

“SO IT IS”
NO. 2175

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S-DAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1890.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know you it for your good.”
Job 5:27.

THUS closed a forcible speech by Eliphaz the Temanite; it may be called his “summing up.” He virtually says, “What I have testified in the name of my friends is no dream of theirs. Upon this matter we are specialists and bear witness to truth which we have made the subject of research and experience. Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know you it for your good.” By this declaration he sets forth his teaching with authority and presses it home. He persuades Job to consider what he had said, for it was no hasty opinion, but the ripe fruit of *experience*. When we speak what we know we expect to be heard.

I shall not follow Eliphaz—I am only going to borrow his closing words and use them in reference to gospel testimony which is to us a thing known and searched out. I shall use it in the following way. First, our text sets forth *the qualification of the teacher*. He must be a man who can say, “Lo this, we have searched it, so it is.” Secondly, we have *the argument with the hearers*—“We have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know you it for your good.” And lastly, we have here *the exhortation for every inquirer* who wants to know the truth concerning spiritual and eternal things: “hear it, and know you it for your good.”

I. To begin with, I judge that these words may well describe THE QUALIFICATION OF THE TEACHER. He will be poorly furnished if he cannot run in the line which Eliphaz draws in the words of our text.

He should have, first, an intimate knowledge of his subject. How can he teach what he does not know? When we come to talk about God and the soul, and sin and the precious blood of Jesus, and the new birth, and holiness and eternal life, the speaker who knows nothing about these things personally must be a poor driveller. Let him be quiet till he knows what he is to speak upon! Let him sweep chimneys, or cobble shoes, or break stones, or follow any other honorable calling—it will not be honest for him to profess to be a preacher of the gospel unless he is acquainted with these sacred subjects.

I know well the place of the ministry of one who was ordained to be a preacher and drew the hire of which every true laborer is worthy. He delivered a discourse which greatly troubled the mind of a friend named Jonathan whom I knew and esteemed. The awakened young man went to him on the Monday and said, “Oh, sir, your sermon last Lord’s-Day has robbed me of my sleep and made me very anxious.” The preacher answered, “I am very sorry for it, Jonathan. I will never preach that sermon any more. If it troubles people, I will have no more of it, for I have something better to do than to make people miserable.” “But, sir,” said the young man, “you preached about the new birth and you said we must be born-again. In fact your *text* said so. What does it mean?” He answered, “Jonathan, I do not know anything about it and you are such a good fellow that I am quite sure you need not be afraid. If there is anything in being born-again you had it when you were christened. In your Baptism you were made a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. That is all I know about it.” It is necessary that we say to some preachers, first of all: You must be born-again, for, if not, you cannot interpret the new birth to the people. Without personal experience you will speak riddles of which you do not know the answers! The blind will lead the blind and both will fall into the ditch. There is a German story of a minister who had delivered himself very earnestly upon a vital theme and after the service he was waited

upon by one in great distress of heart who was peculiar in his use of language. He generally said, “We,” when he should have said, “I.” And so he said to the minister, “Sir, if what you have been saying is true, *what shall we do?*” He did not mean to bring the minister into it, but the use of the word, “we,” implicated the pastor so much that he began to search; and searching he found that he had no part or lot in the matter, and that he had been preaching what he himself had never felt!

Have I anybody here who is doing this every Sabbath? A blind man who is teaching others about color and vision? A preacher of an unknown God? A dead man sent with messages of life? You are in a strange position, dear friend. The Lord save you! I wish that it might happen to you as it did to my dear friend, Mr. Haslam, whom God has blessed to the conversion of so many. He was preaching a sermon which he did not understand and while he preached it he converted himself! By God’s grace he began to feel the power of the Holy Spirit and the force of divine truth. He so spoke that a Methodist in the congregation presently cried out, “The parson is converted!” And so the parson was. He admitted it, and praised God for it; and all the people sang—

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.”

His own utterances concerning Christ crucified had been to him the power of God unto salvation! O beloved, no man has any right to teach in the Sunday school, or preach, or pretend in any other way to be sent of God unless he has been so taught of the Holy Spirit that he has an intimate acquaintance with the gospel!

