

SWEET PEACE FOR TRIED BELIEVERS

NO. 1994

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 4, 1887,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 31, 1887,

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33.

THIS most delightful passage occurs at the close of the last of our Savior's sermons before He went unto the Father. Let us treasure it as we lay up a man's last words. Wonderfully full is that sermon. It is of a piece with His last prayer, and that rises above all other pleadings of men. This farewell discourse may occupy but a short space in Scripture, but the thoughts suggested by it are so many that I suppose that the world itself might hardly contain the books that might fairly be written upon it. It took our Lord but a moment to speak some of its sentences—it will take us a lifetime to fully understand them.

Perhaps we never shall understand some of these gracious sayings till we have put away all childish things, and shall have come to the fullness of the stature of men in Christ Jesus. We shall never see all the richness of the grace of this sermon till we have risen beyond these mists and clouds into the clearer atmosphere of the unclouded skies. In that happy country, being ourselves raised to a nobler condition, we shall be better able to comprehend the deep things of God, concerning which our Savior spoke in His supreme discourse. Meanwhile, let us apply our heart and mind to the consideration of these last words of the greatest of all preachers, the dearest of all teachers, and may the Spirit of our God open them up to us!

Observe concerning the preaching of our Lord Jesus how eminently practical it is. You never find in the Master's speaking a single sentence spoken for what orators use to call “effect.” He never introduces a pretty bit here and there to let men see how poetical His mind could be. He never goes a little aside to introduce a something which was quite unnecessary to the display of the subject, but very necessary to the display of the orator. Nothing so little, so self-seeking, ever governs the mind of Jesus. Far from it.

His soul goes with His subject, and He has no second object. He would convey His meaning to His hearers, and His mind is concentrated on that aim. He keeps hard at it, steadily driving at His point, and He speaks ever with the one desire, that the truth should go home to the heart, and should be blessed to the hearer.

Hence He adopted the method in this instance of summing up, and doing what the old divines used to call “making the improvement” at the end, when the truth which they had spoken was turned to practical account, and the uses of the topic were enlarged upon. We might have found out, perhaps, by diligent study, what the practical drift of the Savior's discourse was, for it is never difficult for a spiritual mind to perceive His drift, but He meant not only that we might possibly see what He was aiming at, but that we should be sure of seeing it, and so He puts it into the plainest language, and He says, “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace.”

If this was our Lord's object, I do not doubt that He had fully accomplished it. All that He had said tended to produce peace in His disciples' hearts, but He knew that their minds were dark—that they had but slight capacity as yet, and so in His infinite tenderness He told them, as one might tell a child, what He intended His address to produce. We thank Him for this, and herein would we endeavor to copy Him. We hope that our friends will always bear with us when we try to be very plain and simple, and

spend much of our strength in pointing out what is the practical bearing of the truth which we are teaching. It will be better to be considered needlessly explicit than to miss the end we have in view.

Let us greatly prize this conclusion of the Savior's ministry. It is all the more endeared to some of us by the fact that *our Lord finished as He began*. He is our peace. He came to bring it, and He left it behind Him as He went away. Even before He had commenced His life-work it was announced of Him that He came to bring "peace on earth, good will toward men," and ere He is taken up, His last words must needs be, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." It was meet that He should close the service of His life wherein He had preached peace, by pronouncing this as His dismissary benediction. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace."

In trying to handle this text tonight, aiming at the same practical end as my divine Lord and Master, I shall notice, first of all, *the believer in Christ*, and in Christ he is at peace. Secondly, *the believer in the world*, and in the world he has tribulation. And thirdly, *the believer in the world and in Christ*, and in that condition he has victory. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." May the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of peace, bless the word which I may now speak unto you!

I. First, you have THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST spoken of in reference to his peace.

Jesus says—"That in me you might have peace." It is worthy of careful consideration that in Jesus Himself there was ever present an abiding peace. *He had peace*. If He had not Himself possessed peace, we could not have had peace in Him. But what a holy calm there was upon the spirit of our divine Master! Read His life through, and dwell upon any one delightful characteristic, and you will find Him perfect. But if you study it carefully in order to remark upon His manliness, His self-possession, His calm and peaceful bearing in the midst of turmoil and provocation, you will find Him to be a master of the art of peace. Truly in patience He possessed His soul.

