

“A PECULIAR PEOPLE”

NO. 2530

A SERMON
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*“But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself:
the LORD will hear when I call unto him.”*

Psalm 4:3

IF you read this Psalm through, you will notice that when David wrote it, he had been pestered and troubled by certain ungodly men who had made a mock of that which was his greatest delight. They had turned his glory into shame, and had proved that they loved folly and falsehood. So he said to them, “O ye sons of men, how long will you turn my glory into shame? How long will ye love vanity and seek after leasing”, or “lying?” In order that he might stop them from angering him, he reminded them of two great facts. “But know,”—said he—understand do not doubt it, rest assured of it, “know that JEHOVAH hath set apart him that is godly for himself: JEHOVAH will hear when I call unto him.” Why did David want these men to know those two facts?

Well, first, that they might cease to oppose him, for, if they did but know that the man whom they mocked was really a child of God, set apart by the Most High by a divine choice to be His own peculiarly favored one, surely they would not go on with their persecution. Those who put Christ to death did it in ignorance, “for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

And we are persuaded that there are many men who now oppose the servant of God, who would not do so if they did but know that he really was a servant of God, and that God looked upon him with delight. Therefore David, to stop the cruel mockings of his persecutors, said to them, “Know that JEHOVAH hath set apart him that is godly for himself: JEHOVAH will hear when I call unto him.”

He may also have had a still better motive and I think that he had—namely, to draw these men towards his God. There is no better way of taking flies than with honey, and no better way of getting men to Christ than by drawing them to Him by a display of the privileges and advantages which belong to a godly life. “Know, then,” said he, “you who are saying, ‘Who will show us any good?’ and who are seeking after mere vanities that never can satisfy you—know you that in true religion there is to be found that which will delight you, and which will give you rest and peace. Know this, ‘that JEHOVAH hath set apart him that is godly for himself.’” I would to God that some to whom we describe the choice privileges of the people of God may be moved to cry,

*“With them numbered may we be,
Now and through eternity!”*

But, whether this truth has either or both of these effects upon the minds of men, or whether it shall have no effect at all, still it is a truth never to be denied, “that JEHOVAH hath set apart him that is godly for himself.”

So, as God may help me at this time, I shall briefly speak, first, upon a *peculiar character*, “him that is godly.” Secondly, upon a *peculiar honor*, “JEHOVAH hath set apart him that is godly for himself.” And thirdly, upon a *peculiar privilege*, “JEHOVAH will hear when I call unto him.” Oh, that every one of us may possess the character, receive the honor, and enjoy the privilege of which our text speaks!

I. First, then, let us notice A PECULIAR CHARACTER, “him that is godly.”

On reading the Psalm, it is very clear that this is *a man misunderstood, or not understood on earth*. The ungodly cannot comprehend the godly. They scoff at them, they turn their glory into shame because they themselves love vanity and seek after lying. The godly man is not understood by the people among whom he dwells. God has made him to be a stranger and a foreigner in their midst. They who are born twice have a life which cannot be comprehended by those who are only born once. Those who have received the Spirit of God have a new spirit within them which is so singular that the carnal mind cannot perceive what it is. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned.

When a man has become a new creature in Christ Jesus, the old creatures round him cannot make head or tail of him. They look at him, they see him actuated by motives which they cannot understand they see that he is kept in check by forces which they do not acknowledge, that he is constrained by energies of which they are not partakers, and that he looks for a something which they do not desire. So the Christian becomes in a measure like Christ Himself, of whom the poet sings,

*“The Jewish world knew not their King,
God’s everlasting Son.”*

“Therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.” “You are a very peculiar person,” said one to a Christian. “I thank you for that testimony,” answered the Christian, “for that is what I desire to be, as Peter says, ‘Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.’” “Ah!” said the other, “but there is a strangeness about you that I do not like. I feel sometimes that I cannot endure your company.” “I thank you again,” replied the Christian, “for you only fulfill our Lord’s words, ‘Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.’”

