

CONFIDENCE AND CONCERN NO. 1913

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, AUGUST 8, 1886,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”
2 Timothy 1:12-14.

OUR apostle was in prison. If he was confined in the Mamertine, those of us who have shivered in that dark underground dungeon may well pity him, and if he was confined in the prison of the Praetorian Guards, he fared no better, for the near company of such rough and cruel soldiers would involve much suffering. The apostle was not only a prisoner, chained by his right hand to a soldier both day and night, but he was, to his intense sorrow, forsaken by his friends.

The encouragements of Christian communion are exceedingly great, and the loss of them is very bitter. Those who ought to have gloried in the apostle for his fervor, his self-sacrifice, his courage, and his zeal, had turned against him, he writes to Timothy, “This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.” It would seem that these two notable persons were ashamed of Paul’s chain, and to their endless disgrace turned against him.

Deserted in his utmost need, deprived of his liberty, and treated as a breaker of the laws, we could not have marveled if the apostle had been somewhat dispirited. Active spirits are apt to fret in confinement, and tender hearts bleed under desertion. Beside that, the man of God was in daily danger of execution by the tyrant’s sword. He was not likely to be spared by the monster who occupied the Roman throne, and already he had the sentence of death in himself. Any morning he might be awakened by a rough summons to come forth and die.

See him then—such a one as Paul the aged! Wearing his chain, he sits in his cell, expecting soon to die a cruel death, but instead of being personally discouraged, he has encouragement to spare for others. He is thinking of young Timothy, and not of himself. As for himself, he says, “Nevertheless, I am not ashamed,” and then he charges his young brother not to be disheartened nor shaken in faith, but bravely to carry on the great work committed to his charge.

It is grand to see how calmly this man bore himself! In his case it was indeed true that “stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.” Paul ranged the world with his free missionary spirit, and he reigned more royally in his prison than Caesar in his palace. No one envies Nero, but many have felt that Paul’s sufferings might readily be embraced for the sake of his exalted life.

What was the cause of the cool courage of the apostle? On what foundation was his peace builded? How was his confidence sustained? He tells us in our text how his fears were removed, and he also informs us as to a matter which pressed upon his mind. Our discourse this morning will be an attempt to show at once Paul’s *confidence* and his *concern*. I pray God to bring our minds into a parallel line with that of the apostle, so that we may enjoy the most serene peace, as Paul did, and may at the same moment feel a noble concern for higher interests than those which begin and end with ourselves.

The honored apostle had committed all his own matters into the hand of God, and so was at perfect peace about them, but he experienced deep anxiety for another treasure, which was committed to himself, which he handed over to Timothy with an earnest entreaty that he would guard it by the Holy

Ghost. The blending of deep peace and holy zeal will give us a condition of heart of a most desirable kind.

Our subject opens up to us under four divisions. First, we shall notice *what Paul had done*, then, secondly, *what Paul knew*, thirdly, *what Paul was persuaded of*, and lastly, *what he was concerned about*.

I. First, observe carefully WHAT PAUL HAD DONE. I will speak but briefly here.

He had trusted a person—"I know whom I have believed." He had trusted that person with full, clear knowledge of Him, so trusted that he did not alter his trust as years rolled by, but as he grew in the knowledge of that person he was also confirmed in his confidence in Him, "I know whom I have believed."

He does not say, "I know *what* I have believed," though that would have been true, he does not say, "I know *when* I believed," though that would have been correct, nor does he say, "I know *how much* I have believed," although he had well weighed his faith. He does not even say, "I know *in whom* I have believed," but he goes closer still. He says expressly, "I know *whom* I have believed," as much as to say, "I know the person into whose hand I have committed my present condition, and my eternal destiny. I know who He is, and I therefore, without any hesitation, leave myself in His hands."

Brethren, it is the beginning of spiritual life to believe Jesus Christ. Is not this the one word that we preach to you continually? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "He that believeth on him is not condemned." Many are the Scriptural assurances to the same effect. Paul had not ventured upon a fancy, but he had trusted in a well-known friend. He had not done this in ignorance, nor in fanaticism, nor in desperation, but with cool, clear, deliberate judgement, knowing whom he had trusted. Ignorance is a wretched foundation, but sure knowledge is like a rock.

