

DESPISED LIGHT WITHDRAWN

NO. 2413

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.
 These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”*
John 12:36

OUR Savior was very gentle with those who had real difficulties. He would argue with them over and over again. He would state a truth, and re-state it. He would cast it into the form of a parable, or He would condense it into a sentence comparable to a proverb, or He would enlarge and expand it, for He was gentle with seeking souls as a nurse is with her child.

I do not believe that there is any real difficulty in the hearts of those of you who are sincerely seeking Jesus that He will despise. He will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed, therefore come to Him with your doubts and your anxieties, believing that His tender heart so loves you and so desires your good, that He will sit at your feet that He may induce you to sit at His feet—He will come down to your level that He may lift you up to His level.

I notice, however, that, while it is true that our gracious Master was very gentle and patient with those who had real difficulties, yet He did not always answer everybody's cavil. When the difficulty was raised for the sake of questioning and disputing, when it was mere quibbling, when the inquirers were not in earnest, and did not really wish to know the truth, He often declined to answer them. My Master has no desire to be merely victor in a debate—He did not come into the world to fight a battle of logic just for the sake of winning it. It is you and your salvation that He is seeking.

So was it in the case of these Jews—when they came with fresh cavils, saying, “Who is this Son of man?” our Lord, instead of replying to them, exhorted them to believe and walk in the light while they had it. He assumed that He was the light—He took that as a thing which had been proved—He did not go over that ground again.

But He let the cavilers know that He claimed to be the light of life, the light whereby men can come to God. And He pressed them to cease from questioning and to begin to practice real and true dealing with Himself. “While ye have light,” said He, “believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.”

I am not going, on this occasion, to attempt to meet any difficulties or to answer any questions. The most of you have no difficulties about the way of salvation and many whom I address here have done with asking questions about Christ. The point is, how to come to a practical decision. Spirit of the Living God, make this the day and this the hour when many shall believe in the great light, and shall be made the children of light once and for all!

I. First of all, I shall call your attention to a very solemn matter which may be described as THE THREATENED END TO A TIME OF PRIVILEGE—“while ye have the light.” You have no freehold possession of it. You have the light, but the time of light will come to an end. Observe the thirty-fifth verse, “Yet a little while is the light with you.” You have it at present, but it will soon be gone from you. Take heed lest it be gone before you have used it, for when it has once been withdrawn, darkness will come upon you, and “He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.”

Now what was this light of which our Lord thus spoke? To the Jews, it was the *light of the presence of Christ*. It was a great privilege indeed for the people living in that age and in that country to have the

Son of God among them bodily. John tells us that there were some few who beheld His glory, “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,” but the vast multitude were so blinded that, with God Himself in their midst in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, they did not perceive who the illustrious Stranger was. He came, and He went away again, and they knew not who it was that they had rejected, “for,” as Paul said in writing to the Corinthians, “had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” That was the light that the Jews had—and which they lost.

Christ has never personally come to you, dear friends, in the flesh, but *the light of His Gospel is still with you*, and in a sense that is His presence, for Jesus is the very life of the Gospel. There is also a light that comes to some men, I might even say in human form, for there are some ministers whom God specially appoints as His representatives to bless others.

I cannot help looking back in history to such men as Whitefield and Wesley and their companions in that great revival period. It was a time of bright light while they were among the sons of men. They flew like flaming seraphs over this land, leaving a trail of light behind them, which banished much of the darkness in which England had been shrouded.

It was a great privilege to have heard those men and when they were gone, to a large extent, and to many people, the light went with them.” There are some preachers still on the earth whom God blesses very greatly in the conversion of souls, men whom you cannot hear without being profited in your souls.

Without exalting anybody or depreciating anybody, it is a fact that there are some preachers who do not touch your heart and do not stir your spirit—they may be very useful to others and useful in other directions—but they are not of service to you.

On the other hand, there are those whom God does bless to your soul and if you find anywhere, in this Tabernacle, or in any other house of prayer where Christ is preached, a voice that does really move you, it is, so to speak, a manifestation of the light to you. Do not, I beseech you, play with it, or trifle with it, for whoever the preacher may be, however humble the instrumentality, if it is instrumentality that is adapted to your case, it should be honored in your conscience and it should be highly regarded in your heart.

That light may readily enough be quenched. The preacher and his hearers may be separated. He may be taken from you, or you may be taken from him. In either case, it may be a very sorrowful experience for you to have to look back upon all you heard and saw in those days when there was an instrumentality exactly suited to your case and yet you refused to be moved by it.

