

GOD'S WRITING UPON MAN'S HEART

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*"I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts."
 Jeremiah 31:33*

THIS is not the language of the old covenant, but of the new covenant. The prospects of life held out in the law have all dissolved into a ministration of death as the penalty of disobedience. Its voice might have once captivated hearts that knew not their own weakness. How spake it? "Do this, and live; keep my commandments, and you shall receive in return for your obedience singular blessings upon earth and rest in heaven." But that old covenant, since the fall, no man has kept, or can keep.

Surely, if any persons could have kept it, those to whom it was originally given were the most likely to do so. They were a separated people. They were removed into the wilderness, far from evil associations. They were miraculously fed out of the granaries of heaven. They received their drink in an equally marvelous manner out of the smitten rock. They had God Himself in the midst of them. They had His pillar of cloud to cover them by day, and His pillar of fire to lead them by night.

In all their difficulties they could appeal to Moses. If there had been an inadvertence or mistake, they could turn to Aaron, and he, by the offering of the appointed sacrifice, could set them right again. They were placed where they had not the trials and the temptations of the rest of mankind. They were cut off and separated that I may well compare them to—

*"A garden walled around,
 Chosen and made peculiar ground."*

And yet, even in that favored soil, which was so well tilled and so well husbanded by God, it was utterly impossible that perfect holiness could grow, and therefore the law was broken. Even the seed of Israel, circumcised and blessed with covenants and promises, and having the immediate presence of God in their sanctuary, could not keep the law—a clear lesson to us that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." You cannot perfectly obey God, you cannot work out a righteousness of your own, you cannot do that which God commands you to do. Look to the flames which Moses saw, and sink, and tremble, and despair, if you wish to be saved by your own works.

Now that old covenant has passed away with regard to the Lord's people. As many of us as have believed in Christ Jesus are now under a new covenant, which is of quite a different kind. It does not say, "Do this, and live," but it says, on God's part, "I will give you a new heart, I will forgive your sins, I will bless you with My presence, I will make you holy, I will keep you holy, I will preserve you in My ways, I will bring you to Myself at the last."

And all this is vouchsafed without any conditions that render the fulfillment precarious, for whatever conditions there were devolved not upon the sinner but upon the sinner's Substitute, as though God had said, "I will do this if My only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, will give His blood for the remission of your sins, and work out a perfect righteousness for your acceptance." That has been done, and now, as far as you and I are concerned, the covenant of grace is one of promise, pure promise, nothing but promise, and all that we have to do is, as poor, guilty, helpless, needy souls, to sit down at the feet of our gracious God, and receive from Him those wondrous blessings which the covenant has secured to all the faithful.

*“Firm as the lasting hills,
This covenant shall endure,
Whose potent shalls and wills
Make every blessing sure:
When ruin shakes all nature's frame,
Its jots and tittles stand the same.*

*“Here, when thy feet shall fall,
Believer, thou shalt see
Grace to restore thy soul,
And pardon full and free;
Thee with delight shall God behold
A sheep restored to Zion's fold.*

*“And when through Jordan's flood
Thy God shall bid thee go,
His arm shall thee defend,
And vanquish every foe;
And in this covenant thou shalt view
Sufficient strength to bear thee through.”*

One of the blessings of this new covenant is heart-writing, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” It is of that I am going to talk tonight, and instead of having different heads to the sermon, I will just offer a few observations, which have, I think, a very intimate connection with this point of writing upon the fleshy tables of the heart.

My first observation is, that WITH THE TABLES OF STONE, CHRISTIANS HAVE NOTHING WHATEVER TO DO.

Do not be staggered or astonished at this remark. I know that there are certain places of worship where these two tables of the law stand right over the communion table, but they have no business there, for we can never have any communion with God upon the footing of the law. If there must be anything there, if there must be any symbol at all there, then the Roman Catholic is right when he puts there the cross, or a picture of the crucifixion.

We put away all symbols lest they should become a source of idolatry, but if there must be anything over the communion table, the cross is the proper thing, not the two tables of the law, for on the footing of the law, God never did have communion with man, and He never can have, since man has fallen. With the two tables of the law as they are written upon the stone the Christian has nothing whatever to do.

