

Monergism

A sunset over a body of water, with the sun low on the horizon and its light reflecting on the water. The sky is a mix of orange and yellow. A white rectangular frame is superimposed on the lower half of the image, containing the title and author information.

# JEHOVAH MAGNIFIED

SERMONS AND ADDRESSES BY GEORGE MÜLLER

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MAGNIFIED**

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**Jehovah Magnified**  
**Sermons and Addresses**  
**by George Müller**

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## **PREFACE**

MANY of the readers of this book may be aware, that, from time to time, some of the Addresses which I have delivered on particular occasions, have been published, in the form of little books.

These Addresses were taken down, more or less, while I was delivering them; and some were handed to me for revision, but others were not.

Now, while these Addresses have no merit, as regards composition, yet, having heard of many instances of blessing through them, I was led a long time since to the thought of collecting them together, and publishing them in two or more volumes. But while my mind was thus occupied, I learned that Mr. Mack (bookseller and publisher in Bristol) had actually taken steps himself towards publishing some of these Addresses, as he also considered they might be helpful to many Christians, as well as to unbelievers. I was absent on a preaching tour on the Continent, when I heard of this; but, as soon as the information reached me, I wrote to Mr. Mack, and expressed a wish to be the Editor of the volume myself, because I purpose (as stated before) to follow it up by publishing other Addresses, to which this

book may be regarded only as an introductory volume; and to this he kindly agreed.

It is necessary to refer to this, because the book was to a great extent already printed, before I heard anything about it, and also because some things found therein, such as my autograph (page 19) and the Addresses about the preaching tours would not have been introduced, if I had been able at an earlier period to take the matter in hand. I mention this, lest the publication of the autograph should appear to be vanity on my part, and as to the Addresses about the preaching tours, they were only intended for Christian friends in Bristol, who had particularly prayed for me with reference to those tours. A few little mistakes have also crept in, which, I, as author, humanly speaking, should at once have discovered in correcting the proof sheets, but which were not found out, until it was too late to alter them, the whole having come under my eye, only when the greater part of the book had been already printed. The reader will see, however, that they are mistakes of the printer, which are not to be put down to my account; but they are so obvious, that notwithstanding them, I expect the book, with the blessing of God, will do much good. From page 192, I had the opportunity of correcting the proofs myself, when I made a few trifling alterations.

What I have stated, about the book having been prepared for the press, by another hand than my own, will likewise account for the way in which I am spoken of in several passages.

With the help of God, I hope very shortly to bring out a collection of other Addresses, a work for which I trust I shall have time and strength, although my labours at present are of a very arduous character. I am now travelling from one city to another, on a Continental preaching tour, accompanied by my beloved wife; and after having laboured for three months in Switzerland, with the manifest help and blessing of God, we are about to proceed into Germany.

May I request the Christian reader, kindly to follow us with his prayers, as we greatly need the help of God in a variety of ways.

To the Christian reader also this little volume is affectionately commended, in order that he may ask the Lord's rich blessing upon it.

GEORGE MÜLLER.

STRASSBURG, Nov. 25th, 1876.

Address in Bristol:

NEW ORPHAN HOUSES, ASHLEY DOWN,

BRISTOL, ENGLAND.

## **A FEW WORDS ON**

### **"Crucified, Dead, and Risen with Jesus"**

An Address delivered at a Conference of Christians held at the Victoria Rooms, Bristol, on the 7th of November, 1865.

HOW may we know that we are crucified with Christ, that we have died with Him, and that we are risen with Him? Possibly some believers may not know how to settle this point. It is of the deepest moment to have a clear understanding of it. It is not by a voice from heaven, not by some powerful impression made on us in a dream or otherwise, but simply by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting

in Him for the salvation of our souls, that we settle the point that we are united to Him, that with Him we were crucified, that with Him we died, that with Him we are raised again, and with Him sit in heavenly places. We have simply to say to ourselves, Do I trust in Jesus for the salvation of my soul? Do I know I am a guilty, wicked sinner, deserving nothing but judgment; but do I trust, at the same time, in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of my soul? If so, then Jesus is my substitute; then Jesus died in my room and stead; then am I looked upon by God as one united with Christ; then have I been punished for my sins in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; then was I hung, as it were, on the cross with Jesus—God having accepted Him as my substitute; then was I buried with Christ, and have been raised again with Him; then, in my Forerunner, I am seated at the right hand of God in heaven; then, as assuredly as the Lord Jesus is there, so shall I be. These are precious truths, not man's inventions. The Book of God speaks of them again and again. The epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, and others, are full of these glorious truths. But what we need is, that they become increasingly realities to us. Not so much that we are able to speak with clearness about them, but that more and more we know their power in our hearts. We have, therefore, to say to ourselves, I am a wicked, guilty, hell-deserving sinner; and had not God, in the riches of His grace, given the Lord Jesus to die in my stead, hell must have been my portion for eternity; but it pleased God to deliver Him up for me; and since I trust in the Lord Jesus for salvation, I shall not be punished, because my blessed Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ, was punished in my room and stead. Now, what follows? My sins are forgiven. Not, shall be when I die. Not, I shall find out some day that they are forgiven. But, they are forgiven—are now forgiven. By the grace of God I am as certain that my sins are forgiven as I am certain that I am speaking to you. Not because I deserve it. I am a guilty, wicked, hell-deserving sinner; but I trust in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of my soul; and God declares that all who put their trust in Him shall have forgiveness. As it is written in Acts 10:43, in reference to the Lord Jesus—"To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." I do believe in Him



—that is, I do put my trust in Him, and therefore my sins are forgiven.

Now, let me affectionately press this point on you, because it is a matter of deep moment that we be assured our sins are forgiven, and habitually assured of it. Because it is just this which makes heaven certain to us—that we know God has nothing against us. The knowledge and the enjoyment of the forgiveness of our sins will keep our hearts from going out towards this present world.

To be heavenly-minded, really and truly, we must be assured our sins are forgiven; and this we know simply from the Divine testimony, that those who put their trust in Jesus have the forgiveness of their sins. But this is not all. Through faith in Jesus we are now the sons of God. We are not only reconciled, because of our Substitute and Surety, and God is well-pleased with us, but we are also the children of God, and as children we are the heirs of God, and as the heirs of God we are joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now this brings us to another point. If we are the children of God, if we are the heirs of God, and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, then all who believe in the Lord Jesus constitute one family. They may be scattered all over the world, may in ten thousand things differ as to the present life, and in ten thousand things have differed as to their manner of life before they were brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus,—may differ after their conversion as to their position in life, and in numberless ways also as to attainments in knowledge and grace; but nevertheless, as assuredly as they believe in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of their souls do they constitute one heavenly family—they are brethren. We glorify God by living as such here. In heaven we shall be together. Throughout eternity we shall be unspeakably happy, and love one another perfectly and habitually. But we are to glorify God by manifesting this love now, while on the earth, while in weakness and exposed to conflict, while the struggle is going on; now we are to be united together, and to manifest that we are one family, the heavenly family. This is the way to bring glory to God. In order to this let us keep before us "Crucified with Christ." What does this

imply? That we deserve to be crucified, that we are sinners, wicked, guilty sinners—I, and every one—all the members of the heavenly family, all sinners, and such sinners that we deserve nothing but hell. And in order that we might escape the torments of hell, the blessed Lord Jesus Christ died in our room, and became a curse that we might escape it. Where is boasting then? Who has ground for boasting? Perhaps one says, "Ah, but I have made much greater attainments in knowledge and grace than others." But what does Paul say? "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." The child of God has nought wherein to glory but the cross of Christ. Therefore if we boast, let it be that the blessed Lord Jesus died for us guilty, hell-deserving sinners. And if we have a little more light and a little more grace than some of our fellow-believers, let us testify that it is by the grace of God we have it.

Now because we love one another we may speak freely. It has been stated, that, if we are of one mind about the foundation truths, we should agree to differ about minor points, in order that thus brotherly love may not be hindered. Allow me to say, that according to Philippians 3:15, 16, I am of a different judgment. We should not agree to differ, but should expect and pray that we and other believers may have further light given to us; yea, we should remember that the day is coming when we shall see eye to eye. In the meantime, however, we should act according to the light which the Lord has given to us already,—always seeking, at the same time, to exercise gentleness, tenderness, and forbearance towards those from whom we differ; remembering that we are what we are by the grace of God, know what we know by the grace of God, and that a man can receive nothing except it be given him from Heaven. Instead of agreeing to differ, let us agree to love one another because of Christ's love to us. While in weakness and infirmity, let us agree to walk together, having the same precious blood of Christ to make us clean, and being of the same heavenly family.

Perhaps some present are not prepared for eternity. I cannot sit down without speaking one word to you, my fellow-sinners. I know

the state in which you are, for I was once in the same state. You may be seeking for happiness,—you will not find it except you find it in Jesus. Seek it never so much and never so eagerly, you will not find it except you find it in the crucified, risen, and ascended Lord Jesus. Let me, as one who has been brought to the knowledge of Christ, tell you of the blessedness I have experienced as a disciple of Christ. Times without number might I have gone back into the world, if I had desired to do so; but so unspeakably blessed and precious have I found it for forty years to be a disciple of Christ, that, if the attractions of the world were a thousand times greater than they are, by the grace of God. I should have no desire for them. Well, then, as one who eagerly sought happiness in the present world, and never found it, and now for forty years knows the sweetness and preciousness of walking with Jesus, I affectionately beseech you to seek Him. Poor sinner! only put thy trust in Him, only depend on Him for the salvation of thy soul, and all thy sins, numberless as they are, shall be instantly forgiven; thou wilt be reconciled to God, brought into the road to heaven, and when this life is over, have eternal happiness as thy blessed portion.

## **When I Die, shall I be Missed?**

An Address at Salem Chapel, Bristol, on Monday evening, February 19, 1866. The first Prayer-meeting Mr. Müller attended after the death of his fellow-labourer, Mr. Henry Craik.

WE miss our beloved brother Craik, and it is right that we should miss him. The godly aim of our lives should be that when we die we may be missed. My soul longs for grace so to live, so to walk, so to act, that when my course is finished, I may be missed,—I may be greatly missed. It becomes every one in the body of Christ,—every

member in the body of Christ, to aim after this; that when their course is finished they may be missed,—they may be missed. If our beloved departed brother were not missed, we should have great cause for weeping, great cause for sorrow; but because he is missed, we have great cause for giving thanks, great cause for praising God for the grace that was given to him so to live, so to walk, so to preach, and so to act, as that now he is gone he is missed. Well, then, let us ask ourselves individually,—Suppose this were my last night on earth, suppose I should not have to stay another day here, would my brethren and sisters in Christ miss me? How deeply important it is that we should so walk, so act, and so pass through this world, that when we are gone we may be missed. If when gone, we are not missed by the saints, it is a plain proof that we have not been strengthening their hands in God, it is a plain proof that we have not been ministering to their spiritual profit, that we have not been helping them forward in the things of God. If we take our place,—though we may not be preachers, though we may not be pastors, though we may not be holding any public position among the saints,—yet if we take our place as members in the body of Christ, and act according to the place the Lord has given us, and walk graciously according to that place, when we are gone we shall be missed,—we must be missed. After this we all have to aim. Let each one take away with us to-night this godly purpose,—that by the grace of God, from this evening and henceforth, it shall be my earnest prayer, my constant aim, so to live, so to walk, so to carry myself, that when I am gone I shall be missed.

## **On the late Mr. Henry Craik**

An Address printed as an Introduction to the volume entitled "Passages from the Diary and Letters of Henry Craik."\*

IT was in July, 1829, that I first became acquainted with Mr. Craik. That which drew me to him was not that we both were then nearly twenty-four years of age; nor was it that we both had had a university education; nor was it that we both, with great love and earnestness, at that time, pursued the study of the Hebrew language; nor was it even, that both of us had been about the same time brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus, whilst at the university; but it will be seen in what follows, what it was that drew me to him. In May, 1829, soon after my arrival in England, I was taken very ill. My desire was then very strong to depart, that I might be with my adorable Lord who had loved me and given Himself for me, the great sinner. It pleased God, however, contrary to my expectation, and especially contrary to my desire, to begin to restore me; and, in order to complete my restoration, I was medically advised to leave London for change of air. In submission to the will of God I went to Teignmouth; for though the state of heart in which I was, desired no prolongation of life, yet I considered it my duty to use this means. While at Teignmouth, I became acquainted with Mr. Craik, and his warmth of heart towards the Lord drew me to him. It was this which was the attraction to me.

As I stayed but a few weeks at Teignmouth, I saw but little, comparatively, of him; but in January, 1830, I returned to Teignmouth, and thenceforth abode there. We were now drawn more fully together; for between July, 1829, and January, 1830, I had seen the leading truths connected with the second coming of our Lord Jesus; I had apprehended the all-sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures as our rule, and the Holy Spirit as our teacher; I had seen clearly the precious doctrines of the grace of God, about which I had been uninstructed for nearly four years after my conversion; and I had learned the heavenly calling of the Church of Christ, and the consequent position of the believer in this world. As these very truths so greatly occupied the heart of Mr. Craik also, we were now soon drawn closely together; and from that time to the day of his falling asleep in Jesus, our friendship was intimate and unbroken for thirty-six years.

The reader will learn from the memoir itself that we remained labouring in the Word in the same locality in Devonshire for about two years and three months; and then, in a very marked way, were both led, at the same time, to Bristol, where we have laboured together for more than thirty-three years.

It has been often observed how remarkable it was that we should have laboured for so many years so harmoniously together, and that this should have continued up to the last. Now, as I write this introduction for the profit of the reader, I dwell a little on this point. It was not because Mr. Craik had no mind of his own, and therefore submitted himself habitually to my judgment; nor was it because I blindly followed him, having no judgment of my own. All our Christian friends who were acquainted with us knew well that this was not at all the case; but the reasons were these,—When in the year 1832 I saw how some preferred my beloved friend's ministry to my own, I determined, in the strength of God, to rejoice in this, instead of envying him. I said, with John the Baptist, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven" (John 3:27). This resisting the devil hindered separation of heart. But this was not all. God honoured me also from that time in the ministry of the Word, and greatly, which is only referred to, to show how a double blessing followed my resisting the devil. But when it pleased the Lord, from the beginning of 1839, and thenceforth, to condescend to bestow such abundant honour upon me as He did in connection with the Orphan Houses and the other objects of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution for Home and Abroad, the temptation was the other way, especially when this work was more and more extended, and the blessing of God resting thereon became greater and greater. Then my beloved friend, on his part, speaking after the manner of men, had cause for envy. But how was it in reality? There were few, if any, who more truly rejoiced in all the honour which the Lord condescended to put on me than my friend did.

Still this was not all. There is this particularly to be added, that whatever the spiritual infirmities of my friend or of myself were,

there was given to us, throughout the whole thirty-six years of our friendship, an honest purpose to live to God, and not to ourselves; to please Him, and not ourselves; and thus it came that our friendship remained unbroken to the end, though the temptations for alienation of heart, humanly speaking, increased more and more, instead of decreasing. Our natural constitution of mind and temperament were very different, and yet we had to work together; whilst about 2500 believers were received into fellowship since first we came to Bristol; and whilst of late years, nearly 1000 believers were in fellowship in the Church meeting at Bethesda and Salem chapels, among whom we laboured. Who therefore can doubt the difficulty there was constantly in the way to this continuation of love and union? but there was help to be found in God, and we found it to the end. Our parting was thus, when I saw my dear friend for the last time. After I had kissed him, when I purposed to go, he, being too weak to converse any more, said, "Sit down," and also asked Mrs. Craik to sit down, that he might look on us, though he could not converse. I sat thus silently still awhile, and then left. This was our last interview. The next day I took cold, and was for several days kept at home, during which time my dear friend fell asleep.

The reader will see from the memoir that Mr. Craik had very superior powers of mind; but that which made him especially lovely in my estimation, were, the following features of his character and spiritual attainments:—

I. He was very affectionate.

II. Like Nathanael of old, he was truly without guile.

III. He was particularly conscientious. Whatever his weakness or failing in any way, you might be sure that he acted conscientiously. He did what he did, because he thought it right. Our views concerning certain modes of action differed materially, but I always came back to this: My friend is conscientious; if he only saw as I did, he would surely act differently.

IV. Whilst endowed by God with such great mental powers, he did not use them to get a name among men, nor to be admired by men, but to throw light on the Holy Scriptures, and to set forth the truth. As a striking proof of his humility, and his being far from seeking the honour of men, I mention the following: In the year 1849, Professor Alexander intimated to him, in the name of the University of St. Andrew's, that it was intended to confer on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, or of Doctor of Canon, and Civil Law. He courteously declined this honour, but recommended a Christian gentleman who had laboured much in biblical literature for the degree, as it might be of great use to him as an author. The latter was done, and this gentleman had bestowed on him the degree of LL.D. Some years since, the same university repeated to Mr. Craik their former intimation and desire, and a second time my friend humbly declined the honour. Truly this is a striking proof that whatever momentary failings there might have been to the contrary, he was steadfastly purposed in his heart not to seek the honour that comes from man, but to commend himself to God as His servant.

V. Mr. Craik manifested great sympathy to those who were in trial and affliction. His affectionate heart felt deeply for the sufferings of others.

VI. Mr. Craik was eminently a man of prayer, and a man given to the study of the Word of God. Such prayerfulness regarding the Holy Scriptures, such truly digging into the Word as for hid treasures, such meditation over the Word as he was given to, I never knew surpassed by any servant of Christ. The chief loss that the Church of Christ at large has sustained in, his removal, is not merely that he was a lovely, amiable, truly spiritually-minded Christian to all who intimately knew him, and an earnest, devoted preacher of the Lord Jesus; but one who had truly studied on his knees, with great diligence, the oracles of God. Among all the thousands of believers whom I know, there is none whose judgment on any part of truth I should have more esteemed than that of my departed friend, on account of his great caution, his prayerfulness, his diligence in



comparing Scripture with Scripture, his humility of soul, his very considerable amount of knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, and his habitual reading the Scriptures in their original languages.

In reference to the health of Mr. Craik, as one who knew him so intimately and so long, I have to state that when he was about forty-four years old, he looked far healthier than when I first knew him at twenty-four years of age, and this was still more the case when he was about fifty years old. He was never strong, and, like many men of great mind, he was not sufficiently careful to make the best of the health and strength he had. He would eat generally rapidly, and though suffering from weak digestion, neglect proper mastication of his food. Moreover, when he felt pretty well, he would forget his constitutional weakness, and labour mentally beyond his strength. This is not stated to throw any blame on that excellent man who is no more among us, but his friend states it as a warning to his fellow-believers; for life, health, strength of body or mind are entrusted to us as precious talents to be used for God. This want of habitually acting with caution respecting his health, and overtaxing his mind, produced, no doubt, at certain times, a measure of nervous depression, of which the reader will find intimations in his diary, which makes Mr. Craik almost appear to be another man than what he was known to be in his ordinary public life, in which he generally manifested great cheerfulness.

Having referred to his health, I cannot help adding that it is my full conviction that the constitutional weakness of my friend was intended by God for an especial blessing to him. Though Mr. Craik was a very humble man, and though it was his earnest and habitual desire to use his mental powers for the glory of God; yet no one could intimately know him without being aware that his natural tendency was to aim after the cultivation of his mind with too great an earnestness and natural fondness, which, but for his weak constitution, might have become a great snare to his inner man. As a check, therefore, the Lord so mercifully gave to him this powerful

mind in conjunction with a weak body, that he might not overmuch indulge in the cultivation of his mental powers.

I add further this with regard to his health. I never know any one who constitutionally so shrank from suffering as he did. He often spoke to me on this subject. And yet this very individual was, for nearly seven months before his decease, not only a very great sufferer, but was also greatly sustained under his great sufferings. On Christmas-day, 1865, sitting a longer time than usual at his bedside, because I had more time than generally, all at once I remembered what he had so often spoken to me about, and then told him, that now the strength of the Lord was manifested in his constitutional shrinking from pain and suffering. He saw it and owned it. And verily the Lord greatly sustained His suffering servant, and did so to the end. Without complaining, he passed through his sufferings, though praying and longing to be delivered out of them. And at last he was delivered. Peacefully leaning upon Jesus, he fell asleep.

His poor friend who writes this, remains. As yet the Lord allows me to serve Him on earth. Pray, Christian reader, that whether this time be long or short, I may be enabled to spend it truly to the honour of God.

21, PAUL STREET,

KINGSDOWN, BRISTOL,

April 21st, 1866.

**Love and Humility**

An Address delivered at a Prayer-meeting at Salem Chapel, Bristol, April 30th, 1866, after the reading of the narrative of the woman pouring precious ointment on the head of Jesus.

WHILST our brother was reading of this dear woman so full of love to the Lord, I felt it was impossible to read the narrative without feeling that this love was coupled with deep humility of soul. She stood behind her Lord, deeply conscious of her vileness, of her unworthiness. She did not think herself worthy to look Him in the face. To understand the narrative, we must consider the manners of the people at those times, that when partaking of meat they did not sit at the table as we do; but reclined, leaning on one side, lying on bolsters or couches, and so reclining that the feet were behind the upper part of the body. Now she felt herself so unworthy that she stood behind. This feeling of love, coupled with that of humility, is what we have especially to pray for. I never read this portion without asking God to give me more of the love of this dear woman, and more of her deep humility of soul. Our dear brother—not connected with us in Church fellowship, but connected with another Church in this city—has read to us this deeply interesting history; let us carry it home from this meeting, and ask God to give to each of us more of the love found in this dear woman, and more of her deep humility of soul.

## **The First and Second Adam**

An Address at the Conference of Christians at Clifton, on November 6, 1866.

THE few words I may say this evening will have especial reference to the object for which we have assembled. First: a few words as to the

first Adam. It is a solemn thought that it is possible there are some here present who as yet only belong to the first Adam, and not to the second. If so, they are dead in trespasses and sins at this present moment; they are ruined still; they have before them still the blackness and darkness of despair; they have before them still eternal woe and misery. Now, dear friends, as I love your souls, I desire to refer to the fact that all of us here present who now by the grace of God are interested in the Lord Jesus Christ, were once as you are now, but it has pleased God in the riches of His grace to bring us out of that state. And what He has done for us He is willing to do for you. In the riches of His grace He has given His only begotten Son, He has punished Him, He has wounded Him, He has bruised Him in our room and stead. The punishment due to us guilty, wicked sinners was laid on Jesus, who shed His precious blood for the remission of our sins. The wrath of God, that ought to have been poured on us through eternity, fell on Him. And all God expects from sinners, is, that they accept what He so freely and graciously has the heart to give. He looks not for us to do something to assist or help the work of Christ, but that we entirely rest our hope on that which our adorable Lord has accomplished on the cross in our room and stead. So that the poor sinner who believes in Jesus, who trusts in Jesus for the salvation of his soul, shall obtain full, free, complete forgiveness for all his numberless transgressions, through faith in Him. At once obtain, forgiveness; not,—shall have it some day; not,—shall have it when we die; not,—shall have it when the Lord Jesus Christ comes again; but instantly receive it when we rest for salvation upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only so, but we become, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the children of God. Through faith we are united to the heavenly family, of which our adorable Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, is the Head. By far the greater number now present, I doubt not, belong to that family. But let me invite those who are conscious that they only belong to the first Adam, to look to Jesus, to accept what God so graciously offers in Jesus and then their sins will be pardoned.

Then as to those of us who do believe in Jesus, who do trust in Him for salvation, who belong to the Lord Jesus, the second Adam, who is the Head of the heavenly family,—how does it become us to walk while here on earth? It is not now the question how we shall be when the manifestation of the sons of God shall have taken place, and when the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, shall have been revealed. Then we shall all be filled with love, we shall all be perfectly united together, we shall be ever together, loving one another, minding the things of each other, and caring for each other. Then there shall be no weakness, nor ignorance, nor infirmity. But now, while yet in ignorance partially, how should we walk,—we who belong to this heavenly family? The great point is to remember that what we have and what we are, we have and are by the grace of God. How is it that we do believe in the Lord Jesus; that we are on the Lord's side; that we look to the Lord Jesus as the Head, and trust in Him for salvation? How does it come that the life of the risen Jesus is in us, that we are risen up again and quickened with Him to sit with Him in heavenly places? Verily, brethren, we did it not ourselves. It was all of grace that it is thus,—that we have been made to believe in Jesus, that He has been revealed to our hearts. Not only was He given in the way of grace by the Father, but it is of grace that He ever was revealed to our hearts.

We see then that these blessings come in the way of grace, and every other spiritual blessing in the way of grace also. How does it become us to deal with each other while we remain here a little while longer in weakness and in partial ignorance. Surely we should forbear, surely we should be gentle, surely we should tenderly deal with each other; ever remembering that if we are stronger than others, it is by the grace of God we are so. Supposing we see a little more clearly on this or that part of truth, it is only by the grace of God we do it. We might have been weaker and more ignorant than our brethren, and peradventure we may really be the weak and ignorant ones. We may only suppose we are stronger and better than others. Oh let us bear with each other in love! We are of the heavenly family,—a little while, and Jesus will come again to take us to Himself. We are of the

heavenly family,—yet a little while we shall be in heaven together, where there is only perfect harmony and love; surely, then, here we may love one another, and bear with one another, and care for one another.

Why, if we have been better instructed, are we better instructed? Why, if we are stronger, are we stronger? Why, if we are richer, are we richer? For this purpose,—that we may communicate of the abundance which in the riches of the grace of God we have received, to those who have not so much. Just as the clouds empty themselves in blessing on others, so we, if better instructed than others, are so that we may bear with those who are less instructed, and lend them a helping hand. If in those our meetings we learn this one lesson—that by the grace of God we who believe in Jesus will henceforth seek to strive more earnestly, more habitually, more fully than we have yet done to bear with each other's weaknesses and infirmities, what profitable meetings they will have been! We should not be satisfied unless we come to this state of heart, that we know of nothing less among the disciples than that the precious blood of Christ has made us clean. That is the bond of union—that belonging to Christ. One with Christ—that is the great bond to keep before us. The more we realize that the grace of God has apprehended us in Christ, and revealed to our hearts the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are all bought with the same precious blood, that we are all in the selfsame Spirit, that the selfsame life of the risen Jesus is in us, that we are all heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and shall all ere long enter into the glory of God,—if these things were more present to our hearts, how loving, kind, and forbearing would the children of God be! And yet once more, in this nineteenth century it would be said, "See how these Christians love one another."

Only let us seek to aim after this, that we see Christ in each other, and not the old nature; the life of the risen Jesus in each other. If we seek to discern Christ in each other, how shall we be drawn to each other. May God grant this to be so. Let us pray and labour that thus it

shall be. Let us resist Satan, that he may not have the mastery over us. May God grant it.

## **Love One Another**

Notes of Two Addresses delivered at a Conference of Christians at Clifton, October, 1863.

### **I**

MY object in coming here was only to manifest the full sympathy I feel with the purpose of the meeting, without any intention of speaking; but being asked to do so I cannot refrain, for love's sake, from saying a few words.

One point has struck me particularly, as to the Headship of our adorable Lord Jesus. It is the will of that blessed One that His disciples should love one another, and be united together in heart and affection. If it is, then, the will of Him, without whom we must perish eternally, who poured out His soul unto death for our life, and stooped so low that we might, share His throne, that we should love one another, and be united as His disciples, does it not become us in love and gratitude to obey?

What are the great hindrances to brotherly love and unity? Self-complacency, high-mindedness, pride, and thinking that we know more than others; but if, by God's grace, we are enabled to subdue these evil tendencies, and to love our fellow-believer, and be united to him, we shall see, perhaps, that if in one thing we have more grace or knowledge than he, yet in four, or five, or ten points he has more than we. Who am I that I should despise my brother? What have I

that I have not received? If I have more grace (though that is yet to be questioned), I received it from my Lord. If I have more knowledge (though that is yet questionable), am I indebted for it to my own mind? How does it come? It is by the grace of God that I know more than my fellow-believer.

If we are, then, what we are by the grace God, so that every particle of power over sin, of heavenly-mindedness, of desire to act according to the Holy Scriptures, becomes ours, because it planned God, in the riches of His grace, thus to bless us, who are we, that we should look down upon a brother, because there are degrees of ignorance or spiritual weakness in a fellow-disciple? Jesus is our head. It is His will that we should love one another. In gratitude to that blessed One, who laid down His life that I might be saved, let me obey; and if I find pride keeps me from it, let me seek grace to subdue it. "We who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." When we meet with a weak brother, as to grace or knowledge, our natural tendency is to say, "Oh, he is a weak one." The carnal mind says, "Put him aside." But the Word of the blessed Lord says, "Bear the infirmities of the weak." If I am strong, let me prove my strength by putting my shoulder to the burden. If I cannot bear with the weakness of my brother it is a plain proof that I am a weak one myself. Why have we received grace? That we may help on our weaker or less instructed brother—that in helping others we may bring glory to God.

I think it may not be unprofitable to refer to one thing in my experience. When I began, thirty-four years ago, as a young servant of Christ, to labour in this country in the Word, having just received certain blessed truths—as the coming of the Lord, etc.—my natural tendency was to look down upon those who did not see them. Thirty-four years have elapsed since then. By God's grace I hold as firmly as ever, and maintain as strongly, those blessed truths; but as to my deportment to other disciples, who do not agree with me in these points, there is a difference now. The mind of the young servant of Christ was to say, "Stand aloof!"—to esteem them as very little



instructed. What was the result? Was it peace and joy in the Holy Ghost? Did I imitate Him who bore with the ignorance of His disciples. No; it was anything but imitation of Jesus, and the result was anything but peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. By the help of God I am now, and have been for more than twenty years, of a different mind, without sacrificing one particle of those truths which I received in the year 1829.

My aim now is, to bear with those who may be less instructed; and, in the measure in which I am able to follow the example of my adorable Lord, the result is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. I affectionately and earnestly entreat my dear fellow-believers, especially the young, to ponder this. Pray to be kept from a spirit of high-mindedness. What you have and are, you have and are by the grace of God, and that should lead you to deal tenderly with your fellow disciples.

It is often said, for the sake of peace and union, we should not be very particular as to certain parts of truth; keep them back, and treat them as matters of no moment. I humbly state that I entirely differ from this view; for I do not see that such union is of a real, lasting, or Scriptural character. If it be truth, it is dear to the heart of Jesus—we are instructed in it by the blessed Spirit—it is found in God's book; it is therefore of great value, and must be esteemed worthy of being carefully and jealously guarded. We are therefore, not at liberty lightly to esteem, undervalue, keep in the background (much less to give up) the truth, even for the sake of union. We have to buy the truth at any cost, but we ought not to sell it at any price, not even for our liberty or life.

Yet, while we hold fast the truth, all the truth which we consider we have been instructed in from the Holy Scriptures, we must ever remember, that it is not the degree of knowledge to which believers have attained which should unite them, but the common spiritual life they have in Jesus; that they are purchased by the blood of Jesus; members of the same family; going to the Father's house—soon to be

all there: and by reason of the common life they have, brethren should dwell together in unity. It is the will of the Father, and of that blessed One who laid down His life for us, that we should love one another.

But it may be asked, Is it possible, that differing in this and that, brethren can be united together? They can. In the three orphan houses and six schools under my direction there are sixty teachers and other helpers. These are found belonging to the Church of England, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists of close communion and open communion, Wesleyans of the Conference and of the Free Church parties, and of the so-called "Brethren." All these, though from different bodies of saints, are united together in this one object of labour for Christ. During the many years we have been thus engaged, I have never known a jar to take place because of such difference. This does not arise from a sort of latitudinarianism in myself, but because, while holding firmly my own convictions, I have not required uniformity in these labourers. In engaging my helpers, it is indispensable that they belong to the Head, that they hold fast the blessed Son of God. This settled, I never question as to what denomination they belong to. This is not brought forward boastingly, but to magnify the grace of God.

It is often said that things are stated on the platform which there is no possibility of carrying out in practical life. I maintain there must be a possibility of this loving one another, because it is commanded by God; and especially may the beloved brethren in Christ, who have gathered together these saints before me, be assured that there is a possibility of doing everything that is according to the will of God. It must be possible to do that which God has commanded. And let us not think that it is an extraordinary and high degree of attainment for Christians to walk together in love. The least instructed saints should be found willing to love, though they may not agree on every point. "Whereunto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule." On many things we are agreed, and walking thus together, holding in our hearts the headship of Jesus, it is certain we shall

make progress; "and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

Don't say of anything, "I shall never understand this." It is entirely a mistake. As to the things of God, despair of nothing. Never make the basis of union an agreement about particular points of truth. If my brethren differ from me, I must not say, "It is a matter of no moment;" neither should I say, "I shall never know this or that truth," which may not as yet have been revealed to me. Let there be more prayer, more study of the Word, more humility, more acting out what we already know; thus shall we be more united together, not only in love, but in one mind and in one judgment. There will be no difference in heaven. There all are of one mind. Let us aim at the heavenly condition. More patience, more faith, will bring us further on in blessing. May God grant it to this assembly for the sake of Jesus!

## II

The two great objects of our salvation are—first, primarily and especially, that God may be glorified, and secondly, at the same time, that His children may be conformed to the image of His dear Son, in order to insure their eternal happiness. They could not possibly be happy even in heaven unless they were thus conformed. The work begins here, and will be completed when we are with the Lord; not till then shall we be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ.

This is the blessed, glorious prospect of all who are believers in the Lord Jesus—that there is a day coming when, their will being swallowed up in the will of God, and having no will of their own, God will only have to present His blessed will to them, and instantly, in their inmost souls, they will respond. For this have we been apprehended by God in Christ Jesus. It is not only true that we shall be perfectly free from pain, sickness, and this corruptible body, and have a glorified body; but also that the day is coming when we shall

be perfectly like Jesus in holiness, when we shall have no mind of our own, when the will of God will only need to be presented to us, and at once we shall act accordingly.

God is the Author of salvation, and this salvation is to be obtained entirely in the way of grace. Men cannot, in the least degree, help God in obtaining it. Salvation is entirely from God, bestowed in the way of grace through Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, whom He wounded, bruised, and punished in our room and stead. Jesus, having given Himself to be our substitute, was punished for us. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." And all that is required of us is to accept or believe in Him—to accept the salvation which He gives us freely. If, therefore, any one feeling himself a sinner, asks, "How shall I get this precious salvation?" the Word of God replies, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (that is, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ), "and thou shalt be saved." We must give no other answer than the Apostle Paul gave to the Philippian jailor.

I would say to my dear fellow-sinner, Trust in—depend on—receive what Jesus has procured for thee; if thou wilt leave thine own merits and goodness, and trust entirely in Christ, this very moment thou shalt receive forgiveness of sins. The faith in Jesus which obtains forgiveness, brings thee nigh to God, removes the enmity which existed between thee and God, and gives peace to thy soul. The primary object of salvation—the glory of God—is accomplished in every sinner thus saved.

Then as to the saved one. Being apprehended of God in Christ Jesus, thou wilt ultimately be conformed to the image of Christ, and be perfectly happy and holy. Especially will this holiness be shown in the perfection of thy love. God is love, and thou wilt be made perfect in love. This leads to a word of practical application as to our present meeting. While we are not yet in heaven, we are not yet conformed to the image of God's dear Son—we are not perfect in love now. But this perfect love is to be aimed at and sought after. We are assembled now in order that our hearts may be drawn together in love.

Though not yet perfect in love, we are to aim after that for which we have been apprehended of God in Christ Jesus. We ought to love one another in spite of the weaknesses and infirmities we see in one another. My brethren have their infirmities, I have my infirmities; God knows them all, and He only can estimate which are the greater. That is not a question for us. Believing in Jesus, we have one common life; the precious blood of Jesus has purchased us; we are the children of God by faith as, assuredly as we trust in Him for salvation. As children, then, of the same Father, as brothers and sisters of the same heavenly family, notwithstanding our weaknesses, we ought to love one another, and bear with each other's infirmities. With any who live in sin, or who, though professing to be disciples of Christ, renounce the foundations of our most holy faith, there can be no fellowship. Loyalty to our Lord will compel us to stand aloof from such, painful though it be. But all true disciples we are bound, in loyalty to our Head, to love as such, and to bear with their infirmities and weaknesses.

If I see a little more clearly concerning this or that part of God's truth than my brother does, is that any reason why I should stand aloof from him? If I have been better instructed, I am to use this knowledge, not to exalt myself, not to praise myself, but for my fellow-disciple, and to instruct him in a kind and loving way. And if that brother will not receive my instruction, still I am not to stand aloof from him, but to pray for him, and still to bear with my brother for the sake of Him who bears with my infirmities. Am I myself fully instructed? No! There is a day coming when I shall know even as I am known. But that day is not yet. If I have a little more knowledge than my fellow-disciple, still I know only in part, and I am what I am by the grace of God; and that very superiority of knowledge is given (if I have it,—I may be mistaken in supposing I have more) that I may use it for the benefit of my less-instructed and weaker brother. If I have strength, let me prove it by putting my shoulder beneath the burden.

The strong are to bear the infirmities of the weak, and if I am unable to do that, it is a plain proof that I am a weak one myself, and have no ground to complain of the weaknesses of my brethren. All, to a greater or less degree, are weak as yet, uninstructed as yet; none have room for boasting. We are all debtors to the grace of God, and should, therefore, praise more abundantly, and walk more humbly, and seek more fully to bear one another's burdens. But a little while, and the blessed Jesus will come again, that where He is we may be also. In the meantime, let us love one another. Love is of God. God is love; and he who loves most is most like God. All the members of the heavenly family should remember the precious blood that bought them, and love one another whilst on the way to their Father's house.

