those great buoys moored out at sea which cannot sink. It matters not what storms may be raging, they always rise above all. Our souls, moored fast and rendered buoyant with peace, will be as fixed marks whereby others may know their way. Moreover, a man who has his heart full of peace is not likely to wander, for he says to himself, "Why should I wander? Where can such sweetness be found as I have tasted in my Lord? Why should I seek elsewhere?" The best way to keep a person in your service is to make it worth his while to stay and if he is so happy and so content that he feels he could not better himself, you are likely to retain him for many a long day.

Now, our Lord and Master has made His service such that we could not better ourselves. When He said to some of His servants, "Will you, also, go away?" They said, "To whom shall we go?" Ah, indeed! To whom *could* we

go? Eyes, will you leave the light for the thick darkness? Ears, will you turn away from the music of Jesus' voice? Heart, will you leave a faithful lover for a deceiver? Understanding, will you go abroad after novelties when you have found the old, sure, satisfactory Truth of God? Conscience, will you burden yourself, again, with your former load? When you are so perfectly satisfied with the work and Person of Christ, will you not stay where you are? Oh yes, the heart is held with bands as strong as they are tender when it is full of the peace of God which passes understanding!

You young people get tempted, I know, and who among us does not? And the world has many charms for you. I recommend you, therefore, pray to the Lord to maintain your happiness in Christ, your joy in the Lord. If you get out of heart with regard to your Lord and Master, it may be the devil may catch you when you are bad tempered and cross-grained towards your great Lord—and entice you away from your allegiance. But if your heart is always peaceful, you will have a strength about you with which to resist the suggestions of the Evil One. Rivets of peace are good fasteners for Christian loyalty. It is a very serious thing for a Christian to be in an uncomfortable state, for he is then weak in an important point. “Comfort you, comfort you, My people,” are God’s words to His Prophets, because He knows that when we lose comfort, or lose peace, we lose one of the most valuable pieces of armor of which our panoply is composed. But the text also adds that this will keep our mind as well as our heart.

Now in all ages we find that the minds of Christians have been apt to be disturbed and vexed upon vital Truths of God. I think, sometimes, that this is the worst age for error which has ever darkened the world. I get distressed and bowed to the earth as I see the treachery of ministers, professed ministers of Christ, who deny the Inspiration of Scripture and lay the axe at the very root of all the doctrines which we hold dear while they continue to occupy Christian pulpits. But when I look back all through history I find it was always so. From the days of Judas Iscariot until now there have been traitors and there have been men of ready speech and of quick thought who have used both fair speech and subtle thought to turn away simple minds from the Gospel, in that they would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect!

But why are not the elect deceived? As a rule it is because they find such peace—such *perfect* peace—in the Truths of God which they have received, that deceivers vainly attempt to entice them away from it. “Ah,” cries the restful Believer, “I cannot give up the Gospel. It is my life, my strength, my solace, my all! It was the comfort of my dying mother and it remains the mainstay of my aged father. It was that which brought me to a Savior’s feet and gives me Grace to remain there. It has helped me in the hour of trial again and again. I feel I need its consolations and, therefore, I can never part with it.” And so he grows indignant with the man who casts a doubt, especially if he is of the clerical order and a pretender to the Christian ministry. Brothers and Sisters, we cannot move one single inch from the Truth which we have been taught by the Holy Spirit in our soul—and it is only such Truth as that which can bring into the heart the peace of God which passes understanding!

When the Lord has brought His own Truth into our minds by His own power and made the sweet savor of it to pervade our frame—and when He has given us to drink thereof till we have been filled with joy and peace unutterable—we cannot, then, depart from it! Truth taught us by man we may forget, but that which the Holy Spirit engraves upon the inmost heart we cannot depart from. So help us God, we must stand to it even if we die for it! And what are the inventions they offer us instead of the choice things of the Covenant of Peace? They are trifles light as air! If they were true they would not be worth propagating—they might be left among the minor matters which are of no practical value to the sons of men.

They bring us no new grounds of solid peace or fresh discovered arguments for holy joy. The negative theology promises no blessings to mankind. It is an empty-handed plunderer, robbing us of every solace and offering nothing in return. If modern thought could be proved to be true, the next thing that ought to be done would be to hang the world in sackcloth because such vanity of vanities has taken the place of the delightful Truth of God which once gladdened the hearts of men! It would be the saddest of all facts if we were assured that the Doctrines of Grace are, after all, a fiction. But they are not so. They cannot be! They bear their own witness within themselves. Some of us can speak about them as Christian replied to Atheist, when Atheist said, “Go back! Go back!” Christian’s reply was, “We are seeking the Celestial City.” “Oh,” said Atheist, “but I have gone farther than any of you and I tell you that there is no such place. I have met with many learned men who have studied the whole matter and it is all a delusion. Go back! Bo back!”

Then Christian said, “What? No Celestial City? Did we not see it from the top of Mount Clear, when we were with the shepherds and looked through the telescopic glass?” So we say—No Atonement? Have we not felt the peace with which it soothes the conscience? No regeneration? Are we not, ourselves, the living evidence that men are made new creatures in Christ Jesus? No answers to prayer? Surely, then, we are not sane men at all and our senses have failed us! No final perseverance? What, then, has kept us to this day? No work of the Holy Spirit? What? Are we asleep? Is even our *existence* a delusion? No, as we rub our eyes, we feel that we have not been dreaming! We feel sure that some other people are dozing and doting—and we pray that God, in mercy, may end their dream and bring them to know those glorious and substantial Truths which fill us with the peace of God which passes all understanding!

We are bound to the Cross forever! We are nailed to the wood with Christ forever! The blood-red colors of the Atonement are fastened to our masthead, to fly there till our vessel sinks, if sink it must, but never to be struck by man or devil, priest or philosopher! We dare not change, but stand faithful to that which Jesus has taught us, at whose feet we sat in our youth and who still continues to teach us! His peace keeps our heart and mind and, therefore, we will, with heart and mind, keep His Truth, come what may.

IV. Lastly, let us observe THE SPHERE OF ITS ACTION. The text says, “In Christ Jesus.” Now, Beloved, I beg you to note this with interest. The Apostle never mentions the name of Jesus too often. You cannot say that

he drags it in, but he mentions it as often as he can, for he delights in the sound of it. "In Christ Jesus." These words touch every point of our text all the way through. Are we speaking of ourselves? We are in Christ Jesus! Our faith has realized our union with His sacred Person. He is our Head and we are His members. He is the Cornerstone and we are built upon Him. There is nothing about ourselves worth thinking of apart from Him—and it will be well if we dismiss the thought.

Then if we dwell upon the peace of God, we still think of our Lord Jesus, for it is all in Him. No peace is to be found out of Christ! No peace can warm our heart while we forget Christ! "He is our peace." Never go, dear Brothers and Sisters, for your peace to the Law or to your own experience—to your own past achievements, or even to your own faith! All your peace is in Jesus. And then our hearts and our minds, mentioned in the text, must all be in Jesus—the heart loving Him and loved of Him. The mind believing Him, resting in Him, using its faculties for Him—all in Him! If I leave that last thought with you it will be the best ending for my sermon, namely, that to get peace and to get your hearts and minds kept, the grand necessity is to be in Christ—in your dying, risen, reigning Lord! Let Him be upon your thoughts now and always! His table is now spread, come here to commune with Him. Come here with your Master, to see your Master and to eat His flesh and drink His blood, after a *spiritual* fashion, at His own table!

A word to you who do not know our Lord. How I wish you did know Him! You can never possess peace till you possess Christ! What a blessed beginning of Sabbaths it would be to your souls if you were to seek Christ tonight. You have not far to go to find Him. He is not far from any of us. Cover your eyes and breathe a prayer to Him. Stand behind one of the columns outside or get into the street and let your heart say, "Savior, I need peace, and peace I can never have till I have found You. Behold, I trust You. Manifest Yourself to me at this moment and say unto my soul, 'I am your salvation.'" God grant you may so pray!

It seems to me very amazing that we should need to *persuade* men to think of their own interests and to care for their own selves! In other things they are always sharp enough to look after what they call, "Number One," but when it comes to the most solemn concern—the greatest blessing and the purest happiness that can be had—they are so foolish as to let all other things attract them more than the Lord Jesus! The Lord save you all for His infinite mercy's sake! Amen.

[EARNEST prayer is desired for the special services now being held at the Tabernacle and also for Mr. SPURGEON, that he may be fully restored and may return to his people in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. He is, by God's Grace, already greatly improved in health.]

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HOW TO KEEP THE HEART

NO. 180

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, FEBRUARY 21, 1858,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts
and minds through Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:7.***

IT is remarkable that when we find an exhortation given to God's people in one part of the Holy Scripture, we almost invariably find the very thing which they are exhorted to do guaranteed to them and provided for them in some other part of the same blessed volume. This morning my text was, “Keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” Now, this evening we have the Promise upon which we must rest if we desire to fulfill the precept—“The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

This evening we shall use another figure distinct from the one used in the morning of *the reservoir*. We shall use the figure of a *fortress* which is to be kept. And the Promise says that it shall be kept—kept by “the peace of God which passes all understanding through Christ Jesus.”

Inasmuch as the heart is the most important part of man—for out of it are the issues of life—it would be natural to expect that Satan, when he intended to do mischief to manhood, would be sure to make his strongest and most perpetual attacks upon the heart. What we might have guessed in wisdom is certainly true in experience. For although Satan will tempt and try us in every way, though every gate of the town of Mansoul may be battered, though against every part of the walls thereof he will be sure to bring out his great guns—the place against which he levels his deadliest malice and his most furious strength is the *heart*. Into the heart, already of itself evil enough, he thrusts the seeds of every evil thing and does his utmost to make it a den of unclean birds, a garden of poisonous trees, a river flowing with destructive water.

Hence, again, arises the second necessity that we should be doubly cautious in keeping the heart with all diligence. For if, on the one hand, it is the most important, and, on the other hand, Satan, knowing this, makes his most furious and determined attacks against it, then, with double force the exhortation comes, “Keep your heart with all diligence.” And the Promise also becomes doubly sweet from the very fact of the dou-

ble danger—the Promise which says, “The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We shall notice, first of all, *that which keeps the heart and mind*. Secondly, we shall note how to obtain it—for we are to understand this Promise as connected with certain precepts which come before it. And then, when we have noted this, we shall try to show *how it is true that the peace of God does keep the mind free from the attacks of Satan, or delivers it from those attacks when they are made*.

I. First, then, Beloved, the preservation which God in this Promise confers upon the saints is “THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING,” to keep us through Jesus Christ. It is called PEACE. And we are to understand this in a double sense. There is a peace of God which exists between the child of God and God his Judge—a peace which may be truly said to pass all understanding. Jesus Christ has offered so all-sufficient a satisfaction for all the claims of injured justice that now God has no fault to find with His children. “He sees no sin in Jacob nor iniquity in Israel.” Nor is He angry with them on account of their sins—a peace unbroken and unspeakable being established by the atonement which Christ has made on their behalf.

Hence flows a peace experienced in the conscience which is the second part of this peace of God. For, when the conscience sees that God is satisfied and is no longer at war with it, then it also becomes satisfied with *man*. And Conscience, which was wont to be a great disturber of the peace of the heart now gives its verdict of acquittal and the heart sleeps in the arms of Conscience and finds a quiet resting place there. Against the child of God Conscience brings no accusation—or if it brings the accusation, it is but a gentle one—gentle chiding of a loving friend who hints that we have done amiss and that we had better change—but does not afterwards thunder in our ears the threat of a penalty. Conscience knows full well that peace is made between the soul and God and, therefore, it does not hint that there is anything else but joy and peace to be looked forward to by the Believer.

Do we understand anything of this double peace? Let us pause here and ask ourselves a question upon this doctrinal part of the matter. Let us make it an experimental question with our own hearts. “Come, my Soul, are you at peace with God? Have you seen your pardon signed and sealed with the Redeemer’s blood? Come, answer this, my Heart—have you cast your sins upon the head of Christ and have you seen them all washed away in the crimson streams of His blood? Can you feel that now there is a lasting peace between yourself and God so that, come what may God shall not be angry with you—shall not condemn you—shall not consume you in His wrath, nor crush you in His hot displeasure?”

If it is so, then, my Heart, you can scarcely need to stop and ask the second question—Is my conscience at peace? For, if my heart condemns me not, God is greater than my heart and does know all things. If my conscience bears witness with me that I am a partaker of the precious grace of salvation, then happy am I! I am one of those to whom God has given the peace which passes all understanding. Now, why is this called “the peace of God”?

We suppose it is because it comes *from* God—because it was planned *by* God—because God gave His Son to make the peace—because God gives His Spirit to give the peace in the conscience—because, indeed, it is God Himself in the soul, reconciled to man, whose is the peace. And while it is true that this man shall have the peace—even the Man-Christ, yet we know it is because He was the God-Christ that He was our peace. And hence we may clearly perceive how Godhead is mixed up with the peace which we enjoy with our Maker and with our conscience.

Then we are told that it is “the peace of God which passes all understanding.” What does He mean by this? He means such a peace that the understanding can never comprehend—can never attain to. The understanding of mere carnal man can never comprehend this peace. He who tries with a philosophic look to discover the secret of the Christian’s peace, finds himself in a maze. “I know not how it is, nor why it is,” says he. “I see these men hunted through the earth. I turn the pages of history and I find them hunted to their graves. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted and tormented. Yet I also see upon the Christian’s brow a calm serenity. I cannot understand this. I do not know what it is. I know that I myself, even in my merriest moments, am disturbed. That when my enjoyments run the highest, still there are waves of doubt and fear across my mind. Then why is this? How is it that the Christian can attain a rest so calm, so peaceful and so quiet?”

Understanding can never get to that peace which the Christian has attained. The philosopher may teach us much. He can never give us rules whereby to reach the peace that Christians have in their conscience. Diogenes may tell us to do without everything and may live in his tub and then think himself happier than Alexander and that he enjoys peace. But we look upon the poor creature after all and though we may be astonished at his courage, yet we are obliged to despise his folly. We do not believe that even when he had dispensed with everything that he possessed a quiet of mind, a total and entire peace such as the true Believer can enjoy.

We find the greatest philosophers of old laying down maxims for life which they thought would certainly promote happiness. We find that they were not always able to practice them themselves. And many of their disciples, when they labored hard to put them in execution, found them-

selves encumbered with impossible rules to accomplish impossible objects. But the Christian man does with faith what a man can never do himself. While the poor understanding is climbing up the crags, Faith stands on the summit. While the poor understanding is getting into a calm atmosphere, Faith flies aloft and mounts higher than the storm and then looks down on the valley and smiles while the tempest blows beneath its feet. Faith goes further than understanding and the peace which the Christian enjoys is one which the worldling cannot comprehend and cannot himself attain. "The peace of God which passes all understanding."

And this peace is said to "keep the mind through Christ Jesus." Without Christ Jesus this peace would not exist. Without Christ Jesus this peace, even where it *has* existed, cannot be *maintained*. Daily visits from the Savior, continual looking by the eye of faith to Him that bled upon the Cross, continual drawings from His ever-flowing fountain make this peace broad and long and enduring. But take Christ Jesus, the channel of our peace away, and it fades and dies and droops and comes to nothing. A Christian has no peace with God except through the atonement of his Lord Jesus Christ.

I have thus gone over what some will call the dry doctrinal part of the subject—"The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." I cannot show you what that peace is if you have never felt it. But yet I think I could tell you where to look for it, for I have sometimes seen it. I have seen the Christian man in the depths of poverty—when he lived from hand to mouth and scarcely knew where he should find the next meal—still with his mind unruffled, calm and quiet. If he had been as rich as an Indian prince, yet could he not have had less care. If he had been told that his bread should always come to his door and the stream which ran hard by should never dry. If he had been quite sure that ravens would bring him bread and meat in the morning and again in the evening—he would not have been one whit more calm.

There is his neighbor on the other side of the street not half so poor, but wearied from morning to night—working his fingers to the bone—bringing himself to the grave with anxiety. But this poor good man, after having industriously labored, though he found he had gained little with all his toil, yet has sanctified his little by prayer and has thanked his Father for what he had. And though he does not know whether he will have more, still he trusted in God and declared that his faith should not fail him, though Providence should run to a lower ebb than he had ever seen. *There* is "the peace of God which passes all understanding."

I have seen that peace, too, in the case of those who have lost their friends. There is a Peridot—her much loved husband lies in the coffin. She

is soon to part with him. Parted with him she has before. But now, of his poor clay-cold corpse—even of *that* she has to be bereaved. She looks upon it for the last time and her heart is heavy. For herself and her children she wonders how they shall be provided for. That broad tree that once sheltered them from the sunbeam has been cut down. Now, she thinks, there is a broad Heaven above her head and her Maker is her Husband. The fatherless children are left with God for their Father and the widow is trusting in Him.

With tears in her eyes she still looks up and she says, “Lord, You have given and You have taken away, blessed be Your name.” Her husband is carried to the tomb. She does not smile. And though she weeps there is a calm composure on her brow and she tells you she would not have it otherwise, even if she could—for Jehovah’s will is right. There, again, is “the peace of God that passes all understanding.”

Picture another man. There is Martin Luther standing up in the midst of the Diet of Worms. There are the kings and the princes and there are the bloodhounds of Rome with their tongues thirsting for his blood. There is Martin rising in the morning as comfortable as possible and he goes to the Diet and delivers himself of the Truth. He solemnly declares that the things which he has spoken are the things which he believes, and God helping him, he will stand by them till the last. There is his life in his hands. They have him entirely in their power. The smell of John Huss’ corpse has not yet passed away and he recollects that princes before this have violated their words. But there he stands, calm and quiet. He fears no man, for he has nothing to fear. “The peace of God which passes all understanding keeps his heart and mind through Jesus Christ.”

