

**THE LIFE AND WORKS OF  
CHARLES H. SPURGEON**

**BOOK TWO - SERMONS AND  
LECTURES BY C. H. SPURGEON**

**BY**

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## PREFACE

This volume contains a graphic account of the Life and Labours of Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. It portrays the brilliant career of the most celebrated preacher of modern times, his matchless eloquence, his tender pathos, his ready wit, and his wonderful mastery over the human heart.

It is an interesting narrative of Mr. Spurgeon's life, and is enriched with the choicest of his sermons and lectures, and with a large collection of extracts from his most famous writings.

This comprehensive volume is divided into three parts.

Book One contains the great preacher's history. It relates the incidents of his early life, shows you the boy preacher at the age of sixteen, and traces his marvellous successes in the great metropolis. It describes the immense Metropolitan Tabernacle and its vast throngs, whom were not only the poor and illiterate, but the most famous persons of the realm, including Gladstone, Bright, Shaftesbury, and multitudes of others.

Mr. Spurgeon was not merely a popular preacher; he was a sunny genial, witty, great-hearted man. He was bold as Luther or Knox, yet possessed deep sympathies, fiery zeal, loving charity, and carried on many enterprises for the welfare of the poor and unfortunate. This work describes his College, where hundreds of poor young men were educated, and his Orphanage, which sheltered thousands of homeless children.

His last, lingering illness; the religious world watching at his bedside; the eagerness with which reports were awaited; his removal to the south of France in hope of recovery; and the final scene when he breathed his last, and both hemispheres were startled by the news, all are depicted in this volume.

Book Two contains Mr. Spurgeon's most celebrated sermons and lectures. These are plain, pithy, expressed in vigorous Saxon, and go right to the heart. Young and old alike are interested in them. He was a master of the art of illustration, and had the rare faculty of making use of the scenes, facts and incidents he met with in his ordinary everyday life. There is, therefore, scarcely a dull page in his sermons or writings. He always had something practical and interesting to say, which secured for him a multitude of hearers and readers.

Book Three comprises a very interesting collection of witty, wise, pathetic, eloquent extracts from the famous preacher's writings. These are illustrated, and are very captivating. Gems from the Spurgeon "Note-Book," quaint sayings of "John Ploughman," beautiful figures and weighty moral lessons, enrich this volume.

Mr. Spurgeon's death removes the most conspicuous figure in the religious world, and one of the most remarkable men of his time. His deeds will live after him. His noble record is made. Whatever monument of bronze or marble may be erected to his memory, his finest tribute will be the glowing words he spoke, the myriads of souls he moved, the grand battle he fought and the brilliant achievements which can not die.

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## 1. HANDS FULL OF HONEY

*“And Samson turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.” - Judges 14:8-9*

It was a singular circumstance that a man unarmed should have slain a lion in the prime of its vigour; and yet more strange that a swarm of bees should have taken possession of the dried carcase, and have filled it with their honey. In that country, what with beasts, birds and insects, and the dry heat, a dead body is soon cleansed from all corruption, and the bones are clean and white: still the killing of the lion and the finding of the honey make up a remarkable story. These singular circumstances became afterwards the subject of a riddle; but with that riddle we have no concern at this time. Samson himself is a riddle. He was not only a riddle-maker; but he was himself an enigma very difficult to explain: with his personal character I have at this time little or nothing to do. We are not today resting at the house of “Gaius, mine host,” where the pilgrims amused themselves with a dish of nuts after dinner; but we are on the march, and must attend to the more important matter of refreshing and inspiring those who are in our company. Neither are we going to discuss difficulties; but as Samson took the honey without being stung, so would we gain instruction without debate. We have in these days so much to do, that we must make practical use of every incident that comes before us in the word of God. My one design is to cheer the desponding and stir up all God’s people to greater diligence in his service. I conceive that the text may legitimately be employed for this purpose. By the help of the Divine Spirit, even after this lapse of time, we may find honey in the lion.

The particular part of the incident which is recorded in these two verses appears to have been passed over by those who have written upon Samson’s life: I suppose it appeared to be too inconsiderable. They are taken up with his festive riddle, but they omit the far more natural and commendable fact of his bringing forth the honey in his hands and presenting it to his father and mother. This is the little scene to which I direct your glances. It seems to me that the Israelite hero with a slain lion in the background, standing out in the open road with his hands laden with masses of honeycomb and dripping with honey, which he holds out to his parents, makes a fine picture worthy of the greatest artist. And what a type we have here of our Divine Lord and Master, Jesus, the conqueror of death and hell. He has destroyed the lion that roared upon us and upon him. He has shouted victory over all our foes. “It is finished,” was his note of triumph; and now he stands in the midst of his church with his hands full of sweetness and consolation, presenting them to those of whom he says, “these are my brother, and sister, and mother.” To each one of us who believe in him he gives the luscious food which he has prepared, for it’s by the overthrow of our foes; he bids us come and eat that we may have our lives sweetened and our hearts filled with joy. To me the comparison seems wonderfully apt and suggestive: I see our triumphant Lord laden with sweetness, holding it forth to all his brethren, and inviting them to share in his joy.

But, beloved, it is written, “As he is, so are we also in this world.” All that are true

Christians are, in a measure, like the Christ whose name they bear, and it is to his image that we are finally to be conformed. "When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;" and meanwhile, in proportion as we see him now, "we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The Samson type may well serve as the symbol of every Christian in the world. The believer has been helped by divine grace in his spiritual conflicts, and he has known "the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." He has thus been made more than a conqueror through him that loved us, and now he stands in the midst of his fellow-men inviting them to Jesus. With the honey in his hands, which he continues still to feast upon, he displays the heavenly sweetness to all that are round about him, saying, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

I have before now met with that popular artist, Gustave Doré, and suggested subjects to him. Had he survived among us, and had another opportunity occurred, I would have pressed him to execute a statue of Samson handing out the honey: strength distributing sweetness; and it might have served as a perpetual reminder of what a Christian should be, a Conqueror and a Comforter, slaying lions and distributing honey. The faithful servant of God wrestles with the powers of evil; but with far greater delight he speaks to his friends and companions, saying, "Eat ye that which is good, and let your souls delight themselves in sweetness." Set the statue before your mind's eye, and now let me speak about it.

Three touches may suffice. First, the believer's life has its conflicts; secondly, the believer's life has its sweets; and, thirdly, the believer's life leads him to communicate of those sweets to others. Here is room for profitable meditation.

### **I. First, then, THE BELIEVER'S LIFE HAS ITS CONFLICTS.**

To become a Christian is to enlist for a soldier. To become a believer is to enter upon a pilgrimage, and the road is often rough: the hills are steep, the valleys are dark, giants block the way, and robbers lurk in corners. The man who reckons that he can glide into heaven without a struggle has made a great mistake. No cross no crown: no sweat no sweet: no conflict no conquest. These conflicts, if we take the case of Samson as our symbol, begin early in the life of the believer. While Samson was a child, the Spirit of the Lord moved him in the camps of Dan. See the last verse of the thirteenth chapter [of the Book of Judges]; and as soon as he was on the verge of manhood, he must match himself with a lion. God, who intended that his servant should smite the Philistines, and should check their proud oppression of his people Israel, began early to train the hero for his life's conflict. So, when Samson was going to seek a wife, he turned aside into the vineyards of Timnath, and a lion roared upon him. Yes, and the young believer, who as yet has not wrestled with the powers of darkness, will not be long before he hears the roar of the lion, and finds himself in the presence of the great Adversary. Very soon we learn the value of the prayer, "Deliver us from the evil one!" Most of the Lord's servants have been men of war from their youth up. Without are fightings even when within there are no fears. This early combat with the savage beast was intended by God to let him know his strength when under the influence of the Spirit, and to train him for his future combats with Israel's enemies. He that is to smite

the Philistines hip and thigh with a great slaughter, until he has laid them heaps on heaps by his single prowess, must begin by rending a lion with his naked hands. He was to learn war in the same school as another and a greater hero, who afterwards said, "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them."

Soldiers are made by war. You can not train veterans or create victors except by battles. As in the wars of armies so is it in spiritual contests: men must be trained for victory over evil by combat with it. Hence "it is good for a man that he bare the yoke in his youth;" for it will not gall his shoulders in after years. It is assuredly a dangerous thing to be altogether free from trouble: in silken ease the soldier loses his prowess. Look at Solomon, one of the greatest and wisest, and yet, I might say, one of the least and most foolish of men. It was his fatal privilege to sit upon a throne of gold and sun himself in the brilliance of unclouded prosperity, and hence his heart soon went astray, and he fell from his high places. Solomon in his early days had no trouble, for no war was then raging, and no enemy worth notice was then living. His life ran smoothly on, and he was lulled into a dreamy sleep, the sleep of the voluptuous. He had been happier far had he been, like his father, called from his earliest days to trial and conflict; for this might have taught him to stand fast upon the pinnacle of glory whereon the providence of God had placed him. Learn, then, O young brother, that if, like Samson, you are to be a hero for Israel, you must early be inured to suffering and daring, in some form or other. When you step aside and seek for meditation in the quiet of the vineyard a young lion may roar upon you; even as in the earliest days of your Lord and Master's public service he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

These conflicts, dear friends, may often be very terrible. By a young lion is not meant a whelp, but a lion in the fullness of its early strength; not yet slackened in its pace, or curbed in its fury by growing years. Fresh and furious, a young lion is the worst kind of beast that a man can meet with. Let us expect as followers of Christ to meet with strong temptations, fierce persecutions, and severe trials, which will lead to stern conflicts. Do not reckon, thou that art yet putting on thy harness, that thou shalt soon put it off, or that when thou puttest it off it will be quite as bright as it is today. It will be dimmed with blood and dust, and battered by many a blow; perhaps thy foe may find a way to pierce it, or at least to wound thee between its joints. I would have every man begin to be a soldier of the cross, but I would at the same time have him count the cost; for it is no child's play, and if he thinks it'll be such, he will be grievously disappointed. A young believer will, of a sudden, have a doubt suggested to him of which he never heard before; and it will roar upon him like a young lion; neither will he see all at once how to dispose of it. Or he may be placed in singular circumstances where his duty seems to run counter to the tenderest instincts of his nature; here, too, the young lion will roar upon him. Or, one for whom he has an intense respect may treat him ill because he is a follower of Christ, and the affection and respect which he feels for this person may make his opposition the more grievous: in this also it is with him as when a lion roareth. Or he may suffer a painful bereavement, or sustain a severe loss; or he may have a disease upon him, with consequent pains and depressions, and these may cast the shadow of death upon his spirits; so that again a young lion roars upon him. Brother, sister, let us reckon upon this, and not be dismayed by it, since in all this is the life of our spirit. By such lessons as these we are taught to do service for God, to sympathise with our fellow-Christians, and to value the help of our gracious

Saviour. By all these we are weaned from earth and made to hunger for that eternal glory which is yet to be revealed, of which we may truly say, "No lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon." These present evils are for our future good: their terror is for our teaching. Trials are sent us for much the same reason that the Canaanites were permitted to live in the Holy Land, that Israel might learn war, and be equipped for battle against foreign foes.

These conflicts come early, and they are very terrible; and, moreover, they happen to us when we are least prepared for them. Samson was not hunting for wild beasts; he was engaged on a much more tender business. He was walking in the vineyards of Timnath, thinking of anything but lions, and "behold," says the Scripture, "a young lion roared against him." It was a remarkable and startling occurrence. He had left his father and mother and was quite alone; no one was within call to aid him in meeting his furious assailant. Human sympathy is exceedingly precious, but there are points in our spiritual conflict in which we can not expect to receive it. To each man there are passages in life too narrow for walking two abreast. Upon certain crags we must stand alone. As our constitutions differ, so our trials, which are suited to our constitutions, must differ also. Each individual has a secret with which no friend can intermeddle; for every life has its mystery and its hid treasure. Do not be ashamed, young Christian, if you meet with temptations which appear to you to be quite singular: we have each one thought the same of his trials. You imagine that no one suffers as you do, whereas no temptation hath happened unto you "but such as is common to man," and God will "with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it." Yet for the time being, you may have to enter into fellowship with your Lord when he trod the wine-press alone, and of the people, there was none with him. Is not this for your good? Is not this the way to strength? What kind of piety is that which is dependent upon the friendship of man? What sort of religion is that which can not stand alone? Moved, you will have to die alone, and you need therefore grace to cheer you in solitude. The dear wife can attend you weeping to the river's brink, but into the chill stream she can not go with you: and if you have not a religion which will sustain you in the solitudes of life, of what avail will it be to you in the grim lonesomeness of death? Thus, I reckon it to be a happy circumstance that you are called to solitary conflict that you may test your faith, and see of what stuff your hope is made.

The contest was all the worse for Samson, that in addition to being quite alone, "there was nothing in his hand." This is the most remarkable point in the narrative. He had no sword or hunter's spear with which to wound the lordly savage: he had not even a stout staff with which to ward off his attack. Samson stood an unarmed, unarmoured man in the presence of a raging beast. So, we, in our early temptations, are apt to think that we have no weapon for the war, and we do not know what to do. We are made to cry out, "I am unprepared! How can I meet this trial? I can not grasp the enemy to wrestle with him. What am I to do?" Herein will the splendour of faith and glory of God be made manifest, when you shall slay the lion, and yet it shall be said of you, "But he had nothing in his hand." Nothing but that which the world sees not and values not.

Now, go one step further, for time forbids our lingering here. I invite you to remember that it is by the Spirit of God that the victory was won. We read, "And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid." Let the

Holy Spirit help us in our trouble and we need neither company nor weapon; but without him what can we do? Good Bishop Hall says, "If that 'roaring lion, that goes about continually seeking whom he may devour,' find us alone among the vineyards of the Philistines, where is our hope? Not in our heels, he is swifter than we: not in our weapons, we are naturally unarmed; not in our hands, which are weak and languishing; but in the Spirit of God, by whom 'we can do all things.' If God fight in us, who can resist us? There is a stronger lion in us, than that against us."

Here is our one necessity - to be endowed with power from on high: the power of the Holy Ghost. Helped by the Spirit of God, the believer's victory will be complete: the lion shall not be driven away but rent in pieces. Girt with the Spirit's power, our victory shall be as easy as it will be perfect: Samson rent the lion as though it were a little lamb, or a kid of the goats. Well said Paul, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." Sin is soon overcome, temptations are readily refused, affliction is joyfully borne, persecution is gladly endured, when the Spirit of glory and of peace resteth upon us.

"With God all things are possible;" and as the believer is with God, it cometh to pass that "all things are possible to him that believeth."

If we were surrounded by all the devils in hell we need not fear them for an instant if the Lord be on our side. We are mightier than all hell's legions when the Spirit is mightily upon us. If we were to be beaten down by Satan until he had set his foot upon our breast, to press the very life out of us, yet if the Spirit of God helped us we would reach out our hand, and grasp "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," and we would repeat the feat of Christian with Apollyon, when he gave the fiend such grievous wounds that he spread his dragon wings and flew away. Wherefore fear not, ye tried ones, but trust in the Spirit of God, and your conflict shall speedily end in victory. Sometimes our conflict is with past sin. We doubtfully inquire, "How can it be forgiven?" The temptation vanishes before a sight of the dying Redeemer. Then lust roars against us, and we overcome it through the blood of the Lamb, for "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Sometimes a raging corruption, or a strong habit wars upon us, and then we conquer by the might of the sanctifying Spirit of God, who is "with us and shall be in us" evermore. Or else it is the world which tempts, and our feet have almost gone; but we overcome the world through the victory of faith: and if Satan raises against us "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," all at once, we are still delivered, for the Lord is a "wall of fire round about us." The inward life bravely resists all sin, and God's help is given to believers to preserve them from all evil in the moment of urgent need; even as he helped his martyrs and confessors to speak the right word when called, unprepared, to confront their adversaries. Care not, therefore, oh thou truster in the Lord Jesus, how fierce thine enemy may be this day! As young David slew the lion and the bear. and smote the Philistine too, even so shalt thou go from victory to victory. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." Wherefore, with a lion-like spirit, meet lions which seek to devour you.

**II. Now, then, we come to our second head, which is: THE BELIEVER'S LIFE HAS ITS SWEETS.**

We are not always killing lions. We are sometimes eating honey. Certain of us do both at a time; we kill lions and yet cease not to eat honey: and truly it has become so sweet a thing, to enter into conflict for Christ's sake, that it is a joy to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." The same Lord who hath bidden us "quit yourselves like men; be strong," has also said, "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, rejoice."

The believer's life has its sweets, and these are of the choicest: for what is sweeter than honey? What is more joyful than the joy of a saint? What is more happy than the happiness of a believer? I will not condescend to make a comparison between our joy and the mirth of fools; I will go no further than a contrast. Their mirth is as the crackling of thorns under a pot, which spit fire, and make a noise and a flash, but there is no heat, and they are soon gone out: nothing comes of it, the pot is long in boiling. But the Christian's delight is like a steady coal fire. You have seen the grate full of coals, all burning red, and the whole mass of coal has seemed to be one great glowing ruby, and everybody who has come into the room out of the cold has delighted to warm his hands, for it gives out a steady heat and warms the body even to its marrow. Such are our joys. I would sooner possess the joy of Christ five minutes than I would revel in the mirth of fools for half a century. There is more bliss in the tear of repentance than in the laughter of gaiety; our holy sorrows are sweeter than the worldling's joys. But, oh, when our joys grow full, divinely full, then are they unspeakably like those above, and heaven begins below. Did you never cry for joy? You say, perhaps, "Not since I was a child." Nor have I. But I have always remained a child as far as divine joy is concerned. I could often cry for joy when "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him."