You know me too well to suspect me of being an Antinomian, yet I will not try to detract from the force of the expression which the Holy Spirit has taught us, “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.” All the ten commandments the Christian love. They are his rule of life and he desires to keep every single word that God has ever commanded to the sons of men. But as they stand on those tables of hard, cold rock, I have nothing whatever to do with them. Moses dashed them from his hands in holy rage, and surely, as I see their broken fragments there, I can only say that I have done precisely what Moses did, and have broken those tables to pieces too.

Even Moses could not carry these tables in his hand without breaking them, nor can I do any better than he did. God rules His people, not by law, but by love. They do not walk in holiness because they must, but because they wish to do so. The rule which governs them is not, “Do this, and live; do that, and perish,” but this, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; what wilt thou do for me?” To quote two good lines of old Master Quarles, which just give me the sense I want to convey to you—

“Leave thou the stony tables for thy Savior's part;

Keep thou the law that's written in thy heart."

As for the laws written on the stone tables, Christ has kept them and fulfilled them, and therefore they have lost their force to crush you. The table on your heart is your rule, your guidance, and your law. See to it that you be not disobedient to the revelation of "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

There are many of my hearers tonight who are always dealing with the tables of the law. You are trying to get to heaven by what you can do. O my dear friend, you can not keep the law, why do you try to do it? It is too high, too heavenly, too broad, too spiritual, for you. It affects you in your imaginations, your thoughts, your words, your actions. Why, you break it every moment, you have broken it since you have been in this house. Think not, then, to do an impossibility.

And even if you could keep it in the future, it would do you no good, for you have already broken it, and to try to preserve what you have already broken is most absurd. If thou had an alabaster box in your hand, and you had broken it to shivers, however careful you might be of the broken fragments, yet you couldst not put them together again. You have most effectually cut the throat of all your hopes of ever being saved by the law.

O man, wherefore do you try to do this when Christ has kept the law for all who trust Him? Do you think that Christ would have come all the way from heaven to keep the law for you if you could keep it for yourself? If you could be your own savior, what need was there for Him to be stretched upon the cross, and to bleed, and agonize, and die? Does Christ do that which is not necessary? O proud soul, proud soul, to think to do what only a Savior can accomplish!

Come now, and leave your doings, for all your righteousnesses are but as filthy rags. Come now, and leave your virtues, and all your boasted deeds, and look away to where He hangs who has woven a garment without seam from the top throughout and has dyed it in the crimson of His own blood. Put this on you, and you wear heaven's court-dress, and you shall one day stand among the peers of Paradise, but without this, you are naked, and poor, and miserable. I counsel you, therefore, to buy of Him fair raiment, the fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints.

With the law as engraved on stone, then, the believer has nothing to do, but his business is with the law as written with the Spirit of the living God upon his heart.

My next observation is that **THE OLD HEART IS NOT FIT FOR GOD TO WRITE HIS LAW UPON.**

Somebody said once that the human heart, in infancy at least, was like a piece of white paper, and that there might be anything written on it which we pleased. Little did that person know, little had he even guessed the truth concerning a human heart, for the heart is blotted, blurred, blacked, smeared, smudged, fouled, stained through and through, even at the very beginning. Every one can say, with David, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

There is no such thing as a white surface upon the natural heart, and God never did try to write a sentence on the natural heart yet, and He never will, because He knows right well that that heart is not a fit place for His holy law to be written. If it should be possible for Him to put it upon that black heart, I think He would not do it, for it is an impure thing, and God will never write His perfect law upon an imperfect parchment like a depraved heart. It is too vile, too abominable for God to touch.

All that can be done with the old, natural, human heart, is for God to mortify it, to pierce it through and through with the spear which pierced the side of Christ. "Death to the old Adam! Death to the old Adam," is the cry of the Gospel, but as far modifying him, it never tries to do it, for the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor can the leopard change its spots. The old nature is looked upon as hopeless, and is given up to die, and the sooner it dies, the better for you and for me. God will not write His law upon it, for it is foul, and blotted, and too abominable for Him to touch.

Equally impossible is it for God to write upon the old heart because it is stony. He did write once on stone, and the tables were broken, and He will not write on stone a second time. The first tables of stone were broken, and as to the second tables of stone, I know not where they are, they are lost, as if the very

thought of goodness had been lost to man by nature. And if God should write upon a stony heart, this would be the result, that the heart with the law written upon it must soon be broken and destroyed. What! shall He write on such an unstable, treacherous, deceitful thing as an unrenewed heart? As well might you write upon the sand, or worse still, go write your name upon the treacherous billow, and expect to find it handed down to fame.