## **The Secret of Effectual Service to God**

### **A NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS**

WE have through the Lord's goodness been permitted to enter upon another year, and the minds of many amongst us will no doubt be occupied with plans for the future, and the various spheres of service in which, if our lives be spared, we shall be engaged. The welfare of our families, the prosperity of our business, our work and service for the Lord, may be considered the most important matters to be attended to; but, according to my judgment, the most important point to be attended to is this: Above all things, see to it that your souls are happy in the Lord. Other things may press upon you; the Lord's work even may have urgent claims upon your attention; but I deliberately repeat, it is of supreme and paramount importance that you should seek, above all other things, to have your souls truly

happy in God Himself. Day by day seek to make this the most important business of your life. This has been my firm and settled conviction for the last five-and-thirty years. For the first four years after my conversion I knew not its vast importance; but now, after much experience, I specially commend this point to the notice of my younger brethren and sisters in Christ. The secret of all true effectual service is,—joy in God, and having experimental acquaintance and fellowship with God Himself.

But in what way shall we attain to this settled happiness of soul? How shall we learn to enjoy God? how obtain such an all-sufficient soul-satisfying portion in Him as shall enable us to let go the things of this world as vain and worthless in comparison? I answer, This happiness is to be obtained through the study of the Holy Scriptures. God has therein revealed Himself unto us in the face of Jesus Christ.

In the Scriptures, by the power of the Holy Ghost, He makes Himself known unto our souls. Remember, it is not a god of our own thoughts or our own imaginations that we need to be acquainted with; but the God of the Bible, our Father, who has given the blessed Jesus to die for us. Him should we seek intimately to know, according to the revelation. He has made of Himself in his own most precious Word.

The way in which we study this Word is a matter of the deepest moment. The very earliest portion of the day we can command should be devoted to meditation on the Scriptures. Our souls should feed upon the Word. We should read it—not for others, but for ourselves; all the promises, the encouragements, the warnings, the exhortations, the rebukes, should be taken home to our own bosoms. Especially let us remember not to neglect any portion of the Bible: it should be read regularly through. To read favourite portions of the Scriptures, to the exclusion of other parts, is a habit to be avoided. The whole Divine volume is inspired, and by degrees should be read regularly through. But to read the Bible thus is not enough; we must seek to become intimately and experimentally acquainted with Him whom the Scriptures reveal, with the blessed Jesus who has given

Himself to die in our room and stead. Oh, what an abiding, soul-satisfying portion do we possess in Him!

But another point here needs especially to be noticed: it is that we seek habitually to carry out what we know, to act up to the light that we have received; then more will assuredly be given. But if we fail to do this, our light will be turned into darkness. It is of the deepest moment that we walk with a sincere, honest, upright heart before the Lord. If evil be practised, or harboured and connived at, the channel of communication between our souls and God (for the time being) will be cut off. It is all important to remember this. Infirmities and weaknesses will cleave to us as long as we remain in the body; but this is a different thing from willingly allowing evil. I must be able, with a true, honest, upright heart, to look my heavenly Father in the face, and say, "Here I am, blessed Lord; do with me as Thou wilt."

Then let us remember that we are His stewards. Our time, our health, our strength, our talents, our all, are His, and His alone. Let us seek to remember this, and carry it out this year, and then what happy Christians shall we all be! It is a Divine principle, "To him that hath shall more be given;" and as assuredly as we seek to make good use of that which is confided to us, more will be imparted. We shall be used of the Lord, and shall become increasingly happy in His own most blessed service. Brethren! we have only one life—one brief life; let us seek with renewed purpose of heart to consecrate that one life wholly to the Lord—day by day to live for God, and to serve Him with our body, soul, and spirit, which are His.

Let it be our unceasing prayer, that as we grow older, we may not grow colder in the ways of God. As we advance in years, let us not decline in spiritual power; but let us see to it that an increase of spiritual vigour and energy be found in us, that our last days may be our best days.

Our holy faith does not consist in talking. "Reality, reality, reality," is what we want. Let us have heart-work; let us be genuine. Brethren!



we should live so as to be missed—missed both in the Church and in the world, when we are removed. Oh how rapidly is time hastening on! We should live in such a manner as that, if we were called hence, our dear brethren and sisters might feel our loss, and from their inmost souls exclaim, "Oh that such a one were in our midst again!" We ought to be missed even by the world. Worldly persons should be constrained to say of us, "If ever there was a Christian upon earth, that man was one."

But to revert to the Scriptures. In them, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, we become acquainted with the character of God. Our eyes are divinely opened to see what a lovely Being God is! and this good, gracious, loving, heavenly Father is ours, our portion for time and for eternity; and our adorable Lord Jesus, who gave Himself for us, is that blessed One, to whose image and likeness we shall be conformed; and to serve Him should be our greatest joy and privilege as long as we remain on earth.

But then, when trial and affliction come; when God deals with us as though He were not the lovely, kind, and gracious Being presented to us in His Word, shall we murmur and despond? Ah! no. Beloved in Christ! let us trust our heavenly Father; let us, like little children, hang entirely on Him, reposing in the sweet assurance of His unchangeable, eternal love. Let us remember how He acted towards His saints of old, what His dealings were with them; let us remember what is recorded concerning their history; for now, as He has ever done, God will most surely act according to His word.

This intimate experimental acquaintance with Him will make us truly happy. Nothing else will. If we are not happy Christians (I speak deliberately, I speak advisedly), there is something wrong. If we did not close the past year in a happy frame of spirit, the fault is ours, and ours alone.

In God our Father, and the blessed Jesus, our souls have a rich, divine, imperishable, eternal treasure. Let us enter into practical

possession of these true riches; yea, let the remaining days of our earthly pilgrimage be spent in an ever-increasing, devoted, earnest consecration of our souls to God.

## **Walking by faith, not by Sight**

Notes of an Address at one of the Clifton Conferences of Christians.

"We walk by faith, not by sight."—2 Corinthians 5:7

AS long as the child of God is in the world, he has not in actual possession what he will have when with the Lord, and especially, what he will have after the return of the Lord Jesus; he is not yet what he then will be; he does not see what he then will see. But while we are yet in weakness, whilst in the body, in comparative ignorance, and have still to contend against mighty enemies, God has been pleased to give to us a revelation of Himself in the Holy Scriptures, to be our rule of action, to comfort and encourage us, to make Himself known to us, to make the Lord Jesus known to us, to tell us of the blessedness of the world to come, to show us the way to the Father's house, and to reveal to us the vanity of all that this present world can give. This Word of God, the revelation He has made of Himself, is to be credited; to be received fully, in childlike simplicity; and, in doing so, heavenly realities become present things to us by faith. We have not to judge by feeling, by seeing, by reasoning, but by believing, viz., by exercising faith in what God says: and thus have our ways and our actions to be regulated; thus our joys and sorrows.

God is not seen by the natural eye: but we have to seek to see Him, and to set Him before us daily, hourly, momentarily, by faith; and to bring Him and keep Him nigh to us by faith. The presence of God, the habitual presence of God, because we believe that He sees us and

hears us continually, has to regulate our life. We have to live in this world as those would who exercise faith in the truth that their heavenly Father is continually their Provider, their Protector, their Helper, their Friend; that He is ever nigh to them, that He is a wall of fire round about them continually. If the child of God thus treated God, exercised faith in Him, looked upon Him practically as the living God ever near to him, how peacefully and happily would he walk through the world!

The Lord Jesus, the loving, sympathising Friend, is not seen by the natural eye; but faith says, I rest upon, that word, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" [age]. (Matt. 28:20) And thus the heart is made happy by the belief in a present living, loving, almighty Saviour.

The Lord Jesus has not yet taken His power to Himself manifestly. He does not yet manifestly reign; but faith looks for the fulfilment of all that which is said of the return of the Lord Jesus; and therefore, though we are not yet actually with Him on the throne, reigning with Him, we believe that He will come again, and we comfort ourselves, whilst yet in the conflict, in poverty, meanness, and suffering, by the precious statements made in the Holy Scriptures regarding the time of His appearing; and we walk thus on in peace and joy, though we do not yet see His glory with the natural eye.

We are now in a body of humiliation, which is often weak, yea, sometimes in pain and suffering. The manifestation of the sons of God has not yet taken place; we are not yet in our glorious body, such a body as the Lord Jesus has had since His resurrection: but we have the promise of such a glorified body; this is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, and therefore, though we do not yet actually possess it, we have to lay hold on God's promise regarding this, and to walk in the faith of this promise: thus our hearts will be sustained under present weakness, pain, and suffering.

We have the promise of an inheritance "incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away;" but we have not yet entered upon the possession of this inheritance: we are poor, mean, without possession at all, it may be, so far as sight is concerned; we have, therefore, to exercise faith in this promise, to lay hold on it, to seek to enter into it, in order that we may be full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Scriptures tell us of Satan being bound, yea, bruised under our feet; but this has not yet taken place; we are yet in the warfare, we constantly experience his power still: we have, therefore, for our comfort to lay hold on the blessing promised in this respect; and thus our hearts will be cheered and comforted.

And thus, regarding all the numberless promises which God has been pleased to make, in so far as at any time they are applicable to our position and circumstances, both with respect to temporal and spiritual things, we have to exercise faith concerning them; and the comfort, support, and blessing intended by them to our hearts, will be enjoyed by us. For instance, the promise in Matthew 7:7–11: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" If we believe that it will be even as the Lord Jesus said, with what earnestness, perseverance, expecting faith, shall we give ourselves to prayer! Though the answer be long delayed, though, as to sight, the answer to our prayers can never be received; yet, since we believe, walk by faith, we shall continue to expect an answer to our prayers, as assuredly as our petitions are according to the mind of God, are asked in the name of the Lord Jesus, and we exercise faith in the power and willingness of God to help us.

Again, the testimony of God the Holy Ghost, in Romans 8:28, is: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Now, if we lay hold on it by faith, bring to it in faith our greatest trials, difficulties, afflictions, bereavements, etc., our hearts will be comforted, we shall obtain peace to our souls. I have been a believer in the Lord Jesus for forty-four years, but I have invariably found that my greatest trials have proved my greatest blessings; they have worked for my good. But suppose we did not see this to be so, while yet in the body, we have nevertheless to exercise faith concerning what God says; we have to walk by faith, regarding that word of His, "That all things work together for good to them that love God," and then will the heart be comforted and sustained.

Three years ago God allowed two most heavy trials to befall me. They continued month after month. I said to myself, "This too works for my good;" and I continued day by day, while the afflictions lasted, to make known my requests unto God, that He would graciously be pleased to sustain me under them, and, in His own time, deliver me out of them. There was hanging in my bed-room in a frame a text, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Ps. 81:10), upon which my eyes fell as I rose in the morning; and my heart said to my heavenly Father, "I do open my mouth wide; wilt Thou graciously be pleased to do according to Thy word? and wilt Thou fill it!" I continued patiently, believingly, expectingly, to look to God for help, and He did deliver me out of these two most heavy afflictions, and I have thus become further acquainted with Him. All this I say for the comfort and encouragement of my younger brethren and sisters in Christ. Will you, then, the next time that you are in trial, seek to remember this for your comfort? You may not be able to see how such and such a heavy trial can work for your good; but it will most assuredly, as God has said. And if even in this life you should not see it, you will do so in the world to come; but generally we see it already in this life.

The reason why the children of God are so frequently overpowered by difficulties and trials is, because they attempt to carry their burden themselves, instead of casting it upon God, as He not only graciously allows them to do, but commands them to do; and therefore they lose the promise which is coupled with the command; they find themselves not sustained. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (Ps. 55:22). This does not mean simply that we should pray to God in our trials and afflictions, but that we should exercise faith in the power and willingness of God to help us under our trials; and by this we know whether we have only used words in prayer, or whether we have, in believing prayer, exercising faith in God, spoken, to Him about our trials. If the latter was the case, then, though the trial still lasts, the burden thereof is gone, because we have laid it upon God, to bear it for us; but if we have not exercised faith in God, we are still carrying the burden ourselves.

All these matters are so deeply important, because if we do not walk by faith we cannot be happy in God, and therefore cannot bear such a testimony for God as we should bear were we indeed happy. Our very countenances should testify of our peace and joy in God, in order that thus the unconverted may be stirred up to seek for themselves after that which makes the children of God so happy.

We have, then, to believe what God says. Nor must we look to our feelings, nor expect help from our natural fallen reason; nor must we be discouraged, though all appearance were against what God says; for faith begins when sight fails. As long as we can see with the natural eye, and our natural fallen reason will yet help us, faith is not needed. This is often lost sight of by the children of God; and hence they are so much discouraged, because they do not walk by sight, which was never intended for them while they are yet in the body. If there is then one thing that we need more than another, it is an increase of faith, in order that we may take right steps, surer steps, firmer steps; yea, run with alacrity in the ways of the Lord. To the end of our course we therefore should pray, "Lord, increase my faith!"

# Jealousy for God in a Godless World

Notes of an Address at one of the Clifton Conferences of Christians.

"I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts."—1 Kings 19:10

WE have especially, dear Christian friends, to notice that we are to be jealous for God; for His honour and His glory, and not for our own honour and glory; not for our own reputation and name, not for our party, our ecclesiastical position, nor even for our particular religious notions. The spirit of that holy man of God, John the Baptist, when he said, with reference to the Lord Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30), should be aimed after by us. The more we are willing, like him, to go down in our own esteem, and in seeking our own honour, the more we are fit to be used by the Lord; and He will also see to it that we are honoured by Him, because we seek to honour Him (1 Sam. 2:30).

As in everything, so in jealousy, or zeal, for the honour of God, our adorable Lord Jesus is to us the perfect example, whom we have to set before us, and whom we have to seek to imitate. But in order to be able in any degree to imitate Him, we have,—

1. Through faith in Him to obtain spiritual life; for we are naturally "dead in trespasses and sins." We have therefore, naturally, no desire whatever to seek the honour of God: yea, are unconcerned about it when He is dishonoured. But when we have become the children of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus, and are thus reconciled to God, and have our sins forgiven, we begin to seek to please God, seek to

honour Him, and desire that others, too, should honour Him and please Him.

2. This zeal for God allows of an increase or a decrease in ourselves; and it will be found to increase, in the measure in which our own hearts are practically entering into the loveliness of the nature and character of God. We have therefore to seek for ourselves to become more and more convinced of the graciousness of God, of His love, His bountifulness, His kindness, His pity, His compassion, His readiness to help and bless, His patience, His faithfulness, His almighty power, His infinite wisdom; in a word, we have to seek to know God, not according to the views of men, nor even according to the notions of Christians generally, but according to the revelation. He has made of Himself in the Holy Scriptures, in order to have our hearts filled with love to Him, so that we may be earnestly longing to honour Him, and seek to stir up others to honour Him.

3. Our Lord Jesus knew the Father perfectly: He came out of His bosom. Moreover, as the perfect Man, the servant of the Father, He meditated day and night in the Holy Scriptures (Ps. 119). The more we, the children of God, meditate in the Holy Scriptures, the more perfectly we shall become acquainted with the true loveliness of God, and the more shall we therefore ourselves seek to please Him, and the more shall we seek to stir up others to acquaint themselves with Him, that they may please Him.

4. There never was a time when it was not true regarding the world what the Apostle John says, "The whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19). Hence the deep importance that all the children of God in this godless world should seek to bring honour to God, live for God, be as lights in the world, manifest their zeal for the glory of God. In seeking to do so they may meet with many difficulties, but God will help them and strengthen them, if they pray to Him for help, and expect help from Him. They may find themselves sometimes almost alone, or quite alone, in their path in seeking to glorify God, as was the case with some men of God of old; but the



more alone, the greater the importance to live for God, to seek zealously His glory, and the greater the reward of grace at last for doing so. Sometimes also it may appear as if we thus lived and laboured in vain for God; but the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures is the very reverse; for it is written, "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). Again, it is written, "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

As we are drawing nearer and nearer the close of the present dispensation, spiritual darkness, departure from the Holy Scriptures, and consequent ungodliness, we have reason to believe, will increase more and more, though coupled with a form of godliness (see 2 Tim. 3:1–5); therefore the path of a true disciple of the Lord Jesus will become more and more difficult; but for this very reason it is of so much the more importance to live for God, to testify for God, to be unlike the world, to be transformed from it. If we desire that thus it may be with us, it is needful that we give ourselves to the prayerful reading of the Holy Scriptures with reference to ourselves. The Bible should be to us the Book of books; all other books should be esteemed little in comparison with the Bible. But if this is not the case, we shall remain babes in grace and knowledge.

And now, beloved fellow-disciples, how many of us are in heart purposed to live for God, to be zealous for God, and to be truly transformed from the world? We have but one brief life here on earth. The opportunities to witness for God by our life will soon be over; let us therefore make good use of it. Let none among us allow his life, nor even a small part of it, to be wasted, for it is given to us to be used for God, to His glory, in this godless world.

# The Gospel in the Holy Ghost

Notes of an Address on 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

"Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."—1 Thessalonians 1:5

"OUR Gospel." That is, simply, the gospel which we preach. There is but one gospel, the gospel of the grace of God, the glad tidings, that God gave His only-begotten Son,—who gave Himself for us, who suffered and was bruised for us, and who died for our sins. This is what we are to believe. The sinner believing in Jesus,—yea, the vilest, the most hardened, the oldest sinner,—will at once obtain the pardon of His sins, the full forgiveness of them. He has not to do any work, but just as he is, he should come; he has only to receive what God has to give in the person of His own dear Son, who, in our room and stead, died for us, unworthy, guilty sinners.

This gospel, the apostle says, "CAME NOT IN WORD ONLY, BUT IN POWER." Not only as a statement, nor even as a mere clear and scriptural statement, but in spiritual energy, in spiritual power. Such power is to be obtained by a holy and prayerful life, by which, even now, believers may be brought into such a state as that out of them flow rivers of living water.

It came further to them "IN THE HOLY GHOST;" viz., the gospel was, as it were, inclosed all round by the Spirit, and accompanied by His power, though uttered by mortal and sinful lips. Only as the Holy Ghost works will the gospel be effectual. We should therefore, above all, seek by earnest, frequent prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit.

This "power," in connection with the ministry of the Word, is not only to be sought after by public preachers, or by such as minister to stated congregations, but also by district visitors, tract distributors,

teachers in schools, by masters, by parents, by all classes of believers; seeing that this "power" is the result of a holy walk and a prayerful life. All believers should seek to win souls for Christ. None should be content to go alone to heaven.

But if we would work successfully for God, we must have "power," and we cannot have this spiritual power without much prayer; we must also be especially careful that we do not allow anything which we know to be hateful to the Lord; Thus shall we be "vessels meet for the Master's use;" but thus alone have we any right to expect to be used by the Lord.

The office of an apostle we never can have, but this spiritual state of heart which the apostle had we may have, yea, ought to have; and just in the degree in which we have it, will the gospel which we preach come in power and in the Holy Ghost. It is not the much we do, the number of visits we have made, or the number of tracts we have distributed; it is not the quantity, but the quality of our service which we should regard. If we have distributed a good many tracts, how much have we distributed them in prayer, and how much have we followed them in prayer?

"AND IN MUCH ASSURANCE;" viz., much full conviction. What an experience is this! a full conviction of the forgiveness of their sins, and of all their sins—hearts brimful of joy; thus showing, by their happy faces, their peace with God, and out of full hearts pouring forth blessed truths! It is true I am a stranger here, but heaven is my home. I am on my way to God. God, for Christ's sake, has pardoned me.

Dear Sunday-school teachers, day-school teachers, superintendents of schools, district visitors, visitors of the sick, tract circulators, let all those with whom you have to do see that you are happy men and women. Let it never be asked by the children we teach, or those we visit, "Does Mr. So-and-so himself believe and what he says?" "Does Mrs. So-and-so herself believe and enjoy the things she speaks of to

me?" Therefore, my beloved brethren, do not expect fruit, unless you speak in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.

"AS YE KNOW WHAT MANNER OF MEN WE WERE AMONG YOU." There should be no uncertainty about this—no doubt as to whether the one who speaks, who teaches, who visits, is a man of God or not. It is to my shame, if men do not know what manner of person I am. If we want to know what manner of men we ought to be, let us read what Paul says of himself in the second chapter of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

I have made these few remarks, firstly, in order that all of us who in any way seek to serve the Lord may be encouraged. Do not let us say, this is too much—this is too high an attainment. Verily it is not! We may not expect to be able to perform miracles, nor have the gift of tongues, nor the office of an apostle; but we may confidently look for this spiritual power, and we shall not be disappointed.

And I have, secondly, made these remarks because the kind of service which I have been noticing is now so particularly needed. Let us pray that God, in the riches of His grace, would raise up, as pastors and teachers, as evangelists, as district visitors and tract distributors, as teachers of schools, etc., holy men, who shall speak not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much, assurance; and who by their manner of life shall commend themselves to the consciences of men.

## **How to Promote the Glory of God**

An Address delivered at a United Meeting for Prayer, held in the Broadmead Rooms, Bristol, January 13, 1870. The meeting was convened—

"To entreat God for a blessing on His work in Bristol—for the attainment of a deeper knowledge of Holy Scripture by Christians in Great Britain and throughout the world—for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of souls—for the progress of the Reformation at home and abroad, and for the spread of the gospel in Roman Catholic countries—for His overruling mercy in reference to the unscriptural designs of the Œcumenical Council—for the closer union and fuller co-operation of believers in Christ, and for the speedy coming of His kingdom."

IT appears to me that, for the profit of the younger brethren in Christ, a few practical remarks, and a few hints with reference to the subjects on account of which we have met to pray, may not be out of place. I rejoiced when I saw what subjects were announced for prayer. We are first invited to ask God for a blessing on His work in Bristol. The particular point here is "in Bristol." Not, at this church or this chapel; not, at this Sunday-school or another Sunday-school; not, in connection with the particular movements of individual Christians, or city missionaries, or district visitors, but the work of God in Bristol. This at once brings before us that we are one in Christ, and all interested in His work that is going on around us. Beloved in Christ, the realizing our oneness in Christ may be tested by the extent to which we feel interested about the work of God that is going on in the hands of others. It is the will of the Lord that we should rejoice with those who rejoice,—if they are fellow-believers; and it is His will that we should weep with those who weep,—if they are fellow-believers; and therefore if it please God to work a mighty work in the way of conversion—though as to myself I had not the least to do with it—I ought to rejoice. If God is pleased to use individuals as instruments of blessing, though known only by name to me, I ought to rejoice in the work of God. First, I am to give myself to pray for the work in which I am engaged, and to which God has been pleased to call me; but I am not to be satisfied with this. I ought to pray for the work of God in this city generally. Let me affectionately ask my beloved fellow-believers whether they are in the habit of doing so? It is a solemn and important question. If not,

let me affectionately press this upon my fellow-believers, especially my younger brethren and sisters. I say—not boastingly, but simply to encourage my fellow-believers—that for many a long year have I been, day by day, praying for the work of God in Bristol,—and not only in Bristol, but for the work of God in this neighbourhood, in this country, and throughout the world. Not a day passes without my bringing this matter before God. I should charge myself with having neglected one of the most important petitions if I were to neglect this. Of course we must first care about our own souls, next about our own particular work; but let us never be satisfied without praying for those who are working elsewhere.

The second subject for prayer is "the attainment of a deeper knowledge of Holy Scripture by Christians in Great Britain and throughout the world." I was particularly delighted when I saw this as one of the points to be brought before us for prayer. It is of momentous importance that we should have a deeper acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, because God has been pleased to reveal Himself by the Holy Scriptures. The more I am truly acquainted with them, the deeper my knowledge with regard to the revelation God has been pleased to make of Himself, the deeper my knowledge becomes of Him. Why is it important to know more of God? Because it tends to holiness happiness, and usefulness. It tends to holiness: the more I know of God, the more I am constrained to admire Him, and to say, What a lovely, good Being He is! and especially when I see His wondrous love in Christ Jesus to such a guilty, wicked creature as I am; and therefore my heart is constrained to seek to imitate God, to seek to do something in return for His love, and to be more like God Himself. It also tends to happiness: the more we know of God, the happier we are. It was when we were in entire ignorance of God that we were without real peace or joy. When we became a little acquainted with God, our peace and joy—our true happiness, I mean—commenced; and the more we become acquainted with Him, the more truly happy we become. What will make us so exceedingly happy in heaven? It will be the fuller knowledge of God,—we shall know Him then far better than we now do. The knowledge of God

also tends to our usefulness in His service here: it is impossible that I can enter into what God has done for sinners, without being constrained in return to seek to live for Him, to labour for Him. I ask myself, What can I do for Him who has bestowed upon me His choicest gifts? Hence I am constrained to labour for Him. According to the measure in which I am fully acquainted with God, do I seek to labour for Him. I cannot be idle.

Does any one ask me, What is the best way of reading the Scriptures? I may say a little about this, because in my experience in pastoral labour I have found how deeply important it is to know how to read the Scriptures; and because, after forty years' blessed experience, I can confidently recommend the plan I have adopted. In the first place, in order to have a deeper acquaintance with the Scriptures, it is absolutely needful that you read the whole in course, regularly through,—not as some perhaps do, take the Bible, and where it opens there begin to read. If it opens on Psalm 103, they read Psalm 103; if at John 14 or Romans 8, they read John 14 or Romans 8. By degrees the Bible opens naturally on such portions of Scripture. Let me affectionately say that it ill becomes the child of God thus to treat the Father's book; it ill becomes the disciples of the Lord Jesus thus to treat their blessed Master. Let me affectionately urge those who have not done so, to begin the Old Testament from the beginning, and the New Testament from the beginning; at one time reading in the Old, and at another time in the New Testament; keeping a mark in their Bible to show how far they have proceeded. Why is it important to do this? There is a special purpose in the arrangement of the Scriptures. They begin with the creation of the world, and close with the end of the world. As you read a book of biography or history, commencing at the beginning and reading through to the end, so should you read the revelation of God's will; and when you get to the end, begin again and again. But this is not all that is necessary. When you come to this blessed Book, the great point is to come with a deep consciousness of your own ignorance, seeking on your knees the help of God, that by His Spirit He may graciously instruct you. I remember when I thus began to read the Scriptures. I had been a student of divinity in the

university of Halle, and had written many a long manuscript at the lectures of the professors of divinity; but I had not come to this blessed Book in the right spirit. At length I came to it as I had never done before. I said, "The Holy Ghost is the Teacher now in the Church of Christ; the Holy Scriptures are now the rule given by God; from them I must learn His mind,—I will now prove it." I locked my door. I put my Bible on the chair. I fell down before the chair, and spent three hours prayerfully reading the word of God; and I unhesitatingly say that in those three hours I learned more than in any previous three, six, or twelve months' period of my life. This was not all. I not only increased in knowledge, but there came with that knowledge a peace and joy in the Holy Ghost of which I had known little before. Since that time, for more than forty years, I have been in the habit of regularly reading the Scriptures; and I can therefore affectionately and confidently recommend to my beloved younger fellow-disciples to read them carefully, with an humble mind, comparing Scripture with Scripture, bringing the more difficult passages to the easy ones, and letting them interpret one another. If you do not understand some portions, be not discouraged, but come again and again to God, and He will guide you by little and little, and further instruct you in the knowledge of His will. But this is not all; for with an increasing knowledge of God, obtained in a prayerful, humble way, you will receive, not something which simply fills the head, but something which exercises the heart, and cheers, comforts, and strengthens you, and will therefore be of real good to you.

We are further entreated to pray "for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of souls." None of us suppose that by this is meant that we are to pray for the Spirit now to be given to the Church of God; for we know He was given on the day of Pentecost to the Church in her collective capacity, to abide with her for ever, and has not been taken away, notwithstanding our many failings. Just as the cloudy and fiery pillar was not taken from the Israelites, notwithstanding their many provocations, so the blessed Spirit of God has not been taken away from the Church. Moreover, God has given His Spirit to the individual believer,—to all who put their trust



in the Lord Jesus Christ. But though the Spirit dwells in the Church of Christ as to her collective capacity, and in the individual believer, nevertheless it is fitting and suitable and right on the part of the children of God, that they should ask God again and again, and with great earnestness, that He would work mightily by His Spirit. We depend entirely on the power of the Holy Ghost for the conversion of sinners. There might be the most mighty preacher, as to the knowledge of the Scriptures and the clearness with which he sets forth the truth; yet if the Spirit of God is not pleased to bless the word, he may preach for months, and yet there will be no blessing. Therefore all the beloved children of God—not only those who are preachers, but those who have never opened their mouth publicly to set forth the truth—should seek day by day to ask the blessing of God on the efforts made to set forth His truth. Let me affectionately ask each one of you whether you are in the habit of doing this? Let each one of us put the question to ourselves,—Are we in the habit of praying day by day that God would be pleased, by the power of His Spirit, to work, through the preaching of the gospel, that whenever and wherever His word is set forth He would work? Not only on Lord's-day morning, just before we go out of our houses, is it right to do this, but day by day. On Monday we should begin with this, on Tuesday we should repeat the request, and again on Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday. Oh, what blessing would come to them, if believers thus acted day by day! I don't refer to my habit boastfully, but to show it can be done, and ought to be done. It is laid on my heart thus to pray day by day. I have been doing it for many years. I have been praying, not for the conversion of souls in Bristol only, though this city I begin with first, then this neighbourhood, specially having before my mind the dear Christian brethren who go unto the dark villages around. Then I pray for the spread of the gospel throughout the land and everywhere. Here is a blessed work for every dear sister as well as brother. You are not called to preach, but here is a blessed work in which you can engage. If this were universally carried out, a mighty power of the Holy Ghost would soon be seen.

We are also come together to pray "for the progress of the Reformation at home and abroad, and for the spread of the gospel in Roman Catholic countries." When I read this, I said to myself, The first thing is, in order to progress, that it should commence in my own heart. What was the great principle of the Reformation? The Bible, and only the Bible! They would no longer have anything else. There were many other points, but this was the great outstanding one. Well, everything must, be brought to the Bible, My own individual life and walk, and the work in which I am myself engaged, must be brought to the Bible; and I must ask myself, if I am honestly and sincerely to pray for the progress of the Reformation, whether it has commenced with myself. Then with regard to my family, I should be next especially anxious increasingly to bring them to the Scriptures, that their ways, lives, maxims, habits, and principles may be according to them. That is carrying out the principle of the Reformation. Then, having by God's grace attended in some little measure to this, I should seek farther and wider to extend the principle, just as a stone thrown into the water makes small circles at first, but spreads wider and wider. Let no man say, "I am single-handed; what can I do? If there were a hundred others working with me, I might do something." Never say this. Think of what Hezekiah accomplished, single-handed, and Jehoshaphat, and Josiah, and Luther, and others, and see what they did. Oh! if we cry mightily to God, and expect great things from Him, what may not be accomplished through us? Look at our beloved Wesley, and Whitefield too, they were comparatively single-handed, and yet what great things were accomplished through their instrumentality. But there must be a right beginning,—and the right beginning is at home, with ourselves. Our own souls must first be nourished and fed and strengthened. If we aim thus to be influenced by the Bible, our influence would be sure to be felt, and would spread farther and farther,—not merely in Bristol or throughout England, but it is impossible to say how far it would be felt. Let us expect great things, and ask them of God, who delights in bestowing abundant blessings.

We are also to pray to-night for the spread of the gospel in Roman Catholic countries. Here it becomes us especially to give thanks for what God has done. There was a time when Italy was completely closed against the preaching of the gospel and circulation of the Scriptures; Spain and Austria, as well as Italy, are now opened to the gospel and the circulation of the Scriptures. It is a remarkable fact, however, that whilst Austria is open in a way it has never before been for many a long century, so that freely the Holy Scriptures may be circulated, and there is no hindrance to the preaching of the gospel there, yet with all this there is scarcely a single evangelist making use of the privilege. The Scriptures are widely circulated there, but the preaching of the gospel is as rare as in any country in the world. I would therefore particularly commend this matter to your prayers,—that God would be pleased by His Spirit to call and qualify evangelists for proclaiming the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Christ in that empire.

We are next asked to pray "for the overruling mercy of God in reference to the unscriptural designs of the Œcumenical Council." Here we should say, for our comfort, that to the blessed Lord Jesus, the great Head of the Church, is given all power in heaven and earth. He rules, He governs; and though this is not seen yet, it is not the less true that that blessed One governs the universe. "So far, and no farther" can men go. The wrath of men shall praise the Lord, who is able to overrule all for good, and will bring good out of evil. But it becomes us to continue in prayer; and day by day, while these prelates are sitting, we should pray that God would so work that good might come out of this council.

The last subject for prayer is, "The closer union and fuller co-operation of believers in Christ, and the speedy coming of His kingdom." I was so delighted when I read this. What will help us, who believe in Christ, to be more united together? One might say, "Oh, we must give up our differences." Allow me affectionately and humbly to say, I don't think so. According to my judgment, a closer union would not be brought about by this means, by giving up our

own views of what we consider to be taught us by God in the Scriptures. Not thus; but the great point is to hold them in their proper place, and to let the foundation truths of our holy faith have their proper place. We have not to say, "Now for this evening I will put all aside that I hold distinctively from my brethren." No! Nor do I expect this from my brethren. No! We will, by God's grace, carry out the teaching of Scripture,— "Buy the truth, and sell it not." With diligence and prayerfulness, and, if necessary, great sacrifice, ought we to buy the truth; but having obtained it, for no price whatever is it to be sold, not even for our liberty or our life. But, beloved, while this is the truth, it is only one side of the truth. The other side is this: The foundation-truths of our holy faith are so great, so momentous, and so precious, so altogether superabounding in comparison with anything else, that if we lived more under their influence, and more valued and enjoyed them, we should be constrained to love one another, to be knit together in love. Now we know we have one and the selfsame Saviour, therefore we are most intimately united in this. By this faith in the Lord Jesus we are all introduced into one family. Through this believing the gospel, we become the children of God and members of the same heavenly family. Now if this were present to our hearts,—that we have all one Father in heaven, one Saviour, all are bought by the selfsame precious blood, and baptized by the Holy Ghost into one body, that we are all walking the same road to heaven, and ere long shall reach the same home,—if this were present to our hearts, I say, then this difference or the other difference of opinion would not separate and alienate us. Let me affectionately say, there is a blessedness and sweetness connected with really holding the membership of the body, and loving our fellow-believers, though we differ from them, that brings unspeakable joy to the soul. We should love our fellow-believers for Christ's sake, without asking to what portion of the Church of Christ they belong. I ask but one question,— "Are you a disciple of the Lord Jesus?" "Do you love the Lord Jesus?" This question must be settled. There can be no spiritual fellowship apart from this; but that being settled, no others should be raised. Let us increasingly pray to enter into what we have received

in common in Christ, and that we shall soon be in the same heavenly home, and we shall of necessity be constrained to love one another.

We are also to pray for "the speedy coming of His kingdom." I cannot sit down without saying a word on this point to those who do not know the Lord Jesus. When we say, "Thy kingdom come," it implies that we are prepared for it. Are we prepared for it? We should be. "Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God." "Ye must be born again." How is it with us? We must believe the gospel; we must have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, or we cannot enter the kingdom. The first thing is to believe the gospel. Fellow-sinner, if you are not yet on the side of Christ, have you seen you are a sinner? If not, read the first three or four chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. You may there see what you are. Pray that God may open your understanding. If you see that you are a sinner, you have to stand before God, to pass sentence on yourself, to condemn yourself. But don't stop there. Receive the gospel. Believe the gospel at once. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," and every one who puts his trust in the Lord Jesus shall have forgiveness for his numberless transgressions. Should any have come to this meeting who are not yet on the side of Christ, I would affectionately say to them, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." It may be you have come into the midst of the children of God to carry away for yourselves a blessing, as I once went into such a company and came away as a believer, and being happy in the Lord. It is my desire that you may receive Christ, and trust in Him, and the blessing will be yours.

## **Satisfied with God**

Addresses, etc., delivered by Mr. Müller shortly after the death and at the funeral of his beloved wife.

MRS. MÜLLER died at 21, Paul Street, Kingsdown, Bristol, on Sunday afternoon, February 6th, 1870, at the age of 73 years, after a few days' severe suffering. At the usual weekly Prayer-meeting on the following day at Salem Chapel, Mr. Müller, after mentioning some subjects on behalf of which prayer had been requested, said,—

Lastly, I desire, on behalf of myself and family, thanksgiving, that it has pleased the Lord to release my precious wife from her pain and suffering, and that He has given to her what had been the desire of her heart for many years,—to be with Jesus. And I also desire thanksgiving for the great peace of mind which He has given me, and with which He has sustained me, and my dear daughter also.