Yes, dear friends, it is so, and if you never strike the worldling as being a strange person, if you never get the mocking laughter of the ungodly, if they never slander you, if you never detect any difference between yourself and them, and they never discover any between themselves and you, it must be because you are not a genuine child of God.

Ishmael will mock Isaac. It is not possible that the two seeds—the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman—should agree together if they act according to their nature. Do not wonder, therefore, if you, like David, have to bear persecution from those who cannot comprehend your new life, “for ye are dead,” and the world says, “Bury the dead out of sight.” “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” But the worldling does not understand the peculiar character of the godly, or delight in it.

But notice that, according to our text, this peculiar character is *understood in heaven*. God knows what godliness is, for He has created it, He sustains it, He is pledged to perfect it, and His delight is in it. What matters it whether you are understood by your fellow men or not, so long as you are understood by God? If that secret prayer of yours is known to Him, seek not to have it known to anyone besides. If your conscientious motive is discerned in heaven, mind not though it is denounced on earth. If your designs—the great principles that sway you—are such as you dare plead in the great day of judgment, you need not stop to plead them before a jesting, jeering generation.

Be godly and fear not. And if you be misrepresented, remember that, should your character be dead and buried among men, there will be “a resurrection of reputations” as well as of bodies. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” Therefore be not afraid to possess this peculiar character, for though it is misunderstood on earth, but understood in heaven.

Let us inquire what this character is which is misunderstood on earth, but understood in heaven. What does the text mean when it mentions, “him that is godly”?

Well, it means, first, *a God-fearing man*. This is a common term, “a God-fearing man.” There are many who have not the fear of God before their eyes. Whether there is a God or not, is a matter of small

consideration to them. They do not care which way the discussion terminates, for God is not in all their thoughts, and as long as He is not there, it does not matter to them whether He is anywhere.

There are some who are not afraid of the terrors of God even with regard to the world to come. At any rate, they flatter themselves that they shall die at ease even if they live in wickedness, and for the present, they even dare to defy the Most High. They have been heard—and our blood has chilled as we have heard them—they have been heard to invoke condemnation from His hand as they have blasphemed His holy name.

The godly man is one who fears God. He would not take God’s name in vain, he would not willfully violate God’s law, he would not do anything that would grieve the Most High. And when he does so through infirmity, or sudden temptation, he is himself grieved that he should have grieved his God, for the fear of the Lord is upon him. He would not wish to stand at the judgment-bar of God, to be judged according to his works, apart from Jesus Christ his Lord. He would dread such a thing. The name of God—the person of God—the character of God—these are matters of holy awe with him. His soul is filled with hallowed trembling while he thinks thereon, and everything that has to do with God is sacred to him.

Heaven is no trifle and hell is no trifle to him. The Book of God is no fable to him, the day of God is hallowed by him, and the church of God is dear to him, for he is a God-fearing man. Often would he have done this or that, but he said, with Nehemiah, “So did not I, because of the fear of God.” When he is sorely tempted to evil, he asks, with Joseph, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”

Now, dear friend, if you go no further than that, and are a God-fearing man, I have great hopes for you and I ask you to look at my text with hope, “Know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself.”

But advancing another step, a godly man is a *God-trusting man*. He is one who has learned to entrust his soul to the hands of God as unto a faithful Creator, one who has trusted his sin with God, beholding it laid upon the Divine Substitute. He has trusted his eternity with God. He believes that he shall die the death of the righteous and that his last end shall be like His. He is resting in the living God, he trusts God about the present, he takes his troubles to God, ay, and if the day opens without trouble, he will not enter upon it without taking his day to God, nor will he fall asleep without committing his night to God. He trusts in God for little things, saying, “Give us this day our daily bread.” He trusts in God for great things, saying, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

So, dear friend, if you are a God-trusting man, as well as a God-fearing man, take my text—for it tastes like a wafer made with honey—lay it on your tongue, and let it dissolve into your soul and sweeten your whole life. “Know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself.”