We have always with us the Gospel of Jesus Christ that you can read in this Book whenever you will, but *the Holy Ghost must go with the Gospel* to make it the power of God unto salvation. You cannot see the light that is in the Word unless the Holy Ghost reveals it to you. Some of you have been under the influence of the Holy Ghost in some measure and degree.

There have been times when you have seen sin and have stood aghast at it, when you have seen the Savior, and have admired His blood and righteousness. There have been times when you have been strangely inclined to come away from yourself and your sin, and to come to Jesus and be saved, You remember those powerful drawings, those inward strivings.

Remember that this work of the Holy Spirit is but for a time, it lasts not forever. Those solemn words are still true, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” A day may come when the same preaching that now greatly stirs you, will have no influence over you—and when the Spirit of God Himself will seem to be entirely absent both from the means of grace and from the Bible when you read it. Therefore I put before you this serious consideration, that you are at present favored with the light, but you are only favored with it for a certain term.

Do not reckon upon always having it, for *the light may be removed from you*. My dear hearer, the day may come when you will have to go away from this country and be found far off in the bush of Australia, or the backwoods of America. Or you may even in this country be located where you will not be able to hear the Gospel, for what you will hear will not be the Gospel, and you will be obliged to confess that it is not.

Therefore while you have the light of God, remember that it is a favorable season for your decision for Christ. The day may come, as I said before, when the voice that has thrilled you again and again, and that wakes the echoes of your soul's most secret chambers, shall be silent in death. The time may come when, although your minister and you yourself are left still in the same place, yet, so far as you are concerned, the Holy Spirit will be gone, and so the light will have departed from you.

Take heed, I beseech you, lest it really be so, and *use the light while you have it*. It may, perhaps, seem to some of you that I am raising a needless alarm, but indeed it is not so. I do not think that, for many a day, I have come to this platform to speak to you without being informed, during the day, of some one or two who have passed into eternity out of this congregation.

Years ago the bulk of us, as church members, were young, and we lost comparatively few by the stroke of death. But as it is with the pastor, so is it with the people—we are all getting older. We have entered middle life, the great mass of us, and consequently our mortality is largely increasing—and every time we meet we may be positively certain that we shall never all of us meet again here.

Between this Sabbath and next Sabbath some in the ranks of our membership will have passed into heaven—and some out of our congregation will have been called to stand before God. I feel, therefore, like the guard of a train that is just ready to start. The time is up for us to be off and the guard's whistle has been blown, but there is somebody who wants to talk to me about politics, or there is another person who wants to discuss a theological difficulty, and I feel bound to say, "Sir, the time is up. We must start at once—will you come on board or must you be left behind? While the train is here at the platform, enter it, take your place, and journey with us to Zion, for now it is time for us to go. We cannot stop here forever."

Time and tide wait for no man. Neither will God forever wait for men to turn unto Him and live—but the hour shall come when all opportunities will be past—when the gate of mercy will be finally shut. You remember how it was with the wise virgins and the bridegroom, "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

God bless that word of warning! He can bless it, however feebly it may have been spoken.

II. Now, secondly, I take you a little further into our theme. Here is AN ACT OF GRACE COMMENDED—"While ye have the light, *believe in the light*." This believing is the most essential act of a man's life. Therefore our Lord said, "Believe in the light."

First, believe that it is the true light, *believe the Gospel to be of God*. Many here have proved in their own experience that it is of God and that "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." That Jesus Christ the Son of God came into this world and was made man, that as man He took upon Himself the sin of His people and suffered for us, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God," is most assuredly true. And that in His name there is salvation, that in Him we have eternal life, is also equally true. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," even now. Believe this to be true.

"Well, I do believe it to be true," says one, "but I am not saved for all that." Then, next, I pray the Holy Spirit to help you to go a little further. Not only believe the Gospel to be of God, but *believe Jesus Christ Himself*. There is a text that is often misquoted—I have many a time heard it said, "I know *in whom* I have believed," but Paul wrote, "I know *whom* I have believed."

He had not only believed in Christ, but he had believed Christ. I want you, dear friend, if you are sincerely seeking salvation, to believe Christ. Believe Him to be what He says He is—believe that everything He says is true—believe that He Himself does save, and can save, and will save you. So believe Him as to hand yourself over to Him and take Him to be your Savior. In a word, as our text says, "While ye have light, believe in the light."

