

A MARVELOUS CHANGE NO. 2661

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1900
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”
1 Corinthians 6:9-11

THE Gospel is as holy as the law. The Gospel is full of mercy to sinners, but it shows no mercy to sin. The Gospel speaks most tenderly to the ungodly, but it speaks most sternly to ungodliness. There is a great difference made in the New Testament, between the sinner and the sin, and while the sinner is, in infinite mercy, spared, encouraged to hope, and wooed by almighty love, the sin is denounced as a dreadful thing, an abominable thing, which God hates, and must punish.

Ah, dear friends! It is not from Sinai alone that we have need to shrink if we are lovers of sin, for if we are resolved to keep on sinning, Calvary also condemns us, and at last, even from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself, willful sinners continuing in their sin, shall hear the awful sentence, “Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Let no man say, when we proclaim God’s message of mercy to the very chief of sinners, that therefore we think lightly of sin. No, it is because of the shedding of the precious blood of Him whom we call Master and Lord, without whose agonizing death not a single sin could ever have been put away, that we are able freely to preach the mercy of God to those who truly repent of their transgressions, but at the same time, we never hesitate to declare in the plainest possible terms, that God will not spare the guilty ones who refuse to repent, for only through the blood of His dear Son will He have mercy upon the ungodly sons and daughters of men, who turn unto Him, with full purpose of heart, trusting in the great atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

The highest standard of holiness is set forth under the Gospel. It does not come to cut down the requirements of the law and to say, “You cannot keep the perfect law of the Lord, but do the best you can, and that will suffice.” There is nothing like that in the New Testament. It does not come to men and say, in a tone of pity, “You are poor ignorant creatures, who have unwittingly fallen into sin, and therefore there is no guilt in your transgression of the law.” Nothing of the kind, for even when our Savior on the cross, said, concerning His mockers and murderers, “they know not what they do,” He prayed, “Father, forgive them,” thereby plainly declaring that they were sinners, who needed to be forgiven, even though their transgression was a sin of ignorance.

That is the short preface to the discourse I am now to deliver, which will be divided into three parts, the first of which will show us that we have here *a solemn sentence*—a sentence shutting the guilty and unrepentant out of the kingdom of God. Then secondly, here is *a reminder to some of us*, “and such were some of you.” And then thirdly, here is *a change spoken of*, “but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

I. Now, beloved, first of all, here is A SOLEMN SENTENCE, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?”

Oh, while I speak of it, pray God, in infinite mercy, to carry home the words I say to any who are guilty of either or all the sins in this black and shameful list!

“Be not deceived: neither fornicators...shall inherit the kingdom of God.” That is the first set of sinners mentioned in this terrible catalogue, “fornicators”—men and women who have been guilty of unchastity with those who are unmarried. Not necessarily in the bonds of wedlock should we all be, but always in the bonds of purity, and those who sin against that which is pure, in their intercourse with one another, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Nothing could be more explicit than this inspired declaration of the apostle. If any persons live in lust and uncleanness, God will not permit them to defile His true church on earth, or to profane His temple above.

It is quite possible that I may be speaking to some people upon whose ears this message grates very harshly—for all sorts of hearers come to this place—and they will be the first to say, “The preacher should not mention such a subject.” My answer to that remark is,—Then, you should not commit such iniquity, and give me cause to speak of it. As long as there are in the world, sinners of this character, there must be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ faithful enough to pluck the velvet from their mouths, and to speak with the utmost plainness about them and to them.

Let there be no mistake concerning this matter, you cannot be Christians if you thus defile yourselves, you cannot be children of God and live in filthy sin, it must not—it cannot be, and God here, by the pen of the apostle Paul, excommunicates all who pretend to be members of His church, and yet are guilty of the sin of fornication.

Strange to say, in the very next place stands idolatry, that is, the worshipping of any god other than the true and living JEHOVAH, the God of the whole earth. All through the Old Testament the Lord calls this sin of idolatry by the name of fornication, because it is the turning away of that love which ought to be fixed upon the one and only God, and giving it to those that are no gods, and so defiling the heart, and sinning against God.

“Oh!” says one, “there are no idolaters here.” I greatly fear that there are, for idolatry is not merely the worship of images made of stone, or wood, or gods of gold, or crucifixes, or pictures of the Virgin Mary—though all that is idolatry—but it is also the worship of that dear child, you have at home, of whom you make an idol, or it is the worship of the Queen’s image on gold and silver pieces by those who live only to amass worldly wealth, or it may be even the worship of yourself.