Ours is a joy which will bear thinking over. You can dare to pry into the bottom of it and test its foundation. It is a joy which does not grow stale; you may keep it in your mouth by the year together, and yet it never cloy; you may return to it again, and again, and again, and find it still as fresh as ever. And the best of it, is there is no repentance after it. You are never sorry that you were so glad. The world's gay folk are soon sick of their drink; but we are only sorry that we were not gladder still, for our gladness sanctifies. We are not denied any degree of joy to which we can possibly attain, for ours is a healthy, health-giving delight. Christ is the fullness of joy to his people, and we are bidden to enjoy him to the full. Christians have their sweets, and those are as honey and the honeycomb, the best of the best.

Of these joys there is plenty; for Samson found, as it were, a living spring of honey, since he discovered a swarm of bees. So abundant was the honey that he could take huge masses of the comb and carry it in his hands, and go away with it, bearing it to others. In the love of Christ, in pardoned sin, in "acceptance in the Beloved," in resting in God, in perfectly acquiescing in his will, in the hope of heaven, there is such joy that none can measure it. We have such a living swarm of bees to make honey for us in the precious promises of God, that there is more delight in store than any of us can possibly realise. There is infinitely more of Christ beyond our comprehension than we have as yet been able to comprehend. How blessed to receive of his fullness, to be sweetened with his sweetness, and yet to know that infinite goodness still remains! Perhaps some of you have enjoyed so much of Christ that you could hardly bear any

more; but your largest enjoyments are only as tiny shells filled by a single wave of the sea, while all the boundless ocean rolls far beyond your reach. We have exceeding great joy, yea, joy to spare. Our Master's wedding feast is not so scantily furnished that we have to bring in another seat for an extra guest, or murmur to ourselves that we had better not invite at random lest we should be incommoded by too great a crowd. Nay, rather the pillared halls of mercy in which the King doth make his feast are so vast that it will be our lifelong business to furnish them with guests, compelling more and more to come in that his house may be filled, and that his royal festival may make glad ten thousand times ten thousand hearts.

Dear friends, if you want to know what are the elements of our joy, I have already hinted at them, but I will for a moment enlarge thereon. Our joys are often found in the former places of our conflicts. We gather our honey out of the lions which have been slain for us, or by us.

There is, first, our sin. A horrible lion that! But it is a dead lion, for "grace has much more abounded" over abounding sin. Oh, brothers, I have never heard of any dainty in all the catalogue of human joys that could match a sense of pardoned sin. Full forgiveness! Free forgiveness! Eternal forgiveness! See, it sparkles like the dew of heaven. To know that God has blotted out my sin is knowledge rich with unutterable bliss. My soul has begun to hear the songs of seraphim when it has heard that note, "I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and as a thick cloud thine iniquities." Here is choice honey for you!

The next dead lion is conquered desire. When a wish has arisen in the heart contrary to the mind of God, and you have said, "Down with you! I will pray you down. You used to master me; I fell into a habit and I was soon overcome by you; but I will not again yield to you. By God's grace I will conquer you;" I say, when at last you have obtained the victory, such a sweet contentment perfumes your heart that you are filled with joy unspeakable; and you are devoutly grateful to have been helped of the Spirit of God to master your own spirit. Thus you have again eaten spiritual honey.

When you are able to feel in your own soul that you have overcome a strong temptation, the fiercer it was and the more terrible it was, the louder has been your song, and the more joyful your thanksgiving. To go back to Mr. Bunyan again; when Christian had passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death during the night, and when he had come entirely out of it and the sun rose, you remember he looked back. (A pause.) He was long in taking that look, I warrant you. What thoughts he had while looking back! He could just discern that narrow track with the quagmire on one side and the deep ditch on the other; and he could see the shades out of which the hobgoblins hooted and the fiery eyes glanced forth. He looked back by sunlight and thought within himself, "Ah me! What goodness has been with me! I have gone through all that, and yet I am unharmed!" What a happy survey it was to him! All the joy of having passed through temptation without having defiled one's garments! How must Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have felt when they stepped out of the fiery furnace, and were not even singed, "neither had the smell of fire passed upon them." Happy men were they who have lived in the centre of the seven-times-heated furnace where everything else was consumed. Here again is "a piece of an honeycomb." We find honey again from another slain lion; namely, our troubles after we have been

enabled to endure them. This is the metal of which our joy-bells are cast. Out of the brass of our trials we make the trumpets of our triumph. He is not the happy man who has seen no trouble; but “blessed is he that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life thatfadeth not away.”

Death, too. Oh, the honey that is found in dead death. Death is indeed dead. We triumph over him, and are no more afraid of him than little children are of a dead lion. We pluck him by the beard, and say to him, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” We even look forward to the time of our departure with delight, when we shall leave this heavy clay and on spirit wings ascend unto our Father and our God. You see there is a rich store of honey for God’s people; and we do not hesitate to eat it. Let others say as they will, we are a happy people, happy in Christ, happy in the Holy Spirit, happy in God our Father. So that believers have their sweets.

### **III. But the third is the point I want to dwell upon: THE BELIEVER’S LIFE LEADS HIM TO COMMUNICATE OF THESE SWEETS.**

As soon as we have tasted the honey of forgiven sin and perceived the bliss that God has laid up for his people in Christ Jesus, we feel it to be both our duty and our privilege to communicate the good news to others. Here let my ideal statue stand in our midst: the strong man, conqueror of the lion, holding forth his hands full of honey to his parents. We are to be modelled according to this fashion.

And, first, we do this immediately. The moment a man is converted, if he would let himself alone, his instincts would lead him to tell his fellows. I know that the moment I came out of that little chapel wherein I found the Saviour, I wanted to pour out my tale of joy. I could have cried with Cennick -

“Now will I tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour I have found;  
I’ll point to thy redeeming blood,  
And say, Behold the way to God!”

I longed to tell how happy my soul was, and what a deliverance I had obtained from the crushing burden of sin. I longed to see all others come and trust my Lord and live! I did not preach a sermon, but I think I could have told out all the gospel at that first hour. Did not you, my friend, feel much the same? Did not your tongue long to be telling of what the Lord had done for you? Perhaps you are one of those proper and retiring people who are greatly gifted at holding their tongues; and therefore you left the feet of Jesus in silence, silence which angels wondered at. Is that why you have held your tongue ever since? Perhaps if you had begun to speak then you would have continued your testimony to this day. I repeat my assertion that it is the instinct of every new-born soul to communicate the glad tidings which grace has proclaimed in his heart. Just as Samson had no sooner tasted of the honey than he carried a portion of it to his father and mother, so do we hasten to invite our neighbours to Christ. My dear young friend, as soon as ever you know the joy of the Lord, open your mouth in a quiet, humble way, and never allow yourself to be numbered with the deaf and dumb. Let no one stop you from unburdening your heart. Do not follow the bad example of those who have become dumb dogs because of their cowardice at the beginning.

The believer will do this first to those who are nearest to him. Samson took the honey to his father and mother who were not far away. With each of us the most natural action would be to tell a brother or a sister or a fellow-workman, or a bosom friend. It will be a great joy to see them eating the honey which is so pleasant to our own palate. It is most natural in a parent at once to wish to tell his children of divine love. Have you all done so? You pray for your children, but many of you would be the means of answering your own prayers if you would talk with them one by one. This may appear difficult, but once commenced it will soon grow easy: and, indeed, if it be difficult we should aspire to do it for that very reason. Should we not do many a difficult thing for him who overcame all difficulties for us? At the least, do not deny to your own children the personal testimony of their father or their mother to the surpassing power of grace and the unutterable sweetness of divine love. Tell it to those who are nearest to you. The believer will do this as best he can. Samson, you see, brought the honey to his father and mother in a rough and ready style, going on eating it as he brought it. If I wished to give honey to my father and mother, I should do it up rather daintily. I would at least put it in as respectable a dish as our kitchen could afford. But there were no plates and dishes out there in that Timnath vineyard, and so his own hands were the only salvers upon which Samson could present the delicacy. "He took thereof in his hands, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat." Perhaps you think, "If I am to speak to any person upon true religion, I should like to do it in poetry." Better do it in prose, for perhaps they will take more notice of your verse than of your subject. But give them the honey in hands, and if there is no dish, they can not take notice of the dish. "Ay, but I should like to do it very properly," says one; it is a very important matter; I should like to speak most correctly." But my judgment is, that, as you will not be likely to attain to correct speech all in a hurry, and your friends may die while you are learning your grammar and your rhetoric, you had better tell them of Jesus according to your presentability. Tell them there is life in a look at Jesus. Tell them the story simply, as one child talks to another. Carry the honey in your hands, though it drip all round: no hurt will come of the spilling; there are always little ones waiting for such drops. If you were to make the gospel drip about everywhere, and sweeten all things, it would be no waste, but a blessed gain to all around. Therefore, I say to you, tell of Jesus Christ as best you can, and never cease to do so while life lasts.

But then Samson did another thing, and every true believer should do it too: he did not merely tell his parents about the honey, but he took them some of it. I do not read, "And he told his father and mother of the honey," but I read, "and he took thereof in his hands." Nothing is so powerful as an exhibition of grace, itself, to others. Do not talk about it, but carry it in your hands. "I can not do that," says one. Yes, you can, by your life, your temper, your spirit, your whole bearing. If your hands serve God, if your heart serves God, if your face beams with joy in the service of God, you will carry grace wherever you go, and those who see you will perceive it. You will hardly have need to say, "Come and partake of grace;" for the grace of God in you will be its own invitation and attraction. Let our lives be full of Christ and we shall preach Christ. A holy life is the best of sermons. Soul-winning is wrought by a winning life more surely than by winning words.

Take note, also, that Samson did this with great modesty. We have plenty of people about nowadays who could not kill a mouse without publishing it in the Gospel

Gazette; but Samson killed a lion and said nothing about it. He holds the honey in his hand for his father and mother, he shows them that; but we are specially informed that he told not his father or his mother that he had taken it out of the carcase of the lion. The Holy Spirit finds modesty so rare that he takes care to record it. In telling your own experience be wisely cautious. Say much of what the Lord has done for you, but say little of what you have done for the Lord. You need not make much effort to be brief on that point, for I am afraid that there is not much of it, if all were told. Do not titter a self-glorifying sentence. Let us put Christ to the front, and the joy and blessedness that comes of faith in him; and as for ourselves, we need not speak a word except to lament our sins and shortcomings.

The sum of what I have to say is this - if we have tasted any joy in Christ, if we have known any consolation of the Spirit, if faith has been to us a real power, and if it has wrought in us peace and rest, let us communicate this blessed discovery to others. If you do not do so, you will have missed the very object for which God has blessed you. I heard the other day of a Sunday-school address in America which pleased me much. The teacher, speaking to the boys, said, "Boys, here's a watch, what is it for?" The children answered, "To tell the time." "Well," he said, "suppose my watch does not tell the time, what is it good for?" "Good-for-nothing, sir." Then he took out a pencil. "What is this pencil for?" "It is to write with, sir." "Suppose this pencil won't make a mark, what is it good for?" "Good-for-nothing, sir." Then he took out his pocket-knife. "Boys, what is this for?" They were American boys and so they shouted, "To whittle with," - that is, to experiment on any substance that came in their way by cutting a notch in it. "But," said he, "suppose it will not cut, what is the knife good for?" "Good-for-nothing, sir." Then the teacher asked, "What is the chief end of man?" and they replied, "To glorify God." "But suppose a man does not glorify God, what is he good for?" "Good-for-nothing, sir." That brings out my point most clearly; there are many professors of whom I will not say that they are good-for-nothing, but methinks if they do not soon stir themselves up to glorify God by proclaiming the sweetness of God's love, it will go hard with them. Remember how Jesus said of the savourless salt, "henceforth it is good for nothing." What were you converted for? What were you forgiven for? What were you redeemed for? Have you been preserved for earth, or to tell to others the glad tidings of salvation to all, so to glorify God? Do hold out with your hands full of the honey of divine love, and hold it out to others.

You must assuredly do good by this; you can not possibly do harm. Samson did not invite his father and mother to see the lion when he was alive and roaring - he might have done some hurt in that case by frightening them, or exposing them to injury; but he settled the lion business himself, and when it came to honey he knew that even his mother could not be troubled about that; therefore he invited them both to share his gains. When you get into a soul-conflict, do not publish your distress to all your friends, but fight manfully in God's name. But when you possess the joy of Christ and the love of the Spirit, and grace is abundant in your soul, then tell the news to all around. You can not do any hurt by such a proceeding: grace does good, and no harm, all its days. Even if you blunder over it you will do no mischief. The gospel spilled on the ground is not lost. Good, and only good, must come of making known salvation by Jesus Christ.

It will be much better for you to tell of the sweets of godliness than it will be to make

riddles about the doctrine of it. Samson afterwards made a riddle about his lion and the honey; and that riddle ended in fighting and bloodshed. We have known certain Christians spend their lives in making riddles about the honey and the lion, by asking tough doctrinal questions which even angels can not answer: "Riddle me this," they say, and then it has ended in a fight, and brotherly love has been murdered in the fray. It is much better to bring your hands full of honey to those who are needy, and present it to them that they may eat of it, than it is to cavil and discuss. No hurt can come of telling what the Lord has done for your soul, and it will keep you out of mischief. Therefore, I would stir up all Christian people to continue from day to day exhibiting to needy sinners the blessedness of Christ, that unbelievers may come and eat thereof.

By doing this you will be blessing men far more than Samson could bless his parents, for our honey is honey unto eternity, our sweets are sweets that last to heaven, and are best enjoyed there. Call upon others to "taste and see that the Lord is good," and you shall have therein much joy. You shall increase your own pleasure by seeing the pleasure of the Lord prospering in your hand. What bliss awaits useful Christians when they enter into heaven, for they shall be met there by many who have gone before them whom they were the means of turning to Christ. I do often inwardly sing when I perceive that I can scarce go into any town or village but what somebody hunts me up to say to me, "Under God I owe my salvation to your sermons or to your books." What will be the felicities of heaven when we shall meet those who were turned to righteousness by our holding forth the word of life! Our heaven will be seven heavens as we see them there. If you have done nothing but exhibit in your lives the precious results of grace you will have done well. If you have presented to your companions truths that were sweetness itself to you, and tried to say in broken accent, "Oh that you knew this peace!" it shall give you joy unspeakable to meet those in glory who were attracted to Christ by such a simple means.

God make you all to be his witnesses in all the circles wherein you move.

## 2. GLORY!

*“Who hath called us unto his eternal glory.” - 1 Peter 5:10*

A fortnight ago, when I was only able to creep to the front of this platform, I spoke to you concerning the future of our mortal bodies. “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” On the next Sabbath day we went a step further, and we did not preach so much about the resurrection of the body as upon the hope of glory for our entire nature, our text being, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Thus we have passed through the outer court, and have trodden the hallowed floor of the Holy Place, and now we are the more prepared to enter within the veil, and to gaze a while upon the glory which awaits us. We shall say a little - and oh, how little it will be - upon that glory of which we have so sure a prospect, that glory which is prepared for us in Christ Jesus, and of which he is the hope! I pray that our eyes may be strengthened that we may see the heavenly light, and that our ears may be opened to hear sweet voices from the better land. As for me, I can not say that I will speak of the glory, but I will try to stammer about it; for the best language to which a man can reach concerning glory must be a mere stammering. Paul did but see a little of it for a short time, and he confessed that he heard things that it was not able for a man to utter; and I doubt not that he felt utterly nonplussed as to describing what he had seen. Though a great master of language, yet for once he was overpowered; the grandeur of his theme made him silent. As for us, what can we do, where even Paul breaks down? Pray, dear friends, that the spirit of glory may rest upon you, that he may open your eyes to see as much as can at present be seen of the heritage of the saints. We are told that “eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” Yet the eye has seen wonderful things. There are sunrises and sunsets, Alpine glories and ocean marvels which, once seen, cling to our memories throughout life; yet even when nature is at her best she can not give us an idea of the supernatural glory which God has prepared for his people. The ear has heard sweet harmonies. Have we not enjoyed music which has thrilled us? Have we not listened to speech which has seemed to make our hearts dance within us? And yet no melody of harp nor charm of oratory can ever take us to a conception of the glory which God hath laid up for them that love him.

As for the heart of man, what strange things have entered it! Men have exhibited fair fictions, woven in the loom of fancy, which have made the eyes to sparkle with their beauty and brightness; imagination has revelled and rioted in its own fantastic creations, roaming among islands of silver and mountains of gold, or swimming in seas of wine and rivers of milk; but imagination has never been able to open the gate of pearl which shuts in the city of our God. No, it hath not yet entered the heart of man. Yet the text goes on to say, “but he hath revealed it unto us by his Spirit.” So that heaven is not an utterly unknown region, not altogether an inner brightness shut in with walls of impenetrable darkness. God hath revealed joys which he has prepared for his beloved; but mark you, even though they be revealed of the Spirit, yet it is no common unveiling, and the reason that it is made known at all is ascribed to the fact that, “the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” So we see that the glory which awaits the saints is ranked among the deep things of God, and he that would speak thereof after the manner of the oracles of God must have much heavenly teaching. It is

easy to chatter according to human fancy, but if we would follow the sure teaching of the Word of God we shall have need to be taught of the Holy Spirit, without whose anointing the deep things of God must be hidden from us. Pray that we may be under that teaching while we dwell upon this theme.

There are three questions which we will answer this morning. The first is, what is the destiny of the saints? - "Eternal glory," says the text. Secondly, wherein doth this glory consist? I said we would answer the questions, but this is not to be answered this side of the pearl-gate. Thirdly, what should be the influence of this prospect upon our hearts? What manner of people ought we to be whose destiny is eternal glory? How should we live who are to live forever in the glory of the Most High?