Mr. Müller, during the meeting, rose and said,—The last portion of Scripture which I read to my precious wife was this: "The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Now, if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have received grace, we are partakers of grace, and to all such He will give glory also. I said to myself, with regard to the latter part, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly"—I am in myself a poor worthless sinner, but I have been saved by the blood of Christ; and I do not live in sin, I walk uprightly before God. Therefore, if it is really good for me my darling wife will be raised up again; sick as she is, God will restore her again. But if she is not restored again, then it would not be a good thing for me. And so my heart was at rest. I was satisfied with God. And all this springs, as I have often before said, from taking God at His word, believing what He says. I fully intended to have preached last night, though I stayed at home in the morning, which I felt to be due to the members of my family to sustain them, and also feeling the need of rest myself, having been greatly deprived of sleep for several nights, and feeling much worn. But the latter part of the afternoon my dearest wife fell asleep, and for many reasons I

had to remain home on this account. Yet if I had preached, this would have been my text, "The Lord is good, and doeth good." You have often heard me say before, what a lovely Being God is; and I believe it still, and I am satisfied with, what He does. For the six days that my dear wife was ill, I had the unspeakable privilege of being her nurse,—my beloved child by day, and myself by night. I am one that feels greatly the want of sleep. Having so much, mental work seven days every week, I need sleep greatly, and usually suffer for the want of it; but, in this instance, I have proved, in my own experience, the faithfulness of God,—"As thy days, so shall thy strength be." As I awoke last night my heart was glad at the thought that my beloved wife was with, Jesus. She had done her work, and who would wish it otherwise than that she should have her heart's desire, to go to be with Jesus!

Mr. Müller again spoke:—A few weeks ago my dearest wife had a very severe cough, on account of which I felt her pulse, and found to my sorrow that she had a very feeble, irregular, and intermitting pulse. When therefore this acute rheumatism, or rheumatic fever, came on, I judged, humanly speaking, how it would end, on account of the effect of acute rheumatism on the heart. Still, in the prospect of this, I was able to say to myself,—

"Best of blessings He'll provide us,

Nought but good shall e'er betide us,

Safe to glory He will guide us:—

Oh how He loves!"

You have often before heard me say this,—I meant what I said, and now I took it to my own heart. And I was at peace. And so it was sixteen years ago, when my beloved child was at the point of death. My dear wife and I were at peace. Why? Because we did not love her? We loved her intensely. But we were satisfied with God, whatever He might do. And now how was it? Because I did not love my dear wife?

I loved her intensely. As the years rolled on, our affection for each other increased more and more. But it was because I was satisfied with the will of God.

Mr. Müller concluded by referring to the keenness of the trial to him as a man and a husband, and to his dependence upon God still, as difficulties increased, and his loneliness was more felt.

On the following Friday the earthly remains of Mrs. Müller were conveyed to Arno's Vale cemetery, preceded, accompanied, and followed by a large concourse of people. About 1400 orphans from the Five Orphan Houses on Ashley Down followed the remains of their benefactor.

The entire service was conducted by Mr. Müller, who spoke in the chapel at Arno's Vale, as follows:—

I shall read a few portions of God's most precious word, and make a few remarks thereon. First, in the fourth chapter of 1 Thessalonians,  
—

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

"The dead in Christ!" Not, all the dead; not, all who died before that time. But, "the dead in Christ,"—those who had fallen asleep as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is it which gives me the peace, the unspeakable joy I have this day in committing to the tomb the earthly remains of my deeply beloved, precious wife,—because I shall spend a happy eternity with her. Whilst we were living most



affectionately and unitedly together for thirty-nine years and four months, this was the theme of our conversation, again and again, and thousands of times; and often and often I have taken her hand, and the hand of my beloved daughter, and said, "we shall be together throughout eternity," and our hearts thrilled with joy in the prospect of spending a happy eternity together in the presence of our adorable Lord Jesus. And therefore, because the earthly remains are placed in the tomb of one of whom we have hope, and a good scriptural assurance that she is now with Jesus, and that when our adorable Lord comes again, she will have a glorified body, and those who love her here on earth will be united together again with her; therefore we "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

I do seek to sustain thereby my own heart. Let us read also a few verses of the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians.

"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Bright and blessed prospect! My precious wife has borne the image of the earthy Adam, who sinned, who fell: she will bear the image of the heavenly Adam, the Lord from heaven.

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

That is, in the state in which we now are, we cannot enter into the immediate presence of the Lord; we must first put off this body.

"Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

That is, as previously stated in this chapter, those who die in Christ shall be raised incorruptible. Bright, blessed prospect to my own soul regarding that loved one! She will be raised incorruptible—this weak, frail tabernacle, this suffering tabernacle, in which she endured so much pain and agony during the last few days of her earthly pilgrimage—will be raised incorruptible. Each living believer shall be changed.

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Let me call on all my beloved Christian friends to lay to heart the words, "Be ye steadfast." Let us aim after it, beloved in Christ. "Unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

My precious wife died, as it were, in harness. Up to the very last she was at work for the Lord. Even when on her death-bed she gave directions for this thing and another thing to be done connected with the honour of the Lord,—caring about the sick ones outside the house, and sending them refreshments; caring yet for the orphans, and giving directions concerning them. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." It was the very joy and delight of her heart to labour for that blessed Jesus who had bought her by His precious blood, in the full assurance of the blessed fulfilment of this word, "Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

I will read one other passage in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians,—

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

How true regarding her—"To me to live is Christ"! During all the thirty-nine years and four months that it was the joy and privilege of my heart to be united by conjugal bonds to that loved one, for her to live was Christ. This dear sister in Christ had one single business in life, one single object in life,—to live for Christ. As soon as I was united to her by conjugal bonds she became a true helper to me in pastoral work. She went about and worked; she laboured, and laboured abundantly, in the Church at Teignmouth of which I was the pastor. And when it pleased God, thirty-seven years and nine months since, to allow us the honour and privilege to come to Bristol, to labour in this city, she in the fullest way gave herself to work among the children of God, and in every way she could, in order to live for Christ. And when it pleased God to give afterwards, as she clearly and distinctly saw, another sphere of labour on Ashley Down, it was day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, that she laboured in one even, steady course,—for her to live was Christ. Can my heart, then, but rejoice when I think of one whose life was what it was, when there is not so much as the shadow of a question remaining as to where she is now? Oh! how can it be otherwise than that my soul should be filled with unspeakable joy and delight, thinking of that blessed one being with Jesus. For her to live was Christ, and as she put off this her tabernacle, her spirit is now in the presence of Jesus; therefore to her to die is gain. I might give many reasons why to die to her is gain. For her the weakness and weariness of the tabernacle are at an end. For nearly two years past, when she came home with me, about nine o'clock in the evening, from the Orphan Houses, I could see that she was worn—worn to the utmost. I often said, "My darling, work less; my darling, stay at home." But I could not prevail upon her to do so. She still worked and worked. She loved to be at my side, as I loved to be at her side. But I saw that it was becoming too much for her. Now for her

this weariness is past—gone for ever. I might mention a number of other things to show that death was gain, but the greatest is this,—it was the desire of her heart to see that lovely One in heaven, our adorable Lord Jesus. She longed to be with Him. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, was continually the theme of her heart. God allowed me to find a most precious jewel the day before yesterday which that loved one had left behind. My darling daughter told me she had seen, about two years since, in a pocket-book of her beloved mother, a sentence written to this effect,—that she longed to be with Jesus; and when her soul was consciously happy in the Lord, she often wished instantly to depart, only that she dreaded the shock to her beloved husband, daughter, and other relatives and friends. But she wound it all up with this,—"Not my will, but Thine, dear Jesus, be done." That was just the desire of her heart; not, at some particular time only, on Lord's-days, or once now and then, but it was the constant desire of her heart to be with the Lord Jesus. Well, to die therefore has been gain to her. Should I wish it to be otherwise? Ah! strange as it may appear to some, what can I say but that I delight in the happiness of my beloved departed one! Oh! the unspeakable peace and joy of my soul as I think she has the desire of her heart. I kiss the hand that has thus laid me low. Do you ask me as a man how I feel? I feel it keenly. Do you ask me as a husband how I feel? I feel it to the utmost. Do you ask me as the director of the Orphan Houses how I feel it? I say again, I feel it to the utmost, and I see no prospect how her loss can be made up. But I kiss the hand that has done it. I rejoice in the joy of my beloved departed one; and if at this moment I could alter it, I would not wish to have her back. The depth of my affection for her is too great to wish her back. She longed to be with Jesus, she has now the desire of her heart, and her joy is my joy! And now in the full assurance of the resurrection of the just, and of all our loved ones who have died as believers in the Lord Jesus meeting together in heaven, I commit these earthly remains to the tomb. But are all here present prepared for eternity? Who will meet that loved one in heaven? None will meet her there, none will meet me there, but believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be born again before we enter heaven; we must be changed in heart by faith in the Lord Jesus

Christ. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Let me affectionately ask all present,—Are you prepared for heaven? Only those can enter there who are taken out of the world as believers in the Lord Jesus.

Mr. Müller then prayed,—

O Lord, accept my grateful, thanks that Thou didst give to me the precious blessing of such a wife, of such a companion, of such a helper, of such a comforter. Oh! how good hast Thou been to me for thirty-nine years and four months in giving and keeping her to me. And now Lord, it has pleased Thee to take her to Thyself. So it pleased Thee; it is therefore the very best thing. Thou dost withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly; and Thy poor servant—weak and feeble though he is—walks uprightly; and his beloved one walked uprightly, and now Thou hast taken her, and therefore it is the best thing for her, and for Thy poor servant, and for his beloved child, and for the other relatives and friends. Thy poor servant, therefore, believes Thou hast done it in love; and that, if it had been good for him that his dear wife should yet further labour with him, Thou wouldest have caused her, notwithstanding her advanced years and her frail tabernacle, to remain. Thy poor servant therefore bows to Thy will, and would not forget Thy benefits during their happy conjugal life for thirty-nine years and four months. And as Thy servant knows he shall meet her again, and spend a happy eternity with her in Thy presence, he would bless and praise Thee for the comfort given to him, the comfort given to his beloved daughter, the comfort given to the dear sisters and all the other dear relatives and friends. O Lord! do good to us all. And wilt Thou graciously grant, that to us as a Church this may be blessed; and not only to us, but to thousands of Thy dear children in this large city and elsewhere; and in Thy good providence so work, that in the end good may come out of this event to the Orphans. Now, Lord, we go to the grave. Go with us. Help us yet. Bless us yet. And when Thy poor servant and the other dear relatives shall feel their loneliness, because Thou hast

taken their loved one to Thyself, help us to remember her joy in Thy presence. We ask it for the sake of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ.

On the following Sunday evening, Mr. Müller occupied, as usual, the pulpit of Bethesda chapel. Before discoursing upon the 14th, 15th, and 16th verses of Ephesians 6, in continuation of the meditation commenced a fortnight previously, he said,—

Let us read again part of the last verse we have just been singing,—

"Best of blessings He'll provide us,

Nought but good shall e'er betide us."

If we are acquainted with Jesus, and know Him, just in the measure in which this is the case, from our inmost soul we shall say,—

"Best of blessings He'll provide us,

Nought but good shall e'er betide us."

Oh the exercising of confidence in the loving heart of Jesus,—what repose it gives, what calmness, what quietness of soul! What an unspeakable blessing to find Jesus, to have Him for our friend, our almighty friend, our never-failing friend, whose heart never will change towards us, to whom has been given all power in heaven and in earth, and who in our behalf will exercise this His power just in the measure in which it shall be for His glory and our real blessing.

"Nought but good shall e'er betide us."

This was the song of my heart during the last week but one. Another portion was, "The Lord is good, and doeth good"; and so day by day I proved it, and my soul was peaceful and happy.... Let me affectionately urge all present, especially my young friends, not to be satisfied with religious feeling, and keep aloof from God's blessed Book. That was my state of heart when I was brought to the

knowledge of the Lord in Germany. Even when I was on the point of preaching in the Establishment, and when afterwards I did so, I cared little about God's blessed Book. My religion was a mere religion of feeling, and so it came—I was a babe, and continued a babe in spiritual things for three years and a half of my Christian course. But when it pleased God, in the riches of His grace, in July, 1829, to bring me to this blessed Book, and to seek to acquaint myself with the Scriptures, it became quite different. I then began to be established in the things of God, to take firmer steps heavenwards, and to fight more successfully in the battles against the powers of darkness. Never let your religion be the religion of feeling, but let it all spring from what you see in this blessed Book. It is because of what I have seen in the Scriptures that you see me here this evening,—and how calm and how peaceful my soul! None of you, except you had heard of it, would suppose that one of the greatest of afflictions that can befall a human being has befallen me. And yet how calm and how quiet I am! And why? Because I take God by His Word, because my religion is not a religion of feeling. With, all the depth of affection of a husband, whence sprang the calmness, the quietness, the holy joy I felt all the past week? Because I have been able, by God's grace, to acquaint myself with God as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. And thus it comes, and only thus, I am able to stand here with this holy calmness. Last Lord's-day, immediately after the death of my beloved wife, I should have been here if I had had physical strength; but having had to watch night after night for several nights, I was unable to come; and, moreover, I felt it my duty to my household to stay at home with them, for many reasons; but so far as the state of my heart was concerned, I should have been able as calmly and quietly to occupy this place as I do now. Why do I refer to this? To seek to encourage you to acquaint yourselves with God,—to know God. And I, by His grace, know Him, and find in Him such satisfaction, and I know there is in Him such love to me that, my soul is satisfied with Him. See, therefore, the deep importance of coming to the Scriptures; for it is written, "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." I know Him, therefore I put my trust in Him. But if you only hear about Him, or

read about Him, if you do not know Him as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures, then, when trials and difficulties come, it will be seen how little you are acquainted with Him. How important, then, that we hold the truth as it is in Jesus, that we know what God says about the vanities of this world, the blessedness of the world to come, and heavenly realities. Because my soul was enabled to lay hold on eternal life, to treat the truths of the Scriptures as realities, to grasp them by faith and not to hold them as notions, therefore in the midst of the storm I was calm and quiet, and there was not so much as a particle of difference between the bridal day and the funeral day. Oh, the holy calmness of my soul! But you must know God. I delight to speak about Him, because our holy faith is a reality. The God of the Bible is the same in the second part of the nineteenth century as He was at the beginning. There is no difference between the Living God four thousand years ago and now; no difference between what the blessed Jesus was when on earth and now. Only let us seek to acquaint ourselves with Him; only believe what the Scriptures say about Him; only in child-like simplicity come to the word and believe it, and lay hold on it. Oh how blessed—how blessed! Oh that some of my dear fellow-sinners might be attracted to Jesus this evening! I have a friend in Jesus—a bosom friend. What He is to me He is willing to be to every one present. Seek Christ first, then confide in His love, in His power, in His wisdom, and you will be happy—happy all the days of your life. Your peace will flow like a river,—not like the ocean, which is sometimes very calm, then all in motion, but your peace will flow like a river, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. Oh, it is an unspeakably blessed thing to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus! I had no intention to refer to these points, but it may please God to bless them to one or the other here present.

At the conclusion of the discourse Mr. Müller further said,—I suppose many dear Christian friends expected I should preach what is ordinarily called a funeral sermon, or give some account of my beloved departed wife. I mean to do so. It is quite in my heart so to do, but I desire, as there is so much to refer to, and as there are so



many important incidents in our married life, to do this in the most public way possible. I have reason to believe that many hundreds of persons more than could get into this chapel would desire to be present; and therefore, as soon as God may please to give me strength for this, and as soon as ray way is made plain so to do, I shall do so, and delight to do so, and count it a great honour from God to be permitted to do so. Timely notice will be given previously, but when, and where, or in what way, I cannot at this moment say. I am waiting on God, and He will direct me.\* I thank all most, heartily for the deep love and affection shown to me and my beloved departed wife, in the time of suffering and trial, and for all the inquiries made, and kindness shown to me and my dear daughter and other dear relatives. I commend myself and my dear daughter to your prayers, that God may help us to continue to rejoice in Him, howsoever we may be placed. I trust, by God's grace, we shall be enabled yet further to rejoice in God.

## **How to become a Successful Labourer in Christ's Vineyard**

An Address delivered at Salem Chapel, Bristol, at a Monday Evening Prayer-meeting, in September, 1870.

IN the first prayer this evening there was the following expression:—"Use. Thy servants, and let them see fruit, as they are able to bear it." I desire to say a few words on this, especially the latter part. It has in a lively way brought to my remembrance my own, experience. It was forty-four years ago, on the 17th of this month, that I began to preach in my own country; but I saw very little fruit from my preaching. I preached in the parish churches—I loved to preach, there was a real earnestness in my preaching, and a real desire to do

good—unquestionably so; and yet I never met with a single instance in which I could say I had been used as God's instrument in the conversion of a sinner, though sometimes I preached to a thousand people, or more. I do not say that persons may not have been converted; but I never met with one single instance of conversion. It did, however, please God, in a few instances—when I did not: expect it—to use me in the conversion of sinners; but this was quite apart from the preaching. I once visited a poor tailor and expounded the Scriptures at his house, and a person was brought to the knowledge of the truth through this exposition. Two of my fellow-students, my former companions in sin, were converted instantaneously whilst I was speaking to them; so that in a few cases, where I expected nothings I was made an instrument of blessing; but where I expected great things, there was nothing at all. In course of time I came to this country, and it pleased God then to show to me the doctrines of grace in a way in which I had not seen them before. At first I hated them, and said, "If this were true, I could do nothing at all in the conversion of sinners, as all would then depend upon God and the working of His Spirit." But when it pleased God to reveal these truths to me, and my heart was brought to such a state as that I could say, "I am not only content simply to be a hammer, an axe, or a saw, in God's hands; but I shall count it an honour to be taken up and used by Him in any way; and if sinners are converted through my instrumentality, from my inmost soul I will give Him all the glory; the Lord gave me to see fruit in abundance; sinners were converted by scores; and ever since God has used me in one way or other in His service. I delight to dwell on this, especially for the benefit of my younger fellow-believers. We must be really willing to give God all the glory. We may say, God shall have all the glory; but the point is, do we mean it? We must aim after this,—to be content to be nothing but the instrument, giving God all the glory. We must not say, God shall have ninety-nine parts of the glory, and the one-hundredth part shall be ours. No, we must give Him all, we must not take the one-hundredth part; He is worthy to have it all. Let us aim after this, and assuredly God will take us up; for He can then use us. Our adorable Lord Jesus, during all His life on earth, had one single aim—to seek glory for the Father.

Well, as we are enabled to get glory for the Master, not for the servant, so He, whom we seek to honour, will see to it that honour is bestowed on the servant. I affectionately, as an elder brother, lay it upon the hearts of my beloved young brethren, whether engaged as preachers, Sunday-school teachers, tract distributors, district visitors, or in any other way working in the Lord's service, if they desire to see fruit resulting from their labours, that they primarily aim after this,—that not only with the lip, but with the heart, they will give all the honour and glory to God, if He should condescend to use them as instruments in His service.

## **The Mighty God**

An Address delivered at the Annual Conference of Christians at Clifton, October 4th, 1870.

The topic suggested for consideration at this day's Conference was,—

"The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."—  
Ps. 72:7; Isa. 9:6; John 16:33

ALL who are acquainted, by God's grace, with our Lord Jesus Christ, have not a particle of doubt that the two verses read to us (Isa. 9:6, 7), refer to Him. We have in them brought before us both the humanity and the divinity of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ; and we, the disciples of the Lord Jesus, should hold fast both the true humanity and the true divinity of our adorable Lord. We have to seek practically, day by day, to enter into the truth, that He who is at the right hand of the Father—the ascended living Lord Jesus Christ—is, in the presence of God, still the God-Man. He is our Brother in the presence of God. But that blessed One, who is our Saviour, at the same time is not only truly man, but is really and truly God, as fully

as is the Father; and of this truth, that He is very Man and very God—the God-Man—we have to seek to remind ourselves continually. For there will come a time when we shall need to remember the truth in both these aspects—His true humanity and His true divinity. I would say to any who are not aware of it, that about 750 years before the incarnation of our adorable Lord, the Holy Ghost, by Isaiah, made the statement contained in the two verses referred to. How this in itself is calculated to refresh our hearts, and strengthen us in the belief that this blessed Book, the Bible, is the Word of the living God! Who declared on the first of July, 1870, that in a very short time Napoleon III. would be a prisoner? Who wrote it? Who said it? Who was assured about it? But God knew it. And so with regard to the incarnation of our adorable Lord Jesus. It was clearly and distinctly revealed by the Holy Ghost hundreds of years before it took place.

How full of comfort is the word "Counsellor," as applied to our Lord. We shall find ourselves, in our course heavenwards, again and again in positions when we particularly need counsel and advice. Now the blessed Lord Jesus,—our Brother, our Friend, our Saviour, our Lord, our God,—sustains the office of the Counsellor to His Church, and to His individual disciples. To myself, I ought to say, when in perplexing circumstances, "Oh! let me lie on the bosom of the Lord Jesus." To Him let me Pray, "Thy poor servant knows not how to act, knows not what to do, but Thou art the Counsellor of Thy people; now prove Thyself in my own happy experience my Counsellor!" What would be the result? As assuredly as we exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ with regard to this His office, and as assuredly as we give ourselves to prayer, and seek, by the Spirit of God, through the instrumentality of the written word, to obtain counsel of Him, so assuredly we shall obtain it.

Then, when in weakness as to the outward man, or in weakness spiritually, in any difficulty, in any trial, or any sorrow, when we are in the hour of temptation, needing special help, how blessed to remember "the Mighty God," to remember He is the mighty God. There is no question as to this being the meaning of it. Every word is

here honestly translated. The greatest Hebrew scholars, though rationalists, were constrained to acknowledge that that was the meaning, and they have translated the words thus. How full they are of comfort! He, my Friend, my Lord, my Saviour, my Bridegroom, is the mighty God. I am perfect weakness, I cannot stand against my enemies, I am helpless. Oh, how weak, how extremely weak am I in myself! But if I cling to the mighty God, if I exercise faith in my precious Redeemer, the mighty God, He is able and willing to help me. He proved the depth of His love to me by laying down His life for me, a miserable guilty sinner. He, our best Friend, our bosom Friend, is at the same time the mighty God. Oh! let us cling to the mighty God.

How full of comfort are the words, "The Everlasting Father." As they have been referred to by previous speakers, I need not enlarge. Yet how full of comfort! While all things change here below, the precious Jesus, our Friend, is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." What He was millions of years since, He is now. What He was when He walked through Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee, He is now—His heart full of tenderness, of pity, of compassion. Oh, how patient, how loving, how gracious! Oh, what a lovely Being Jesus is! When I saw the notice of these Conference meetings, I was particularly refreshed by the remembrance of this,—that Jesus will be the theme again of our meetings. I have been privileged to attend every one of those evening meetings during the eight years they have been held, and Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, has been the theme of every meeting. Well, now, beloved fellow-disciples, it should be Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, more practically and experimentally in our closets, in our walk, in our labour, in our service; and day by day our hearts should be occupied with Jesus, and especially the friendship of Jesus should be cultivated by us increasingly. When trials, difficulties, and sorrows come, we should remember we have the self-same Jesus now as ready to comfort and encourage us as He did the disciples more than 1800 years since; and quite as ready as He was then to prove Himself our Friend, our Helper, our Comforter. We should say, "Now, Lord Jesus, since Thou, art 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,'

and since it is written, Thou hast 'the tongue of the learned' to 'know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary,' give me a word in season to comfort me; Thou art willing, now comfort me, Thy poor servant, for I am weary; Thou art ever the same, and since Thou art as willing to comfort now as Thou wast when in Judæa, in Samaria, and Galilee, now comfort me Thy poor servant." Thus should we prove Jesus practically and experimentally to be our bosom Friend. And we should seek to couple with the experience, that He is our bosom Friend, the fact that He is the Mighty God, and ever the same. If all my friends fail, this precious Jesus remains, and He will never forsake, He will never grow weary, He will ever care for me. How full of comfort is this! Let us enter into what God, in the riches of His grace, has been pleased to provide for us in Jesus. There is reality in these things. God brings this precious truth before us, that we may be sustained and comforted. And if practically and experimentally we lean on the arm of Christ, it shall be yet seen in these last days how happy the disciples of the Lord Jesus may be, though everything may be dark and gloomy, though they are in the midst of difficulties and trial. Not only this—we may even be strong in the Lord; and whilst we cannot be apostles, we may aim after the grace of apostles. Though we never attain to it, it would be a holy aim, and God would be pleased with it. In ourselves we are perfect weakness; yet the Holy Ghost is in the Church, and dwells in every individual believer, and we have the written word, and Jesus our bosom Friend; and therefore if we pour out our hearts before God, in the midst of all our difficulties and trials, what strength may we not get to our souls? Let us live on Jesus, beloved in Christ.

Further: Jesus is "the Prince of Peace." I do not dwell on those points of this subject on which the brethren have already spoken; but there is one aspect I will refer to, and that is the bright and blessed prospect with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when Himself shall put aside war, Himself shall take the power and reign, and all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Christ of God; when the blessed Jesus will come, not in the character in which He came before, but "as the King in His beauty." How the

heart, with joyful anticipation, should look forward to the day when He will come and reign, and take the power to Himself, and subdue everything that is contrary to Himself. This is the bright and blessed prospect before us, and most blessed with regard to our own hearts now. He will subdue in us individually everything contrary to His own blessed mind. The Lord Jesus will have His own blessed mind to the full seen in us. Precious, bright, glorious the prospect! After waiting yet a little while, we shall see Jesus as He is, and be made like Him.

But are we regenerated? There is no such thing as being made like Jesus, unless we are first born again, by believing the gospel, by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. There is no such thing as making progress in the heavenly life, except we first believe the truth of the gospel and rest our souls for salvation on the Lord Jesus Christ. As there may be a few here present who are not yet believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, let me affectionately ask such,—Do you know Jesus? Do you believe in Him? Do you simply, solely, entirely, rest on what He did to save sinners? Every other foundation is a sandy foundation. You cannot be saved unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is one name alone given,—through Jesus our Lord, by faith in His name, alone is there salvation. Therefore, if any here present do not believe, let me entreat and beseech them to lay these things to heart. Forsake the false ways, do not seek to work out your own salvation by trusting in your own merit or works, or by supposing that reading the Bible or going to a place of worship will save your souls. I commend the one way of salvation to you—trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pass sentence upon yourselves as sinners; condemn yourselves; and as guilty sinners, deserving nothing but punishment, put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. If you do this, then assuredly God, for Christ's sake, will forgive you. Though you be the greatest, the oldest, the most hardened sinner; though you have sinned again and again against light and knowledge; if you now trust in Christ, you will, for His sake, be forgiven; for there is power in the blood of Christ to take away the greatest sins. The most hardened sinner, instantly when he believes,

by God, for Christ's sake, is accepted, and treated as if he had never sinned at all. He who believes, obtains full, free, and eternal forgiveness for all his numberless transgressions. Then begins love to God who gave Jesus, and love to Jesus who gave Himself. And then the soul says, "What can I render to God for His unspeakable gift, and to my precious Lord Jesus for giving Himself?" Then the soul begins to seek to be more like Jesus Christ. The more we become acquainted with Jesus and with ourselves, the more we seek to be like that blessed One. After this, let us, fellow-believers, more and more aim. "The world is passing away, and the fashion, thereof." We have but one life to spend here, and that a very brief one; and after our conversion our one great object in this evil world should be to seek to manifest the mind of Jesus. And then, with regard to our fellow-believers, we are to love one another. Disciples should love one another, notwithstanding all the weaknesses and infirmities we see in one another. For Christ's sake should we do it, because it is the will of that blessed One. Therefore let us aim after this; and the more we can thus manifest the mind of Jesus, the greater will be the honour which we obtain for Him.

## **Waiting for Christ**

An Address delivered at the Annual Conference of Christians at Clifton, October 5th, 1870.

The topic suggested for consideration at this day's Conference was,—

"When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."—Luke 21:31; 1 Cor. 15:24; Rev. 11:15



MAY I be allowed to read once more the last verse of the hymn we have just sung,—

"The bride eyes not her garment,  
But her dear bridegroom's face;  
I will not gaze at glory,  
But on my King of grace;—  
Not at the crown He giveth,  
But on His piercèd hand:—  
The Lamb is all the glory  
Of Immanuel's land."

This brings before us the subject of personal attachment to the Lord Jesus. And if I might be allowed to ask for myself one thing more than another, it is a deep, personal attachment to Jesus. And if I were to express what I most desire on behalf of all my beloved fellow-disciples, it is a deep, personal attachment to Jesus. Oh! if we all had a hundred times more of real, true deep, personal attachment to Jesus, how delighted should we be to hear of our blessed Lord, how we should long to see Him, how it would be the one thing uppermost in our hearts to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Beloved in Christ, let this be our prayer, that the Lord, in the riches of His grace, would bring it more habitually, more deeply, more fully before us—what this blessed One did for us, when He emptied Himself and came down to this world, and went about in the form of a servant, and laboured and toiled and suffered, and at last shed His precious blood for the remission of our sins. For the more this is present to our hearts, the more will our hearts be filled with personal attachment to that blessed One, and the more shall we long to be with Him. That blessed One who is now at the right hand of God

interceding for us, and who remembers all the infirmities and weaknesses which mingle with our attempts to speak for Him, to sing His praise, and to listen to what beloved brethren bring before us, will not always be at the right hand of God. After His ascension to heaven, the promise was given to the disciples: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Now for this blessed One,—for the personal return of this blessed One,—we have to wait. He said, before He ascended: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." We all know He did go to the Father; but He will not be satisfied till He returns to take His Church to Himself, that where He is, she may be also.

As to the time when this will take place, what can we say? If we attempt to say it will be next month, it will be next year, we should not stand on scriptural ground; for it is written, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels of heaven." I remember well the mistake into which many fell, about the time when it pleased God first to reveal to me the truth with regard to the return of the Lord. In July, 1829, as many will remember, there was war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Many beloved brethren whose minds had just been opened to look for the return of their Lord, said, "Now is the time when Israel will be restored." "You will see" they said, "in a short time how all this Turkish Empire will be destroyed." Having had my mind recently directed to the subject of our Lord's return, I fell into the same mistake as many of my older brethren. What was the result? Six weeks more, and peace was restored between Russia and the Turkish Empire; forty-one years and three months have passed since then, and the Turkish Empire still exists, and Israel has not been restored. Why do I refer to this? Not to indicate that we are not to look at the circumstances around us. It is the will of the Lord that we should do so, and not shut our eyes to what is passing around us. But this I affectionately say, that we should not be too hasty in at once forming a judgment, that because such and such an event has taken place, therefore in such and such a time it is certain the Lord

Jesus will return; lest, when such and such a time shall have passed, and after all our adorable Lord has not been revealed, unbelievers should turn round and say, "The time has passed, and the Lord Jesus, of whose return you talked so much, has not come; and after all, is there anything in the truth about His return?" We should be careful not to give a handle to those who speak evil of the truth; and not lay too much stress on certain events which may not be God's instruments in ushering in the return of the Lord.

What we need is the right state of heart. We should seek to have our hearts kept practically in such a state, that in any hour of the day or night we should be willing to give up everything; and when the last trump shall sound, to say, "Oh, my blessed Jesus, for many a long day and year I have waited for Thy return, and now I am delighted to see Thee." There should be no plans of ours regarding which we should not like to be interfered with by the coming of our Lord. If this were so, it would be a plain indication that we preferred our plans to the person of Jesus, that we were seeking our own honour and glory instead of the honour and glory of the Master. However great our work, however manifold our labours, unless we could say with all our heart,—"Lord, if Thy name may be more magnified by my being instantly taken out of the work, or the whole being broken to pieces, let it be so,"—it would be clear that we preferred our own honour and glory to that of Jesus. In so far as we seek our own honour and glory in His work,—though in a little degree only,—just in so far are we unfitted ourselves to be His instruments in promoting the glory of His name. We must go down, down, down, deeper still, if we wish to be used by Him. We must be willing to give to God all the honour and glory; and just in the measure in which this is so, God will delight to take us up. Why? Because we are willing to give Him all the honour and glory. He cannot share it with the creature; it would be derogatory to the Godhead to do so. But if we are willing to give God all the honour and glory, what will He do? Most assuredly He will take the greatest delight in putting honour on us.

Further: if we have our plans, and on this account wish to put off the return of the Lord, it betrays a want of proper attachment to Jesus. If our affections are set on something here below, as were those of Lot's wife who looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt, it shows that something is wrong with us. Our blessed Lord referred to this, and warned His disciples of the danger of engaging their hearts too much with the pursuits of this life,—their business, their wealth, their farms, their plantations, their families or family connections, or the pursuit of anything connected with this world. I do not mean to say that it is wrong to be occupied with the affairs of this life. Far otherwise. A precious opportunity has the dear brother in Christ in that profession or at that shop to serve the Lord! A precious opportunity has the dear brother who in that counting-house seeks to bring honour to the Lord! A precious opportunity has the servant maid in the kitchen to bring honour to the Lord! A precious opportunity has the mother seeking to bring up in the fear of the Lord six, seven, or eight children! It is the will of the Lord that we should attend to these things, and at the same time that we should be waiting for His return. And notwithstanding that His return is the hope of the Church, it is the will of the Lord that we should be occupied in these things. He says Himself, "Occupy till I come;" therefore in whatever position in life we are, we are to occupy till He comes. We must not suppose, because in connection with the return of the Lord, planting and building, and marrying and giving in marriage are spoken of, therefore these things are wrong. What the Lord means is, that the ordinary affairs of life will go on up to the day of His return. The sun will rise as at other times; and, when least expected, and when, things are going on perhaps as smoothly as usual, the last trump will sound, and that blessed One will be revealed. We are to attend to the things of this world, but in a right spirit, as the children of God, as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, as not of the world, but redeemed out of it; ever remembering what price it cost—the laying down of His life, the shedding of His precious blood for the remission of our sins. So long as what it cost to purchase us is present to the heart, we say, "Here am I, precious Lord! Thou hast bought me. Now tell me what

Thou wilt have me to do, and I will do it." The heart must be ever in this state, in order that we may be willing, gladly to labour for Him till He returns.

Now, as it is entirely unknown how soon that blessed One may return, it must not be said,—Mr. Müller has just told us that forty-one years and three months ago he first began to look for the return of the Lord, and these forty-one years and three months have passed away, and the Lord has not come, therefore we need not look for Him for another century or half a century. No! How soon, how very soon, may that blessed One be revealed from heaven! We are to be living like men and women waiting for the return of their Lord. And if the Lord yet tarry for a while, what a privilege, if life is continued to us, to have the opportunity of living for the Lord, of labouring for the Lord! And what a blessed privilege to be allowed to live and labour for the Lord! So then we are not to be cast down because the Lord has not yet come. If He comes, how glad shall we be! But if He tarries, here am I, witnessing for the Lord, and allowed to witness for Him yet for another day, another month, or another year, in this Christ-denying world, in this evil world which is lying in the wicked one. How precious! to rise in the morning to say, "Blessed Lord Jesus, the night is past; Thou hast not yet come; another day is before me; help me to be Thy witness this day; help me in word and spirit, and yet to wait for Thy return." The day passes, and we may yet have to retire for rest. Another day comes, and in the same spirit we should go on day by day, every one in his particular sphere doing something for Him. Are we to go to sleep if the Lord tarries, and give up the precious truth, of His return? Far be it from us! Though for forty-one years and three months I have been looking for the return of the Lord, by His grace I am not tired of waiting for His return, I have not given up the truth; but my soul steadily says, This is the hope of the Church—not death, but the return of the Lord Jesus, and to wait for the same from heaven, to wait for the morning of the resurrection; because when we die, only individually we are ushered into the presence of the Lord, and we leave brethren and sisters behind—the whole Church is not gathered. Moreover, none of the

saints have their glorified bodies yet, which they will have at the return of the Lord Jesus; therefore the full redemption, the redemption of the body, is not come to pass yet. We must wait for this for the return of the Lord. When our blessed Lord said, "After this manner pray ye," He gave one petition, "Thy kingdom, come," and meant something by it. We have to wait for the kingdom to which there are frequent references in Daniel, the Revelation, the Epistles, and other portions of the Scriptures, where the glorious things connected with the return of the Lord are spoken of. But if He delays His coming, one way of glorifying Him is, by patiently waiting for His return, and each of us in the meantime in our particular sphere seeking to occupy till He comes.

Are we occupied? Are we living for the Lord? Are we labouring for the Lord? Is it our one great business of life to live for Him? How many objects have we set before us, on account of which we desire to live on earth? To please our God and Father, and to seek to imitate the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, this is the one business of life—the only one business of life. The man in trade seeking this—to bring honour to Christ! The one in a profession, or in any occupation in life, seeking to live, to labour, to bear fruit for the Lord! Is this the one business of life, beloved in Christ? Ask yourselves, What am I living for? Am I living for the Lord? Is my one great business of life to be a fruit-bearer, to live to the praise of Him who purchased us with His precious blood? Remember, these hands and feet and ears and eyes are not ours, they belong to Jesus—He bought them. Our tongue is His, and our brain is His; our time is His, all our talents are His. All He has given us belongs to Him, and at His feet we have to lay it down. And what will be the result of this? Ah! we shall have true wealth; we shall have true joy. I do not mean by this, that as soon as you get money you are to throw it out of the window; or when God gives a business, to put it all aside and say you have nothing to do with the world. The very reverse of this. We are to do all to the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus, "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do." This is true liberty, true joy, and true happiness. And when Jesus comes, and we are found in such a state, how

delighted we shall be to see Him; and, oh! what joy to the heart of our blessed Master to find us in such a state. And then this will be for eternity. Our little brief time here will then be gone, and we shall have entered upon that period which will never come to an end. How blessed to spend one happy thousand years after the other with that precious One who laid down His life for us! Do we not long to see Him?