Never man had more to disturb Him, but never man was less disturbed. He could not be turned aside from anything which He had resolved to do, for He set His face like a flint, and in the doing of it He could not be excited or discouraged, for His spirit was not of this changing world. Men might oppose Him, but He endured great contradiction of sinners against Himself with marvelous long-suffering.

When His eager and foolish disciples would push Him forward, or would hold Him back, He was moved neither in the one direction nor in the other by any of them, but He steadfastly held to the even tenor of His way, His soul abiding in God, giving glory to God, and resting in the eternal Power and Godhead which He knew to be always at His side. The background of the life of Christ is the omnipresence of the Father. Wherever you see Him—if you see Him quite alone when every disciple has forsaken Him—you see this text expounded, "You will leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

Now this fact that He felt the presence of the Father, and did not occasionally speak to God, but *dwelt* with Him—that He did not resort to God as a make-shift in time of trouble, but abode with God at all times, and so kept His spirit above everything that would draw it down, this it was that filled Him with an unbroken peace. Even Gethsemane did not break that peace.

Covered with the bloody sweat He still cries, "Not as I will, but as you will." When His soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, yet He knows where His Father is, and He keeps His hold upon Him, and maintains His intimacy with Him. He feels that one word from Him would presently bring more than twelve legions of angels to His rescue. Such is the position of favor which He still occupies with God, even when the sin of man is laid upon Him.

O friends, Christ has peace enough and to spare. He is Himself, personally, the deep well-spring of an endless peace, and therefore we can understand why we always find peace in Him. One calm and quiet man has sometimes spread peace through what else would have been terrified company. One Paul standing in the sinking ship saves all from ruin by the majesty of His immovable courage, and one Christ—such a Christ as ours—in the midst of a church turns a horde of cowards into an army of heroes. His infinite peace breathes peace into our vacillating spirits. We rest because we see how He rests.

Now, as the Master had peace in Himself, *He had a strong desire that all His disciples should have peace.* I was about to say that it was with our Lord “the ruling passion strong in death.” It was strong within Him when He was coming very near His passion, and was about to go into Gethsemane, and then to Golgotha. Quietly He said, “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace.”

Our Lord Jesus Christ delights to see His people firm, calm, happy. I do not think that He is so pleased to see them excited, although we have those around us who seem to think that great grace can only display itself by raving and raging. The religion of the quiet Jesus was never intended to drive us to the verge of insanity. “He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.” His Holy Spirit is no raven or eagle, but a dove. His holy influences are powerful, and therefore calm. Weakness hurries, rages, shouts, for it has need to do so. Strength moves with its own deliberate serenity, and effects its purpose. To those who think that saints should be maniacs, Jesus says, “Peace! Peace!”

On the other hand, we are quite certain that our Lord Jesus does not desire His disciples to be depressed. To some the fit color for piety seems to be grey, drab, or full mourning. But it is not so, the saints are arrayed in white linen, which is the emblem of gladness as well as of purity. The Savior does not wish His disciples to go through the world as through a twilight of sadness, whispering in fear, because of judgments to come, and suppressing all joy because of the evils with which they are surrounded. No, brethren, Jesus wishes us all to be happy in Himself, with a quiet peacefulness like His own. He was no laughing maker of merriment, but still He was serenely confident, and He would have us keep to His pitch, and be at peace. “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace.”

We have a great end to serve. We have a grand life to live. We have a grand Helper ready to help us if we will but believe in Him. Therefore, we need not blow a trumpet before we begin, and we need not make a fuss when we are in the midst of our service, nor need we lie down on the ground as if we were the most wretched of men because of our heavenly calling. No, but we may just feel, “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge,” and walk with God through life in that holy quiet which springs of conscious strength. Let us enjoy the calm of heart which comes of knowing that the reserves of God are infinite and that at any moment they can come to the front and deliver us should an emergency occur.

Oh, that we could learn from Christ the art of peace! He desires that we should have it. Then we should not be so often up and so speedily down, today so brimming over and tomorrow so empty, one moment so fast and another so slow, unduly exhilarated at one moment and at the next so needlessly depressed. We ought not to be movable as waves, but fixed as stars. We ought not to be as thistledown, the sport of every wind, but as yonder granite peak, which defies the storms of the ages. “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace”—“peace.” Oh, to get it, and to keep it, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Thus I have noticed that He had peace, and He wished us to have it.