But God writes not on water thus. He will not take His great pen into His hand to write on such a medium as the heart which "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." "Ye must be born again." God's promise is, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Let that prayer be breathed by you as you realize the unfitness of the old heart for God to write upon.

The old heart, then, being put out of the question, there is a new heart produced by the Holy Spirit. Transcending the greatest wonders in nature is this bestowment of a new heart. You know, dear friends, that a tree, if it has had some of its branches cut off, may have new branches, and there are some crustaceous animals which, when they lose a claw or a foot, have fresh ones grow, but you never heard of an animal losing its heart, and then having a new one. The thing is impossible in nature, but this wonder of wonders God works in us. He gives a new core to our very being, a fresh life-fountain to the whole of our existence.

Well, when this new heart comes unto us, it must have something written on it. A heart with nothing on it would be too preposterous for imagination. Look at all God's works, they all have something written on them. Even the black brow of tempest has God's name of terror written upon it in letters of lightning. Do not the thunders roll like drums in the march of the God of armies? Is not the Eternal Himself mirrored in tempest upon the bosom of the stormy sea? Even the fields, whether they be white with winter's snows or golden with autumn's crown of glory, still bear the impress, either of divine power or of divine love. God has written the whole world over, there is not a slab in the great palace of creation which is left unsculptured.

Everywhere there are great hieroglyphs, which skillful men and initiated spirits love to read. And shall there be nothing on the heart, when God has taken the trouble to make it twice over, when He has made that heart anew? If there were nothing on the heart, it would be no heart. A heart without something in it is just a dull, dead vacuum, and not a fit heart for such a creature as man. What was the new heart made for, to what end, and to what purpose, if it was not to bear some divine inscription? The devil would soon attempt to write on it if God did not write.

Is it not the very best way to keep a man from filling a bushel with chaff, to fill it full of wheat first? So, for God to write on the new heart, is not this the safest method to keep that heart pure for Himself, so that no word of the language of hell shall be written there? If that heart were left empty, what would happen? Is it not written, concerning the man's house that was swept and garnished, that the evil spirit came back to it? Why? Because it was empty, if there had been a tenant in it, if the strong man armed had kept the house, the old tenant could not have gone back.

And so, when God has thoroughly written out this whole of His law upon the tablet of a sanctified heart, there will be no possibility that sin shall ever be written there. I know it is an incorruptible seed that cannot sin, because it is born of God, but that very thing which makes it an incorruptible seed, the very life that is in it, makes it swell, and grow, and germinate. As the heart is God's heart, and a renewed heart, there must be God's writing upon it. God does not send books into the world which are but blank paper. He does not produce, as His epistles that are to be known and read of all men, mere empty sheets. No, there must be upon the new heart, some of the handwriting of God.

Pray the Lord to give you a new heart, poor soul, or if you have it already, ask Him now to write upon it. Say, in the words of that verse—

*"There shall His sacred spirit dwell,
And deep engrave His law;*

*And every motion of our souls
To swift obedience draw."*

Next, IS NOT THE NEW HEART THE VERY BEST PLACE IN WHICH TO WRITE THE LAW OF THE LORD?

I cannot conceive of a better place to put it in than the new heart. A certain minister, preaching from that text, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee," had three heads to his sermon, first the best thing—"Thy word," secondly, in the best place—"have I hid in mine heart," thirdly, for the best of purposes—"that I might not sin against thee." That was a well-divided sermon. The heart is the best place, because, you know, it is in his heart that a man carries his jewels. When Little-faith was met down Dead Man's Lane by those three villains, they robbed him of most of his spending money, but they did not steal his jewels. The reason was because he carried them in the casket of his heart.

Some men wear their religion as men wear their hats, where it can be snatched off by a thief, or be blown away by the winds of temptation, or be laid aside to suit their own convenience when they get into the devil's drawing room. But the true Christian carries his religion in his heart, and as his heart is always safe in the very center of his being, so is his religion. Fair weather or foul weather, good company or bad company, it is all the same, in a losing market or the winning market, whether men cry "Hallelujah" and "Hosanna," or whether they cry, "Crucify him, crucify him!" the man is still the same, because he has got his principles in his heart, which is the best place for God's law.