Then advance still further and understand the word “godly” as meaning a *God-loving man*. A godly man loves God. He is one whose heart has gone out after God. He loves his dear ones here below, but his God he loves more than all of them. He loves them in God and loves God the more for giving them to him, but God Himself has become his great object of delight.

I am sure that he is a saved man who can follow David in saying, “God, my exceeding joy.” When one comes to joy in God, it is a sure evidence of godliness. The hypocrite has no delight in God. He may have a delight in the outward parade of religion, or in the name of godliness, possibly he has a delight in the bliss of heaven which he sometimes hopes that he may enjoy, but in God Himself he has no delight. Whereas, to the true believer, God is heaven.

***“Were I in heaven without my God,
'Twould be no heaven to me.”***

“Delight thyself, also, in the Lord,” says David, and the genuine believer does. He can say of his God,

*“Thou art the sea of love,
Where all my pleasures roll;
The circle where my passions move,
The center of my soul.”*

So that he is a godly man who is a God-loving man.

And assuredly, he is a godly man who is *a God-knowing man*. He does not merely fear and trust and love God, but he has come into personal acquaintance with God. The other day I saw a book entitled, “Is God Knowable?” Well, dear friends, that is a question that can be answered by some of us. We can say, “We know Him. We have spoken to Him and He has spoken to us. Our spirit has come into actual contact with the Divine Spirit. We do not need anybody to prove this truth to us, for it is a matter of faith, nay, of joyous, ecstatic, delicious experience.

*“My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights.”*

“My God, it is a fact that I have touched You and that You have touched me—that I have spoken to You and that You have spoken unto me—and it is that fact which has forever made me glad.” O beloved, if you know not God, what do you know? How are you a child of God if you do not know your Father? How are you saved if you do not know your Savior? How can you come to the table to remember Him whom you never knew? And must you not expect to hear Him say at the last, “Depart from me; I never knew you”? If we know Him, we are known of Him, the two things go together and are much the same, but if we know Him not, then He knows us not in the sense of acquaintance and of love.

Once more, a godly man is *a God-like man*. We reach this point, you see, by steps—the man is God-fearing, God-trusting, God-loving, God-knowing, and then God-like. Can a man be like God? Ah, me! what a wide discrepancy there must always be between God and the best of men! We are unlike God even in our likeness to Him. He who is most like God is only like Him as a dewdrop is like the sea, or as a glowworm is like the sun. Yet grace does make us like God in righteousness, and true holiness, and especially in love.

Has the Holy Spirit taught you, my dear friend, to love even those that hate you? Have you a love that leaps out, like the waters from the smitten rock, that every thirsty one may drink? Would you fain love the poorest and the most depraved into the wealth and glory of your Master’s love? Do you love even those that render you no love in return, as He did who gave His life for His enemies? Then are you to that extent made like God. And do you choose that which is good? Do you delight yourself in peace? Do you seek after that which is pure? Are you always gladdened with that which is kind and just? Then are you like your Father who is in heaven. You are a godly man and this text is for you, “Know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself.”

II. This leads me to dwell with pleasure upon A PECULIAR HONOR which has been conferred upon this peculiar character. “The LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself.”

You see, then, that *God discerns godliness in men*. There is a great deal of dross in all of us, but God spies whatever gold there may be. If there be any gold in the ore, God preserves the lump because of the precious metal that is in it.

I know, my dear brother, that you are not perfect. Perhaps you are at this moment grieving over a great fault. If so, I am glad you have the godliness that makes you grieve over sin. I know, my dear friend, that you are not what you want to be, or wish to be, or ought to be. Still, you do fear the Lord, and you do trust Him, and you do love Him. Now, the Lord can spy all that out and He knows about the good that is in you. He casts your sin behind His back, but that which is of His own grace, He sets apart for Himself, and He sets you apart for Himself because of the good which is in you.