But now notice again that *in order to their having peace He spoke to them certain words*—“These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace.” It will do you good, when you are at home, to read over the preceding chapter, and note with diligence what the Lord Jesus said in order to give His disciples peace, for that same thing will give *us* peace. If you please you may go back to the fifteenth chapter, and even to the fourteenth, where you read—“Let not your heart be troubled.” When you are at it, you may, if you like, go all through the Book, backward or forward, searching for peace as for a pearl and you will not err even then, for the great object of all these Scriptures, which in the deepest sense were all spoken by Jesus Christ, is that you may have peace. But especially let us dwell upon these particular words in this sixteenth chapter of John, for to these He chiefly alludes.

Now, what did He say to them that they might have peace? One thing was that *He foretold their trials.* He said to them, “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time comes, that whosoever kills you will think that he does God service.” Learn then that one way for you to gain peace is to reflect

upon it, that trial is promised you, that trial is in the covenant, that persecution and the ill-will of an ungodly world are evils which you are bound to endure. They are guaranteed to you by the very fact of your being of the seed of the woman whose heel must be bruised, and they will come to you in your measure.

Expect trials as you look for clouds and rain in the English climate. If this island is your dwelling place, you cannot look for the climate of India, neither ought you to complain of winter and frost, for these are a part of a Briton's inheritance. You must take the rough with the smooth. When exceedingly severe persecutions and afflictions happen to you, they will seem to the adversary to be evident tokens of perdition, but to you they will be evident tokens of the truth of God's Word, and of your being yourself a true lineal descendant of that persecuted Savior who told you, "If they persecute me, they will also persecute you. The disciple is not above His Master, nor the servant above His Lord."

Do, then, make yourself familiar with trial. Wonder when it does *not* come, and when it does come, say, "Ah! You are an old acquaintance of mine." There is such a thing as carrying your cross till you are so accustomed to it that you would be almost uneasy without it. You may bear a burden on your back so long that, if that burden were taken away, you would feel the miss of it. The Lord has made some of His children fond of their cross. It was so with Rutherford.

He said at last that he was half afraid lest his cross, which had become so sweet to him, might rival Christ Himself. I never feel any fear of *that* myself, for pain is very much dreaded by my coward flesh, but I suppose that there are saints who have come to feel that the bitter is so beneficial, that they would prefer its tonic to the sweetest cup that was ever mingled. It is an acquired taste, no doubt, but he that has it will be at peace about trouble. It shall help you greatly to attain peace if you expect rough treatment while you are a sojourner in this present evil world.

The next thing He did to comfort them was, that *He told them why He was going away*. It is often a choice blessing, when you have a great trial, to know what it is sent for. That is a wise petition if not pressed too far—"Show me why you contend with me." The Savior was going, because it was expedient for them that He should go. Does it not take away the sting of a trial when you know by faith that it is expedient that such and such a grief should happen to you? If it is expedient that the dear child should be taken from your arms—expedient that the business should not prosper—expedient that you yourself should be struck with a sickness which no faith will remove, so that you bow to the divine wisdom.

The God who is better to you than all your fears, yea, better than your hopes, perhaps intends the affliction to remain with you until it lifts the latch of heaven for you, and lets you into your eternal rest. Now, when the Savior told them why He was going, the condescending information was meant to produce peace in their hearts. He has also told you why your trials are sent to you—they work your lasting good—therefore rest concerning them.

Further, to give them peace, the Savior went on *to speak to them of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and what the Comforter would do*. He enlarged upon that theme, since it was so cheering. Beloved, if you want peace, think much of the divine Comforter. You are not left alone. You are not left without the tenderest sympathy of One who knows how to cheer the heaviest heart. You are not left without a friend more able than all other friends to enter into your secret griefs, and administer to you the most potent consolations. Think much of the Holy Spirit in His office as Comforter, and the meditation will foster peace within your spirit. How ill we treat the Holy Spirit by our few and superficial thoughts of Him! Let us henceforth adore Him with deeper love and reverence.