There is another scene. There is John Bradford in Newgate. He is to be burned the next morning in Smithfield and he swings himself on the bedpost in very glee and delights—for tomorrow is his wedding day! And he says to another, “Fine shining we shall make tomorrow, when the flame is kindled.” And he smiles and laughs and enjoys the very thought that he is about to wear the bloodied crown of martyrdom. Is Bradford mad! Ah, no. But he has got the peace of God that passes all understanding.

But perhaps the most beautiful, as well as the most common illustration of this great peace is the dying bed of the Believer. Oh, Brethren, you have seen this sometimes—that calm, quiet serenity. You have said, Lord, let us die with him. It has been so good to be in that solitary chamber where all was quiet and so still. All the world shut out and Heaven shut in. And the poor heart nearing its God and far away from all its past burdens and griefs—now nearing the portals of eternal bliss. And you have said, “How is this? Is not death a black and grim thing? Are not the terrors of the grave things which make the strong man tremble?”

Oh yes, they are. But, then, this one has the “peace of God which passes all understanding.” However, if you want to know about this, you must be a child of God and possess it yourselves. And when you have once felt it, when you can stand calm amid the bewildering cry, confident of victory—when you can sing in the midst of the storm, when you can smile when surrounded by adversity and can trust your God, be your way ever so rough, ever so stormy—when you can always repose confidence in the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah—then it is you will have “the peace of God which passes all understanding.”

II. Thus we have discussed the first point, what is this peace? Now the second thing was, how Is THIS PEACE TO BE OBTAINED? You will note that although this is a Promise, it has *precepts preceding* and it is only by the practice of the precepts that we can get the Promise. Turn now to the fourth verse and you will see the first rule and regulation for getting peace. Christian, would you enjoy “the peace of God which passes all understanding”?

The first thing you have to do is to “rejoice evermore.” The man who never rejoices but who is always sorrowing and groaning and crying—the man who forgets his God, who forgets the fullness of Jehovah and is always murmuring concerning the trials of the road and the infirmities of the flesh—that man will lose the prospect of enjoying a peace that passes all understanding. Cultivate, my Friends, a cheerful disposition. Endeavor, as much as lies in you, always to bear a smile about with you. Recollect that this is as much a *command* of God as that one which says, “You shall love the Lord with all your heart.” Rejoice evermore is one of God’s commands. And it is your duty, as well as your privilege, to try and practice it. Not to rejoice, remember, is a *sin*. To rejoice is a duty and such a duty that the richest fruits and the best rewards are appended to it.

Rejoice always and then the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds. Many of us, by giving way to disastrous doubts, spoil our peace. It is as I once remember to have heard a woman say, when I was passing down a lane. A child stood crying at the door and I heard her calling out, “Ah, you are crying for nothing. I will give you something to cry for.” Brethren, it is often so with God’s children. They get to crying for nothing. They have a miserable disposition, or a turn of mind always making miseries for themselves and thus they have something to cry for. Their peace is disturbed. Some sad trouble comes. God hides His face and then they lose their peace. But keep on singing, even when the sun does not keep on shining. Keep a song for all weathers. Get a joy that will stand clouds and storms. And then, when you know how always to rejoice, you shall have this peace.

The next precept is, “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” If you would have peace of mind, be moderate. Merchant, you cannot push that speculation too far and then have peace of mind. Young man, you cannot be so fast in trying to rise in the world and yet have the peace of God which passes all understanding. You must be moderate and when you have got a moderation in your desires, then you shall have peace. Sir, you with the red cheek, you must be moderate in your anger. You must not be quite so fast in flying into a passion with your fellows and not quite so long in getting cool again—because the angry man cannot have peace in his conscience.

Be moderate in that. Let your vengeance stay itself. But if you give way to wrath—if you are angry—“be you angry and sin not.” Be moderate in this. Be moderate in all things which you undertake, Christian—moderate in your expectations. Blessed is he who expects little, for he shall have but little disappointment. Remember never to set your desires very high. He that has aspirations to the moon, will be disappointed if he only reaches half as high. Whereas, if he had aspired lower, he would be agreeably disappointed when he found himself mounting higher than he first expected. Keep moderation, whatsoever you do, in all things—but in your desires after God. And so shall you obey the second precept and get the glimpse of this Promise—“The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.”

The last precept that you have to obey is, “be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication make known your requests unto God.” You cannot have peace unless you turn your troubles up. You have no place in which to pour your troubles except the ear of God. If you tell them to your friends, you but put your troubles out a moment and they will return again. If you tell them to God, you put your troubles into the grave. They will never rise again when you have committed them to Him. If you roll your burden anywhere else it will roll back again, just like the stone of Sisyphus. But just roll your burden unto God and you have rolled it into a great deep, out of which it will never by any possibility rise.

Cast your troubles where you have cast your sins. You have cast your sins into the depth of the sea, there cast your troubles also. Never keep a trouble half an hour on your own mind before you tell it to God. As soon as the trouble comes—quick, the first thing—tell it to your Father. Remember, that the longer you take telling your trouble to God the more your peace will be impaired. The longer the frost lasts, the more thick the ponds will be frozen. Your frost will last till you go to the sun. And when you go to God—the Sun—then your frost will soon become a thaw and your troubles will melt away. But do not be long because the longer you are in waiting the longer will your trouble be in thawing afterwards. Wait a

long while till your trouble gets frozen thick and firm and it will take many a day of prayer to get your trouble thawed again.

Away to the Throne as quick as ever you can. Do as the child did when he ran and told his mother as soon as his little trouble happened to him. Run and tell your Father the first moment you are in affliction. Do this in *everything*, in every little thing—"in everything by prayer and supplication make known your wants unto God." Take your husband's headache, take your children's sicknesses, take all things. Little family troubles as well as great commercial trials—take them all to God. Pour then all out at once. And so by an obedient practice of this command in everything making known your wants unto God, you shall preserve that peace "which shall keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ."

These, then, are the precepts. May God the Holy Spirit enable us to obey them and we shall then have the continual peace of God.

III. Now, the third thing was to show HOW THE PEACE, which I attempted to describe in the first place, KEEPS THE HEART. You will clearly see how this peace will keep the heart full. That man who has continued peace with God will not have an empty heart. He feels that God has done so much for him that he must love his God. The eternal basis of his peace lies in Divine *election*—the solid pillars of his peace, the incarnation of Christ—His righteousness, His death—the climax of his peace, the Heaven hereafter where his joy and his peace shall be consummated. All these are subjects for grateful reflection and will, when meditated upon, cause more love. Now, where much love is, there is a large heart and a full one. Keep, then, this peace with God and you will keep your heart full to the brim.

And remember that in proportion to the fullness of your heart will be the fullness of your life. Be empty-hearted and your life will be a meager, skeleton existence. Be full-hearted and your life will be full, fleshy, gigantic, strong—a thing that will tell the whole world. Keep, then, your peace with God firm within you. Keep close to this, that Jesus Christ has made peace between you and God. And keep your conscience still. Then shall your heart be full and your soul strong to do your Master's work.

Keep your peace with God. This will keep your heart pure. You will say, if temptation comes, "What do you offer me? You offer me pleasure—lo, I have got it. You offer me gold—lo, I have got it. All things are mine, the gift of God. I have a city that hands have not made, 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' I will not barter this for your poor gold." "I will give you honor," says Satan. "I have honor enough," says the peaceful heart. "God will honor me in the last great day of His account." "I will give you everything that you can desire," says Satan. "I have everything that I can desire," says the Christian—

"I want nothing on earth;

***Happy in my Savior's love,
I am at peace with God.***

“Away, then, Satan! While I am at peace with God, I am a match for all your temptations. You offer me silver—I have gold. You bring before me the riches of the earth—I have something more substantial than these. Away, Tempter of human kind! Away, you Fiend! Your temptations and blandishments are lost on one who has peace with God.” This peace, too, will keep the heart undivided. He who has peace with God will set his whole heart on God. “Oh,” he says, “why should I go to seek anything else on earth, now that I have found my rest in God? As the bird by wandering, so should I be if I went elsewhere.

“I have found a fountain. Why should I go and drink at the broken cistern that will hold no water? I lean on the arm of my Beloved. Why should I rest on the arm of another? I know that religion is a thing worth my following. Why should I leave the pure snows of Lebanon to follow something else? I know and feel that religion is rich when it brings forth to me a hundredfold the fruits of peace. Why should I go and sow elsewhere? I will be like the maiden Ruth, I will stop in the fields of Boaz. Here will I ever stay and never wander.”

Again, this peace keeps the heart rich. My hearers will notice that I am passing over the heads of the morning's discourse and showing how this peace fulfils the requisites that we thought necessary in the morning. Peace with God keeps the heart rich. The man who doubts and is distressed has got a poor heart. It is a heart that has nothing in it. But when a man has peace with God, his heart is rich. If I am at peace with God I am enabled to go where I can get riches. The Throne is the place where God gives riches. If I am at peace with Him, then I can have access with boldness.

Meditation is another and a great field of enrichment. When my heart is at peace with God, then I can enjoy meditation. But if I have not peace with God, then I cannot meditate profitably. For “the birds come down on the sacrifice,” and I cannot drive them away unless my soul is at peace with God. Hearing the Word is another way of getting rich. If my mind is disturbed I cannot hear the Word with profit. If I have to bring my family into the Chapel, if I have to bring my business, my ships, or my horses, I cannot hear. When I have cows and dogs and horses in the pew, I cannot hear the Gospel preached. When I have got a whole week's business and a ledger on my heart, I cannot hear.

But when I have peace—peace concerning all things and rest in my Father's will—then I can hear with pleasure and every Word of the Gospel is profitable to me. For my mouth is empty and I can fill it with the heavenly treasures of His Word. So you see, the peace of God is a soul-enriching

thing. And because it keeps the heart rich, thus it is it keeps the heart and mind through Jesus Christ our Lord. I need hardly say that the peace of God fulfils the only other requisite which I did not mention, because it was unnecessary to do so. It keeps the heart always peaceable. Of course, peace makes it full of peace—peace like a river and righteousness like the waves of the sea.

Now, then, Brothers and Sisters, it is of the first importance that you keep your heart right. You cannot keep your heart right but by one way. That one way is by getting, maintaining and enjoying peace of God to your own conscience. I beseech you then, you that are professors of religion, do not let this night pass over your heads till you have a confident assurance that you are now the possessor of the peace of God. For let me tell you, if you go out to the world Monday morning without first having peace with God in your own conscience, you will not be able to keep your heart during the week. If this night, before you rest, you could say that with God as well as all the world you are at peace, you may go out tomorrow and whatever your business I am not afraid for you.

You are more than a match for all the temptations to false doctrine, to false living, or to false speech that may meet you. For he that has peace with God is armed. He is covered from head to foot in a panoply. The arrow may fly against it but it cannot pierce it, for peace with God is a mail so strong that the broad sword of Satan itself may be broken in two before it can pierce the flesh. Oh, take care that you are at peace with God! For if you are not, you ride forth to tomorrow's fight unarmed, naked. And God help the man that is unarmed when he has to fight with Hell and earth. Oh, be not foolish—"Put on the whole armor of God" and then be confident, for you need not fear.

As for the rest of you, you cannot have peace with God because "there is no peace, says my God, to the wicked." How shall I address you? As I said this morning, I cannot exhort you to keep your hearts. My best advice to you is to get rid of your heart. And as soon as you can, get new ones. Your prayer should be, "Lord, take away my stony heart and give me a heart of flesh." But though I cannot address you from this text, I may address you from another. Though your heart is bad, there is another heart that is good. And the goodness of that heart is a ground of exhortation to you.

You remember Christ said, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden." And then His argument would come to this, "for I am meek and lowly of heart and you shall find rest to your souls." Your heart is proud and high and black and lustful. But look at Christ's heart—it is meek and lowly. *There* is your encouragement! Do you feel tonight your sin? Christ is meek. If you come to Him He will not spurn you. Do you feel

your insignificance and worthlessness? Christ is lowly. He will not despise you. If Christ's heart were like your heart, you would be damned for sure. But Christ's heart is not as your heart, nor His ways like your ways. I can see no hope for you when I look into your hearts—but I can see plenty of hope when I look into Christ's heart.

Oh, think of His blessed heart! And if you go home tonight, by God's grace, sad and sorrowful, under a sense of sin—when you go to your chamber, shut your door—you need not be afraid—and talk to that heart so meek and lowly. And though your words be ungrammatical and your sentences incoherent, He will hear and answer you from Heaven, His dwelling place. And when He hears, He will forgive and accept, for His own name's sake.

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CONTENTMENT

NO. 320

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, MARCH 25, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“For I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.”
Philippians 4:11.***

THE Apostle Paul was a very learned man, but not the least among his manifold acquisitions in science was this—he had learned to be content. Such learning is far better than much that is acquired in the schools. Their learning may look studiously back on the past, but too often those who cull the relics of antiquity with enthusiasm are thoughtless about the present and neglect the practical duties of daily life. Their learning may open up dead languages to those who will never derive any living benefit from them. Far better the learning of the Apostle. It was a thing of ever-present utility and alike serviceable for all generations—one of the rarest—but one of the most desirable accomplishments.

I put the senior wrangler and the most learned of our Cambridge men in the lowest form, compared with this learned Apostle, for this surely is the highest degree in humanities to which a man can possibly attain—to have learned in whatever state he is—to be content. You will see at once from reading the text, upon the very surface, that contentment in all states is not a natural propensity of man. Ill weeds grow apace—covetousness, discontent and murmuring—are as natural to man as thorns are to the soil. You have no need to sow thistles and brambles. They come up naturally enough, because they are native to earth, upon which rests the curse. So you have no need to teach men to complain, they complain fast enough without any education.

But the precious things of the earth must be cultivated. If we would have wheat, we must plow and sow. If we want flowers, there must be the garden and all the gardener’s care. Now, contentment is one of the flowers of Heaven and if we would have it, it must be cultivated. It will not grow in us by nature. It is the new nature, alone, that can produce it and even then we must be specially careful and watchful that we maintain and cultivate the grace which God has sown in it.

Paul says, “I have learned to be content.” As much as to say he did not know how at one time. It do him some pains to attain to the mystery of that great truth. No doubt he sometimes thought he had learned and then broke down, Frequently too, like boys at school, he had his knuckles rapped. Frequently he found that it was not easy learning this task and when at last he had attained unto it and could say, “I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content,” he was an old gray-headed man upon the borders of the grave—a poor prisoner shut up in Nero’s dungeon at Rome.

We, my Brethren, might well be willing to endure Paul’s infirmities and share the cold dungeon with him, if we, too, might by any means attain

unto such a degree of contentment. Do not indulge, any of you, the silly notion that you can be contented without learning, or learn without discipline. It is not a power that may be exercised naturally, but a science to be acquired gradually. The very words of the text might suggest this, even if we did not know it from experience. We need not be taught to rumor, but we must be taught to acquiesce in the will and good pleasure of the Lord our God. When the Apostle had uttered these words, he immediately gave a commentary upon them. Read the 12th verse, "I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry both to abound and to suffer need."

Notice first, that the Apostle said he knew how to be abased. A wonderful knowledge this. When all men honor us, then we may very well be content. But when the finger of scorn is pointed at us, when our character is held in ill repute and men hiss us by the wayside, it requires much Gospel knowledge to be able to endure that with patience and with cheerfulness. When we are increasing and growing in rank and honor and human esteem, it is easy work to be contented. But when we have to say with John the Baptist, "I must decrease," or when we see some other servant advanced to our place and another man bearing the palm we had longed to hold, it is not easy to sit still and without an envious feeling cry with Moses, "Would to God that all the Lord's servants were Prophets."

To hear another man praised at your own expense, to find your own virtues made as a foil to set forth the superior excellence of some new rival—this, I say, is beyond human nature—to be able to bear it with joy and thankfulness and to bless God. There must be something noble in the heart of the man who is able to lay all his honors down as willingly as he took them up. When he can as cheerfully submit himself to Christ to humble him, as to lift him up and seat him upon a throne. And yet, my Brethren, we have not anyone of us learned what the Apostle knew, if we are not as ready to glorify Christ by shame, by ignominy and by reproach, as by honor and by esteem among men. We must be ready to give up everything for him. We must be willing to go downwards, in order that Christ's name may ascend upwards and be the better known and glorified among men. "I know how to be abased," says the Apostle.

His second piece of knowledge is equally valuable, "I know how to abound." There are a great many men that know a little about how to be abased, that do not know at all how to abound. When they are put down into the pit with Joseph, they look up and see the starry promise and they hope for an escape. But when they are put on the top of a pinnacle, their heads grow dizzy and they are ready to fall. When they were poor they used to battle it, as one of our great national poets has said—

***"Yet many things, impossible to thought,
Have been by need to full perfection brought.
The daring of the soul proceeds from thence,
Sharpness of wit and active diligence;
Prudence at once and fortitude it gives;
And, if in patience taken, mends our lives."***

But mark the same men after success has crowned their struggles—their troubles are over. They are rich and increased with goods. And have

you not often seen a man who has sprung up from nothing to wealth—how purse-proud he becomes, how vain, how intolerant? Nobody would have thought that man ever kept a shop. You would not believe that man at any time ever used to sell a pound of candles, would you? He is so great in his own eyes, that one would have thought the blood of all the Caesars must flow in his veins. He does not know his old acquaintances. The familiar friend of other days he now passes by with scarce a nod of recognition.

The man does not know how to abound. He has grown proud. He is exalted above measure. There have been men who have been lifted up for a season to popularity in the Church. They have preached successfully and done some mighty work. For this the people have honored them, and rightly so. But then they have become tyrants. They have lusted after authority. They have looked down contemptuously upon everybody else, as if other men were small pigmies and they were huge giants. Their conduct has been intolerable and they have soon been cast down from their high places, because they did not know how to abound.