I do like to notice, in Scripture, that, although God’s people are described as a very faulty people, and although the Lord is never tender towards sin, yet He is always very gentle towards them. If there is any good point about them, He brings it out and He is most gracious to them, and His love casts a mantle over a thousand of their mistakes and errors. If God’s people mentioned in the Old and New Testaments had all been perfect, I should have despaired, but because they seem to have just the kind of faults that I grieve over in myself, I do not feel any more lenient toward my faults, but I have the more hope that I also am among those whom the Lord sets apart for Himself because they are godly.

And dear friends, know yet further that *God makes those who are really godly to differ from the world*. He will not let them be like the world. Some of them try to be so, but they must not. And the world sometimes gets the victory over them for a time, and makes them like itself, but they soon get out of its power.

Poor Samson told the secret of his great strength and the Philistines cut off all that long hair of his which used to hang down his back till he seemed to be like a wild man of the woods. The Nazarite told his secret, and then they clipped away his hair, and set him to grind in the mill when they had put out his eyes. They should have had a razor drawn over his head every morning, but they forgot to do that, and when his hair had grown again, he pulled the pagan temple down upon his enemies, and in his last moments won a glorious victory for his nation.

If the devil ever does cut the Nazarite locks of a true child of God, they will grow again in time. They must grow again and they grow when the devil is not noticing them, and then the old strength of grace comes back again. I have known a child of God fall, like Peter did, when he denied his Master. Yet, when the locks of his consecration had grown again, in a short time there was Peter preaching a sermon that brought three thousand to Christ. And the devil had not made much of a gain of Peter after all, when once he came back to his Lord.

But, oh, what a mercy it is to be kept so as never to lose those locks of consecration! Oh, that we may differ from the world in a thousand respects, so that we may go through it as Mr. Bunyan pictures his pilgrim going through Vanity Fair. “Buy, buy, buy,” the merchants cried, but he did not buy any of their wares. And when they pressed him very hard, he said, “We buy the truth and sell it not.” All he had to do was to go through the fair, and that is what you and I have to do. Let us go through the world as those who are in it but not of it, the Lord always, by His grace, making us to differ from other men.

There is no need to take off the collar of your coat, or to talk differently or to dress differently from ordinary folk. Dress and talk like other people who act as they should, but let your difference from the world be spiritual, real, true, not merely indicated by some outward emblem or badge, but seen in the deportment and carriage of your entire life.

Further, the Lord sets apart him that is godly for himself by *dealing with His people differently from others*. I fancy that I hear somebody say, “I stoutly deny that.” Well, deny away, brother, if you like, for, apparently the Lord does not deal with His people differently from what He does with others, and it says, even in Scripture, “All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and the wicked.”

Here is a man of God, but the Sabeans steal his oxen and his asses, the Chaldeans carry away his camels, the fire of God burns up his sheep and his servants, and his children are destroyed by a great wind from the wilderness. Yes, yes, yes, but read the whole of Job’s story, and see that when God turns again his captivity and gives him twice as much as he had before, and enables him to gain a great victory over the devil, after all, God did not deal with Job as He dealt with others.

“Oh!” says another, “but whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.” Yes, and that is one of the ways in which He differs in His dealings with them and with others, for, sometimes, He does not chasten the ungodly, but lets them have no trouble in their lives and no pangs in their death. He lets them have as much pleasure as they can have, for what they get here is all they will ever have. Whereas He chastens His own people for their present and eternal good.

My dear friend, there is never exactly the same providence to the ungodly as to the godly. There is a difference somewhere. There is a difference in the end if nowhere else, for to you and to me, as God’s

people, “all things work together for good.” But they do not work together for good to the ungodly. There may, apparently, be the same causes at work, but they do not produce the same results.

So God does make a difference between the godly and the rest of mankind. And there is one peculiar point of difference, He has set them apart for Himself. For what purpose? That they may be His friends, and *that He may converse with them*. God does not usually come to this earth to talk with kings and princes—the greatest king is but a brother-worm like the rest of us—but God has often been here to converse and commune with His poor people. If men are godly, whether they are rich or poor, God has fellowship with them.