Then He told them about *the power of prayer*. He said, "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you," and again "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." What a breath of peace cools the forehead of the man who remembers that he may pray, and that prayer is heard in heaven! There is a noise in the streets, there is a disturbance within doors, even your own heart is perturbed, what then? Let us pray. The known remedy for unknown evils is prayer.

Oh, the peace that comes from the mercy seat! You that are familiar with it will bear me witness that it is wonderful what storms it will quell, what cyclones it will quiet. Only pray, and you are master of the situation. Like your Master, you may walk the waves of the sea, when you have but the power in His name to speak to those waves, and bid them be still, and He gives you that power when you draw near to Him in believing prayer.

All this must have greatly tended to produce peace, but as if this might not be enough, our tender Lord let slip a precious word that ought to give peace to all our minds, "*The Father himself loves you.*" The love of God the Father is a treasure-house of peace. The *Father Himself*—not moved by the importunities of His pleading Son, but Himself, of His own accord, loves you. O Father God, how have You sometimes been slandered, as though You were backward to love us, and Your Son must needs persuade You! Nay, it is not so. God loved His people, and, therefore He sent His Son to redeem them. "He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Christ is not the cause of divine love, but the sweetest and best fruit of it. "The Father himself loves you." Therefore, be of good cheer, and let your peace be like a river.

And then, dear friends, *He confirmed their faith in Himself*. He so spoke to them that at last they said, "Now are we sure. By this we believe," and so on. This is the way to get peace. Peace comes by the way of faith. Those of you who are very fond of doubts, can, perhaps, tell me whether you ever derived any peace from them. Time is but ill-used when we pore over books which are calculated to shake our faith—as well eat food which is sure to make us ill.

There are certain men who are always busy with the Scriptures to try and find difficulties in them, and if they cannot find them in the English version, then straightway they will sooner have a new translation than miss their precious difficulty. This is as foolish as if we should refuse to eat our Christmas pudding because we could not find any stones in the plums, or any hard lumps in the sugar upon which to break our teeth upon.

The great object of some men seems to be to find in the Bible something which they cannot believe, for my part I am delighted with what I do believe. They cultivate doubts, while a wise man regards them as weeds, and burns them in a heap. The Lord knows there is sorrow enough in this world without laboring to make more, and I should like to ask all such critics and great discoverers whether they believe that their discoveries tend at all to the creation of peace in their own minds, or in the minds of others?

I believe, and then I get peace. I believe and am sure. Then is my peace like a river, and my righteousness like the waves of the sea. Luther tells us how he found peace when one said to him, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Oh, if one did but believe what he professes to believe! I mean believed it fully! That way lies peace—in believing up to the hilt. The child-like way of sitting at Jesus' feet and receiving His words—this is the path of peace. All the outgrowth of quibbling and caviling may be summed up as thorns and briers, tearing the flesh and rending the spirit. These things had Christ spoken, that they might believe in Him, for well He knew that the victory which overcomes trial is faith, and not doubt. Believing, and not questioning, is the King's highway.

I must notice that *our Master's wish that we might have peace was qualified by those two words, "in me"*—"That *in me* you might have peace." Remember, then, you may not expect to derive peace from yourselves. You will turn that dunghill over a long while before you find the jewel of peace in it. Our Lord did not even intend that we should find peace in outward ordinances or religious exercises. No doubt it is very quieting to read a chapter, or to attend a service, or to come to communion, but it is not the Lord's intent that these should of themselves yield us peace. These are to be means to peace, but the peace must always be *in Himself*, in His own blessed Person.

We must get to Him, for this is His wish, "that *in me* you might have peace"—peace only in Him, but peace always in Him. Peace of the deepest, truest, most constant, most emphatic kind is only found in Jesus. Peace in all seasons, and in all difficulties, peace forever, all this is in Him, and in Him only. Outside of Him it is all tossing to and fro, and question, and fog, and haze, and fear, but in Him we

dwell as in a sheepfold, where the sheep lie down and rest. In Him we are in a home where all is love and comfort.

Brothers, sisters, let us not wander from this sacred center of serene repose, lest we wander from peace. It is this man who shall be the peace, this Son of God who shall give us rest. Let us then come to Him at once in every case. Yea, let us always abide in Him. His wish is that His joy may be in us, and therefore He says, “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace.”