Paul had gone further, and had practically carried out his confidence, for *he had deposited everything with this person*. He had unreservedly committed his body, soul, spirit, character, life, and immortality to the guardian care of that person whom he knew and loved so well. I may believe in a person, and yet I may never have committed anything to his charge, he might not wish that I would do so, nor be willing to accept any trust at my hands, but we must go that length with the Lord Jesus.

While we are bound to believe in the Lord Jesus as faithful and true and able to save, this belief is not enough in itself to work salvation, we must in consequence of this belief actually and definitely convey out of our own keeping all our eternal interests, and put them into His keeping. We must make the Lord Jesus Christ the depository of all our anxieties and hopes. He must be to us the banker who has the custody of all our valuables, and bonds, and title-deeds, yea we must leave with Him ourselves also. All that we are, all that we have, all that we expect to have, we must confide with Jesus.

A poor idiot, who had been instructed by an earnest Christian man, somewhat alarmed him by a strange remark, for he feared that all his teaching had been in vain. He said to this poor creature, "You know that you have a soul, John?" "No," said he, "I have no soul." "No soul!" thought the teacher, "this is dreadful ignorance." All his fears were rolled away when his half-witted pupil added, "I had a soul once, and I lost it, and Jesus found it, and so I have let Him keep it." How could he better have expressed his faith?

Is not that exactly what the apostle meant, he passed his soul out of his own keeping into the care of Jesus, his Lord? As a man leaves his estate with a trustee, or as the patient entrusts his life to his physician, even so had the apostle Paul committed himself into the hands of that glorious Person, whom having not seen he loved.

I pause here to ask whether we have all done the same. This is a vital question. If you, my friend, are keeping your own soul, you have a poor keeper. You will lose your soul as surely as you attempt to be your own savior. Have you once for all transferred salvation work from yourself to Jesus? Are you looking out of yourself, and looking to Jesus only? Are you leaning upon the Beloved? Are you living in Him? If so, your safety is secure. In the hand of Jesus a soul must be safe. In the keeping of Jesus

nothing shall hurt you either night or day. In Him you dwell in a fortress and high tower, and no enemy shall molest you. Through time and eternity you are secure. Death shall leave you sleeping on His bosom, resurrection shall awaken you in His likeness, and endless ages shall display your security in Him forever and ever.

What Paul did is summed up in these words, “I know whom I have believed,” “I have committed everything to Him.”

II. The next thing is, WHAT DID PAUL KNOW?

He tells us plainly, “I know whom I have believed.” We are to understand by this that Paul looked steadily at the object of his confidence, and *knew that he relied upon God in Christ Jesus*. He did not rest in a vague hope that he would be saved, nor in an indefinite reliance upon the Christian religion, nor in a sanguine expectation that all things would, somehow, turn out right at the end. He did not hold the theory of our modern divines, that our Lord Jesus Christ did something or other, which, in one way or another, is more or less remotely connected with the forgiveness of sin, but he knew the Lord Jesus Christ as a person, and he deliberately placed himself in His keeping, knowing Him to be the Savior.

His countrymen did not know Jesus, or they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, but Paul knew Him. Those around the apostle were strangers to the Lord Jesus, and could not sympathize with Paul, yet he knew Him. Some of them curiously asked, “Who is this Christos of whom you sing?” Others asked, “Who is this crucified One, of whom you make so much?”

Paul answers by avowing his own faith—“I know whom I have believed.” He had no phantom Savior, no mythical Savior, no unknown Savior, no Savior sharing salvation with two or three others. Paul knew no company of saints and virgins, nor even a church to which he trusted his soul, but he says, “I know whom I have believed.” Jesus was a distinct person to the apostle, so real as to be known to him as a man knows a friend.

Paul knew nobody else as well as he knew his Lord. By faith he knew Jesus as He was born at Bethlehem, partaker of our humanity, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh—a brother born for adversity. He knew Him as He died on Calvary, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. He knew Him as dead, and buried in the tomb of Joseph, and as risen from the dead for our justification. He knew Him as gone up into the glory, and sitting at the right hand of God, clothed with honor and majesty. Because of all this, the apostle trusted his Lord. On what better ground could he have gone? What could be more reasonable than that he should entrust his all with One so fitted to preserve him till the day of His appearing?