### **I. First, WHAT THEN IS THE DESTINY OF THE SAINTS?**

Our text tells us that God has "called us unto his eternal glory." "Glory!" Does not the very word astound you? "Glory!" Surely that belongs to God alone! Yet the scripture says "glory," and glory it must mean, for it never exaggerates. Think of glory for us who have deserved eternal shame! Glory for us poor creatures who are often ashamed of ourselves! Yes, I look at my book again, and it actually says "glory" - nothing less than glory. Therefore so must it be.

Now, since this seems so amazing and astonishing a thing, I would so speak with you that not a relic of incredulity may remain in your hearts concerning it. I would ask you to follow me while we look through the Bible, not quoting every passage which speaks of glory, but mentioning a few of the leading ones.

This glory has been promised. What said David? In the seventy-third Psalm and twenty-fourth verse we meet with these remarkable words: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory." In the original Hebrew there is a trace of David's recollection of Enoch's being translated; and, though the royal Psalmist did not expect to be caught away without dying, yet he did expect that after he had followed the guidance of the Lord here below the great Father would stoop and take up his child to be with himself forever; He expected to be received into glory. Even in those dim days, when as yet the light of the gospel was but in its dawn, this prophet and king was able to say, "Thou shalt afterward receive me to glory." Did he not mean the same thing when in the eighty-fourth Psalm, verse eleven, he said, "The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly?" Not only no good thing under the name of grace will God withhold from the upright, but no good thing under the head of glory. No good of heaven shall be kept from the saints; no reserve is even set upon the throne of the great King, for our Lord Jesus has graciously promised, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." "No good thing," not even amongst the infinitely good things of heaven, will God withhold from "them that walk uprightly." If David had this persuasion, much more may we walk in the light of the gospel. Since our Lord Jesus hath suffered and entered into his glory, and we know that we shall be with him where he is, we are confident that our rest shall be glorious.

Brethren, it is to this glory that we have been called. The people of God having been

predestinated, have been called with an effectual calling - called so that they have obeyed the call, and have run after him who has drawn them. Now, our text says that he has "called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus." We are called to repentance, we are called to faith, we are called to holiness, we are called to perseverance, and all this that we may afterwards attain unto glory. We have another scripture of like import in 1 Thessalonians 2:12 - "Who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." We are called unto his kingdom according to our Lord's word, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." We are called to be kings, called to wear a crown of life that fadeth not away, called to reign with Christ in his glory. If the Lord had not meant us to have the glory he would not have called us unto it, for his calling is no mockery. He would not by his Spirit have fetched us out from the world and separated us unto himself if he had not intended to keep us from falling and preserve us eternally. Believer, you are called to glory; do not question the certainty of that to which God has called you.

And we are not only called to it, brethren, but glory is especially joined with justification. Let me quote Romans 8:30 - "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." These various mercies are threaded together like pearls upon a string. There is no breaking the thread, no separating the precious things. They are put in their order by God himself, and they are kept there by his eternal and irreversible decree. If you are justified by the righteousness of Christ, you shall be glorified through Christ Jesus, for thus hath God purposed, and so must it be. Do you not remember how salvation itself is linked with glory? Paul, in 2 Timothy 2:10, speaks of "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." The two things are riveted together, and can not be separated.

The saved ones must partake of the glory of God, and for this are they being prepared every day. Paul, in the ninth of Romans, where he speaks about the predestinating will of God, says in the twenty-third verse: "The vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." This is the process which commenced in regeneration, and is going on in us every day in the work of sanctification. We can not be glorified so long as sin remains in us; we must first be pardoned, renewed, and sanctified, and then we are fitted to be glorified. By communion with our Lord Jesus we are made like unto him, as saith the apostle in 2 Corinthians 3:18 - "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." It is very wonderful how by the wisdom of God everything is made to work this way. Look at the blessed text in 2 Corinthians 4:17, where Paul says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" where he represents that all that we can suffer, whether of body or of spirit, is producing for us such a mass of glory that he is quite unable to describe it, and he uses hyperbolic language in saying, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Oh, blessed men, whose very losses are their gains, whose sorrows produce their joys, whose griefs are lost in heaven! Well may we be content to suffer, if so it be, that "all things are working together for our good" and are helping to pile up the excess of our future glory.

Thus, then, it seems that we who are called to glory are being prepared for it. Is it not also a sweet thought that our present fellowship with Christ is the guarantee of it? In

Romans 8:17, it is said, "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Going to prison with Christ will bring us into the palace with Christ; smarting with Christ will bring us into reigning with Christ; being ridiculed, and slandered, and despised for Christ's sake will bring us to be sharers of his honour, and glory, and immortality. Who would not be with Christ in his humiliation if this be the guarantee that all be with him in his glory? Remember those dear words of the Lord Jesus, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." Let us shoulder the cross, for it leads to the crown. "No cross, no crown:" but he that has shared the battle shall partake in the victory.

I have not yet done, for there is a text in Hebrews 2:10, which is well worthy of our consideration: we are to be brought to glory. It is said of our Lord that it "became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." See, beloved, we are called to glory, we are being prepared for it, and we shall be brought to it. We might despair of ever getting into the glory land if we had not One to bring us there, for the pilgrim's road is rough and beset with many foes; but there is a "Captain of our salvation," a greater than Bunyan's Greatheart, who is conducting the pilgrim band through all the treacherous way, and he will bring the "many sons" where? - "unto glory." Nowhere short of that shall be their ultimatum. Glory, glory shall surely follow upon grace; for Christ the Lord, who has come into his glory, has entered into covenant engagements that he will bring all the "many sons" to be with him.

This glory will be for our entire manhood, for our body as well as for our soul. You know that text in the famous resurrection chapter, in 1 Corinthians 15:43, Paul speaks of the body as being, "sown in dishonour," but he adds, "it is raised in glory;" and then, in Philippians 3:21, he says of our divine Lord at his coming, "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." What a wonderful change that will be for this frail, feeble, suffering body! In some respects it is not vile, for it is a wonderful product of divine skill, and power, and goodness; but inasmuch as it hampers our spiritual nature by its appetites and infirmities, it may be called a "vile body." It is an unhandy body for a spirit: it fits a soul well enough, but a spirit wants something more ethereal, less earthbound, more full of life than this poor flesh and blood and bone can ever be. Well, the body is to be changed. What alteration will it undergo? It will be rendered perfect. The body of a child will be fully developed, and the dwarf will attain to full stature. The blind shall not be sightless in heaven, neither shall the lame be halt, nor shall the palsied tremble. The deaf shall hear, and the dumb shall sing God's praises. We shall carry none of our deficiencies or infirmities to heaven. As good Mr. Ready-to-Halt did not carry his crutches there, neither shall any of us need a staff to lean upon. There we shall not know an aching brow, or a weak knee, or a failing eye. "The inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick."

And it shall be an impassive body, a body that will be incapable of any kind of suffering: no palpitating heart, no sinking spirit, no aching limbs, no lethargic soul shall worry us there. No, we shall be perfectly delivered from every evil of that kind. Moreover, it shall be an immortal body. Our risen bodies shall not be capable of decay, much less of death. There are no graves in glory. Blessed are the dead that die in the

Lord, for their bodies shall rise never to know death and corruption a second time. No smell or taint of corruption shall remain upon those whom Jesus shall call from the tomb. The risen body shall be greatly increased in power: it is "sown in weakness," says the Scripture, but it is "raised in power." I suppose there will be a wonderful agility about our renovated frame: probably it will be able to move as swiftly as the lightning flash, for so do angels pass from place to place, and we shall in this, as in many things else, be as the angels of God. Anyhow, it will be a "glorious body," and it will be "raised in glory," so that the whole of our manhood shall participate of that wonderful depth of bliss which is summed up in the word - "glory." Thus I think I have set before you much of what the Word of God saith upon this matter.

## **II. Secondly, may the Holy Spirit help me while I try very hesitatingly and stammeringly to answer the inquiry, WHEREIN DOTH THIS DESTINY CONSIST?**

Do you know how much I expect to do? It will be but little. You remember what the Lord did for Moses when the man of God prayed - "I beseech thee show me thy glory!" All that the Lord himself did for Moses was to say, "Thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen." How little, then, can we hope to speak of this glory! Its back parts are too bright for us: as for the face of that glory, it shall not be seen by any of us here below, though by-and-by we shall behold it. I suppose if one who had been in glory could come straight down from heaven, and occupy a platform, he would end that his discoveries could not be communicated because of the insufficiency of language to express such a weight of meaning.

The saints' destiny is glory. What is glory, brethren? What is it, I mean, among the sons of men? It is generally understood to be fame, a great repute, the sound of trumpets, the noise of applause, the sweets of approbation among the crowd and in high places. The Queen of Sheba came from afar to see the glory of Solomon. What was that glory, brethren? It was the glory of a rare wisdom excelling all others; it was the glory of immense riches expended upon all manner of magnificence and splendour. As for this last glory the Lord says of it that a lily of the field had more of it than Solomon; at least "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Yet that is what men mean by glory - rank, position, power, conquest - things that make the ears of men to tingle when they hear of them - things extraordinary and rare. All this is but a dim shadow of what God means by glory; yet out of the shadow we may obtain a little inkling of what the substance must be. God's people shall be wise, and even famous, for they shall "shine as the stars for ever and ever." God's people shall be rich; the very streets of their abode are paved with gold exceeding rich and rare. God's people shall be singularly honoured; there shall be a glory about them unrivalled, for they shall be known as a peculiar people, a royal priesthood, a race of beings lifted up to reveal their Maker's character beyond all the rest of his works.

I reckon that glory to a saint means, first of all, purified character. The brightest glory that really can come to any one is the glory of character. Thus God's glory among men is his goodness, his mercy, his justice, his truth. But shall such poor creatures as we are to have perfect characters? Yes, we can be perfectly holy. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." God's Holy Spirit leaves in us no trace of sin: when walking in the Spirit, no temptation can touch us, no relics of our

past and fallen state. Oh, is not this to be blessed? “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” I was going to say it is all the glory I want - the glory of being perfect in character, never sinning, never judging unjustly, never thinking a vain thought, never wandering away from the perfect law of God. “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” We are glorious because the devil himself is not able to detect a fault in us, and those eyes of God, which burn like fire and read the inmost secrets of the soul, is not able to detect anything blameworthy in us. Such is the character of the saints that they are meet to consort with Christ himself, fit company for that thrice Holy Being before whom angels veil their faces. This is glory!

I understand by “glory” our perfected manhood. When God made Adam he was a far superior being to any of us. Man’s place in creation was very remarkable. The Psalmist says, “For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.” No king among men in these days could rival Adam in the garden of Eden: he was indeed monarch of all that he surveyed, and from the lordly lion down to the tiniest insect, all living creatures paid him willing homage. Can we ever rise to this last honour? Brethren, listen, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when Christ shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Is there any limit to the growth of the mind of a man? Can we tell what he may reach? We read of Solomon that God gave him largeness of heart as the sand of the sea: God will give to his people glory that will include in it more largeness of heart than Solomon ever knew. Then shall we know even as we are known by God. Now we see, but it is “through a glass darkly,” but then we shall see “face to face.” You have met with men of great intellect and you have looked up to them: but assuredly the smallest babe in Christ when he shall reach heaven shall have a greater intellect than the most profound philosopher who has ever astounded mankind by his discoveries. We shall not always be as we are today, contracted and hampered because of our little knowledge, and our slender faculties, and our dull perceptions. Our ignorance and prejudice shall vanish. What a man will become we can scarcely tell when he is remade in the image of God, and made like unto our divine Lord who is “the first-born among many brethren.” Here we are but in embryo: our minds are but the seeds, or the bulbs, out of which shall come the flower and glory of a nobler manhood. Your body is to be developed into something infinitely brighter and better than the bodies of men here below: and as for the soul, we can not guess to what an elevation it shall be raised in Christ Jesus. There is room for the largest expectation here, as we conjecture what will be the full accomplishment of the vast intent of eternal love, an intent which has involved the sacrifice of the only-begotten Son of God. That can be no mean design which has been carried on at the expense of the best that heaven itself possessed.

Further, by “glory” and coming to glory I think we must understand complete victory. Dwelling in the age of the Romans, men said to themselves, as they read the Scriptures, “What does the apostle mean by I glory?” and they could scarcely help connecting it with conquest, and the return of the warrior in triumph. Men called it glory in those days when valiant warriors returned from fields of blood with captives

and spoil. Then did the heroes ride through the streets of Rome, enjoying a triumph voted them by the senate. Then for the while the men of war were covered with glory, and all the city was glorious because of them. As Christians, we hate the word "glory" when it is linked with wholesale murder, and girt in garments rolled in blood; but yet there is a kind of fighting to which you and I are called, for we are soldiers of the cross; and if we fight valiantly under our great Captain, and rout every sin, and are found faithful even unto death, then we shall enter glory, and receive the honour which belongs to men who have fought a good fight, and have kept the faith. It will be no small glory to obtain the crown of life which fadeth not away. Is not this a full glory if we only place these three things together, a purified character, a perfected nature, and a complete victory?

An invaluable ingredient in true glory is divine approval. "Glory" among men means approbation: it is a man's glory when he is honoured of his Queen, and she hangs a medal on his breast, or when his name is mentioned in the high court of Parliament, and he is ennobled for what he has done. If men speak of our actions with approval, it is called fame and glory. Oh, but one drop of the approbation of God has more glory in it than a sea full of human praise; and the Lord will reward his own with this holy favour. He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and Christ before the universe will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father." Oh, what glory that will be!

They were despised and rejected of men, they "wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; destitute, afflicted, tormented;" but now God approves them, and they are among the peers of heaven, made noble by the approbation of the Judge of all. This is glory with an emphasis - substantial glory. One approving glance from the eye of Jesus, one accepting word from the mouth of the Father, will be glory enough for any one of us, and this we shall have if we follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

Not all children of God will have the glory of reflecting the glory of God. When any of God's unfallen creatures shall wish to see the greatness of God's goodness, and mercy, and love, they that dwell in heaven will point out a glorified saint. Whenever any spirit from far-off regions desires to know what is meant by faithfulness and grace, some angel will reply, "Go and talk with those who have been redeemed from among men." I believe that you and I will spend much of eternity in making known to principalities and powers the unsearchable riches of the grace of God. We shall be mirrors reflecting God; and in us shall his glory be revealed. There may be myriads of races of pure and holy beings of whom we have never heard as yet, and these may come to the New Jerusalem as to the great metropolis of Jehovah's universe, and when they come there they will gaze upon the saints as the highest instances of divine grace, wisdom, power, and love. It will be their highest pleasure to hear how eternal mercy dealt with us unworthy ones. How we shall delight to rehearse to them the fact of the Father's eternal purpose, the story of the incarnate God - the God that loved and died, and the love of the blessed Spirit who sought us in the days of our sin, and brought us to the cross foot, renewing us in the spirit of our minds, and making us to be sons of God. Oh, brothers and sisters, this shall be our glory, that God shall shine through us to the astonishment of all.

Yet I think glory includes somewhat more than this. In certain cases a man's glory lies in his relationships. If any of the royal family should come to your houses you would

receive them with respect; yes, and even as they went along the street they would be spied out, and passers-by would say, "That is the prince," and they would honour the son of our good Queen. But royal descent is a poor business compared with being allied to the King of kings. Many angels are exceeding bright, but they are only servants to wait upon the sons. I believe that there will be a kind of awe from angels at the sight of men; when they see upon us our glory they will rejoice to know our near relation to their Lord, and to fulfil their own destiny as ministering spirits appointed to minister to the heirs of salvation. No pride will be possible to the perfected, but we shall realise the exalted position to which by our new birth and the divine adoption we have been raised. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God." Sons of God! Sons of the Lord God Almighty! Oh what glory this will be!

Then there will be connected with this the fact that we shall be connected with Jesus in everything. For do not you see, brethren, it was because of our fall that Christ came here to save men; when he wrought out a perfect righteousness, it was all for us; when he died, it was all for us; and when he rose again, it was all for us? And what is more, we lived in Christ, we died in him, we were buried in him and rose in him, and we shall ascend into heaven to reign with him. All our glory is by Christ Jesus and in all the glory of Christ Jesus we have a share. We are members of his body; we are one with him. I say, the creatures that God has made, when they shall come to worship in the New Jerusalem will stand and gaze at glorified men, and with bated breath will say one to another, "These are the beings whose natures assumed the Son of God! These are the chosen creatures whom the Prince of heaven bought with his own blood." They will stand astonished at the divine glory which will be manifested in beings emancipated from sin and hell and made heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. Will not even angels be surprised and awed as they look on the church and say to one another, "This is the bride, the Lamb's wife!" They will marvel how the Lord of glory should come to this poor earth to seek a spouse and that he should enter into eternal union with such a people. Glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land! Now we are getting near to the centre of it. I feel inclined, like Moses, to put off my shoes from off my feet, for the place whereon we stand is holy ground, now that we are getting to see poor bushes like ourselves aglow with the indwelling God, and changed from glory unto glory.