It is essential also that you should *believe for yourselves*. It is no use for people to try to believe the Gospel for their friends or for their children. Believe it for yourselves. I notice that some unsaved persons will read with great interest accounts of conversions, and even feel pleasure in hearing of this and that man being saved. My dear friend, why not believe Christ yourself? Why not take Him to be your own Savior?

Remember that it is true to you that, “He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life.” May you be led at this moment to make it true to yourself! You stand in a banqueting-hall tonight—the tables are delightfully spread with every kind of food that your hunger can crave and every drink that is suitable to quench your thirst—you have been up and down those tables and admired the generosity of Him that furnished them so liberally. And you have rejoiced as you have seen others sit down and feast.

Now I want you to do this. There is the chair for you. What is next? Sit down at the table and begin to feast. It is you yourself who will find the Gospel true. It is your own personal participation in this feast that shall be to you your joy and your salvation. You do not want simply a Savior—knock that little letter “a” out and put in the blessed pronoun “my,” and say from your heart, “my Savior.”

Do not merely say, “I believe that there is pardon for sin”—take Christ to be your own Savior and then you are pardoned—your sin is gone. All that is said in the Word of God to sinners in general is meant for each sinner in particular when he comes and takes it to himself by his own individual faith.

There is a passage in Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* where he says—“These are the generals; come to particulars, man.” That is just what I want to say to you. All that you have heard, all that we have preached, may be put down as generals. But if it is to benefit you, you must come to particulars, you must personally appropriate the general truth and say, “This is for me. This I believe. This I will take. This Savior is mine.”

“Still,” says one, “suppose that I should take what was not mine.” That is a supposition which every honest man might fairly suggest, but in this case, so free is the Gospel that ye may freely take it and there will be no question about whether you had a right to it.

See, there is a hungry dog. He rushes into a butcher’s shop, jumps up, steals a piece of meat, and runs off with it. It is hardly worth the butcher’s while to run after him, to take it away, but if the dog has actually eaten the meat, then I am sure that no sensible butcher will even think of taking it away from him.

Now, I would advise you to make a snatch at the Gospel and hungrily devour it by a ravenous faith—and I am sure that no one will ever take it away from you. Have you never read that promise of our Lord, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”? I see the Savior standing there and His different disciples come to Him one after another, and He does not put one of them away from Him.

At last, there comes a filthy beggar, leprous as snow—the white scales are on his brow and men flee in terror from him. He comes right up to the Christ and tries to get into His arms. Will He not push Him away? No, for He says, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,” and He embraces this filthy, leprous beggar, and wonder of wonders, as He presses Him to His breast, the leprosy is healed, the filth is all gone, and His rags are transformed to shining raiment!

Wonders of grace belong to Christ. Come along with you, then, and try Him for yourselves. Did He not Himself say, “While ye have light, believe in the light”? If you dare to believe in that light, you shall make no sort of mistake, for Jesus Himself bids you to do so.

Very often, at the bottom of our unbelief, there lies this thought, “I am, after all, somebody of importance.” It is the old story of Naaman all over again. He went to the house of Elisha, we are told, “with his horses and with his chariot.” That equipage was a very important part of the real Naaman—his horses and his chariot went to show that he was a great man with his master, and he would have Elisha to know that he was a great man and honorable, albeit that he was a leper.

Such a great man, when he goes to the prophet’s door, down that narrow street in the city of Samaria, must still have his horses and his chariot. The coachman thought he never would get down that lane, but Naaman said, “You must drive right up to the door. I must go with my horses and with my chariot.” The man of God was indoors and Elisha knew how to treat the proud warrior—he did not even go out to him—he sent a message to him, saying, “Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.”

Naaman thought that Elisha would have come out to him. He said, “I thought, he will surely come out to me—the proudest man in all Syria has been glad to unloose the latches of my shoes. Did I not

come to the prophet's door with my horses and my chariot? Yet he sent out a bit of a boy, or a servant girl, with a message to me. Then, besides, he tells me to wash! Does he think that I do not wash? I, a prince of Syria, want washing? And if I wanted washing, must I come all the way to Jordan to wash in that paltry stream? No, there are Abana and Pharpar, back there at Damascus, the rivers of my very respectable country—may I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.”

Yet you know that, when he came to a proper state of mind, he did as the prophet bade him—he washed seven times in Jordan and his leprosy was cleansed. Thus, proud sinner, obey the Gospel command, “Believe and live,” and you, too, shall be made whole.

III. I want you now to advance another step. I have almost anticipated this third point—“While ye have light, believe in the light, *that ye may be the children of light.*” Here is, A RESULT OF FAITH MENTIONED.