There was once a square piece of paper put up into George Whitfield's pulpit, by way of a notice, to this effect—"A young man who has lately inherited a large fortune, requests the prayers of the congregation." Right well was the prayer asked, for when we go up the hill we need prayer that we may be kept steady. Going down the hill of fortune there is not half the fear of stumbling. The Christian far oftener disgraces his profession in prosperity than when he is being abased.

There is another danger—the danger of growing worldly. When a man finds that his wealth increases it is wonderful how gold will stick to his fingers. The man who had just enough thought if he had more than he required he would be exceedingly liberal. With a shilling purse he had a guinea heart—but now with a guinea purse he has a shilling heart. He finds that the money adheres and he cannot get it off.

You have heard of the spider that is called a "money spinner." I do not know why it is called so, except that it is one of the sort of spiders you cannot get off your fingers. It gets on one hand, then on the other hand, then on your sleeve. It is here and there. You cannot get rid of it unless you crush it outright—so is it with many who abound.

Gold is a good thing when put to use—the strength, the sinews of commerce and of charity—but it is a bad thing in the heart and begets "foul-cankering rust." Gold is a good thing to stand on, but a bad thing to have about one's loins, or over one's head. It matters not, though it be precious earth with which a man is buried alive. Oh, how many Christians have there been who seemed as if they were destroyed by their wealth! What leanness of soul and neglect of spiritual things have been brought on through the very mercies and bounties of God!

Yet this is not a matter of necessity, for the Apostle Paul tells us that he knew how to abound. When he had much, he knew how to use it. He had asked of God that he might be kept humble—that when he had a full sail he might have plenty of ballast—that when his cup ran over he might not let it run to waste—that in his time of plenty he might be ready to give to those that needed—and that as a faithful steward he might hold all he

had at the disposal of his Lord. This is Divine learning. "I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound."

The Apostle goes on to say, "everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry." It is a Divine lesson, let me say, to know how to be full. For the Israelites were full once and while the flesh was yet in their mouths the wrath of God came upon them. And there have been many that have asked for mercies that they might satisfy their own heart's lust. As it is written, "the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." Fullness of bread has often made fullness of blood and that has brought on wantonness of spirit. When men have too much of God's mercies—strange that we should have to say this, and yet it is a great fact—when men have much of God's providential mercies—it often happens that they have but little of God's grace and little gratitude for the bounties they have received.

They are full and they forget God. Satisfied with earth, they are content to do without Heaven. Rest assured, my dear Hearers, it is harder to know how to be full than it is to know how to be hungry. To know how to be hungry is a sharp lesson, but to know how to be full is the harder lesson after all. So desperate is the tendency of human nature to pride and forgetfulness of God! As soon as ever we have a double stock of manna and begin to hoard it, it breeds worms and becomes a stench in the nostrils of God. Take care that you ask in your prayers that God would teach you how to be full.

The Apostle knew still further how to experience the two extremes of fullness and hunger. What a trial that is! To have one day a path strewn with mercies and the next day to find the soil beneath you barren of every comfort. I can readily imagine the poor man being contented in his poverty, for he has been accustomed to it. He is like a bird that has been born in a cage and does not know what liberty means. But for a man who has had much of this world's goods and thus has been full—to be brought to absolute penury—he is like the bird that once soared on highest wing but is now encaged. Those poor larks you sometimes see in the shops always seem as if they would be looking up and they are constantly pecking at the wires, fluttering their wings and wanting to fly away.

So will it be with you unless grace prevents it. If you have been rich and are brought down to be poor, you will find it hard to know "how to be hungry." Indeed, my Brethren, it must be a sharp lesson. We complain sometimes of the poor, that they murmur. Ah, we should murmur a great deal more than they do, if their lot fell to us. To sit down at the table where there is nothing to eat and five or six little children crying for bread, were enough to break the father's heart. Or for the mother, when her husband has been carried to the tomb—to gaze round on the gloom-stricken home—press her new-born infant to her bosom and look upon the others, with widowed heart remembering that they are without a father to seek their livelihood. Oh, it must need much grace to know how to be hungry.

And for the man who has lost a situation and has been walking all over London—perhaps a thousand miles—to get a place and he cannot get one, to come home and know that when he faces his wife, her first question

will be “Have you brought home any bread?” “Have you found anything to do?” and to have to tell her “No. There have been no doors open to me.” It is hard to prove hunger and bear it patiently.

I have had to admire and look with a sort of reverence on some of the members of this Church, when I have happened to hear afterwards of their privations. They would not tell anyone. And they would not come to me. But they endured their pangs in secret, struggled heroically through all their difficulties and dangers and came out more than conquerors. Ah, Brothers and Sisters, it looks an easy lesson when you come to see it in a book but it is not quite so easy when you come to put it in practice. It is hard to know how to be full, but it is a sharp thing to know how to be hungry. Our Apostle had learned both—both “how to abound and to suffer need.”

Having thus expounded to you the Apostle Paul’s own commentary, in enlarging upon the words of my text let me return to the passage itself. You may now ask by what course of study did he acquire this peaceful frame of mind? And of one thing we may be quite certain—it was by no stoic process of self-government but simply and exclusively by faith in the Son of God.

You may easily imagine a nobleman whose home is the abode of luxury traveling through foreign parts for purposes of scientific discovery, or going forth to command some military expedition in the service of his country. In either case he may be well content with his fare and feel that there is nothing to repine at. And why? Because he had no right to expect anything better. Not because it bore any comparison with his rank, his fortune, or his social position at home.

So our Apostle. He had said, “Our conversation or citizenship is in Heaven.” Traveling through earth as a pilgrim and stranger he was content to take travelers fare. Or entering the battle field, he had no ground of complaint that perils and distresses should sometimes encircle his path, while at other times a truce gave him some peaceful and pleasing intervals.

Again—calling attention to the text, you will notice that the word “herewith” is written in italics. If therefore we do not omit it, we need not lay upon it a heavy stress in the interpretation. There is nothing in hunger, or thirst, or nakedness, or peril to invite our contentment. It we are content under such circumstances, it must be from higher motives than our condition itself affords. Hunger is a sharp thorn when in the hands of stern necessity. But hunger may be voluntarily endured for many an hour when conscience makes a man willing to fast. Reproach may have a bitter fang, but it can be bravely endured when I am animated by a sense of the justice of my cause.

Now Paul counted that all the ills which befell him were just incident to the service of his Lord. So for the love he had for the name of Jesus, the hardships of servitude or self-mortification sat lightly on his shoulders and were brooked cheerily by his heart. There is yet a third reason why Paul was content. I will illustrate it. Many an old veteran takes great pleasure in recounting the dangers and sufferings of his past life. He looks back with more than contentment, oftentimes with self-congratulation,

upon the terrible dangers and distresses of his heroic career. But the smile that lights his eyes, and the pride that sits on his lofty wrinkled brow as he recounts his stories, were not there when he was in the midst of the scenes he is now describing. It is only since the dangers are *past* that the fears have subsided and the issue is complete, that his enthusiasm has been kindled to a flame.

But Paul stood on vantage ground here. "In all these things" said he, "we are more than conquerors." Witness his voyage toward Rome. When the ship in which he sailed was caught and driven before a tempestuous wind. When darkness veiled the skies. When neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, when hope failed every heart—he alone bore up with manly courage. And why? The angel of God stood by him and said, Fear not. His faith was predestinarian, and as such he had as much peaceful contentment in his breast while the tribulation lasted as when it had closed.

And now I want to commend the lesson of my text very briefly to the rich. A little more at length to the poor and then with sympathy and counsel to the sick—those who are sorely tried in their persons by suffering.

First, to the rich. The Apostle Paul says, "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." Now some of you have, as far as your circumstances are concerned, all that the heart can wish. God has placed you in such a position that you have not to toil with your hands and in the sweat of your face gain a livelihood. You will perhaps think that any exhortation to you to be contented is needless. Alas, my Brethren, a man may be very discontented though he is very rich. It is quite as possible for discontent to sit on the throne, as it is to sit on a chair—a poor broken-backed chair in a hovel.

Remember that a man's contentment is in his *mind*, not in the extent of his possessions. Alexander, with all the world at his feet, cries for another world to conquer. He is sorry because there are not other countries into which he may carry his victorious arms and wade up to his loins in the blood of his fellow men—to slake the thirst of his insatiable ambition. To you who are rich, it is necessary that we give the same exhortation as to the poor—"learn to be content."

Many a rich man who has an estate is not satisfied because there is a little corner-piece of ground that belongs to his neighbor, like Naboth's vineyard that the king of Israel needed that he might make a garden of herbs by his palace. "What matters it," says he, "though I have all these acres, unless I can have Naboth's vineyard?" Surely a king should have been ashamed to crave that paltry half-acre of a poor man's patrimony. But yet so it is—men with vast estates which they are scarcely able to ride over may have that old horseleech in their hearts, which always cries, "Give, give! more, more!"

They thought when they had but little, that if they had ten thousand pounds it would be enough. They have it—they want twenty thousand pounds. When they have that, they still want more. Yes, and if you had it, it would be, "A trifle more!" So would it continually be. As your possessions increased, so would the host of acquiring property increase. We

must, then, press upon the rich this exhortation—"Learn in your state, therewith to be content."

Besides, there is another danger that frequently awaits the rich man. When he has enough wealth and property, he has not always enough honor. If the queen would but make him a justice of the peace for the county, how glorious would my lord become! That done, he will never be satisfied till he is a knight. And if he were a knight, he would never be content until he became a baron. And my lord would never be satisfied till he was an earl. Nor would he even then be quite content unless he could be a duke. Nor would he be quite satisfied, I think then, unless there were a kingdom for him somewhere.

Men are not easily satisfied with honor. The world may bow down at a man's feet. Then he will ask the world to get up and bow again and so keep on bowing forever. For the lust of honor is impossible to satisfy. Man must be honored and though king Ahasuerus make Haman the first man in the empire, yet all this availed nothing, so long as Mordecai in the gate does not bow down to my lord Haman. Oh, learn, Brethren, in whatever state you are, therewith to be content.

And here, let me speak to the elders and deacons of this Church. Brethren, learn to be content with the office you hold, not envious of any superior honor to exalt yourselves. I turn to myself. I turn to the ministry. I turn to all of us in our ranks and degrees in Christ's Church—we must be content with the honor God is pleased to confer upon us. No, let us think nothing of honor, but be content to give it all up, knowing that it is but a puff of breath after all. Let us be willing to be the servants of the Church and to serve them for nothing, if need be even without the reward of their thanks, if we but receive, at last, the right good sentence from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must learn, in whatever state we are, therewith to be content.

At a little more length I have to counsel the POOR. "I have learned," says the Apostle, "in whatever state I am therewith to be content." A very large number of my present congregation belong to those who labor hard and who, perhaps, without any unkindly reflection, may be put down in the catalogue of the poor. They have enough—barely enough and sometimes they are even reduced to straitness. Now remember, my dear Friends, you who are poor, there are two sorts of poor people in the world. There are the Lord's poor and there are the devil's poor.

As for the devil's poor—they become pauperized by their own idleness, their own vice, their own extravagance. I have nothing to say to them tonight. There is another class, the Lord's poor. They are poor through trying Providences, poor, but industrious—*laboring* to find all things honest in the sight of all men, but yet they still continue through an inscrutable Providence to be numbered with the poor and needy. You will excuse me, Brothers and Sisters, in exhorting you to be contented and yet, why should I ask excuse, since it is but a part of my office to stir you up to everything that is pure and lovely and of good report?

I beseech you, in your humble sphere, cultivate contentment. Be not idle. Seek, if you can, by superior skill, steady perseverance and temperate thriftiness, to raise your position. Be not so extravagant as to live en-

tirely without care or carefulness. For he that provides not for his own household with careful forethought, is worse than a heathen man and a publican. But at the same time, be contented. And where God has placed you, strive to adorn that position—give thanks to Him and bless His name.

And shall I give you some reasons for so doing? Remember, that if you are poor in this world so was your Lord. A Christian is a Believer who has fellowship with Christ—but a poor Christian has in his poverty a special vein of fellowship with Christ opened up to him. Your Master wore a peasant's garb, spoke a peasant's brogue. His companions were the toiling fishermen. He was not one who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. He knew what it was to be hungry and thirsty—no, He was poorer than you—for He had not where to lay His head. Let this console you. Why should a disciple be above his Master, or a servant above his Lord?

In your poverty, moreover, you are capable of communion with Christ. You can say, "Was Christ poor? Now I can sympathize with Him in His poverty. Was He weary and did He sit thus on the well? I am weary, too, and I can have fellowship with Christ in that sweat which He wiped from His brow." Some of your Brethren cannot go the length you can. It were wrong of them to attempt to do it, for *voluntary* poverty is voluntary wickedness. But inasmuch as God has made you poor, you have a facility for walking with Christ, where others cannot. You can go with Him through all the depths of care and woe and follow Him almost into the wilderness of temptation, when you are in your straits and difficulties for lack of bread. Let this always cheer and comfort you and make you happy in your poverty, because your Lord and Master is able to sympathize as well as to succor.

Permit me to remind you, again, that you should be contented because otherwise you will belie your own prayers. You kneel down in the morning and you say, "Your will be done!" Suppose you get up and want your own will and rebel against the dispensation of your heavenly Father—have you not made yourself out to be a hypocrite? The language of your prayer is at variance with the feeling of your heart. Let it always be sufficient for you to think that you are where God put you.

Have you not heard the story of the heroic boy on board the burning ship? When his father told him to stand in a certain part of the vessel, he would not move till his father bade him, but stood still when the ship was on fire. Though warned of his danger he held his ground. Until his father told him to move there would he stay. The ship was blown up and he perished in his fidelity. And shall a child be more faithful to an earthly parent than we are to our Father who is in Heaven? He has ordered everything for our good and can He be forgetful of us? Let us believe that whatever He appoints is best. Let us choose rather His will than our own. If there were two places, one a place of poverty and another a place of riches and honor—if I could have my choice, it should be my privilege to say, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

Another reflection suggests itself. If you are poor you should be well content with your position, because, depend upon it, it is the fittest for

you. Unerring wisdom cast your lot. If you were rich, you would not have so much grace as you have now. Perhaps God knew that if He did not make you poor, He would never get you to Heaven at all. And so He has kept you where you are, that He may conduct you there. Suppose there is a ship of large tonnage to be brought up a river and in one part of the river there is a shallow. Should someone ask, "Why does the captain steer his vessel through the deep part of the channel?" His answer would be, "Because I should not get it into harbor at all if I did not take it by this course."

So, it may be, you would remain aground and suffer shipwreck if your Divine Captain did not always make you trace the deepest part of the water and make you go where the current ran with the greatest speed. Some plants die if they are too much exposed. It may be that you are planted in some sheltered part of the garden where you do not get so much sun as you would like, but you are put there as a plant of His own righteous planting, that you may bring forth fruit unto perfection. Remember this—had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you are, God would have put you there. You are put by Him in the most suitable place and if you had had the picking of your lot half an hour afterwards, you would have come back and said, "Lord, choose for me, for I have not chosen the best after all."

You have heard, perhaps, the old fable in Aesop's, of the men that complained to Jupiter of their burdens and the god in anger bade them everyone get rid of his burden and take the one he would like best. They all came and proposed to do so. There was a man who had a lame leg and he thought he could do better if he had a blind eye. The man who had a blind eye thought he could do better if he had to bear poverty and not blindness, while the man who was poor thought poverty the worst of ills. He would not mind taking the sickness of the rich man if he could but have his riches.

So they all made a change. But the fable said that within an hour they were all back again, asking that they might have their own burdens—they found the original burden so much lighter than the one that was taken by their own selection. So would you find it. Then be content. You cannot better your lot. Take up your cross. You could not have a better trial than you have got. It is the best for you. It sifts you the most. It will do you the most good and prove the most effective means of making you perfect in every good word and work to the glory of God.

And surely, my dear Brethren, if I need to add another argument why you should be content, it were this—whatever your trouble, it is *not for long*. You may have no estate on earth, but you have a large one in Heaven and perhaps that estate in Heaven will be all the larger by reason of the poverty you have had to endure here below. You may have scarcely a house to cover your head, but you have a mansion in Heaven—a house not made with hands. Your head may often lie without a pillow, but it shall one day wear a crown. Your hands may be blistered with toil, but they shall sweep the strings of golden harps. You may have to go home often to a dinner of herbs, but there you shall eat bread in the kingdom of God and sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb—

***“The way may be rough, but it cannot be long,
So we’ll smooth it with hope and cheer it with song.”***

Yet a little while, the painful conflict will be over. Courage, Beloved, courage—glittering robes for conquerors. Courage, my Brothers and Sisters, courage, you may sooner become rich than you dream of. You may go home, perhaps, shivering in the cold March wind. But before morning dawns you may be in your Master’s bosom. Bear up with your lot, then, bear up with it. Let not the child of the King, who has an estate beyond the stars, murmur as others do. You are not so poor, after all, as they are who have no hope. Though you seem poor, you are rich. Do not let your poor neighbors see you disconsolate, but let them see in you that holy calmness, that sweet resignation, that gracious submission, which makes the poor man more glorious than he that wears a coronet and lifts the son of the soil up from his rustic habitation and sets him among the princes of the blood-royal of Heaven. Be happy, Beloved, be satisfied and content. God will have you to learn, in whatever state you may be, therewith to be content.

And now just one or two words to SUFFERERS. All men are born to sorrow, but some men are born to a double portion of it. As among trees, so among men, there are different classes. The cypress seems to have been created specially to stand at the grave’s head and be a weeper. And there are some men and some women that seem to have been made on purpose that they might weep. They are the Jeremiahs of our race, they do not often know an hour free from pain. Their poor weary bodies have dragged alone through a miserable life, diseased, perhaps, even from their birth, suffering some sorrowful infirmity that will not let them know even the gaiety and the frolic of youth.