The apostle tells us of a very low form of idolatry when he writes concerning those “whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” There are far too many of such idolaters as these still about, all around us, and our text declares that they “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

As to adulterers, whom the apostle next mentions, I need not say much, but alas! there are still many such sinners, and they are found not only among the poor, but perhaps even more among those who can afford to pay for divorces, and dispensations, and indulgences to vice. Oh, horrible and terrible in this country, as well as in other lands, is the prevalence of this filthy sin!

If there are any persons here who have made a profession of religion, and yet who have fallen into this guilt and crime of adultery, let me read this solemn sentence of my text to you, without mincing matters in the least, or toning down the severity of the inspired language, you “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Unless you hate and abhor this shameful sin, and flee from it, as from a poisonous serpent, you can never come into that kingdom where Christ is, neither in the kingdom of His grace, nor yet in the kingdom of His glory, can you ever have any inheritance, for as Dr. Watts sings—

*“Pure are the joys above the sky,
And all the region peace;
No wanton lip nor envious eye
Can see or taste the bliss.*

*Those holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame;*

*None shall obtain admittance there
But followers of the Lamb.”*

I dare not explain to you what is meant by the next expression used by the apostle: “nor effeminate,” but alas! alas! there are still to be found all too many who are altogether given up to sinful practices, and who go from one form of vice to another, secretly ruining themselves both in body and in soul, for time and for eternity. These also are amongst those who “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

So are those whom the apostle next describes: “nor abusers of themselves with mankind.” Would God that this accursed vice had been swept off the face of the earth, as God did sweep it away when He rained brimstone and fire from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and destroyed the guilty inhabitants of the cities of the plain!

Next to these great sinners, whom the apostle mentions, come “thieves.” There are still far too many of them in the world—not merely those who are brought before the magistrates for having broken into a house, or having robbed a person in the street, but those who steal little things, speculators, servants in the house who take what is not their own, and men who do dishonest things in trade, calling an article in their shop by a name that is not its proper description, and so cheating their customers, and getting their living by their knavery. These also are among those who “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

You do not like to hear me talk about such matters, then do not you continue to sin in this fashion. I shall cease to rebuke the sin when it has been abandoned, but as long as such evils abound, it is my duty, as the servant of the living God, to declare plainly that the continuance in dishonest actions is not consistent with being in the kingdom of God’s grace, and it will effectually close the gate of the kingdom of His glory. Dr. Watts was right when he wrote—

*“Not the malicious or profane,
The wanton or the proud,
Nor thieves, nor sland’rers shall obtain
The kingdom of our God.”*

Then next, the apostle says, “nor covetous.” It is a strange thing that hardly anybody ever admits that he is covetous, such a person calls himself, “Mr. Prudent Thrifty.” Mr. Covetous tries to make us believe that he is only thrifty and prudent,—both excellent qualities which are not to be condemned—but he is really greedy and grasping, which are quite different. He denies help to the poor, and help to the work of God, all he cares for is himself, that he may be rich.

It is very significant that the covetous are put in the same list with fornicators and adulterers. Oh, dear! how quickly Mr. Covetous would move out of the seat if he thought that there were any such people as those about! But my dear sir, you need not be so particular, or think so much of yourself, for in the sight of God, you are in the same condition as they are, and you also are among those who “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” unless you repent of your sin.

“Nor drunkards,” says the apostle. We know that in the church at Corinth, there were some who were so degraded that they were actually drunken at the Lord’s table. We hope there are no professing Christians nowadays, of so low a type as that, though we know that there are still some who have named the name of Christ, who are rightly called by that terrible name, “drunkards,” and we also know that outside the nominal church, there are multitudes to whom that title belongs.

Drunkenness is one of the most debasing of sins, it lowers the whole tone of the person who is held in bondage by it. We sometimes talk of a man being “as drunk as a beast,” but whoever heard of a beast being drunk? Why, it is more beastly than anything a beast ever does. I do not believe that the devil himself is ever guilty of anything like that. I never heard even him charged with being drunk. It is a sin which has no sort of excuse, those who fall into it generally fall into other deadly vices. It is the devil’s backdoor to hell, and everything that is hellish, for he that once gives away his brains to drink, is ready to be caught by Satan for anything.