They who believe in Christ receive *a change of nature*. They were born heirs of wrath, but by grace they become children of the light of God. “Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord,” as soon as you have believed in Jesus Christ. This new birth, this regeneration, is a great puzzle to many poor sinners.

One asks, “How can I make myself a new creature in Christ?” Of course, *you* can do nothing of the kind. This is a miracle—it is as much a work of God to make us children of light as it was to make light at the first. Only God can work this miracle, but mark you this, there never was a soul yet that truly believed in Christ, but at the same time it underwent the change called the new birth or regeneration.

Christians have often been asked about which is first, faith or regeneration, belief in Christ or being born again. I will tell you when you answer me this question—When a wheel moves, which spoke moves first? “Oh, they all start together!” say you. So these other things all start together, whether it is the hub of the wheel, which is regeneration, or the spokes of the wheel, which are faith, and repentance, and hope, and love, and so on—when the wheel moves, it all moves at once.

If you believe in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, in the moment that you believe, this great change of nature is effected in you, for *faith has in itself a singularly transforming power*. It is a fact in everyday experience that, when a man comes to believe in his master, he becomes at once a better servant. A person whom I disliked, because I suspected him, becomes at once pleasing to me as soon as I trust him. So, faith towards God in itself produces a total change of mind in the man who has it.

But beside that, there goes with faith a *divine energy which changes the heart of man*. I have heard of an old sinner who had been in prison many a day, growing grey in his iniquity, who took a little child up in his arms, and as he put his hand upon the boy's curly head, he said, “There would be some hope for me if I could become like this little child.”

Now, that is exactly what God can do for you. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you shall receive a new and childlike nature. There shall be created in you something better than what is called the primitive innocence of infancy—it shall be a really pure and holy life that shall be given to you and you shall become a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Is not this very wonderful? The text says, “Believe in the light, *that ye may be the children of light.*” The children of light—what a wonderful picture that might be if I were an artist and could exercise the power of word-painting which some have! “The children of light.” Why, in the morning, when the sun first shines forth, those myriads of dew-drops, all brighter than diamonds of the first water—these are the children of light!

And those innumerable flowers that open their cups and sweeten the air with their dainty perfume—these are the children of light! And those birds that have been slumbering away there, during the night, in their hidden corners in the grove, come out and begin at once their charming minstrelsy, for they are the children of the light! I cannot tell you how many and how bright are these things in nature which are the children of light, but God can make us by His grace to be like these things, only far better, children of light spiritually.

What are the children of light spiritually? Well, I have met with some of them and it has been a great joy to know them, for these children of light have *a great delight in truth*. They are not afraid of it, they love to dive into it. As children of light they like to know, they wish to know, even the deep things of God. They do not shut their eyes to the truth about eternity. They do not refuse to search their own hearts. They are children of light and they desire the light to shine. They come to the light that their hearts, their thoughts, and their works may be made manifest. They delight to know the truth—error and falsehood are loathsome to them, but that which is true is charming to their judgment.

“Children of light.” They are those who *move in a world of knowledge*. They have come to know what others do not know. To them, the world is peopled with invisible beings. To them, eternal things are no dreams, but they have become realities. Their eyes have been opened to a light that shines not from the sun and they move in an atmosphere in which they behold things which the telescope cannot reveal. They are children of light who have come into a world of perception and discoveries to which others are strangers.

“Children of light.” I will tell you again how you may know them. *They practice truth*. They speak the truth. It is said that an ambassador is a gentleman who is sent abroad to lie for the good of his country. I suppose that common saying is so nearly true that we need not correct it. And a politician is often a gentleman who has learned the art of concealing his thoughts, or who expresses opinions which he trusts will be in accordance with those of his constituency!

A child of God is a man who says what he believes, let the world believe it or not. He does not understand, “policy.” He is no mariner who trims his sail to every shifting wind, but believing in the difference between right and wrong, he chooses the right and eschews the wrong, for he is a child of light. He has made up his mind to follow the right, and the true, and the good, and the gracious at all costs. Now, that is what faith in Christ will do for you. It will make you, by the good Spirit of God, to be a child of light.

A child of light, further, is *one who exhibits the mind and character of God*. He is not an earthworm, hiding himself away in the mold. He is not a rat, which loves to be behind the wainscot except at nighttime—he is a child of light. He wears his heart upon his sleeve where daws may peck at it and they will do so, but that will not affect him. It is not for him to conceal anything—what has he to conceal?