They grow up to mourning and each year’s suffering drives its plowshare deeper into their brows and they are apt—and who can blame them?—they are apt to murmur and say, “Why am I thus? I cannot enjoy the pleasures of life as others can. Why is it?” “Oh,” says some poor Sister, “consumption has looked on me. That fell disease has bleached my cheek. Why should I have to come, scarcely able to breathe, up to the House of God and after sitting here, exhausted with the heat of this crowded sanctuary, retire to my home and prepare to engage in daily labor much too heavy for me? My very bed not yielding me repose and my nights seared with visions and frightened with dreams?—why is this?”

I say if these Brothers and Sisters mourn, we are not the men to blame them, because, when we are sick, we murmur more than they. I do admire patience, because I feel myself so incapable of it. When I see a man suffering and suffering bravely, I often feel small in his presence. I wonder, yes, I admire and love the man who can bear pain and say so little about it. We who are naturally healthy and strong, when we do suffer, we can hardly endure it.

Caesar pulses like a sick girl and so do some of the strongest when they are brought down. While those who are always enduring suffering bear it like heroes—martyrs to pain and yet not uttering a complaint. There was good John Calvin, all his life a victim of sickness. He was a complication of diseases. His visage, when he was a young man, as may, indeed, be judged of from the different portraits of him, exhibited the signs of decay.

And though he lived a long while, he seemed as if he were always going to die tomorrow. In the deepest of his agony, suffering from severe spinal pains and acute disease, the only cry he was ever known to utter was, "Domine usquequo?—How long, Lord? How long, Lord?"

A more repining expression than that he never used. Ah, but we get kicking against the pricks, murmuring and complaining. Brothers and Sisters, the exhortation to you is to be content. Your pains are sharp, yet, "His strokes are fewer than your crimes and lighter than your guilt." From the pains of Hell Christ has delivered you. Why should a living man complain? As long as you are out of Hell, gratitude should mingle with your groans.

Besides, remember that all these sufferings are less than His sufferings. "Can you not watch with your Lord one hour?" He hangs upon the tree with a world's miseries in His heart. Cannot you bear these lesser miseries that fall on you? Remember that all this chastening work for your good. They are all making you ready—every stroke of your Father's rod is bringing you nearer to perfection. The flame does not hurt you. It only refines you and takes away your dross. Remember, too, that your pain and sickness have been so greatly blessed to you already, that you never ought to rebel. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept Your Word." You have seen more of Heaven through your sickness than you ever could have seen if you had been well.

When we are well, we are like men in a clay hut, we cannot see much light. But when disease comes and shakes the hut and dashes down the mud and makes the wall tremble and there is a crevice or two, the sunlight of Heaven shines through. Sick men can see a great deal more of Glory than men do when they are in health. This hard heart of ours, when it is undisturbed, waxes gross. When the strings of our harp are all unstrung, they make better music than when they are best wound up.

There are some Heaven-notes that never come to us but when we are shut up in the darkened chamber. Grapes must be pressed before the wine can be distilled. Furnace work is necessary to make us of any use in the world. We should be just the poorest things that can be, if we did not sometimes get sick. Perhaps you that are frequently tried and frequently pained, would have been scarcely worth anything in the vineyard of Christ if it had not been for this trial of your faith. You have sharp filing, but if you had not been well filed, you would not have been an instrument fit for the Master's use, you would have grown so rusty.

If He had kept you always free from suffering you would have been often lacking those sweet cordials which the Physician of souls administers to His fainting patients. Be content, then, but I feel as if I hardly must say it, because I am not sick myself. When I came to you once, from the chamber of suffering, pale and thin and sick and ill, I remember addressing you from that text, that was blessed to some far away in America—"It needs be you are in heaviness through manifold temptations." Then I think I might very justly have said to you, "In whatever state you are, be content." But now that I am not suffering myself, I do not feel as if I can say it so boldly as I could then. But nevertheless, be it so, Brothers and

Sisters, try if you can and imitate this beloved Apostle Paul. "I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content."

Before I dismiss you there is this one other sentence. You that love not Christ, remember that you are the most miserable people in the world. Though you may think yourselves happy, there is no one of us that would change places with the best of you. When we are very sick, very poor and on the borders of the grave—if you were to step in and say to us "Come, I will change places with you. You shall have my gold and my silver, my riches and my health," and the like—there is not one living Christian that would change places with you. We would not stop to deliberate, we would give you at once our answer—"No, go your way and delight in what you have, but all your treasures are transient, they will soon pass away. We will keep our sufferings and you shall keep your gaudy toys."

Saints have no Hell but what they suffer here on earth. Sinners will have no Heaven but what they have here in this poor troublous world. We have our sufferings here and our Glory afterwards. You may have your glory here, but you will have your sufferings forever and ever. God grant you new hearts and right spirits, a living faith in a living Jesus and then I would say to you as I have said to the rest—Man, in whatever state you are, be content.

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***“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:13.***

THE former part of the sentence would be a piece of impudent daring without the latter part to interpret it. There have been some men who, puffed up with vanity, have in their hearts said, “I can do all things.” Their destruction has been sure and near at hand.

Nebuchadnezzar walks through the midst of the great city. He sees its stupendous tower threading the clouds. He marks the majestic and colossal size of every erection and he says in his heart, “Behold this great Babylon which I have built. I can do all things.” A few hours and he can do nothing except that in which the beast excels him. He eats grass like the oxen until his hair has grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws.

See, too, the Persian potentate. He leads a million men against Grecia, he wields a power which he believes to be omnipotent, he lashes the sea, casts chains upon the wave and bids it be his slave. Ah, foolish pantomime—“I can do all things!” His hosts melt away, the bravery of Grecia is too much for him—he returns to his country in dishonor. Or, if you will take a modern instance of a man who was born to rule and govern and found his way upwards from the lowest ranks to the highest point of empire, call to mind Napoleon.

He stands like a rock in the midst of angry billows. The nations dash against him and break themselves. He, himself puts out the sun of Austria and bids the star of Prussia set. He dares to proclaim war against all the nations of the earth and believes that he, himself shall be a very Briarius with a hundred hands attacking at once a hundred antagonists. “I can do all things,” he might have written upon his banners. It was the very note which his eagles screamed amid the battle.

He marches to Russia, he defies the elements. He marches across the snow and sees the palace of an ancient monarch in flames. No doubt, as he looks at the blazing Kremlin, he thinks, “I can do all things.” But you shall come back to your country alone, you shall strew the frozen plains with men. You shall be utterly wasted and destroyed. Inasmuch as you have said, “I propose and dispose, too,” let Jehovah dispose of you and put you from your seat, seeing you have arrogated to yourself omnipotence among men.

And what shall we say to our Apostle, little in stature, stammering in speech, his personal presence weak and his speech contemptible—when he comes forward and boasts, “I can do all things?” O impudent presumption! What can you do, Paul? The leader of a hated sect, all of them doomed by an imperial edict to death! You, you, who dare to teach

the absurd dogma that a crucified Man is able to save souls, that He is actually King in Heaven and virtually King on earth! You say, "I can do all things."

What? Has Gamaliel taught you such an art of eloquence, that you can baffle all that oppose you? What? Have your sufferings given you so stern a courage that you are not to be turned away from the opinions which you have so tenaciously held? Is it in yourself you rely? No. "I can do all things," says he, "through Christ which strengthens me." Looking boldly around him he turns the eye of his faith humbly towards his God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and dares to say, not impiously, nor arrogantly, yet with devout reverence and dauntless courage, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

My Brethren, when Paul said these words, he meant them. Indeed, he had to a great measure already proved the strength of which he now asserts the promise. Have you ever thought how varied were the trials and how innumerable the achievements of the Apostle Paul? Called by grace in a sudden and miraculous manner, immediately—not consulting with flesh and blood—he essays to preach the Gospel he has newly received. Then he retires a little while, that he may more fully understand the Word of God.

From the desert of Arabia, where he has girded his loins and strengthened himself by meditation and personal mortification, he comes out. Not taking counsel with the Apostles, nor asking their guidance or their approbation, but at once, with singular courage, proclaiming the name of Jesus and proclaiming that he, himself, also is an Apostle of Christ. You will remember that after this he undertook many difficult things—he withstood Peter to his face—no easy task with a man so bold and so excellent as Peter was, but Peter might be a timeserver—Paul never. Paul rebukes Peter, even to his face.

And then mark his own achievements, as he describes them himself, "In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure." "In prisons more frequent, in deaths often. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. Journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false Brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in marches often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which comes upon me daily, the care of all the Churches."

Ah, bravely spoken, Beloved Paul. Yours was no empty boast. You have, indeed, in your life, preached a sermon upon the text, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

And now, my dear Friends, looking up to Christ which strengthens *me*, I shall endeavor to speak of my text under three heads. First, the measure of it. Secondly, the manner of it. And thirdly, the message of it.

I. As for THE MEASURE OF IT. It is exceeding broad, for it says, "I can do *all* things." We cannot, of course, mention "all things," this morning.

For the subject is illimitable in its extent. "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

But let us notice that Paul here meant that he could endure all trials. It matters not what suffering his persecutors might put upon him, he felt that he was quite able through Divine Grace to bear it. And no doubt though Paul had seen the inside of almost every Roman prison, yet he had never been known to quake in any one of them. Though he understood well the devices which Nero had invented to put torment upon Christians—he had heard, in his cell, no doubt, of those who were smeared with pitch and set on fire in Nero's gardens to light his festivities. He had heard of Nero's racks and chains and hot pincers, yet he felt persuaded that rack and pincers and boiling pitch, would not be strong enough to break his faith. "I can endure all things," he says "for Christ's sake."

He daily expected that he might be led out to die and the daily expectation of death is more bitter than death itself, for what is death? It is but a pang and it is over. But the daily expectation of it is fearful. If a man fears death he feels a thousand deaths in fearing one. But Paul could say, "I die daily," and yet he was still steadfast and immovable in the hourly expectation of a painful departure. He was ready to be offered up and made a sacrifice for his Master's cause.

Every child of God, by faith, may say, "I can suffer all things." What, though today we are afraid of a little pain, though perhaps the slightest shooting pang alarms us—yet I do not doubt, if days of martyrdom should return—the martyr spirit would return with martyrs' trials. And if once more Smithfield's fires needed victims, there would be victims found innumerable—holocausts of martyrs would be offered up before the shrine of the Truth of God. Let us be of good courage under any temptation or suffering we may be called to bear for Christ's sake, for we can suffer it all through Christ who strengthens us.

Then Paul meant also that he could perform all duties. Was he called to preach? He was sufficient for it, through the strength of Christ. Was he called to rule and govern in the Churches—to be, as it were, a traveling over looker and bishop of the flock? He felt that he was well qualified for any duty which might be laid upon him, because of the strength which Christ would surely give. And you, too, my dear Brother, if you are called this day to some duty which is new to you, be not behind the Apostle, but say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."

I have seen the good man disappointed in his best hopes—because he has not won the battle in the first charge, he lays down his arms saying, "I feel that I can do no good in this world. I have tried, but defeat awaits me. Perhaps it were better that I should be still and do no more." I have seen the same man, too, for a while lie down and faint, "Because," said he, "I have sown much, but I have reaped little. I have strewed the seed by handfuls, but I have gathered only here and there an ear of precious grain."

O be not a coward—play the man. Christ puts His hand upon your loins today and He says, "Up and be doing." And do you reply, "Yes, Lord, I will be doing, for I can do all things through Christ which strengthens

me.” I am persuaded there is no work to which a Christian can be called for which he will not be found well qualified. If his master should appoint him to a throne, he would rule well, or should He bid him play the menial part he would make the best of servants—in all places and in all duties the Christian is always strong enough, if the Lord his God is with him. Without Christ he can do nothing, but with Christ he can do all things.

This is also true of the Christian’s inward struggles with his corruptions. Paul, I know, once said, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” But Paul did not stay there—his music was not all in a minor key. Right quickly he mounts the higher chords and sings, “But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I may be addressing some Christians who have naturally a very violent temper and you say you cannot curb it. “You can do all things through Christ which strengthens you.”

I may be speaking to another who has felt a peculiar weakness of disposition, a proneness to be timid and yielding. My Brother, you shall not disown your Lord, for through Christ that strengthens you, the dove can play the eagle and you who are timid as a lamb can be mighty and courageous as a lion. There is no weakness or evil propensity which the Christian cannot overcome. Do not come to me and say, “I have striven to overcome my natural slothfulness, but I have not been able to do it.” I do declare, Brother, that if Christ has strengthened you, you can do it.

I don’t believe there exists anywhere under Heaven a more lazy man than myself naturally. I would scarce stir if I had my will, but if there is a man under Heaven who works more than I do, I wish him well through his labors. I have to struggle with my sloth, but through Christ who strengthens me, I overcome it. Do not say you have a physical incapacity for strong effort. My Brothers and Sisters, you have not. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.

A brave heart can master even a sluggish life. Often do I find Brethren who say, “I hope I am not too timid or too rash in my temper, or that I am not idle, but I find myself inconstant, I cannot persevere in anything.” My dear Brothers and Sisters, you can. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. Do not sit down and excuse yourself by saying, “Another man can do this, but I cannot. The fact is, I was made with this fault—it was in the mold originally and it cannot be gotten rid of, I must make the best I can of it “

You can get rid of it, Brother, there is not a Hittite or a Jebusite in all Canaan that you cannot drive out. You can do nothing of yourself, but Christ being with you, you can make their high walls fall flat even as the walls of Jericho. You can go upon the tottering walls and slay the sons of Anak and although they are strong men, who like the giants had six toes on each foot and six fingers on each hand, you shall be more than a match for them all. There is no corruption, no evil propensity, no failing that you cannot overcome, through Christ which strengthens you. And there is no temptation to sin from without which you cannot also overcome through Christ which strengthens you.

Sitting one day this week with a poor aged woman who was sick, she remarked that oftentimes she was tempted by Satan. And sometimes she

said, "I am a little afraid, but I do not let other people know, lest they should think that Christ's disciples are not a match for Satan. Why, Sir," she said, "he is a chained enemy, is he not? He cannot come one link nearer to me than Christ lets him. And when he roars ever so loudly I am not afraid with any great fear of him, for I know it is only roaring—he cannot devour the people of God."

Now, whenever Satan comes to you with a temptation, or when your companions, or your business, or your circumstances suggest a sin, you are not timidly to say, "I must yield to this. I am not strong enough to stand against this temptation." You are not in *yourself*, understand that. I do not deny your own personal weakness. But through Christ, that strengthens you, you are strong enough for all the temptations that may possibly come upon you. You may play the Joseph against lust. You need not play the David—you may stand steadfast against sin. You need not to be overtaken like Noah—you need not be thrown down to your shame, like Lot. You may be kept by God and you shall be.

Only lay hold on that Divine strength and if the world, the flesh, and the devil should beleaguer and besiege you day after day, you shall stand not only a siege as long as the siege of old Troy, but seventy years of siege shall you be able to stand and at last to drive your enemies away in confusion and make yourselves rich upon their spoils. "I can do all things through Christ."

Though I despair of explaining the measure of my text, so as to classify even the tenth part of "all," let me make one further attempt. I have no doubt that the Apostle specially meant that he found himself able to serve God in every state. "I know how to be abased and I know how to abound—everywhere and in all things I am instructed to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Some Christians are called to sudden changes and I have marked many of them who have been ruined by their changes.

I have seen the poor man exceedingly spiritual-minded. I have seen him full of faith with regard to Divine Providence and living a happy life upon the bounty of his God, though he had but little. I have seen that man acquire wealth and I have marked that he was more stingy. That he was, in fact, more straitened than he was before. He had less trust in God, less liberality of soul. While he was a poor man he was a prince in a peasant's garb. When he became rich, he was poor in a bad sense—mean in heart with means in hand.

But this need not be. Christ strengthening him, a Christian is ready for all places. If my Master were to call me this day from addressing this assembly to sweep a street-crossing, I know not that I should feel very contented with my lot for awhile. But I do not doubt that I could do it through Christ that strengthens me. And you, who may have to follow some very humble occupation, you have had grace enough to follow it and to be happy in it and to honor Christ in it.

I tell you, if you were called to be a king, you might seek the strength of Christ and say in this position, too, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." You ought to have no choice as to what you shall be. The day when you gave yourself up to Christ, you gave yourself up

wholly to Him! To be His soldier, and soldiers must not be choosers. If they are called to lie in the trenches, if they are bid to advance under a galling fire, they must do it. And so must you, feeling that whether He bid you do one thing or another in all states and in all circles, you can do what God will have you do, for through Him you can do all things.

To conclude upon this point, let me remind you that you can do all things with respect to all worlds. You are here in this world and can do all things in respect to this world. You can enlighten it. You can play the Jonah in the midst of this modern Nineveh. Your own single voice may be the means of creating a spiritual revival. You can do all things for your fellow men. You may be the means of uplifting the most degraded to the highest point of spiritual life. You can doubtless, by resisting temptation, by casting down high looks, by defying wrath, by enduring sufferings—walk through this world as a greater than Alexander, looking upon it all as being yours—for your Lord is the monarch of it. “You can do all things.”

Then may you look beyond this world into the world of spirits. You may see the dark gate of death. You may behold that iron gate and hear it creaking on its awful hinges. But you may say, “I can pass through that. Jesus can meet me. He can strengthen me and my soul shall stretch her wings in haste, fly fearless through death’s iron gate, nor fear the terror as she passes through. I can go into the world of spirits, Christ being with me and never fear. And then look beneath you. There is Hell, with all its demons, your sworn enemy. They have leagued and banded together for your destruction.

Walk through their ranks and as they bite their iron bonds in agony and despair, say to them as you look in their face, “I can do all things.” And if loosed for a moment, if Diabolus should meet you in the field and Apollyon should stride across the way and say, “I swear by my infernal den that you shall come no further, here will I spill your soul”—up at him! Strike him right and left, with this for your battle cry, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me,” and in a little while he will spread his dragon wings and fly away.