Dear friends, do you really know Christ Jesus as a real person? Do you trust in Him as now living? I beseech you do not trust the weight of your salvation upon a doctrine. A statement, an abstraction cannot save you, you need the active interference of a person. Do not trust in a form of faith, or in a code of rules. What are they? Trust in the living person of Him who, though He was dead, rose again, and ever lives to make intercession for us at the right hand of God, even the Father. I trust that you have no hesitation as to faith in Him, but that you can sing with me—

*“Jesus, my God, I know His name,
His name is all my trust,
Nor will He put my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost.”*

Paul also knew the character of Jesus whom he trusted. His perfect character abundantly justified the apostle’s implicit trust. Paul could have said, “I know that I trust in one who is no mere man, but very God of very God. I have not put my soul into the keeping of a priest, like unto the sons of Aaron, who must die, but I have rested myself in one whose priesthood is according to the law of an endless life—a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He upon whom I confide is He without whom was not anything made that was made, who sustains all things by the word of His power, and who at His

coming shall shake both the heavens and the earth, for all fullness of divine energy dwells in Him.” Paul knew that his Christ was God as well as man, and so he felt safe in relying upon Him.

He knew also that this blessed person was pre-eminently satisfactory to the heart of the eternal God. What manner of perfection must concentrate itself in Him in whom the Father Himself delights? Think of Him as the great sacrifice for sin, which has made a complete, absolute, and everlasting atonement, to which, nothing can be added, from which nothing shall ever be taken away. Think of Him in whom the justice of God is vindicated, and the love of God is displayed.

When my own eye darts a glance to Calvary, and I picture the Lord of glory dying there for my sake, I cannot allow a doubt to live, I feel compelled to trust. I cannot but rest in perfect peace when I see that great sacrifice, which has forever put away all the sins of believers.

Beloved, Paul knew whom he had believed as being divine in His person and complete in His sacrifice, but more than that, Paul knew that the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom he trusted his soul, was now adorned with all the glory of heaven, and clothed with all the omnipotence of the mighty God. He knew that, if *he* was bound, Jesus was not bound, and that, if *he* must die, yet Jesus could not die. He knew that the Lord shall reign forever and ever, and his expectant ear caught the hallelujahs of eternity when the Crucified shall be acknowledged Lord of all.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” said Jesus, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them.” Paul felt that such power was worthy of boundless confidence, and therefore he said—“I know whom I have believed.” Jesus was to Paul’s faith no longer the despised and rejected Nazarene, no longer the condemned and crucified Man of sorrows, but He was the acknowledged King of kings, and Lord of lords. He knew Him in His risen glory. Happy, happy, happy heart which has such knowledge of Jesus, and such confidence in Him!

Now, brethren, I think I have shown you why Paul should have much faith in Jesus. How could he do otherwise than trust in one of whom he knew such wonderful things? But *how did Paul come to know Christ?* I suppose he knew Him in great part by the Word of God. Every page of Scripture, as the apostle perused it, revealed Jesus to him. These Scriptures are the swathing-bands of the holy child Jesus, unroll them, and there He is. This Book is a royal pavilion, within which the Prince of peace is to be met with by believers who look for Him. In this celestial mirror Jesus is reflected. This is a sure testimony, more to be trusted than the sight of the eyes, or the hearing of the ears. Do you know Christ by seeing Him in His word?

Paul also knew Jesus in another way than this. He had personal acquaintance with Him, he knew Him as “the Lord Jesus, who appeared unto him in the way.” When he was going to Damascus to persecute the saints of God, this same Jesus spoke out of the excellent glory, and said to him, “Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?”

Brethren, have we any personal acquaintance with Christ? If not, our witness will not run parallel with Paul’s utterance in our text, “I know whom I have believed.” Did Jesus ever call you to Himself, and have you answered His call? Has He so spoken as to change the whole current of your life? Does He still speak to you? Do you remember a sacred place, a consecrated spot where Jesus has met you? Have you a chamber where He keeps tryst with you, and manifests Himself to you as He does not to the world? If so, you can well trust Him whose love is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost, you can well trust Him, for He is no stranger, but your near kinsman, who is mindful of you, and visits you. Cannot you join with our poet, and softly sing—

*“Yea, though I have not seen, and still
Must rest in faith alone,
I love Thee, dearest Lord, and will,
Unseen, but not unknown.”*

There are other gates of the soul beside eyes and ears, other touches than those of the hand, and other feelings than those of the flesh. Our inner spirit when it would commune with the spiritual world disdains to use the gross and inefficient instruments of this poor body, she cannot with these have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. By its own inner hand our spirit has touched Him, with her own inner mouth she has kissed the Well-beloved, with other than a material eye she has beheld her unseen spouse. Our eyes do not see, *we* see through our eyes even these temporal things, but we see eternal things without the need of eyes.