I must add that *he should have a personal experience of it*, so that he can say, “Lo this, we have searched it, so it is.” It is unseemly that an ignorant man should keep a school. It is not meet that a dumb man should teach singing. Shall an impenitent man preach *repentance*? Shall an unbelieving man preach *faith*? Shall an unholy man preach obedience to the divine will? Shall one that is living in sin preach of freedom from sin? Surely any person will be an unsuitable herald of the glad tidings of divine grace who speaks what he has never tried and verified. Before you preach again, brother, pray God to enable you to know in your own soul the truth of that which you declare. Oh, that we may be born-again and so preach regeneration! Oh, that we may exercise faith and then preach it! Surely it must be so! He who would learn to plow must not be apprenticed to one who never turned a furrow. We must know the Lord or we cannot teach His way.

It strikes me, next, that *what is needed in a successful teacher is a firm conviction of the truth of these things growing out of his having tested them for himself*. He must say, with emphasis, “So it is.” When I had found Christ and joined the church, I began to teach in the Sunday school, but my little class of boys taught me more than I taught them! I was speaking to them, one day, about “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” and one of the boys said to me, “Teacher, have you believed?” I answered, “Yes.” “And have you been baptized?” “Yes.” “Then,” said he, “teacher, you are saved.” I said, “I hope so.” Years ago it was a kind of fashion to say, “I hope so,” and I followed my seniors in this modest talk. The boy looked me straight in the face, and said, “And don’t you know, teacher?” Well, I felt that I did know and that I ought not to have said, “I hope so.” So I replied, “Yes, I do know it.” “Of course,” said the boy, “the text says so. If it ain’t true, well, of course, it ain’t true. But if it is true; well, it is true, and nobody need *hope* about it.” So it was. The boy used good logic. The Scripture says, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Therefore, he that believes and is baptized is saved. That is clear enough and let not the believer say that “he hopes so,” but let him boldly assert that, “it is so!” You promise a man to pay him five pounds some day this week. Suppose you asked him, “Do you expect that I shall pay you that five pounds?” If he should answer, “I hope so,” you would know what he thought of you. And it is very much the same when we thus speak of the Lord—we dishonor Him when we say, “I hope so,” after He has said “it is so.” The Lord’s Word is true. Why do you “hope” about it? Believe it and enjoy it! But people will go hoping and hoping, and hopping and *limping*—as if to be lame were the proper thing. They had better put both feet to the ground and cry, “God has said it! I believe it! Glory be to His name, He shall have all the praise!” “Then shall the lame man leap as an hart.” When we teach others, we ought to have a firm conviction that what we teach is true beyond all question! You cannot use a lever if you have no fixed fulcrum. You must have a point to work upon or you cannot lift an ounce. So, in trying to teach another man, you must know that something or other is

true. Infallibility used to be claimed for the pope, but Luther upset that nonsense. The Protestants then asserted that infallibility lay in the Bible and this became their fulcrum. It seems to me that now it is commonly thought that infallibility lies nowhere—or, if there is any such thing, it is to be found among young green horns, fresh from college, who do not know *A* from *B* in theology and yet criticize the Bible and cut it about as they choose. They are infallibles and we must all bow down before their idol of advanced thought! I prefer my infallible Bible, and I shall stick to it, God helping me, knowing that it has never led me astray and believing that it never will! O dear teachers, know for a certainty what you teach and, if you do not know it to be true, hold your tongues about it! If you are not sure that your doctrine is true, be quiet till you are sure! A ministry of hesitation must be ruinous to souls. When divine truth is held fast, then let it be held forth and not till then.