And yet this is not all, for there in heaven we shall dwell in the immediate presence of God. We shall dwell with him in nearest and dearest fellowship! All the felicity of the Most High will be our felicity. The blessedness of the triune Jehovah shall be our blessedness for ever and ever. Did you notice that our text says, "He hath called us unto his glory?" This outshines everything: the glory which the saints will have is the same glory which God possesses, and such as he alone can bestow. Listen to this text: - "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." He glorifies them! I know what it is to glorify God, and so do you; but when we poor creatures glorify God it is in a poor way, for we can not add anything to him. But what must it be for God himself to glorify a man! The glory which you are to have for ever, my dear believing brother, is a glory which God himself will put upon you. Peter, as a Hebrew, perhaps uses a Hebraism when he says "his glory:" it may be that he means the best of glory that can be, even as the Jews were wont to say- "The trees of God," when they meant the greatest trees, or "the mountains of God," when they intended the highest mountains;

so by the “glory of God” Peter may mean the richest, fullest glory that can be. In the original the word “glory” has about it the idea of “weight,” at which the apostle Paul hints when he speaks of a “weight of glory.” This is the only glory that has weight in it, all else is light as a feather. Take all the glories of this world and they are outweighed by the small dust of the balance. Place them here in the hollow of my hand, all of them: a child may blow them away as thistledown. God’s glory has weight; it is solid, true, real, and he that gets it possesses no mere name, or dream, or tinsel, but he has that which will abide the rust of ages and the fire of judgment.

The glory of God! How shall I describe it! I must set before you a strange Scriptural picture. Mordecai must be made glorious for his fidelity to his king, and singular is the honour which his monarch ordains for him. This was the royal order. Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king’s most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the streets of the city, and proclaim before him, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.” Can you not imagine the surprise of the Jew when robe and ring were put upon him, and when he found himself placed upon the king’s horse. This may serve as a figure of that which will happen to us: we shall be glorified with the glory of God. The best robe, the best of heaven’s array, shall be appointed unto us, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The glory which God has in reserve for his chosen will never come to an end: it will stay with us, and we shall stay with it, for ever. It will always be glory, too; its brightness will never become dim; we shall never be tired of it, or sated with it. After ten thousand, thousand millions of years in heaven our happiness shall be as fresh as when it first began. Those are no fading laurels which surround immortal brows. Eternal glory knows no diminution. Can you imagine a man being born at the same time that Adam was created and living all these thousands of years as a king like Solomon, having all he could desire? His would seem to be a glorious life. But if at the end of seven thousand years that man must needs die, what has it profited him? His glory is all over now, its fires have died out in ashes. But you and I, when we once enter glory, shall receive what we can neither lose nor leave. Eternity! Eternity! This is the sweetness of all our future bliss.

Yet bear with me, I have left out a word again: the text has it, “Unto his eternal glory.” Ay, but that is the gem of the ring. Highest of all our glory will be the enjoyment of God himself. He will be our exceeding joy: this bliss will swallow up every other, the blessedness of God. “The Lord is my portion,” saith my soul. “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” Our God shall be our glory. Rejoice, ye saintly ones! ‘Take your harps down from the willows, any of you who are mourning, and if you never sang before, yet sing this morning - “God has called us unto his eternal glory,” and this is to be our portion world without end.

### **III. I can only find time for a few words upon the concluding head, which is - WHAT INFLUENCE SHOULD ALL THIS HAVE UPON OUR HEARTS?**

I think, first, it ought to excite desire in many here present that they might attain unto

glory by Christ Jesus. Satan, when he took our blessed Lord to the top of an exceeding high mountain, tempted him to worship him by offering him the kingdoms of the world and all the glories thereof. But Jesus turned the offer of glorifying self back to the true author of all glory, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Will you not fall down and worship the Lord Jesus when he can lead you to the Father in his kingdom and all the glory thereof, and all this, not in pretence, but in reality? If there was any force in the temptation to worship Satan for the sake of the glory of this world, how much more reason is there for urging you to worship the Son of God that you may obtain his salvation with eternal glory! I pray the Holy Ghost to drop a hot desire into many a poor sinner's breast this morning that he may cry, "If this glory of the worship of God is to be had, I will have it, and I will have it in God's way, for I will believe in Jesus, I will repent, I will come to God, and so obtain his promise."

Secondly, this ought to move us to the feeling of fear. If there be such a glory as this, let us tremble lest by any means we should come short of it. Oh, my dear hearers, especially you that are my fellow members, brother church officers, and workers associated with me, what a dreadful thing it will be if any one of us should come short of this glory! Oh, if there were no hell, it would be hell enough to miss of heaven! What if there were no pit that is bottomless, nor worm undying, nor fire unquenchable, it would be boundless misery to have a shadow of a fear of not reaching to God's eternal glory? Let us therefore pass the time of our sojourning here in fear, and let us watch unto prayer and strive to enter in at the strait gate. God grant we may be found of him at last to praise and honour!

If we are right, how this ought to move us to gratitude. Think of this, we are to enjoy "his eternal glory!" What a contrast to our deserts! Shame and everlasting contempt are our righteous due apart from Christ. If we were to receive according to our merits, we should be driven from his presence and from the glory of his power. Verily, "he hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities;" for, after all our transgressions, he has still reserved us for glory, and glory for us. What love and zeal should burn in our bosoms because of this!

Last of all, it should move us to a dauntless courage. If this glory is to be had, do we not feel like the heroes in Bunyan's picture? Before the dreamer there stood a fair palace, and he saw persons walking upon the top of it, clad in light, and singing. Around the door stood armed men to keep back those who would enter. Then a brave man came up to one who had a writer's inkhorn by his side, and said, "Set down my name;" and straightway the warrior drew his sword, and fought with all his might, until he had cut his way to the door, and then he entered, and they within were heard to sing:

"Come in, come in, Eternal glory thou shalt win."

Will you not draw your swords this morning, and fight against sin, till you have overcome it? Do you not desire to win Christ, and to be found in him? Oh, let us now begin to feel a passion for eternal glory, and then in the strength of the Spirit, and in the name of Jesus, let us press forward till we reach it. Even on earth we may taste enough of this glory to fill us with delight. The glory which I have described to you

dawns on earth, though it only comes to us as noontide in heaven: the glory of sanctified character, the glory of victory over sin, the glory of relationship to God, the glory of union with Christ - these are all to be tasted in a measure here below. These glories send their beams down even to these valleys and lowlands. Oh, to enjoy them today and thus to have earnest and foretastes of glory. If we have them, let us go singing on until we reach the place where God's eternal glory shall surround us. Amen.

### 3. THE LUTHER SERMON AT EXETER-HALL

*“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” - Galatians 5:6*

Paul makes a clean sweep of that trust in the externals of religion which is the common temptation of all time. Circumcision was a great thing with the Jew, and oftentimes he trusted in it; but Paul declares that availeth nothing. There might be others who were glad that they were not Jews, but Paul declares that their uncircumcision availeth no more than its opposite. Certain matters connected with godliness are external, and yet they are useful in their places: especially is that the case with baptism and the Lord's supper, the assembling of ourselves together, the reading of the word, and public prayer and praise. These things are proper and profitable; but none of them must be made in any measure or degree the ground of our hope of salvation; for this text sweeps them all away, and plainly describes them as availing nothing if they are made to be the foundations of our trust.

In Luther's day superstitious confidence in external observances had overlaid faith in the gospel; ceremonies had multiplied excessively, and the plain and simple way of salvation was obscured. There was need of some sturdy soul who, seeing the truth himself, should show it to others. When God raised up Martin Luther, who was born four centuries ago, he bore emphatic testimony against salvation by outward forms and by the power of priestcraft, affirming, that salvation is by faith, and that the church of God is a company of priests, every believer being a priest unto God.

#### GOD'S CLERGY

If Luther had not affirmed it, the doctrine would have been just as true, for the distinction between clergy and laity is no excuse in Scripture, which calls the saints, "God's *kleros*" - God's clergy, or heritage. Again we read, "Ye are a royal priesthood." Every man that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is anointed to exercise the Christian priesthood, and therefore he need not put his trust in another, seeing the supposed priest is no more than any other man. Each man must be accountable for himself before God. Each one must read and search the Scriptures for himself, and must believe for himself, and when saved, he must offer up himself as a living sacrifice, unto God by Jesus Christ, who is the only High Priest of our profession. So much for the negative side of the text, which is full of warning to this Ritualistic age.

The chief testimony of our great reformer was to the justification of a sinner in the sight of God by faith in Jesus Christ, and by that alone. He could fitly have taken this for his motto, "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." He was in the Augustinian monastery at Wittenberg troubled and perturbed in mind; and he read there, in an old Latin Bible, this text - "The just shall live by faith." It was a new idea to him, and by its means spiritual light entered his soul in some degree; but such were the prejudices of his upbringing, and such the darkness of his surroundings, that he still hoped to find salvation by outward performances.

## LONG FASTING

He therefore fasted long, till he was found swooning from hunger. He was exceedingly zealous for salvation by works. At last he made a pilgrimage to Rome, hoping to find there everything that was holy and helpful: he was disappointed in his search, but yet found more than he looked for. On the pretended staircase of Pilate, while in the act of climbing it upon his knees, the Wittenberg text again sounded in his ear like a thunderclap: "The just shall live by faith."

Up he started and descended those stairs, never to grovel upon them again. The chain was broken, the soul was free. Luther had found the light; and henceforth it became his life's business to flash that light upon the nations, crying evermore, "The just shall live by faith." The best commemoration which I can make of this man is to preach the doctrine which he held so dear, and you who are not saved can best assist me by believing the doctrine, and proving its truth in your own cases. May the Holy Ghost cause it to be so in hundreds of instances.

### **I. First, let us inquire WHAT IS THIS FAITH?**

We are, always talking about it; but what is it? Whenever I try to explain it, I am afraid lest I should confuse rather than expound.

Story of Bunyan. There is a story told concerning John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Good Thomas Scott, the Commentator, wrote notes to it; he thought the 'Pilgrim's Progress' a difficult book, and he would make it clear. A pious cottager in his parish had the book, and she was reading it when her minister called. He said to her, "Oh, I see, you are reading Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.' Do you understand it?" She answered innocently enough, "Oh, yes, sir, I understand Mr. Bunyan very well, and I hope that one day I shall be able to understand your explanations." I am afraid lest you should say when I have done, "I understand what faith is, as I find it in the Bible, and one day, perhaps, I may be able to understand the preacher's explanation of it." Warned by this, I will speak as plainly as I can.

And first, it is to be remembered that faith is not a mere creed-holding. It is very proper to say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," and so forth; but you may repeat all that and be no "believer" in the Scriptural sense of that term. Though the creed be true, it may not be true to you; it would have been the same to you if the opposite had been true, for you put the truth away like a paper in a pigeonhole, and it has no effect upon you. "A very proper doctrine," you say, "a very proper doctrine," and so you put it to sleep. It does not influence your heart, nor affect your life. Do not imagine that professing an orthodox creed is the same thing as faith in Christ. A truthful creed is desirable for many reasons; but if it be a dead, inoperative thing, it can not bring salvation. Faith is belief of the truth; but it is more.

### **IMPORTANT DISTINCTION**

Again, faith is not the mere belief that there is a God, though that we must have, for we can not come to God except we "believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We are to believe in God - that he is good, blessed,

true, right, and therefore to be trusted, confided in, and praised. Whatever he may do, whatever he may say, God is not to be suspected, but believed in.

You know what it is to believe in a man, do you not? to believe in a man so that you follow him, and confide in him, and accept his advice? In that same way faith believes in God - not only believes that he is, but finds rest in his character, his Son, his promise, his covenant, his word, and everything about him. Faith livingly and lovingly trusts in her God about everything. Especially must we believe in what God has revealed in Scripture - that it is verily and indeed a sure and infallible testimony to be received without question. We accept the Father's witness concerning Jesus, and take heed thereto "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

Faith has specially to believe in him who is the sum and substance of all this revelation, even Jesus Christ, who became God in human flesh that he might redeem our fallen souls from all the evils of sin, and raise it to eternal felicity. We believe in Christ, on Christ, and upon Christ; accepting him because of the record which God has given to us concerning his Son, that he is the propitiation for our sins. We accept God's unspeakable gift, and receive Jesus as our all in all.

If I wanted to describe saving faith in one word, I should say that it is trust. It is so believing God and so believing in Christ that we trust ourselves and our eternal destinies in the hands of a reconciled God.

## **II. In the second place we will consider, WHY FAITH IS SELECTED AS THE WAY OF SALVATION?**

I would remind YOU that if we could not answer this question it would not matter; for since the Lord has appointed believing as the way of grace it is not ours to challenge his choice. Beggars must not be choosers; let us trust, if so the Lord ordains.

### **NO HELP FOR PAST DEFECTS**

But we can answer this question in a measure. First, it is clear that no other way is possible. It is not possible for us to be saved by our own merits, for we have broken the law already, and future obedience, being already due, can not make up for past defects.

"Could my tears for ever flow,  
Could my zeal no respite know.  
All for sin could not atone:  
Thou must save, and thou alone."

The road of good works is blocked up by our past sins, and it is sadly further blocked up by future sins; we ought therefore to rejoice that God has commended to us the open road of faith. God has chosen the way of faith that salvation be by grace. If we had to do anything in order to save ourselves, we should be sure to impute a measure of virtue to our own doings, or feelings, or prayers, or alms givings, and we should thus detract from the pure grace of God. But salvation comes from God as a pure favour - an act of undeserved generosity and benevolence, and the Lord will, therefore,

only put it into the hand of faith since faith arrogates nothing to herself. Faith, in fact, disowns all idea of merit, and the Lord of grace therefore elects to place the treasure of his love in the hand of faith.

### **PRIDE CRUCIFIED**

Again, it is of faith that there may be no boasting; for if our salvation be of our doings or feelings, we are sure to boast; but, if it be of faith, we can not glory in self. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." Faith is humble, and ascribes all praise to God. Faith is truthful, and confesses her obligation to the sovereign grace of God.

I bless the Lord that he has chosen this way of faith, because it is so suitable for poor sinners. Some among us tonight would never have been saved if salvation had only been prepared for the good and righteous. Suppose that you were in the last article of death, what good works could you do? Yonder dying thief found it a happy thing that by faith he could trust the Crucified One, and before set of sun could be with him in Paradise. Faith is a way suitable for sinners, and especially for sinners who are soon to die; in some sense we are all in that condition and some of us peradventure are especially so; for what man among us knows that he will see tomorrow's dawn?

I bless God again that the way of salvation is by faith, because it is a way open to the most unlearned. What fine theology we get nowadays - deep thinking they call it. The men go down so deep into their subjects, and so stir the mud at the bottom, that you can not see them and they can not see themselves. I apprehend that teachers of a certain school do not themselves know what they are talking about. Now, if salvation were only to be learned by reading through huge folios, what would become of multitudes of poor souls in Bow, and Bethnal Green, and Seven Dials? If the gospel had consisted of a mass of learning, how could the unlearned be saved? But now we can go to each one of them and say, "Jesus died."

"There is life in a look at the Crucified One;  
There is life at this moment for thee."

Now, I am going to finish in a way suitable to this Luther memorial. You have heard a great deal about Luther's preaching salvation by faith alone.

### **III. NOW LET US TURN TO LUTHER'S LIFE, and see what Luther himself meant by it. What kind of faith did Luther himself exhibit by which he was justified?**

First, in Luther's case, faith led him to an open avowal of what he believed. Luther did not mean to go up to heaven by the back stairs, as many young men hope to do. You wish to be Christians on the sly, so as to escape the offence of the cross. Luther did not refuse to confess Christ and take up his cross and follow him. He knew that he who with his heart believeth, must also with his mouth make confession, and he did so right nobly. He began teaching and preaching the truth which had enlightened his own soul. One of his sermons displeased Duke George of Saxony; but as it saved a lady of high rank, Luther did not fret. He was not the man to conceal truth because it was

dangerous to avow it. It cost him something to stand up boldly for a pure and simple gospel, but he believed the testimony he gave was worth much more than it cost.

### **“WITHOUT MONEY AND WITHOUT PRICE”**

The river of life is as free as any river that flows to the sea, and all the world may stoop down and drink. Luther wished the people to have free access to the Bible. He was not always excessively polite in his speech; he was too earnest for that. He spoke from the heart, he was all on fire, and his words were heated sevenfold, “without money and without price,” and he did not conceal his convictions. He nailed his theses to the church door where all might read them. When astronomers require a new constellation in the heavens let it be “the hammer and nails.” Oh you who make no profession, let this man’s outspoken faith rebuke you!

His dauntless valour for truth caused him to be greatly hated in his own day with a ferocity which has not yet died out. It has always been so, and always will be so. Light has no fellowship with darkness; oil and water will not unite; there is no concord between Christ and Belial. Yet Luther would not sacrifice his convictions for the sake of the applause of men. Feeling that he was right he went ahead, and did not stop to count the consequences. Ridicule, malice, even the dark dungeon could not turn him aside, nor daunt his holy courage.

### **APPEAL TO YOUNG MEN**

Young men, I do not know what your ambition may be; but I hope you do not wish to be in this world mere chips in the porridge, giving forth no flavour whatever. My ambition does not run in that line. I know that if I have no intense haters, I can have no intense lovers; and I am prepared to have both. When right-hearted men see honest love of truth in a man, they cry, “He is our brother. Let him be our champion.” When the wrong-hearted reply, “Down with him!” we thank them for the unconscious homage which they thus pay to decision of character. No child of God should court the world’s approbation. Certainly Luther did not. He pleased God, and that was enough for him.

His faith was of this kind also - that it moved him to a hearty reverence for what he believed to be Holy Scripture. I am sorry that he was not always wise in his judgment of what the Bible contains; but yet to him Scripture was the last court of appeal. If any had convinced Luther of error out of that book, he would gladly have retracted; but that was not their plan, they simply said, “He is a heretic: condemn him or make him retract.”

### **A FOOL FOR A CLIENT**

To this he never yielded for an instant. Alas, in this age numbers of men are setting up to be their own inspired writers. I have been told that every man who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client; and I am inclined to think that, when any man sets up to be his own Saviour and his own revelation, much the same thing occurs. That conceited idea is in the air at this present: every man is excogitating his own Bible. Not so Luther; He loved the sacred book! He fought by its help. It was his battle-axe and his weapon of

war. A text of Scripture fired his soul; but the words of tradition he rejected. He would not yield to Melancthon, or Zwingle, or Calvin, or whoever it might be, however learned or pious; he took his own personal faith to the Scripture, and according to his light he followed the word of the Lord. May many a Luther be in this place.