Our spirit needs no intervening medium, but she sees in her pure spirit the pure spirit of Jesus face to face. More than the senses could convey to the soul she perceives without them. This is a divine and blessed knowledge, and the apostle could, with all his heart, declare that it was his own. Though he had once known Christ after the flesh, he declared that after the flesh he knew Him no more, but he knew Him so well and so truly after the spirit that he said, without reserve, "I know whom I have believed."

He knew the Lord also by practical experience and trial of Him. Paul had tested Jesus amidst furious mobs, when stones fell about him, and in prison, when the death-damp chilled him to the bone. He had known Christ far out at sea, when Euroclydon drove him up and down in the Adriatic, and he had known Christ when the rough blasts of unbrotherly suspicion had beaten upon him on the land. All that he knew increased his confidence.

He knew the Lord Jesus because He had delivered him out of the mouth of the lion. "I know," said he said, he was past the age of speculation and theory. Look at his hoary locks and his scarred face, he is no fair-weather sailor, he has sailed with his Lord upon the great deeps, and has suffered many things for His sake, and now after all his experience he does not say that he hopes, supposes, or thinks, but he writes, "*I know.*" Glorious dogmatist, we are not ashamed to follow in your track! Where is there any comfort or stimulus, except in truth assuredly believed? To doubt is to be downcast and feeble, only in solemn assurance is there courage and strength.

Come on, you who cavil and criticize. Paul meets you with "I know." You demand that he shall maintain his thesis with logic? He answers, "I know." What he knew of his Lord was as sure to him as his own consciousness. He had no reserve in his mind for future alterations of creed, for he had reached certainty. "I know whom I have believed." He could not doubt Him, nor distrust Him, nor stir an inch from the absolutely unlimited confidence which he reposed in Him.

Beloved, I trust we know as much of Jesus as leads us to a living faith in our living Lord. Some people do not know much else, but they are well educated if they know this. Others are skillful in classics, and mathematics, and applied sciences, but if they do not know Jesus, in whom the saints believe, they are in the worst of ignorance. I pray God to send such untaught persons to His infant school, for it is written, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." May we be taught of God to know Jesus by that practical acquaintance which engenders trust in Him!

III. Thirdly, let us inquire—WHAT WAS THE APOSTLE PERSUADED OF?

If one should say to a Christian man, "Pray, sir, what are your opinions?" he might answer, "I have no opinions, but I know whom I have believed." If the inquirer then said, "But what is your persuasion?" he might answer, "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him." This method of treating matters is far better than forming mere opinions for ourselves, or borrowing persuasions from others.

Implicitly Paul declares his faith in our Lord's willingness and faithfulness. He does not mention these in words, but sometimes there is great instruction in omissions, things not said may perhaps be more conspicuous by their absence than things which are spoken. Silence is often more emphatic than speech. Paul does not raise the question whether the Savior was willing or faithful to keep what he had committed to Him—he takes that for granted. He will not even assert his knowledge of the truth and grace of his Redeemer, he leaves these among the things which could not be questioned for a moment.

Dear heart, if you have given yourself to Christ, Christ has given Himself to you, do not doubt His readiness to receive you! If you are leaning upon the Beloved, He is willing to be leaned upon, and He will never fail you. If in very truth His word is your trust, the Lord will never run back from His promise. Has He not said it, and will He not do it? Take this for granted. Receive it as an acknowledged principle which none may question.

But *the point which the apostle expressly mentions is the power of Christ*—"I am persuaded that he is able." He had a solemn conviction of the ability of the Lord Jesus, who is able to save unto the uttermost. Let us hope that no believer here has any doubt about the power of Christ, if he has, the doubt is most absurd. He that goes to the sea for salt water cannot rationally fear that he will be forced to come back with an empty bucket. He that lifts up his face to the sun can have no doubt but that his features will be bright with the light.