Once more—a *necessary qualification for a teacher of the Lord is earnestness, and good will to the hearer*. We must implore each one of our hearers to give earnest heed. We must cry to him with our whole heart, “Hear it, and know you it for your good.” Without love there can be no real eloquence. We must have a burning love for the souls of men if we would win them for Jesus. Unless our hearts desire their good, we may preach our tongues out, but we shall never bring our hearers to salvation by Christ. The best birdlime for these wild fowl is a longing desire for their present and eternal good! The great Savior’s heart is love, and those who are to be saviors for Him must be of a loving spirit. True love will do the work when everything else has failed. A pastor has held the hearer by his heart long after his head has struggled away. A preacher had managed, somehow, to offend one of his hearers and the angry man kept away from the place of worship for many a day. The preacher was not in the least aware that he had given offense, but when the matter came out, he went at once to set it right. The offended person had become settled in unbelief. The preacher went to him and said that he had been sorry to miss him and that he had been made ill by learning that he had become an unbeliever. Tears were in his eyes and his voice was half choked as he said, “Do you know, friend David, I cannot sleep at nights for thinking about you? I am so concerned about your soul that I cannot rest unless you are converted.” The man had grown into the habit of blasphemy, and if he had been addressed in any other way he would have cursed the minister, and told him to go about his business; but that touch of real affection did it. “You, concerned about *my* soul? Then it is time that I became concerned about it, too”—that was the reasoning which passed through David’s mind. Oh, do let us love our hearers! Let us love them to Jesus! These are the bands that draw men to Jesus—the bands of love! And these are the cords that *hold* them to the Savior—the cords of a man! We must wish our people to hear the truth of God, not because we have prepared discourses which we cannot afford to waste upon an empty chapel, but because we feel sure that if they will hear the gospel it will do them good and save their souls! We must sigh and cry for the souls of our hearers! We must preach with intent, and that intent must not fall short of their eternal salvation! We must go as with a sword in our bones till we see our hearers yield their hearts to Jesus!

Knowledge of our subject avails not without love to our hearers! There are three ways of knowing, but only one sort is truly worth having. Many labor *to know merely that they may know*. These are like misers who gather gold that they may count it and hide it away in holes and corners. This is the avarice of knowledge—in some respects less mean than greed of gold and yet of the same order of vices. Selfishness makes men anxious to know. Mental selfishness urges them to toils most wearisome. Yet there may be much of this hoarded knowledge where there is no wisdom. Poor is the ambition to know; to know more than others, to know more today than we knew yesterday; to know what no one else knows. What of all this? To know, to know—this is the one thing with those who, like the horseleech live only to suck and to be swollen. To what purpose is knowledge buried in the brain like a crock of gold buried in a ditch? Such knowledge turns stagnant, like water shut up in a close pond—above mantled with rank weeds, and below putrid, or full of loathsome life. A second class aspires *to know that others may know that they know*. To be reputed wise is the heaven of most mortals. To win a degree and wear half-a-dozen letters of the alphabet at the end of your name is the glory and immortality of many. To me the fashion seems cumbersome and vexatious; but the grand use of these appended letters is to let the world know that this is a man who knows more than the average of his fellows. After all, it is no very great thing to make your neighbors aware that you are somebody in scientific circles. It is more

magnanimous to do without the certificates and let folks find out for themselves that you possess unusual information. One does not eat merely that others may know that you have had your dinner and one should not know merely to have it known that you know. Why not wear letters after your name to signify that you own half a million of money, or farm a thousand acres of land, or fatten a hundred hogs? This is the grand end of wearisome days and nights; that the knowing ones may know that you know!

The third kind of knowledge is the one worth having. *Learn to know that you may make other people know.* This is not the avarice but the *commerce* of knowledge. Acquire knowledge that you may distribute it! Light the candle, but put it not under a bushel. Some are much buried under that bushel. My friend was half inclined to say a word or two for his Lord but he did not, for he remembered the big bushel marked, “TIMIDITY & Co.,” and so he kept his light out of the way. Destroy that bushel, since it destroys your usefulness! If God has given you a candle, let it burn and shine, for light is given that eyes may see it. If God has lighted you from on high, do not deny your light to any far or near. Know that others may know! Be taught that you may teach! This trading is gainful to all who engage in it.

Thus much upon the first point—the qualification of a teacher is intimate knowledge, personal experience, confidence, earnestness, and good will.

II. Secondly, THE ARGUMENT FOR THE HEARER—“Lo this, we have searched it, so it is.”

The argument directed to the hearer is the experience of many, confirming the statement of one—“We have searched it, so it is.” Bacon has taught us from a mass of agreeing testimonies to infer a general truth. We are not, now, so foolish as to set up a theory and then hunt for facts to support it. No, but we gather the facts, first, and then deduce the theory from them. So here the three friends have made ample research and have arrived at certain conclusions; and they urge this reasoning upon Job. Unrenewed men cannot know much about Christ and His salvation unless it is through the testimonies of their friends who have felt the power of divine grace. It is ours, therefore, to be witnesses for Christ to them, that they also may believe the truth of God which can save their souls.