And now, are we all prepared to spend a happy eternity with Jesus? I trust that nineteen out of twenty here present, if not forty-nine out of fifty, are true disciples of Jesus; but I cannot help feeling, peradventure there are a few present as yet strangers to Him. Ah! let me tell you, dear friends, who are strangers to Jesus, that the blessed Jesus stands with open arms ready to receive you. Do but own before Him that you are poor miserable sinners, but trust in His atonement for the salvation of your souls, and all your sins shall be forgiven you.

## **The Good Fight of Faith**

## **2 Timothy 4:7, 8**

Notes of an Address delivered in Bethesda Chapel, Lord's-day Evening, May 14, 1871.

THE apostle Paul writes to Timothy in the previous verse: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." He, as it were, committed the matter into the hands of Timothy, that he might do the utmost to prove a successor in labour and service, saying, For as for me, I am just on the point of being made a sacrifice for the Gospel's sake. I am ready to be sacrificed, and the time of my departure is at hand. And in making this statement there is as it were a glance at the past life, and the judgment regarding it is, "I have fought a good fight," rather, "the good fight." Fighting in the games, running in a race, are the figures here. But this fighting and running implies life. Keeping the faith implies that we have faith; naturally, this is the reverse. Naturally, we are dead in trespasses and sins, we have no spiritual life, and therefore there is no such thing as fighting against the devil, our own evil tendencies, the habits and customs of the world; but the worst of all is, we do not know it. We have life with regard to the body, life with regard to the mind. Having life as to the mind, we can think; having life as to the body, we can use our right or left arm, we can move from one place to another; but spiritually we are dead in trespasses and sins. And so it is entirely impossible to carry on a spiritual conflict. Every one needs to be quickened spiritually, to be made alive spiritually, to be born again spiritually; this is what we all need. And therefore, before we meditate any further upon this, we must ask ourselves,—Am I spiritually alive? or am I dead in trespasses and sins? Now there are hundreds here who by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ have obtained spiritual life, who are born again through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. But there are many here who are as yet dead in trespasses and sins, and who cannot possibly fight the good fight. And what is my word to them? What it has been many times before. Own before God that you are



sinners. Condemn yourselves before God as sinners; and should you not see that you are sinners, then read carefully the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, and if you honestly desire to see what you are, God will show it to you. You will see then that you are sinners; and you will find in these three chapters what God in His wondrous grace has done for these guilty sinners, in that he gave His only begotten Son, bruised Him, laid on Him the iniquity of us all, that all who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, and not only be saved, but through this very faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are begotten again. It is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that this new birth is brought about according to Galatians 3:26: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" also, 1 John 5:1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

Now is this the case with regard to all of us? Have we all seen that we are sinners, and all put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls? If so, then we have spiritual life, but only in this way is it that we can have spiritual life. No religious ceremonies and observances will make us alive, not even reading the Bible itself will make us alive; though it is right and proper that we should read it, but that in itself will not make us alive.

Now, when we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, then begins the race. The apostle Paul, looking back on many years, came to this conclusion:—By the grace of God I have fought the good fight. After this, beloved in Christ, we have to seek; and we have not to say to ourselves, But here is an apostle, and no doubt he fought a good fight; but as for me, poor weak sinner as I am, in much conflict, exposed to many trials, having a long family dependent upon me, how can it be said of me, "I have fought a good fight"? But if we reason so, we shall reason to the dishonour of God. We have to keep before us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the living Lord, and we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us; and it is impossible to say to what amount we may be helped by looking to Him and trusting in Him. Paul was able to say it, not because he was an apostle, not because he had no trials, for he had an abundance of

trials and difficulties; not because he had not an evil nature, but it was because this apostle was deeply conscious of his weakness and helplessness, and was looking to the Lord Jesus Christ. And if we are enabled, like this man of God, to look to the Lord Jesus, owning our helplessness and nothingness, we shall find how willing He is to help us and strengthen us. But means are to be used. Day by day we are to seek to be nourished through the word of God. Persons who have to work with their bodies cannot go on for any length of time unless they take nourishing food at stated times. The child of God has to see to it that again and again and again he comes to this blessed book for nourishment for the inner man. It is not the will of the Lord that we should be twenty-four hours reading that blessed book on our knees. The children of God have work or service appointed them, and by this they are kept in a healthy state. I remember a godly brother said to me, forty-two years ago,—“Get nourishment for your soul from God's word, and then work it out.” This is deeply important. We should seek to read the word of God to be nourished and strengthened for our service. We must serve God with the strength He has given us—the mother in her family, the head of the family in his business, doing all for the glory of God, looking to Him for help and blessing. And so every one of us, in our various positions, should seek to labour for God with the strength which He has given to us. And if any one were habitually to neglect reading the word of God, let such a one be sure of this,—he will very soon find out how little he is able to withstand the devil and the corruptions within. Now, then, let us seek particularly to remember this; for I judge that though prayer is of the utmost moment, yet still this is as deeply, or more deeply important than prayer itself: for when we pray to God, we speak to God; but when we read the Scriptures, God speaks to us, and this is what we so much need. In addition to this we have to expect answers to our prayers; we have to expect that the next time temptation comes, we shall not be conquered, but that God will help us by His Spirit's might in the inner man. And this one point especially is to be noticed: when we have found anything in Scripture that we seek honestly to carry it out. Here you see is a special danger. We may clearly and distinctly see what is the will of God; but we may say, But

this is very trying; this is very much against my natural inclinations. If we say, I don't like this, then we shall never do the things which are according to the mind of God. But let us say to ourselves, Oh what wondrous love God has shown to me in giving His Son to die for me. What can I do for Him? Though, it is but little, let me seek to do that little. To the Cross of Christ we have to look continually; we have to admire the love of God in giving His Son, and to admire the love of God in sending His Spirit into our hearts, and by the memory of it we shall be strengthened to go forth against the powers of darkness. And thus, not only beginning, but going on week after week, month, after month, year after year, it would be true of you and me also at the last, "I have fought the good fight." Tens of thousands of the true children of God have passed away, of whom it was true that they had fought the good fight. Why should it not be true of you and me, beloved in Christ? And oh! if it were before us,—an eternity of blessedness, the joy, the crown awaits us for eternity, the rivers of His pleasure, to see the King in His beauty, to spend a happy eternity in the presence of Jesus.

The apostle Paul adds further, "I have finished my course." This refers to the practice in games of running, and he applies what they all knew to his spiritual course. Thus, as the people of the world underwent great hardships and difficulties in order that they might have the prize and the crown, which, was nothing more in many instances than a wreath of parsley leaves, and to be admired as the winners; so the apostle ran in a race, and with all steadfastness, and with all prayerfulness, and keeping under his body, and at the last he finished his course. Now, beloved in Christ, let it be present to us that all of us have our course, our race to run. Our service is not all the same. We have different work, different labour; God himself places us in our position. He knows our difficulties, our trials, our natural tendencies. He appoints our work. The blessed Jesus is ready to do for us individually what He did for that man of God, Paul, when he said,— "At my first answer no man stood with me; nevertheless the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." So, whatever the difficulties, whatever the trials, we may reckon on that blessed One.

So then, from this evening and henceforth let us come to this holy, godly purpose,—By the help of God I will with renewed earnestness seek to set out in the race. Oh! let us honour the Lord by looking to Him for strength, expecting great things at His hands. "I have finished my course." John the Baptist finished his course; David finished his course; Paul finished his course; and many others; and why not you and I? Why should not we run successfully to the honour and glory of God? The temptation is lest we flag, lest we grow weary. Ah! but the angels are looking on, and the devils are looking on, and the eyes of the world are looking on; therefore, beloved in Christ, let it be our prayerful, earnest desire, as it was the desire of this man of God, to finish our course. Let us aim after the grace of apostles, though we cannot hold the office of apostles. "I have kept the faith." This at first sight might appear as if the apostle Paul ascribed to himself a great deal. But there was no boasting in this man of God regarding it. We know full well, again and again, what he says of himself,—Not worthy to be called a child of God. This was the lowly mind of this man of God. This might be true of us. For while on the one hand we can do nothing in our own strength, yet if we use the appointed means it will be true of us. One especial point is to maintain a good conscience, else we are in danger of making shipwreck of faith. The conscience being defiled, we become spiritually weak. Whenever we fall into anything contrary to the will of God, we should confess it, and have recourse to the blood of Christ, and not go on in it, lest the good conscience be defiled. Now this man of God could say, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man." This he could say when he stood before King Agrippa; and in reading the life of this blessed man of God, we find that though he was a poor sinner, yet he exercised himself in this to keep a good conscience before God. Let us aim after it, beloved in Christ. What is implied in it? I have been kept hanging upon Christ, trusting in Christ, for the salvation of my soul. I am a poor miserable sinner, but I look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the ground of my acceptance before God. I am a child of God, an heir of God, and I shall share the glory at the last.

And now the result of running the race, fighting the fight, keeping the faith: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love His appearing." Remarkable word this, "Crown of righteousness laid up for me." It is as it were in God's keeping. God is taking care of it; He would under no circumstances lose it. And thus regarding us, it awaits us. Before the universe to be owned as one worthy of the crown; before the universe, when the manifestation of the sons of God takes place, would this man of God have this crown awarded to him.

And so will it be to those who love the prospect of His appearing. Not to such a one as the apostle only, or Peter, or Stephen, but unto all those who love His appearing. Now we have to ask ourselves, How is it with my heart, with regard to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do I wish Him to come? Do I long to see Him? or do I not care about Him? If we are in our sins we cannot possibly wish to see such a person as the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Those who do not love Him, if they were honestly to tell out their minds, would say, "I wish I were not under the necessity of meeting Him at all. But all true honest-hearted believers, though they may not be free from sins, yet they love the very thought of being at last with Jesus, of being free from sin like Jesus, and therefore the prospect is a precious one to their souls. Now all those who love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, will just as much have the crown of righteousness as the apostle Paul. This is the prospect we have. The day is coming for the manifestation of the sons of God. The Lord Jesus will point out this one and that one, and say,—This is my disciple. Will this be true of all of us? Shall we all here present be owned by the Lord Jesus, and receive the crown of righteousness? Suppose the coming of the Lord Jesus were now to take place, in what state would it find us?—prepared or unprepared? Now every one who is unprepared has to say to himself or herself,—I do not love to be with Jesus Christ; this thereby proves the heart is not right. Any who love Jesus, wish to be with Jesus. This was not the case once with the apostle, yet see how great the change

has been. Now, what God did for this great sinner, He is willing to do for every unconverted sinner here. Only believe God's gospel; this is the great remedy.

## **On the Twenty-third Psalm**

An Address delivered at Salem Chapel, Bristol, at the Weekly Prayer-meeting on Monday Evening, July 24th, 1871.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," etc.

IN the measure in which, in our souls, we are enabled to say that Jehovah Himself is our Shepherd, just in that measure our hearts will say, "I shall not want." The second follows from the first; for it is written, "They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." It is when God is not known that difficulty comes. The great point, therefore, is to acquaint ourselves with God, to know God for ourselves as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. And the more we know Him ourselves, the more easy will our hearts find it to say, "I shall not want." No one yet knew Jehovah without being able to exercise faith in Him.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters."

How precious! Not, He leadeth here and there to a dry morsel. Not, now and then He giveth a mouthful of green pasture. Far more than this. Here we have not only abundance of pasture, and green pasture, but lying down in it, that we may leisurely, abundantly, bountifully partake of it. Now this is just the way of our good and gracious Lord. It is His joy and delight not only to give as much as we need, but to

give us abundantly. Oh, what joy has our good Shepherd in thus refreshing our hearts!

"He leadeth me beside the still waters." Not only has each just enough to drink to keep life in them, but they may drink again and again. He leadeth them, not to a noisy stream, where the poor sheep would be frightened, but to the gentle, quiet waters, where they may drink leisurely and calmly.

"He restoreth my soul."

This is not to be understood as the bringing back of a backslider to God, for the Hebrew word here translated "restoreth" most assuredly would not bear that interpretation. It must be understood in the sense of refreshing, or strengthening, just as in retiring at night to rest, we lie down and sleep, and awake with our strength renewed. We must understand the restoring to be the renewal of strength. The connection also shows this to be the meaning.

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake."

It is the very joy and delight of the heart of God thus to lead us on, to help us forward, to strengthen us more and more. Here again we may betake ourselves to our Shepherd with the greatest confidence, and say, "Now it is for the honour and glory of Thy name that I should be strengthened, that I may walk in Thy ways and to Thine honour."

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Very precious! So that, let come what may, all will be well. Let the worst come, as the world would say, all will be well. The Shepherd is with us. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Why not? The Shepherd is with us. Oh! this Shepherd, this precious Shepherd, loves to accompany the sheep. If

only they walk in His ways, whatever their circumstances may be, they may reckon upon His presence.

The sheep will say, as they regard the Shepherd, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over."

Here the figure ceases. The first four verses speak about the Lord under the figure of a Shepherd. Now He is spoken of under the figure of a Host caring for His guest. And how do we fare in this capacity? "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over." Here again how bountifully we are blessed by God—the Host. It is the very joy and delight of the heart of God to honour us. It was a mark of honour when guests were anointed by their host. And then they are not sparingly supplied: "My cup runneth over." Oh! what joy, what happiness should we not have, provided we walked stately, habitually, at all times and under all circumstances, simply in the ways of the Lord, having the single object in life to please Him.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

The psalm ends with a bright and blessed prospect for us for the little of the future of time that is yet before us: "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Let come what may, there will be goodness and mercy. Friends may be taken; I may be sick; I may be tried in my family; I may be tried in my Church position; I may be tried in various ways; yet goodness and mercy follow me. And here in this verse we have our own name. Goodness and mercy shall follow me—so-and-so; we may write our own name, and say to the glory of God regarding ourselves, Goodness and mercy shall follow ME. This is no presumption. This tends to the glory of God. When we take God by His word, we are not going too far. We ought to go so far as to believe what God says regarding His children; and this is a universal promise regarding all the children of God.



"And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

The Host having been so kind towards the guest, having anointed his head with oil, and so abundantly provided for him, the guest now says, "I will remain in the house; I will remain in it, and not be a visitor merely." In our inmost heart we say, "There is no house like the Father's house." And oh! to dwell in the presence of God; in spirit, to be in the Father's house; in spirit, to be in heaven now, there to abide,—there, not to be a visitor only, a guest merely for a day or two or a week or two, but to say, "I will abide there, in the Father's house." Oh, how blessed! Now this is the present portion of the feeblest and weakest of the children of God; and if we would only have it, it is the very joy and delight of the heart of God to give us this blessed portion.

## **"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it"**

### **Psalm 81:10**

An Address delivered at a Prayer-meeting at Salem Chapel, Bristol, on Monday Evening, August 14th, 1871.

THIS word should be continually present to our hearts. We all have our necessities of one kind or another, and every child of God has many things about which he has need to speak to God. And our gracious God speaks here to each one of His children: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it,"—now ask much at my hands, look for much from me, bring great requests before me, I am God and not man; it is the very joy and delight of my heart to give abundantly. If we were privileged to go to a great person for anything, we should not ask for twopence-halfpenny, nor two shillings only, but much

more; it would be an insult to ask for so little. And if we were allowed freely to make our requests before the sovereign, we should be ashamed, or ought to be, to make only trifling requests. But the mighty ones of the earth are as nothing compared with Jehovah; and if we would give joy to the heart of God, we must ask great things at His hands, and expect great things from Him. This is taught us in the figurative expression, "Open thy mouth wide," and the promise is, "I will fill it." Let any one act according to the exhortation, and most assuredly God will fulfil the promise. Let us look about, and see when in any measure we have been able to act according to this word, whether God was not as good as His word; and let us remember that if He has not yet gratified our requests, it does not follow that He will not. Let us only wait still on Him expectingly, perseveringly, for the glory of God, in the name of Jesus, and we shall see how He will fulfil this word,— "I will fill it." How touching are those words in the same psalm, where God says,—

"Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto Him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee."

It is the very joy and delight of the heart of God to do us good; and we are here taught that God is willing to give us everything really good for us.

**"Of God"**

An Address delivered at the Conference of Christians at Clifton, October 3rd, 1871.

THE passage from which, the subject has been taken is evidently the 19th verse of the 5th chapter of the first epistle of John, which I will read: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" or the Wicked One. The first point suggested to us is this,— "We know that we are of God." We have then to ask ourselves,—"Do we know we are of God?" How can I come to this knowledge? Not, by some particular impressions I may have had! Not, by waiting for some dream, or some powerful application of a certain passage! But we have, on the ground of what we find in the Holy Scriptures, to settle the matter. As about all spiritual things we have to come to the Divine testimonies, and only to the Divine testimonies, to settle matters; so regarding this point in particular also, if I am to know I am "of God," I must be able to put my hand on what is written in the Holy Scriptures, and by the Divine testimonies settle the matter, that I am "of God."

The next point is,—What does it mean; to be "of God." The connection in which this verse stands will teach us the meaning of the opposite. "We know we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Wicked One." Naturally we all belong to the latter part of the verse. We are all naturally in the Wicked One; that is, by nature we are the children of wrath, the children of Satan—the devil. This is to be clearly before us, that we are not naturally the children of God, but the people of the devil, serving him, being led about by him according to his will, and our hearts naturally being in sympathy with the evil one, obeying him, and acting according to his bidding. This is our state naturally, and thus, therefore, we are doing things contrary to the mind of God. We seek to please ourselves, we serve the world, we serve the flesh, we obey Satan instead of obeying the word of God. That is our state naturally. Now the very opposite of this is to be "of God."

How then may we be "of God?" First, we have to trace it all up to the councils and purposes of God from eternity. He did choose us in Christ. He did apprehend us in Christ. He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His dear Son. He arranged from eternity for our salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. But all this, while true, would not give us the enjoyment of our being "of God," the blessedness practically of our being "of God"; and, therefore, in order to this, we have to obey the Gospel, we have to believe the Gospel, we have to put our trust for the salvation of our souls in the atonement made by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is through faith in the Gospel, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, through receiving Jesus, through resting on Him alone, that the enjoyment comes of our being "of God," that the blessedness thereof comes to our souls. We are, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, "begotten again," according to the 3rd verse in the 1st chapter of the gospel of John: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power,"—the the right, the title, the privilege, the blessing,—"to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." Thus we become the children of God, as to enjoyment, as to the power, as to the blessedness, as to the practical enjoyment, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we have to believe the testimony of God regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, we have to submit to the Gospel, we have to receive the atonement, and to rest on it alone as the ground of our acceptance. Again, in Gal. 3:26, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." That is, the enjoyment, the blessedness, the realization of our having been predestinated of God, and chosen in Christ Jesus, comes through faith. Again, in the 1st verse of the 5th chapter of 1st John, we have this portion, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." I have therefore to believe that the despised, the rejected, the crucified Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, the Saviour, and I have to depend on Him as such. And this settles the matter that I am "born of God," that I am "born again," that I am "begotten again," that I am a "child of God."

Now comes, in connection with this, the responsibility of all such. "Born of God!" A "child of God!" Oh, what it implies!

"Our God and Father, we beseech Thee that by the power of the Holy Ghost Thou wouldst help us to seek to enter into it! O God, our Father, we Thy children know a little of it, and we Thy children can speak a little of it, and can enjoy it in some little measure,—that we are Thy children, that we are "of God." But all this is yet but little. We know little of the power of being "of God," of being Thy children, and we pray and entreat Thee, by the power of the Holy Ghost, so deeply write this on our hearts, so deeply impress it on our hearts, so deeply affect our hearts by the consideration of being "of God," of being Thy children, that from this evening and henceforward it shall be uppermost in our hearts to our last moment on earth. We ask it for Christ's sake.

Now, for a few moments, let us ponder this. We are "of God," we are the children of God, not nominally, but really, for we partake of the Divine nature. We have obtained spiritual life, whilst once we were dead in trespasses and sins. And this life is eternal life. We shall not perish. We are really the children of God. What a wondrous blessing this! "And if children," according to the Scriptures, "then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs through Christ." Now, let the soul enter into it,—I am a child of God. Oh, how the things of this world vanish as nothing—as nothing in comparison with what I have already as a son of the Most High, as to what I shall have in heaven—all as nothing in comparison with what I am as a child of God! All this world, with its honours, with its pleasures, with its grandeur of every kind,—all is as nothing in comparison with what I have, and with what I am as a child of God. And therefore what we have to do, beloved fellow-saints, is this: to seek in our inmost souls to enter into it, and in childlike simplicity believe everything God has in the riches of His grace revealed concerning us as His children, as His heirs, as jointheirs with Christ. When the soul contemplates this,—that Jesus will, ere long, come again and take us to Himself, that "where He is, there we shall be also," that He will share the crown with us, and the throne, and we shall be engaged in the judgment of the world with Him,—when the soul enters into it, how the heart is filled with gratitude to God, and says, "What can I do in return to Thee, my God

and Father, for having done so much for me!" It only needs the realization of what we receive as the children of God. In a former address at one of these Conferences, I mentioned how it wrought with regard to my own soul. It was in February, 1830, that for the first time my inmost soul was powerfully wrought upon by the realization of what it was to be a child of God. I had been a believer for many years, but I had not, up to that time, sought to enter into what it was; and I cannot tell you what an impression it made on me. Oh, how it deadened me to the world! Oh, how it filled my heart with love to my heavenly Father, with love to the Lord Jesus Christ through whose atoning death I was brought into this blessed position, by the power of the Holy Ghost, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now let me affectionately urge my fellow-believers to seek to enter into it, to understand it, to pray over it. And ask God graciously to be pleased to open your hearts fully to receive what He has been pleased to say regarding us as His children.

Then one word more. Are we all "of God?" We are met here as the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and there is the fullest reason to believe that by far the greater number here present are such. But, peradventure, there may be a few here present—indeed one has reason to fear there are a few—who as yet are not "of God." Let me affectionately say one word to such. Oh! how long will you continue in this state, seeing one Conference after another passing away, and yet remaining of "the world which lieth in the Wicked One." And as year after year passes, and you are at last brought to the close of life, what then, if not "of God?" Be assured, if you pass out of the world as not being "of God," that is, without having rested for the salvation of your soul on the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not be where Jesus is, you will not be in the Father's house, you will not spend a happy eternity with the people of God with whom you are now meeting. But we long that you too may be "of God." We wish to spend a happy eternity with you. We are not satisfied to meet you only at these happy Conference Meetings, we want to meet you in heaven. But this cannot be except your heart is changed by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You must

own you are poor miserable sinners. You must pass sentence on yourselves. You must accept what God has so graciously provided for you in the Gospel, in the gift of His Son. But one peradventure says, "You have been telling us that believers are 'of God' primarily as regards election and predestination, and I can do nothing to save myself, but must wait till God does it for me." This is Satan's trap for the poor sinner. It is quite true that you cannot elect yourself; it is quite true that you cannot predestinate yourself; it is quite true that you cannot save yourself. Quite true! But what God expects is, that you should receive, as a poor lost sinner, what He has so graciously provided for you in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you say, "Oh, I wish I could believe!" well, I grant it, you cannot if left to yourself. But you can groan out to God, "Lord, help me to believe." If you say, "My heart is full of sin, and I cannot cleanse it,"—I grant it. But you can groan out, "Help me, O Lord; look on me, a poor, wretched, guilty sinner, through the Lord Jesus Christ;" and as truly as you desire anything from God, will you find He is more ready to bestow the blessing than you are to receive it. Look at the whole life of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ. Did any ever come to Him really desiring blessing, and be denied? Assuredly not! Whether they came as regarding sight, or the use of the arm, or the power to walk; whatever it was, He always received them. It was only the Pharisees and Scribes those who were full and did not want to be blessed by Him, but who only came to tempt Him and to set Him at nought, who went away without His blessing. But the poor, the wretched, the miserable obtained blessings at His hands. So come you, poor, wretched, miserable ones, and pour out your groans before God; and tell Him at the same time that you want Christ, that you want to be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ; and ask Him pitifully and compassionately to help you, and assuredly you will not be sent empty away. Then, when you have found Jesus, tell other poor sinners what a precious Saviour you have found.

And let us, fellow-believers, seek individually, just in our measure, and according to the ability and opportunity God gives to us, to spread the truth, one in one way, one in another, and all seek to do

something to spread the truth. If all cannot, in the like measure, be actively engaged, all can give themselves to prayer, and that is the most mighty weapon we can wield to the praise and honour and glory of God.

## **"The Whole World Lieth in Wickedness"**

An Address delivered at the Conference of Christians at Clifton, October 4th, 1871

### **1 John 5:10**

IT has been my happy privilege to be present at every one of the various Conference Meetings, year by year, held here; but I do not remember one single day that brought such an awfully solemn subject before our consideration as the one before us to-day,—"The whole world lieth in wickedness," or, the Wicked One,

O Lord, grant that our hearts may be truly affected by this Thine own declaration! Through the riches of Thy grace we apprehend it a little, we enter into it a little, we are affected by it a little. But, oh, how little! Now we beseech Thee that Thou Thyself, by the Holy Ghost, wouldst so write upon our hearts the truth contained in this statement, as that it may affect us day by day for the remainder of our life. We ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I just refer to the expression itself, in which there seems a vast deal contained: "The whole world lieth in the Wicked One." What does it imply? A kind of repose, of slumber,—a readiness to be in such a



condition. This is implied in it. Thus is it with the world. They will have it to be so. They desire not it should be otherwise,—because they are blinded by Satan, because they are dead in trespasses and in sins, because they are wanting spiritual life, and fail to apprehend the awful condition in which they are. They are just, spiritually, in the condition in which a man is who is sleeping at the top of the mast and apprehends not the awfulness of his danger. Precisely in the same state, spiritually, are those who are lying in the Wicked One. Should there be any here present,—and I cannot help fearing there are some here present,—to whom this applies, because as yet they belong to the world; oh, let me beseech and entreat affectionately, as one who by God's grace knows by painful and sad experience what it is to be in that state, and as one who at the same time by grace has known now for about forty-six years the blessedness of the opposite state; oh! let me beseech such to consider the awfulness of their condition, if by any means they might be aroused out of their state. Oh! be besought and entreated, for the end of your course is destruction,—the end of your course is everlasting misery. Therefore be besought, be entreated to flee from "the wrath to come." The arms of the blessed Lord Jesus are stretched out to receive you. Oh how willing is that Blessed One! He has proved the depth of His love to the vilest, the most awful sinner, by laying down His life for you; and therefore how can you doubt the readiness of the blessed Son of God, who left His glory, who became a servant, who lived as a servant in the most degraded condition for more than thirty years, and then laid down His life as a substitute in order to save sinners, the greatest, the oldest, the vilest, the most hardened sinners,—how can you doubt His love to receive you? Therefore come to Him; which means, believe in Him, trust in Him, depend on Him for the salvation of your souls, and blessing will be yours,—this evening it will be yours. And oh! what joy in heaven there would be if this last meeting of this happy Conference is God's instrument in bringing some precious souls here present to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, then, be besought, be entreated to consider your state, dear fellow-sinners, and with earnestness to flee from "the wrath to come!"

But while the statement is, "The whole world lieth in wickedness," or the Wicked One, it is evident here are excluded the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the little flock, comparatively the few. Those who trust in Jesus, those who depend on Him for the salvation of their souls; they by God's grace are excluded, they by God's grace believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they by God's grace are "begotten again," "born again," "renewed"; they have been "delivered from the power of darkness," out of the kingdom of Satan, and have been "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," to show forth His praise, to live to His honour and glory, to be lights in this dark world, to make it manifest that they have been translated into the kingdom of God, and that they are the children of God. Such to whom God has been gracious—to you who are by far the larger part here present, as to myself, what becomes us to do? To show forth our gratitude to God who has done so much for us! That is our one great business of life, if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, to be grateful to God for all He has done for us in Jesus, and for having revealed Him to our hearts and given to us peace in Him, and forgiveness of our sins by faith in His name through the power of that precious blood which was shed for the remission of our sins. How may I show forth gratitude? Evidently, by seeking to do those things which please God, acting according to His mind revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures—in that one blessed, precious Book of which we heard at the beginning of this meeting. And, therefore, while seeking to refrain and abstain from those things which are contrary to the mind of God—and this is our business if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ—we are to seek also to please God in doing those things which are according to His mind.

Then there is one other thing in which believers are especially to show their gratitude to God; and that is by seeking to rescue out of the world those who are living in the world, by seeking to do what lies in their power to bring to the knowledge of the truth those who know it not, to seek to be instrumental in the salvation of their souls. I would ask, How many of you have children in the faith? Can you point to so-and-so, and so-and-so, and say, "him has God given me

as my child in the faith;" "her has God given to me as my child in the faith"? Oh! if you are yet alone, if you have no spiritual children as yet, there remains yet a precious blessing before you. Let there be a holy ambition, which is according to the mind of God, for this precious blessing. Pray earnestly for this blessing, pray earnestly day by day that God will not allow you to go out of the world without having spiritual children. Every one who believes in the Lord Jesus ought to aim after this. Let me affectionately press this point on your hearts. The consideration that "the whole world lieth in the Wicked One" does not allow us to go on dreaming, to go on slumbering; and if we are not affected by it, it is a plain proof that as yet we have not apprehended what is contained in that solemn statement. In the measure in which the soul does apprehend it, the soul cries to God, "Lord, help me to deliver my poor fellow-sinners out of their present condition," and the Lord condescends to use us as the blessed instruments to win souls to Him. Now in this state of mind we are to continue. Not, now and then,—not, to use a common phrase, by fits and starts,—but, day by day, as an habitual thing, this should be foremost in our hearts.

Let me affectionately ask all my fellow-believers, Are we day by day in the habit of praying for blessing in the way of conversion? Are we day by day—at least once in each day—asking God that He would graciously be pleased to work mightily through the variety of instruments employed for the winning of souls? If not, such a day should be considered as a day regarding which we have not done one thing which is according to the mind of God, in which we have neglected one thing regarding which He would have us to be earnest. Further: we should day by day ask God graciously to be pleased to fulfil that word which He laid on the minds of His disciples, that they should pray to "the Lord of the harvest" that He would be pleased to "send forth labourers into His harvest." Are we in the habit of doing so? The most important point is, that we are earnest in prayer. But we are not to be satisfied simply with praying. The example of our Lord is before us. He told His disciples—we have it in Matthew—to pray for labourers to be sent forth; and immediately He sent them

forth. Then He Himself went forth, through every city and town, preaching the gospel. This is the order in which we should go, labouring according to the ability and opportunity given to us, and according to the gift God has bestowed upon us,—not all of us in a public way, but in our measure doing what we can for the spread of truth. As Sunday School teachers, as Adult School teachers, as Ragged School teachers, as District Visitors, as Tract Circulators, we may labour in winning souls to God. Further: in our own families seeking to bring our children to the knowledge of the truth,—and this is especially the point for Christian parents to have uppermost on their hearts. I do not mean from morning to night, five, six, or ten times a day bringing the truth before your children,—there are certain times and seasonable times for doing this; but it is to be done prayerfully, lovingly, affectionately, as it becomes parents, the heart filled with love to the children. Then, in every position in which believers are placed, they are to bring the truth before those around them,—before their servants, their warehousemen, their shopkeepers. Then some may speak a word to little companies, and some may have a gift for speaking in the open air. How great a privilege is this, which I was led to enjoy forty years ago, till I was obliged to give it up, not having sufficient strength of voice or lungs. But for those who have strength of lungs and voice it is a glorious and blessed privilege to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God in the open air. And let me affectionately press this on my fellow-believers who have the ability so to do. Every one has his work to do, and our business is to find out in what way we may serve the Lord in the winning of souls to Him.

I hope some beloved young brethren and sisters in Christ may be stirred up to-night to purpose that they will do something for God; that they will begin in earnest to-night, to work somewhere or other, to do something or other, and by the help of God to say, "I mean not to go to heaven alone; I mean to have spiritual children; I mean to pray for many spiritual children; and will cry mightily to God till I receive many spiritual children." Here is a holy ambition of which we

cannot have too much, for which we cannot pray too much, for which we cannot labour too much.

And in connection with all this use of the means we have never to depend on the means as if they could accomplish anything. Millions of tracts you may circulate, and not a single soul be converted thereby. Wait upon God. Water the tracts with your tears, water them with your prayers. As you give the tract, let your soul go out after the tract. Cry to God, "Go with this tract; direct it to the right person." And when you have given it, or when you have given the Testament, cry to God that He would graciously be pleased to give His blessing upon your effort; but at the same time labour as if everything depended upon your labour. Put no trust in your labour, but let all your dependence be upon God the Holy Ghost; at the same time pray as if everything depended on your prayer. Thus work and pray, and pray and work. Again and again work, again and again pray; expect blessings, and blessings assuredly will be granted. Our meetings have been of an unusually practical character, and I bless God for it; and if furrows are made in the heart, and good traces left behind of our Conference Meetings, what cause we shall have to bless and praise God; and most of all, if some of our dear fellow-sinners, who as yet are out of the way, would receive the Lord Jesus Christ, and love and serve Him, what joy there would be in heaven, and what joy to us to hear of such cases.

## **"Clothed with Humility"**

An Address delivered at a Monday Evening Prayer-meeting at Salem Chapel, Bristol

**1 Peter 5:5**

WHEN we see one another, we have no difficulty in observing the colour of the dress each one wears. And so with the disciples of the Lord Jesus, there should be no difficulty in its being seen what we are, whether we are of a lowly, humble, meek mind, or whether we are proud and high-minded. We should be "clothed with humility." It should be manifest, apparent, that we have been in the school of Christ, that we are followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. This is the will of the Lord concerning us. We have need to pray for grace to be "clothed with humility." "For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." The due time will come. We must wait for it. In the meantime we are to cast all our care upon Him; and we have the reason, "for He careth for you." Blessed position!

How may I know whether I have cast my burden, upon God? One says, By prayer! Well, right or wrong, just as you understand it. Right, if it is believing prayer, if you exercise faith in the power and willingness of God to carry the burden for you. But simply praying will not do. We know we have rolled our burden upon God, if after praying, the heart is easy, the heart is light. If this is not the case, then we are still carrying the burden ourselves instead of casting it on God, and have need to go again to Him, and in believing prayer exercise faith with regard to the power and willingness of God to carry the burden for us.

## **A Faithful Saying**

Notes of a Sermon preached at the Opening of Salem Chapel, North Common, near Bristol, Feb. 27, 1872

## 1 Timothy 1:15, 16

WELL now, dear friends, you are almost all strangers to me. I do not know your state, cannot possibly know it; therefore I do not know what you need to have more especially brought before you this evening, and therefore in the consciousness of my weakness I asked the Lord again and again to direct me to a portion from which to speak to you, and after prayer I have been directed to two verses in the chapter which we have been reading. This is just the portion which suits us all; there is not one here present for whom there is not something contained in this portion, for we are all sinners, without a single exception; and that is a point which I desire particularly to impress on your hearts, as well as on my heart. By the grace of God I am convinced about it; now are all here present convinced that they are sinners? We are all sinners, and great sinners; and here it rests. Some make excuses and say they are not so bad as others: they have not murdered anybody, they have not robbed anybody; but that is not the question. We are all naturally going our own way, instead of going the way that God would have us go. And it is just this which is hateful to God, that we naturally please ourselves, go our own way, do all to our own liking, instead of caring about the way of God, and seeking to please Him. It is because we seek to gratify ourselves, and do not set God before us, on this very ground that we are sinners whose sins are most hateful to God. If we had what we all deserve, we must all go to the place of perdition. There is no help for us. But in this verse it is pointed out that although we are the chief of sinners yet there is hope. Wicked, guilty never so much, yet there is no need of despairing if we are ready to be saved in God's own appointed way. Now these verses bring the matter before us in a very few words. The Holy Ghost by the Apostle Paul seeks to commend the way in which a sinner is to be saved. God might speak in the way of command or threatening,—If you will not believe I will send you to hell. But God is entreating, reasoning with sinners. That is according to the heart of God, so pitiful, so compassionate, in order that He might get the sinner to Himself; and therefore he says it is a "faithful saying," it is

quite true, there is no flaw in it, it is all real, all good this saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. You stake nothing, you risk nothing; you may depend on it that it is so.