It does seem wonderful to me that God should so often be unknown in His own world. The great majority of His creatures never hear His voice and never give a response to His call. But the godly, when they hear the voice of their God saying to them, “Seek ye my face,” cry out at once, “Thy face, LORD, will we seek.”

There are thousands at this moment speaking with God, but all of them are godly people, and God is speaking to them. The Holy Spirit is holding high communion with many of the sons and daughters of Adam, but only with those who are godly. Even now there is a great gulf between God and the ungodly, their backs are turned towards Him, and at the last He will bid them keep on doing what they have been doing, for He will say to them, “Depart from me, ye cursed.”

But His people are always coming, coming, coming to Him and at the last He will bid them continue to do what they are now doing, for to them He will say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father.” Oh, yes, wonderful as it is, it is true that we do have conversation with God, for “the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself” to be His friend and His constant companion.

Moreover, God has also set apart him that is godly *that He may use him*. If you are a godly man, God will make you His own servant, and He will send you on His errands, and He will be with you all the while. He will employ you to carry messages of comfort, messages of warning, messages of invitation to those who need them. If you are godly, God will use you. He will not use dirty vessels, but when we are clean, washed by His own hand in the cleansing fountain, then He will use us for His own purposes. He has reserved us, He has monopolized us for Himself alone. We sometimes sing,

*“Take my hands, and let them be,
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.”*

We say to God, “Take my lips, my eyes, my ears, my feet, my whole being—reserve me for Yourself.” That is exactly what the Lord has done with the godly. You sometimes see certain things marked, “Reserved.” That is the label that God has put on every Christian, “The LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself.” Nobody but your God is to have you in His possession or control, for you belong wholly unto the Most High.

Know this, beloved, for, *at the last, God will acknowledge you as His*. Before astonished worlds, when ungodly men shall not dare to lift up their faces, God will own you in that day as belonging to Him if you are godly. Your righteousness shall come forth as the light and your judgment as the noonday, for God has made you His own and set a hedge about you, and none shall destroy you, or separate you from His Son. “They shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels,” for He hath set apart the godly for himself.

III. Now I must close by speaking briefly of a PECULIAR PRIVILEGE. “The LORD will hear when I call unto him.”

This means, first, “*He will grant me an audience*. He will hear what I have to say.” There were certain princes of Media and Persia who had the right to come to the king whenever they pleased. Such is the right of all the godly, whensoever you desire to speak with God, God is waiting to hear you. Oh, what a privilege is this!

There are none of us who could go to see earthly kings and queens whenever we liked, we would have to be properly introduced and go through all manner of forms and ceremonies. But through the one Mediator between God and men, we have the right at any moment of the day or night to have an audience with the King of kings and Lord of lords.

It means, next, *“The Lord will not only hear, but He will answer me.”* Answer is intended in the word, “hear” “The LORD will hear when I call unto him.” Ask what you will, O you children of the King, and it shall be done unto you. Ask Him not merely for the half of His kingdom, but for the whole of it, and you shall have it. “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

I am not going to preach about that part of my subject, I only want to apply it. Many of you, dear brethren and sisters, desire to commune at the Lord’s table, yet I hear one say, “I feel so dull, I do not know whether I dare come to the table. I seem as if I was dead and I cannot get out of this cold, lethargic state.” Let me whisper this message in your ear, “The LORD will hear you when you call unto him.” Now, then, pray, “Lord, quicken me.”

*“Dear Lord! and shall we ever lie
At this poor dying rate?
Our love so faint, so cold to Thee,
And Thine to us so great?”*

*Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers,
Come, shed abroad a Savior’s love,
And that shall kindle ours.”*

You need not be dull, you need not be lethargic, up with you, for you have wings! Ask the Lord to help you to stretch them out, that you may rise superior to everything earth-born and groveling, up into communion with the Most High. Try the power of prayer now.