Then mount up to Heaven. From the lowest deeps of Hell ascend to Heaven. Bow your knee before the eternal Throne. You have a message. You have desires to express and wants to be fulfilled and as you bend your knee, say, “O God, in prayer I can prevail with You. Let me wonder to tell it, I can overcome Heaven itself by humble, faithful prayer.” So you see, in all worlds—this world of flesh and blood and the world of spirits in Heaven and earth and Hell—everywhere, the Believer can say, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

II. Thus have I discussed the first part of our subject—the measure. I shall now talk for awhile upon THE MANNER.

How is it that Christ does strengthen His people? None of us can explain the mysterious operations of the Holy Spirit. We can only explain one effect by another. I do not pretend to be able to show how Christ communicates strength to His people by the mysterious in-flowing of the Spirit’s energy. Let me rather show what the Spirit does and how these

acts of the Spirit, which He works for Christ, tend to strengthen the soul for “all things.”

There is no doubt whatever that Jesus Christ makes His people strong by strengthening their faith. It is remarkable that very many poor, timid, and doubting Christians during the time of Queen Mary’s persecution were afraid, when they were arrested, that they should never bear the fire. But a singular circumstance is that these generally behaved the most bravely and played the man in the midst of the fire with the most notable constancy. It seems that God gives faith equal to the emergency and weak faith can suddenly sprout and swell and grow, till it comes to be great faith under the pressure of a great trial.

Oh, there is nothing that braces a man’s nerves like the cold winter’s blast. And so, doubtless, the very effect of persecution through the agency of the Spirit going with it, is to make the feeble strong. Together with this faith it often happens that the Holy Spirit also gives a singular firmness of mind—I might almost call it a celestial obstinacy of spirit.

Let me remind you of some of the sayings of the martyrs, which I have jotted down in my readings. When John Ardley was brought before Bishop Bonner, Bonner taunted him, saying, “You will not be able to bear the fire. That will convert you. The fire wood will be sharp preachers to you.” Said Ardley, “I am not afraid to try it and I tell you, Bishop, if I had as many lives as I have hairs on my head, I would give them all up sooner than I would give up Christ.” That same wicked wretch held the hand of poor John Tomkins over a candle, finger by finger, saying to him, “I’ll give you a taste of the fire before you shall come there,” and as the finger cracked and spurted forth, Tomkins smiled and even laughed in his tormentor’s face, being ready to suffer as much in every member as his fingers then endured.

Jerome tells the story of a poor Christian woman, who being on the rack, cried out to her tormentors as they straitened the rack and pulled her bones asunder, “Do your worst. For I would sooner die than lie.” It was bravely said. Short, pithy words. But what a glorious utterance! What a comment! What a thrilling argument to prove our text! Verily, Christians can do all things through Christ who strengthens them. And not only does he thus give a sort of sacred tenacity and obstinacy of spirit combined with faith, but often Christians anticipate the joys of Heaven, just when their pangs are greatest.

Look at old Ignatius. He is brought into the Roman circus and after facing the taunts of the emperor and the jeers of the multitude, the lions are let loose upon him and he thrusts his arm into a lion’s mouth, poor aged man as he is and when the bones were cracking, he said, “Now I begin to be a Christian.” *Begin* to be a Christian—as if he had never come near to his Master till the time when he came to die.

And there was Gordus, a martyr of Christ, who said when they were putting him to death, “I pray you do not spare any torments, for it will be a loss to me hereafter if you do, therefore inflict as many as you can.” What but the singular joy of God poured down from Heaven—what but some singular vials of intense bliss could have made these men almost sport with their anguish?

It was remarked by early Christians in England, that when persecution broke out in Luther's days, John and Henry, two Augustine monks—the first who were put to death for Christ in Germany—died singing. And Mr. Rogers, the first put to death in England for Christ, died singing, too—as if the noble army of martyrs marched to battle with music in advance. Why, who would charge in battle with groans and cries? Do not they always sound the clarion as they rush to battle, “Sound the trumpet and beat the drums, now the conquering hero comes”?

Indeed—comes face to face with death, face to face with pain and surely they who lead the van in the midst of such heroes should sing as they come to the fires. When good John Bradford, our London martyr, was told by his keeper, that he was to be burned on the morrow, he took off his cap and said, “I heartily thank my God.” And when John Noyes, another martyr, was just about to be burned, he took up a piece of fire wood and kissed it and said, “Blessed be God that He has thought me worthy of such high honor as this.”

And it is said of Rowland Taylor, that when he came to the fire he actually, as I think Fox says in his Monument, “fetched a frisk,” by which he means, he began to dance when he came to the flames, at the prospect of the high honor of suffering for Christ!

But in order to enable His people to do all things, Christ also quickens the mental faculties. It is astonishing what power the Holy Spirit can bestow upon the mind of men. You will have remarked, I do not doubt, in the controversies which the ancient confessors of the faith have had with heretics and persecuting kings and bishops, the singular way in which poor illiterate persons have been able to refute their opponents.

Jane Bouchier, our glorious Baptist martyr, the maid of Kent, when she was brought before Cranmer and Ridley, was able to non plus them entirely. Of course we believe part of her power lay in the goodness of the subject, for if there is a possibility of proving infant Baptism by any text in the Bible, I am sure I am not aware of the existence of it. Popish tradition might confirm the innovation, but the Bible knows no more of it than the Baptism of bells and the consecration of horses. But, however, she answered them all with a singular power—far beyond what could have been expected of a countrywoman.

It was a singular instance of God's providential judgment that Cranmer and Ridley, two bishops of the Church who condemned this Baptist to die—that she said when they signed the death-warrant, that burning was an easy death and they had themselves to try it in after days. She said, “I am as true a servant of Christ as any of you and if you put your poor sister to death, take care, lest God should let loose the wolf of Rome on you and you have to suffer for God, too.”

How the faculties were quickened to make each confessor seize every opportunity to avail himself of every mistake of his opponent and to lay hold of texts of Scripture which were as swords to cut in pieces those who dared to oppose them, is really a matter for admiration.

Added to this, no doubt, also, much of the power to do all things lies in the fact that the Spirit of God enables the Christian to overcome *himself*. He can lose all things because he is already prepared to do it. He can

suffer all things, because he does not value his body as the worldling does. He can be brave for Christ because he has learned to fear God and therefore has no reason to fear man. A healthy body can endure much more fatigue and can work much more powerfully than a sick body.

Now, Christ puts the man into a healthy state and he is prepared for long injuries, for hard duties and for stern privations. Put a certain number of men in a shipwreck. The weak and feeble shall die—those who are strong and healthy—who have not by voluptuousness become delicate, shall brave the cold and rigors of the elements and shall live. So with the quickened, yet feeble, professor. He shall soon give way under trial. But the mature Christian, the strong temperate man, can endure fatigues, can perform wonders, can achieve prodigies—because his body is well-disciplined and he has not permitted its humors to overcome the powers of the soul.

But observe that our text does not say, “I can do all things through Christ, which *has strengthened* me.” It is not past, but present strength that we want. Some think that because they were converted fifty years ago they can do without daily supplies of grace. Now the manna that was eaten by the Israelites when they came out of Egypt had to be renewed every day, or else they would starve. So it is not your old experiences, but your *daily* experiences, not your old drinking at the well of life, but your *daily* refreshing from the presence of God that can make you strong to do all things.

III. But I come now to the third part of my discourse, which is THE MESSAGE OF THE TEXT. “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

Three distinct forms of the message—first, a message of encouragement to those of you who are doing something for Christ, but who begin to feel painfully your own inability. Cease not from God’s work, because you are unable to perform it of yourself. Let it teach you to cease from yourself, but not from your work. “Cease you from man whose breath is in his nostrils,” but cease not to serve your God. Rather in Christ’s strength do it with greater vigor than before.

Remember Zerubbabel. A difficulty is in his path, like a great mountain, but he cries, “Who are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain.” If we did but believe ourselves great things, we should do great things. Our age is the age of littleness, because there is always a clamor to put down any gigantic idea. Everyone praises the man who has taken up the idea and carried it out successfully. But at the first he has none to stand by him. All the achievements in the world, both political and religious, at any time, have been begun by men who thought themselves called to perform them and believed it possible that they should be accomplished.

A parliament of wiseacres would sit upon any new idea—sit upon it, indeed—yes, until they had destroyed it utterly. They would sit as a coroner’s inquest and if it were not dead they would at least put it to death while they were deliberating. The man who shall ever do anything is the man who says, “This is a right thing. I am called to do it. I will do it. Now, then, stand up all of you—my friends or my foes, whichever you

will—it is all the same, I have God to help me and it must and shall be done.”

Such are the men that write their records in the annals of posterity. Such the men justly called great and they are only great because they believed they could be great—believed that the exploits could be done. Applying this to spiritual things, only believe, young man, that God can make something of you, be resolved that you will do something for Christ, and you will do it. But do not go driveling through this world, saying, “I was born little.” Of course you were, but were you meant to be little and with the little feebleness of a child all your days do little or nothing? Think so and you will be little as long as you live and you will die little and never achieve anything great.

Just send up a thought of aspiration, oh, you of little faith.! Think of your dignity in Christ—not of the dignity of your manhood—but the dignity of your regenerated manhood and say, “Can I do all things and yet am I to shrink first at this, then at that, and then at the other?” Be as David, who, when Saul said, “You are not able to fight with this Goliath,” replied, “Your servant slew both the lion and the bear and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them.” And he put his stone into the sling and ran cheerfully and joyously—so Goliath fell and he returned with the bloody dripping head.

You know his brothers said at first, “Because of your pride and the naughtiness of your heart, you came to see the battle.” All our elder Brethren say that to us if we begin anything. They always say it is the naughtiness of our heart and our pride. Well, we don’t answer them. We bring them Goliath’s head and request them to say whether that is the effect of our pride and the naughtiness of our heart. We wish to know whether it would not be a blessed naughtiness that should have slain this naughty Philistine.

So do you my, dear Brothers and Sisters. If you are called to any work, go straight at it, writing this upon your escutcheon, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me—and I will do what God has called me to do, whether I am blessed or whether I am left alone.”

A second lesson is this—Take heed, however, that you get Christ’s strength. You can do nothing without that. Spiritually, in the things of Christ, you are not able to accomplish even the meanest thing without Him. Go not forth to your work, therefore, till you have first prayed. That effort which is begun without prayer will end without praise. That battle which commences without holy reliance upon God, shall certainly end in a terrible rout. Many men might be Christian victors, if they had known how to use

the all-prevailing weapon of prayer. But forgetting this, they have gone to the fight and they have been defeated right easily.

O be sure, Christian, that you get Christ’s strength! Vain is eloquence. Vain are gifts of genius. Vain is ability. Vain are wisdom and learning—all these things may be serviceable when consecrated by the power of God—but apart from the strength of Christ they shall all fail you. If you lean upon them, they shall all deceive you. If you lack the all-sufficient

strength of Jesus Christ you shall be weak and contemptible, however rich or however great you may be in these things.

Finally, the last message that I have is this—Paul says, in the name of all Christians, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.” I say, not in Paul’s name only, but in the name of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, How is it that some of you are doing nothing? If you could do nothing you might be excused for not attempting it, but if you put in the slightest pretense to my text you must allow my right to put this question to you.

You say, “I can do all things”—in the name of reason I ask why are you doing nothing? Look what multitudes of Christians there are in the world. Do you believe if they were all what they profess to be and all to work for Christ, there would long be the degrading poverty, the ignorance, the heathenism, which is to be found in this city? What cannot one individual accomplish? What could be done, therefore, by the tens of thousands of our Churches?

Ah, Professors! You will have much to answer for with regard to the souls of your fellow men. You are sent by God’s Providence to be as lights in this world. But you are rather dark lanterns than lights. How often are you in company and you never avail yourself of an opportunity of saying a word for Christ? How many times are you thrown in such a position that you have an excellent opportunity for rebuking sin, or for teaching holiness—and how seldom do you accomplish it?

An old author named Stuckley, writing upon this subject, said, “There were some professed Christians who were not so good as Balaam’s ass. For Balaam’s ass once rebuked the mad prophet for his sin. But there were some Christians who never rebuked anyone all their lives long. They let sin go on under their very eyes and yet they did not point to it. They saw sinners dropping into Hell and they stretched not out their hands to pluck them as brands, from the burning. They walked in the midst of the blind, but they would not lead them. They stood in the midst of the deaf, but they would not hear for them. They were where misery was rife, but their mercy would not work upon the misery. They were sent to be saviors of men, but by their negligence they became men’s destroyers.”

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” was the language of Cain. Cain has many children even at this day. You *are* your brother’s keeper. If you have grace in your heart, you are called to do good to others. Take care lest your garments be stained and sprinkled with the blood of your fellow men. Mind, Christians, mind, lest that village in which you have found a quiet retreat from the cares of business, should rise up in judgment against you, to condemn you, because, having means and opportunity, you use the village for rest, but never seek to do any good in it.

Take care, masters and mistresses, lest your servant’s souls be required of you at the Last Great Day. “I worked for my master, he paid me my wages, but he had no respect to his greater Master and never spoke to me, though he heard me swear and saw me going on in my sins.” Mind, I speak, Sirs, to some of you. I would I could thrust a thorn into the seat where you are now sitting and make you spring for a moment to the dignity of a thought of your responsibilities.

Why, Sirs, what has God made you for? What has He sent you here for? Did He make stars that should not shine and suns that should give no light and moons that should not cheer the darkness? Has He made rivers that shall not be filled with water and mountains that shall not stay the clouds? Has He made even the forests which shall not give a habitation to the birds? Or has He made the prairie which shall not feed the wild flocks? And has He made you for nothing?

Why, Man, the nettle in the corner of the Churchyard has its uses and the spider on the wall serves her Maker. And you, a man in the image of God, a blood-bought man—a man who is in the path and track to Heaven, a man regenerated, twice created—are you made for nothing at all but to buy and to sell, to eat and to drink, to wake and to sleep, to laugh and to weep, to live to yourself? Small is that man who holds himself within his ribs. Little is that man's soul who lives within himself. Yes, so little that he shall never be fit to be a compeer with the angels and never fit to stand before Jehovah's Throne.

I am glad to see so large a proportion of men here. As I always have a very great preponderance of men—therefore, I suppose I am warranted in appealing to you—are there not here those who might be speakers for God, who might be useful in His service? The Missionary Societies need you, young men. Will you deny yourselves for Christ? The ministry needs you—young men who have talents and ability. Christ needs you to preach His Word. Will you not give yourselves to Him? Tradesmen! Merchants! Christ needs you to alter the strain of business and reverse the maxims of the present day—to cast a healthier tone into our commerce.

Will you hold yourselves back? The Sunday-School needs you. A thousand agencies require you. Oh, if there is a man here today that is going home to his house and when he gets there will say this afternoon—“Thank God I have nothing to do.” And if tomorrow when you come home from your business, you say, “Thank God I have no connection with any Church—I have nothing to do with the religious world, I leave that to other people. I never trouble myself about that”—you need not trouble yourself about going to Heaven.

You need not trouble yourself about being where Christ is—at least until you can learn that more devoted lesson—“The love of Christ constrains me. I must do something for Him. Lord, show me what You would have me to do and I will begin this very day, for I feel that through You, Christ strengthening me, I can do all things.”

God grant the sinner power to believe on Christ—power to repent—power to be saved. For, Christ strengthening him, even the poor lost sinner, “can do all things”—things impossible to fallen nature can he do—by the enabling of the Spirit and the power of Christ resting on him.

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

FILLING THE EMPTY VESSELS

NO. 1712

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 17, 1882,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"But my God shall supply all your need according to His
riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19.*

VERY beautiful, to my mind, is the sight of "Paul the aged" confined in his prison at Rome, likely, by-and-by, to be put to death, but calm, quiet, peaceful and joyful. Just now he is so happy that a gleam of sunlight seems to light up his cell and his face shines like that of an angel! He is exceedingly delighted because he has been, in his deep poverty, kindly remembered by the little Church at Philippi, for they have sent him a contribution. See how cheerful the man is—I was about to say, how *contented*, but I drop the word because it falls far short of the mark! He is far more happy than Caesar overhead in the palace. He is charmed with the love which has sent him this relief. Probably the gift does not come to very much, if estimated in Roman coin, but he makes a great deal of it and sits down to write a letter of thanks abounding in rich expressions like these—"I have all things, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you."

His heart was evidently greatly touched, for he says, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now, at the last, your care of me has flourished again." See how little a gift may make a good man glad! Is it not worth while to be free with our cups of cold water to the Prophets of the Lord? Instead of a little money, the Brothers and Sisters at Philippi receive a boundless blessing and are enriched by the fervent prayers of the Apostle! Hear how earnestly Paul invokes benedictions on the heads of his benefactors! Is it not a blessed state of mind which enables a heart so soon to be full to overflowing? Some would grumble over a roasted ox, but here is Paul—rejoicing over a dinner of herbs!

So great was the disinterestedness of Paul, that there was nothing of selfishness about his joy. He did not speak in respect of need, for he knew how to suffer need without complaint. But he looked upon the kindly contribution as a fruit of the Grace of God in the Philippians—a generous proof that they were lifted out of heathen selfishness into Christian love! There was little enough of kindness in the old Roman and Greek world into which Paul went preaching the Gospel. Those were times of great hardness of heart, even to cruel heartlessness. There was no sort of provision for the poor. If a man was poor, why, that was his own problem, and he might starve and die.

You know how hardened the people had become through the fights in the amphitheater, so that the sight of blood produced a fierce delight in their brutal bosoms and human suffering was, to them, rather a thing to be rejoiced in than to be prevented. There might be, here and there, a ten-

der hand that gave coin to the poor, but, for the most part, charity was dead. The voluptuaries of that most degenerate age planned no hospitals and built no orphanages—they were too intent upon their gladiators and their mistresses. Self was lord paramount in Caesar's court and all over Roman realms!