Oh! But while the drunkard cannot have eternal life abiding in him while he is such, is it not a joy to think of the many drunkards who have been washed and saved? This night there are sitting here, those who have done with their cups, who have left behind them their strong drink, and who have renounced the haunts of their debauchery. They are washed and cleansed, and when they think of the contrast between where they used to spend their evenings, and where they now are, they give echo to the question, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

After the drunkards, the apostle says, "nor revilers,"—those who gossip and slander, pulling other people's characters to pieces, or those who revile the saints and the things of God, profane swearers, who constantly add oaths to anything they have to say, those who cannot let the godly man's character alone—all such as these "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And alas! there are thousands and tens of thousands of them even in this so-called Christian country.

And then to close the black list, the apostle writes, "nor extortioners,"—the men who demand usurious interest, those who prey upon the poor while they pretend that they are going to be their helpers. They have a certain sum of money to lend, and they are willing to lend it out of pure benevolence, but when any fall into their clutches, they pick their bones, and suck their blood, ere they have done with them. Woe unto the men who grind the poor, and rob another of anything that is justly his due! Of all these people, the apostle truly says that they "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Nay, not merely does the apostle say it, but the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of His servant Paul—He whose word is faithful and true—He who knows what the truth is, declares that all such persons as these whom the apostle has been describing are not partakers of divine grace, they are not subjects of King Jesus, and into His glorious kingdom they can never come, except they repent of their sin, and turn unto the Lord with godly sorrow and genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So much for that part of our subject. May God make these solemn and faithful words to be like arrows from the bow of a mighty man!

II. But secondly, in our text we have also A REMINDER TO SOME OF US, "and such were some of you."

The apostle does not say, "and such were all of you," and I thank God that I have not to say that to you my hearers. Oh, what a mercy it is for any of us to have been kept from those terrible sins! Yet, with the apostle, I can say, "and such were some of you." Those vices and evils were so common in Corinth that it was a great glory to God that He had taken some of these people, who had formerly committed them, and had made Christians of them, "such were some of you."

Now, will you dear friends, look at the first part of our text, and as you run your eye down the black list, put your finger upon the points where you were guilty, and then say to yourself, "Yes, it is true, such was I, before the Lord saved me by His grace, that, or that, or that was my grievous offense against Him." "Such were some of you." Then let me ask you, my brothers and sisters, to consider why it is that God is pleased to save some of the worst of sinners so that, in the church of Christ, it can always be said, "such were some of you."

First, *it illustrates the great power of the Gospel.* If nobody were saved except the better sort of people, who have never openly offended, then the cavilers would say to us, "That is a very poor religion of yours, it is suitable for the moral, and the sober, and the chaste, but what good is it to a poor fallen world where there are so many real sinners of the blackest dye?" But the Lord seems to have said, "I will stretch out My hand, and I will save some of the very chief of sinners, in order that throughout all time, it may be known that My Gospel can effect the salvation of all sorts of sinners, even the most degraded. However depraved and fallen they may be, they cannot have gone beyond the reach of the Gospel of My Son." Is not that a glorious fact?

Oh! when I think of some of you big sinners, whom the Lord has saved under my ministry, I stand on this platform, and with the utmost confidence, cry to the guiltiest sinners who may be present, "Come along with you, whoever you may be, I have a Gospel that is just suited to you." I can say, "Come, you who are moral and refined, who have never gone into any gross sin, here is a Gospel just suitable for

you,” but I am glad also to be able to add, “Come along, you who have raked the very kennels of hell with your iniquities, here is that which can wash you, and make you white as the newly fallen snow.”

That, I believe, is one reason why the Lord saves these great sinners—to glorify His Gospel.

Next, He does it *to magnify His mercy*, for when, in great tenderness, He comes to look upon sin as a disease, then the worse the disease, the more is His pity. I remember reading of one, who was giving some relief to a dumb man, and his companion said to him, “Why, he never asked anything of you!” “No,” he answered, “but his dumb lips asked of me more eloquently than any man could have done by speaking.” Look at the blind man, he cannot affect you with his eyes, for he has none, but it is the absence of his eyes that makes you stop, and say to him, “Poor blind man, I am so sorry for you, here’s a trifle to help you.”