Without further preface I should like to bear my own personal witness to a few things about which I am fully persuaded. I am not afraid of dogmatism, but I shall speak very positively, since I can say, “Lo this, we have searched it, so it is.”

And my first witness is that *sin is an evil and a bitter thing.* I think, my dear brothers and Sisters in Christ, I may speak for you and say, “We have searched this out, and we know that it is so.” We have seen sin prove injurious to our fellow men. “Who has woe, who has redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; men of strength to mingle strong drink”; from where comes much of beggary but from dissipation; from where comes much of deadly disease but from uncleanness of life? Is not half the misery in the world the direct and distinct result of vice? I will not harrow up your feelings by telling you of young men and young women who set out for better things, but who turned aside to vice and thus brought evil diseases into their bones. We could wish to forget their cries and moans with which they appalled us when they found that wild oats had to be reaped and that each ear of those sheaves was as a flake of fire. By-and-by the guilty soul has to meet its God—and what will be its terror! We know of ourselves, and in ourselves, that sin is a serpent whose tooth infuses poison into the wound it makes. Sin brought some of us very low and nothing but almighty grace restored us. It made some of us sit between the jaws of despair and question whether it would not be better to put an end to our lives than continue to exist in such horrible gloom. Sin is that inquisition which deals in racks and fires and all manner of infernal tortures. No misery can for a moment be compared with the torment which follows upon sin! We get neither pleasure nor profit by sin, though it may dupe us with the name of both. Sin is “evil, only evil and that continually.” This we have searched, and *so it is.* We wish that others who are beginning life would accept our testimony and withhold their feet from the paths of the destroyer. It cannot be necessary that everybody should taste the poison cup—may not our mournful experience of sin’s evil effects suffice for you? Sirs, you may search the neighborhood of sin from end to end, but you will never find a living joy therein. Therefore, flee from it, by God’s grace.

I wish, next, to testify to the fact that *repentance of sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ bring a wonderful rest to the heart and work a marvelous change in the whole life and character.* There is such a thing as the new birth, for we have been born-again, and this not a mere fancy or sentiment; but is a

plain matter of fact. We know what it is to have passed from death unto life as surely as we know the difference between night and morning. Young man, have you any doubt about this? Will my testimony be of any use to you? Do you think I would stand here, knowingly, and tell you what is false? I hope you do me justice and admit that I aim at speaking the truth! There is such a thing as having the tastes all altered, the desires all changed, the fears removed, the hopes elevated, the passions subdued, the will conquered, the affections purified and the mind sanctified. There is such a thing as having perfect rest about all the past because sin is forgiven; perfect rest about the future, because we have committed our all to the hands of Christ who is able to keep us, and peace as to the present, because we belong to Jesus. I speak for thousands in this place tonight when I say that repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ bestow on men a wonderful delight and transform their characters by the Holy Spirit! That is worth knowing, is it not? Believe for yourselves and realize personally the power of faith. “We have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know you it for your good.”

Next, we beg to bear our witness to the fact that *prayer is heard of God*. If it were possible for me to tell you the many instances in which God has heard my prayers, you would, in your kindness, follow me a considerable way. But I should have to draw so largely upon your faith that before I came to the end, you would feel compelled to doubt. Nor should I blame you. Truth is stranger than fiction and if you are not familiar with prayer, you will think me a mad fanatic! In matters in reference to the Stockwell Orphanage I have seen the Lord’s hand very conspicuously in times of need. When money has run short and there have been hundreds of children to be fed, faith and prayer have filled our coffers! Well, sirs, men of the world may say it is all fancy and laugh at it as a spiritual dream; but fancies do not load tables and feed children and supply thousands of pounds! Will one of you make the attempt? Will you provide for our five hundred orphans for a month by dreams and fancies? We have known times of close pinching and have waited upon God; and in a short time He has sent us abundant relief and there are brethren on this platform who would willingly bear witness. If there is no prayer-hearing God, we have played the fool! And yet no other sort of foolery has ever produced such surprising results! *We know* that God hears prayer! We are personally sure of it because we have tried it for ourselves. I wish that anybody here who is in doubt about it would try the power of prayer. Go to God in prayer; yes, even you that are unconverted, and see whether the Lord will not hear you! Somebody says, “Surely that is unsound advice! How can the unconverted *pray*?” Let me tell you a story. I was preaching, years ago, to the Sunday school children of a certain country town where the people were Calvinistic, and a point or two more. They received 16 ounces to the pound of the gospel and they liked an ounce or two above full weight. I made the observation to the children that before I had been renewed by divine grace, I, as a child, was in trouble, and I went to God in supplication, and He helped me. I need not repeat the circumstances, but it seemed to me that the Lord heard my childish pleading and helped me. This experience led me to feel that there was a reality in prayer, for God had heard me.