So he that turns to Christ may be persuaded that there is no lack of sufficiency or ability in Him. "Oh," says one, "I do not doubt the ability of Christ to save me." May I ask you, then, what you do doubt? "Oh, I doubt my own merit, my own ability, and so forth." What have any of these things to do with the matter in hand, which is the power of Jesus? These things are out of the circle altogether. All the salvation of a man depends upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and if *He* is able to save you, why are you full of fears?

If you have committed your money to the banker, and you say, "I am afraid it is not safe," the only justifiable reason for such suspicion must be because the bank is not solvent. Would you say, "I doubt about my money, because I have a headache?" Would that be rational? Would you say, "I am afraid my money is unsafe because my eyesight is failing me?" Does that influence the safety of your deposit at the bank? Nothing can affect that matter but want of stability in the bank itself.

If you have committed yourself to the care of the Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot listen to those miserable "ifs" and "buts," they are unreasonable and irrelevant. I blow them away as so much chaff. If Jesus is able to save, and you are trusting Him, there is no room for distrust. Can you doubt the Lord's ability? Have we not believed in His Godhead, and in the almighty power with which the Father has girt Him as the God-man, the Mediator, now that He has gone up into His everlasting reward? If these be facts, how can it be difficult to trust such a one? Trust my soul with Christ! Why, if I had all your souls within my body, I could trust them all to Him, and if every sin that man has done, in thought, and word, and deed, since worlds were made, or time began, could meet upon my one guilty head—I dare say it—the precious blood of Jesus could wash them all away. Trust Him with one soul! Yes, indeed, it seems too little a thing.

He that goes on board a great Atlantic liner does not say, "I venture the weight of my body upon this vessel. I trust it to bear my ponderous frame." Yet your body is more of a load to the vessel than your soul is to the Lord Jesus. Did you ever hear of the gnat on the horn of the ox which feared that it might be an inconvenience to the huge creature? O friend, you are but a gnat in comparison with the Lord Jesus, nay, you are not so heavy to the ascended Savior as the gnat to the ox. You were a weight to Him once, but having borne that load once for all, your salvation is no burden to Him now. Well may you say, "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him."

What was this which Paul had committed to Christ? He committed to Him everything that he had for time and for eternity, his body, his soul, his spirit, all fears, cares, dangers, sins, doubts, hopes, joys, he just made a clean removal of his all from himself to his Lord. "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." See how the eye of the apostle lights up as he tells his amanuensis to write down, "He is able to keep my deposit *against that day*."

If he had little joy and rejoicing in his waiting time, he would nevertheless look to have his full of it in that day of days, that day in which his Lord would appear. He left everything with Jesus with a view to the Advent, the Judgment, and the eternal glory. Then would he look for his divine Keeper to produce the deposit entrusted to Him. There will be no need in that day to ask, "My Lord, is it all right?" Yet we may picture Him as coming in all His glory and majesty, to be admired in all them that believe. He sits

upon the throne of His glory, and there are you amongst the countless multitude. Suppose you could say, "My Lord, I trusted You with my soul, am I safe? I trusted You with my eternal interests, are they all secure?" How sweet will be His reply, as He says to His Father, "Of them which thou gave me have I lost none," and to us, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you"!

If any inquire of us in glory, "How did you get here?" we will answer, "*He* brought us here." If they say, "How is it that you are on His right hand?" we will reply, "Because His own right hand brought us there." "But how is it that you are so bright in your apparel?" "We have washed our robes, and made them white in His blood." "How is it that after you were converted you did not turn back?" "He kept us in the way and preserved our lives, for He said, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.'" "How is it that you have escaped the power of the enemy since you were only a sheep, and a wolf was after you?" "It is because He said, 'I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.'" "

When the Lord shall make up His last account of His jewels in that great day, we shall be found in Christ, even as gems are found in a golden casket. In the Lord Jesus Christ all His elect, all His blood-bought, all His called, all His justified, all His believing people shall be found in that day. None of His redeemed shall be absent in the day when the sheep shall pass again under the hand of Him that tells them. All who were marked with the blood-mark here below shall be folded in the pastures of glory. "I know whom I have believed," says Paul, "and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

Those of you who are acquainted with the original will follow me while I forge a link between my third division and my fourth. If I were to read the text thus it would be quite correct—"I am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit against that day." Here we have a glimpse of a second meaning. If you have the Revised Version, you will find in the margin, "that which he has committed to me," and the original allows us to read the verse whichever way we choose—"He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him"—or "that which he has committed unto me."