But here are people at Philippi thinking about one who had preached the Gospel to them and who is now suffering. They are moved by a new principle—love to God in Christ Jesus has created love to the man whose words had changed them. They will not abandon him—they will, out of their own slender means, cheer his sad condition. There were Churches that had no such hearts of mercy, alas, that so early in the Gospel-day holy charity should be so rare! There were people whom Paul had blessed greatly, who even quarreled about him and denied that he was an Apostle of Christ! But not so the beloved Church at Philippi. They had, again and again, ministered to his necessities and Paul, now, rejoices in them, again, because he delights to see another instance of the transforming power of the Grace of God upon character, so that those who were once selfish now rejoiced, unprompted and unasked, to send their offering to him.

Was Lydia at the bottom of that subscription? I should not wonder! We know that she was open-hearted. Did the jailer add his full share? I feel sure of it, for in the prison he courteously entertained the Apostle. These were a generous people and Paul is happy in thinking of them. I may here dare to say that I, also, have had the same joy over many of you when I have seen how freely you have given of your substance to the work of the Lord. It would be unfair if I withheld commendation for liberality from many now before me. You have rejoiced my heart by your gifts to the cause of God. You have given up to the measure of your means and some of you beyond what we could have asked of you. The Gospel has taught you this. To God be glory that it is so. Continue in the same spirit, that none may rob me of this joy.

The Apostle makes to them an assurance in the following verses that they shall be abundantly repaid for all that they have done. He says to them, "You have helped me; but my God shall supply you. You have helped me in one of my needs—my need of clothing and of food. I have other needs in which you could not help me, but my God shall supply all your need. You have helped me, some of you, out of your deep poverty, taking from your scanty store. But my God shall supply all your need out of His riches in Glory. You have sent Epaphroditus unto me with your offering. Well and good! He is a most worthy Brother, and a true yoke-fellow. And for all that, God shall send a better messenger to you, for He shall supply all your needs by Christ Jesus."

He seems to me to make a parallel of his needs with theirs, and of his supplies from them with their supplies from the Lord. He would seem to say—Just as God has, through you, filled me up, so shall He, by Christ, fill you up. That is a translation of the Greek which most nearly touches the meaning—"My God shall fill up all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Will you allow me to make a break, here, for one instant? I read you, just now, the story of the Prophet's widow whose chil-

dren were about to be taken for a debt, and how the oil was multiplied in the vessels which she borrowed until there was enough to discharge the debt, and sufficient surplus for herself and children to live upon.

Now, kindly take that picture and join it on to this—and we have here, first, the empty vessels. Set them out in a row, “all your need.” Secondly, who will fill them up?—“My God shall fill up all your need.” Thirdly, after what fashion will He do it?—“According to His riches in glory.” Fourthly, by what means will He do it?—“By Christ Jesus.” Keep the widow and the vessels before you and let us see the miracle worked over, again, on a grand scale in our own houses and hearts. May the Holy Spirit make the sight refreshing to our faith.

I. So, then, we will begin our discourse this evening by asking you to SET OUT THE EMPTY VESSELS. “My God shall supply all your need.” Bring forth your vessels, even empty vessels! “All your need.” I do not suppose that you are under any great obligation to go out, tonight, and borrow other people’s needs, for you have enough of your own at home—needs many and varied. Very well, set them out. Hide none of them away, but put them down, one after another, in a long row, all of them. There are needs for your body, needs for your soul. There are needs for yourselves, needs for your families—needs for the present, needs for the future—needs for time, needs for eternity. There are needs for earth, needs for Heaven. Your needs are as many as your moments—as many as the hairs of your head.

I suppose it would be useless for me to attempt a catalog of them—however carefully we made the list, we should have to add a host of sundries altogether unmentionable until circumstances suggested them. I could hardly tell you all my own needs, but I know that they are enormous and increasing with my years. I have needs as a man, as a husband, as a father, as a citizen, as a Christian, as a pastor, as an author—in fact, every position I take up adds to my needs. If I went through my own personal bill of requests, I could fill a document like the roll mentioned in the Old Testament, written within and without—and hardly *then* could I enumerate all my own demands upon the Bank of Heaven. But if I attempted to take all the thousands that are gathered beneath this roof and to let each man state his particular needs, where would the computation end? The sands upon the seashore are not more innumerable!

Dear! Dear! We would need a *library* larger than the Bodleian to hold all the books which could be written of all the needs of the needy congregation now before me! Well, I am not sorry for it, for here is so much the more room for the Lord to work His miracles of bountiful Grace! Sometimes, when I have been in need for the work of the Orphanage and the College and such things—and these times have occurred—I do solemnly assure you that I have felt a wonderful joy in my spirit. I have watched the ebb of the funds till nearly everything has been gone and then I have joyfully said to myself, “Now for it! The vessels are empty! Now I shall see the miracle of filling them.” What wonders the Lord has worked for me, I cannot, now, tell you in detail, but many of you who have been my faithful helpers know how hundreds and even *thousands* of pounds have poured

in from our great Lord in the moment of necessity. It will always be the same, for the Lord God is the same.

Until the funds run low we cannot expect to see them replenished—when they get low, then will God come and deal graciously with us! Money is, however, our smallest need—we need Grace, wisdom, light and comfort—and these we shall have. All our needs are occasions for blessing. The more needs you have the more blessing you will get. God has promised to fill up all your needs. That is, all your empty vessels will be filled and, therefore, the more the merrier! What? The more in need the *better*? Yes, I would have your faith believe that strange statement—your poverty shall thus be your riches, your weakness your strength, your abasement your exaltation! Your extremity shall be an opportunity that God will use to show the riches of His Grace! To your utter exhaustion He will draw near with all the fullness of His inexhaustible Grace and He will replenish you till your cup runs over!

He will fill up all your empty vessels. Be not slow to fetch them out from holes and corners and place them before the Lord, however many they may be. Weep not over the empty jars, but place them out in rows in full expectation of their being filled to the brim! These empty vessels of yours are, some of them, I have no doubt, very large, and they even grow larger. Most of our needs grow upon us. You still pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” but the one loaf which was a large answer to the prayer when you were single, would not go far at your table, now—the loaves vanish like snow in the sun! You needed faith 50 years ago, but you need more, now, do you not? You have more infirmities and, perhaps, more trials than in your younger days. I know that, apart from my loving Lord, I am much more needy, now, than I ever was before. Whatever a man requires in the things of God, usually the older he grows and the more experience he has, the more he needs, and the more of it he needs.

He needs more love than he had when he was younger, more patience, more resignation, more humility, more charity, more wisdom, more holiness. He desires more faith and a brighter hope. He needs, especially in prospect of death, more courage and more bold, simple, child-like confidence in his Savior, Why, some of us have needs that could not be supplied if we could turn the stars to gold and coin them and pay them away—these could not *touch* the hunger of the heart and soul! The world, itself, would be but a mouthful for our spirits’ necessity—a drop in a bucket. I know some saints that have grown to be so deeply in debt to their Lord, to His Church and to the world, that they are hopelessly involved in boundless obligation.

How can we meet the demands upon us? Our responsibilities are overwhelming! All that some of us have made by our lifelong trading is a bigger stock of needs than we ever had before. The vacuum within our spirit expands and enlarges, and we cry out, “More knowledge of the Scriptures! More of Christ! More of Grace! More of God! More of the Holy Spirit! More power to serve God!” Our oil vessels would, each one, hold a sea—and even these are expanding! We need more and more, and the mercy is that the text before us keeps pace with the growth—“My God shall supply all your need.” This includes the big needs as well as the little ones! It com-

prehends all that can be as well as all that is! It guarantees us that our growing needs shall all be supplied. Let the vessels expand to their utmost, "Yet my God," says Paul, "shall fill up all those needs of yours."

Certain of our needs, again, are of this extraordinary kind, that if they were filled up, tonight, they would be empty tomorrow morning! Some of our necessities are fresh every morning. The crop is a daily one, it springs up every moment. The Grace I had five minutes ago will not serve me now. Yesterday I may have possessed great love, great faith, great courage, great humility, great joy—but I also need these *today*—and none can give them to me but my Lord. You had great patience under your last trial. Yes, but old patience is stale stuff. You must grow more of that sweet herb in your garden, for the trial that is now coming can only be sweetened by the herb content, newly gathered from the garden of your heart and mixed with the bitter water of your afflictions.

Our condition apart from our God may be compared to those fabled vessels that we read of in mythology that were so full of holes that, though the 50 daughters of Danaus labored hard to fill them up, they could never accomplish the task. You and I are such leaky vessels that none but God can ever fill us! And when we are filled, none but God can keep us full. Yet so the promise stands, "My God shall supply all your need"—all the vessels shall be filled and shall be kept full! We have certain needs, dear Friends, that are very pressing and, perhaps, most clamorous at this moment. Some needs are urgent—they must be supplied, and supplied speedily—or we shall perish with hunger, or die of sickness, or wither up in despair. Here let me add a caution—I dare not tell you that God will supply all the needs of *everybody*, for this promise is to the children of God—and in its most emphatic sense it is only to a certain class, even, among them.

Those persons who profess to be Christians and, when they were well-to-do, never helped anybody else—I think the Lord will let them pinch a bit, and know what a condition of poverty is like that they may become more sympathetic with the poor. I have known good stewards and the Lord has sent them more, for they have dealt well with what they had. They have given away their substance by shovelfuls and the Lord has sent it back by cartloads and entrusted them with more! Others who have been bad stewards and have not served their Master well, have lost what they had, and have come to poverty. Let us hope that their substance has gone to somebody that will use it better! But, meanwhile, they have to pinch, and deservedly so.

But, remember, the Apostle is speaking to people of a very different character from that. He is speaking to the Philippians and I think that there is a point in that pronoun, "My God shall supply all *your* need." You have been generous in helping the Lord's servant and the Lord will repay you. Up to the measure of your ability you have served His Church and helped to carry on His work in the world and, therefore, God will supply all your need. This is not spoken to hoarding Judas, but to the generous who had voluntarily yielded of their substance when a fit opportunity was given them. Will any of you bring your need to God and test Him by the same conduct? Remember that old promise of His, "Bring you all the

tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in My house, and prove Me now herewith, says the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

There is that that scatters and yet increases. Give, and it shall be given unto you. Oh yes, our gracious God will fill all the vessels at once, if time presses! If your needs urgently require to be filled, bring them to Him. I began by saying that few of us had any great call to borrow other people's empty pots. Yet there are some of us whose main anxiety is about the vessels that we *have* borrowed. We need more oil than others for this very reason, that we care for others. Certain of us have been called to a life which intertwists itself with many lives. We have been led by Grace and Providence to take upon ourselves the needs of thousands. Every genuine warm-hearted Christian does this, more or less. We try to make other men's needs our own needs by working for the poor, the ignorant, the sick, the helpless. You that care for our orphan children may well join with me in prayer that the Lord will fill up all those empty vessels which we have borrowed of poor widows.

Think of my hundreds of borrowed vessels in the Orphanage and of the number in the College. Blessed be the Lord my God, He will fill up all these! Those whom we try to help in different ways, especially those we try to lead to the Savior, are like the woman's borrowed vessels—and they are not a few! You have made their spiritual needs your own. You have come before God to pray for them as for your own soul and you shall be heard. You have talked to your neighbors and laid yourself out for their good, as if your own eternal destiny were in their stead—rest fully assured that the Lord that filled the borrowed pots in Elisha's day will also supply your borrowed needs! “My God will fill up all your needs.” It is a blessed word! Bring out your vessels and see if it is not true!

I should like to see every Christian here setting out all his vessels in rows at once, whatever they may be. Do not put your cares away in the back room and say, “I shall draw them out tomorrow and begin worrying over them.” Instead of that, while the oil is flowing, bring them here, before the Lord, that the oil may have free course and find suitable storage. Would you limit the miracle? Have you one forgotten need? Make haste with it! Still, the oil is multiplying! Come one! Come all! Arrange your vessels and the Lord will fill up your needs, by His Grace, and fill your mouths with a song!

II. Secondly, let us enquire, WHO IS TO FILL THESE VESSELS? Paul says, “My God will supply all your need.” “My *God!*” Oh, that is grand! It were foolish talking if any other name were mentioned! God can supply all the needs of His people, for He is All-Sufficient—but nobody else can. He can do it without any help, for nothing is too hard for the Lord. He is able to number the myriads of His creatures and attend to the commissariat of them all, so that not one of them shall lack—“He calls them all by their names, by the greatness of His power not one fails.” “They that wait upon the Lord shall not want any good thing.” As for you, dear Brothers and Sisters, “trust in the Lord and do good, so shall you dwell in the land, and

verily you shall be fed." He that promises to fill up all your empty vessels is one who can do it—there is no limit to the goodness and power of God!

Then, notice that sweet word which Paul has put before the glorious word, "God." He writes—"My God." As Paul looked at the money which the Philippians had sent him and, perhaps, at the warm garments that would cover him in the cold, damp jail, he cried, "See how my God has supplied me!" And then he says, "My God shall supply *you*." This same God, Paul's God—"shall fill up all your need." Wonderfully had God protected Paul from the malice of those who sought for his life. Very wonderfully had he been carried by Divine power through unparalleled labors, so that he had been made to triumph in every place in the preaching of the Gospel! And thus Paul had learned from day to day to get a firmer grip of his God, and say, "My God!" with more and more emphasis.

Jehovah was not to Paul the unknown god, but, "My God." With God he dwelt and in Him he reposed all his cares. This same God is our God! Think of that, poor friend, in your hour of need. Think of that, you afflicted widow woman—you have Paul's God to go to! Think of that, dear child of God in trouble—you have the same God as Paul had and He is as much yours as He was Paul's! His arm has not waxed short, neither has His heart grown hard towards any of His children! "My God," says Paul, "who is also *your* God, will supply all your need." Who is this God that will supply all our needs? Paul's God, remember, was and is the God of Providence! And what a wonderful God He is.

We speak as if we were some very important part of the universe, but really, what are we? Our little island can scarcely be found upon the globe till you hunt long for it! What a tiny speck this congregation must be! But God supplies the needs of all the millions of mankind. "Mankind," I said—but I ought to have included all the other creatures, too—the myriads of herring in the sea, the multitudes of birds that sometimes darken the sun in their migrations, the countless armies of worms and insects, strangely supplied, we know not how! And yet, "Your heavenly Father feeds them."

Is that all the sphere of His Providence? No, far from it! I suppose that this round world of ours is but one apple in the orchard of creation, one grain of dust in the corner of God's great palace. But all yon orbs, with all the living things that may be peopling every star, He supplies. And how? "He opens His hand and supplies the need of every living thing." See how easy to Him is this universal provision—He does but open His hand and it is done! This is the God that will supply all your need! He calls the stars by name! He leads out Arcturus with his sons. He loosens the bands of Orion. He does great things without number—and shall He not feed and clothe *you*, O you of little faith? Yes, be you sure of this, the God of Providence shall supply all your needs for this life and its surroundings.

If that suffice you not, let me remind you that this God is the God of Grace, for Paul, above all men, counted Divine Grace to be his treasure—his God was the God of Grace. Chiefly He is the God who gave His Son to bleed and die for men. Oh, stand at Calvary and see God's great Sacrifice—the gift of His only-begotten Son! And when you have marked the wounds of the Well-Beloved and seen Jesus die, answer me this—"He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall

He not, with Him, also freely give us all things?” What will He deny us who has given up the best jewel that He had, the glorious One that Heaven could not match? There was never the likes of Jesus, and yet He bowed His head to die on our behalf!

Oh, my dear, dear Friends, if you are anxious, tonight, and vexed with many cares, do think of that! It is the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who says that He will fill up all your need! Do you doubt Him? *Can* you? *Dare* you distrust Him? Now, take a flight above this present cloud-land and behold the God of Heaven! Think of what God is up yonder—

***“Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll,
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul.”***

Behold the splendor of God! Gold in Heaven is of no account—the streets of that city are all of pure gold like unto transparent glass! The riches and the merchandise of nations are but as rags and rottenness compared with the most common utensils of God’s great House above! There they possess inexhaustible treasures and everything that is precious, for the walls of the New Jerusalem are described as made of 12 manner of precious stones, as if these stones were so common in Immanuel’s land that they built the walls with them! The gates are each one a pearl. What pearls are those! Is God rich? Inconceivably, incalculably rich, so that He clothes the very grass of the field more gloriously than Solomon clothed himself!

What am I doing to be of a doubtful mind? Is He my Father and will He let me suffer need? What? I, starving, and my Father owning Heaven? No, no!—

***“He that has made my Heaven secure,
Will here, all good provide
While Christ is rich, can I be poor?
What can I need beside?”***

My precious text is one which, years ago, when we built the Orphanage, I caused to be cut on one of the pillars of the entrance. You will notice it inside the first columns on either side whenever you go there. “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” This I took for the foundation of the Institution and set my seal to it as true. And it has been so! Time would fail me if I were to tell how often God has interposed, there, for His numerous family—those children that are cast upon the Divine Fatherhood. He has honored His own promise and our faith—and I believe He always will. There on the forefront of the Orphanage stands also the words—“The Lord will provide.” You shall see whether it is not so. As long as that place stands, my God shall supply our need and it shall be a standing encouragement to us all.

Think of the far more extensive orphanage of our Brother Mueller, of Bristol, with those 2,500 children living simply through prayer and faith, and yet as abundantly supplied as the Queen in her palace! Nothing is needed where God is the Provider. The Lord will supply without fail! Let us trust without fear. Go and plead this promise with the Lord your God and He will fulfill it to you as well as to the rest of His saints.