He lives in the sight of the eternal God and as for how he appears in the sight of men, what is that to him? Such a one condemns me, but God acquits me, so let the other condemn if he will, what does it matter to me? Such a man acquits and applauds me, but if God condemns me, the acquittal of man is less than nothing and vanity. A child of light should be very bold for his Lord.

You remember that the times were horribly dark in the days when Farel lived in Switzerland and young John Calvin had written his weighty volumes of treatises called the *Institutes*. They were the product of his early days and he wrote in a flowing style, either in French or Latin, and he thought, if he wrote books and sent them forth, he would have done his part towards the Reformation.

But Farel discovered this young writer and said to him, “You must take up the work of the Reformers and carry it on by preaching the truth.” Calvin replied, “I am a bookish man, I have not the courage and the strength to stand out in the front of the battle—that is for men like Martin Luther. I am a studious person and not so much a man of action.”

Farel reasoned with him and said, “You must come out and take the lead in this Reformation fight,” and he asked him, “Are you afraid of losing your life?” Calvin protested that he had no such fear, he would willingly lay down his life for Jesus Christ if that were necessary, but he shrank from the tumult of controversy.”

Then Farel pronounced upon him a curse so terrible, if he did not immediately come and take his proper place, that John Calvin had to yield and he never doubted afterwards, but was always to the front, and always the bravest of the brave. I have often admired the noble veteran, Farel, who could not tolerate that this young man, with so much in him, should simply hold the pen and keep in the

background, but threatened that the Lord would follow him with all the vials of His vengeance if he did not take his place at the post of duty.

I should like now, if I could, to put my hand upon the shoulder of some young brother, and call upon him to come out to serve his Lord. I feel myself tonight like an Elijah to you—and I charge you, Elisha, quit the cattle and betake yourself to this prophetic ministry. God calls you to it and woe be to you if you start back from it!

Again, a child of light is one who, by God's grace, is *bright, happy, restful, full of joy, life, fruitfulness*. These are the children of light, and if we believe in Christ, who is the light, and take Him to ourselves with all our hearts, then we shall be the children of light. I pray that some of you may become the children of light even tonight.

O God, work miracles of mercy in this house! JEHOVAH, Thou true God, when You answer by fire, then are You known to be God, and the priests of Baal flee away. If you will convert men by Your own omnipotent grace, they will worship and adore You. If You will not do this, what can our voice do? Pray, O you people of God, that He may bring those who have the light to believe in the light and to become the children of light!

These people to whom Christ spoke were bigoted persecuting Jews, yet He said even to them, "Believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." Whoever may be in my congregation tonight—and doubtless there is a mixed medley here—there are none within these walls whom the power of divine grace cannot at this moment save. Our Lord Jesus Christ is as able to save the most abandoned as the most moral and to bring to Himself the most skeptical as well as the most credulous. May that miracle be wrought in our midst by His great grace!

IV. My last point is, A GRIEVOUS CLOSE TO A SERMON.

Christ Himself was the preacher on this occasion—do you therefore infer that these people believed? Let me read to you what happened when the sermon was done. They gathered about that extempore pulpit from which Jesus had addressed them, but on a sudden, they could scarcely tell how, He was gone!

They said one to another, "Where is He?" According to the latter part of our text, this happened at the close of Christ's sermon—"These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them." So, although He had preached as never man preached, though His very soul had run over at His lips in a mighty cascade of love, yet His hearers were not converted, but the Divine Preacher had to go and hide himself from their malicious violence.

The preacher on this occasion will not have to do that. No one will seek his life, or try to do him injury, but it is a sad reflection that the same result may follow as followed from Christ's own preaching. Men may go their way with their eyes blinded and the question of Isaiah may have to be repeated again and again, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"

Do you blame Jesus because these people rejected His testimony? Do you blame Jesus because He had to escape from their violence? No, no, no—a thousand times, no. And "in that day," in that last dread day of judgment, I trust that you will exonerate me from all blame if you are lost, for I have earnestly exhorted you to believe in Jesus, and in Jesus only. There is salvation to be had in Him—will you have it or will you not?

I would gladly grip your hand, to detain you, as that "ancient mariner," of whom Coleridge tells us in his weird poem, transfixed with his glittering eye the wedding guest, and held him when he wanted to be gone, and I would pray you to remember that tonight may be the turning point, the deciding hour, of your eternal destiny. The scales, I see, are quivering—which way shall they turn? O blessed Christ, cast Your cross into the balance and turn it tonight for the salvation of each one before You, and unto Your name shall be praise forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 12:20-50

20-24. *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

I think that our Saviour looked upon these Greeks as a sort of vanguard of the great army of Gentiles who would come to Him as the result of His death, but He fixed His eye upon the cause rather than the result, and so He began to talk about that death of His, and how it was that it would work such glorious results.