The next thing I note was the intense activity of his faith. Luther did not believe in God doing the work he was to do, so as to be in idleness himself. Not a bit of it. Oliver Cromwell's Puritan precept was, "Trust in God, but keep your powder dry." Luther believed above most men in keeping his powder dry. How he worked! By pen, by mouth, by hand; he was energetic almost beyond belief.

### **MANY MEN IN ONE**

He seemed a many-handed man. He did works which would have taxed the strength of hundreds of smaller men. He worked as if everything depended upon his own activity, and then he fell back in holy trust upon God as though he had done nothing. This is the kind of faith which saves a man both in this life and in that which is to come.

Again, Luther's faith abounded in prayer. What supplications they were! Those who heard them tell us of his tears, his wrestlings, his holy arguments. He would go into his closet heavy at heart, and remain there an hour or two, and then come forth singing, "I have conquered, I have conquered." "Ah," said he one day, "I have so much to do today that I can not get through it with less than three hours' prayer." I thought he was going to say, "I can not allow to give even a quarter of an hour to prayer;" but he increased his prayer as he increased his labor. This is the faith that saves - a faith that lays hold on God and prevails with him in private supplication.

### **DUKES COULD NOT STOP HIM**

His was a faith that delivered him entirely from the fear of man. Duke George is going to stop him. "Is he?" said Luther. "If it were to rain Duke Georges I would go." He is exhorted not to go to Worms, for he will be in danger. If there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the housetops he would be there. And he was there, as you all know, playing the man for the gospel and for his God. He committed himself to no man, but kept his faith in God pure and unmingled. Dukes, emperors, doctors, electors were all as nothing to Luther when they stood against the Lord. Be it so with us also.

His was a faith that made him risk all for the truth. There seemed no hope of his ever coming back from Worms alive. He was pretty sure to be burned like John Huss; and the wonder is that he escaped. His very daring brought him safety from peril. He expressed his regret that the crown of martyrdom would, in all probability, be missed by him; but the faith which is prepared to die for Jesus was within him. He who in such a case saves his live shall lose it, but he that loses his life for Christ's sake shall find it unto life eternal.

### **RELIGION IN A GLASS CASE**

This was the faith that made Luther a man among men, and saved him from priestly affectation. I do not know whether you admire what is thought to be very superior

religion: as is a thing of beauty, but not of use; that it ought always to be kept in a glass case; it is made up for drawing-rooms and religious meetings, but would be out of place in a shop or on a farm. Now, Luther's religion was with him at home, at the table as well as in the pulpit. His religion was part and parcel of his common life, and that life was free, open, bold, and unrestrained. It is easy to find fault with him from the superfine standpoint, for he lived in an honest unguardedness. My admiration kindles as I know of the hearty openness of the man. I do not wonder that even ungodly Germans revere him, for he is all a German and all a man. When he speaks he does not take his words out of his mouth to look at them, and to ask Melancthon whether they will do; but he hits hard, and he has spoken a dozen sentences before he has thought whether they are polished or not. Indeed, he is utterly indifferent to criticism, and speaks what he thinks and feels. He is at his ease, for he feels at home: is he not everywhere in his great Father's house? Has he not a pure and simple intent to speak the truth and do the right?

### **LUTHER'S HOME LIFE**

I like Luther with a wife and children. I like to see him with his family and a Christmas-tree, making music with little Johnny Luther on his knee. I love to hear him sing a little hymn with the children, and tell his pretty boy about the horses in heaven with golden bridles and silver saddles. Faith had not taken away his manhood, but sanctified it to noblest uses. Luther did not live and move as if he were a mere cleric, but as a brother to our common humanity.

After all, brethren, you must know that the greatest divines have to eat bread and butter like other people. They shut their eyes before they sleep, and they open them in the morning, just like other folks. This is matter of fact, though some stilted gentlemen might like us to doubt it. They feel and think like other men. Why should they seem as if they did not? Is it not a good thing to eat and drink to the glory of God, and show people that common things can be sanctified by the word of God and prayer? What if we do not wear canonicals, and so on? The best canonicals in the world are thorough devotion to the Lord's work; and if a man lives aright, he makes every garment a vestment, every meal a sacrament, and every house a temple. All our hours are canonical, all our days holy days, every breath is incense, every pulse music for the Most High.

### **LUTHER'S CHARITY**

They tell us that Luther ignored good works. It is true he would not allow good works to be spoken of as the means of salvation; but of those who professed faith in Jesus he demanded holy lives. Luther abounded in prayer and charity. What an almsgiver Luther was! I fear he did not at all times duly regard the principles of the Charity Organisation Society. As he goes along, if there are beggars he empties his pockets for them. Two hundred crowns have just come in, and, though he has a family about him, he cries, "Two hundred crowns! God is giving me my portion in this life." "Here," says he to a poor brother minister, "take half. And where are the poor? Fetch them in. I must be rid of this!"

I am afraid that his Catherine was forced at times to shake her head at him; for, in

truth, he was not always the most economical husband that might be. In almsgiving he was second to none, and in all the duties of life he rose far beyond the level of his age. Like all other men he had his faults; but as his enemies harp on that string and go far beyond the truth, I need not dwell upon his failings. I wish that the detractors of Luther were half as good as he. All the glory of his grand career be unto the Lord alone.

Lastly, Luther's faith was a faith that helped him under struggles that are seldom spoken of. I suppose that never had man had greater soul-conflict than Luther. He was a man of heights and depths. Sometimes he went up to heaven and he sang his hallelujahs; and then he went down again into the abyss with his "misereres." I am afraid that, great, vigorous man that he was, he had a bad liver. he was grievously afflicted in body in ways which I need not mention; and he was sometimes laid aside for months together, being so racked and tortured that he longed to die. His pains were extreme, and we wonder how he endured them so well. But ever between the attacks of illness Luther was up again preaching the word of God. Those desperate struggles with the devil would have crushed him but for his faith. The devil seems to have been constantly assailing him, and he was constantly assailing the devil. In that tremendous duel he fell back upon his Lord, and, trusting in Omnipotence, he put Satan to rout.

Young men, I pray that a Luther may spring up from your ranks. How gladly would the faithful welcome him! I, who am more a follower of Calvin than of Luther, and much more a follower of Jesus than of either of them, would be charmed to see another Luther upon this earth.

God bless you, brethren, for Christ's sake. Amen.

## 4. THE BEST WAR-CRY

*“The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.” - Numbers 33:21*

It was a singular spectacle to see the king of Moab and his lords climbing to the tops of the craggy rocks, accompanied by that strange being, the Eastern prophet Balaam. They are seeking to look upon Israel with the evil eye, and flash down curses upon her tents in the plain beneath. You see them gazing down from the mountains upon the encampment in the wilderness below, like vultures from aloft spy out their prey. They watch with keen and cruel eyes. Cunning and malice are in their countenances. How Balak longs to crush the nation which he fears! They are secretly endeavouring by spell and enchantment to bring evil upon the people whom Jehovah has chosen and led into the wilderness.

You see them offering their seven bullocks and their seven rams upon the seven altars which they have set upon Pisgah's rocks; and Balaam retires to wait until the afflatus [divine inspiration] shall come upon him, and he shall be able to prophesy. In all probability Moses knew nothing about this at the time; and certainly the people below knew nothing of the foul conspiracy. There lay the tribes in the valley, unaware that mischief was brewing, and quite unable to meet the dark design even if they had been aware of it. What a mercy it was for them that they were guarded by a Watcher, and a Holy One, whose eyes can never slumber. How sure it is - “I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.”

The Lord's eyes are fixed upon Balaam the hireling, and Balak the Son of Zippor: in vain do they weave the enchantment and work the divination; they shall be utterly ashamed and confounded. They were baffled in their machinations, and utterly defeated in their schemes, and that for one single reason: it is written, “JEHOVAH SHAMMAH - the Lord is there.” God's presence in the midst of his people is as a wall of fire round about them, and a glory in their midst. The Lord is their light and their salvation, whom shall they fear?

### CRAFTY INTRIGUES

At this present time God has a people, a remnant according to the election of grace, who still dwell like sheep in the midst of wolves. When, as a part of the Lord's church, we look at our surroundings, we see much that might cause us alarm; for never, either day or night, is Satan quiet. Like a roaring lion he goeth about, seeking whom he may devour: he plots in secret his crafty devices: if it were possible he would deceive even the very elect. This prince of darkness has on earth many most diligent servants, compassing sea and land to make proselytes, laying out all their strength, and using all their craft and cunning if by any means they may destroy the kingdom of God, and blot out the truth from under heaven.

It is saddest of all to see certain men who know the truth in some degree, as Balaam did, entering into league with the adversary against the true Israel. These combine their arts, and use all possible means that the gospel of the grace of God, and the church that holds it, may utterly be destroyed. If the church be not destroyed it will be no thanks to

her enemies, for they would swallow her up quick. When we look upon the signs of the times our hearts grow heavy; for iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold, many false spirits have gone abroad into the earth, and some whom we looked upon as helpers are proving themselves to be of another order. What then? Are we dismayed? By no means, for that same God who was in the midst of the church in the wilderness is in the church of these last days.

### **THE IMMORTAL CHURCH**

Again shall her adversaries be defeated. Still will he defend her, for the Lord has built his church upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. The reason of her safety is this:

“God in the midst of her doth dwell  
Nothing shall her remove;  
The Lord to her a helper shall,  
And that right early, prove.”

Our text declares the grand safeguard of the church of God, ensuring her against every peril known and unknown, earthly or Satanic; “Jehovah his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.”

May the Holy Spirit help me while I try to speak first upon God’s presence with his people; secondly, upon the results of that presence; and, thirdly, upon how, by the grace of God, that presence may be preserved continually amongst us.

#### **I. First, let me speak a little upon GOD’S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE.**

It is an extraordinary presence, for God’s ordinary and usual presence is everywhere. Whither shall we flee from his presence? He is in the highest heaven and in the lowest hell: the hand of the Lord is upon the high hills, and his power is in all deep places.

#### **A PECULIAR PRESENCE**

This knowledge is too high and wonderful for us: yet everywhere is God, for in him we live and move and have our being. Still there is a peculiar presence; for God was among his people in the wilderness as he was not among the Moabites and the Edomites their foes, and God is in his church as he is not in the world. It is a peculiar promise of the covenant that God will dwell with his people and walk among them. By the gift of the Holy Spirit the Lord is with us and in us at this hour. He saith of his church, “Here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” This is much more than God’s being about us; it includes the favour of God towards us, his consideration of, his working with us. An active nearness to bless is the presence of which we speak.

Here we may say with great reverence that God is with his people in the entirety of his nature. The Father is with us, for the Father himself loveth us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. He is near to us, supplying our needs, guiding our steps, helping us in time, and tutoring us for eternity. God is where his children are, hearing every groan of their sorrow, marking every tear of their

distress. The Father is in the midst of his family, acting a father's part towards them. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." He is never far from any into whose breasts he has put the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father!" Come, ye children of God, rejoice in this: your heavenly Father has come unto you, and abides with you.

### **"LO, I AM WITH YOU"**

We have also the presence of the divine Son of God. Said he not to his apostles, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world?" Have we not this for our joy whenever we come together, that we meet in his name, and that he still says, "Peace be unto you," and manifests himself unto us as he doth not unto the world? Many of you know most delightfully what it is to have fellowship with God, for "truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ;" and this fellowship were not ours if we were not made nigh by His precious blood. Very near are we to the heart of Christ; he dwells with us; yea, he is one with us.

Peculiarly this presence relates to the Holy Ghost. It is he who represents the Lord Jesus who has gone from us. We have a double portion of Christ's spirit, because we see him now that he is taken up; even as Elisha had a double portion of Elijah's spirit, according to the prophet's saying, "If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee;" that is, a double portion of my spirit shall rest upon thee. It was expedient that our Lord and Master should go, that the Spirit might be given. That Spirit once outpoured at Pentecost has never been withdrawn. He is still in the midst of this dispensation, working, guiding, quickening, comforting, exercising all the blessed office of the Paraclete, and being for us and in us God's advocate, pleading for the truth, and for us.

### **THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH**

Yes, dear friends, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are in the midst of the true church of God when that church is in a right and healthy state; and if the triune God be gone away from the church, then her banners must trail in the dust, for her warriors have lost their strength.

This is the glory of the church of God - to have the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost to be her never-failing benediction. What a glory to have Father, Son, and Holy Spirit manifesting the Godhead in the midst of our assemblies, and blessing each one of us.

For God to dwell with us: what a condescending presence this is! And will God in very truth dwell among men? If the heaven of heavens can not contain him, will he abide among his people? He will! He will! Glory be to his name! "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" God dwelleth in us. Wonderful word! Who can fathom the depth of this grace? The mystery of the incarnation is equalled by the mystery of the indwelling. That God the Holy Ghost shall dwell in our bodies is as extraordinary as that God the Son should inhabit that body which was born of the blessed virgin. Strange, strange is this, that the Creator should dwell in his creatures,

that the Infinite should tabernacle in finite beings. Yet so it is, for he has said, "Certainly I will be with thee."

### **TRUE WORSHIP**

What an awe this imparts to every true church of God! You may go in and out of certain assemblies, and you may say, "Here we have beauty! here we have adornment, musical, ecclesiastical, architectural, oratorical, and the like!" but to my mind there is no worship like that which proceeds from a man when he feels - the Lord is here. What a hush comes over the soul! Here is the place for the bated breath, the unsandalled foot, and the prostrate spirit. Now are we on holy ground. When the Lord descends in the majesty of his infinite love to deal with the hearts of men, then it is with us as it was in Solomon's temple when the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the glory that filled the place. Man is set aside, for God is there.

In such a case the most fluent think it better to be silent; for there is at times more expressiveness in absolute silence than in the fittest words. "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." For why? Because Jacob had said, "Surely the Lord is in this place." We regard the lowliest assemblies of the most illiterate people with solemn reverence if God be there; we regard the largest assemblies of the wealthiest and most renowned with utter indifference if God be not there.

### **NOTHING WITHOUT GOD**

This is the one necessary of the church; the Lord God must be in the midst of her, or she is nothing. If God be there, peace will be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces; but if the Lord be not there woe unto the men that speak in his name, for they shall cry in bitterness, "Who hath believed our report?" Woe unto the waiting people, for they shall go away empty! Woe unto the sinners in a forsaken Zion, for them comes no salvation! The presence of God makes the Church to be a joyful, happy, solemn place: this brings glory to his name and peace to his people; but without it, all faces are pale, all hearts are heavy.

Brethren, this presence of God is clearly discerned by the gracious, though others may not know it. Yet methinks even the ungracious in a measure perceive it - coming into the assembly they are struck with a secret something, they know not what; and if they do not immediately join in the worship of the present God, yet a deep impression is made upon them beyond any that could be caused by the sound of human speech, or by the grandeur of outward show. They feel awed, and retire abashed. The Great Enemy.

Certainly the devil knows where God is - none better than he. He hates the camp of which Jehovah is the leader; against it he doubles his enmity, multiplies his plots, and exercises all his power. He knows where his kingdom finds its bravest assailants, and he therefore attacks their headquarters, even as did Balaam and Balak of old.

Let us look at Balaam for a moment. May we never run in the way of Balaam for a reward; but let us stand in his way for a moment that he may be our beacon. This man had sold himself for gold, and though he knew God and spoke under inspiration, yet he

knew him not in his heart, but was willing to curse God's people for hire. He was thwarted in his design because God was there. It is worth our while to see what kind of a God Jehovah is in Balaam's estimation. He describes our God in verse nineteen - "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Balaam perceived that the God who was in the midst of his people is not a changeable God, not a false God, not one who promises and forgets, or promises and eats his words, or promises what he can not and will not perform.

### **THE SURE PROMISES**

The God of Israel is faithful and true, immutable, unchanging: every one of his promises shall be fulfilled: none of his words shall fall to the ground. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it? hath he spoken, and shall it not come to pass?" What a joy it is to have such a God as this among us - a promise-making and a promise-keeping God; a God at work for his people, as he has declared he would be; a God comforting, and cheering his people, and fulfilling in their experience that which his word had led them to expect. This God is our God for ever and ever; he shall be our guide even unto death.

My dear friends, we sometimes hear men talk of the failure of the church. We are afraid that some churches do fail. Wherever failure occurs, the bottom of it is the absence of the Lord of hosts, for he can not fail. I heard one, speaking of the district in which he lives, say, "We are a religious people; almost all the people attend a place of worship, but," he added, "I am bound to add that of spiritual life we have few traces. One Church has given up its prayer-meetings; another feels that its entertainments are more important than its worship, and another is notorious for worldliness." This is a testimony as terrible as it is common.

### **DEAD CHRISTIANS**

The worst thing that can be said of any Christian community is this: "Thou hast a name to live and art dead." "Thou art neither cold nor hot." Our Lord Jesus says, "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." A church without life and zeal makes Christ sick; he can not bear it. He can put up with downright godlessness sooner than with a profession of religion out of which the life and the power are gone, since it has cooled down into lukewarmness. This, then, we should pray for continually - the presence of God in the midst of his people.

"Great Shepherd of thine Israel  
Who didst between the cherubs dwell,  
And ledd'st the tribes, thy chosen sheep,  
Safe through the desert and the deep -

Thy church is in the desert now;  
Shine from on high, and guide us through;  
Turn us to thee, thy love restore;  
We shall be saved, and sigh no more."