It is worthy of all acceptance. It deserves to be accepted. Now have we all accepted this statement? By the grace of God I have accepted it, and there are not a few here present who have accepted it. Now just ask yourselves this question one after the other. Let not a single heart be left out here. The aged need it as well as the young. Have I accepted it? You see I am a witness for God, and I tell you I have accepted it. And I could point to this one, and another, and another who have accepted it; but the point is have we all accepted it? The hearts of those who have accepted it long that all might accept it. Should there be any here present who might be in doubt about it, let them now accept this statement. We have especially to notice this,—"Christ Jesus came into the world." What does this imply? That He was before in existence. It also teaches us the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Son of the living God, the Creator of the universe, by whom all things were made, by whom everything is kept in existence, and for whose honour and glory everything has been created, without whom none of us would have an existence, without whom none of us would be kept in existence. How did He come into the world? As a prince? Not as His Royal Highness, on whose account thanksgiving is made today, but He came as a little babe in a manger. He was a carpenter's son, working at the bench as a carpenter, and called upon this account the carpenter's son, and thus going on until He was thirty years of age. As such He came into the world, in the form of a servant, as a poor one, as a mean one, as a despised one—not as a prince, not as a nobleman's son, but as a poor one, taking upon Him the form of a servant, and for thirty-three years thus going on. And for what did He come into the world? To save sinners; for this very purpose. He did not come into the world to save good people, and if there are any persons here who consider themselves good people, then they are not among the number Jesus came to save. If you continue so, you will not have the benefit of this salvation. We must be brought to see that we need the Saviour, that



we are wicked persons who deserve nothing but punishment. As long as we have a good opinion about ourselves, and will do our best to please God, and make up for any little thing that might be wanting, we are altogether mistaken, we know nothing yet about the way to heaven. We must first see that we are sinners: that is, that we are wicked, although we are not drunkards; that we are wicked, although we are not murderers; that we are wicked, although we are not thieves; that we are wicked, although we may be industrious, and although we have not defrauded people,—because naturally we are going our own way, we are seeking to please ourselves, to do the things we like, instead of doing the things which God would have us do. We all fall short of the glory of God naturally; we have all gone astray from God like lost sheep. If God were to go from one to another and to chalk those who are sinners, every one would be chalked. I should be chalked, and you would be chalked, not one would be passed by, but every one would be chalked as sinners. And if the question were, Are there any great sinners here? and if God were to chalk all the great sinners, he would chalk me and you and every one of us. But there is hope, hope for such wicked sinners as you and I are, but hope alone in God's appointed way. Hope in Jesus, but in no other way. Hope through the shedding of the blood of Jesus, but in no other way. Hope by God not sparing His only begotten Son, wounding Him, bruising Him, laying upon Him the punishment due to us. That blessed Holy One stands, and He has transferred to and laid on Him all our sins and all our iniquities. You all remember the late war between the Germans and the French. Now in these countries people, whether they like or not, must be soldiers if their health and strength allow it. Now suppose it could have been managed in the case of any one that a substitute could have been bought, that is, by giving another man who was not under the necessity of attending to his business, a sum of money to serve instead, then the substitute takes the place of that other one, and goes into battle and fights in his stead. So the Lord Jesus Christ became a substitute in the room of such as you and I. We ought to be punished for our iniquities, for all our wicked deeds and wicked thoughts, for our pride and highmindedness, for our self-will, and for

our temper, and for all those things; but the blessed Lord Jesus has the punishment for all our sins laid on Him, He stood instead of us, and in our stead endured the torment, anguish, and punishment we ought to have borne throughout eternity. He became a real man, and really bore the punishment. But not only was it necessary that He should be a man, He must be Divine, in order to give value to the sufferings; and all the woe, the misery, and anguish which ought to have come upon us throughout eternity was concentrated in that time when the Lord Jesus hung upon the cross. He came into the world to save sinners, to deliver them from hell, from the power of sin, to translate them into His own kingdom. And now you see what the sinner has to do—to depend upon Jesus for salvation. We have not to go to Paris, or to Bath, or to Bristol; here, in this very place, in this very hour it is to be had. No money to be paid for it, but only to accept what God in His wondrous grace and mercy has provided in His dear Son. If we do this we shall obtain forgiveness of sins, shall be accepted by God, shall be justified, shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and have heaven at the last. Now how many are ready to receive this blessing? Who will say,—These are good news; I will accept them? Or will you slight it still? The vilest, the most hardened, the most wretched, may even now obtain the full blessing through Jesus.

The apostle says "of whom I am chief." He does not say—came into the world to save such wretched sinners as you are; but I am a very good being, and I do not need this. He says, I am the first among them, the chief among them. He does not point out other people to be very bad, and make out himself to be very good. I do not mean to say, dear friends, that you are worse than I am. If I were to speak out my heart I should say that I am one of the vilest, most guilty sinners who sought most greedily to find satisfaction in the world, and found it not. What an encouragement is contained in this word for you and me—"that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering!" Now what does this mean? Just this,—though I am such a wicked, guilty sinner, though I did such abominable deeds, I, Saul, a great persecutor, who sought to torment to the uttermost those who

believed in Jesus, tried to make them blaspheme Christ, who worried them to such a degree, and sought to use such means in every way to get them away from Christ that I compelled them often to blaspheme, and went a great distance to a large city, Damascus, to bring them to Jerusalem, and torment them there,—yet I was converted just when on the point of entering Damascus. The Lord Jesus appeared to him and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" This abominable wretch Saul was accepted by Jesus, and not only obtained forgiveness of sins, but became one of the chief instruments in preaching the Gospel. See what an encouragement this is. The Apostle Paul was converted in order that afterwards not a single sinner might despair, that none might say, Oh! I am too great a sinner. You should say, Oh! Paul was converted; Paul was a pattern to show that what the Lord did to him He would do to others. Saul was converted, and therefore I need not despair. Now should there be any one here who says, I am too old for Christ; you are not too old, Paul was a pattern. If any should say, I am too hardened; you are not too hardened, look at Saul. If any should say, I have too long neglected the Lord Jesus; if you wish to obtain the blessing in the appointed way, there is hope, and you are told for an encouragement that Paul was converted. If any should say, I have sinned against light and knowledge, and I have neglected it and resisted it to this day, and never laid these things to heart; it is true it is very late, but not too late if you are willing this very evening to accept Christ. Come, black as thou art, says Christ; and here I am with open arms ready to receive thee. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Coming means believing Him, trusting Him.

Now comes in conclusion a precious word, particularly for you and me who are believers in Jesus. We believe, for what, and to what? and what is the end of our belief? "To life everlasting;" that is, through this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we are united to the Lord Jesus Christ. Through this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we become one with the risen Lord Jesus, who liveth for ever; and if we believe in Him, the life of the Lord Jesus will be ours for ever. How blessed,

how unspeakably blessed, that the moment the sinner rests in Jesus he obtains life everlasting! The body may die, in millions and millions of instances it has died; but as surely as the soul trusts in Jesus Christ for salvation, so surely from that moment we obtain life everlasting, because it is a heavenly life, Divine life, the life of the risen Lord Jesus, as certain as that that blessed One is at the right hand of God. We throughout eternity shall be a happy people; we throughout eternity shall live spiritually; we throughout eternity shall partake of the rivers of pleasure at the right hand of God, shall enjoy the presence of God and of His dear Son. Oh, how blessed and precious, that when this little span of life shall come to an end, there will be the development of that eternal life which is in us now, as surely as we have put our trust in Jesus! Oh, the unspeakable blessedness of being in heaven!—as ages shall roll on, our happiness becoming greater and greater.

Now, beloved fellow-disciples, let us see to it that during the little span of time we are here on earth we are fruit-bearers. We are called to show forth the praises of Him who bought us; we are no longer our own, we are His who has given Himself for us, and our business is to give ourselves to Him,—with our substance, with our all, to give ourselves to Him, and to seek for the little time that we live here to bear fruit to the honour and praise of His name. In order that it may be so, let us come to this precious book to obtain nourishment and strength for our souls. Now, are you readers of the Bible? There are so many religious publications now, that they furnish a great temptation to neglect this blessed book, and to read all sorts of books, periodicals, and newspapers. Now, if you want real happiness, real spiritual strength, seek day by day to get to this blessed book. Are you in the habit of reading regularly through the Bible? Some just open the Bible, and where it falls open there they read; but after a little while it will always open in the same place. How do we read other books? We begin at the beginning and turn over page after page. So should we read God's blessed book. I recommend to you something I have known the blessedness of for forty years. After my conversion, I did not read the Bible much, but I read missionary

papers and other books. But since July 1829 (now nearly 43 years ago) I have been reading God's blessed book: I read sometimes in the Old Testament, and Sometimes in the New Testament. I put a mark where I left off, and read on from there when I come to it again, reading thus regularly on. During these 43 years I have read about one hundred times through the Bible. And I am not tired of it yet. It is just as fresh and as new and as pleasant, and I am just as delighted with it as if I had never read it before. One speaks to you who has known the blessedness of it for forty-three years and a half; and to it I owe all I have, and I am just as happy in reading this portion as another portion. We have not to pick and choose; it is the whole that constitutes the word of God. Is it not a shame that we should have God's blessed book, and not have once read it through?

Suppose a rich uncle of yours were to die, and leave a will, and your name were in the will,—"To my nephew I give three of the cottages in such and such a place; and every year ten pounds is to be paid to my niece Sarah, and to my niece Jane, and to my niece Ann." Now if you knew that your name was in the will, you would want to see that it was all correct, you would want to read the whole will, saying, "Perhaps there is something more that my uncle may have said about me." Now these things are written for your blessing and mine, and they are better than these three cottages, and better than a thousand pounds. Oh, how deeply important to read what God says about us! If you cannot read, ask God to help you to read; if you say, I have not a Bible; then I pledge myself to supply you with a Bible. Only be in earnest about your soul, be not trifling with the things of eternity. It is high time that we should be in earnest about our souls. And we must see that God teach us by His blessed Spirit. We must not suppose that we are clever enough to understand it all ourselves. If in humility of soul we wait on Him, He will teach us. If He has taught us, then we must seek to carry out the light, for one of the especial means to obtain light is to practise what God has given us. If otherwise, God might say to us—"I have taught you so and so, and you have not done it." We must be faithful to the light we have. If we thus go on, our peace and joy will increase more and more. From

strength to strength we shall go on, and our path will shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

## **"Watchman, what of the Night?"**

An Address at the Clifton Conference of Christians, October, 1872.

"THE burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come."—Isa. 21:11, 12

THE question contained in this passage is asked at a time of heavy trial, heavy judgment, which is spoken of under the figure of the "night." These judgments were coming upon Edom; for this I understand to be the country referred to, from its connection here with "Seir."

The earnestness of the inquiry is brought before us by its being twice asked.

Who the watchman is, there can be no difficulty in determining—evidently the prophet; because just as a watchman is set for the very purpose of announcing the approach of the enemy or of any danger, so that those who are in danger may take warning, and prepare against that which threatens, so the spiritual watchman, the prophet, was appointed to give warning of coming judgments, and to announce to the people how they should act, how they should obey and please Jehovah, so that the terrible judgments that were threatened might be averted.

The question here asked is, "When shall these terrible judgments come to an end?" In New Testament language, "When will this dispensation end? When shall our sorrows cease, and we be for ever with the Lord?" Now, observe particularly the answer of the watchman. He does not say, "It is the second or third watch of the night"—not to mention the fourth watch, which could not have been referred to by one who lived at the time when this prophecy was uttered, because the division of the night into four watches was introduced by the Romans; but I say, the watchman does not answer, "It is the second watch," or "It is the third watch." Ah! how deeply important it is to notice this. Again and again it has been the inquiry amongst Christians: "How far are we from the close of the present dispensation? How near is the return of the Lord?" And repeatedly calculations have been made with the view of fixing the precise date, or nearly so, of the fulfilment of the prophetic predictions; and this political event or that religious movement has been taken as an indication of the speedy approach of the end; and statements have been made, "So many years, or months, or days, will elapse, and then the dispensation will close." Now, how, beloved, are we to decide when we hear such statements? I judge we should be guided by the answer of the watchman, "The morning cometh, and also the night." Nothing was declared concerning the time.

May I be allowed here to say one word from my own experience to my younger brethren? It was in July, 1829, just forty-three years and three months ago, that it pleased the Lord to show me the truth of His word as to His second coming, and the truths connected with that blessed hope. At that time there was war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia; and many good, excellent Christians said, "Now is come the time that the Euphrates shall be dried up;" "now the Ottoman Empire will be destroyed, and Israel will be restored," and so on; and I, as a young disciple, very naturally took up the views and repeated the words of my elder brethren. Well, what followed? Before six weeks were over peace was proclaimed, the Ottoman Empire remained, and remains to this day, and Israel is still not restored to their land. Now, I firmly believe that Israel will be

restored to their land; but I refer to this mistake of my earlier years to illustrate the point I am referring to.

Not that we should never look at political events in connection with the prophetic Word, but that we should use the greatest caution before we conclude that such and such events must surely usher in the end. I judge that when the time really comes that we should be guided by such events, the signs will be so plain, so decided, that all who love Jesus will be able to see that now truly He is at the door. But before this time comes, until these things come to pass, let us be cautious how we make such statements as, "In so many days or so many months, or before this generation passes, such and such events will happen:" but rather let us say with the watchman, "The morning cometh, and also the night;" that is to say, the great, the all-important point is, the certainty of our Lord's return: "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner" as He went into heaven. There is no question whatever that when all is made ready for the bride, the Bridegroom will return and receive her to Himself; and what we have to do, is to comfort ourselves with the hope that our Lord will surely come again; and in the full assurance of this, that there is coming the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, we should patiently bear the cross. We should comfort ourselves with the certainty that "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry;" and if He tarry yet a little longer, to say still, He will surely come, and lay out ourselves to win souls for Christ, remembering that it is in long-suffering to the perishing that He tarries.

Some may say, "Why make so much of the coming of the Lord? Is not death the same thing, for it is our going to Him? I once thought so myself; but I was led to see that there is a vast difference between the two. The hope of the Church is not death, but the return of the Lord. If I am taken out of the world by death, I shall myself be happy so far as regards the soul; but, blessed as I shall be, my happiness, even as regards myself alone, will not be full; for I shall not yet have my glorified body, my redeemed body. But when the Lord comes, it is the whole family brought into happiness and blessedness—the whole



family gathered home. Then there will be the resurrection of the just, the first resurrection, when, therefore, the whole elect family will receive their glorified bodies. Death has to do with the partial happiness of the individual believer; but the coming of the Lord has to do with the complete happiness of the whole redeemed family! So you see there is a vast difference between the two events as to the hope connected with them; and we must not yield to the statements that are made to the contrary. We must be guided by the Word of God, and not frame our own notions about these things, nor follow the notions of good people around us, if their thoughts are not according to the Word of God.

"The morning cometh;" that is, the morning of that day which will be without clouds, of that day which will never end, in which the whole heavenly family will share together eternal happiness.

But this is not all. The "night" cometh also. Ah! then, it will be seen who are on the Lord's side, and who are not. What a revelation will there be then. The curtain lifted, and the actual condition of all manifested! The bodies of the believers who sleep in Jesus, though by millions scattered over all parts of the world, all raised and gathered together to their Lord; but the bodies of unbelievers, that lie in the grave, will be left in the grave to await the resurrection of the last day! The unbelievers who are alive, separated for ever from the believers—the one taken, and the other left! Oh, think of it! for the solemn point for each is this,—To which class do I belong? If ever there was a practical truth, this is it. Let us look at it again and again, and ask ourselves before God, "Will it be to me the morning, or will it be to me the night? The eternal day of happiness, or the eternal night of woe and misery?" The night! Oh, what a night! The night of "wailing and gnashing of teeth," the night to be spent for ever with the "devil and his angels"! Oh, my beloved friends and fellow-sinners, ask, I beseech you, before God, the question, "Am I prepared? Am I really trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of my soul?" There must be the entire dependence upon the Lord Jesus; no ritualism, no works will avail. The precious blood of

Christ must be the sole ground of your trust before God. I repeat it, the momentous question is, "Am I trusting in Jesus, depending on Jesus alone for the salvation of my soul?" If so, the morning of that bright, blessed day is before me; if not, there is nothing before me but the endless night of darkness!

In conclusion, one word on the last clause of the verse—"If ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come." Our esteemed brethren have regarded these as addressed to the backslider and to the undecided, and I believe rightly so; but I would particularly dwell for a moment on these words, as showing to us the heart of God. These words were written by inspiration, and it is, therefore, just as if God were saying in our midst this evening, "If there be here the vilest, the oldest, the most hardened sinner, I desire not that that sinner should die. Oh, if he will only return, if he will only be in earnest, how gladly will I receive him!"

And then, if there should be any who are in some little measure stirred up to "inquire after God," His word to such is, "Inquire ye;" that is, continue to read the word of God. Have you a little desire, a little relish, for that Word? Be encouraged; that desire is the Spirit's working; it comes from God, not from your own evil heart. Continue to look to the Lord, and the blessing will yet be yours.

This word is not to be limited to backsliders, but is to be taken more generally; for by nature it is true of us all, that we have cast God behind our back; and what we want is to "return," to "come" back to Him. Now to "come" to God means to "believe." This is the inspired explanation of what "coming" means, as we learn from comparing John 6:64, 65, with verse 44 of the same chapter. This, then, is what the sinner has to do—to believe in Jesus, to trust in Him, to depend on Him for salvation. In this consists "coming" to God, and no one who has not believed can be said to have "come."

## **Paul's Letter to Philemon**

Notes of an Exposition of the Epistle to Philemon, delivered in Bethesda Chapel, Bristol, Lord's-day Evening, March 2nd, 1873.

THE occasion which gave rise to this letter was this: Philemon, who resided at Colosse (for this is plainly to be seen by the last chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians. The letter to the church at Colosse was written at the same time with this letter to Philemon. Onesimus and another brother were the bearers of the letter to the church at Colosse, and of this private letter to Philemon),—Philemon, who resided at Colosse, had a slave by the name of Onesimus, and this slave in his ungodly state ran away from his master Philemon, and in the providence of God, as we say, he comes to Rome. Rome was the greatest place in the whole world at that time. In all probability this slave said to himself, "If I could get to Rome, what prospects there would be before me." This may have occurred to his mind after he left his master. He wanders on from Asia Minor to Rome with bright prospects before him. "Oh, what pleasures I shall have in Rome; what sights I shall see in Rome; what companionship I shall meet with in Rome!" No doubt some such thoughts passed through his mind. And what happened in Rome? He was converted. So God allows men to go their own way; so God allows men to follow the desires of their own heart, and if they could they would yet farther and farther run away from Him. But God says, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." Many have gone to London and to other places, not to get good for the soul, but in the service of the devil; but God there laid hold on them, in the very way which they least thought of, and converted them.

Again, Onesimus might have come to Rome and never seen Paul. He might have spent fifty years in Rome, and never seen Paul; but God has purposes of grace and mercy towards him, and in His good providence orders it that he may fall in with Paul, that he must become acquainted with this Paul. And who was Paul at this time in Rome? Not a great man in the eyes of the world. Truly a great man in one sense, and yet in the greatest obscurity in another sense. Paul was at this time a prisoner for the gospel's sake. Paul did not walk about in the market place, the Forum, where the great and wealthy of the capital met together. He was in prison, with a soldier watching him, and yet God so orders it that this runaway slave must fall in with Paul and that Paul shall become a blessed instrument in the hands of God of converting his soul. How full of encouragement this should be to us all! Some have dear ones who are far from Christ, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and other relatives, and many of them are apparently getting farther and farther from God, and caring less and less about the things of God, and more and more about the things of this world. Go on, beloved in Christ, believingly, patiently bringing their cases before the Lord, and you will yet have the joy of finding out that your prayers have not been in vain. There is every reason to believe that Philemon, the godly master of this slave, was concerned about his spiritual welfare; but all seems lost when this slave runs away, and yet God follows him, and lays hold on him at the very time when you and I would least have thought he would have been brought to the Lord.

Let us read and meditate on this letter to Philemon.

Ver. 1. "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved and fellow-labourer."

He regarded this Philemon as one who laboured with him in the gospel. He speaks of him and treats him as a fellow-labourer.

Ver. 2. "And to our beloved Apphia (the wife of Philemon), and to Archippus our fellow-soldier (this Archippus was a brother who

laboured in the word and doctrine at Colosse), and to the church in thy house." The house of Archippus was the meeting place of the church, for at that time it was not so that there were churches and chapels built, but they met in private houses or in some places which were fitted up for the purpose. We have an instance of this in the 20th chapter of the Acts, where Paul was preaching in an upper chamber. It was not the aim of the disciples to have costly places, to resemble the temple at Jerusalem. The first hundred and twenty met in an upper room. So here the church at Colosse had for its meeting place the house of Philemon.

Ver. 3. "Grace to you." You observe how this comes in in the various letters addressed to the churches, and there must be a reason for it. It is not a common phrase which is brought in. The reason seems to be this: we have to be reminded that grace has been bestowed upon us by God through Christ Jesus, and that He is willing to bestow more and more blessing. And so also we have to be reminded continually of the fact that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I am now only speaking to those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who having passed sentence on themselves, and having condemned themselves in the sight of God as guilty sinners, are trusting in the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the one ground of acceptance before God.

Ver. 4–7. "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother."

This is what the Apostle Paul writes with regard to the spiritual state of Philemon, and a high commendation it is a most blessed man of God he was; and yet one says, He had slaves! Yes; he had slaves. But then we have always to keep this before us, that the having slaves at

that time was not connected with such awful cruelty as the slavery of modern days. Many of these people were idolaters, and there were many things connected with slavery which were quite wrong. Yet ordinarily speaking, we have no reason to believe that there were the cruelties of slave-holders of modern days. In most of these instances where we read the word servant it means slave, those who belonged to the master; but in not one single instance is there a hint given how wicked you are, how cruel and abominable your conduct. If the love of Christ constrained them to set all free, the apostles would have rejoiced in it; and when these slaves had the opportunity of becoming free, they were to accept it thankfully and not reject it.

The apostle Paul commends Philemon on account of the blessed state spiritually in which he was. He says "I thank my God," and this particularly with reference to the 5th verse, "hearing of thy love and faith." This was a subject for praise and thanksgiving in the heart of Paul with regard to Philemon. This is rather a remarkable expression, "faith and love towards the saints." You can see what that means, that he had love; but what is the meaning of this, that he had faith towards the saints? Did you ever think of this? It is deeply important that we seek to search into the meaning of what we read in the Divine testimony. The meaning of it is evidently this:—looking upon them with faith, seeing in them that they are the children of God, treating them as such, as the children of God. Whenever we are enabled to look on one another as the children of God, whenever we are enabled to see Christ in one another, that is exercising faith towards one another. He also prayed that God would help him further, and from this we should gather instruction, that as Paul prayed for Philemon we should pray for each other. This was the subject of his prayer,—"that the communication of thy faith may become effectual, by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." This in other words means,—My dear Philemon, I pray that thou, having received faith, might go on; that this might energize thee, might become effectual in thee, and give thee yet further and further strength to acknowledge everything that is good in any of the saints. And he adds to his praise this in the 7th

verse: "For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother." What a high commendation of this dear man! Evidently he was one in a position of comparative wealth and prosperity, and he says "we have great joy" because on account of the holy, godly walk of this blessed man of God, Philemon, the hearts of the saints were refreshed.

Do we the children of God aim after this, viz., that we become a spiritual refreshment to the saints, that the saints are refreshed by our godly life? After this we have to aim. Giving way to our natural tendencies, to our temper, and to other things which are hateful to God, we do not strengthen the hands of our fellow disciples; but when we seek to do those things which are according to the mind of God, we strengthen each other's hands in God. In bringing glory to God, we also help on the life and deportment of other children of God. Just as it is with regard to any army; if one regiment acquits itself well, the other regiments are strengthened thereby; and if one regiment turns its back on the enemy, the other regiments are weakened thereby. So is it with the Church of God.

Ver. 8–14. "Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels; whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly."

Exquisite statement this, and of the deepest moment. Briefly it was just this:—Onesimus was converted; Paul a prisoner for the gospel in bonds. What a comfort this good man would have been in waiting upon him! He longed to have on to wait on him, Paul might have

said,—This Onesimus is my son in the faith, and therefore I shall just act as I have a right to act; I will just keep him, and let him wait on me. He might have said,—I am an apostle, and for the gospel's sake am here in prison, and it is all right and fit that my child in the faith should wait on me. Not thus, not thus. This was not the mind of Christ, and this blessed man of God sought to act according to the mind of Christ. He might have said,—I am an aged servant of Christ, an aged apostle, and I have laboured more abundantly than any of them; and as this runaway slave has been converted through me, it is all right that I should have him to wait on me. Not thus, because this would be by constraint. He would not know whether it was done willingly and cheerfully on the part of Philemon. He desired that this man of God might do what he did cheerfully, willingly. Oh, how deeply important it is to keep this before us! The principle is just this. Suppose any one said,—Now I am in great need, and such and such a one is my brother in Christ, and such and such a one has plenty of money, and he ought to give to me because I am a poor brother; he is bound by the word of God to do it, and I have a right just to demand it of him. Is this the mind of Christ? It is the mind of the flesh, and not the mind of Christ. You never find such an instance on the part of a man of God in the epistles or the gospels. Quite true that he who hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion, cannot have the love of God in him; but it is also true on the other hand that it is ill becoming that a poor brother should insist on it. The apostle Paul could have insisted on his rights, but he did not do so.

"Which in time past was to thee unprofitable."

This brings out the character of Onesimus: a good-for-nothing man, a bad fellow.

Philemon had lost nothing.

"But now profitable to thee and to me." Because a child of God, a brother in Christ a member of the body. That brings out another



deeply important principle. There is no child of God but what is of some good. One might say,—Here is a very ignorant person, cannot put two letters together; what good is such an one to the Church of Christ? If in no other way, to afford opportunity for the exercise of grace on the part of others. Here is one helplessly confined to his bed year after year. That individual can pray, that individual can yet manifest the mind of Christ to such an one who comes to see him. And suppose none of these things were so, yet they give the opportunity to those who are in health and strength to show love to such an one. We should always look on one another as precious in the night of Christ. Our natural tendency is this: to see the old Adam in one another, to see the failings and shortcomings in one another; and the result is misery to one another and dishonour to God. O beloved in Christ, let us aim after it to see Christ in one another. Onesimus was profitable to the chief of the apostles; just think of this. He could not be a useless one, because he was a member of the body of Christ, and Christ can have no member of His body who is altogether useless.

"Thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels." Philemon was to receive him as if Paul himself came to him. And oh, how would Paul have been received? O beloved brother Paul, how glad I am to see thee again here, he would say, falling on his neck and kissing him many times. Now Paul says,—Just as thou wouldest have received me, if I were to come, so, beloved Philemon, receive this runaway slave, because he is thy brother in Christ, and thou wilt have to spend a happy eternity with him.

"But without thy mind would I do nothing." But I must first know that this pleases thee, that thou art satisfied with it, that this is according to thy wish and will. How deeply important to keep this before us in the Divine life, that we manifest the mind of Christ. Just as that blessed One sought not to please Himself, but to be the servant of others, so have we to imitate that blessed One.

"For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever." "For ever," never to be separated any more. And that brings before us the precious truth that the disciples of the Lord Jesus are bound together for eternity, are knit together for eternity. And that you see is so precious. There may come separation by distance, there may come separation by death; ah, but it is only the appearance. We are bound together in the bonds of love, not for time only, but for eternity. All the poor sinners who rest on the atoning death of the Lord Jesus form one holy, happy, blessed family for eternity, and there will be no separation for eternity. Do we belong to that family? Do we believe in the Lord Jesus? How many among us belong to the heavenly family? How many are decided yet? Put this to yourselves, you dear youngmen, you dear girls from the Orphan Houses, and all here present.

Oh, the blessedness of belonging to the heavenly family! Oh, the blessedness of belonging to the members of Christ! Then let come what may—one in Christ, and one in Christ for ever!

## **"A Garden Inclosed"**

An Address delivered at a Conference of Christians of various denominations held at Clifton, on Tuesday, September 30th, 1873.

### **Song of Solomon 4:12–16**

THE few words, beloved Christian friends, I have to speak this evening, are in connection with the first portion of Holy Scripture to which our attention has been directed, contained in the Song of Solomon,—the portion on which our beloved brother has already spoken.

It is not necessary to repeat what is God's object in giving to us the Song of Solomon; you all know it, and our esteemed brother has again referred to it. But it should be in our hearts to seek to enter into the spiritual meaning of this most precious Book. I do not know one single part of Divine testimony which more effectually acts like a spiritual thermometer, to show how it is with regard to our affection for the Person of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ, than this little portion of the Word of God called the Song of Solomon. And this portion to which our attention is directed for consideration in these meetings, if entered into with regard to ourselves, would bring an abundant blessing to our souls.

Now let us once more read this verse; and, as God may help me, I desire to make a few remarks, in addition to what has been stated already. "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse;" we are called a "spouse," the most intimate of all unions. How comes this, that we are in this most intimate of all unions? By reason of that deep sleep of death which fell upon Jesus. That Blessed One died in our stead, in order that we might have life, in order that we might be brought into this most intimate of all relationships to Him, in order that we should be His spouse. Now this sister is called a "garden inclosed," "a spring shut up," "a fountain sealed;" these three different figures are employed. A "garden inclosed:" let me here observe that I judge the meaning is not what is commonly stated. A "garden inclosed": the very word "garden" implies that it is inclosed; a portion of land taken away from other parts, inclosed by a hedge or wall, or somehow or other inclosed and cultivated afterwards. It is this very thing which constitutes it to be a garden. But it is not simply said a "garden," there is something added regarding the garden, and that is, that it is "barred," "bolted," "shut up," just like this spring, and this "fountain sealed"; that is the particular point: not that this portion of land is inclosed, but that this inclosed field is shut up,—that it is not accessible to every one. The owner goes in and out as he pleases; he has a right to this piece of land—this Garden; but it is bolted, it is barred, it is shut up, and not accessible to every one. Just as he who sealed the fountain may alone break the seal; and he who shut up the

Spring may break away that by which it is shut up, and may partake of the refreshing draughts of this fountain: that is the particular point. Now what is meant by this figure of "a bolted Garden," "a spring shut up," "a fountain sealed"? We are our Lord's property,—He has bought us with His precious blood; thus we are His and not our own. The right to the Garden is His, the bolts and keys are His, the fountain is His, the spring is His; all belongs to that Blessed One, who bought us with His precious blood. Do we feel in our inmost souls that all we have and are belongs to the Lord?—that He has bought our persons, our talents, and our time? Do we feel that He has bought our eyes, our hands, our feet? Do we feel that our houses and lands, our horses and carriages, belong to Him?—that all the money we have is His,—that our profession or business is His,—that everything we have and are is His? Oh! if our inmost souls entered into it, what Christian men and women should we be from this time and henceforth.

Now, beloved in Christ, as we are come here not to pass an hour or two for amusement, but in order that our inmost souls may be affected, that we may be more holy and devout, "out and out" consecrated to the Lord; oh! let us seek to enter into this glorious fact, that the Lord Jesus Christ has bought us with His precious blood,—that "out and out" we are His, and not our own; and that not for this evening, or to-morrow, merely, but that all the days of our life, we and all we have and are, belong to the Lord. Oh! let us ask God to seal this upon our hearts, and to seal it so, that from this evening and henceforth we shall never be able to lose sight of this truth. This, I judge, is the great practical point that the Holy Ghost would bring before us in this portion.

Now we read the next verse: "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices." What is this? The Lord Jesus coming into His Garden, and the grace He sees in His Church;—the grace He sees in His spouse, His sister: the

Bridegroom able to take a delight and joy and pleasure in what He sees in His people. Beloved in Christ, the great practical point is,—Is it thus with me? When I was meditating upon this portion last Sunday evening, I said to myself, "Lord, let it be thus with me: help me, that it may be thus with me." Oh that it may be thus with ourselves, individually; and that it may be thus not only "now and then," when we are under special spiritual influences, or under special spiritual excitement, such as the present may be; but that day by day, from Monday morning until Saturday evening, and all the day through, all the week long, all the year round,—we may be in the "fear of the Lord." It is just this which, with the blessing of God, will make an effect upon the consciences of the unconverted. When they see that we are in earnest,—that there is a reality about our profession as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ; when they are able to say, "Look at that man, he is just what he was twenty, or thirty, or forty years ago." And so goes on that man or woman,—day by day, week by week, month after month, and year after year,—always in the fear of God, always setting Christ before him. Oh, if it were thus with us, beloved in Christ, what a testimony would our lives be to an ungodly world! More than this, how we should strengthen each other's hands in God! We are all members of the Body, and each one has a duty to perform, in order that his fellow-believers may be helped on. We should not be simply satisfied with reading that Jonathan went into the wood to strengthen the hands of David; but we should ask ourselves, "Do I strengthen my brethren and sisters? do I lend them a helping hand when they are tried and afflicted and weak? When they are falling, do I seek to strengthen their hands in God?" Again, in the Epistle to the Thessalonians we read, "Edify one another even as also ye do." Do we build up one another, and seek to encourage and lead on one another in the knowledge of Christ? How is it with us regarding these points? Is it true of us that we are not merely plants and trees, but fruit-bearing trees in the Lord's Garden? Oh! beloved in Christ, is our life and walk day by day a sweet perfume to Christ? Just let us ask ourselves, and deal honestly with our souls this evening; and before we go away let us ask ourselves, as before God, the question, Is my life and my deportment a sweet

savour unto Christ? Do I refresh the heart of my blessed Lord? Thus it might be,—thus it ought to be, beloved in Christ. Oh let us aim after it, that it may be thus; and if we honestly ask the Lord that He would help us, we should most assuredly experience the fulfilment of the promise of the blessed Lord Jesus, contained in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, the twelfth verse: "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly." And we should verily experience the truth of the precious statement of the apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

The next verse, the fifteenth, "A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." This is what the Lord Jesus Christ further says about the Church,—she is a fountain of gardens. That means a fountain in gardens, or a fountain such as is found in a garden. "A well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon." The particular point here, I think, that is intended to be conveyed as to the spiritual meaning is this,—the refreshing that is intended to be diffused through the instrumentality of the Church. You remember well that statement in the Gospel of John with regard to the Spirit not yet given, "That out of the believer should flow rivers of living water." The Church should be a fountain,—a spring of living waters,—a spring running from Lebanon. How is it with us regarding this? If we ask ourselves as before God (and we should always deal honestly with our hearts), we should say. Is the living water flowing out of me? Am I God's instrument in conveying spiritual blessings? Do I by my life and deportment and words minister the Spirit to others? How often has it been thus; or has it been so at all? And if in some degree, is it so habitually? What the Lord Jesus Christ looks for is this, That since He has graciously been pleased to give unto us the Holy Ghost, it should be true of us individually, "that out of us flow rivers of living water." And I would say, that, if we more expected it, we should have more; and if our life and walk and deportment were more as it becomes a disciple of the Lord Jesus, we should, by the grace of the Spirit, refresh others, and out of us would verily flow "rivers of living water"; as was the case in the days of the apostles. The office of the apostles we cannot have; and if any wore to come and tell us that

they were apostles, we should at once say that they were liars. But while we cannot have the office of the apostles,—the grace of the apostles we should seek after. It may be true of the saints of the Most High now in this latter part of the nineteenth century, as it was true of them in the days of Paul,—that out of them "flow rivers of living water." And if, beloved in Christ here present, we were expecting this, and were praying for this,—that we might be men and women out of whom should "flow rivers of living water," we should find that verily the Lord is as good as His Word, and that He would give us help and strength that thus it might be.

The last verse, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." Possibly the way in which I understand this verse may differ from the way in which one or other of my beloved brethren understand it. The meaning, as I understand it, is this,—The Church responding, and the Church delighting to give joy to the heart of her beloved Bridegroom. The Church wishing to refresh Him by her sweet savours and pleasant fruits, says, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." I understand the whole of this verse, and not simply the last words thereof, to be a statement of the Church: the beloved is speaking to the bridegroom in order to refresh his heart; and so the saints of the Most High should ever look above and say to themselves, How can I give joy to the heart of my blessed Lord? He has laid down His life for me, what can I do for Him,—how can I serve and glorify Him? And lest any say, I am poor, or I am young, or I have not much learning, I have been but recently brought to the knowledge of the Lord,—I say, every one who is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a partaker of the Holy Ghost, regenerated and renewed, has it in his heart to refresh and gladden the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh let us never say, "I can do nothing to give joy to the heart of my blessed Lord." We can do it, and the Lord Jesus Christ looks for it that we should do it. He has given the last drop of His blood for us, and went through everything that was necessary for

our salvation; and now is He looking that we, on our part, seek His glory, and refresh His heart, in return for all He has done for us. And thus it comes that the Church desires to gladden the heart of the Lord Jesus, and she says, "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits."

Now notice the response of the Blessed One in the first verse of the next chapter, "I am come into my Garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." The first thing I notice here particularly is this, it is all "My," "My," "My," because we belong to the Lord, and have nothing in ourselves. It is My spice, My Garden, My honeycomb, My honey, everything belonging to the Lord Jesus. And this we must never lose sight of, that however much we may be advanced in knowledge and grace, yet we owe every particle of grace and knowledge to the Lord. We must never stand before a spiritual looking-glass and think what we have done, what we have attained to; but give all the honour and glory—not in word only, for that is a little thing,—but in our inmost souls, to Him to whom it is alone due: the Lord Jesus Christ claims it all for Himself. It is My Garden, My sister, My spouse, My myrrh, My spice, My honeycomb, My honey,—everything belongs to Him.

And then at the close of the verse, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." "Be drunken in love," as it should be, or at least might be rendered. And here let me say particularly, if there is one thing more than another after which we should aim, it is an increase of love. Oh! when we think of it,—that there is a possibility of being drunken in love, what a blessed, blessed, blessed thing to set before us, to be aiming after this,—to be drunken in love, to be filled with love. Oh, beloved in Christ, let it be our holy, godly aim, to know something of this for ourselves! And these blessed meetings may be a great stimulus to us to aim after an increase of love. That is one of the special objects why we come together; not so much that we may instruct one another, but that we may excite one another to an



increase of love. Oh let us aim after this! "God is love." And just in measure as we are helped on to increase in love, so, and only in so far, do we become more like God.

## **The Redeemed in the Wilderness**

An Address delivered at a Conference of Christians of various denominations, held at Clifton on Wednesday, October 1st, 1873.