The crafty beggars in the streets will often show their sham sores and imitation wounds, in order to provoke your pity, but our great God, when He sees us really full of sin—leprous, foul, corrupted,—then says, “Poor soul, I will have pity upon thee.” It is in this way that He looks upon these greatly diseased ones, and blesses some of them on purpose that the majesty of His mercy and the omnipotence of His grace may be plainly seen by the sons of men.

I am sure that He does it also, *to confound self-righteousness*. I have heard this kind of remark again and again, “If God saves anybody, it ought to be those of us who always go to a place of worship, and listen so attentively to the preacher.” Ah, yes, you proud sinner! I know what you think, but I must remind you that there is no sin worse than pride, and you are evidently full of it. “Oh, but!” says someone, “I have always been seeking and striving to be as good as I could, and yet I am not saved, but over there is a poor fallen girl, just rescued from the streets, who has believed in Christ, and is now rejoicing in Him.”

I can easily explain why you are not saved, it is because you say that you see, and therefore you prove that you are blind. You think you are righteous, and that thought is itself the very essence of unrighteousness. I pray you notice how the Lord rebukes you, and to learn from His rebuke, where your sin lies. He does, as it were, smite your pride on the cheekbone, and He says, “Because you say that you do not need a Savior, you shall not have a Savior. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance.” Come down off your lofty pinnacle, Mr. Pharisee—you who thank God that you are not as other men are. Stand side by side with the poor publican whom you have despised and cry, as he does, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” and then see if God will not deal in mercy with you also.

I am sure, too, that God saves some of these very black sinners on purpose *to encourage the preachers of His Gospel*. I will tell you a secret. We ministers, are often a very faint hearted set of men, and if we do not have a great many converts, we go crying to our Master, “Who hath believed our report?” and while we are doing it, in comes one who has been a drunkard, or an unchaste person, or a thief, and we hear what God has done for him by our poor feeble ministry, and we shake his hand. Then he cries, and we cry, and we do not know which is the bigger sinner of the two—he for his open iniquity, or we for our unbelief.

I know that when I meet with such converts, I say, “Bless God for them! When I get into the pulpit again, I will give the people some more of that same Gospel, for I see that, what it has done for them it can do for others.” Oh, yes! they may empty the prisons, if they like to do so, and let all the criminals in them come to hear the Gospel. We have a Christ to preach who is more than a match for the very worst of them, and even if there should come one, whose heart had been turned into thrice-hardened steel, this Gospel would be able to melt it, and behind it there is the Christ who can take the hard heart away, and give in its place the heart of flesh, full of tenderness, and full of love to Himself and to saints and sinners, too.

Oh, yes! God often encourages His servants by fetching out from among the ungodly some of these great black sinners, washing them whiter than snow in the precious blood of Jesus, and bringing them into His kingdom on earth, in anticipation of the time when they shall be received into His kingdom above.

Further, by this means, He also *encourages other great sinners to come to Him*. I have known a man who said, "I fear that I cannot be saved, for I have been such a terribly great sinner," but one day, he has met one of his old companions, who used to swear, and drink, and lie, and finding him to be saved, he said to himself, "Oh, then! I also might be saved."

I once knew a poor fellow, who was very much distressed in spirit, because he thought there was no pardon that could ever come to him, but he went into a chapel one morning, when a little prayer meeting was being held before the service, and there was a certain old sea captain praying with such a tremendous voice that the man thought, "I must surely have seen and heard that man somewhere else."

When the prayer was ended, and he saw the man's face, he said to himself, "Why! that is Captain So-and-so. Six months ago, my very blood ran cold as I listened to his blasphemy, I never heard a man swear as he did, and I never before heard a man pray as he now does," and then he added, "God can save me now that He has saved him, for I am sure that, great sinner as I have been, I never went his length in blaspheming my Maker." There was good ground for that man's conclusion, and many other people have argued in a similar fashion.

It has frequently been the case that the big sinner has become a kind of decoy duck. He is caught first in the blessed Gospel net, and then he allures others to come in with him. Very often, those who had not the courage to go to Jesus before say, when they see how He welcomes some out-and-out profligate, "Well, as He has received him, why should He not also receive me?"