Thus have I said well-nigh enough to you upon this first point of the believer in Christ and His peace.

II. I have been a long while on that head, and I want to be all the shorter on the second—THE BELIEVER IN THE WORLD finds himself like wheat under the flail, for so the text puts it, “In the world you shall have tribulation.”

That is, first, *you are not screened from any kind of trouble*. You are in Christ, and the Savior saves you from your sins, but He has not promised that you shall have no sorrow. He has not promised to screen you from either poverty, or toil, or sickness, or slander, or any of the common ills of mankind. Some of the very best of His beloved have been enriched and indulged by being permitted to undergo much secret discipline of pain, and sorrow, and want.

Your Lord, among the treasures that He gives you, grants a cross. You start back, and say, “Not *that*, Lord,” but He answers, “Yes, *this*, My child. This and no other.” The cross is the best piece of furniture in your house, though you have sometimes wished it was not there. It shall always work your good—it does work it now. Some of the comforts allotted to you in providence will be questionable in their effect upon you, by reason of your sinfulness and weakness, but the cross which the Lord appoints you has no result but your good. It is a bitter tree, apparently, but it is a healthful medicine. Take it, child of God—plant it, and let it grow, and its fruit shall be sweet. We are not guarded from tribulation, but we are promised it, and we are benefited by it.

We are not favored by being promised the admiration of the ungodly. “In the world”—not merely in this present state, but in this ungodly world—we shall have tribulation. Worldlings will not gather round you to admire your excellence and assist your piety. If they did I should think that either the world had changed, or else it had made a mistake about you. Which of the two it is I do not say. I do not think that it can be that the world has changed. Worldlings may like a Christian for certain externals, they may admire him for certain advantages they get from him, but as a Christian they cannot love him. That is impossible.

There is an enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, and you had better understand that it is so, because the serpent has not changed his nature, but is a vile deceiver and destroyer still. He still exhibits his glittering scales, and speaks as craftily and flatteringly to us as he did to mother Eve, and perhaps, to you he says that he loves you more than he can tell, only you are so unfriendly and suspicious that he has never been able to show his affection. Yes, he sees in you so much to admire that he wishes you were not quite so strait-laced, and then he could introduce you to his dear friends and children, for you would do them no end of good.

Hit him across the head if you get an opportunity, for he means no good to you. Of all the devils in the world I hate a roaring devil least, but a fawning devil is the worst devil that ever a man meets. When the world pretends to love, understand that it now hates you more cordially than ever, and is carefully baiting its trap to catch you and ruin you. Beware of the Judas kiss with which the Christ was betrayed, and with which you will be betrayed unless you are well upon your guard. In the world and from the world you shall have tribulation.

The text puts this in such a broad way that it gives a hint that in the world you shall have tribulation *often*. Affliction is not with us always, but it is well to be always prepared for it. There are times in which we enjoy prosperity. Some Christians enjoy much of it, and do not let them be much alarmed because they do so, for what the Lord’s providence sends us is not harmful in itself, and is to be accepted without suspicion.

I remember that a person came to me once and told me that she had prayed for affliction. I replied, "Dear soul, dear soul, do not be so foolish. You will have quite enough trouble without asking for it." If a child were to ask his father to let him be whipped, he would be a strange sort of child, and I should think he would not be likely to repeat the experiment if he had a practical man for a father. No, no, no! That is not our path of duty. If God spares us tribulation let us be thankful to Him, but if He does not spare us let us be equally thankful.

This last is a hard lesson to learn, but we ought to learn it. We shall frequently endure tribulation, for we are born to it at our first birth, as the sparks fly upward. It is also certain that our second birth introduces us to a second set of tribulations. He sang a true song who gave us this verse—

*“Poor and afflicted, ’tis their lot,
They know it, and they murmur not;
’Twould ill become them to refuse
The state their Master deigned to choose.”*

Again, in the world you will *emphatically* have tribulation. If anybody else has it you shall, and if nobody else has it, yet you shall have it. You shall have it, perhaps, where you least wish it or reckon on it. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." "Any cross but the one I have," cried one. Surely it would not be a cross if you had the choosing of it, for it is of the essence of a cross that it should run counter to our liking. It must be something from which the flesh shrinks, which is not for the present joyous but grievous. So our Lord puts it, "In the world you shall have tribulation."