This last expression, though I could not endorse it as giving the full sense of the text, does seem to me to be a part of its meaning. It is noteworthy that, in the fourteenth verse, the original has the same phrase as in this verse. It runs thus—"that good deposit guard by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." Inasmuch as the words are the same—the apostle speaking of "my deposit" in the twelfth verse, and in the fourteenth verse speaking of "that good deposit"—I cannot help thinking that one thought dominated his mind. His soul and the Gospel were so united as to be in his thought but one deposit, and this he believed that Jesus was able to keep. He seemed to say, "I have preached the Gospel which was committed to my trust, and now, for having preached it, I am put in prison, and am likely to die, but the Gospel is safe in better hands than mine."

The demon of distrust might have whispered to him, "Paul, you are now silenced, and your Gospel will be silenced with you, the church will die out, truth will become extinct." "No, no," says Paul, "I am not ashamed, for I know that He is able to guard my deposit against that day." I cannot tell you what heart-cheer it often brings to my soul, in these evil days, to join in the confidence of this text.

At the present moment, it seems as if parts of the church had almost forgotten the Gospel of the grace of God. We hear on all hands, "another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." We hear the noise of archers at every place of drawing of water, and the wayfaring man almost ceases from the highways of Zion. Worldliness is growing over the church, she is mossed with it. The visible church is honeycombed through and through with a baptized infidelity. Unholy living is following upon unbelieving thinking. They boast that they have nearly extirpated Puritanism, some of us are described as the last of the race.

Have they quenched our coal? Far from it. The light of the doctrines of grace shall yet again shine forth as the sun. Elijah was wont to say, "As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand," and this also is my confidence, truth lives because God lives. Though truth were dead and buried, it would rise again. The day is not far distant when the old, old Gospel shall again command the scholarship of the age, and shall

direct the thoughts of men. Even if it were not so, it would be a small matter, for it signifies little except to themselves what *men* think, since God is true, and with truth there is power. The fight is not over yet, the brunt of the battle is yet to come. They dreamed that the old Gospel was dead more than a hundred years ago, but they dug its grave too soon. Conformists and Nonconformists had alike gone over to a cold Socinianism, and in the old sanctuaries, where holy men once preached with power, modern dreamers droned out their wretched philosophies.

All was decorous and dead, but God would not have it so. On a sudden, a voice was heard from Oxford, where the Wesleys and their compeers had found a living Savior, and were bound to tell of His love. From an inn in Gloucester there came a youth, who began to preach the everlasting Gospel with trumpet tongue. A new era dawned. Two schools of Methodists with fiery energy proclaimed the living word. All England was aroused. A new springtide arrived, the time of the singing of birds had come, life rejoiced where once death withered all things.

It will be so again. The Lord lives, and the Gospel lives too. Our charioteers are driving as fast as they can in the direction of Unitarianism and spiritual death, but the Lord will lay His hand upon the bridles of the horses, though Jehu himself drives them, and He shall turn them back again by the way whereby they came. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep my deposit against that day."

IV. This leads me on to this fourth point—WHAT THE APOSTLE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT.

The matter about which he was concerned was this deposit of his—this everlasting Gospel of the blessed God. He expresses his concern in the following words—"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou have heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us."

First, *he is concerned for the steadfastness of Timothy*, and as I think for that of all young Christians, and especially of all young preachers. What does he say? "Hold fast the form of sound words." I hear an objector murmur, "There is not much in *words*, surely." Sometimes there is very much in words. Vital truth may hinge upon a single word. The whole church of Christ once fought a tremendous battle over a syllable, but it was necessary to fight it for the conservation of the truth.

Only the unorthodox ridicule words, and with them it is an affectation, for were they not impressed with the importance of words they would not be so eager to alter them. "Surely we may change our terms." I have no objection if I know that your intentions are honest. "Surely we may change the form of a creed, however sound it may be." Do so if you like. I will not contend for words to no profit. But as for some of you who ask for these changes, I shrewdly suspect that you would get rid of a phrase that you might be rid of that which the phrase means. You gentlemen who say, "Surely you will not stick out for a word," are, after all, neither so innocent nor so liberal as you appear to be.