## **II. To whet your desire for this let me pass on to the second head of my subject, which is briefly to describe THE RESULTS OF THIS DIVINE PRESENCE.**

Some of these results are mentioned in the context. One of the first is leading - "God brought them out of Egypt" (verse 22). The best critics give us another rendering: "God is bringing them out of Egypt." When God is in the midst of his people he is leading them, so that we may cheerfully sing that song, "He leadeth me; he leadeth me," and go on with David to word it:

"He leadeth me beside the still waters."

We want no other leader in the church when we have God; for his eye and arm will guide his people.

### **HUMAN INEFFICIENCY**

I am always afraid of having human rules in a church, and equally fearful of being governed by human precedents. I am afraid of power being vested in one, or two, or twenty men; the power must be in the Lord himself. That church which has God in the midst of them rules itself, and goes right without any other guidance but that which comes of the Holy Spirit's working. Such a church keeps together without aiming at uniformity, and goes on to victory even though it makes no noise. That movement is right which is led by God, and that is sure to be all wrong which is led in the best possible way if God be absent. Organisation is all very well, but I sometimes feel inclined to join with Zwingli in the battle when he said, "In the name of the Holy Trinity let all loose:" for when everybody is free, if God be present, everybody is bound to do the right. When each man moves according to the divine instinct in him there will be little need of regulations: all is order where God rules.

### **EMPTY SCHEMES AND SYSTEMS**

Just as the atoms of matter obey the present power of God, so do separate believers obey the one great impelling influence. Oh, for God to be in the church to lead it: and it shall be rightly guided. Do not fall in love with this particular system or that, my brother; do not cry up this scheme of working or that! Get the Spirit of God, and almost any shape that spiritual life takes will be a form of energy suitable for the particular emergency. God never leads his people wrongly. It is for them to follow the fiery, cloudy pillar; though it lead them through the sea, they shall traverse it dry-shod; though it lead them through a desert, they shall be fed; though it bring them into a thirsty land, they shall drink to the full of water from the rock. We must have the Lord with us to guide us into our promised rest.

The next blessing is strength. "He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn" (verse 22). It is generally agreed that the creature here meant is an extinct species of urus or ox, most nearly represented by the buffalo of the present period. This gives us the sentence, "He hath as it were the strength of a buffalo." When God is in a church, what rugged strength, what massive force, what irresistible energy is sure to be there!

## **BACKBONE WANTING**

And how untameable is the living force! You can not yoke this buffalo to everybody's plough: it has its own free way of living, and it acts after its own style. When the Lord is with a church her power is not in numbers, though very speedily she will increase; her power is not wealth, though God will take care that the money comes when it is needed: her power lies in God, and that power becomes irresistible, untameable, unconquerable. Force and energy are with the Lord.

I do fear me that what many bodies of Christian people need is this force.

Examine yonder religious body: it is huge, but it lacks muscle; it is a fine-looking organisation, but soul, sinew, backbone are wanting. Where God is there is sure to be life-force. When the Spirit of God descended upon the first saints they began to speak with wondrous power; and though they were persecuted, they were not subdued. No bit could be put into their mouths to hold them in, for they went everywhere preaching the word. Of the true Israel it shall be said - his strength is as the strength of the buffalo: it can not be controlled or conquered.

The next result is safety. "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." The presence of God quietly baffles all the attempts of the evil one. I have noticed, dear brethren, in this church, where we have had God's presence in a great measure, that all around us people have gone off to this opinion and to the other fancy, yet our members as a rule have stood firm.

## **SCEPTICISM TO BE IGNORED**

Persons say to me, "Do you not sometimes answer the scepticism's of the day?" I answer, No. They do not come in my way. "Do not modern opinions trouble your church?" They have not done so. Why? Because God is there, and spiritual life in vigorous exercise does not fall a victim to disease. A gracious atmosphere does not agree with modern doubt. When people fall into that evil they go where the thing is indulged, or at least where it is combated; where in some way or other they can develop their love of novelty and foster the notion of their own wisdom. Infidelity, Socinianism, and modern thought can make no headway where the Spirit is at work. Enchantment does not lie against Israel, and divination does not touch Jacob.

If a church will keep to truth, keep to God, and do its own work, it can live like a lamb in the midst of wolves without being torn in pieces. Have God with you, and not only the evil of doctrinal error but every other shall be kept far from you. There was even when Christ was in the Church a Judas in the midst of it; and even in the apostles' days there were some that went out from them because they were not of them, for if they had been of them doubtless they would have continued with them; hence we may not expect to be without false brethren. But the true safety of the Church is not a creed, not an enactment for expelling those who violate the creed; the presence of God alone can protect his people against the cunning assaults of their foes.

## **USELESS NONSENSE**

Upon these words “there is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel,” suffer a few sentences. There are still a few foolish people in the world who believe in [i.e., trust in the power of] witchcraft and spells, but ye, beloved, if you love the Lord, throw such nonsense to the winds. Do you not hear people talk about this being lucky and that unlucky? This notion is heathenish and unchristian. Never utter such nonsense. But even if there are such things as witchcraft and divination, if this house were full of devils and the air swarmed with invisible sprites of an evil sort, yet if we be the people of God, surely there is no enchantment against us. Divination can not touch a child of God: the evil one is chained. Wherefore be of good courage: if God be for us, who can be against us? Further than that, God gives to his people the next blessing, that is of his so working among them as to make them a wonder, and cause outsiders to raise inquiries about them. “According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?” Is not that a singular thing? Here is Balaam with his seven altars, and seven bullocks, and seven rams, and here is Balak, and they are all going to compass some dreadful evil against Israel.

## **SIGNS AND WONDERS**

The prophet is a man of great skill in the occult arts: and what does God say? In effect he says, from this hour in which you try to curse them I will bless them more than ever, until I will make them say, and their enemies say, “What hath God wrought?” Brethren, there is another question, “What hath Israel wrought?” I am glad that Israel’s work is not my subject just now, because I should make a very wretched sermon out of it; we have better music in the words, “What hath God wrought?” Let me tell not what I have done, but what God has done; not what human nature is, but what God’s nature is, and what the grace of God will work in the midst of his people.

If God be with us we shall see signs and wonders, until those about us shall say, “What is this that God is doing?” Yes, in you, poor Jacob, wrestling, halting on your thigh, men shall see marvels and cry, “What hath God wrought?” Much more shall it be so with you, my brother Israel, you who have prevailed and won the blessing; you are as a prince with God, and you shall make men inquire, “What hath God wrought?”

## **THE INVINCIBLE LION**

When God is with his people he will give them power of a destructive kind. Do not be frightened. Here is the text for it: “Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion” - that is, as a lion in the fullness of his vigour - “he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.” God has put into his church, when he is in it, a most wonderful destructive power as against spiritual wickedness.

A healthy church kills error, and tears in pieces evil. Not so very long ago our nation tolerated slavery in our colonies. Philanthropists endeavoured to destroy slavery; but when was it utterly abolished?

It was when Wilberforce roused the church of God, and when the church of God

addressed herself to the conflict, then she tore the evil thing to pieces. I have been amused with what Wilberforce said the day after they passed the Act of Emancipation. He merrily said to a friend when it was all done, "Is there not something else we can abolish?" That was said playfully, but it shows the spirit of the church of God. She lives in conflict and victory; her mission is to destroy everything that is bad in the land. See the fierce devil of intemperance, how it devours men! Earnest men have been laboring against it and they have done something for which we are grateful, but if ever intemperance is put down, it will be when the entire church of God shall arouse herself to protest against it. When the strong lion rises up the giant of drunkenness shall fall before him. "He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain."

### **A HOPEFUL PROPHECY**

I augur for the world the best results from a fully aroused church. If God be in her there is no evil which she can not overcome. This crowded London of ours sometimes appals me - the iniquity which reigns and rages in the lower districts, the general indifference and the growing atheism of the people - these are something terrible; but let not the people of God be dismayed. If the Lord be in the midst of us we shall do with this as our sires have done with other evils: we shall rise up in strength, and not lie down till the evil is destroyed. For the destructions, mark you, of God's people, are not the destructions of men and women; they consist in the overthrow of sin, the tearing in pieces of systems of iniquity. This it is which God shall help his church to do, he being in the midst of her.

Once more: the results of God's presence are to be seen, not only in the context, but in other matters which we have personally experienced and hope to experience more fully still. Note them. When God is in a church there is a holy awe upon the hearts of his people; there is also childlike trustfulness and hopefulness, and consequent courage and joy.

### **DELIGHTFUL ORDINANCES**

When the Lord is in the midst of his people the ordinances of his house are exceeding sweet; baptism and the Lord's Supper become divinely painted pictures of our burial in Christ, and of our life through him; the preaching of the word drops as dew and distils as the rain; the meetings for prayer are fresh and fervent; we want to stay in them hour after hour, we feel it such a happy thing to be there. The very house wherein we meet grows beautiful to us; we love the place where our Lord is wont to meet with us. Then work for Christ is easy, nay, delightful; God's people never want urging on, they are eager for the fray when the Lord is with them. Then, too, suffering for Christ becomes pleasant, yea, any kind of suffering is easily borne.

"I can do all things, or can bear  
All sufferings, if my Lord be there:  
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,  
While his left hand my head sustains."

Then prayer grows abundant all over the church, both in private and in public. Then life is made vigorous; the feeblest becomes as David, and David like the angel of the Lord. Then love is fervent; unity is unbroken; truth is esteemed, and the living of truth in the life is sought after by all the people of God. Then effort is successful; the church enlarges the bounds of her tent, for she breaks forth on the right hand and on the left. Then her seed inherits the Gentiles, and the desolate places are inhabited. Then God gives unto her the holy energy with which she vanquishes nations. When God is with her she becomes like a sheaf of fire in the midst of the stubble, and consumes her adversaries round about. "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," is a church which has God in her midst.

### **THE KING'S BATTLE-CRY**

But now notice one thing in my text, and with that I close this description. Where God is, we are told, "The shout of a king is among them." What is the shout of a king? When great commanders are known to have come into a camp what a thrill of joy it causes among their trusty warriors! When the soldiers have been much dejected it has been whispered in their tents -

"The king has come to marshal us,  
All in his armour dressed,"

and from that moment every man is cheered up. At the sight of the king as he comes riding into the camp the host raises a great shout. What means it? It is a shout of loyal love - they are glad to welcome their leader. So it is when we sing -

"The King himself comes near;"

we are all as glad as glad can be. Those who can not come out to see their prince, because they are lying on their sick beds in hospitals, clap their hands, while even the little children in their mothers' arms join in the general joy. "The king is come," say they, and his presence kindles their enthusiasm till they make the hills ring again.

### **CROMWELL AND HEROES**

You know how the stern Ironsides felt when Cromwell came along; every man was a hero when he led the way. They were ready for any adventure, no matter how difficult, as long as their great chief was there. That enthusiasm which was inspired by Alexander, and by Napoleon, and by other great commanders, is the earthly image of the spiritual fervour felt by the church when the Lord Jesus is in her midst.

What next? When the King comes and they have received him with enthusiasm, he cries, "Now is the hour of battle;" and at once a shout goes up from his warriors who are eager for the fight. When a clan of Highlanders was led to the battle by their chief he had only to show them the enemy and with one tremendous shout they leaped upon them like lions. It is so with the people of God. When God is with us then are we strong, resolute, determined. The charge of the servants of God is as the rush of a hurricane against a bowing wall and a tottering fence. In God is our confidence of victory. With God present no man's heart fails him; no doubt enters the host. "Be

strong, and quit themselves like men,” is the word that is passed round, for their king’s eye makes them brave and the presence of his majesty secures them triumph.

### **THE GREAT NEED**

My brethren, let us cry to God, entreating him to be among us, This it is that you want in your Sunday-schools, in your mission halls, in your street preaching, in your tract distributing; it is this that I want beyond everything when I have to speak to you in this vast house. If I could hear the sound of my Master’s feet behind me I would speak though I were lying upon the borders of the grave; but if God be gone I am bereft of power. What is the use of words without the Spirit? We might as well mutter to the whistling winds as preach to men without the Lord. O God, if thou be with us then the shout of a King is among us, but without thee we pine away.

### **III. Thirdly, let us look at a very important point, and a very practical one too: What can be done for THE SECURING AND PRESERVING OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITH THE CHURCH?**

This is a matter that would require several sermons to discuss it fully; but I notice that there is something even in the confirmation of a church to secure this. God is very tolerant, and he bears with many mistakes in his servants and yet blesses them; but depend upon it, unless a church is formed at the very outset upon scriptural principles and in God’s own way, sooner or later all the mistakes of her constitution will turn out to be sources of weakness.

### **POWER OF THE BIBLE**

Christ loves to dwell in a house which is built according to his own plans, and not according to the whims and fancies of men. The church ought not to set up as her authority the decrees of men, either living or dead; her ruler is Christ. Associations formed otherwise than according to Scripture must fail in the long run. I wish Christians would believe this. Chillingworth said, “The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants.” That is not true.

Certain Protestants have tacked many other things to the Bible; and they are suffering as the result of their folly, for they can not keep their church from becoming formal. Of course they can not: they have admitted a little unhealthy leaven, and it will leaven the whole lump. The dry rot in one part of the house will spread throughout the whole fabric sooner or later. Let us be careful to build on the foundation of Christ, and then let every man take heed how he build thereon; for even if the foundation is good, yet if he build with hay and stubble the fire will cause him grievous loss.

But next, God will not only dwell with a church which is full of life. The living God will not inhabit a dead church. Hence the necessity of having really regenerated people as members of the church. We can not secure this in every case with all our watching; tares will grow among the wheat. But if the admission of unregenerate men is usual, and there are no restrictions, then the Lord will be grieved and leave us. God dwelleth not in temples made with hands; He has nothing to do with bricks and mortar; He dwells in living souls. Remember that text: “God is not the God of the dead, but of the

living,” and it bears this sense among others, that He is not the God of a church made up of unconverted people. Oh that we may all live unto God, and may that life be past all question.

### **HELPLESS PARALYSIS**

That being supposed, we next notice that to have God among us we must be full of faith. Unbelief gives forth such a noxious vapour that Jesus Himself could not stop where it was. His strength was paralysed; “He could not do mighty works there because of their unbelief.” Faith creates an atmosphere in which the Spirit of God can work. Meanwhile the Spirit of God Himself creates that faith, so that it is all of His own working from first to last. Brothers, sisters, do you believe your God? Do you believe up to the hilt? Alas! too many only believe a little. But do you believe His every word? Do you believe His grandest promises? Is he a real God to you, making His words into facts every day of your lives? If so, then the Lord is among us as in the holy place. Faith builds a pavilion in which her King delights to sit enthroned.

With that must come prayer. Prayer is the breath of faith. I do not believe God will ever be long with a church that does not pray, and I feel certain that when meetings for prayer, when family prayer, when private prayer, when any form of prayer comes to be at a discount, the Lord will leave the people to learn their weakness.

### **FERVENT PRAYER WANTED**

Want of prayer cuts the sinews of the church for practical working; she is lame, feeble, impotent, if prayer be gone. If anything be the matter with the lungs we fear consumption. Prayer-meetings are the lungs of the church, and anything the matter there means consumption to the church, or at best, a gradual decline, attended with general debility. Oh, my brothers, if we want to have God with us, pass the watchword round, “Let us pray.” Let us pray after the fashion of the widow who was importunate and would not be repulsed; remember, it is written, “Men ought always to pray and not to faint.” Where prayer is fervent God is present.

Supposing there is this faith and prayer, we shall also need holiness of life. You know what Balaam did when he found he could not curse the people. Satanic was his advice. He bade the king of Moab seduce the men of Israel by the women of Moab that were fair to look upon. These were to fascinate them by their beauty, and then to invite them to their idolatrous rites, which rites were orgies of lust; he hoped that the lewdness of the people would grieve the Lord and cause Him to leave them, and then Moab could smite them. He sadly succeeded.

### **PHINEAS AND HIS JAVELIN**

If it had not been for Phineas who in holy wrath drove his javelin right through a man and woman in the very act of sin, sparing none in the vehemence of his zeal, Israel had been quite undone. So in a church. The devil will work hard to lead one into licentiousness, another into drunkenness, a third into dishonesty, and others into worldliness. If he can only get the goodly Babylonian garment and the wedge of gold buried in an Achan’s tent, then Israel will be chased before her adversaries. God can

not dwell in an unclean church. A holy God abhors the very garments spotted by the flesh. Be ye holy as Christ is holy. Do not take up with this German-silver electrotype holiness, which is so much boasted of nowadays.

### **A DANGEROUS DELUSION**

Do not be deluded into self-righteousness, but seek after real holiness; and if you do find it you will never boast about it: your life will speak, but your lips will never dare to say, "See how holy I am." Real holiness dwells with humility, and makes men aspire after that which yet lies beyond them. Be holy, upright, just, straight, true, pure, chaste, devout. God send us this behaviour, and then we shall keep him among us as long as we live.

Lastly, when we have reached to that, let us have practical consecration. God will not dwell in a house which does not belong to him. No, the first thing with any one of us is to answer this question: - Dost thou give thyself up to Christ, body, soul, and spirit, to live for him and to die for him? Wilt thou give him all that thou hast of talent and ability, and substance, and time, and life itself? Where there is a church made up of consecrated people, there God will remain, and there he will make a heaven below, and there the shout of a king shall be heard, and there his strength shall be revealed, and there his glory shall be seen even as it is beheld on high. The Lord send us this, for Jesus' sake. Amen and Amen.