You know how Bunyan relates that when he was converted, and began to preach, people said, "What! is that tinker saved?" and they gathered together to hear what he had to say, and then he preached to them Jesus the Savior, and there were more tinkers that got tinkered that day, nay, not tinkered, but made new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Christ finds it easier work to make us anew than to mend us, and that is what we really need to have done to us. If any of you are thinking of being mended tonight by signing the pledge [This discourse was delivered at the service in the Tabernacle, which was followed by a public meeting in connection with the Gospel Temperance Mission held there in September, 1882]—well, I am glad to see old kettles repaired, but for all that, I would rather that you were made new kettles altogether. That is to say, I pray God to take you in hand, and make you new creatures in Christ Jesus, for that is what we are aiming at in all these Gospel Temperance services, and we shall not be satisfied unless that great work is accomplished.

I want to tell you one more thing about the salvation of these great sinners. I believe that the Lord saves them in order *that He may win from them great love, intense zeal, and much earnestness*. If a man with a cut finger, calls on a doctor, the surgeon says, "Oh, yes, I see! Put this piece of plaster on, and it will be all right in a day or two," and so it is. He had not much the matter with him, so there was not much to be said when his finger was healed.

But here is a man who can hardly breathe; he is on the very borders of the grave, he will be dead in a week unless something extraordinary happens to him. He has been to scores of doctors, and they all say, "It is no use to give you any medicine, for nothing will ever cure you, and you will soon die," But he hears of a physician who has been the means of healing other sick folk in just such a plight as his. He calls him in, and the doctor says to him, "If you take this remedy, you will recover," and so he does.

In a month's time, that man is walking about, breathing the fresh air, and he is soon going to work again. Will he talk about the wonderful physician who cured him? Won't he talk about him? Why! there is no stopping him when once he begins on that topic. To every friend whom he meets, he says, "Do you see what a difference there is in me? You remember how my bones were almost sticking through my skin. It was as much as ever I could do to keep on breathing, but just look at me now, I have every hope of living on, perhaps for twenty or thirty years more."

Possibly, a man, who is suffering from neuralgia, comes to see him and he says, "I am not sure whether my doctor treats such a slight ailment as that, I almost wish you were in a consumption like mine was, for he would cure you as he healed me."

Is it not so with regard to the diseases of the body, and gratitude to the man who cures them? Well, in like manner, when the Lord saves a great big sinner, oh, how that sinner will love Him, and how he will talk about Him to other sinners! There is a common saying among game preservers, that an old poacher makes the best game keeper, he is the man to catch all other poachers when they come, for he knows from his own experience, all their ways. “Set a thief to catch a thief,” is a similar proverbial expression which teaches the same lesson.

A woman, who has been brought up out of great sin, into the paths of virtue and honor, is the one who will rejoice in rescuing others from a life of sin and shame. If you find a man who has been permitted to know the depths of sin, he is the one who will delight to go and seek after those who are sinking in the terrible flood.

In the providence of God, I was never allowed to plunge into gross open sin, yet the Lord made me to feel myself to be the worst sinner who ever lived. I had such a vivid realization of my own guilt that I thought there never was another individual who had broken God’s law as I had, and when He pardoned me, I felt that there was no one who owed more to Him than I did.

People say that I preached Calvinistic doctrine from the very first. I know I preached free grace, and that I must proclaim till I die, for I should have been damned in hell years ago, if it had not been for the freest, richest, and mightiest grace that ever came from the heart of God. And oh! I do love to tell you big black sinners that He can forgive your grossest sin, and cleanse you from your worst wickedness—that He waits to do this for all who will come and put their trust in His dear Son, and that very trust He gives them by the effectual working of His Spirit. Salvation is all of grace from first to last, and as it is all of grace, the greater the sinner who is saved by it, the more glory to the grace that saves him.

III. My time has gone, but I must say just a little about the third point, that is, THE MARVELOUS CHANGE.

Oh, that I knew how to preach upon this theme! I never feel my own weakness so much as when I stand here to plead with unconverted men to yield to the Savior. If any man thinks that he can preach, let him come and try it, if by preaching he means affecting the hearts of men, and bringing them to God. This must be the work of the Holy Spirit, and whatever we may do, nothing comes of it until He works the great miracle. We go back home and say, “Who hath believed our report?” until the arm of the Lord is revealed, and then men are saved.

Now, turning to this last part of our text—“and such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”—I will endeavor briefly to set all these things before you as best I can, the Lord knows how much better I would do it if it were in my power to do it. But after all, it is not my language which is the important matter, it is the power of the truth I utter on which I rest, nor yet even upon that, but on the wonder-working Spirit of God, who can effectually apply that truth to the heart, and make it anew by His omnipotent grace.