Brethren, it is not a word they would amend, but a truth they would efface. I intend calling a rose a rose, even though I admit that by another name it might smell as sweet, for I perceive that there is intent to inflict upon me a rank smelling weed which is no rose at all. When people rail at creeds as having no vitality, I suppose that I hear one say that there is no life in eggshells. Just so, there is no life in egg shells, they are just so much lime, void of sensation. "Pray, my dear sir, do not put yourself out to defend a mere shell." Truly, good friend, I am no trifler, nor so litigious as to fight for a mere shell. But hearken! I have discovered that when you break eggshells you spoil eggs, and I have learned that eggs do not hatch and produce life when shells are cracked. I have come to be rather tender about shells now that I find that certain rogues are depriving me of chickens by cracking my eggshells.

At certain periods when everybody is sound and right at heart, it may be wise to revise expressions, but we will have none of it when the very air is tainted with unbelief. If you walk round certain continental towns, you will see bright greensward and garden where once there stood grim walls. In times of peace we are glad to see fortifications demolished, but, mark you! when the Prussians are around Paris, no Frenchman will tolerate the proposition to throw down the forts.

This is our case today, and therefore we hold fast the form of sound words. “We hate your narrowness, your nasty narrowness! You are shut in within your walls of creeds and beliefs!” Yes, gentlemen, we are so, and we mean to remain so, since we see how you hate the Gospel. If everything were in peace, and we believed in you, we might perhaps think about turning bulwarks into boulevards, but at the present moment we will do nothing of the kind, but rather hear the voice of our old captain from his prison at Rome, crying, “Hold fast the pattern of wholesome words which thou hast heard from me.”

Brethren, do not change your posture nor shift your position. Stand fast on immutable truth, trusting and loving your Lord. Hold the old faith, and hold it in the old fashion too. We are crossing the stream, and can make no change of horses. Brethren, why should we change? Do these tempting novelties offer any real improvement on the old? Do they offer us anything to die upon? Can these new teachings afford us comfort in poverty, in sickness, in depression of spirit, or in prospect of the day of judgment?

They are pretty flowers for the children of this world to play with, they suit well with minds that love frivolities, but they are not for men whose life is warfare against sin. The eternal verities revealed within this Book, and grasped by the hands of our inner life—these are everything to us, therefore we shall stand by them even to the last with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

The apostle was anxious, not only that the men should stand, but that the everlasting Gospel itself should be guarded. “That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” O friends, it were better for us that the sun was quenched than that the Gospel were gone! I believe that the moralities, the liberties, and peradventure the very existence of a nation depend upon the proclamation of the Gospel in its midst. Have you not noticed that where the Gospel has been given up, and various forms of infidelity have ruled, foul pollution has also boiled up from below!

The very idea of morality seems to have departed from some men by whom belief in God has been rejected. The Lord save us from the general spread of this mischief! Let the sea itself cease to ebb and flow sooner than the Gospel fail to be preached among the sons of men. If the whole church were to die for the defense of the Gospel, it were a cheap price to pay for the maintenance of it. I speak solemnly when I say that our main care in life should be to preserve this Gospel intact, and hand it down to our descendants. God grant that future ages may not have to curse us for having been undecided or cowardly in the hour of conflict!

How are we to keep the faith? There is only one way. It is of little use trying to guard the Gospel by writing it down in a trust-deed, it is of small service to ask men to subscribe to a creed, we must go to work in a more effectual way. How is the Gospel to be guarded? “By the Holy Ghost which dwells in us.” If, my dear brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit dwells in you, and you obey His monitions, and are molded by His influences, and exhibit the result of His work in the holiness of your lives, then the faith will be kept.

A holy people are the true bodyguard of the Gospel. A living people, in whom the Holy Ghost is the soul of their soul, and the spirit of their spirit, are alone able to keep the truth living and influential in the world. Let the power of the Gospel be missing where it may, it must be present where the Holy Ghost abides, for He makes the Word of God to be a living and incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever. God send us, more and more, the Holy Ghost! May He be in us as rivers of living water! Oh for His heavenly presence in this day of blasphemy and rebuke! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 TIMOTHY 1, 2:1-13

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—911, 670, 674

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