I wonder how many Christians here could say that they have *not* found it so. I think that the most of us—at least, all I know of—would say that the prophecy of our Lord has been abundantly verified. And must it not be so in the nature of things? Has not this world been a place of sorrow ever since Adam broke his Maker's command? Did not the mandate then go forth, "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you. Dust you are, and unto dust shall you return"? To a Christian man must not the world bring tribulation and anguish because it is a world which lies in the wicked one.

The Christian is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. He is out of his element. He is an alien. He is a pilgrim. Can he expect the comforts of home while he tarries here? It is a world uncongenial to his spiritual nature. There is nothing in it to help him. This world is a foe to grace, and not a friend to it, and hence the gracious man must have tribulation. If he is to be like his Lord he certainly will have it, and if he is to be like the Lord's people, he will have it, for they are a line of cross-bearers.

There is no exception to this rule if you take the whole of any believer's life, though for a while certain favored men may seem to be the darlings of providence. Job multiplied his riches, and dwelt at ease with a hedge about him. He thought, perhaps, that he would have no tribulation to bear, but the flail seemed made of iron when at last it fell. So may the most prosperous have all the greater trial when the day of adversity arrives.

Brethren, I was thinking, as I turned over this subject, that though there is tribulation in the world, we still get far too fond of the world. We are always trying to pluck handfuls of its flowers, and if its roses had no thorns we would bury ourselves in heaps of them! We would never quit the nest and learn to fly if the Lord did not stir up our nest even as does the eagle. We should want to tarry here forever, and say, "Lo, this is my home," if it were not that an unkind world gives us aliens' treatment, and forces us to feel that here we are in exile.

One said to a great man, as he looked over his gardens, "These are the things that make it hard to die." As we are not to live here, but must soon be up and away to the better land where our life can far better develop, it is meet that in the world we should have tribulation, that we may turn our thoughts and our desires towards that dear city of our God where alone is our dwelling place. Thanks be unto God

for the tribulation which weans our thoughts from earth, and wins them for heaven, and let all the people say, “Amen.”

III. But now, lastly, let us view THE BELIEVER IN THE WORLD AND IN CHRIST, and this means victory.

I will occupy but a moment or two to say, that if we dwell in Christ, though we have also to dwell in the world, yet we shall overcome the world.

I call your special attention to the words of our Lord Jesus in the text—“Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” *Our Lord was at that time still in the world.* Do you know where Christ was when He said *that*? Why, He was on the edge of Gethsemane. He was at the foot, so to speak, of Golgotha, where He was to die. He had not then borne the scourge and the cross. But I dare not lay my hand upon my Master, and say, “Good Lord, You have made a mistake. You have not yet overcome, for the worst part of the battle has not come to You.” He knew what He said, and made no error in saying it.

Oh, but it was bravely spoken! The faith which abode in Him made Him say, “I have overcome.” On the verge of the fight He said, “I have overcome.” John caught up this word when he afterwards said, “This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith,” because it was by faith that our blessed Lord said at this moment, “I have overcome the world.” He spoke in the prescience of faith. He took for granted that He would overcome the world, for the Father was with Him.

But up to that point it was assuredly true, as it was even to the end, that *He had really overcome the world.* Its blandishments He had overcome. Its temptations He had overcome. Its terrors He had overcome. Its errors He had overcome. Everything in the world that had assailed Him He had put to the rout. He was tempted in all points like as we are, but He remained without sin. He had overcome everything that had come to attack His holiness, His patience, His self-sacrifice. He had been victor at every point.

Now, here is a matter of joyful consideration; our Lord says, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” But what cheer is there in that? Well, the cheer lies in the fact which He does not here state, but which He had stated before, namely, that *He is one with us, and we are one with Him.* He does as good as say, “I have overcome the world, and you are in Me, your Head. My overcoming of the world belongs to you. I, your Leader, have overcome the world for you. I have led the way in this dread fight, and conquered the adversaries which you have now to fight with, and thus I have virtually won the battle before you begin it.”