When I came out from the chapel where I had mentioned this circumstance, a number of grave persons who were both sound and sour in the faith, beset me round about like bees. They began asking, “How can a natural man pray a spiritual prayer? How can God accept a prayer which is merely natural, since He is a Spirit? If prayer is not worked by the Holy Spirit, it is an idle form,” and so on, and so on. It is difficult to conceive how many quibbles can be made upon one point. I was about 20 years of age, but I did my best to defend myself, for I had stated a fact, and a fact is a stubborn thing. At any rate, I held my own, but I do not know that I should have won the victory if I had been left alone. A grand old woman in a red cloak pressed forward into the middle of the ring, and addressed the doubly-sound brethren whom she knew better than I did. With an almost prophetic air she looked on them and said, “O fools, and slow of heart to come here and quibble with this young servant of the Lord! Listen to me and be convinced, and go home in silence. Does not the Lord hear the young ravens when they cry? Do they pray *spiritual* prayers? Does the Holy Spirit work prayer in them? If God hears the natural prayers of crying ravens, will He not hear the cries of children?” This was fine. The adversaries vanished out of my sight. There was no overcoming a statement so Scriptural. God does hear prayer! We bear our witness to that fact with all our strength and therefore we say about it—“Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know you it for your good.”

Another testimony we would like to bear, namely, that *obedience to the Lord, though it may involve present loss, is sure to be the most profitable course for the believing man to take*. If you will serve the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not find your road all smooth, but you will find it more pleasant than serving the devil. Satan said of Job, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have not You made an hedge about him and about all that he has?” It was most true, but the Lord God might have answered the devil, “Would you have My servants unrewarded? It is from you that service meets no reward but death. Do you think I would have you able to say, ‘God’s servants serve Him for nothing. Even Job gets no return for his faithful obedience?’” Beloved, we may not expect immediate success in business because we walk in the path of integrity. We may, for a time, be losers by being honest and may miss many a chance by abhorring deception. But we do not measure things by the inch and by the ounce when we come to deal with eternal matters. Brothers and sisters, here we leave the clock and its ticking and speak of the glory and Immortality which belong to the infinite and the eternal! Coming into those larger regions, we declare that nothing can be obtained worth getting by a lie, or by a trick, or by falling into sin. The most profitable course in life that any man can take is to do the right in every case. If it should involve loss, do right and suffer the consequences; for there are other compensating consequences which will make a man a gainer by uprightness—even if he should lose the clothes from his back. To have done right is to have a well-spring of joy within the heart. Some of us have tried this and are sure about it. There are aged persons here who can tell you that they owe everything in life to having been enabled, by the grace of God, to act uprightly in their youth. I know one who is at this moment in a fine position, whose rise in life dates from the moment when his employer bade him say that he was not at home and he answered, “Sir, I could not say *that*. I cannot tell a lie.” From that day his promotion in the office was constant and rapid. Another felt himself unable to cast up the firm’s accounts on Sunday but before long was so prized that nobody would have suggested such a thing to him. A straightforward course is the nearest way to success. We bear our testimony that righteousness is the best course. We *cannot* say, “Honesty is the best policy; we have tried both that and thieving—and honesty pays best.” But, for all that, if you consider the law of the Lord you will be considering your own interests. Take notice of this testimony—righteousness is wisdom. A straight line is the shortest way between any two places. “Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know you it for your good.”