"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?"—Song of Solomon 8:5

Our subject, beloved Christian friends, as you all know, is "The redeemed in the wilderness." Now the first point is, Do we know that we are among the number of the redeemed in the wilderness? Possibly there may be some hearts here present this evening saying, How can I find out that I belong to the redeemed in the wilderness? This is to be settled thus: If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls,—if we trust in Him alone for salvation,—if we look away entirely from our own merit and worthiness,—if we are convinced that we are sinners by nature, and put our trust alone in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls,—if we look to Him alone as our Substitute, and find in His precious blood alone the power to cleanse away all our numberless transgressions, in deed, word, thought, desire, feeling, and purpose,—then are our sins forgiven, then are we renewed—born again—regenerated through this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; then have we become children of God through this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; then have we been delivered from the bondage of Satan, the world, and our own evil and corrupt nature. We are thus delivered out of the mystical Egypt, and are brought into the wilderness.

Now we have before God to answer this,—Do I trust alone in Jesus for the salvation of my soul? Do I look away from everything but Jesus as the ground of acceptance, and depend upon Him, and trust in Him? Then are my sins forgiven; and though I am but a poor weak believer, and little instructed as yet, nevertheless, if I am really and truly hanging upon Christ for salvation, all is right before God,—we are accepted by Him, we are dear to His heart; He looks upon us as clean and spotless ones for Christ's sake, though we are vile, worthless, and sinful in ourselves. And then, having thus, by the grace of God, been delivered out of the world of Egypt, and brought into the wilderness,—What then? To answer this question we refer to one passage, and only one, brought into the programme before us; it is the last passage referred to.

In the eighth chapter and fifth verse of the Song of Solomon, we read thus: "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" As we saw last evening again and again, by the Beloved we are to understand the Lord Jesus Christ; and by that one who in her weakness, feebleness, and nothingness, leans upon her Beloved—the Church of Christ, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; because by the power of the Holy Ghost they have been taught to know their weakness and nothingness. This is just what we have to do: having, by the grace of God, been redeemed out of the world, out of the mystical Egypt,—having, by the grace of God, been brought into the wilderness,—now we have to own increasingly our weakness, helplessness, and ignorance; and, under the consciousness of this betake ourselves to the Beloved One—the Lord Jesus Christ—to lean upon the arm which can never tire, that arm which created the world, which sustains and upholds the world. This is what we have to do; and I ask, beloved in Christ, what is our position? Are we leaning upon the Beloved? Just answer the question before God, What is your habit of soul? Trusting in yourself, your intellect, your physical strength, your money, your experience in business, your skilfulness in your profession, or even the experience you have had in the divine life, your knowledge of the Word of God,—do you trust in any of these things? If so, allow me affectionately to tell you, that you are

not "leaning upon the Beloved." And this will prove your weakness, and will make you feel that you are in a wrong state, and not doing as you should do. When I walked about in my garden, an hour or two ago, and thought upon this passage, I said, "Lord Jesus, I am one of Thy weak ones, and I desire to lean upon Thee. If I should be asked to speak this evening, oh! what can Thy poor servant do? but he looks to Thee, he desires to lean upon Thee. Now, Lord Jesus, instruct Thou Thy poor servant, who cannot speak as he ought to the profit of the hearers; but in his weakness he will lean upon Thee, and look to Thee: now help Thou Thy servant." Well; just as under these circumstances we look to Him, so in the education of our children, in the carrying on our business, in the hour of depression, under the consciousness of our manifold failings, under the temptations that continually befall us day by day, we have to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, and, by faith, draw out of the fulness which is treasured up in Him. He is a power for good to His Church,—of infinite wisdom, and full of pity and compassion; and by prayer, and the exercise of faith, we may draw into our souls from His blessed attributes that strength which we so much need. Now of this weak one it is said, "She is coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved." This suggests to us at once that her destiny is not to remain in the wilderness; and this is just the blessed position of the Church of Christ. We have most abundant reason to thank God that we are in the wilderness. I have been in the wilderness forty-eight years, and I well remember the time when I was not in the wilderness,—when I was of the world, when I loved this world, and it was to me a delight and desire. I well remember the time when I should have laughed at the very thought of coming out of the wilderness, and hearing anything about this Beloved One; but now, by the grace of God, it is different. And so with regard to all the believers here present; though we are in the wilderness, yet we shall not remain there. The prospects are bright and blessed for all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are not nominal but real Christians,—children of God, partakers of the Divine nature; and though the manifestation of the sons of God has not yet taken place, it will take place: wait, wait for it, and as assuredly as we now trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, so

assuredly every one of us—before the whole universe—will be manifested, "in the day of Christ's appearing," as the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as the children of God. Oh, bright prospect,—the manifestation of the sons of God! And just in proportion as the child of God is enabled to enter into it, and to say, "The day is coming when I shall be manifested as a child of God," so this world is let go, with its lusts and vanities and pleasures and wealth and rank; we let it all go, as we are enabled to realize that we are the children of God, and are looking forward to that day when the children of God shall be manifested. This is the great point, and allow me affectionately to press it upon you, as one who has had some little share of experience in these things. Just in proportion as you are enabled to lay hold on heavenly realities,—to look forward to the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, and the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, when you shall share the kingdom with Jesus, when you will be for ever separated from the world, received into the Father's house, completely conformed to the image of God's dear Son, not only as to the body, but perfectly holy—as that blessed One is—will your heart be lifted up out of the world into heaven. There is no more blessed a lever to separate us from this world, and lift our hearts right into heaven, than considering what we have been redeemed from, and unto what we are in Christ Jesus now, and shall be hereafter. Oh! the soul entering into it cannot but rejoice in the Lord. It is a bright and blessed prospect,—we are not to remain here, we are to "come up from the wilderness." But do not misunderstand me; as if I were altogether so sick of the world that I wished any moment to be taken out of it: not so. If the Lord were only to give me grace, I am willing to serve Him fifty years longer, and more if it were His will. But yet with all this, on account of the conflict and difficulties of the way, on account of the evil corrupt nature within me, on account of Satan not being bound yet, and the separation between the Church and the world not having taken place, and most of all, because Jesus is not yet manifested in His glory—the children of God rejoice in the prospect that the wilderness state will come to an end: because it will be the day of blessedness for the universal Church of Christ, and the

day for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ,—therefore we cannot but rejoice in the prospect that the wilderness state will come to an end.

Now this weak one "cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved." What does this imply?—That as she took one step further she got nearer and nearer to the promised land. So with us: as the sun sets once more, we are a day nearer; as the week closes, we are a week nearer; as our Conference has again come round, we are one year nearer. Oh! one year nearer than we were last October, when we had those happy meetings. Oh! bright and blessed prospect,—getting nearer, and nearer, and nearer to whom? To Jesus. Do we delight in the prospect of being with Him? I do not speak about balls and theatres and some extraordinary parties and the prospect of joining them; nor about becoming rich in this world, nor getting a great name in this world, nor about any of these things, but the blessed prospect of being with Jesus. How many here present have any sympathy with such a statement as this? If you have no sympathy with it, let me tell you this,—it proves one of these two things: either you are "dead in trespasses and sins," and walking in the broad way which leads to destruction; or, at least for the time being, your heart is not alive to the things of God, and if a spiritual thermometer were applied to your heart, it would be seen that you are all but lifeless. This never ought to be the case with regard to the disciples of the Lord Jesus: their heart should be full of love to that blessed One who laid down His life for them, so that they rejoice when they hear that the day is coming when they shall be with that blessed One. This then is our great and blessed prospect,—that, though glad, if necessary, to labour and suffer here for the Lord's sake; though glad for a season, if necessary, to be separated from that blessed One, and from "the spirits of just men made perfect," with whom we shall be united for ever hereafter; nevertheless we have before us the prospect that the wilderness will not always be, but that we shall come out of it, and that, as days pass on, so we get nearer and nearer to our blessed home. And while we remain here, what have we to do? All of us have our various occupations,—not all as preachers of the gospel, not all as district visitors; but every one of us, as a disciple of

the Lord Jesus Christ, has some work to do; every one of us has some difficulty to meet, some trial to go through, some affliction to endure; and every one of us, day by day, is exposed to temptation. What have we to do under these circumstances? We have to "lean upon the Beloved;" to go to Jesus, to trust in Jesus, in the consciousness of our weakness and helplessness;—not to look to our own resources, for we have none; not to look to our brothers and sisters, or friends, for they are as weak as we are; but we are to look to the Lord Jesus. There is treasured up in Him inexhaustible fulness; and just as by prayer and faith, we lay hold on the strength of the Lord, so shall we receive comfort according to our need, instruction in the hour of perplexity, help in the hour of depression, deliverance in the hour of difficulty,—difficulties in connection with family trials and business trials; under all circumstances there should not be a single trial that befalls us, but we should look forward calmly to it, and say, "Jesus is able to meet all these circumstances; Jesus can help me; He says, 'Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.' Let me open my mouth wide, and see how the blessed One is both able and willing to fill it."

Try to lean upon the arm of that blessed One, and you will find it never grows weary, but able to bear you up,—it never will fail. Oh! do but try it, and you will see. And remember, Jesus does not simply "take" the arm: sometimes there are such cases as this,—a weakly husband, in the way of courtesy, offers his arm to his wife; but he is very feeble, and the wife knows it is only done in the way of politeness and love; really the truth is that her arm is ten times stronger than his—he has no strength to support her, and, therefore, while she gives her arm, she does not lean upon it. It is not thus that we are to take, so to speak, the arm of the Lord Jesus, but really to lean upon it, and trust in it, and make but trial of it, and we shall find how strong it is, and how able to carry us through. If you have never tried it, let an elder brother now beseech you to try it, and you will find how strong that arm is, how able and ready to carry you all through,—it will never, never tire. Oh, bright prospect, to have such a Friend for ever and ever!

I look forward now to the year which is coming: there is every reason to believe that we shall not all meet again at another Conference; and our path may be varied,—we may have to meet trials and difficulties; but, beloved in Christ here present, with all this before us, are we dismayed or cast down, or overwhelmed in the prospect of what may possibly befall us before another year is over? No; for that arm will carry us through—the arm of our Friend "who sticketh closer than a brother,"—He never will get tired of us; He upholds the universe by His power and might, and He will carry us through. And if the Lord permit us to see another year, and if we are again allowed to meet at these happy meetings, what reason shall we not have to bless and praise God for all His goodness; and amidst all other reasons, for this too, that we are one year nearer to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ,—one year nearer the day when the wilderness course will be over for ever and ever.

## **Address to Young Men**

Delivered in Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol, on Sunday, October 12th, 1873.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity."—Eccles. 11:9, 10

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."—Eccles. 12:1

I HAVE been requested to preach, this evening more particularly to young men,—to the dear young men; and as I myself have been a young man, and know what it is to be a young man out of Christ, and a young man in Christ, a believer in the Lord Jesus, I cheerfully complied with the request. I myself lived to be twenty years of age and a few weeks before I was converted, and therefore I know experimentally what it is to be a young man out of Christ; especially when it is considered that, though I was only twenty years of age, I had the experience of one who was thirty or thirty-five years old; for I had been, from ten years and a half, so to speak, my own master, and had seen much, very much, of life by the time that I was twenty. Yet, as I was only a young man of twenty when converted, I know experimentally what it is to be a young man as a believer in the Lord Jesus, and gladly, therefore, do I comply with the request to preach to my dear young friends,—the dear young men. But while the subject which we lay before you this evening is of importance to young men, it is also of importance to all of us,—to young men and young women, to middle-aged men and to middle-aged women, to elder men and to elder women; for the truth as it is in Jesus must always be of importance to every human being. The portion which I have read is one which more especially, by the Holy Ghost, is addressed to young men; and of all the portions in the Divine Testimony for the occasion, I know none more suitable than the one which I have been reading.

We will now read again, little by little, this portion, and meditate upon it, as God may help us: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." The first thing we have especially to keep before us regarding this statement is not as if the Holy Ghost were encouraging people, whether young men or young women or any human beings, to live according to their own likings. We have not for a moment to suppose this. The statement is precisely of the same character as we find at the very close of the blessed book of God, in the last chapter of the book of Revelation, in the eleventh verse, where we read: "He that is unjust, let him be



unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (12 v.) And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." These two verses are to be taken in connection, just as the first part of this ninth verse in the eleventh chapter of Ecclesiastes is to be taken in connection with the latter part of the selfsame verse. The Holy Ghost is stating here what will be seen with regard to young men—the natural liking of the natural heart of young men, that is, to please themselves; to go their own way; to gratify themselves; to walk according to the sight of their own eyes. It is not stated in the way of encouragement by the Holy Ghost that they should do so. Far less is it sanctioned by the Holy Ghost, as if there were no harm in all this. The fact is simply referred to, as it is among men,—What is the common course among men, and what is the natural tendency of youth. It was the same with all of us; the same, not only with young men and young women, but the same with middle-aged men and middle-aged women, with elder men and elder women. We like to go our own way, to please ourselves, and gratify ourselves, and act according to the biddings of nature. This is the statement of the Holy Ghost, just as we find it in the last chapter of the book of Revelation, but with this solemn, weighty, momentous addition: "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me;" and here the Holy Ghost adds, "For all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." Now, the very reverse of all this the Holy Ghost would tell them should be the case.

In the first place, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth." Are we to rejoice in our youth? The statement of the Holy Ghost again and again and again is, "Rejoice in the Lord." Our strength is, to be happy in the Lord. This we are enjoined, this is the will of the Lord concerning us, to rejoice in the Lord, and not to rejoice in youth.

Further, "Let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth." Our own hearts cheer us? The consolations of the blessed gospel are to cheer us, and not our own hearts. He that would trust in his own heart, and he that would look into his own heart, to find there a fountain of happiness, is a fool; and therefore that cannot possibly be the meaning. But it is simply the statement of the Holy Ghost how it is among men, what is the tendency among men, and how it is found to be among men. So, then, it does not at all mean that we should cheer ourselves, from the fact that we are young men.

"And walk in the ways of thine heart." Verily, is it this that is enjoined? Can it be so? The walking in the ways of our own heart would be the ways of the transgressors. We are naturally far from God; we naturally do things which are hateful to God, which are anything but pleasing to Him. What is enjoined to the human being is, to walk in the ways of the Lord; and therefore it cannot possibly mean here that it is pleasing to God, and according to the mind of God; but it is simply stated what is the tendency of youth—to walk in their own ways, not liking to be directed by God's orders, by God's ways.

And then further, "In the sight of thine eyes." This we like naturally, but that which is inculcated in the Holy Scripture is this,—to walk in the sight of God, to walk according to the mind of God, to walk in the light of God's countenance, so to walk as that we do not go out of the sight of God. This is the will of the Lord respecting us. And, therefore, in the first place, this is to be settled in our own hearts, that here is the statement of the Holy Ghost, not by way of commendation, the very reverse, only the simple statement of the Holy Ghost as to what is common among men, what is the result of our fallen state, as long as we are not in Christ we rejoice in things which are according to nature, instead of rejoicing in things which are according to the mind of God. But it is the latter, and the latter only, which brings real, true joy, peace, and happiness to the human being; and the former never did, never will, never can. It is not contained in that which this world affords, not even in natural

relationship, nor in the state of man as to his varied progress, it is not possible that, in any of these things, real joy, real happiness can be found; but only in communion with God, in oneness with God, in having done away, by the grace of God, the distance from God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, can we find peace and happiness.

Now, that this is not a supposition of mine, but that it is evidently the mind of God, we at once find from the second part of the verse, where this is stated: "For all these things God will bring thee into judgment." If it were commended by the Holy Ghost that a young man should rejoice in the fact that he is a youth, that he is young; if it were commended by the Holy Ghost that he should let his heart cheer him in the days of his youth; if it were commended by the Holy Ghost that he should walk in the ways of his own heart, and in the sight of his own eyes, then why this addition? Why this contrast? A plain proof that it is the very reverse from what the Holy Ghost means us to do; for, as I said before, He would have us to rejoice in the Lord. He would have us to be cheered by the consolations of the gospel, He would have us to walk in the ways of God, He would have us to walk in the light of the countenance of God. This is according to the mind of God, and not the other. If, however, young men are determined to go their own way, then let them hear the word of the Lord: "But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

What then, if we are brought into judgment? If all our wrong doings are brought before God, and sentence passed according to our actions; if all our words, the tens upon tens of thousands, and the hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of words which we utter, from the moment that we are brought into the world to the moment that we are taken out of the world; and if all the thoughts and desires, the inclinations and purposes, which have been found in our hearts are tested by the scrutinizing eye of God, and weighed in His balance, what will be the end of this? What can be the end of this but to hear that awful sentence, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into

everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh! what would befall us if once we are to be dealt with according to our deeds, our words, our thoughts? We should be undone, and undone for eternity; and, therefore, the solemn and momentous point with regard to this latter part of the verse is not only that it says to us that the meaning, which is apparently the meaning of the first part of the verse, cannot possibly be the meaning; but that also, by this latter part of the verse we are stirred up to the utmost, and entreated, and besought by God to the utmost (if I may use the words), with all earnestness, with all diligence, with all haste, to close with Christ, to lay hold on the offers of the gospel, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls, in order that we may not have to stand at the judgment-bar of the Lord Jesus Christ, and hear that awful sentence to which I have referred. There is no possibility of escaping punishment and hell, but by believing the gospel. There is no possibility of having eternal joy and happiness, but through faith in the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ; and if there had been a possibility of any human being being saved in any other way, God would not have delivered up the choicest, the most precious of all gifts He had to give,—even His only-begotten Son. But when He saw that we were lost and undone, His heart being full of yearning love, His heart full of compassion to the lost and ruined and guilty, He, in the riches of His grace, gave for them the choicest gift He had to give,—His only-begotten Son, and bruised Him and wounded Him and laid on Him the punishment of us all; and that blessed One endured, in our room, all the punishment which was due to those who put their trust in Him.

Now the great point before we pass on is this: First of all, I ask my dear young friends,—the dear young men to whom I am speaking more particularly this evening,—how is it with you? Have you closed with Christ or not? Have you accepted the offers of the gospel or not? Are you in Christ or out of Christ? I feel for you; I can well enter into your state. I was out of Christ for many a long year, and oh! the thousands of times that I have wished that I had known the Lord much younger than I did. There was, however, this difference

between me and you; I never heard the gospel till I was twenty years and five or six weeks old; I never met with a Christian till I was twenty years and five or six weeks old. I never understood about the atoning death of the Lord Jesus till then. You, at least almost all of you, if not every one of you, have heard the gospel again and again; some of you, it may be, times without number. You have been entreated and besought, most of you, if not all of you, many times to believe the gospel; therefore see the difference. Now, be besought and entreated at last; oh! let me beseech and entreat you to give, without delay, your heart to the Lord. And if you want another testimony, though I dare say you have had testimony upon testimony before, I tell you that it is altogether a mistake when persons suppose that they will never have a happy hour if, while young, they believe the gospel,—that is a most grievous mistake; it is the reverse. It is just this very reception of the Lord Jesus Christ which gives real joy, real happiness, real gladness of heart. The other is a, more fancy, a dream-like joy; there is no reality in it; it brings nothing but an aching heart afterwards, whatever the apparent joy for the Lime may be.

I know from my own experience what it is with, all one's might to seek to enjoy the world, for I did it to the utmost, and I had opportunity above many to do it; and it was nothing but vanity and misery and wretchedness that it brought.

Then, again, on the other hand, I know what it is, as a young man, to be a Christian; for, as I told you, I was about twenty years and five or six weeks old when I was brought to the knowledge of the Lord; and then, having found the Lord, I was happy, and before the very first evening had closed, in which I was brought to the knowledge of the Lord, I said to my former companions in travelling, "What are all our joys and all our pleasures on the journey to Switzerland in comparison with this evening. That was the very beginning of my divine life; and now forty-eight years have passed, and I bear testimony, to the praise and honour and glory of God, that I have never been tired of Christ; but the longer I walk on in the ways of

God, the more I find how true the Word of the Lord is, that the paths of wisdom are paths of pleasantness and peace; that real joy, real happiness, real blessing, real peace, real comfort, reality, are to be had by faith in the Lord Jesus. Only I make this addition, You must be an out and out Christian; you cannot hold with one hand the world, and with the other Christ. You would otherwise be a wretched being; and if there are any here present who want the world and Christ, let them keep the world, for they cannot have both. You can have nothing but perdition if you cleave to the world, because it is under condemnation, and you will be condemned with the world if you will not let the world go; but if you are minded to let the world go, and lay hold on Christ, and be an out and out disciple of the Lord Jesus, I tell you this, as an honest man, you will be a happy man. Oh! how happy, how unspeakably happy, how blessed your portion as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! it is a blessed thing to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, dear young men, be no longer believing the lie of the devil; and to you young women I say the same; and to you elder men and women I say the same; to every one here present, and even to the little boys and girls here present, I say the same; if ever there comes a whisper to your mind from the devil, that all joy and happiness would be gone if you were to become a Christian,—it is the very reverse. Real joy, real happiness, real blessedness, only begin with the day that we obtain spiritual life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; for then comes the time when our sins are forgiven; then comes the time when we become the children of God through this faith in the Lord Jesus; then comes the time when we become the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ through this faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; then comes the time, and only then, that you can lie down, in peace at night, knowing that, if it were the last time, and you should not awaken any more in this world, you would not lift up your eyes in torment, but in heaven. I challenge any dear young man here present, who will show to me any way that makes so happy as this,—to know that if this were the last night, to be awaking in heaven, and not in torment. Oh, what is not this worth! Oh, how

blessed is this one single thing! What can all the world give in comparison with this one single thing,—to know that, if this were our last night, heaven would be our portion, and not the place of torment? Is it not worth something? You speak about the happiness at the billiard table: I know it; and misery it is, and nothing else. You speak about the enjoyment of the theatre: I know it, above many of you, if not all of you; I was there times without number, and was passionately fond of the theatre; and what then? Wretchedness and misery were the result. You speak about the ball-room: there was I;—there was I, and at two or three o'clock in the morning left the ball-room with a disordered stomach.

I know all this,—the wretchedness and misery which it gives, instead of real enjoyment and real happiness. You speak about the pleasures of reading: I know them too; for when I was only thirteen years old I had my books by the month out of the library, and I devoured them with all eagerness—volume after volume. And you speak about learning, and the enjoyment in this: I was at school from the time that I was five years old, to the time that I was nineteen and a half, when I went to the university with honourable testimonials, and was there for four years; and then studying was not over, for when I came to England I went on with Hebrew, Chaldee, etc. And what did I find? That learning in itself gives no happiness,—no real, true happiness. Christ, and Christ alone, gives real, true happiness. I know seven languages; and with all this I should have gone to hell, if it had not been that I know Christ, Christ, Christ. Oh, the blessedness of being a disciple of the Lord Jesus! Oh! my dear young friends, be you male or female, or little children, let me tell you of the blessedness, the blessedness, **THE BLESSEDNESS**, of being a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Only be an out and out Christian, It is this half-hearted mind which makes men to be no really happy beings. You cannot be happy if you want to hold the world with one hand and Christ with the other; but the moment you come to the determination that you will not halt between two opinions, and that you will be an out and out Christian, you will be happy. I know the difficulty of this; for, when I was converted, I was almost the only

believer out of 1260 young men who were students at the university; and they knew me, that I had been in the fencing saloon to learn fencing, in order that I might be able to fight a duel if any one insulted me. They knew me: "There is the Mystic," as I was called; and they pointed at me with fingers. But those sneers lasted a few days or a few weeks at the most; and, by the grace of God, I stood at the side of Christ with two or three students out of the 1260, and the result was, a happy man I was. And the result has been, a happy man I have been. But it must be an out and out thing. And therefore this I would say affectionately to those who are yet out of Christ,—Only be upright and honest. You who are believers in the Lord Jesus, let me affectionately say this,—Let it be an out and out standing at the side of Christ with you. Be not half-hearted. The devil will seek, if he cannot altogether bring you back to him, at least in some degree to bring you back into the world. Now let me affectionately beseech and entreat you to let it be an out and out Christianity, and then the result will be this,—you will be an out and out happy man. Thus it should be with all the disciples of the Lord Jesus. It would pain me to the almost if people could live with me a month in the house and not bear this testimony,—that Mr. Müller is "a happy man" And a happy man I desire to be; and a happy man I am. It is Christ who makes me happy; for there is something unspeakably blessed in this,—that the older one gets, the nearer the end of the journey, the brighter the blessedness of the prospect; with heaven as one's home, that one is getting nearer and nearer to the gates. Oh! how blessed to be in Christ. And this blessedness I desire for all my beloved dear young friends to whom I am more specially speaking this evening. It is a blessed thing to be a believer in the Lord Jesus.

"But know, thou, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity." If we act according to the statement of the first part of the ninth verse, the result will be this,—sorrow to the heart and evil to the flesh. I would mention here, by the way, that "flesh" is to be here understood as "tho body." It does not mean the old and corrupt nature, it means the



body. Now if we walk according to the ways of our own heart, according to the sight of our own eyes, it is certain, that there will come, sooner or later, more or less sorrow to the heart, and that there will come evil, even to the body, as the certain result.

The will of God is, that young men should remove sorrow from their heart, and put away evil from their body; but, if young men walk according to their natural inclinations, it will bring, it must bring sorrow,—oh! how much sorrow. Let any dear young men just follow out their own desires: sorrow upon sorrow it will bring; sorrow upon sorrow it will bring, not only as to the heart, but also as to the body, in most instances; yet not only to the body, evil, but oftentimes premature death. Oh! how often is it seen that not only disease of the body, but even a premature death comes from walking according to the natural inclination and the carnal mind.

So, then, if you wish to put sorrow from your heart, if you wish to put evil from the body, the way is to walk according to the mind of the Lord, which begins, in the first place, by the reception of the gospel, by receiving Christ, and then, afterwards, by continuing in Christ. Abide in Christ, seek to please the Lord, and to act according to the mind of the Lord, It is by this, and by this only, that sorrow can be kept from the heart, and that evil can be kept from the body. Oh how deeply important it is to attend to these things! And we see it is just the graciousness of the heart of God which brings before us this boon; because the Lord wills not the death of the sinner, but that he should turn from his evil ways and live. This is not all. If young men are believers, God desires them to be happy believers,—truly happy. This, however, cannot be, except they abide in Christ. This is the only way whereby sorrow can be removed from the heart, and whereby evil can be kept from the body. Awful diseases many dear young men bring on themselves, and even premature death, because they do not attend to these things.

And then it is added, in the way of caution, "For childhood and youth are vanity." The word "youth" in Hebrew means "the beginning of the

day," "the breaking of the day", and therefore the figure is carried out here. "Childhood and the morning of life are vanity." Vanity here means, "of a transient character,—it passes—it does not last long—it goes away."

Now this is also a point to be kept before us. It is deeply important, in the first place, with regard to this life, that youth is of a transient character, it passes away. Therefore, in childhood and in youth, the best use is to be made of time, talents, strength. The cultivation of the mind is deeply important. From what I have been saying, you must not for a moment suppose that I mean that it is not worth anything at all that one knows this or the other thing, or that the mind be well cultivated; I mean no such thing to be understood by what I am saying. I simply mean that these things are nothing in comparison with the choicest and the chiefest of all the good that we can have,—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important for young men to make good use of their time, even with regard to this life; because childhood and youth are of a transient character, they pass away; and therefore the mind should be cultivated.

Things that are profitable for this life are to be learned,—and to be learned, among other reasons, that hereafter they may be useful even in the cause of Christ. I have just been referring to languages. When I learned French, for instance, and other languages, I had no thought that they would ever be useful, in the service of Christ; but afterwards it pleased God so to order it in His providence that I had sometimes six missionaries for five and six months at a time in my house, and there were three different languages spoken at my dinner-table,—German, French, and English. Now the very fact of knowing these languages helped me in the cause of Christ. I am now continuing my correspondence in three different languages,—French, German, and English. These, in the cause of Christ, have been very useful. Not that I mean to lay stress on these things, as if they were of such moment that there would be no happiness without them. Not this; for the great point, after all, remains,—to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus, and to walk in the ways of God. But, if we

have the opportunity, let us make good use of the opportunity. We must not despise the opportunities, nor put them aside, but make good use of them; because youth passes away, is of a transient character, does not last, and therefore the time is to be usefully employed in the cultivation of the mind and in becoming acquainted with the affairs of this life, all of which may afterwards be used, not only with regard to this life, but in the service of the Lord, and for the glory of God.

But though it is important with regard to the affairs of life and the things connected with this life, to do so, it is of infinitely more importance with regard to eternal matters, because childhood and youth are not lasting, are of a transient character; therefore the momentous point is, that, while yet young, we should give our hearts to the Lord. Not to put it off to this time or that time. Suppose that time never came? And even if the time came, the heart naturally gets harder and harder, and therefore, a loss is sustained by putting it off. But the cares of this life come after awhile, and then the less inclination to give the heart to the Lord. Therefore, the great object, both as to this life, and especially with regard to the world to come, should be to make the best use of childhood and youth, which are passing away.

Before passing on to the last verse of our subject, I pause, and I ask the question, "How many have given the heart to the Lord?" I see a number of dear young persons before me, both male and female. How many have given the heart to the Lord? I see also a few very young persons—children; have they given the heart to the Lord? I do not want you to answer the question to me; but I do beseech and entreat you, in sincerity, in uprightness, with godly earnestness, to answer the question, to God Himself, who, by His Spirit, puts the question to your heart: "Art thou Mine, or art thou for the devil? Art thou for Christ, or art thou for the world?" How can there be a halting between two opinions?

Youth and childhood are of a transient character; you put it off, and you think there is time enough. How do you know there is time? What if, when you get home this evening, you are laid low? What if, in the night, the cholera comes upon you, or if some other disease should befall you and hurry you away? What then?—what then?—what then? All is too late.

Oh! be besought and entreated, dear young friends. Be assured of this, that the more you hear of the gospel, and the more you reject the invitations of the gospel, the harder your heart becomes; the further you get away from Christ; the more you are getting into the ways of the devil; the more you love the world. Oh! be besought and entreated.

The last verse: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

What is the import of this? In the first place, I judge what the Holy Ghost would bring before the human beings is this: That the human beings—especially the young part of the human beings—should keep it before them solemnly, deeply, gravely, earnestly, that they have a Creator. Now all in this country know that they are created. But the mere superficial knowledge is not enough; it is of little significance in comparison with the reality. What the Holy Ghost would have us to keep before us is that we are creatures, and that we have a Creator.

The verse we have before us implies various points. In the first place, it implies this: "That the creature is subject to the Creator." This we cannot sufficiently keep before our hearts. It implies further: "The creature is made for the honour and glory of the Creator." We can never have this sufficiently before our eyes. It implies further: That because the creature is made for, the honour and glory of the Creator, therefore the creature should live so that the honour of the Creator would be upheld. In what way can the human creature, above all things, honour the Creator? In the first place, by accepting

the choicest of all His gifts, the Lord Jesus Christ; and whosoever has not accepted Christ never honoured the Creator.

You think this is a hard saying;—it may be. I repeat it solemnly,—Every one here present, who has not accepted Christ, whether fifteen years old, or twenty years, or twenty-five years old, never once, in his whole life, honoured the Creator. There is no such thing as that we honour the Creator, whilst the choicest gift, the most precious gift, this unspeakable gift, which cost Him so much,—His only begotten Son,—is not accepted. Go home in this belief, that you are fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five years old, and never once, for one single minute in your whole life, honoured God, because you have not accepted Christ.

This is no hasty statement. It is my deliberate conviction. As a man of God I give it as my deliberate conviction. All you have done—all you have said, never can, never has, tended to the honour of God as long as you have not received the gospel. Therefore the first thing, if you would honour God the Creator, if you would realize what is meant by "remembering" Him, you must close with Christ; you must accept the gospel; you must pass sentence upon yourself as a ruined, guilty, lost sinner, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul. You must put your whole trust, and only trust, in the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. This, and this only, God would consider as remembering Him.

Then, if you have received the gospel, further abide in Christ. Seek to please Jehovah Jesus, who spake the word; everything that is in existence was brought into existence by Him, and He is the builder of the universe. Abide in Him; seek to please Him; seek to act according to His mind. That He considers as the choicest, most precious way of remembering your Creator.

Lastly: "While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." This is the very reverse from what a young man naturally says: "I am very young; there is

time enough; when I am old I will attend to these things." The very reverse from what God says: "Before the evil days come;" that is the will of the Lord. When men get advanced in life, then comes the danger of not attending to these things: because of the heart having been so much hardened, because the cares of this life shut out Christ, because of numberless troubles, a long family, a number of children to be settled in life; therefore this, the most momentous of all matters, is not to be put off. Oh! how wise,—how infinitely wise, is God. But the devil, you see, is always against God; he is always placing things in the very opposite light. God says, "Before these days come." Nature says, "I will put it off till I am an old man, or till I am an old woman." The devil whispers, "There is time enough when you get to your death-bed." How do you know that you will ever get to your death-bed? The next time you travel—rush! and in an instant you are carried away in a railway accident; the next time you ride in a carriage, off the horse goes, and in an instant you are thrown out, and in eternity; the next time you go out, a tile falls on your head from the roof, and in an instant you are in eternity. Oh! how do you know that you will live one single day more? How utterly fallacious it is to put it off to old age, to this or that time! The present moment, and the present moment only, is the time, and therefore the present moment alone is ours; we cannot boast of time.

Once more, beloved young friends, male or female, beloved older men and women, let me beseech and entreat you, with all earnestness, to seek the Lord while He is to be found, and to call upon Him while He is near. And be you sure of this: if you go—to speak after the manner of men—one single step, it is Jesus who comes a dozen or a hundred steps towards you. He stands, as it were, with open arms to receive you. It is the very joy and delight of His heart to welcome you; and, therefore, delay not. Oh! be besought and entreated.

# Holding fast the Gospel

Notes of a Sermon delivered in Bethesda Chapel, Bristol, March 1st, 1874.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which, also ye have received and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."—1 Cor. 15:1,

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THOSE who are in any measure familiar with the first letter written by the Holy Ghost through the apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth, know that there were three especial reasons why the letter was written.

1. To answer certain questions; as for instance, how those should do who were unmarried, and those who had unbelieving partners.
2. To notice the flagrant wickedness and moral inconsistency which had crept in among these true children of God; and, in doing so, not only sharply to rebuke them on account of these things, but to direct them how to cleanse themselves of them.
3. But there was one other especial object which he had in writing this letter, viz., to take notice of grievous errors which had come in among them, and one of these we have especially noticed in this chapter, and that is, the denial of the resurrection.

The apostle brings before them how this touched the very foundation of their holy faith. If there was no resurrection, there were no glad tidings at all,—no truth in any of these things, if there were no resurrection. But he shows that there is a resurrection, and not only so, but dwells on the blessedness connected with it.

The word "moreover" points to the other things on which he had been dwelling, "I declare unto you," in the sense of, I remind you; I stir up your remembrance; I remind you of the gospel which I preached unto you. Tho word Gospel is one with which we are all familiar, and yet it is so deeply important that our hearts have right apprehensions, and that our hearts enter into the full meaning of the word "Gospel."

Now, then, though we are all familiar with the phrase, and have heard it from our earliest days, yet let us seek to ponder it and enter into it.

"Gospel,"—good, news, glad tidings. Good news about what? Glad tidings; what glad tidings? These: That while by nature we are lost, ruined, and undone, and must have remained thus for eternity, God, in the riches of His grace, in His abounding mercy, contrary to all human expectation, contrary to all angelic expectation, in the riches of His grace comes forward, in the wondrous power of His love provides a plan for the salvation of our souls. What a wondrous plan is this, not to give all the universe for the salvation of our souls, for that would be the merest trifle; but He gives,—what? His only begotten Son; He gives His Holy Child Jesus, His perfect servant; He gives the God-man Christ Jesus to hang upon the cross, to die in the room of wicked, guilty, rebellious men. Oh, wondrous grace this! and this He does not bargain for; He does not say, if you do this, or if you give me this, I will give you my Holy Child Jesus. The only condition He makes is, that the sinner accept the unspeakable gift, the Lord Jesus Christ; and if he does this he shall never lose the blessing any more. Oh, this wondrous grace,—this unspeakable grace! God gives the choicest gift He had to give; and He requires nothing whatever on the part of the vilest, most hardened sinner, who has lived ten, twenty, thirty or more years in sin, if he only receives Christ, puts his trust in Him, depends on Him for salvation; instantly he does so, all his numberless transgressions shall be forgiven, they shall be sought for and not found; shall be cast behind God's back; cast into the depths of the sea. Our great adversary shall seek them and not be



able to find them. These are the good news and glad tidings. And the sinner may have it now. He has not to wait until the last judgment-day, but instantly he obtains the forgiveness of his sins; for it is written, concerning the Lord Jesus, in the 10th chap, of the Acts of the Apostles, 43rd verse: "Whosoever believeth on Him shall receive the remission of sins." Salvation is a present blessing, the forgiveness of sins a present blessing. The instant the sinner owns that he is a sinner, he obtains the full, free, eternal forgiveness of his numberless transgressions. If his sins were a million times more than the hairs of his head, all shall be instantly forgiven, when he trusts in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of his soul. This is not all: through the reception of this very gospel, through the belief of this very gospel, we become the children of God. It is through faith that we are born again, and thus become the children of God.

We are thus introduced by the reception of the gospel into the heavenly family, separated from the devil's family, separated from the kingdom of darkness, translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. We are regenerated, begotten again, by this very faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; we become heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; we shall be manifested as the children of God, and shall share the glory with the Lord Jesus Christ. These are the good news which the gospel proclaims. No working for these blessings, no going to Rome, no going on pilgrimage. Instantly, on believing the gospel, we all receive those blessings for time and eternity. No devil shall be able to rob us of these blessings which we receive through faith.