“Ah!” sighs another, “but I feel so desponding, I am as heavy as lead. If I were thrown up, I should fall down again. I have so many doubts, I have such a sinking of spirit that I often question whether I am a child of God at all.” Now listen to our text, “The LORD will hear when I call unto him.” Call unto Him, “Lord, bring my soul out of prison! Lord, appear to Your poor servant!”

*“Shine, Lord, and my terror shall cease,
The blood of atonement apply;
And lead me to Jesus for peace,
The rock that is higher than I.”*

There is no need for you to be “down in the dumps.”

*“Why should the children of a King
Go mourning all their days?”*

Come, brother, you can get rid of those clouds,

*“Prayer makes the darken’d cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above.”*

Try it now, believing and expecting that the Lord will hear you. You see, He has set you apart for Himself, you belong to Him, you are His treasure, His jewel, the signet on His finger, the delight of His heart, your name is engraved on the palms of His hands. Do you think He wishes you to be in this miserable state? Oh, no, He has sent the Comforter to deal with just such as you are. One Person of the Divine Trinity has undertaken the office of comforting the people of God, therefore He must want you to be happy and comfortable. Cry to Him to bring you up out of your low estate.

But I hear a brother say, “I have a great trouble on me, I have sustained a very heavy, a very serious loss in my business.” Another says, “I have lost a dear child and there is another loved one sickening.” “Ah!” cries one, “if you were to step into my house, you would find it like the wards of a hospital. Everybody in it seems to be ill. I am the man that has seen affliction?”

Are you, dear brother? Then you are the very man who ought to pray and to say, “The LORD will hear when I call unto him.” He will either take your trouble away, or else make you glad that it ever came. He will either take your burden off, or else He will give you a strong back to bear it. I do not think it matters much which it is—whether He takes off the burden or strengthens the back. You know, the deeper your troubles, the louder shall be your song at the last, and God will get more glory out of you by a life of trial than if you had a smooth path all the way. Come, then, call to Him. “The LORD will hear when I call unto him.”

This seems a very wonderful sentence. What is there in me which is a reason why the Lord should hear me when I call unto him? Let me explain this marvel. There is a little boy who lives at your house and I say to him, “I have called to see your father, but he will not see me.” “Oh!” says the lad, “he always sees me.” “Your father will not let me speak to him.” “He always lets me speak to him,” says the boy. What is there in that little child that makes the man hear him when he will not hear me? Why, you see, it is his own boy. And the father will, of course, see and hear his own child.

And you are the Lord’s own child, so He will hear you. Therefore take your troubles to Him. If the father will not hear his boy in ordinary times, yet when the lad cries, “O father, I feel so ill!” the loving parent says, “Come here, my child, and tell me all about it.” That is what the Lord says to you now, my poor, weary, heavy-laden brother. The LORD will hear you, I am quite sure of it. Therefore call on Him and get rid of those burdens.

“Ah!” says one, “but my trouble is that I want to have my children converted.” Then, pray for them, pray for them. “Oh, but it is my husband who is not a Christian!” says another. Then, pray for him. “I have prayed,” says one. Pray on, dear sister, and the Lord will hear you. “I am afraid my husband will not be saved.” Well, you must not be afraid, but say with David, “The LORD will hear when I call unto him.”

“Ah,” says another, “but I have to go back tomorrow into business and I shall have to work with so many ungodly men, my life is one long struggle.” Well, never mind about that tonight, it is not Monday yet. Let us get Monday’s grace when Monday comes. And let us now enjoy ourselves as we repeat this precious text, “The LORD will hear when I call unto him.”