I have many things to say, but our hours fly like the cherubim—each one has six wings. We beg to say that *the old-fashioned gospel is able to save men and to awaken enthusiasm in their souls*. Here—here is the best proof! Look around upon this vast assembly! Have we any music, any candles, any millinery? Have we anything here to attract people but simply the preaching of the old, old gospel? Our service is so severely simple as to be called *bare*. Have I varied from the old way and the old faith—yes, by even an eighth part of a hair’s breadth? Have I not kept to the gospel and set it forth in simple language? Lo, here I come to the end of 37 years and before me are the same multitudes of people as at the first! Young preacher, you will not need anything but Christ Jesus should you be spared to preach as long as I have done. When everybody seems to say that orthodoxy is spun out, God will send us a revival and the despised doctrines of grace will be to the front again and Christ shall make them His chariot in which He will ride forth conquering and to conquer! Behold, even at this day a company of the poorest of the people proclaim the gospel in its roughest form and preach it in our streets and lanes—and the crowd is stirred as it never is by any other theme! Notwithstanding all the infidelity of the times, faith is still lifting the standard! Hold to the faith and to the cross! Preach sin down—preach Christ up! Preach the atoning sacrifice! Preach in the power of the Holy Spirit! Such preaching is sufficient for the purposes of salvation! “Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know you it for your good.”

III. I close, now, with our third point—we have **HERE THE EXHORTATION TO THE INQUIRER**. What do we say to him? This—“We have searched it, so it is; *hear it*.” I need hardly address that exhortation to most of the present assembly. Hear it you do—with a delight which is remarkable. But you know how matters tend in London in these sad days. The masses of the people will not come to hear of Jesus and His love. They often pass by a street preacher and have no curiosity to know what it is which has brought him out into the open air. But oh, if you wish to be saved, hear the gospel! Let nothing keep you away from God’s sanctuary where the real gospel is proclaimed. Hear it! If

it is not preached exactly in the style which you would prefer, nevertheless, hear it! “Faith comes by hearing.” Come out on Sunday morning, you working men that are sitting at home in your shirt-sleeves. Come out and hear! I cannot make out what some of you do—you work hard all the week round—and when the day of rest arrives, you have no hope of heaven and no hunger after salvation! life is a poor thing if it ends here. Do you believe that all you can possess is to be had on this side the grave? It is a poor situation. Do you fancy that your life can be nothing better than an endless turning of the grindstone? Were you born merely to toil for daily bread? Is there nothing higher and better? If you say that you will die like dogs, I dare not think so meanly of you as you think of yourselves. You have only begun to exist! You have to live forever! You will exist in eternity as surely as God shall live, world without end! Shall it be an immortality of happiness, or an eternal existence of woe? Do, I pray you, think about this—and if there is a gospel, (and you know there is), then hear it, hear it, hear it, till by the hearing of it God sends you faith and faith grasps salvation!

The next thing that we say is, “*know it.*” Hear it and *know it*—go on hearing it until you know it! If you cannot quite attain to knowing it by hearing it, read your Bibles and seek the Lord till you are made to know the sublime secret. Ask Christian men and women to explain difficulties to you so you may know it. By getting a clear view of the plan of salvation, know what you must do to be saved. If you do not know anything else, know this essential matter! Christ crucified is the most precious piece of knowledge which you can ever come at. To know Christ is life eternal! Look to Him till you see in Him your life, your love, your God, your heaven, your all. Blessed is the man that finds this wisdom, for he has found an endless blessedness.

Our text means—*know it in a particular way.* “*Know you it for your good.*” The devil knows a great deal. He knows more than the most intelligent of us; but he knows nothing for his good. All that he knows sours into evil within his rebellious nature. There is a way of knowing a great deal and yet of getting no good out of it. Like Samson’s lion which had a mass of honey within it and yet had never tasted the sweetness of it, for it was a *dead* lion. You may have all the knowledge of Solomon and yet you may know nothing for your good, but end your days with the terrible wailing, “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!”