***“Hell and your sins obstruct thy course,
But hell and sins are vanquished foes:
Your Jesus nailed them to His cross,
And sang the triumph when He rose.”***

“I have Myself,” says Jesus, “overcome for you that you may overcome in Me. Now, go to the fight, to rout the already worsted enemy, and triumph over a serpent whose head I have already broken.”

We derive, then, from the fact that Christ has overcome, the assurance that we shall overcome, since we are one with Him, members of His body, and parts of Himself. O brothers, sisters, you must fight your way through. You cannot quit this conflict. You have to cut your way through a solid wall of difficulties—there is no other course! But you are going to do it. You shall do it. A great commander commences a campaign. Does he desire that there shall be no battle? If so, how is it a war? How is he a soldier? He certainly can send home no reports of victory if there is no fighting. He can never come to be a great commander if he never distinguishes himself in the field. So let us consider that every battlefield to which God calls us is only another opportunity of victory, and, Christ being with us, another certainty of victory. Onward, then, you Christian soldiers!

***“Let your drooping hearts be glad;
March in heavenly armor clad.”***

Let not the brightness of your armor be stained by the rust of fear. You shall overcome as surely as your Lord has overcome. If you commit yourself to His keeping, and abide in Him who is all-in-all to you, no defeat can possibly befall you.

I have this last word to add. There may be some here who will say, “Look, look, these Christian people have plenty of trouble.” That is quite true, but they are not the only ones to be pitied, “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked.” Those who are not in Christ Jesus shall also find tribulation in this world, for thorns and thistles spring up more numerous in the field of the sluggard than anywhere else. The wicked shall find that there are special sorrows for them—whips of scorpions for them, especially when they get farther on in life, and their youthful fires burn down to a black ash. Woe unto sinners when they have to reap the fruits of their evil deeds!

O sirs, I would not go through life without a Savior, as you do, no, not if I might be made an emperor. To have to fight this life-battle without Christ is sure defeat. What a discovery it will be when, having struggled through one life of sorrow, you shall find yourself beginning another life of greater sorrow, which will never come to an end!

It is an awful thing for a man to go from hell to hell—to make this world a hell, and then find another hell in the next world! But it were a blessed thing to go through fifty hells to heaven, if such a thing could be. It is glorious to struggle on through poverty, and sickness, and persecution, and to hear at last the word, “Well done!” That will be glorious! Who aspires to it? God help each one of us to labor after it, and give us strength to carry on the holy war, and fight it through even to the end!

But if you are wrapping yourselves up in these poor joys, these wretched rags of earth, and are living to make money, or to get drink, or to enjoy yourselves in the hurtful luxuries of lust, God have mercy upon you, and save you! Hear the Gospel, each one of you! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” The Lord lead you to do so, for His name’s sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 16

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—734, 744, 779

A POSTSCRIPT TO THE SERMON FROM MR. SPURGEON:

At this time I am compelled by fervent gratitude to acknowledge, in the mass, a vast amount of loving encouragement for which it is impossible for me to tender individual thanks. The “Down Grade” controversy has cost me dear in several ways, and the pain of heart I have endured I would not wish any other man to bear. But the floods of enthusiastic sympathy have washed out the footprints of sorrow, and left many precious things upon the shores of my memory. I had cast myself upon the Lord alone, willing to be forsaken of all for the truth’s sake, and hence it is an extra joy to find so many unlooked-for friends and helpers in every part of the Christian church. Human sympathy is in this case the basket of silver to bear to me the golden apples of divine consolation. I now know of a surety that there are tens of thousands that have not bowed the knee to “modern thought.”

I have felt some little fear lest my orphans should be made to suffer through my actions. They, at least, are innocent of any controversy. Yet it is within the possibilities of unhallowed anger that subscriptions to their support should be withheld because of my protest and secession. Those who maintain error are not always very choice in their arguments. I can bear anything myself, God helping me, but I hope I shall not see the Orphanage, or any other of the Institutions under my care, suffering through this solemn debate. Will not my faithful friends see that it is not so? I have no great alarm about it, but it is sometimes well to stir up pure minds by way of remembrance.

During my absence letters containing aid for the Orphanage had better be directed to Mr. F. G. Ladds, Stockwell Orphanage, Clapham Road, London, and he will report them to me.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.