III. Now, thirdly, let us enquire IN WHAT STYLE WILL GOD SUPPLY HIS PEOPLE’S NEEDS? He will do it in such style as becomes His

wealth—"according to His riches." There are several ways of doing most things. There is more than one way of giving a penny to a beggar. You can throw it at him, if you like, or pitch it in the mud as if you threw a bone to a dog. Or you may hand it to him in a sort of huff as if you said, "Take it, and be off with you." Or you may drag the coin out of your pocket as unwillingly as if you were losing your eye-tooth. There is yet another way—namely that which makes the copper turn to gold—by a way of doing it courteously and with kindness which expresses sympathy with the poor creature's need. Always give good things in the best way, for your heavenly Father does so.

Now, how does God supply His children? Stingily, miserably, grudging them every penny's worth? Certainly not! I hope that it was never your misery to dine with a grudging man who watched every mouthful that went down your throat as if there was so much the less for him! Why, when one does eat, at whatever table it may be, if it is the most common fare, one likes a welcome. It is the *welcome* which makes the Covenant invitation so sweet, when you hear the exhortation, "Eat, O Friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved." One enjoys the welcome of a heart which pleases all it can—like the Scot woman at a great communion meeting when there was nobody to take the people in—"Come in," she said. "Come in! I have room for 10 of you in my house, and I have room for 10,000 of you in my heart. Come along with you. Nobody so welcome as you that have been sitting at my Master's table with me."

How, then, does God dispense His favors? How does He fill up the vessels? The way He does it is not according to our poverty, nor according to our merit, "but according to His riches." He gives like a king! Brothers and Sisters, I must correct myself—He gives as *God* and as only God can give—according to His own God-like riches. No, that is not all. He will do it in a style consistent with His present Glory. It is "according to His riches in glory," which means that, as rich as God is in glory, so rich is He in giving. He never demeans Himself in the mercies that He gives. He gives according to His rank and that is the highest conceivable. He gives so as to bring Him new Glory. I never heard of one of His children receiving a great blessing from Him and then saying that it did not glorify God to bestow it. No, no! The more He gives, the more glorious He is in the eyes of men!

And He delights to give, that His Glory may be seen, and that the riches of His manifested Glory may be increased. Withholding would not enrich the Lord of Heaven! Rather would it impoverish Him in Glory. But giving enriches Him with more revealed Glory and He, therefore, delights to scatter His bounty. The fact is, Brethren, God gives gloriously! The calculations of God—did you ever think of them? Well, let me say that He always calculates so as to leave something to spare, by which to illustrate the infinity of His goodness. I know that it is so. He does not give us just as much light as our eyes can take in, but He floods the world with splendor till we shade our eyes amidst the blaze of noon. After this fashion did His only-begotten Son feed the thousands when He multiplied bread and fish for them to eat. We read that "they did all eat"—no doubt they were hungry enough to do a great deal of that sort of labor! So far so good. But it is added, "and were filled."

It takes a good deal to fill men who have come a long way into the country and have had nothing to eat for a whole day. But they were filled, fainting and famished though they had been. Yes, but do not stop there—“And they took up of the fragments 12 baskets full.” The Lord always has baskets full of leftovers remaining for the waiters. He will be sure to fill all your needs till you have no other need remaining and have provision on hand for needs not yet arrived. Will the day ever come when we shall say, “Bring yet another need for God to fill,” and the answer will be, “I have no more needs”? Then the oil of Grace will stop, but not till then! No, according to what I have said, it will not stop then, but it will go on flowing and flowing, and flowing and flowing, world without end, “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” The Lord will give enough, enough for all time, enough of all, enough for all, and more than enough!

There shall be no real need of any Believer but what the Lord will fill it full and exceed it. It is a wonderful expression “filled with all the fullness of God.” It pictures our being in God and God in us. One has illustrated it by taking a bottle, holding it in the sea and getting it right full—there is the sea in the bottle! Now, throw it right into the waves and let it sink—and you have the sea in the bottle and the bottle in the sea! So God enters into us and, as we cannot hold more, He makes us come into Himself! Into the very fullness of Christ are we plunged! What more can the amplest imagination conceive, or the hungriest heart desire? Thus God will supply our needs. Well may you fill others, who are yourselves so filled by God! Well may you serve His cause with boundless generosity when the infinite liberality of God is thus ensured to you!

IV. Lastly, let us notice BY WHAT MEANS THE LORD FILLS OUR NEEDS. It is “by Christ Jesus.” Does God supply all His people’s needs by Christ Jesus? Yes, first, by giving them Christ Jesus, for there is *everything* in Christ Jesus. Christ is all! The man who has Christ has all things, as says the Apostle, “All things are yours, for you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” You will never have a spiritual need which is not supplied in Christ. If you need courage, He can create it. If you need patience, He can teach it. If you need love, He can inspire it! You need washing, and there is the Fountain. You require a garment, and there is the robe of Righteousness. You would have great needs if you went to Heaven without Christ, but you shall not go there without Him! And even there He shall supply you with everything! He it is that prepares your mansion, provides your wedding dress, leads you to His Throne and bids you sit there with Him forever. God will supply your eternal needs by giving you Christ.

Moreover, all things shall come to you by virtue of Christ’s merit. You deserve no good thing, but He deserves it and He says, “Set it to My poor servant’s account.” You may use Christ’s name at the Bank of Heaven freely, for though God might not give His favor to you, He will always give it to His dear, dying, risen, pleading Son! When Jesus’ name is quoted, all things are yielded by the Father. God will give you all things by Christ—therefore do not go to anybody else after those things. If you have begun in the Spirit, do not attempt to be perfected by the flesh. If your only hope is in what Christ has done, stick to that and add nothing to it! Be this your motto—

“None but Jesus!”

None but Jesus!

Jesus is our All-in-All! We are complete in Him! We need no addenda to the volume of His love. Christ, and Christ, alone, shall supply all your need—all your fresh springs are in Him. “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and of His fullness we have all received, and Grace for Grace.”

Now, once more, I would to God that some poor soul here that has no faith—that has no good thing about him—would, nevertheless, look over his house and see whether he has not an empty vessel somewhere. All that Christ wants of you, poor Sinner, is that you should be empty and come and let Him fill you with His Grace! Come along with you, just as you are! Bring no good works, no prayers, no *anything*—but come with all your sins, follies and failures which you may look upon as so many empty pots! Come to Jesus for everything. “But I have scarcely a sense of need,” you say. Come to Him for that, too! You must be very needy to be in need of that. Come and get it from Him. I tell you, Soul, you do not need a half-farthing’s worth of your own—for what you *think* you have will only keep you from Jesus!

Come in all your poverty—a beggar, a king of beggars! Come and be made rich by Jesus! You that have not a rag to cover your sin with—you that are only fit to be put into the devil’s dust bin and thrown away as worthless—come along with you! My Lord Jesus is ready to receive those that Satan, himself, flings away! If you are such that you cannot find anything in yourself that is desirable and even your old companions, who once cheered you on, now think you too mean for them—yet come into my Master’s company—for, “this Man receives sinners.” Come with your beggary and bankruptcy—you cannot dig, but to beg be not ashamed, for, “My God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

As for you that have not trusted my Lord and boast that you can do very well without Him, I suppose I must leave you to fight your own way. You declare that you will carry on your own business and will not be dependent upon God, nor fall into any fanatical ideas, as you are pleased to call them. But we shall see. Already we see that the youths faint and are wearied and the young men utterly fall. We see that the young lions lack and suffer hunger and, also, that the best-laid plans of wisest men go oft awry. And they that have felt assured that they could fight their own way—even they have come to terrible failure. We shall see how you fare. They that mount up with wings as eagles and are proud and vainglorious—even these go down to destruction so that no flesh has reason to glory.

As for me, let me wait upon the Lord God and live by faith in Him. Is it not better to drink of life out of the deep, inexhaustible fullness of God than to go forever pumping and pumping at your own shallow cisterns which hold water? Self-reliance may be well enough, but God-reliance eclipses it as the sun outshines the stars! “Oh, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.” “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.” “He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust: His truth shall be your shield and buckler.” There is a God and those who love Him and trust Him and

serve Him know that He is a good Master. Job was slandered by the devil when he came and said, "Does Job serve God for nothing?" He insinuated that Job made a good thing out of his religion and was moved by selfish motives.

It was a great lie and yet, in a certain sense, it is true. If anybody says the same of you, admit that it is true. Acknowledge that you do make a fine thing out of your religion. God will not let you serve Him for nothing—you shall never have to ask the question—"What profit is there if we serve God?" You shall have His peace, His love, His joy, His supplies according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus! You shall know that in keeping His Commandments there is great reward! Believer, you shall have everything through Christ and nothing without Him! He that trusts not the Savior and prays not to Him, shall be like Gideon's fleece—when all around it was wet the fleece was dry! But the man who trusts God and blesses His name shall be like Gideon's fleece—when all around was dry it was full of moisture!

God will not hear a man's prayers except through Christ Jesus! But if that name is mentioned, the gates of Heaven fly open! God withholds no real good from the man of God who is in Christ. But our plea must be Jesus, first, and Jesus last, and Jesus in between! We must present the bleeding Lamb before God each morning and each night. I pray you seek no mercy of God apart from Christ, but lay hold upon God in Christ—and you shall have enough for all your need! May God the Holy Spirit cause you to abide in Christ Jesus for His name's sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
2 Kings 4:1-7 and Philippians 4.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—
84 (SONG II), 23 (FIRST VERSION), 708.**

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A NEW YEAR'S WISH

NO. 3231

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 1911.

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

*“But my God shall supply all your need according to
His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:19.*

THE Philippians had several times sent presents to Paul to supply his necessities. Though they were not themselves rich, yet they made a contribution and sent Epaphroditus with it, “an odor of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.” Paul felt very grateful—he thanked God, but he did not forget to also thank the donors—he wished them every blessing and he did as good as say, “You have supplied my need, and my God shall supply yours. You have supplied my need of temporal food and raiment out of your poverty. My God shall supply *all* your need out of His riches in Glory.” “As,” he says, in the 18th verse, “I have all and abound: I am full.” “So,” he adds, “my God shall supply all your need.’ You have sent what you gave me by the hand of a beloved Brother, but God will send a better Messenger to you, for He will supply all your need ‘by Christ Jesus.’” Every single word sounds as if he had thought it over and the Spirit of God had guided him in his meditation so that he should, to the fullest extent, wish them back a blessing similar to that which they had sent to him—only of a richer and more enduring kind!

Now, on this New Year’s Day I would desire, somewhat in the spirit of Paul, to bless those of you who have supplied, according to your abilities, the needs of God’s work in my hands, and have given, even out of your poverty, to the cause of God according as there has been need. I count myself to be personally your debtor though your gifts have been for the students, the orphans, the book and track distributors and not for myself. In return for your kindness, after the manner of His gracious love, “my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” This verse is particularly sweet to me, for when we were building the Orphanage, I foresaw that if we had no voting, and no collecting of annual subscriptions, but depended upon the goodness of God and the voluntary offerings of His people, we would have times of trial and, therefore, I ordered the masons to place upon the first columns of the Orphanage entrance, these words, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” The text, therefore, is cut in stone upon the right hand and upon the left of the great archway! There stands this declaration of our confidence in God—and as long as God lives, we shall never need to remove it, for He will certainly

supply the needs of His own work! While we serve Him, He will furnish our tables for us!

I. The text might suggest to us a field of gloomy thought if we wished to indulge the melancholy vein, for it speaks of “all your need.” So, first, behold A GREAT NECESSITY—“*all your need.*” What a gulf! What an abyss! “All your need.” I do not know how many Believers made up the church at Philippi, but the need of one saint is great enough—what must many need? It would not be possible to tell the number of God’s children on earth, but the text comprehends the need of the whole chosen family, “*all your need.*” We will not ask you to reckon up the wonderful draft upon the Divine bank account which must be made by all the needs of all the saints who are yet on earth—but just think of your own need—that will be more within the compass of your experience and the range of your meditation! May the Lord supply your need and *all your need!*

There is *our temporal need* and that is no little matter! If we have food and raiment, we should be content, but there are many of God’s people to whom the mere getting of food and raiment is a wearisome toil—and what with household cares, family trials, sickness of body, losses in business and sometimes the impossibility of obtaining suitable labor, many of God’s saints are as hard up as Elijah was when he sat by the brook Cherith. If God did not send them their bread and meat in a remarkable manner, they would surely starve—but their bread shall be given them and their water shall be sure. “My God shall supply all your need.” You have, perhaps, a large family and your needs are therefore greatly increased. The declaration of the text includes the whole of your needs—personal and relative!

After all, our temporal needs are very small compared with *our spiritual needs*. A man may, with the blessing of God, pretty readily provide for the needs of the body, but who shall provide for the requirements of the soul? There is need of perpetual pardon, for we are always sinning. And Jesus Christ’s blood is always pleading for us and cleansing us from sin! Every day there is need of fresh strength to battle against inward sin and, blessed be God, it is daily supplied so that our youth is renewed like the eagle’s! As good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we need armor from head to foot—and even then we do not know how to wear the armor, or how to wield the sword unless He who gave us these sacred implements shall be always with us. Warring saint, God will supply all your need by His Presence and Spirit. But we are not merely warriors, we are also workers. We are called, many of us, to important spheres of labor, (and, indeed, let no man think his sphere unimportant), but here, also, our hands shall be sufficient for us and we shall accomplish our life-work. You have need to be helped to do the right thing, at the right time, in the right spirit and in the right manner—your need, as a Sunday school teacher, as an open-air preacher and especially as a minister of the Gospel, will be very great, but the text meets all your requirements—“My God shall supply all your need.” Then comes our need in suffering, for many of us are called to take our turn in the Lord’s prison camp. Here we need patience under

pain and hope under depression of spirit. Who is sufficient for furnace-work? Our God will supply us with those choice Graces and consolations which shall strengthen us to glorify His name even in the fires! He will either make the burden lighter, or the back stronger—He will diminish the need, or increase the supply.

Beloved, it is impossible for me to mention all the forms of our spiritual need. We need to be daily converted from some sin or other, which, perhaps, we have scarcely known to be sin. We need to be instructed in the things of God, we need to be illuminated as to the mind of Christ, we need to be comforted by the promises, we need to be quickened by the precepts, we need to be strengthened by the Doctrines. We need, oh, what do we *not* need? We are just a bag of needs and a heap of infirmities! If any one of us were to keep a *need book*, as I have seen tradesmen do, what a huge folio it would need to be! And it might be written inside and out and crossed and re-crossed, for we are full of needs from the first of January to the end of December! But here is the mercy—“My God shall supply all your need.” Are you put in high places? Have you many comforts? Do you enjoy wealth? What need you have to be kept from loving the world, to be preserved from wantonness and pride and the follies and fashions of this present evil world! My God will supply your need in that respect. Are you very poor? Then the temptation is to envy, to bitterness of spirit, to rebellion against God. “My God shall supply all your need.” Are you alone in the world? Then you need the Lord Jesus to be your Companion and your Companion He will be! Have you many around you? Then you have need of Grace to set them a good example, to bring up your children and manage your household in the fear of God. “My God shall supply all your need.” You have need, in times of joy, to be kept sober and steady. You have need, in times of sorrow, to be strong and act like men. You have needs in living and you will have needs in dying—but your last need shall be supplied as surely as your first! “My God shall supply *all* your need.”

Come, then, Brothers and Sisters, and look down into this great gulf of need and exultingly say, “O Lord, we thank You that our needs are great, for there is then more room for Your love, Your tenderness, Your power, Your faithfulness to fill the chasm!”

That first thought, which I said might be a gloomy one, has all the dreariness taken out of it by four others equally true, but each of them full of good cheer! The text not only mentions *a great necessity*, but it also mentions *a great Helper*—“My God.” Next, *a great supply*—“My God shall supply all your need.” Thirdly, *an abundant store* out of which to draw the gift—“according to His riches in Glory.” And lastly, *a glorious Channel* through which the supply shall come—“by Christ Jesus.”

II. So, for our enormous needs here is A GREAT HELPER. “*My God shall supply all your need.*” Whose God is that? Why, Paul’s God! That is one of the matters in which the greatest saints are no better off than the very least, for though Paul called the Lord, “My God,” He is my God, too! My dear old Friend who sits yonder and has nothing but a few pence in

all the world, can also say, "and He is my God, too! He is my God and He is as much my God if I am the meanest, most obscure and weakest of His people, as He would be my God if I were able, like Paul, to evangelize the nations!" It is to me delightful to think that *my God is Paul's God*, because, you see, Paul intended this—he meant to say, "You see, dear Brothers and Sisters, my God has supplied all my needs and as He is your God, He will supply yours." I have been in the Roman dungeon in which Paul is said to have been confined—and a comfortless prison, indeed, it is! First of all you descend into a vaulted chamber into which no light ever comes except through a little round hole in the roof. And then, in the middle of the floor of that den, there is another opening through which the prisoner was let down into a second and lower dungeon in which no fresh air or light could possibly come to him. Paul was probably confined there. The dungeon of the Praetorium in which he was certainly housed is not much better. Paul would have been left well-near to starve there, but for those good people at Philippi! I should not wonder but what Lydia was at the bottom of this kind movement, or else the jailer. They said, "We must not let the good Apostle starve." And so they made up a contribution and sent him what he needed—and when Paul received it, he said, "My God has taken care of me. I cannot make tents here in this dark place so as to earn my own living, but my Master still supplies my need! And even so, when you are in straits, He will supply yours."