How is a man to know anything for his good? This knowledge must first be *a practical knowledge.* Does the Word say, “Repent”? If you want to know what repentance means, repent at once. You need not go to the Catechism or to the Creed for a definition—repent, and you know what repentance means! Be changed in mind, confess your sin and forsake it. Be sorry for sin. See the wrong of it. Quit it. You will know what repentance is when you have repented. If you want to know what faith is, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and when you have believed, you will know what believing is. The best way to know a virtue is to practice it! Somebody said, “What is the best way to tell a sinner the way of salvation?” The answer given was, “The best way to tell him is to tell him.” So it is. The very best way to eat your dinner is to eat it. We get confounding and confusing ourselves with trivial distinctions, whereas we had better throw distinctions to the dogs and get to soul-winning! You will never catch hares with drums, nor souls with controversies. Come to Jesus, Sinner! Come to Jesus! Believe in Jesus, Sinner! Believe in Jesus at once! “He that does His will shall know of His doctrine.” You will know the truth of God when, from the heart, you have obeyed it. God help you to exercise this practical faith at once. “Know you it for your good.”

To know a thing for our good is to know it *for ourselves.* “Know you it for your good.” I find that one rendering is, “Know it for yourself.” Another man’s God is no God to me; He must be, “My Lord and my God.” Another man’s Christ is no Christ for you; He must reveal Himself to you personally. Another man’s faith is no faith for you. God must be your God. Christ must be your Christ and the faith that saves you must be your own faith. God grant that it may be so; then you will know the Lord personally for your good.

I must add that we only know things for our good when we *know them believingly.* To a sinner a promise is as dark as a threat if he does not believe it. Christ, to an unbelieving sinner, is simply a judge. Christ’s very death becomes “a savor of death unto death” to the unbeliever and it cannot be “a savor of life unto life” to him unless it is mixed with faith. When you believe in Jesus, there is a vein of divine

grace for you in every doctrine of the Bible. You know the promise of the Lord and you know it for your good when you humbly believe that it is so, and humbly take it to yourself because you are resting in Christ.

I would to God that many here would know these things for their good! If they did, I should be happy, indeed, and so would they!

Now I have done, but I should like to say this; if there is nothing in religion, why do you come here? If there is salvation in believing in Christ, why are you not saved? You say there is a hell. Why are you going there? You know that there is a heaven. Why are you not preparing for it? You know that there is a Christ whose wounds bleed salvation; why are you not looking to Him? Is it all to be play, this religion of yours—going to meetings, sitting in your seats, and listening to the preacher? I would rather be silent than be fiddling to your dancing, or go through the service merely to spend a Sabbath in a decorous manner. Sirs, if you are not saved what shall I do? What shall I do? If you are saved, we will meet in heaven and we will praise God forever, each one of us; and our Lord shall have all the glory. But if you are lost! If you are lost—I cannot come to you, nor can you come to me; no matter what I do for you before the great gulf divides us. What? What shall I say when I render in my account? Shall I tell the Lord that you were not saved because I was afraid to tell you that there was a hell and I kept back every threatening doctrine and tried to make things pleasant for you, whether you were saved or not? I could not make that profession even if it could save your souls, for it would not, in any measure, be true!

“I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God” as far as I know it. God is my witness and so are your consciences that I have longed for your conversion! You that have heard me these years, if you are lost, it will not be for lack of pleading with, nor for lack of instruction, nor from lack of entreaties! O souls, why will you die? Why will you keep on procrastinating and crying, “Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow”? Why should it always be tomorrow? There will be no tomorrow of hope for you when once you are lost! Flee, now, to Christ! I pray you, by the living God and by the heaven which He gives to those who believe in Christ, hasten to Jesus! Trust yourselves to Jesus now! By that dreadful doom which will surely fall on every man who dies rejecting Christ, I beseech you, flee from the wrath to come! Lord, grant that it may be so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Job 5.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—245, 23 (VERS. III), 757.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:

[The following note from Mr. Spurgeon was read at the Tabernacle last Lord’s-Day. The publishers feel sure that sermon readers everywhere will pray for the speedy recovery of the suffering preacher.]

DEAR FRIENDS—I have been in great pain day and night all this week. I earnestly entreat your prayers, for I am brought very low.

Yours ever heartily,

C. H. SPURGEON.

Mentone, November 20, 1890.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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