The gospel is called by various names. In Romans 10:15, it is called the Gospel of Peace, and there is not much difficulty in seeing why. We are at variance by nature with God, we make manifest this variance by doing the things contrary to His mind. By this gospel the alienation between us and God is removed. We obtain a new nature, a heavenly life, a divine life, and so it comes that we are at peace with God,—now we love God, while formerly we hated Him.

It is further called the "Gospel of God's Grace" (Acts 20:24). It is called thus because these glad tidings have especially to do with the grace of God, not with the justice of God so much, not with the holiness of God, though the holiness of God and the justice of God are intimately connected with the gospel; but these glad tidings particularly bring before us this attribute of the true and living God. These blessings He bestows upon us in the way of grace, unmerited favour, through wounding and bruising His beloved Son in the room of the sinner, making Him a sacrifice in the room of the sinner. It is thus that God forgives us our sins in the way of unmerited favour. Merit has nothing whatever to do with these good news. If the question were, you shall only fulfil the tenth part of the law, it would be no longer in the way of grace. If we had the least to do for the salvation of our souls, it would no longer be in the way of grace. Works have their right and proper place, and we cannot make too much of works in their right and proper place. But the right place of works is this: we must have the forgiveness of our sins, we must have peace with God, be at one with God, before there can be found in us one single good work in which God can be well pleased. All is without blessing on the part of God until we have accepted the gospel. And therefore this is the first great business of every man, woman, and child, to accept the gospel. Except this be the case you may be a Sunday-school teacher, or you may give away tracts, but not one of these things is acceptable to God. You must receive Christ first. But after we have received Christ, then works come in their proper place; not working for life, but from life, after having been born again, after having obtained heavenly divine life; then we cannot work too much for God, cannot be too much dead to the world, cannot make it too much manifest that we are dead to the world and alive to God.

It is also called the "Gospel of Salvation" in Ephesians 1:13; because these glad tidings do not bring merely good business, or health of the body, or family comfort, or prospects of any kind with regard to this life merely, but they bring us the salvation of the soul. These glad tidings, that the lost, ruined sinner, the one who must have remained for eternity in a state of wretchedness and condemnation, and who

could look forward to nothing but the second death, to the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; that this vile, lost ruined, hell-deserving sinner, may be saved from all tho wretchedness, woe, and misery, which he must have endured for ever and ever. These are the glad tidings which announce blessing for eternity, the salvation of our souls.

It is also called the "Gospel of the Kingdom" (Matt. 24:14). A rather remarkable phrase this. Glad tidings regarding the kingdom. In this day it would be much better understood if it were called the kingdom of the gospel. But we must cling fast to what God says, not what man says, or to what thousands of Christians say. If we do not do so it will be a miserable thing to us in the end. The days are coming when there will be neither buying nor selling, unless we have the mark of Antichrist in our foreheads or hands. These are the good news or glad tidings of the kingdom of Messiah, the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. That blessed One is coming. The kingdom of Messiah would have been set up when He appeared, but for the rejection of Messiah by the Jews. But the kingdoms of this world shall yet become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ; and the manifestation of the sons of God is connected with all this. The weak ones, the hidden ones, the despised ones, shall share the throne of glory with Christ. With all these good news, with all these glad tidings particularly, this is connected, that Jesus will have the glory, and that each one who believes in Him shall share in this.

Further: it is said, "Which also ye have received." These Corinthians were in a weak state, in a comparatively little instructed state, there were many failings among them. Nevertheless they had received the gospel. Now, how far is this true of my dear friends in the gallery? Is it true of all my dear young friends,—my dear aged friends? You have heard it times without number. The Holy Ghost may have been knocking at the door of your hearts again and again; but have you received the gospel? Oh! the solemnity of this thought, the terribleness of this thought—received, or not received. It is the will of God that you should receive it. If you do not receive the gospel, you

reject God's blessing, you slight the choicest of all blessings which God has to bestow. Let me press this particularly upon you, dear young people,—Have you received the gospel, or have you rejected it?

Before passing on, turn to one or two passages where this is particularly enforced.

Romans 10:16. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel." You perceive from this it is the will of God that the gospel should be received, believed, obeyed. It is no matter of choice on our part, no question whether we ought or ought not to believe it. It is as much a command of God, as that we should not steal, or that we should do no murder.

Turn also to 2 Thessalonians 1:8: Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is the end of it,—in flaming fire; He will take vengeance on those who do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ: because this is the one only way to obtain forgiveness of sins, to escape the wrath of God which shall be poured out on the ungodly. And therefore all those who have merely been the hearers of the gospel, and not believers in the gospel, oh! be besought to believe the gospel, to obey the gospel. As long as you are in a state of unbelief you are amongst those who obey not the gospel. This is your expectation; oh! think of it. On the other hand, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, if you receive the Lord Jesus Christ, if you came into this place as the vilest sinner, as the most hardened sinner, at the greatest distance from God, you may be instantly pardoned, may become a child of God this very instant, and the prospect become bright and pleasing.

"And wherein ye stand." What does this mean? It means we go on believing the gospel, we go on trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, resting on the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls. There is such a thing as receiving the gospel, and letting the gospel go again. We see this by the Epistle to the Galatians. They were so taught by false teachers that they had let go the gospel of Christ. Let

us all be wary to avoid this; it is a matter of immense importance, not only to receive the gospel in all simplicity, but to go on from first to last, knowing none other than Christ in the matter of our salvation. So we must go on to the very last of our earthly pilgrimage. As to pleasing God, we need Christ in us; but in the matter of our salvation, we must know none other than Christ for us. Now this is the point, that we stand fast in the gospel; we must hold fast Christ, depend on the work and sufferings of Jesus Christ. And this is particularly important in these days, when, through the subtlety of the devil, ritualism is rampant, and the devil would introduce priestcraft. When these things are so, how important that we should cling and cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ, and know nothing but Him in the matter of our salvation.

"By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you." What does this teach us? Not merely that there is the necessity for receiving, or that for the time being we stand fast, but that to the end of our course we hold fast to Christ.

"Unless ye have believed in vain,"—What does this teach us? This is a word to young believers, to young converts, and those who have been stirred up to care about their souls: that they should be in earnest, that God would enable them to cling and cleave to the Lord Jesus, and to know nothing but Christ in the matter of their salvation. Those who have known the Lord for a long time, also, should see that they watch in love and kindness over those who have been stirred up to seek the Lord Jesus, that they may cling and cleave further to the Lord Jesus. We rejoice when we see persons stirred up to care about their souls; but it is one thing to begin, another thing to hold fast to the end of the course. So, while we rejoice, we rejoice with trembling; for the victory is not won, but the battle is only begun.

# Parable of the Ten Virgins

Notes of a Sermon delivered, in Bethesda Chapel, Bristol, Lord's Day Evening, March 15th, 1874.

## Matthew 25:1–13

THE connection in which this portion stands, you know. In the previous chapter, the Lord Jesus had been speaking about the destruction of Jerusalem, and about His return, particularly about the latter; and having brought weighty matters in connection with this deeply important subject before His disciples, He then goes on with our parable in the 25th chapter. The very commencement of the chapter shows us the connection,—“Then”—at that time, when these things spoken of in the latter part of the previous chapter were coming to pass, at that time the kingdom of heaven shall be likened unto ten virgins.

With regard to parables, I state again, what I have several times before stated, that we should seek to inquire what is the great truth, or what are the great truths couched under the parable, and intended to be set forth by the parable. Having found out this, to be content with that, and not to seek to press every particular point of the parable, lest we should be led into great errors in doing so: for earthly things never to the full can set forth heavenly things. In seeking to find some great truth couched under every particular point, we are in great danger of being led astray. Nevertheless there are always great points, weighty points, couched under the parables spoken by our blessed Lord. Now the question arises, What are the great points which the blessed Lord meant to bring before the disciples by this parable of the ten virgins? Evidently this: that at the time of His return, while there may be the looking for Him, the expecting Him, and the great mass of Christians being stirred up to look for His return, the danger will be this,—lest all fall asleep; not

only those who have merely the form of godliness without the spirit, but also true disciples, real children of God even; these will be in danger of falling asleep, and not going on waiting and watching. Therefore the great point against which the blessed Lord meant by this parable to warn disciples is, not to go to sleep, but to watch and wait for His return to the very last moment. And we should especially seek to have coupled with this the preparation of heart in which all should be found waiting, looking for, expecting the return of the Lord, and tho danger lest persons are occupied with these things connected with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and profess even to wait for His appearing, and yet unprepared for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. We consider now a little more minutely this parable. I have to state before doing so that this parable was given by our Lord Jesus Christ in reference to Jewish customs; and as those to whom He was, speaking were intimately acquainted with these customs, He does not enter more particularly into them; but one or the other here present may not know the customs to which our blessed Lord refers. At the time of marriage among the Jews it was the custom that the bridegroom in the evening went out with his male friends to fetch home to his house the bride, while the companions of the bride waited in the neighbourhood of the bridegroom's house for the bridegroom; and then the bride coming with the bridegroom, these companions, coming with the bride and bridegroom, went into the house and partook of the marriage feast. The custom was in the evening to fetch home the bride, and therefore the going to sleep is referred to; therefore the reference is made to the midnight cry.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins."

The kingdom of heaven is used here for the professing Church; this is the meaning of the phrase here. I say advisedly here the professing Church, for there is no reason to believe that the foolish virgins were true disciples, but only professing Christians "which took their lamps;" for this reason, because it was evening, it was after sunset, they had to wait sometimes an hour or two, and as it became dark

soon after sunset, therefore the necessity for the lamps. But the difference between the wise and the foolish virgins: the wise not only took their lamps, but in separate vessels took oil, that if necessary they might replenish their lamps; but the foolish had made no such preparation. That was the difference, and only difference between the two. You see the ten went to meet the bridegroom, not the five only. They all had lamps, but there was wanting, with regard to the foolish, the vessel containing the oil, that the lamps might be replenished if necessary. The wise went to sleep like the foolish, but they had the oil, and that was the difference. Now this is one of the points regarding which we rightly judge what is couched under the parable. We have to inquire into it, what is the meaning of the oil? what is set forth by the Holy Ghost with regard to the oil? The one had oil, the other had none. Evidently this is the meaning,—that through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ they were partakers of the Spirit; the others were not partakers of the Spirit, because they had no real faith in the Lord Jesus Christ at all. They professed to be His, they professed to care about Him, they professed to go out to meet Him, but in heart they were strangers. And this is the momentous point, whether through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we are partakers of the Holy Ghost, or not. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. Whatever we have, if we have not the Holy Ghost, we do not belong to Christ. In whatever way we may seek to resemble the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ,—we may be in the habit of reading our Bibles, of bowing our knees, of singing together with them, of meeting together with them, of partaking together with them of the Lord's Supper, we may be reckoned among them as disciples; and yet with all this, far from God; with all this, unregenerate yet; with all this, wanting the Spirit of Christ; with all this, not born again through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Talkers we may be, in outward appearance like the children of God; but if the heart is unrenewed, if there be no faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls, through which we are begotten again and renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost, so that the Holy Ghost takes our bodies and makes them His temple,—if this is not the case, we are yet far from God and His kingdom; and therefore the solemn,



momentous question, particularly in these days of almost universal profession and discipleship, when there is so much profession and religion in the land, whether it is the form or the reality; whether we are born again, or yet dead in trespasses and sins with all our profession; whether merely in the way of form we bow the knee, and sing His praise, and say Amen to the prayers of others; or whether the heart goes along with the praises and prayers, or whether we only go to this or that meeting, because it is respectable in these days. In the days of the apostles they were cast out as mad; but in these days no man is called a respectable man if he does not make a profession of religion in some shape; and people, therefore, in order that they may be respected would make a profession of some sort or other; and therefore the momentous question is this,—Whether it is a reality? whether it is heart work? whether we be born again? whether it is really taking Christ as our Saviour? or whether it is, after all, only a mere hollow profession? The question is not whether my name is written on the Church book, but whether it is written in the Lamb's book of life; not how my fellow-men look on me, but how God looks on me. Not what is my appearance in the sight of my fellow-men, but in the sight of God. Am I His child? am I born again? Are the disciples loved by me in the heart, or do I simply by the lips profess to care about them. Before God we should weigh these things, and see that we are not deceiving ourselves. But the simplest believer who trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul, feeble and weak though he may yet be, nevertheless having the heart upright, in carrying on warfare against sin, and not in league with the world and the devil, having yet the desire to carry on the conflict against the world, the flesh, and the devil,—all such simply entirely hanging on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, they are the wise virgins, they will be saved at the last, they will assuredly enter with the bridegroom to the marriage supper of the Lamb; while those who simply make a profession, but who cannot appeal to the heart-searching Lord Jesus, and say, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," will be shut out. Oh! may such be entreated to seek after reality, and not be satisfied with the mere empty name to live, while they are dead in trespasses and sins.

Now to which of the two classes do we belong,—the wise or the foolish? Oh! let us seek to answer before God; and if the matter is unsettled, let us not retire to rest to-night without making the inquiry whether we belong to the wise. You may try to put it off, but it will force itself again upon your heart; therefore ask the question now—To which do I belong? All of us here present belong to one of the two classes. Now let it be answered. Let me beseech and entreat you not to sit down to supper, and far less to retire to rest to-night, without answering the question before God. And if in honesty of heart you have to say, I am among the foolish virgins, then I ask you, how long you intend to continue in that state? That word belongs to you: "The door was shut." You must be regenerated. The door of mercy is open yet; press, press, press into the door while it remains open. Oh! be besought and entreated.

But some may say, How may I press in? Own before God that you are wicked, guilty sinners deserving punishment; if you do not feel that you are sinners, ask God to show it to you, for it is His delight to reveal it to you. Now, then, God tells you that you are wicked, as all men without exception are wicked, and we have to pass sentence on ourselves, and to accept what God so mercifully has provided in the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He wounded Him, bruised Him in our room and stead. The Lord Jesus in His own person carried our sins, He bore the punishment due to us, and the soul believing in Him, for His sake, on the ground of what the Substitute suffered in the room of the sinner, shall be saved. Then if you find out by the grace of God that you belong to the wise virgins, you have to say to yourself, All praise to God on this account, I am indebted to Him for it; and now my business is to seek to live to Him, to seek to let my gratitude show that I am sensible of the guilt of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that my future business is this,—while the Lord Jesus tarries I seek not to go to sleep, but to wait for the Son of God from heaven.

As I said before, the danger lest true disciples, real children of God, such who have begun in heart to wait for the return of the Lord Jesus

Christ, lest they should be found slumbering and sleeping when the Lord comes. It pleased God about forty-four years ago to arouse the Church in this land with regard to the truth concerning the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was in the year 1829. Since that time many a true servant of Christ who was stirred up has been taken away, has fallen asleep in Jesus. The blessed One has delayed His return. Many others have been in danger, and not only in danger, but have actually gone to sleep with regard to the return of the Lord Jesus. And therefore the great point is, that we seek in heart and spirit, in life and deportment, to let it be seen that we are waiting for the return of the Lord, like the Thessalonians of old. What delight it will give to the heart of Jesus when He comes again and finds our hearts ready to receive Him. Not only to have been stirred up for a little time to talk about His return, but practically and experimentally to look for His return. But seeing here that the wise virgins slumbered and slept, we should not hide it from ourselves that we are in danger of sleeping.

"And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you."

In such an hour as this, no faith of the one will do for the other. No possession on the part of the one will do for the other; it is an individual matter. We must have Christ in our hearts the hope of glory; we must be partakers of the Holy Ghost for ourselves; we must be born again as to ourselves, others have none to spare. No parents can believe on the part of their children. The son and the daughter need the Holy Ghost as well as the father and mother. No godly children can believe on the part of their father and mother; the parents must believe for themselves. The father must have the Spirit, and the son, and the daughter. Except it be so, that the individuals are partakers of the Holy Ghost through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, they will have no admission, the door will be shut. Oh! the awfulness of the case; to think the door shut, and to be without. But remember, the door is not shut yet; it is open wide now, and the Lord

Jesus, this very evening, with open arms is standing in our midst, and saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink;" "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The blessed Lord Jesus is delighted to receive sinners,—the oldest, the most hardened sinner, if he but believes in Him, trusts in Him. And therefore remember, any who have to say to themselves, I am among the foolish virgins, I have been born in the house of godly people, have been educated among godly people, and yet I am among the foolish virgins; remember, it is not too late, but do not remain undecided, lest you find it is too late at the last.

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

What is the great practical lesson to be gathered? Evidently this,—That if people put off to care about their souls to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is too late. That is not the time. While He tarrieth, that is the time; while He is carrying on the high-priestly work of intercession, that is the time. But when once the Master of the house has risen up, when once He has come, then to care about the soul is too late, too late, too late then. Oh! that this may be deeply impressed on the hearts of my dear friends and fellow-sinners here present. Did you ever, with reference to your own hearts, consider this word, "The door was shut"? If you never did, let me entreat you to do it now,—you my dear girls there, and you my dear little boy, and you my dear little girl, and all here present who have never pondered this word, "the door was shut," "the door was shut," "the door was shut." And, oh! if this were to be my place, if I had to stand outside, if I had to knock; oh! What would be my pain if the door was shut? Oh, the solemnity of this! Oh! who can describe the feelings of those persons who used to say,—Ah! it is only a dream, it is only a fancy, it is all right; God will not be so particular? and now find that God is very particular and that the Lord Jesus is as good as His word. Oh! what then? what then? to stand outside and find that it is shut, and shut for ever? Oh! the solemnity of the position. But it is open

yet. The very fact that we are assembled here is a proof that it is not shut. If it were shut, the poor servant of Christ now addressing you would not be allowed to speak a word. Now, then, will you delay yet? Will you remain undecided yet? Oh! be besought not to remain undecided, but to close this night with Christ. If you leave it till tomorrow, it may be too late, and the difficulties will be greater than they are now.

## **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

Portion of an Address delivered to the Orphans of the Ashley Down Orphan Houses, April 3rd, 1874.

### **Luke 16:19–31**

IT has been Mr. Müller's practice for many years to address the orphans under his care on the morning of the day commonly called "Good Friday." On Friday, April 3rd, 1874, the children, to the number of about 1600, assembled in Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street, Bristol. The whole service was conducted by Mr. Müller.

The subject of the address was "The Rich Man and Lazarus" (Luke 16:19–31). In the course of his remarks Mr. Müller said,—

Beloved children, I desire to impress this point particularly upon you for your whole life, that without the blessing of God nothing you do will really prosper. You may toil and strive and labour ever so much, but unless God is your friend all in the end will be in vain. Through the Lord Jesus Christ alone you can be really happy, and therefore no one is to trust in his own power or goodness. Our eyes must be directed to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone are found life,

pardon for sin, and acceptance with God. If any of you, beloved boys and girls, desire to get to heaven, you must turn to Jesus; if you wish to escape the place of torment in which the rich man of whom we have read found himself, you must turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. If you wish to be in the place where Lazarus was after his life on earth, you must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and look to Him alone to enable you to reach that place of blessedness. This rich man, who at last went to the place of torment, was not a murderer; there is nothing said to show that he was. He was not a thief; there is not the least reason to think he was. Nor is it said that he was a burglar, or did any great open sin or wickedness. This man was like most people in this world who seek to enjoy themselves, who seek to live to themselves, who seek to please themselves, and care about themselves. This was the sin of this rich man, that he did not set God before him, that he did not live for the honour and glory of God; but that to go his own way, to please himself, to enjoy himself, to gratify himself, was the object of his life. As in Isaiah 53 we read, "We have turned every one to his own way," so this was this man's great sin, he liked to go his own way. Some sinners go astray in some way, and some in another. Many find their all in eating and drinking, others in pleasuring, others in making money, others in dress, others in pleasant society, but all, in one shape or other, living to themselves. This man's great sin was that he did not set God before him, did not seek to live to God, did not seek to please God, did not seek to glorify God.

Ask yourselves, dear boys and girls, "What is my object in life? What do I live for? Is it to enjoy myself? is it to gratify myself? or do I seek to live for the honour and glory of God?" Now none can live for the honour and glory of God unless they obtain a new nature, a heavenly nature, a spiritual nature, a divine nature. You remember the Lord Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." We must be changed,—not merely outwardly changed, but inwardly, altogether changed; and this can alone be through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. And then, only when we are born again, inwardly changed, having spiritual life within, we desire to live

not to ourselves, but to God. You see the vast importance of all this. You see that though this man enjoyed himself whilst here, it was only for a little time. He had to be dragged away from his enjoyments, he could not take these with him; he could not take his servants, he could not take his food, he could not take his costly raiment or his splendid house with him; he must leave all his gold, his cattle, his furniture,—everything, behind him. The rich may live in great comfort and splendour now, and when they die he carried to their graves in a hearse, with plumes on it and on the horses, to make a show; but what then? Ah! if they were not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ before they went out of the world, though they have such a splendid funeral, they, like this rich man of whom we have been reading, lift up their eyes in torments. Now it is just this torment I wish you to escape. I long in my inmost soul that you may escape this place of torment. For this purpose, dear children, the five houses on Ashley Down have been built, that beloved orphans might enter and hear of the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone it is possible to escape this place of torment. For this same reason this little meeting has been held to-day, and for this purpose the Word of God is read to you every morning and evening, and teachers and friends from time to time speak to you about the only way to heaven. Lay to heart, dear boys and girls, and ask yourselves this question, "If this were my last day, or suppose on my way to Ashley Down from this chapel I were to fall down dead, should I go to heaven, or to the place of torment?" None of the dear boys and girls can go to the place of happiness unless they are born again; for without faith in the Lord Jesus they are in nature's darkness, they are unforgiven, and not clothed in the righteousness of Christ. But if we believe in the Lord Jesus, then, though we have sinned times without number, though we have been the worst people that ever lived, yet believing in the Lord Jesus our sins at once are forgiven, and we become heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. The moment a poor sinner believes in the Lord Jesus he comes into the road to heaven. How many dear boys and girls here are believers in the Lord Jesus? That is the point. Those who are should see to it that by prayer and reading the Word of God, getting food for your souls, you live to the honour and praise of God.

Mr. Müller then read the narrative, commenting as he proceeded. Speaking of Lazarus being carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, he said,—Now I am a great sinner, a very great sinner, and deserve nothing but punishment, and if I had what I deserved I should have hell, but if I were to die I should go to heaven. Though a poor wicked sinner, and though I was particularly wicked when I was the age of some of you, yet if I died now, because I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I should not go to the place of torment, but I should go to heaven. I long to have all the dear orphans with me in heaven. How I long for it! How I pray for it! I pray that I may be surrounded in heaven by thousands of the dear children. But none of you will be in heaven unless while on earth you become believers in the Lord Jesus. Now, then how many will join me in heaven? I want to see in heaven not only the 1600 or 1700 who are here, but those who have already left the Orphan Houses, and all the thousands who may yet come to them; but I shall only see there those who have believed in the Lord Jesus. Lazarus was not taken up to heaven because he was a poor man, or because he was a diseased man, but because he was born again through faith in the Messiah. The Christian orphan may sit now side by side with the unbelieving orphan, may sleep in the same bed, and may eat at the same table; but this will not be the case when this life is over, for at death there will be a complete separation at once and for ever between the believers and unbelievers. I love you, and wish you to escape the place of torment; and therefore in plain language I tell you that there is no such thing as getting into heaven, without preparation, and that must be through believing in the Lord Jesus.

## **The Conversion of the Jailor**



Portion of an Address to the Orphans of the Ashley Down Orphan Houses, March 26th, 1875.

ON "Good Friday," March 26th, 1875, according to annual custom, there was a large gathering of the Ashley Down Orphans at a public service at Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street. About 1,600 were present, with their teachers and other workers associated with Mr. Müller. After singing and prayer, Mr. Müller read, expounded, and commented upon the narrative of the jailor's conversion, as recorded in the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. As in all his addresses, so now in this address to the orphans, his aim was to secure a practical application of the subject. Speaking of Paul and Silas praying and singing praises unto God at midnight in the prison, he said,—They knew they were suffering for well doing, not for evil-doing; they knew they were the children of God; they knew they were on the road to heaven; they knew that heaven was their home, and that if they never came out of prison again, heaven would be their home. Have you anything of the feeling they had? Some of you have. Have all of you something of it? Do you know your sins are forgiven? Do you know you are the children of God? Do you know you are on the road to heaven? Do you know that if you died this day you would go to heaven? Paul and Silas knew it, and so you may. Any one having this precious knowledge can afford, at all times and circumstances, to give thanks to God. Now it is that you may be brought to this blessed position, and have this happiness that I built the orphan houses, and that I have had the joy of gathering you under my care; and it is for this very reason your beloved teachers and my beloved fellow-labourers instruct you in the things of God—that you may have this joy and be as happy as Paul and Silas were. There is no reason why you may not be as happy as they were, though you are not apostles, and never can be; for it is the happy portion and privilege of all who are the children of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask, beloved children, that you will solemnly and earnestly ask yourselves, in the fear of God,—Are my sins forgiven? Am I a child of God? Am I on the road to heaven? Shall I go to heaven? Should I sing praises to God if I were in such a position as

Paul and Silas were? And if you cannot, then why not? God is not altered. He is the same almighty God. He is the same loving, good, and gracious God as He was in the days of the apostles. Why are you not happy? You cannot be in the state of mind they were in unless you are happy in your souls. Are you happy in your souls? Are you happy because you know you are the children of God? If not, you have not the right kind of happiness.

Speaking of the earthquake, and the extraordinary circumstances attending it, as an answer to prayer, Mr. Müller said: One or another, if there had merely been an earthquake, might have said it would have taken place if the apostles had not prayed. But what a remarkable circumstance that the earthquake should open the doors and loose the bands of the prisoners! The hand of God was in it. Here was the miracle. Do you know the power of prayer, my beloved children? I have been praying forty years. One proof of the power of it is that I see you here before me. But every one of you might know a little of the power of prayer. And we know not to what an extent we may know of the power of prayer. Try it, try it, beloved children; you must begin in the right way. If on the ground of your own merit or righteousness you ask God for blessing, you will not get it. You must ask on the ground of the merits and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is called in Scripture—asking in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. You must first be yourself a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of your own soul. Then, further, the blessings for which you ask must be according to the mind of God. For instance, if any one of you were to ask for many bags of gold so that you might be able to do all your days without work, you might ask a long time without getting these bags of gold to enable you to spend your time in idleness. Prayer must be according to the mind of God. Further: you must have confidence in the power, in the love, and the willingness of God to answer prayer; this is particularly important. We have to believe God does hear us, and is willing to give us the blessing. Then, having asked, we must go on waiting upon God and looking for blessing till it comes. I never in my life, in this way, asked God for blessing without at last getting it; and I expect I shall never

ask in this way without the blessing coming. And what God is willing to do for one He is willing to do for another. Have you had any answers to your prayers, my dear children? The answer to prayer brings great blessings to the soul. It makes one so happy when one gets answers to prayer. Ask yourselves,—How many answers have I had to my prayers? If you watch the hand of God you will easily find out if your prayers are answered.

Speaking on the 30th and 31st verses, Mr. Müller said,—Just let every one of these dear boys and girls consider,—Have I ever asked myself, "What must I do to be saved?" What is the answer? Some perhaps will say, We must pray. Prayer never saves, and never will save. Another may say, I must read my Bible. Reading the Bible never will and never can save. Another will say, I must go to a place of worship. But that will not save us. Another will say, I must keep the commandments of God, I try to please God. That never will save. The trying to save yourself by keeping the commandments would only add sin to sin, and increase your guilt. What then is to be done in order to be saved? We have to do nothing ourselves. Salvation depends altogether upon another, upon the Lord Jesus Christ whom God sent into the world to save us. Salvation is wrought out already, accomplished already, and all we have to do is to receive salvation according to the riches of His grace, as provided for the guiltiest, the oldest, the vilest, the most hardened sinner. As the beggar opens his hand when a kind lady or gentleman offers him something, so we should open our hands to receive the blessing God has provided for the salvation of our souls. And the way of receiving the blessing is to put our trust in Jesus, to depend on the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls, which is commonly called in the Scriptures—believing. I ask,—Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of your souls? If you do, your sins are forgiven, you are the children of God, you are brought on the road to heaven, you are born again, you will go to heaven at last,—through believing in Jesus, through putting your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. But without trusting in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ you can never have these

blessings. I am afraid there are many who have not yet asked yourselves this question, "What must I do to be saved?" What must I do? The first point is I—I—I. That I am saved—that my sins are forgiven—that I am born again—that I am a child of God. Until this is so, everything else is nothing. It is all very well to learn to read and write, to learn a little arithmetic, a little geography, and a little history, and for the dear girls to understand needlework. All this is right and proper to enable you to fill respectable positions in life,—all very well for this life; but the most momentous matter is this, that your soul is safe. There is not a single child here, there is not a single person in this large city who may not have salvation if they seek it in God's way, which is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Speaking of the jailor after his conversion, Mr. Müller said, the change of heart was shown in the manifestation of kindness. Religion does not consist in sweet words and religious sentences. It is a poor thing where it goes no further. Wherever there is real trust in the Lord Jesus Christ it shows itself in the life. Just as our faith is strong or weak, so in a greater or less degree will it be seen in our life that we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The jailor was made happy as soon as he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. As soon as I was brought to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ I was made happy—made very happy; and it is now in the fiftieth year that I am going on as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet I am happy—very happy. And that is why I come to speak to you, because I am happy in my soul, and wish you all to be as happy as I am. There is no reason why you should leave this place without being made happy. Now put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ; now pass sentence on yourselves, and condemn yourselves before God, and own you deserve punishment; but at the same time trust in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and this very moment you will be forgiven, this very moment you will be changed in heart, this very moment you will be brought on the road to heaven. Just as I left the meeting-place at which I was converted forty-nine years ago, so you, if you put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, may leave this place happy, very happy. Do not remain thoughtless, but be in earnest. I long for the salvation of your souls,

and day and night pray for it. The blessing may be had by every one. There is nothing to hinder. Only God looks for earnestness. Be in earnest, and the blessing will be yours. Only trust in Jesus,—only depend on Jesus, and the blessing will be yours.

## **Account of a Preaching Tour**

ON Monday evening, July 12th, 1875, at the ordinary Weekly Prayer-meeting at Bethesda Chapel, Mr. Müller, in accordance with, a previous announcement, gave an account of his recent tour to a large congregation, He said,—

"Nearly two years since my beloved wife and I visited Brighton. I preached there with evident marks of blessing both to believers and unbelievers, and I thereby was particularly led to consider how desirable it was—as I had ministered for more than forty-two years in Bristol, and almost exclusively during that time in Bristol—that I should not confine my ministry to Bristol. Last year we were in the Isle of Wight, and there I preached manifestly with blessing to those who heard. A very dear lovely brother in the Lord, who had been one of the leading ministers of Birmingham, said to me on the last Lord's Day I preached in his chapel,—'Dear Mr. Müller, I do not wish to flatter you, but I must tell you this has been the happiest day of my life.' This spoke to my heart. I knew how God was with me, and how He had used me in the ministry of the Word. It spoke to my heart thus: 'Why confine your ministry to Bristol only.' It was this in particular which determined me, by the help of God, to go forth to other places ministering the Word. Many of you remember that after my return from the Isle of Wight I stated here that I had it laid on my heart thus to go forth. Peradventure one or other thought this would never be. Nevertheless it remained in my heart. I had not spoken

lightly or unadvisedly, but to the glory of God, and in the fear of God. In process of time the thing came about. It was not simply that I looked at the result of the blessing I had seen in Brighton and elsewhere, but it was the deep consciousness,—I may speak egotistically, but I do not mind what is said about that, for I speak to the glory of God,—it was the deep consciousness that I had learned truth in the school of Christ during the forty-nine years I had been a believer, which I felt responsibility was laid on me to seek to communicate to others. I felt I knew God in a way which was not generally known. I felt I had an acquaintance with Scripture, and was able to apply truths in a way in which truths are not generally applied. I felt God was with me, and would help me, and that a blessing would come out of my labours. But more: I felt I had a place in the Church of Christ which not every one has; that I was known to hundreds of thousands and millions, and that these hundreds of thousands and millions loved me and esteemed me; and that therefore if I came to a place I should get hearers. The question was whether I should get places large enough to hold the hearers who would come. I felt therefore that on me was laid a responsibility to make good use—though at the evening of my life—of the opportunities God had opened for me to set forth the truth. After waiting on God, and seeing that the time had come, I went forth, and assuredly God has abundantly blessed my labours. I know some here thought little of it, and questioned whether I was called to this work. But as for myself I had the fullest assurance that it was the will of God, and that God would bless my labours abundantly. And what have I now to say? Ten times beyond my largest expectations, if not a hundred times, God has been with me blessing my labours. Now a few particulars. I wrote to a beloved Presbyterian clergyman at Brighton, and said I had it in my heart to go again to Brighton, and preach again in his church if he were willing. I had the most affectionate letter in return, in which he expressed the greatest delight at my coming, The first time I preached, not only was the place crowded to the utmost, but hundreds had to go away, and God wrought greatly in the way of blessing to the unconverted and to believers. And as soon as this dear brother found I was there, he gave

out that I should preach every Sunday and twice in the week, and I readily accepted it. So I preached time after time whilst there in this place, besides preaching also in the Odd-Fellows' Hall, where the so-called Brethren met. I had then invitations from all quarters to come and preach. At first I felt a little the exertion with regard to my voice and chest; but the more I preached the more this passed off, and soon I felt no difficulty whatever. So I looked out for the largest place in Brighton—the Dome,—which will hold 3000 persons. But as it could not be had on the Lord's-day evening,—the reason I found out afterwards being that the ministers in the place did not like their own congregations to be disturbed,—I took it for a week-day. It so happened that evening, that for an hour before the service the rain poured down in torrents, and continued so till after the meeting. One thousand persons were there, and God helped me to preach; but with regard to this place I had not the joy I had expected. The people did not sleep over what they heard at Brighton. I had the testimony of the Holy Ghost to my own soul how God blessed my labours there. I felt I had not strength for inquiry meetings, and therefore I did not attempt them, except once or twice; but felt I must leave this work to be done by beloved brethren and ministers stately labouring in the places in which I preached. I was delighted to meet the heavy expenses connected with these services."

Mr. Müller also referred to visits paid by him to Lewes, and continued,—

"Now having been nearly six weeks at Brighton, I felt I must go forth elsewhere. Preaching, of course, was not my only service. I saw many persons who came to me about their souls. A little portion of my work followed me from Bristol daily: I wrote my Report, and had correspondence to attend to. My beloved wife helped me in all, especially in the correspondence and with the Report. My purpose had been to go now to Liverpool, to follow up Mr. Moody's work there. I had corresponded with a beloved brother who particularly advised me to seek to lend a helping hand to the young converts. But when I gave myself earnestly to prayer about this, I was led, contrary

to my expectations, to Sunderland. It was most clearly and distinctly impressed on my heart to go to Sunderland instead of Liverpool. I prayed again and again, and Sunderland remained present to my heart, and I was delighted. There was a large Church there of about 800 believers, and a large chapel which would hold 1600 or 1800 persons, and my beloved friend Mr. Rees would give me a hearty welcome. I wrote him, and he was overwhelmed with joy. No sooner did he know I was coming, than he wrote to Mr. Spurgeon to say, that Brother Müller was passing through London on his way to Sunderland. I had then a most affectionate letter from this beloved brother asking me to preach on my way through London. This was done. I had no hesitation whatever about my voice, because my voice is very strong and very good. Moreover, I looked to the Lord for help regarding this as every thing else. The building holds 6000, and I judge that about 4000 persons were present, and that all heard me except any who were dull of hearing. God was with me, and helped me. I saw then how God helped me in every way. On the next day I prayed at the Haymarket Opera House, at Mr. Moody's meeting, and I believe every one heard me distinctly. When I preached the first time at Sunderland, I found, to my great sorrow, that whilst about 1800 persons were crammed into the place long before the meeting commenced, many hundreds could not get in. I preached for about four weeks at Sunderland, and also attended twice the noon-day prayer meeting, and spoke. The choicest part of my service during my absence from Bristol has been the opportunity of addressing many hundreds of ministers. The mere fact becoming known that Mr. Müller was to preach brought a number of ministers who had read my narratives and reports. Thus I judged my service particularly was used by God in bringing the simplicity of the truth before ministers, and the way of setting forth the truth and applying the truth. Whilst I was at Sunderland, two excellent ministers came to me, and in the name of all the Nonconformist ministers of Newcastle, asked that I would visit that town. I said, 'I am unable to give an answer; but if you can get me the largest chapel there, I will come next week and preach there, and then consider the case further.' They said, 'We pledge ourselves to this, and will make



arrangements.' I went, and there I preached in the largest chapel. You cannot get to any place where the truth is more needed than at Newcastle, on account of the sceptical reading and the infidelity that prevail there."

Mr. Müller then gave a detailed account of his labours at Newcastle, and of arrangements which were made for him to occupy the pulpits of the nine largest chapels in the town. Referring to one service, he said,—

"God was with me. If I had had an inquiry meeting I have no hesitation in saying that perhaps 200 would have stayed behind, but I felt that this was not my service. For many reasons it may be best to have a little time to see how far the work is real.