"*My God.*" It has often been sweet to me, when I have thought of my orphan children, and money has not come in, to remember Mr. Müller's God and how He always supplied the children at Bristol. His God is my God—and I rest upon Him. When you turn over the pages of Scripture and read of men who were in serious trouble and were helped, you may say, "Here is Abraham, he was blessed in all this and Abraham's God will supply all my need, for He is *my God*. I read of Elijah, that the ravens fed him. I have Elijah's God and He can command the ravens to feed me if He pleases. The God of the Prophets, the God of the Apostles, the God of all the saints that have gone before us—"this God is our God forever and ever." It seems to be thought by some that God will not work, now, as He used to. "Oh, if we had lived in miraculous times," they say, "then we could have trusted Him! Then there was manifest evidence of God's existence, for He pushed aside the laws of Nature and worked for the fulfillment of His promises to His people." Yet that was a rather coarser mode of working than the present one, for now the Lord produces the same results without the violation of the laws of Nature! It is a great fact that without the disturbance of a single law of Nature, *prayer* becomes effectual with God! And God being enquired of by His people to do it for them, does fulfill His promise and supplies their needs. Using means of various kinds, He still gives His people all things necessary for this life and godliness! Without a miracle, He works great wonders of loving care—and He will continue to do so!

Beloved, *is the God of Paul your God?* Do you regard Him as such? It is not every man who worships Paul's God. It is not every professing Chris-

tian who really knows the Lord at all, for some invent a deity such as they fancy God ought to be! The God of Paul is the God of the Old and New Testament—such a God as we find there. Do you trust such a God? Can you rest upon Him? “There are such severe judgments mentioned in Scripture.” Yes, do you quarrel with them? Then you cast Him off! But if, instead thereof, you feel, “I cannot understand You, O my God, nor do I think I ever shall, but it is not for me, a child, to measure the Infinite God, or to arraign You at my bar and say to You, ‘Thus should You have done, and thus ought You not to have done.’ You say, ‘Such am I,’ and I answer, ‘Such as You are, I love You and I cast myself upon You, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob—the God of Your servant Paul. You are my God and I will rest upon You.’” Very well, then, He will “supply all your need, according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.” Just think of that for a minute!

If *He* will supply you, you will be supplied, indeed, for God is Infinite in capacity! He is Infinitely wise as to the manner of His actions and Infinitely powerful as to the acts themselves! He never sleeps nor tires. He is never absent from any place, but is always ready to help. Your needs come, perhaps, at very unexpected times—they may occur in the midnight of despondency or in the noonday of delight—but God is always near to supply the surprising need! He is everywhere present and everywhere Omnipotent and He can supply all your need, in every place, at every time, to the fullest degree!—

“Remember that Omnipotence has servants everywhere”—

and that whenever God wishes to send you aid, He can do it without pausing to ask, “How shall it be done?” He has but to will it and all the powers of Heaven and earth are subservient to your necessity! With such a Helper, what cause have you to doubt?

III. The next point in the text is, A GREAT SUPPLY. “My God shall *supply* all your need.” Sometimes we lose a good deal of the meaning of Scripture through the translation. In fact, nothing ever gains by translation except a bishop. The present passage might be rendered thus, “My God will fill to the fullest all your need.” The illustration which will best explain the meaning is that of the woman whose children were to be sold by her creditor to pay the debts of her late husband. She had nothing to call her own except some empty jars—and the Prophet bade her set these in order and bring the little oil which still remained in the cruse. She did so and he then said to her, “Go among your neighbors and borrow empty vessels, not a few.” She went from one to another till she had filled her room full of these empty vessels—and then the Prophet said, “Pour out.” She began to pour out from her almost empty cruse and, to her surprise, it filled her largest jar! She went to another and filled that, and then another and another! She kept on filling all the jars till, at last she said to the Prophet, “there is not a vessel more.” Then the oil stopped, but not till then! So will it be with your needs. You were frightened at having so many needs just now, were you not? But now be pleased to think you have them, for they are just so many empty vessels to be filled! If the

woman had borrowed only a few jars, she could not have received much oil—but the more empty vessels she had—the more oil she obtained! So the more wants and the more needs you have—if you bring them to God, so much the better—for He will fill them all to the brim and you may be thankful that there are so many to be filled! When you have no more needs, (but oh, when will that be), then the supply will stop, but not till then!

How gloriously God gives to His people! We needed pardon once—He washed us and He made us whiter than snow! We needed clothing, for we were naked. What did He do? Give us some rough dress or other? Oh, no! But He said, “Bring forth the best robe and put it on him.” It was a fortunate thing for the prodigal that his clothes were all in rags, for then he needed raiment and the best robe was brought forth! It is a grand thing to be sensible of spiritual needs, for they will all be supplied. A conscious need in the sight of God—what is it but a prevalent request for a new mercy? We have sometimes asked Him to comfort us, for we were very low. But when the Lord has comforted us, He has so filled us with delight that we have been inclined to cry with the old Scotch Divine, “Hold, Lord, hold! It is enough! I cannot bear more joy. Remember I am only an earthen vessel.” We, in relieving the poor, generally give no more than we can help, but our God does not stop to count His favors—He gives like a king! He pours water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground!

IV. We must pass on to the next thought and consider for a minute or two THE GREAT RESOURCES out of which this supply is to come. “My God shall supply all your need, *according to His riches in Glory.*” The preacher may sit down, now, for He cannot compass this part of the text. God’s riches in Glory are beyond all thought!

Consider *the riches of God in Nature*—who shall count His treasures? Get away into the forests—travel on mile after mile among the trees which cast their ample shade for no man’s pleasure, but only for the Lord. Mark on lone mountainside and far-reaching plain the myriads of flowers whose perfume is for God alone. What wealth each spring and summer is created in the boundless estates of the great King! Observe the vast amount of animal and insect life which crowds the land with the riches of Divine Wisdom, for “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” Look towards the sea—think of those shoals of fish, so countless that when only the fringe of them is touched by our fishermen, they find enough food to supply a nation! Mark, too, the sunken treasures of the ocean which no hand gathers but that of the Eternal. If you would see the wealth of the Creator, cast your eyes to the stars—count their numbers if you can! Astronomy has enlarged our vision and made us look upon this world as a mere speck compared with innumerable other worlds that God has made and it tells us that probably all the myriads of worlds that we can see with the telescope are a mere fraction of the countless orbs which are in infinite space! Vast are God’s riches in Na-

ture. It needs a Milton to sing, as he sang in *Paradise Lost*, the riches of the creating God!

The riches of God in Providence are equally without bound. He says to this creature, "Go," and he goes, and to another, "Do this," and he does it, for all things do His bidding. Think of *the wealth of God in Grace*. There Nature and Providence stand eclipsed, for we have the Fountain of Eternal Love, the gift of an Infinite Sacrifice, the pouring out of the blood of His own dear Son and the Covenant of Grace in which the smallest blessing is infinite in value! The riches of His Grace! "God is rich in mercy"—rich in patience, love, power, kindness—rich beyond all conception!

Now your needs shall be supplied according to the riches of Nature, the riches of Providence and the riches of Grace! But this is not all—the Apostle chooses a higher style and writes "according to *His riches in Glory*." Ah, we have never seen God in Glory! That were a sight our eyes could none at present behold! Christ in His Glory, when transfigured upon earth, was too resplendent a spectacle even for the tutored eyes of Peter, James, and John—

"At the too-transporting light"—

darkness rushed upon them and they were as men that slept! What God is in His Glory do you know, you angels? Does He not veil His face even from you lest, in the excessive brightness of His Essence, even *you* should be consumed? Who among all His creatures can tell the riches of His Glory when even the heavens are not pure in His sight and He charges His angels with folly?

"His riches in Glory." It means not only the riches of what He has done, but the riches of what He could do, for if He has made hosts of worlds, He could make as many myriads more—and then have but begun! The possibilities of Omnipotent God, who shall reckon? But the Lord shall supply all your need according to such glorious possibilities. When a great king gives according to his riches, then he does not measure out stinted alms to beggars, but he gives *like a king*, as we say. And if it is some grand festival day, and the king is in his state array, his largesse is on a noble scale. Now, when God is in His Glory, think, if you can, what must be the largesse that He distributes—what the treasures that He brings forth for His own beloved! Now, "according to His riches in Glory," He will supply all your needs. After that, dare you despond? O Soul, what insanity is unbelief? What flagrant blasphemy is doubt of the love of God! He must bless us; and, blessed by Him, we must be blest, indeed! If He is to supply our needs "according to His riches in Glory"—they will be supplied to the fullest!

V. Now let us close our meditation by considering THE GLORIOUS CHANNEL by which these needs are to be supplied—"According to His riches in Glory *by Christ Jesus*." You shall have all your soul's needs satisfied, but you must go to Christ for everything. "By Christ Jesus." That is the Fountainhead where the Living Waters well up! You will not supply your needs by your own care and fretfulness. "Consider the lilies, how they grow." You are to be enriched "by Christ Jesus." You will not have

your spiritual needs supplied by going to Moses and working and toiling as if you were your own savior, but by faith in Christ Jesus! Those who will not go to Christ Jesus must go without Divine Grace, for God will give them nothing in the way of Grace except through His Son! Those who go to Jesus the most, shall taste of His abundance more often, for through Him all blessings come! My advice to myself and to you is that we abide in Him for since that is the way by which the blessing comes, we had better abide in it! We read of Ishmael that he was sent into the wilderness with a bottle, but Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-Roi. And it is wise for us to dwell by the Well, Christ Jesus, and never trust to the bottles of our own strength. If you wander from Christ Jesus, Brothers and Sisters, you depart from the center of bliss!

All this year I pray that you may abide by the well of this text. Draw from it. Are you very thirsty? Draw from it, for it is full! And when you plead this promise, the Lord will supply all your need! Do not cease receiving from God for a minute. Let not your unbelief hinder the Lord's bounty, but cling to this promise, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus." I know not how to wish you a greater blessing. If you are enabled by the Holy Spirit to realize it, you will enjoy what I earnestly wish for you, namely— **A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
2 KINGS 4:1-7; PHILIPPIANS 4.**

2 Kings 4:1. *Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the Prophets unto Elisha, saying, Your servant, my husband, is dead and you know that your servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.* It is sad for anyone to be in debt and yet there may be circumstances under which even a man who fears the Lord may die in debt and leave no provision for his wife and children except a large portion of sorrow. In the case of this poor widow, it was not long before she cried to Elisha, "The creditor is come." He generally does come pretty quickly and he had come to her to take away her two sons whom she needed to support her—to make them bondmen—slaves, to serve him for a certain number of years till their father's debt was worked out. And this hurt the poor woman's heart, so she came to see what the Lord's servant could do for her. She could not bear to see her sons taken away to serve as bondmen to a stranger through no fault of their own and, possibly, through no fault on their father's part.

2. *And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for you?* Elisha was probably about as poor as she was, so what could he do for her?

2. *Tell me, what have you in the house?* "Whatever there is in the house must go towards this debt, so 'tell me what have you in the house?'"

2. *And she said, Your handmaid has not anything in the house, save a pot of oil.* Her husband had been a God-fearing man, a true servant of

Jehovah, yet he had died in such dire poverty that his widow had to say to Elisha, "Your handmaid has not anything in the house, save a pot of oil." Those were indeed bad times for the sons of the Prophets for, in those days men cared more for false prophets and for the priests of Baal than for the servants of the Most High God!

3. *Then he said, Go, borrow vessels abroad of all your neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.* [See Sermon #2063, Volume 35—THE FILLING OF EMPTY VESSELS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] "Get as many empty oil jars as you can, it does not matter how great nor how many they are, but they must be empty."

4-6. *And when you are come in, you shall shut the door upon you and upon your sons, and shall pour out into all those vessels, and you shall set aside that which is full. So she went from him and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not another vessel. And the oil stopped.* [See Sermon #1467-A, Volume 25—THE OIL AND THE VESSELS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] There was no reason why "the oil stopped" except that there was "not another vessel" to receive the flowing stream!

7. *Then she came and told the man of God.* She must have understood that the oil was to be used for the payment of her debt, but she was a woman of delicate sensitiveness, with a tender conscience—as honest people usually are—so she wanted full permission from Elisha before she would dispose of the oil. She regarded it, in some sense, as *his* oil—as it was through using the means that he had directed that her little store of oil had been so miraculously multiplied. So "she came and told the man of God."

7. *And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay your debt, and live, you and the children off the rest.* What a merciful deliverance that was for the poor widow and her sons! And there have been many other deliverances in the experiences of God's people which, if they have not been quite as miraculous as this one, have, nevertheless, been very remarkable—although God has appeared to work them the common way in which He is constantly working. Yet they have been uncommon mercies all the while.

Now let us read Paul's letter to the Christians at Philippi who had been the means of supplying his necessities, though not in the miraculous manner in which the Prophet Elisha had supplied the needs of that poor widow.

Philippians 4:1. *Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the lord, my dearly beloved.* [See Sermon #1959, Volume 33—THE WATCHWORD FOR TODAY—STAND FAST—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Paul had a very warm affection for the Church at Philippi. You remember how that Church was established—first with the baptized household of Lydia and afterwards with the baptized household of the jailer. These saints at Philippi were, in a special sense, Paul's spiritual children. They were very generous and

kind to him, and his heart was very warm with love to them, so he called them, “my brethren dearly beloved,” and then again, “my dearly beloved.”

2. *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.* These two women had fallen out with one another. They evidently differed upon some question or other so that they were not “of the same mind in the Lord,” and Paul thought it so important that there should be perfect unity and love in the Church at Philippi, as well as everywhere else, that he beseeched these two women, of whom we know nothing else, that they would be “of the same mind in the Lord.” Notice that he beseeches each of them in exactly the same way—“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche.” He has a, “beseech,” for each of them! Perhaps, if he had written, “I beseech Euodias and Syntyche,” the latter lady might have fancied that he was not quite so earnest about her as he was about Euodias, so he puts it, “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” Have any of you fallen out, my dear Friends? I do not know of any of you who have done so, but if you have, I say to all of you, men or women, “I beseech you, that you be of the same mind in the Lord.” There is nothing like perfect unity in a Christian Church! If there is even a little division, it will grow to something much worse, by-and-by, so I beseech you, “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

3. *And I entreat you, also, true yokefellow—* Their minister—

3. *Help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement, also, and with other of my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.* They helped me, and they have helped you, so help them with encouraging words and in every other way that you can.

4. *Rejoice in the Lord always.* Not only now and then, on high days and holiday, have a time of joy, but, “rejoice in the Lord always.”

4. *And again I say, Rejoice.* [See Sermon #2405, Volume 41—JOY, A DUTY—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] He had said this before, as you will see in the first verse of the third Chapter, which begins, “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Now he writes it again and repeats it in the same verse—“Rejoice. Rejoice.” It is so important that Believers should be full of joy that Paul writes three times over in a short space, “Rejoice in the Lord.” “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men.* Be men who are God-governed, because God governs those who run to excess in nothing. Some go to excess in one way and some in another, but all excess is to be avoided! “Let your moderation be known unto all men.”

5, 6. *The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing.* This is not a good translation of the original—it does not convey the sense of the Greek. It should to, “Be *anxious* for nothing.” Of course you ought to be careful about everything. You cannot be too careful, but you never ought to be *care*-full, you must care to be right with God, yet you must not be filled with care about anything. “Be anxious for nothing.” Do not fret, do not

worry, do not make other people miserable by your fretting and fuming and fueling.

6. *But in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.* [See Sermon #2351, Volume 40—PRAYER, THE CURE FOR CARE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Ah, this is the way to find the cure for all your anxieties! Take all your trouble to God with a prayer and with a song. Do not go without either the thanksgiving or the prayer, but bear your burden at once to God and ask Him to bear it for you.

7, 8. *And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue and if there is any praise, think on these things.* If anything is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report—be on that side. A Christian is on the side of everything that makes for purity, chastity, honesty or that is for the good of men and the Glory of God! Whenever anyone is making out a list of those who will fight for everything that is right and good, every Christian should say to the man writing the list, “Set down my name, Sir.”

9, 10. *Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of Peace shall be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me has flourished again; wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity.* You see that Paul did not really mean, “Be careful for nothing,” for he says here that these Philippians had cared for him and he praises them for being careful of him. They had lovingly thought of him who was their spiritual father—and when they knew that he was shut up as a prisoner in Rome, and suffering need, they took care to send something to relieve and cheer him.

11. *Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.* [See Sermon #320, Volume 6—CONTENTMENT—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] “I have been initiated—for that is the word—“among those who are content with such things as they have.”

12, 13. *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.* [See Sermons #345 and #346, Volume 6—SELF-SUFFICIENCY SLAIN and ALL-SUFFICIENCY MAGNIFIED—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] “I can be poor, or I can have abundance, if you send it to me, but these things make no real difference to me. I have been made invulnerable either to suffering or to abundance.” Blessed is the man who has got as far as that! It is a wonderful work of Divine Grace when a man can truly say this!

14, 15. *Nevertheless you have done well, that you shared with my affliction. Now you Philippians also know that in the beginning of the Gospel,*

when I departed from Macedonia, no Church shared with me as concerning giving and receiving, but you only. I should not wonder if it was Lydia who was at the bottom of that giving and receiving and, perhaps, the jailer. They were evidently thoughtful and grateful people. They remembered the Apostle's sufferings and needs and did all they could to help and cheer him.

16, 17. *For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desired a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* He did not look at it as merely something that would ease him, but he looked at it as a token of gratitude for the spiritual blessings they had received through him! It showed that they loved the Gospel which he preached and that they also loved him for having been blessed by God to their souls—and this cheered and delighted him. But, to show that he was not asking for more, he says—

18. *But I have all, and abound: I am full.* I do not suppose that it amounted to much, but it was all that the Apostle needed—and so he says to them, “I have all, and abound: I am full.”

18, 19. *Having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.* I am sure that when they read this verse, they all felt glad that they had had a share in the subscription to relieve the Apostle's needs.

20, 21. *Now unto God and our Father be Glory forever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.* “Give them all my love and tell them how grateful I am to them.”

21, 22. *The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.* Exposed to the greatest perils and yet brave to confess Christ! They may have been nothing but poor kitchen maids, or they may have been among the Praetorian guards who watched and guarded the palace and the prisoners, but they must have their title set down in the letter, “chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.”

23. *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

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