## 5. LECTURE ON CANDLES

Candles were far more familiar objects in my boyhood than in these days of gas and electricity. Now, fathers show their boys and girls how to make gas at the end of a tobacco pipe; but in my time the greatest of wonders was a lucifer-match. Our lights were so few that they justified the wit who declared that the word "luxury" was derived from lux, the Latin for light. Assuredly, a good light is a high form of luxury. I can never forget the rush-light, which dimly illuminated the sitting-room of the old house; nor the dips, which were pretty fair when there were not too many of them to the pound; nor the mould candles, which came out only when there was a party, or some special personage was expected. Short sixes were very respectable specimens of household lights. Composites have never seemed to me to be so good as the old sort, made of pure tallow; but I dare say I may be wrong. Nevertheless, I have no liking for composites in theology, but prefer the genuine article without compromise.

Once I thoughtlessly hung a pound of tallow candles on a clothes-horse. This construction was moved near the fire, and the result was a mass of fat on the floor, and the cottons of the candles almost divested of tallow: a lesson to us all not to expose certain things to a great heat, lest we dissolve them. I fear that many a man's good resolutions only need the ordinary fire of daily life to make them melt away. So, too, with fine professions, and the boastings of perfection which abound in this age of shams.

### JOKE ON YOUNGSTERS

In my early days it was a youthful joke to send a boy to the shop for a pound of cotton rushes. The grocer, if of an angry sort, was apt to make a rush at the lad, who thus appeared to mock him. It was in these times that we heard the story of the keeper of the chandler's shop, who told her customers that "candles was riz." "Riz?" said her neighbour, "everything is riz except my wages. But why have they riz?" "They tell me," said the other, "that tallow has gone up because of the war with Russia." "Well," replied the customer, "that is a queer story. Have they begun to fight by candle-light?" That woman had some inkling of the law of supply and demand. She may never have read "Adam Smith," but it is possible that she was a Smith herself.

Those were the days when a wit is represented as saying to his tradesman, "I hope these candles will be better than the last." "I am sure I don't know, sir; was anything the matter with those I sent you?" "Matter enough," replied the wit; "they burned very well till they were about half gone, and then they would burn no longer." The catch is that, of course, they burned shorter.

### THE CANDLE BOX

I have here a case for candles, a casket for those jewels of light. Look well at this curiosity, ye dwellers in cities; for I do not suppose that any of you have such a piece of furniture in your houses. It is a candle-box, well-fashioned and neatly japanned. Here at the back are two plates with holes in them by which to hang up the box against the wall. It closes very neatly, opens very readily, and keeps its contents out of harm's way. I can assure you that I have within it a number of the very best candles, from the

most notable makers. Wax, stearin, palmitin, and so forth: there could not be a handsomer assortment than I now exhibit to you. Let no one despise this display: here we have capacity, elegance, preparation, and plenty of each.

But suppose that we were in this room without the gas, and I were simply to exhibit the candle-box and its contents, and say, "Here is brilliance! You need no electric lighting: this box abundantly suffices for the enlightenment of this large assembly!" You would reply, "But we see none the better for your boasted illumination. The candles are shut up in their box, and yield no single beam of light." Herein detect a resemblance to many a church. We could readily find communities of Christian people, who are shut up to themselves, and are without the living fire of the Spirit of God. What is the good of them?

### **DYING OF RESPECTABILITY**

This is a very respectable candle-box; is it not? it could hardly be more respectable. Even so, yonder is a highly respectable congregation! Very refined and select! The minister is a "man of high culture and advanced thought." He can confound a text of Scripture with any living man. He attracted at least five horses to his place of preaching last Sunday. They say it takes a great deal of ability to draw a horse to church! As for his hearers, they are all the cream of the cream. Don't you know that the doctor, and the brewer, and the lawyer, and the auctioneer all attend that most honoured sanctuary? What with an M. D., and a D. D., and an F. R. S., two wealthy dowagers, a colonel, a county council-man, and a professor, it is worth while for a fellow to go to that church for the sake of the social distinction which it will bestow upon him.

The people are so very respectable that they do not know one another, and never think of shaking hands. They are all so very select, that they float about in distinguished isolation, like so many icebergs in the Atlantic. The families walk up the aisles with the most becoming dignity, and they walk, down the aisles with the most proper decorum. They can do without warmth, brotherly love, sympathy, and co-operation; for their eminent "respectability" suffices for every need. Of course, they can do nothing more; for it costs them all their time, talent, thought, and spare cash to maintain their superior respectability. Like the gentleman with his well-brushed hat; no wonder that they look so superior, for they give their whole minds to it.

### **CHARMING VARIETY**

I see before me quite an array of candles. Variety is charming, and number is cheering. The more the merrier, and especially of such reputable and notable light-givers as these. We may consider that we are having quite an illumination. With so many luminaries we need hardly regret the set of sun. But is it so? I, for one, am none the better for these promising lights; are you? I put on my spectacles. But there is no improvement. I can see nothing; and yet there are candles enough and to spare! There is no mystery about it - the candles are not lighted; and until they are lighted they can not remove our darkness. Grace is needed to make gifts available for the service of God.

Let us look more closely into our collection of lights. Here is one which I should

suppose to be an archbishop at the least. This specimen is a Doctor of Divinity. These are gentry, and these are merchants, and those are “cultured” individuals; but without the light from on high they are all equally unserviceable.

### **A GRAND RUSH-LIGHT**

A poor converted lad in a workshop will be of more spiritual use than a parliament of unregenerate men. I introduce to you a lighted rush-light, and there is more to be seen by this ignoble luminary than by all the rest. Little ability, set on fire by the light of God may produce greater results than ten talents without the divine power. “A living dog is better than a dead lion:” a zealous but illiterate Christian may be worth twenty lifeless philosophers.

Herein is great encouragement, dear friends, that if you once get a light, it will spread from one to another without end. This one lighted candle would suffice to set a hundred candles shining. It may light a much finer candle than itself.

Fire is one of those things for which there is no accounting as to what may come of it. Its spread is not to be measured even by leagues when it once gets firm hold, and the wind drives it on. Piety in a cottage may enlighten a nation. If the church of God were reduced to one person, it might, within an incredibly short time, become a great multitude.

### **HOW ONE LIGHT KINDLES ANOTHER**

There is a true apostolic succession in the kingdom of grace. Office has the pretence of it, but grace gives the reality. At Mr. Jay’s jubilee, Timothy East, of Birmingham, told how, by the youthful ministry of William Jay, a thoughtless youth was converted and became a minister. Under the preaching of that man, Timothy East himself was led to repentance; and then by a sermon from Timothy East, John Williams, who became the martyr of Erromanga and the apostle of the South Sea Islands, was savingly impressed. See how the light goes from Jay to another, from that other to East, from East to Williams, and from Williams to the savages of the Southern Seas! A family tree of an equally interesting character has been traced with regard to books as surely as with living witnesses for God. A Puritan tract, old and torn, was lent by a poor man to Baxter’s father. It was called Bunny’s Resolutions. Through reading this little book, Richard Baxter, afterwards the great preacher of Kidderminster, received a real change of heart.

### **SOME WONDERFUL BOOKS**

Baxter wrote *The Saint’s Everlasting Rest*, which was blessed to the conversion of Doddridge. He wrote *The Rise and Progress*, which was the means of the conversion of Legh Richmond, and he wrote his *Dairyman’s Daughter*, which has been translated into more than fifty languages, and has led to the conversion of thousands of souls. How many of these converted ones have in their turn written books and tracts which have charmed others to Jesus, eternity alone will reveal. We can never see the issues of our acts. We may strike a match, and from that little flame a street may be lighted.

Give a light to your next door neighbour, and you may be taking the nearest way to instruct the twentieth century, or to send the gospel to Chinese Tartary, or to overthrow the popular science fetish of the hour. A spark from your kitchen candle may, in its natural progression from one to another, light the last generation of men; so the word of the hour may be the light of the age, by which men may come in multitudes to see their Saviour and Lord. Let thy light shine, and what will come of it thou shalt see hereafter.

### **“I SAW A LIGHT”**

Coming one Thursday in the late autumn from an engagement beyond Dulwich, my way lay up to the top of the Herne Hill ridge. I came along the level out of which rises the steep hill I had to ascend. While I was on the lower ground, riding in a cab, I saw a light before me, and when I came near the hill, I marked that light gradually go up the hill, leaving a train of stars behind it. This line of newborn stars remained in the form of one lamp, and then another, and another; It reached from the foot of the hill to its summit. I did not see the lamplighter. I do not know his name, nor his age, nor his residence; but I saw the lights which he had kindled, and these remained when he himself had gone his way. As I rode along I thought to myself, “How earnestly do I wish that my life may be spent in lighting one soul after another with the sacred flame of eternal life! I would myself be as much as possible unseen while at my work, and would vanish into the eternal brilliance above when my work is done.”

The taper which I hold in my hand is in itself a poor thing as an illuminator, but it has created quite a splendour in the room by the light which it has communicated to others. Andrew was not a very great personage, but he called his brother Peter, and led him to Jesus, and Peter was a host in himself. Never mind how small a taper you may be; burn on, shine at your best, and God bless you. You may lead on to grand results despite your feebleness.

### **UNKNOWN GREAT ONES**

He that called Dr. John Owen is forgotten: I might almost say was never known: he was a small taper - but what a candle he lighted! Those holy women who talked together as they sat in the sun at Bedford were a blessing to John Bunyan; but we know not the name of even one of them. Everywhere the hidden ones are used of the Lord as the means of lighting up those who shine as stars in the churches.

In the service of God we find the greatest expansion of our being. It makes the dead man speak, and it also makes a single living man spread himself over a province. Our forefathers were fond of riddles. I can not say that they were very witty ones, but there was solidity in them. Here is one - What is that of which twenty could be put into a tankard, and yet one would fill a barn? Twenty candles unlit would scarce fill a jug; but one when it is lighted will beneficially fill a barn with light, or viciously fill it with fire and smoke. A man, what is he? A man of God, what is he not? Our influence may enlighten the world and shine far down the ages, if the Holy Spirit's fire shall kindle us.

## **THE WRONG CANDLESTICK**

Here is a candle which has never given any light yet and never will as it now is. Hear its reason for not giving light! It is so unfortunate that it can not find a proper candlestick, in which to stand upright and fulfil the purpose for which it was made. Let us try to accommodate it. Here is a fine church candlestick, and we set our candle in the socket. Does it shine? No. Shall we try a lower place? It does not shine any better. We will put this candle in the most enviable position - in this real silver candlestick, of the most elaborate workmanship. It does not shine one whit the more. Neither high nor low places will make a man what he is not.

I know persons who can not get on anywhere; but, according to their own belief, the fault is not in themselves, but in their surroundings.

## **NO CHURCH GOOD ENOUGH FOR HIM**

I could sketch you a brother who is unable to do any good because all the churches are so faulty. He was once with us, but he came to know us too well, and grew disgusted with our dogmatism and want of taste. He went to the Independents, who have so much more culture, breadth, and liberality. He grew weary of what he called "cold dignity." He wanted more fire, and therefore favoured the Methodists with his patronage. Alas! He did not find them the flaming zealots he had supposed them to be: he very soon outgrew both them and their doctrines, and joined our most excellent friends, the Presbyterians. These proved to be by far too high and dry for him, and he became rather sweet upon the Swedenborgians, and would have joined them had not his wife led him among the Episcopalians.

Here he might have even grown into a churchwarden; but he was not content; and before long I heard that he was an Exclusive Brother! There I leave him, hoping that he may be better in his new line than he has ever been in the old ones. "The course of nature could no further go:" if he has not fallen among a loving, united people now, where will he find them? Yet I expect, that as Adam left Paradise, so will he ultimately fall from his high estate.

## **A ROLLING STONE**

He reminds me of a very good man who changed his religious views so often, that I once asked him, "What are you now?" he told me, and I went on my way; but when I met him next, and made the same inquiry, he was something else. At our next meeting my reverend brother was grieved because I said to him the third time, "What are you now?" He reproved me for it; but when I somewhat impenitently repeated the query, and pressed it home, I found that he really had entered another denomination since I had last seen him. What a pity that the churches should be so bad, that when a man has gone the complete round he finds none which quite comes up to his mark!

The same illustration suggests to me to ask you whether you know the young man who can not serve God as an apprentice, but is going to do wonders when he is out of his time? Yes, he only wants to be put into another candlestick. So he thinks: but we know better. When he is out of his time, and has become a journeyman, he will postpone his

grand plans of usefulness till he has started as a master on his own account. Alas! When he is a master, he will wait till he has made money and can retire from business. So, you see, the candle does not shine, but it imputes its failure to the candlesticks! The candlesticks are not to be blamed.

### **THE SELF-FITTING CANDLE**

Poor Dick Miss-the-Mark believes that he ought to have been Oliver Cromwell; but as that character is hardly in season in this year of grace, Richard is unable to be Cromwell, and therefore he is not himself at all. That wart over the eye, and other Cromwellian distinctions, are a dead loss in his case. He can not develop his genius for want of a King, Charles and a Prince Rupert. The proper candlestick is not forthcoming, and so this fine candle can not shine.

Here is a very simple affair - Field's Self-fitting Candle; but it is very handy. You see, owing to the shape of its lower end, the candle will fit into any candlestick, whether it be large or small. A man of this sort makes himself useful anywhere. In poverty he is content; in wealth he is humble. Put him in a village, and he instructs the ignorant; place him in a city, and he seeks the fallen. If he can preach, he will do so; and if that is beyond his capacity, he will teach in the Sabbath-school. Like the holy missionary Brainerd, if he can not convert a tribe, he will, even on his dying bed, be willing to teach a poor child his letters. It is a great thing not only to be able to fit in to all kinds of work, but to cope with all sorts of people.

### **RIDING ANY KIND OF A HORSE**

The power of adaptation to high and low, learned and ignorant, sad and frivolous, is no mean gift. If, like Nelson, we can lay our vessel side by side with the enemy, and come to close quarters without delay, we shall do considerable execution. Commend me to the man who can avail himself of any conversation, and any topic, to drive home saving truth upon the conscience and heart. He who can ride a well-trained horse, properly saddled, does well; but the fellow who can leap upon the wild horse of the prairie, and ride him bare-backed, is a genius indeed. "All things to all men," rightly interpreted, is a motto worthy of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and of all who, like him, would win souls for Jesus.

It is a pity when a man is too big for his position - as some candles are too big to fit in certain candlesticks. Don't I know some Jacks-in-Office who are a world too great to be of the slightest use to anybody? Don't ask them a question unless you desire to be eaten up alive. On the other hand, it is not pretty to see a candle with paper round it to keep it in its place; nor is it nice to see a little man padded out to make him fill up an important office.

### **DO YOUR WORK ANYWHERE**

Some men in prominent positions are like the small boy on the high horse; they need a deal of holding on. Be fit for your office, or find one for which you are fit. It is not a very great invention to make a candle self-fitting, but the result is very pleasant. Though the expression, "the right man in the right place," is said to be a tautology, I

like it, and I like best of all to see it in actual life. Try to fit yourself to whatever comes in your way.

Hearty service, rendered from pure motives, is acceptable to God, even when persons of education and taste have just cause to find fault with its imperfections. If we can not bear witness for the gospel in grammatical language, we may be thankful that we can do it at all, and we may be encouraged by the unquestionable fact that God blesses the most unpolished utterances. When you go to do a bit of carpentering in the shed, and need a light, you are sometimes on the lookout for the means of setting up your bit of candle in a handy way. Here is the great invention in which your researches usually end.

### **CURIOUS CANDLESTICK**

You see I have stuck a candle into a ginger-beer bottle, and the light which comes from it is quite as clear as if I had a fine-plated candlestick. Here is a popular implement, and it is both handy and cheap. Who would find any fault with it if he were in the dark, and wanted to find something in a hurry? If you have no fitter candlestick, a ginger-beer bottle does mightily well. How often our Lord has used men of scanty education, or of none at all! How useful he has made the things which are despised!

Yet, at the same time, if it were left to me to make my choice as to how I would have my candle set up, I should not object to have it in a more presentable stand. I would not quarrel even if the candle given to me to go to bed with were in a silver candlestick. For use I would sooner have a ginger-beer bottle with a bright candle in it than a plated candlestick with a dead candle in it, which I could not light. Who would object to be rid of the guttering and the hot dropping tallow, and to handle a concern which would not dirty his hands? A thing of beauty and of brightness is a joy for ever.

### **THAT FATAL EXTINGUISHER**

Have you ever heard of a person who, in real earnest, did the very foolish thing which I am attempting in pretence? I have a candle here, and I want to light it. What shall I do? Before me I see a candle burning very brightly, and I will take a light from it for this other candle. I have not succeeded. How is it that I have altogether failed? I am of a very persevering turn of mind; I will give it a fair trial. I can not succeed in lighting my candle, and you are all laughing at me, and you whisper that I must be overmuch stupid to try to light a candle while an extinguisher is upon it. I subside. Do you not think that very many persons go with an extinguisher on to hear a minister preach? Listen to yonder young lady: - "Well, I will go to hear him, Mary Anne, because you press me, but I am sure I shall not like him." Is she not very like a candle covered with an extinguisher? Why our nameless friend does not like the preacher she has not told us; but probably her prejudice will be the more intense in proportion as she is unable to give a reason for it. Prejudice is a blind and deaf judge, who decides a case before he has seen or heard the evidence. "Hang them first, and try them afterwards," is one of his sage observations. Remember the old lines about unreasonable dislikes:

"I do not like you, Dr. Fell,  
The reason why I can not tell;

But this I know, and know full well,  
I do not like you, Dr. Fell.”

Just so. That is a very effective extinguisher.