He will either stop those wicked men’s mouths, or else He will open yours. He will give you the right word by way of reply, or else He will not let them say anything that needs a reply. Only tell the Lord about them. You would like to come and see me, and tell me about them, but I do not particularly want to hear it and I cannot do you much good if I do hear it. Go and tell my Master about it. “I want to speak with some Christian friend.” Well, do so, if you like, but remember that—

*“Were half the breath thus vainly spent,
To heaven in supplication sent,
Your cheerful song would oftener be,
‘Hear what the Lord has done for me.’”*

“The LORD will hear when I call unto him.” Call unto Him now and He will hear and answer you. And so let us come to His table, happy and joyful, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 119:25-32

Verse 25. *My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.*

“I feel heavy, unhappy, dull. ‘My soul cleaveth unto the dust.’ Or I feel worldly, lethargic, lifeless. ‘My soul cleaveth unto the dust.’ There is nothing but the power of new life that can separate me from that dust. ‘Quicken thou me according to thy word.’” Divine life is the great cure for most spiritual evils. When a man has vigorous life in his constitution, he throws off many diseases. And when the soul is full of spiritual life, it masters a great number of evils. “My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.” That is good pleading, “according to thy promise, for thou have promised to quicken me. It is the nature of thy Word to be quick and quickening; therefore, Lord, ‘quicken thou me according to thy word.’”

26. *I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes*

“I have confessed my wrong, now, O Lord, teach me what is right! I have acknowledged my sin, now, O Lord, lead me in the paths of holiness! ‘Teach me thy statutes.’”

27. *Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.*

He who fully understands the way of God’s precepts must talk of His wondrous works. There is a power about that truth in the heart to unloosen the most stammering tongue. We are bound to speak of that which God teaches us. “Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.”

28. *My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.*

Are any of you, dear friends, in that condition? Do your hearts melt within you? It is a sore trouble, as I know full well. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity,” but when his very soul melts for heaviness, what is he to do then? Why, even then he may pray. Nay, then he *must* pray and this may be the burden of his prayer, “Strengthen thou me according to thy word.”

Notice, beloved, how the psalmist keeps harping upon that string, “according unto thy word.” If your prayer is according to God’s Word, you may expect a comfortable answer sooner or later. We know that God will not act contrary to His Word. He who is not a man of his word is despised and if there could be one who was not a God of His Word, what would be said of him? But my tried friend, He will make His Word true to you to the very letter. Therefore still cry to Him, “Strengthen thou me according to thy word.”

29. *Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.*

“Lord, let me not be pestered by liars, and let me never fall into any measure of falsehood myself.” There is a way of thinking better of yourself than you deserve, which is a form of lying. There is a method of supposing that you have experienced what you never have experienced, and that you have attained to what you never have attained to, that also is a way of falsehood. May God remove it from us and may we have the law of the Lord written on our hearts! “Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.”

30. *I have chosen the way of truth:*

“I want to be true, I want to know the truth, I want to feel the truth, I want to practice the truth, ‘I have chosen the way of truth.’”

30. *Thy judgments have I laid before me.*

“Like a map, so that I might follow the way of truth, as I see it drawn out in letters of light in thy Word.” The man who spreads out God’s Word before him, like a map of the road, is not likely to make a mistake in his journeying.

31. *I have stuck unto thy testimonies*

I like that word, “stuck.” “I have stuck unto thy testimonies.” “I could not be drawn or dragged away from them. Some have told me of some fine new ideas and modern grand discoveries, but ‘I have stuck unto thy testimonies.’ They came before me with something very artistic and scientific, but ‘I have stuck unto thy testimonies’”

31. *O LORD, put me not to shame.*

You may rest assured that He never will. If a man clings to God, God will cleave to him. If we are not ashamed of God, He will never put us to shame, but we shall go from strength to strength glorying in His truth and grace.

32. *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.*

There is an enlargement of the heart that is very dangerous, but this kind of enlargement of the heart is the most healthy thing that can happen to a man. A great heart, you see, is a running heart. A little heart goes slowly, but an enlarged heart runs in the way of God’s commandments. Oh, for a heart full of love to God. And then to have that heart made larger, so as to hold more of God’s love! Lord, enlarge my heart in that sense. Let me feel at home and at liberty with You. Let the last link of my bondage be snapped. Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—146 (VERSION II), 89, 87

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.