If you want a corn of wheat to grow, you must put it into the ground. It must be resolved into its primary particles—for that is what “to die” means—and then it must spring up again with newness of life or else it can never be multiplied. It was so with the Lord Jesus Himself. It is still so with us, it is in proportion as we ourselves shall be prepared to die that we shall be prepared to give life to others.

25. *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

To hoard your energies will be really to destroy them, like hoarded wheat which in the end becomes useless, but to give up your energies, to expend your life-forces, this is to sow the wheat, and this is the way to ensure the harvest.

26. *If any man serve me, let him follow me;*

Do not let him invent some new method of service, “Let him follow me.” If you would do Christ a service, it cannot be by will-worship, or by any way of your own devising, “If any man serve me, let him follow me.”

26. *And where I am, there shall also my servant be:*

“He shall be with me in tribulation, he shall be with Me in humiliation, but he shall ultimately be with Me in triumph and in glory.”

26. *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

Those servants of Christ who follow at their Master’s heel, and do His bidding at all times, are the true knights of the King who win the honours that God alone can give.

27. *Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.*

Often, my brethren, should we be checked in prayer if we would be as wise as our Lord. “What shall I say? Shall I ask to be delivered from sickness? Shall I ask that I may not endure the troubles, which are the common lot of men? Shall I pray to be screened from persecution?”

You see, I am rendering our Lord’s question into our language, bringing it down from the lofty height of His divine thought to the level of our poor humanity. We must often pause before we pray, and say with our Lord, “For this cause came I unto this hour. Have I not been brought here on purpose to suffer? Have I not been led to this place that I may glorify God by submitting to all His will?” Therefore, sometimes let us check ourselves in prayer, lest we should ask what is not for our own good or for God’s glory.

The next word of the Saviour will give us liberty enough, for he went on to say,—

28. *Father, glorify thy name.*

When we are pleading about that glorious name of JEHOVAH, we may pray with vehemence and importunity, “Father, whatever I do or suffer, glorify Thy name.”

28-29. *Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.*

Ah! they did not understand the voice of God, or the cause of the voice speaking to them. If the men of the world in our Saviour's day did not understand the Father's voice to the Only Begotten, do not expect that the men of the world today will understand the divine voice in your heart. They will reckon that you are in error, and that God has not spoken to you, it has only thundered. They will be ready to invent all kinds of stories of angels, and I know not what, so as to get rid of the voice of God to you. But you know it, if you are God's children, you know His voice, and you also know what He means when He speaks.

30-32. *Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

This is the sermon, which has the Greeks for a text. They are already coming, being drawn to Christ, but when he dies, when he is lifted up upon the cross, instead of losing His attractive power, He will have greater drawing force than ever, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

33-34. *This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him,*

As they were always doing, capaciously answering, not answering to Him with sentiments that responded to His, but replying against Him with their caviling.

34-41. *We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

It is an awful thing to resist the Spirit of God, for if His softening influences are withdrawn, the heart grows hard. If His enlightening influences are taken away, the eyes of the understanding are darkened. I do believe there are many who have so long trifled with conscience and violated the best instincts of their nature that they are given up as those who are past hope. I pray God that it may not be so with any here, but it was so with many in the generation amongst which Christ laboured.

42. *Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him;*

Christ has His secret followers in the darkest days. There are men who believe in Him even when the current of infidelity runs most strongly.

42-43. *But because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

For which they deserved great censure. Yet some of them cast away their cowardice at the last, for Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus were among those who confessed their love to the crucified Christ.

44-49. *Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.*

Christ did not pride himself upon being a great original thinker. He took his word from his Father's mouth. And the preacher of the gospel is to be no inventor of new thoughts. The "thoughtful" man of

whom we hear so much is just a man who is rebellious against God. The Lord's true servant is to repeat God's thoughts, not his own, to borrow from the Scriptures, to borrow from the teaching of the Holy Ghost, even as the Lord Jesus Christ did.

50. *And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*

If the great Head of the church was thus only a messenger, the deliverer of a message from the Father, should not we, who at our best are such poor ministers of Christ, take heed to it that we also can say, "Even as the Father said unto me, so I speak"? God grant it! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—611, 587, 501

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. 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.