Our young lady friend showed the prejudice of ignorance, but there is such a thing as the prejudice of learning, and this is a very effectual extinguisher. Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, once said that he had read the Bible through - I think it was ten times - and he could not anywhere find the Deity of Christ in it. Honest John Newton observed, “Yes, and if I were to try ten times to light a candle with an extinguisher on it, I should not succeed.” Once make up your mind to refuse a doctrine or a command, and you will not see it where God himself has written it as with a sunbeam. Kick against a truth, and the arguments for it will seem to have no existence. Let prejudice of any sort wholly cover the candle of your mind, and, whatever you do, there is no likelihood of your receiving the light. There are none so deaf as those who will not hear.

### **WIDE-AWAKE HEARERS**

The only case in which I am willing to bear with prejudice is when a dislike of me leads people to watch the more carefully what I have to say. If they will, during a sermon, be wide awake that they may find fault, I will forgive their object out of respect to their action. Of all devils, the worst is the devil of slumber. He haunts places of worship, and it is not easy to chase him away, especially in warm weather. I greatly fear lest my people should become so used to me, that, like the miller, they can go to sleep all the easier for the grinding of the wheels - I mean, all the quicker for the sound of my voice.

Butchers, it seems, are accustomed to do their work with a candle fastened upon their foreheads in this fashion. As I am not one of those gentlemen “who kills his own,” you will excuse me if I have not managed the affair in an orthodox manner. There is an old story of one who had lost his candle, and travelled all round his premises searching for it by its own light. It is told as a jest, and it must have been a mirthful incident where it happened. I remember an old gentleman who could see very little without spectacles, but went up and down the house searching for his glasses, looking through them all the time.

### **THE CANDLE ON THE FOREHEAD**

The parable is this: a person full of doubts and fears about his personal condition before God is searching for grace within, by the light of that very grace for which he is looking. He is fearfully anxious because he can see no trace of gracious anxiety in his mind. He feels sad because he can not feel sad. He repents because he can not repent. He has the candle on his forehead, and is seeing by the light of it, and yet he is searching for that very light, without which he could not search at all. Many a time a man laments that he does not feel, and all the while he is overwhelmed with pain through the impression that he does not feel pain as he should.

Some seem to have a great capacity for denying light to their fellows. I have known persons almost glory in their reticence with their own children. “I never spoke to him

about religion,” was the complacent confession of an old professor as to his son. Some of these hide away in the dark: themselves, lest they should be called upon to work. A prospectus of a Burial Club began, “Whereas many persons find it difficult to bury themselves.” Alas! to my knowledge many persons bury themselves most easily, and one of my constant labours is to fetch them out of the sepulchre of their indolence. I wish they would respond to my call, and not lie in their coffins and grumble at my disturbing them. Again, dark lantern, I must turn you on!

Here is a candle which is in a lantern of a tolerably respectable sort: at least, it was respectable long ago, and you might not now have noticed its forlorn condition if it had not been for the candle within.

### **FAULTS SHOW THEMSELVES**

So soon as you place a light within, the imperfections of the lantern are shown up; and it is the same with human characters. Many a man would have seemed a decent sort of fellow if he had not professed to be a Christian; but his open confession of religion fixed many eyes upon him, and his imperfections were at once observed of all observers. He who unites with a church, and takes upon himself the name of Christ, claims a higher character than others; and if he is not true to his profession, his inconsistency is marked; and very justly so. How often do we see that an unconverted man may steal a horse, but a Christian must not look over the hedge at it! That which is winked at in a man of the world, is a grave fault in a Christian. It is no more than natural and just that great professors should be expected to be better than others. It is inevitable that the very light they have should reveal their faults and flaws.

Brethren, let us not exhibit our candle in a dirty lantern, nor our religion in a doubtful character. I have heard of a minister who was a capital preacher, but he bought a wig of one of his hearers and forgot to pay for it. A bad habit that. Not to pay at all is worst of all; but even to be long-winded is objectionable. When the barber came home from the meeting he said, “That was a beautiful discourse; but his wig spoiled it. I like his deep expositions, but, oh, that wig! Will he ever pay for that wig?” A friend who heard me tell this story remarked that “the wig stuck in the man’s throat.”

### **JEWEL OF CONSISTENCY**

Let us pay for our wigs if we wear such inventions, and let us see to it that there is nothing else about our person or character which may bring the gospel into discredit. We have heard of a wonderful preacher, of whom they said that he preached so well and lived so badly, that when he was in the pulpit they thought he ought never to come out of it; but when he was out of the pulpit they changed their minds, and sorrowfully concluded that he ought never to go into it again.

In the case of this other lantern, little or no light would come from it if it were not for its cracks and rents. The light passes through the broken places. Do you not think that the sicknesses and infirmities of many godly people have been the making of them, and that the light divine has gleamed through the rifts in their tenements of clay? Do not light-givers sometimes shine the better for sickness? Some ministers preach the better for being afflicted. Do not wish your minister to be ill or to be tried; but I can not

doubt the fact that the trials of ministers are the best part of their education. One who was rather a critic in sermons used to ask, "Has the doctor been ill within the last six months? For he is not worth hearing else."

### **AN OLD SCOTCH WOMAN'S SAYING**

An old Scotch woman found that when her minister lost his sight he could not read his dry old manuscripts, and was therefore forced to preach extemporaneously.

Perhaps she was a little cruel when she said, "Praise be to God. It Would have been well if he had lost his sight twenty years ago." To her mind the sermons were so much better when they came forth from his heart than when he read them from the sapless manuscript, that to her the good man 's loss of sight was a gain. If, in any way, you are able to tell out a sweeter experience, and so afford greater comfort to others through your body being like a broken lantern, be thankful for it. Happy are we if our losses are the gains of others. So long as our soul shines out with holier radiance we will glory in infirmities.

Honoured among women be the memory of Florence Nightingale! Her name and fame gave an impetus to the movement for trained nurses, which has been so fraught with comfort to thousands. Our young ladies who devote themselves to this sacred service deserve all the encouragement we can give them. God bless you, gentle night-lights!

Our night-light is set in water to make it quite safe. We do well to guard ourselves against the personal dangers of our position: even when doing good we must be on our watch lest we fall into temptation.

### **NIGHT-LIGHTS**

Night-lights are marked to burn just so many hours, and no more; and so are we. Long may you each one shine and yield comfort to those around you; but, whether your hours be few or many, may you burn steadily to the end! If we may but fulfil our mission it will be enough. May none of us take fire in a wrong way, blaze into a shameful notoriety, fill the air with an ill savour, and then go out in darkness ere half our work is done!

There is room for fresh forms of candle still, and we should not wonder if the article once more became the subject of advertising, as soap is at present. In other lands, as, for instance, on the north-west coast of America, candles have a singular originality about them: for there they burn a fish, a species of smelt, which grows nearly a foot long and is full of fat. We should rather think the smelt smelleth, when they put a rush or a piece of bark down the centre of him, and make a natural candle of him. The light must be rather fishy; but so is everything else in that region, and therefore it does not matter much.

### **FIRE-FLIES AND GLOW-WORMS**

There is, in China and the East Indies, a candle fly; but though it bears the name, we do not suppose that it serves the purpose of a candle. We have heard of reading by the

light of glow-worms in our hedges, but we doubt whether ordinary type could thus be deciphered. Glow-worms remind us of most expositors, of whom Young says,

“The commentators each dark passage shun,  
And hold their failing candles to the sun.”

Fire-flies might serve our turn better, for they are like living lamps. They had a great charm for us when we saw them for the first time by the Italian lakes. The night-light is a sober night-comforter: may it be long before any of you learn its value in long hours of suffering!

In the next similitude you have a simpler reminder of the imperfections to which men are liable. A candle needs snuffers, and men need chastisements, for they are both of them subject to infirmity. In the temple of Solomon there were snuffers and snuff-dishes; but they were all of gold.

### **SNUFFERS OF GOLD**

God’s rebukes are in love, and so should ours be; holy reproofs in the spirit of affection are snuffers of gold. Never use any other, and use even these with discretion, lest you put out the flame which it is your aim to improve. Never reprove in anger. Do not deal with a small fault as if it were a great crime. If you see a fly on your boy’s forehead don’t try to kill it with a sledge-hammer, or you may kill the boy also. Do the needful but very difficult work of reproof in the kindest and wisest style, so that the good you aim at may be attained.

It was a shocking habit of bad boys to snuff the candle, and then open the snuffers and let the smoke and the smell escape. The snuffers are made on purpose to remove the snuff, or consumed wick, and then to quench it by pressure, and prevent any offensive smoke; but young, urchins of a mischievous sort would set the snuffers wide, and let the filthy smoke fill the room with its detestable odour. So do some who hear of a brother’s faults, make them known, and seem to take pleasure in filling society with unsavoury reports. I pray you, do not so. If the candle has something wrong with it, touch it carefully, snuff it with discretion, and shut up the obnoxious matter very carefully.

### **STRANGE THAT THE SECRET GOT OUT**

Let us be silent about things which are a discredit to Christian character. Keep an ill report secret; and do not be like the young lady who called in a dozen friends to help her keep a secret, and yet, strange to say, it got out. Remember, you may yourself deserve rebuke one of these days; and as you would like this to be done gently and privately, so keep your remarks upon others within the happy circle of tender love. To rebuke in gentle love is difficult, but we must aim at it till we grow proficient. GOLDEN snuffers, remember; only golden snuffers. Put away those old rusty things - those unkind sarcastic remarks. They will do more harm than good, and they are not fit things to be handled by servants of the Lord Jesus.

See how precious material runs to waste if the light is not trimmed! There is a thief in

the candle, and so it takes to guttering and running away, instead of yielding up its substance to be used for the light. It is sad when a Christian man has some ill habit, or sinister aim.

### **WASTED LIVES**

We have seen fine lives wasted through a love of wine. It never came to actual drunkenness, but it lowered the man and spoiled his influence. So it is with a hasty temper, or a proud manner, or a tendency to find fault. How many would be grandly useful but for some wretched impediment! Worldliness runs away with many a man's energies; love of amusement makes great gutters in his time; or fondness for feasts and gilded society robs him of his space for service. With some, political heat runs away with the zeal which should have been spent upon religion, and in other cases sheer folly and extravagance cause a terrible waste of energy which belonged to the Lord. You see there is fire, and there is light; but something extraneous and mischievous is at work, and it needs to be removed. If this is your case, you may well desire the Lord to snuff you, however painful the operation may be. Depend upon it, we have no life-force to spare, and everything which lessens our consecrated energy is a robbery of God.

### **“TAKE A LIGHT”**

Certain persons are like harbours of refuge, to which every vessel will run in distress. When you want to ask your way in the street, you instinctively shun the stuck-up gentleman of importance; and you most readily put the question to the man with the smiling face and the open countenance. In our church we have friends who seem to say to everybody, TAKE A LIGHT; may their number be greatly multiplied!

It should be a joy to hold a candle to another. It will not waste our own light to impart it.

### **WASTING THE TALLOW**

Men who are not upright waste all of their influence. To such we might apply the old and almost obsolete word - candle-waster. It is a pity to lose life in harmful or unprofitable ways.

Here is a very important-looking candle. Its dimensions are aldermanic. You expect great things from so portly an illuminator. Look at the size of it. But when I light it, the illuminating power is very small. Can you see any light coming from it? It is a star of the smallest magnitude. We have here the maximum of tallow and the minimum of light. The fact is, that only a little of the fat just near the centre ever gets melted. This makes a little well of hot grease, but the rest is as hard and cold as if there were no burning wick in the middle. Thus it is with men of more talent than heart: the chief part of them is never used.

Many a great and learned minister, with any quantity of Latin and Greek tallow, is but very little useful because his ability is not touched by his heart. He remains cold as to the bulk of him. Many a great, rich man, with any amount of the fat of wealth, never

gets warmed through: he is melted to the extent of a shilling or two, but his thousands are unaffected. What is wanted is “grace more abundant,” to fuse the whole man, and make every part and parcel of him subservient to God’s great design of light- giving.

### **A SON OF THUNDER**

The main business is to have plenty of heart. I have noticed that speakers produce an effect upon their audiences rather in proportion to their hearts than their heads. I was present at a meeting where a truly solid and instructive speaker succeeded in mesmerising us all, so that in another half minute we should all have been asleep. His talk was as good as gold, and as heavy. He was followed by a gentleman who was “all there,” what there was of him. He was so energetic that he broke a chair, and made us all draw in our feet, for fear he should come down upon our corns. How the folks woke up! The galleries cheered him to the echo. I do not know what it was all about, and did not know at the time: but it was very wonderful. An express at sixty miles an hour is nothing to that orator. He swept past us like - well, like nothing at all. He meant it, and we felt that he deserved to be cheered for such zealous intentions. He was all ablaze, and we were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

### **POWDER NEEDS SHOT**

I do not hold him up as an example, for in warfare we need shot as well as powder; but I could not help seeing that a warm heart and an energetic manner will carry the day, where a cold ponderosity affects nothing. My friend was like the cobbler’s candle with two wicks. His blaze was very large in proportion to the material which sustained it.

In our labor to do good we must not let our learning remain cold and useless. Dr. Manton was one of the best of preachers, being both instructive and simple. On one occasion, however, he preached before an assembly of the great, and he very naturally used a more learned style than was his wont. He felt greatly rebuked when a poor man plucked him by the gown, and lamented that, whereas he had often been fed under his ministry, there had been nothing for him on that occasion. The fire had not been so fierce as the tallow had been cold. It is a dreadful thing when hearers have more use for a dictionary than for a Bible under a sermon. A preacher may pile books on his head and heart till neither of them can work. Give me rather the enthusiastic Salvationist bearing a burning testimony, than your cultured philosopher prosing with chill propriety.

### **A LONG-WINDED BROTHER**

A witty preacher, having on one occasion only reached to “Eighteenthly” when the hourglass had run out; and having thirty heads to dilate upon, turned the machine over and cried, “Brethren, let us have another glass.” When you hear of the length of time that your ancestors gave to hearing discourses, be ashamed at the grumbling about long sermons, and do try to take in every scrap of the poor pennyworth which we are allowed to give you in three poor quarters of an hour. Whether we preach, or hear, time is hastening on. Our sands of life will soon run out. Just as we are being borne along irresistibly every moment as the earth speeds in her orbit, so are we being carried away by the resistless course of time. How it flies to a man of middle age! How

exceedingly fast to the aged! We may say of the hours, as of the cherubim, "each one had six wings." If everything is made secure by faith in the Lord Jesus, we need not wish it to be otherwise; for the faster time passes, the sooner shall we be at home with our Father and our God.

We feel, as we watch the decreasing candle and the falling sand, that we, at least, have no time which needs killing. What we have is all too little for our high and holy purposes. We want not cards, and dice, and scenic displays for a pastime: our time passes all too rapidly without such aids. Those who kill time will soon find that time kills them, and they would gladly give worlds, if they had them, to win back a single hour. Remember the story of Queen Elizabeth's last moments, and take care to spend each hour as carefully as if you had no other hour to follow it.

### **BURNING THE CANDLE AT BOTH ENDS**

The next illustration is a warning, and not an example. You have often heard it said of such and such a person "he is burning the candle at both ends." Spendthrifts waste both capital and interest; and by both neglecting business and wasting their substance on expensive pleasures, they burn the candle at both ends. The vicious not only exhaust their daily strength, but they draw upon the future of their constitutions, so that when a few years have gone they are old men before their time. Beware of burning the candle at both ends. It will go fast enough if you burn it only at one end; for your stock of strength and life is very limited.

If there is any one here who is sinning on the right hand and on the left, let him forbear, and not be in such fearful haste to endless ruin. Let this candle cast a light upon the folly of prodigality, and may the prodigal hasten home before his candle is burned out. Did you ever see a candle used in that way? You do not live with folks so mad; but if you look abroad in the wide world, you may see how thousands are squandered and lives are cut short by burning the candle at both ends.

Some good people are unreasonable towards ministers and evangelists, and want them to be worked to death. Many a valuable man of God has been lost to the church by his burning his candle at both ends.

### **CANDLE METEORS**

This candle has fallen upon evil time. I have a bottle here full of a black material, which is to fall upon the flame of this candle. When I tell you that this bottle contains a quantity of steel-filings, you will at once prophesy that the light will be put out.

Let us see what will happen! Why, well, instead of putting the candle out, I am making it disport itself as candle never did before! Here we have fireworks, which, if they do not quite rival those of the Crystal Palace, have a splendour of their own. Do you not think that often when Satan tries to throw dust upon a Christian by slander, he only makes him shine the brighter? He was bright before, but now he coruscates, and sends forth a glory and a beauty which we could not have expected from him, for it never could have come from him if it had not been for the temptations, trials and spiritual

difficulties with which he has been assailed. God grant that it may be so with us in all time of our tribulation! May we turn the filings of steel into flashes of light!

### **UNITED SPLENDOUR**

We will conclude as they do at open-air entertainments - with the greatest display of our fireworks.

Here are many candles uniting their brilliance; they all hang upon one support, and shine by the same light. May they not represent the church of Christ in its multiplicity, variety and unity? These candles are all supported upon one stem, they are all giving forth the same light, and yet they are of all manner of sorts, sizes and colours. A great way off they would seem to be but one light. They are many, and yet but one. I happened one evening to say that nobody could tell which was the "U. P.," and which was the Free Church, or which was the Wesleyan, or the Primitive, or the Salvation Army, or the Baptists, and so on; but one strong old Baptist assured me that the "Dips" gave the best light.

Another said the Presbyterians were, on the whole, cast in the best mould; and a third thought the English Church was made of the truest wax. I told them that some of the Baptists would be the better if they had another Baptism. The Free Churches might be none the worse for being more established in the faith; and even the Methodists might improve their methods. The main question is possession of the one light and fire of God, the flame of divine truth. Those who shine by divine grace are all one in Christ Jesus.

What a glory will there be in the one church when all her members shine, and all are one. May such a day come quickly! Amen.

Have I not proved that a world of illustration may be found in a candle?