*“Come, Holy Ghost, (for, moved by Thee,
The prophets wrote and spoke),
Unlock the truth, Thyself the key,
Unseal the sacred Book.*

*God, through Himself, we then shall know,
If Thou within us shine;
And sound, with all Thy saints below,
The depths of love divine.”*

“And such were some of you.” Where are you—dear members of this church, or of other churches—of whom this is true, “and such were some of you”? “But ye are washed.” The High Churchman says that this means baptism, does it? I have seen some people washed by baptism—I do not mean sprinkled, for I never could see how anyone could be washed in that way—but when we have immersed them, this

I know—that an unregenerate person, even after immersion, is unregenerate still, and that a man who is not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ before he is baptized, has need to be baptized again, for it is not really Scriptural baptism to him, and it cannot be a means of blessing to him. It may be a piece of hypocrisy on his part, and of no value to those who practice it. No, no, that is not the washing of which Paul writes, and baptism, repeated ten thousand times, can do you no good whatever unless, first of all, you are washed in another fountain of which we often sing. Let us sing about it now, all of us who know the verse—

*“There is a fountain fill’d with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.”*

[This verse was accordingly sung by the congregation, and then Mr. Spurgeon resumed and concluded his sermon]

That is the washing of which the apostle says, “but ye are washed,” and after that washing, comes the sanctifying, that is, the changing of the heart, and the making of the whole nature holy, and that is the work of the Spirit of God, by the application of the Word of Christ.

And then follows the justification. Pardon washes away our sin, justification makes us righteous in the sight of God, and sanctification gives us true holiness. Justification gives us imputed holiness, so that we stand before God, first in the righteousness which Christ has wrought out for us, and next in the righteousness which the Spirit of God has wrought in us. Oh, what a marvelous change is wrought as the result of that one act of blessed washing!

Now, to close, let me say that, if you would be saved, this is the one thing for you to do, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not trust in anything else whatever, but rely alone upon Him. Trust in Christ to make you hate sin. Trust in Christ to enable you to overcome every bad habit. Trust in Christ to help you to do everything that is right. Trust in Christ to cause you to stand fast even till you get to heaven.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”—not, “he shall be saved tomorrow, or ten years hence”—he is saved now, on the spot. If you have only trusted in Christ since last that clock ticked, you are forgiven, you are a child of God, you are accepted in the Beloved, you are saved. It is an instantaneous, an immediate, but a perfect work—this washing away of sin, and this giving to us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The Lord grant it to each one of you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-14

Verse 1. *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?*

In those days, the courts of law were utterly unjust. It was all a matter of who could bribe the most, for he would gain the suit. I think that we cannot say that it is quite like this at the present time in our law courts, neither can this verse be strictly a rule for the guidance of men in these days, except that, in the spirit of Paul’s words, all lawsuits among Christians should be avoided if possible.

2-3. *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?*

Sitting with Christ, at the last great day of judgment, we shall give our “Amen” to the condemnation of the fallen spirits.

3-4. *How much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.*

For they will be better judges than the best of worldly men. Do you set such people to judge your difficult matters? And if you do not, then why do you go to those who are even worse fitted to give a right decision?

5-11. *I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you:*

They were Corinthians, and some of them had fallen into the same sad and shameful condition as the rest of the inhabitants of Corinth. Many of them had been fetched, by almighty grace, out of the very depths of the grossest sin, so that Paul, after giving a list of the blackest sinners, could add, “and such were some of you.”

11-12. *But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient:*

There are some things that I may do, that is, I have the liberty to do them if I please, but I must also consider whether they are expedient, or whether they will damage others, and do mischief to them, for if so, it will be better for me not to do them, because they are not expedient, even though they are lawful.

12-13. *All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.*

So, on the one hand, do not make too much of abstaining from this or that, for these things, after all, are but small matters to glory in, but on the other hand, let no man ever call himself a Christian while he is a slave to any evil habit. What does Paul say? “God shall destroy both it and them.” In the previous verse he says, “I will not be brought under the power of any.” The immortal spirit under the power of materialism? Nay, that must never be.

13-14. *Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.*

Our bodies belong to Him, therefore, let us think highly of them, and never do anything to injure them, and especially, let us take care never to let them become instruments of iniquity to the grieving of the blessed Spirit of God.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—550, 551

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