"I was asked to address a meeting of Christian workers. I consented, for I felt to decline would be false humility. If I said I had nothing to bring out to profit the people, it would be a shame and disgrace to me. For a servant of Christ, who for nearly fifty years has been engaged in the ministry of the Word, to have nothing to say, would be shame and disgrace. What chiefly induced me to go to Newcastle was the desire to follow up Mr. Moody's work, and to seek to benefit young converts by seeking to instruct them in the things of God. Mr. Moody began his labours in England at Sunderland. From Sunderland he went to Newcastle; and I desired to follow in his track."

Mr. Müller then referred to other places visited by him, and continued,—

"I state these facts to the glory of God, that all of you may have the deep conviction in your souls that it was of God that I should leave you for a time. I never spent a time in my whole life when I so enjoyed the presence and blessing and wondrous help of God. I bless and praise Him that at the close of my 70th year He has condescended to use a poor miserable worm to such an extent. I

adore, praise, and magnify Him for His wonderful condescension, though it does not surprise me. I expected great things from God. I knew that if ever I went forth in this way, that God would be with me and would abundantly bless me. The last meeting I attended—which was for Christian workers—was so blessed, so precious, that if during my fifteen weeks' absence from Bristol, that had been the only opportunity I had of opening my mouth, I should have been repaid most abundantly. Now what is the conclusion of the whole matter? I bless and praise God for the great honour, the glorious privilege, bestowed on me at the evening of life to do this great and glorious work. My inmost soul is convinced it is all of God that I should be far more abundantly engaged in such service. I purpose,—as soon as the Lord permits, as soon as dear Mr. Wright has had some relief and change, together with my dear daughter, and as soon as the Report shall have been completed, and God in other ways shall make my path plain,—to sally forth again. The next place I visit will be Edinburgh, because Mr. Moody went from Newcastle to Edinburgh. Then I purpose to go to Dundee and Glasgow; and then as God may lead me, to other large towns and cities, with the determination, as much as lies in me, to set forth the truth in its simplicity, as God may help me. I doubt not He will further bless me in this glorious service, for in my inmost soul I give Him all the glory. I am a poor miserable worm in myself; but if I were not to say that God was with me, and that I had not ministered in the power of the Spirit, I should be ungrateful to Him; for the power of the word was felt, and I have no doubt the greatest blessing conveyed has been especially to the hearts of hundreds of ministers who will become thereby the better instruments in setting forth the truth as it is in Jesus."

## **Account of a Second Preaching Tour**

ON Monday evening, July 10th, 1876, Mr. Müller, who had recently returned from a long preaching tour extending over ten months, gave an account of his labours during that period, to a large congregation in Bethesda Chapel, Great George Street.

After the singing of a hymn and prayer, Mr. Müller said,—One object, beloved brethren and sisters, why I propose that we should have this meeting is, as knowing how earnestly you prayed for myself and my beloved wife, both with regard to the service for the Lord, and with regard to blessing for our health of body and blessing to our souls, it seems right, suitable, and becoming, to bring before you cause for thanksgiving, for the Lord has been remarkably good to us in every way. As to our health, we have been remarkably well. If I may refer to myself, I have cause to say that during the forty-three years I have been in England, I have never had one single year that I have been in better health than during the past twelve months, and I find myself now as capable of work and labour, both as regards the body and mind, as I was fifty years ago. I do not know of a particle of difference as to energy of mind and strength. And as to voice, never during my whole life was it stronger than during the past twelve months, nor even when I first began to minister the Word, and ministered ten or twelve times a week, including services in the open air. I never had an engagement made but I was able to fulfil it, though during the time I was away I preached 328 times. Now this is a matter for thanksgiving; and as I know that you have been so kindly again and again remembering us, not only at these meetings but in the other chapels, and as I have the fullest reason to believe, in secret also, I feel it right to let this be known as a subject for praise and thanksgivings, how the Lord has been listening to your prayers; and we thank you heartily for the kind interest you have taken in us. Nothing happened, all the thousands of miles we have travelled, in the way of harm.

Then with regard to the help which the Lord has given, eternity only can prove with regard to spiritual profit and blessing; but this I do say to the praise of His name, whatever the appearance may be,

though I say it myself, I am certain I was never in one single city or town but the Master's print was left behind. Blessing, blessing in abundance, left behind, more especially among the children of God, though as to blessing among the unconverted there was a good deal. My especial object was not to go as an evangelist, though I did it, and with greater power and help than ever; yet that was not the object, but my particular object was the edification of the people of God, to seek to help on the believers, and especially to care about strengthening the young disciples; and in every way and in every place God most abundantly blessed the labours, so that again and again I had thanks given me for the kindness in coming to them. And again and again deputations were sent to thank me for coming to the place, on account of the blessing they had received. What I have to say savours of praising myself. I have counted the cost; I know well how one or the other who does not know me, and who does not desire to receive it from me as the desire to praise the Lord, will hear words of self-complacency and self-esteem. But this I must leave with Him. I seek to please Him. But this you know, that if I sought to praise myself, the blessed Lord would soon put me down.

When we set out, the first stage was London. We were there fifteen days, and I preached fourteen times. This sphere of service has always appeared to me one of the most glorious parts of my labour for the Lord, for I had from perhaps fifty or one hundred different Churches, individuals coming, so that among the 3,000 or more who heard me in the Conference Hall at Mildmay Park, were persons who came from all quarters of the city. During the whole time I was exceedingly helped by the Lord, and I believe most abundant blessing resulted. I preached to young converts five times, as well as to other Christians, and attended the noon meeting.

After this we turned our steps towards Scotland, for in the previous preaching tour we had not reached Scotland, and that was particularly laid on my heart.

Mr. Müller then stated again the circumstances which at first led him to devote his time to this service, and gave as his chief reasons: first, because in his work and labour in connection with the Church in Bristol for forty-three years, he had gathered a measure of experience on account of the length of time; and, second, because he had also gathered considerable experience in connection with the Orphan work which might be useful to others.

On these accounts, he said: I felt a measure of responsibility laid on my heart to benefit other children of God in the way of comfort, instruction, warning, and that I should do my best to lend a helping hand to other believers. Then many can bear me witness how for years I have again and again brought before you the importance not only of praying for evangelists, and to be thankful for evangelists, but to pray for pastors and teachers, that the young converts might be led on. Then I had it laid on my heart to follow up the work which God had wrought by the instrumentality of the beloved brethren Moody and Sankey, going to the places where they had been, and seeking to benefit the young converts. This I have been enabled to do, so that now scarcely any place remains unvisited. We have been to York, Sunderland, Newcastle, London (twice), Dublin, Glasgow, Dundee, Liverpool, Aberdeen, Inverness, Kilmarnock, Wick; so that as far as I know there only remain Manchester and Birmingham. And as I was going about from place to place I saw the deep importance yet further and further of being engaged in the work in which I was, because the blessing which has been communicated through these beloved American brethren was here and there in a measure beginning to grow cold; therefore the deep importance to lend a helping hand, to rouse, to strengthen the disciples, to bring before them not to be satisfied with first impressions, but to seek to grow, and particularly to be careful lest they should lose their first love.

The first place visited in Scotland was Kilmarnock. The largest parish church, holding 1,800, was placed at my disposal by the aged minister, a true evangelical man. I preached there three times; also preached in two different Free churches, the church of the

Evangelical Union, and the meeting-place of so-called Brethren,—seven times altogether; also once at Saltcoats. Everywhere we were received with the greatest kindness. Letters of commendation were not needed to one single place. I was known everywhere; everywhere I was loved and esteemed. Hearts were opened, and pulpits were opened with delight. This I felt to be the finger of God pointing out what was His will regarding me. I had reason to believe it would be so, for my heart has been towards the Church of Christ for many a year. I love all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, and I was loved among all the denominations, and by them all received with open arms, and the greatest kindness shown by every one, by Episcopalians, National Churches, United Presbyterians, Morrisonians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and so-called Brethren,—nothing but love shown me in all quarters! If I had had ten times the amount of time I could have used it all, so vast the openings, so abundant the openings,—and in no little corners, but to vast congregations. Now all this was God's confirmation as to what He would have me do, even to make good use of these precious, blessed talents which He had put into my hands to use for Him in the closing days of my earthly pilgrimage. Many of you have heard me pray that He would make the remaining days of my life the best part of my whole journey. I believe He is answering my prayers in this way, in condescending to use a vile, wretched, miserable worm, to the blessing of tens and hundreds of thousands, as in the past year.

After being in Kilmarnock a week, we went to Dundee. We went to no place without clear guidance. It was always manifest in every place that God had sent us there. Work was ready for us, and blessing followed. Our way to Dundee was instrumentally opened in this way. We had a very affectionate invitation to go to the Conference there. We waited on God about it, and as we prayed about it the matter became clear and distinct. We went to Dundee. At this Conference there was a large and particular service. A vast number of brethren in the ministry were present, and among them I could seek just to do what could be done to lend them a helping hand in the way of encouragement; and though it may seem boasting, I dare not keep it

back, for on the 17th of next month it will be just fifty years I have been engaged in the ministry of the Word, and if I had nothing to say to my younger brethren in the ministry, it would be a shame to me. I ought to be able to comfort, to encourage, and to help them, and by the grace of God I felt I had something to say. There was no keeping back in the way of false humility, for to the praise and honour and glory of God I could bring out what I had to say. At all these meetings I had blessed opportunities of giving out what I had learned, and all my mistakes I could bring out in the way of warning. To speak within bounds, I have had the opportunity of bringing the truth before 2,000 ministers. On one occasion alone I addressed for about an hour 500 of them, and at all the meetings they were present in great numbers. For instance, I brought out how profitable I had found the inquirers' meetings from my earliest days in the ministry; for although they were comparatively new in England, yet they were not new to me, as I had begun to hold them in Germany in 1828. Then, "How to get a text?" How deeply important not only to preach but to have the very message God would have us to deliver. Then, "What was the most profitable way of ministering?" Not sermonizing, but expounding the Scriptures, in order to lead the disciples to a love for the Word of God. Everywhere I went entreating and beseeching them to make good use of the Word of God, more and more to become men and women of one Book, to be taken up with the Bible, and to find all and all with regard to spiritual things in this blessed Book. And again and again they have thanked and blessed God that they have been stirred up to care about these things.

In Dundee I preached in an immense hall, called Kinnaird Hall, to 2,000 or 3,000 people. I preached also in a number of churches besides. Among others, in the church where beloved holy McCheyne preached—St. Peter's church; also in the McCheyne Memorial church. In all these places I attended the noon prayer-meetings, and particularly sought to revive the spirit of prayer, for I brought before them how entirely everything depended on earnestly dealing with God. Everywhere I went the prayer-meetings increased fourfold or fivefold, and sometimes to a greater number than that; because I

sought to bring before beloved brethren what it was to deal with God in simplicity, expecting great things from God; and the beloved brethren were encouraged thus to wait upon God, and blessing came. During the sixteen days we were in Dundee I preached sixteen times, and once in the neighbourhood of Dundee, at Broughty Ferry.

From Dundee we went to Perth. I had been invited by a Baptist minister at Perth to come and preach there. I knew nothing of the place except that this dear brother was a godly man, and that there were some beloved brethren in fellowship for many years, friends of beloved Mr. Craik, who had preached again and again in this Baptist chapel. This I found to be a small place, and it was crowded to the utmost. I next preached in the City Hall. When we arrived there, there were ten or twelve of the ministers of the town waiting to receive us. As they had no service in the evening (the preaching in Scotland being generally in the morning and afternoon), they were there to give me and my beloved wife the right hand of fellowship. Then we went into the hall. When they saw this hall crowded, they said, "It has been announced Mr. Müller will preach in the Baptist chapel, but the people cannot go in there;" and therefore they gave notice that I would preach in the United Presbyterian Church close by. This they arranged entirely by themselves, without consulting me in the least, showing by their actions their lovely spirit and readiness to receive me. We only stayed there five days, and then went to Glasgow, not only because there these American brethren had laboured, but because I was invited to come to the Conference. At the Conference the crowd was immense,—about 5,000 being present, and hundreds unable to get in. There was all but a complete disturbance on this account; but it was stated that Mr. Müller would repeat his address in one of the neighbouring churches, which I did, and also had the opportunity of enlarging upon the subject there, which I could not do at the Conference, on account of the number of speakers. Every Lord's-day I preached in the Prince of Wales' Theatre to between 3,000 and 4,000. Among these there were about 2,000 Christians, who had come there to get some spiritual food, as there are no churches open in the evening. On the week evenings I



preached in the largest churches in the place. Five different Monday evenings I preached to young converts, and the places were crowded to the utmost,—aisles and pulpit-stairs being occupied, the number present being about 1,600, all young converts. At another time I spoke to Christian workers in a church holding 1,600 or 1,700 people. They were admitted by ticket, to insure that all should be bonâ fide Christian workers. Then I also preached in the church in which Dr. Craik (brother of our departed brother Mr. Craik) preached. At the noon meeting I was present as often as possible; and there, at twelve o'clock every day, I had a congregation of about 1,000, among which were a great number of ministers. An Episcopalian bishop was again and again among my hearers, and I also had some conversation with him. Thus I went on in various places. I may just mention that the longer I remained in places, not the fewer came, but the number increased; the taste and relish for the truth increased.

In Inverness I began with 400 or 500, but by the time we were leaving, the place was crowded. I did not seek to excite the people, but to bring them to the Bible, and to make them value the Bible and prayer, and to expect great things from the Lord.

We were in Glasgow thirty-five days, and I preached, thirty-five times. Also at Kirkintilloch once, Pollockshaws once, and Hamilton once, making a total of thirty-eight times.

While in Glasgow I had a pressing invitation from Dublin to go to the Conference there, but hesitated about accepting it, on account of the great blessing in Glasgow. Then, came a letter signed by seventeen ministers in Dublin, entreating me to come. At last I felt I ought to leave, as I should have a most blessed opportunity in Dublin. Notwithstanding my natural disinclination for going to sea, we went; though in the depth of winter, we went; and it was of God that we went, for the opportunities were most blessed, I preached in the three largest halls, viz., the Metropolitan and Merrion Halls, and Exhibition Palace. Then I preached also at one of the Free churches

beside, and attended the noon meetings. Wherever I went these noon meetings were placed at my disposal at once. "Dear Mr. Müller, you may have them entirely to yourself, and give addresses at every one of them;" and in most places I did so. In Dublin the Lord was with me, and blessed abundantly.

While in Dublin I had time to look over letters I had received while in Glasgow, and among them was one inviting me to come to Liverpool and preach in the Victoria Hall, which letter I had not read till then. Since my return I may say that I have looked over the letters of invitation, and I have now no less than ninety-eight letters of invitation from the largest towns. When I read the letter from Liverpool, I thought this is too mighty for my voice, on account of the size; but we prayed about it, and I eventually agreed to go there. We were twenty-one days in Dublin, and I preached twenty-four times.

Before going to Liverpool, we went to Leamington in Warwickshire, where I preached fifteen times; to Coventry, where I preached twice; at Rugby once; at Kenilworth once. During the twenty-seven days I was in Leamington and neighbourhood, I expounded the Scriptures every morning at a large establishment.

Then we went to Liverpool. On the Lord's-day mornings we went to the Albion Hall for the breaking of bread, and in the evening to the Victoria Hall. The Lord strengthened my voice, and I preached eleven times the first week in this place. We went to York for one week. Then back to Liverpool, and preached again at Victoria Hall six days following. Many of the Liverpool merchants came from the Exchange to hear the address at the noon meetings. Altogether, I preached at the Victoria Hall thirty-nine times.

From thence we went to Kendal; and here, remarkable to say, as a large place was desired, the beloved Society of Friends offered their meeting-place, it being the largest in the town. I preached there twice, and twice in other places. Next we went to Carlisle, where I preached once.

Then to Annan, where I preached at the United Presbyterian Church. In this place the total inhabitants are 3,000, but out of these 600 were present.

Next we went to Edinburgh, where we remained six weeks. The Free Church Assembly Hall was placed at my disposal, and I was requested to give addresses at all the noon prayer-meetings, and hold as many meetings as I had strength for. In Edinburgh I preached fifty-three times. When in Glasgow I had a meeting with about 100 ministers of all denominations. In Edinburgh I had a similar meeting, with about sixty or seventy of the ministers. They asked a number of questions regarding pastoral work and the ministry of the Word, and everything was of the most affectionate character. I also addressed a meeting of about 800 Christian workers, and by the request of a professor, addressed many divinity students for about an hour.

After leaving Edinburgh we went to Arbroath; then to Montrose, preached there four times; then to Aberdeen, where we stayed three weeks. Here, in addition to other meetings, I had two meetings for women only: one meeting of 1,600, and another of 1,000. The very first evening God gave testimony in the winning of one of them, who was a teacher, and was brought to the knowledge of the Lord. From thence we went to Ballater, and then to Crathie. I preached six times close to Her Majesty's ground, the castle being within sight. Several of the Queen's household came: one, a German lady; also the housekeeper; and the head gardener, who is also one of the elders of the Free Church. At that time it so happened there was a communion in the Free Church, and the dear minister asked me to speak at this service.

Then we went to Braemar, where I preached twice. Then to Inverness, Wick, and to the extreme end of Scotland, preaching in the parish where John o' Groat's house is; and the scattered population came from three to six miles to hear. Then to Inverness again, and back to England. I purposed to have stayed a fortnight

longer in Scotland, but the death of an aged Christian friend made it necessary that I should come back sooner. We came to Reading, where we stayed thirteen days, and I preached thirteen times. Then to London again for ten days, preaching ten times.

Now I leave it with you, my beloved brethren, to form your own judgment as to what my business is. But to whatever conclusion you might come, I can only say this,—Day by day we have been crying to God for guidance, light, and direction; and the longer I have been engaged in this service, the more I see it is the will of God I should devote the evening of my life to this blessed work. Here I am: this seems the will of my heavenly Father; and until He speaks differently, what can I do but give myself to this service? For I feel there is responsibility laid on me to attend to it, on account of the openings I have in every place; on account of the love I have received in every place; on account of the confidence saints have in me everywhere I go. They say, "We know you by name for ever so long, and are delighted to see you and hear what you have to say." I have found that where no one else could go, I have been received with open arms. Brethren have told me, "Well, we will go and tell such a minister in the way of respect, but there is no prospect he will let you preach." The reply has been, "Is it Mr. Müller of Bristol? Mr. Müller of the Orphan Houses? delighted to let him preach." Such a thing never heard of before. Thus you see the openings God gives in every direction, and I feel the responsibility to use them. I have felt like this: "I have been the servant of the saints here for forty-three years, and delighted to minister among you; and formerly when I went away for a month, it was always like banishment to me, and delighted I was when the time came to come back. All this is now different. I see God leads me; and just as much as I was opposed to go from Bristol, I am ready to follow the leadings of the Lord. As long as He pleases to give health and strength and voice, and to give to Mr. Wright health and strength, and as long as there is nothing of a pressing character calling me back; what can I do but obey, and attend to this evident call from God to give myself to it? What of course may be next year I cannot say, for I am now nearly seventy-

one years of age; but at present this is my happy blessed service, in which I purpose to spend the evening of my life.

Now I commend this matter to you, my beloved brethren, asking you to help by your prayers; asking God to sustain us physically, mentally, and spiritually, in our precious service; to be pleased to make use of us, both myself and my beloved wife, who gives away tracts and speaks a word in private. All we can do is to commend ourselves to your prayers, that He would make it increasingly plain regarding us.

## **The Forgiving God**

A Sermon preached at the Tabernacle, Penn Street, Bristol, on Sunday Morning, August 13th, 1876.

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."—Psalm 103:3–5

WE should particularly notice in this Psalm, which I read to you, the stress the Psalmist lays on praise: "Bless the Lord (or Jehovah), O my soul, and all that is within me." His soul is engaged in the service. All!—the affections of His heart, the powers of His mind,—all! This is what we are to aim at. Not that we do not thank the Lord;—I trust we do, but that it be more of a spiritual character, that more and more the heart be engaged, all that is within be occupied with praising, adoring, and magnifying the Lord. Then there is a remarkable addition to this: "Bless His holy name." This is only what believers can be engaged in. Naturally, we care not about the holiness of God.

Naturally, man likes to gratify self, and would have God to be like himself. The attribute of holiness is the last, naturally, we care about. But when we are born again, when we are renewed, when we have spiritual life, there is begotten in our hearts a longing after holiness, and we rejoice in the fact that God is a holy Being. Then we have a prospect of one day being like Him. Only a child of God takes a real interest in admiring the holiness of God, and rendering praise to Him for it. Then the Psalmist adds, in the second verse: "Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." We are in danger of forgetting the mercies of God. We are ready to speak about our trials, our difficulties, our bereavements, our crosses; but are we just as ready to speak of and admire the goodness of God, and His mercies in numberless ways bestowed upon us all the days of our life? This the Psalmist was particularly anxious about. Now to our text:—

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities." This is the first blessing the Psalmist enumerates. The first mercy of which he especially desired not to be forgetful. Notice particularly that among all the blessings this is the first. And is not this the choicest blessing we have received? Is there one single blessing to be compared to this? What are all business blessings—and they are something to be grateful for—in comparison with the forgiveness of our sins? What are all the peace and quietness in the family—and these, too, are something to be grateful for—compared with the forgiveness of our sins? What is the soundness of the health of the body—for which we should be thankful—in comparison with the forgiveness of our sins? What is the vigour and strength of mind with which we are blessed, in comparison with the forgiveness of our sins? It is as nothing in comparison with it. The Psalmist brings this blessing first because it is the choicest, the chiefest, and the most precious a human being can have.

Let me affectionately ask,—Have we all obtained the forgiveness of our sins? That is the point! that is the point! Are we all pardoned sinners? We are all sinners, without exception. Are we all pardoned

sinners? Have we all obtained the forgiveness of our sins? That is the point! I have no doubt many hundreds here have; but at the same time I cannot help feeling that there are many who have not. Now this is the momentous point,—To which of the two classes do we belong? Pardoned sinners,—sinners with a load of guilt removed; or unpardoned sinners, unable to look up to God peacefully, calmly, through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ? Ask yourselves before God,—To which class do I belong? If I am not pardoned I am without peace, I cannot look peacefully and calmly forward to eternity, and do not know what will be the end of my course. It is a fearful thing to go on day by day unpardoned.

This leads to the question,—How can we obtain the forgiveness of our sins? Simply through laying hold by faith on the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. God, in the riches of His grace, instead of sending us to the place of perdition, as we deserved, laid all the punishment due to our numberless transgressions on His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Him He sent into the world, that in our room and stead He might work out a righteousness for us in fulfilling the whole law of God; so that poor guilty sinners who trust in Him shall be looked on by God as if they had lived the holy and spotless life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The believing sinner, standing before God in the righteousness of Christ, hiding himself—as he does—in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ wrought out for the poor sinner who trusts in Him, is accepted of Him. In our stead the Lord Jesus Christ bore every particle of the punishment we wicked, guilty sinners ought to have endured. Now God looks to us not to do something to complete the work of salvation, but to accept what He so graciously provides for the sinner in the person of His Son, whose righteousness He accepts for the sinner. But when the sinner believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, a different life begins; he seeks to please Christ, he seeks to adorn His doctrine, he seeks to walk according to His mind. He does this not to be saved thereby, or to add to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But having through faith been saved, having obtained forgiveness, and having been accepted in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ wrought out for sinners, he seeks to please

God. This is the way to obtain forgiveness,—simply trusting in Jesus, thus believing in Jesus. Whosoever does this obtains forgiveness.

Another important point is the knowledge of our forgiveness. We are not to wait for this knowledge till we die, far less are we to wait for it for the judgment-day. The blessing is to be had now, is to be known now, is something to be enjoyed now. He who is without it cannot be very happy for any length of time. It is this which brings the peace and joy of the Holy Ghost into the heart,—the knowledge that, wicked and guilty as we are, our sins are forgiven. My beloved Christian friends, do we all enjoy the forgiveness of our sins? I trust none say it cannot be had. Assuredly it can. This was the blessing enjoyed by the first Christians. They knew in whom they believed; that in Him they had "redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." They had that statement brought before them concerning the Lord Jesus Christ: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." So that every poor sinner believing in Jesus obtains the forgiveness of sins. This verily is a blessing to be had now. If any of you are without this blessing, do not give rest to the Lord till you know that your sins are forgiven. It is verily to be had and enjoyed now, for salvation brings with it present blessing. This is one of the blessings connected with our believing in the Lord Jesus Christ,—to obtain the knowledge of forgiveness.

Notice further the statement of the Psalmist,—not, "Who forgiveth some of thine iniquities, but ALL." That is so precious. It is not that five hundred of our sins are forgiven, or five thousand, but every one; so that though they be innumerable, every one is forgiven. Just think—vile, guilty as we are, every sin of every one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is forgiven. Do you enjoy it? I do enjoy the forgiveness of my sins. Not because I have very strong feelings. I do not rest on feelings. I take God at His word. I rest on His word: "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." I believe in Jesus, therefore I have been pardoned. I have had no dream or vision about it. Some people think that unless by some



strange vision or other they see Jesus suspended on the cross in some corner of the room they must remain in doubt. I have had no such vision. For fifty years I have never had a single minute's doubt about the forgiveness of my sins. For these years I have been a believer, and all this time the word I have referred to, and on which I rest, has been written in the Book, and by it I know my sins are forgiven. Every believer who is willing to take God at His word has a right to look on himself as a pardoned sinner, as a forgiven sinner. This is a blessing, a great blessing, to know that all our sins are forgiven. Suppose now our sins were just 9090, and suppose we had the forgiveness of 9089—just one single sin unforgiven. What then? This one single sin would bring us to the place of perdition. There is no trifling with sin. We must be perfectly without sin, hiding ourselves in the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and fully pardoned; or we are unclean, and cannot come into His presence. Therefore see the blessedness of this statement of the Psalmist: "Who forgiveth ALL thine iniquities." All gone! Oh, the blessedness of this! Every one gone! Sins of action, sins of word, sins of thought, sins of feeling, sins of desire, sins of purpose, sins of inclination,—all gone, as assuredly as we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation, of our souls.

Now comes a point to which I particularly wish to refer, for the instruction of Christians, and especially of young believers. We read, "Who FORGIVETH." This shows that forgiveness is something going on now. Christians may say, Sometimes we have statements in the New Testament as if our sins were all forgiven, and sometimes as if we needed to obtain forgiveness; and this passage, "Who forgiveth," seems as if forgiveness were going on. The explanation is this. In the position in which we stand as sinners, naturally being guilty criminals, the moment we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ we obtain the forgiveness of all our sins; and in the matter of our salvation, the thing is done once for all. But then we pass out of the old relationship of guilty criminals towards the righteous Judge, into the position of children; and in this relationship of children, though the matter of our salvation is settled, yet in the relation of children, whenever we

fail,—as is more or less the case day by day,—and the Holy Ghost makes us conscious of our failure, we have to own before God, in childlike simplicity, that in such a way we have not behaved ourselves, that this thing we have left undone, or that thing we have done improperly. In childlike simplicity we are to make confession before the Lord; then comes in that word: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" and there is a necessity of the High-Priestly office of the Lord Jesus Christ. So far as regards the matter of our salvation, when He died He could say, "It is finished;" and He then ascended as the great High Priest, still to point in the sinner's behalf to the efficacy of His blood. It is in this latter sense—in our position of children—that we need to make confession whenever we err or fail, to get the Fatherly forgiveness granted us; and this will be as assuredly as we confess. I trust this will be the explanation to my dear Christian friends.

"Who healeth all thy diseases." This is the next blessing of which the Psalmist desired to be mindful. Here we do not mean to say that the diseases of the body are excluded; for if any one is cured of any bodily disease, it is not by the skill of the doctor, or by the powerful character of the medicine, but by the blessing of God on the skill of the doctor. Still I judge that the especial point referred to here is spiritual disease. You remember what Isaiah said in the beginning of his prophecies: "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." We all know that that did not refer to the bodies of the Israelites, that they were not in that loathsome state as regarded the body, but that the reference was to their spiritual diseases. That is the case with regard to all sinners, at all times, and under all circumstances. If we are pure spiritually, it must come from the Lord. Now we have here particularly to remember that the poor sinner who trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ, the moment he does so is unconsciously, as it were, putting himself under the infinitely wise and gracious Physician. That blessed One takes him up and puts him into His own hospital, His own infirmary, and will not let him go till he is perfectly cured.

And as you all know, there is no such thing as a discharge out of that hospital or infirmary on account of incurable disease, as is commonly the case among men; but the patient is cared for till he is perfectly free from spiritual disease. The moment we are there the cure is going on. This very meeting is intended by the blessing of Jesus to do something towards that cure, to help us out of the diseased state. And this is the prospect of the weakest: that as assuredly as he believes in Jesus, as assuredly as he is not wilfully living in sin, so assuredly will he be brought finally into that state in which he will be altogether free from sin. We have been apprehended of God to be conformed to the image of His Son, to be at last altogether like Him, altogether holy, altogether free from spiritual disease. Pride will be gone completely; irritability, covetousness, worldly mindedness, will be all gone. We shall be gentle and lovely, pure and holy,—just like Jesus. Oh the blessed prospect! that Jesus will not give us up till we are altogether free from our spiritual diseases. Then shall this be fulfilled: "Who healeth all thy diseases." Such is His discipline and care, that day by day there shall be done something towards this complete cure, and we should say to ourselves, Have I made some progress today? Am I a little freer from disease to-day than I was yesterday? Am I something more conformed to Jesus to-day? At the new year we should say, Have I made more progress during the last year than the previous one? for the will of the Lord regarding us is that we should be like Jesus at the last; and that the will of God only needing to be presented to us, and instantaneously in our inmost souls we should be ready to do it. The Psalmist desired to be grateful to God that He was carrying on this cure.

"Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." This is true in a variety of ways. In regard to natural life,—If God did not watch over us, what would become of us? We are constantly exposed to the loss of our life. This is particularly so in the case of little children. When you look at little children in the neighbourhood of the Tabernacle, by the dozen, and the carts and carriages going by, who does not see that God watches over them. How true as to natural life: "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction." Then when we go a journey, how exposed

is our life to danger. And though we go no journey, but lie on our beds, we are continually exposed to the loss of our life. How often a stack of chimneys has fallen, and people have been crushed instantaneously! But there is more in it than this. Our whole life was to be for the glory of God. Now, unless we had believed in Jesus, either as to the Messiah who was to come, or in Him who had come, this life given to us would have been spent in hell. Our life has indeed been redeemed from destruction. But in reference to those who are not yet believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, their life given to them for the glory of Christ, and to be enjoyed throughout eternity, is yet liable to be spent in hell. See to it that your life be redeemed from destruction; for unless you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not fully true yet that your life is redeemed from destruction. Further: we who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who desire to live for Christ, suppose we had been left to ourselves since we believed—we should have gone back. We owe it to the grace and mercy and faithfulness of God that we are this day on the Lord's side, and that we have not gone back again into the world. Therefore, how deeply important it is to feel grateful that we have been upheld, and have the word, "He which hath, begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ," and that He will never leave nor forsake us. How blessed, how glorious this prospect!

"Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies." This was the next mercy for which the Psalmist desired to be especially grateful. We should have a clear understanding of the figure here used. Whenever a figure is employed in the Scriptures we should seek to have a clear understanding of it, so as to be able to know what is the meaning of the spiritual truth couched under it. The figure here is "crowning." We all know with regard to crowning, that not a dozen persons in a country are crowned, nor half a dozen, but that one individual is singled out, on whose head as a mark of honour and power is put the crown. But this individual singled out, taken out from the rest, is placed in this position of honour and power by the crown put on the head. Precisely thus our heavenly Father deals with us who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not a particle better

than the vilest. We are just as wicked as the poor prisoners on the Cut, or in the Bridewell, or at Lawford's Gate. We are just as bad in ourselves as these are, just as bad as the vilest in the city. When we see drunkards or prisoners carried off by the police-officers, we should say,—But for the grace of God I should now be a drunkard. But for the grace of God I should be in the hands of those policemen. And this we never should lose sight of to the last,—that the heart may be filled with love and gratitude to God more and more, and to the Lord Jesus Christ more and more, more and more; for had we been left to ourselves we should have been wallowing in sin, and in a far worse state. And it is this particular point to which the Psalmist refers when he says, "Crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies,"—lovingkindness meaning grace. In the Old Testament, coming to the Hebrew, it means grace. It is the grace and mercy of God to which we are indebted. But for the grace and mercy of God we should be like the vilest of the vile. All this we should be mindful of to keep us from high-mindedness and not thinking ourselves better than others, but that the heart may remain filled with love and gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now there is one more mercy remaining for which the Psalmist desired to be grateful.

Precious Lord Jesus Christ, now use the mouth of Thy servant; direct by Thy Spirit Thy poor servant to bring out those very points the beloved disciples especially need to help them. Help Thy servant, and let the Word come, not in word only but in the power of the Holy Ghost, that it shall not be forgotten to the end of the life of these dear disciples here. And Thy servant asks it for Thy dear name's sake.

"Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Notice the figure again,—the old eagles casting their feathers; and this being done, their strength verily renewed, and they become strong and powerful again. With those advanced in years this was the case. Thus the Psalmist looking on himself, admired what the Lord had done for him. He does not refer

to food, though that is included; and for every crumb of bread and drop of water we should be exceedingly grateful, for the body is strong and vigorous through the food given us. The Psalmist meant to say that his mouth was satisfied with good things, like that of the eagle's was, through the instrumentality of good food. But more than this; he referred to spiritual food, through which his spiritual strength was renewed. Now, beloved Christian friends, this is the momentous point. There is no necessity for aged believers to get more and more lifeless and careless and worldly-minded. As the Psalmist got old he did not get very worldly-minded, he did not get lifeless and cold and carnal, but his spiritual strength was renewed. Thus it may be with us. It is a mistake to suppose that for two or three years after conversion we may be in a healthy and lively state; and after we have known the Lord five or ten years, may expect to become cold and dead and formal, and go back again little by little. Far otherwise it may be, far otherwise it ought to be; and if not, we are not living to the praise and glory of God. The Psalmist in his advanced years was more happy in the Lord, more spiritually-minded; he had more spiritual power and vigour at the end than he had at the beginning. Oh! my beloved younger brethren and sisters, you have before you, not the prospect of dull and miserable days but of brighter and happier days.

And here I bear, for the honour and glory of God, my own testimony. I am happier now, after being a believer nearly fifty-one years, than I was fifty years ago; happier far than I was forty years ago, than I was thirty years ago, than I was twenty years ago, than I was ten years ago. As the time has gone on, my peace and joy and happiness in the Lord have increased more and more, instead of going more and more. Why do I refer to this? Not to boast, for it is all by the grace of God; but to encourage my younger fellow-believers to expect greater things from the Lord, who delights in giving abundantly. And as you sing sometimes, "More and more, more and more," there is yet more to come. Let us look out for it, for God delights to give more grace. It is the joy and delight of His heart to give more and more. Why should it not be? Why should we not in the last part of the life have

the best things? Has God changed? Far from it! Is the Bible changed? No! we have the same blessed word. Is the power of the Holy Ghost less? Far different from that; nothing of the kind! The Lord Jesus Christ is ever ready to bless. The word we now have is the whole revelation. And our heavenly Father has the same heart toward His children. Therefore there is nothing to hinder our being happier as time goes with us. If we are not happier, what is the reason? There must be a reason, and we should ask ourselves why we are not getting happier and happier.

Now in brotherly love and affection I would give a few hints to my younger fellow-believers as to the way in which to keep up spiritual enjoyment. It is absolutely needful, in order that happiness in the Lord may continue, that the Scriptures be regularly read. These are God's appointed means for the nourishment of the inner man. If the Word of God is neglected, you are not making progress, but you are spiritual babes, and remain so. That is not all. You will become spiritual dwarfs! you will become spiritual dwarfs! spiritual dwarfs! Instead of living to the glory of God you will be living to dishonour Him. You see we are left here after conversion to live for the benefit of the world. Only a few of the children of God are taken to heaven directly after their conversion, but they are left to live for awhile here for the glory of God. This cannot be unless we regularly give ourselves to the Word of God, unless we come to it day by day and pray over it. We should consider it, and ponder over it, in reference to our own wants. But especially we should read regularly through the Scriptures, consecutively, and not pick out here and there a chapter. If we do we remain spiritual dwarfs. I tell you so affectionately. For the first four years after my conversion I made no progress, because I neglected the Bible. But when I regularly read on through the whole with reference to my own heart and soul, I directly made progress. Then my peace and joy continued more and more. Now I have been doing this for forty-seven years. I have read through the whole Bible about one hundred times, and I always find it fresh when I begin it again. Thus my peace and joy have increased more and more. Now think of it, you beloved younger brethren and sisters

in particular, and say, Let me live to the glory of God. And if you have arrived to middle age, and have neglected thus to read the Word of God, begin it now with earnestness; and if you thus read with prayer and application to your own heart, and seek to practise what you find, your peace and joy will increase more and more, more and more; and it will be said of you, "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Thus the prospects of eternity how bright, when we lay hold of the precious Word! May the Lord grant that we may individually be able to do so!

But are there any dear friends here who have not yet obtained forgiveness? If there are, let them now pass sentence on themselves, let them now condemn themselves as guilty sinners, and put their whole trust for salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom, alone it is to be obtained.

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## MONERGISM BOOKS

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