Putting the law of the Lord into the heart signifies that it is put where it will be loved, and where it will control the whole man. If you can put a thing into a man's heart, you have put it at the very center of his being. We have heard of a certain shepherd, who had a flock of sheep in a meadow. A stream of water that ran through the meadow, was very foul and muddy, so the shepherd dug some new channels, but after he had dug them, the water was still not very clear. He cleared out the channels again and again, but still, after a little time, the water was again impure. It was better than it had been before, when flowing through the muddy channel, but still it was not such as he could wish it to be.

At last, someone said to him, "Why do you not clear the water up upon the hill? There is a mass of mud and filth there, and the water comes down the hillside laden with all this impurity, purify it there—purify it near the fountain head." So, when man gets purified at the fountain, when he gets the law of the Lord in his heart, then it is that he is sure to be all right as to the streams of his actions. You cannot put the law then, in a better place than in the heart, because there it will be preserved, and there it will influence the entire man. Lord, grant to me and to mine, that we may have thy law thus safely locked up in the golden casket of a renewed heart!

Still, it must be admitted that IT IS VERY HARD TO WRITE ON HEARTS.

That same old poet, whom I quoted just now—Quarles—pictures God as saying—

*"What I indite
'Tis I alone can write,
And write in books that I myself have made.
'Tis not an easy trade
To read or write in hearts.
They that are skillful in all other arts,
When they take this in hand,
Are at a stand."*

It is not easy to read hearts, and it is harder work still to write on hearts. We can sometimes write on people's heads, that is comparatively easy. You may get a thing into the intellect, you may get it into the brains by sheer dunning and argument, but to get things into the heart is not so very easy.

*“He that’s convinced against his will
Is of the same opinion still;”—*

and though convinced, he still goes on in the same path, pursuing the thing which he knows to be his own worst enemy, There are no slaves like those who serve their enemies, and those are the greatest slaves who are slaves to their own soul-destroying lusts. It is not an easy thing to write on hearts. When there are many conversions, certain simpletons are apt to think that there is something in the preacher to account for them.

Suppose someone had gone to that ancient battlefield, and had picked up the stone with which David smote Goliath’s head, and said, “Well, it must be a very wonderful stone that could have killed a giant,” and then, after turning it round, and looking at it a little while, he would say that it was very like any other smooth stone that might be put in a sling, and very likely he would throw it down in contempt, and think nothing of it.

Well, that is how some people do with God’s ministers. They first say, “Well, there are so many conversions, the preacher must be a very wonderful man,” and then they find him wonderfully like any other common-place talker, and so they think nothing of him. Ah, simpleton! do you not know that it is not the stone but the sling, and not even the sling, but the God who directs the stone to the giant’s brow? And so it is not the man, but the man’s Master, and it is the Spirit of God that makes the Word effectual.

But what would you think if that stone should talk thus, “Oh, what a fine stone am I! I killed you, Goliath! What a fine stone am I! The daughters of Jerusalem ought to rejoice over me in the dance, and they ought to ‘sound the loud timbrel,’ and say, ‘Glory be unto thee, O Stone, for thou hast smitten the giant’s brow’”?

What would the Angel of Wisdom say but “O foolish pebble of the brook! Son of the dirt and of the dark and miry seabed! There is nothing in thee any more than in thy fellow stones that slept with thee in the flowing crystal, had David picked any other stone, the work would have been done just as well, and inasmuch as he chose thee, boast not of thyself as though there were aught in thee.” Beloved, when you and I are privileged to do anything for Christ, let us recollect that we are only like the poor stone out of the brook, that there is nothing in us, and that unto God must be all the glory.

This writing upon hearts is hard work. I confess that I never could—and I never expect to be able to write God’s holy law on a human heart. No, beloved, the heart is locked up too tightly for us to get at it, but God has the key, and He opens it as a man would do His own writing desk, and He knows how to open the sheets one after another, and begin to write with His own pen the blessed commandments of His new and perfect law.

Jesus is the great Writer, for Jesus knows hearts. He is divine and omniscient, and therefore He knows hearts. But He is a man, every pang that rends the heart has rent His heart. He had a pierced heart, and there was a terrible writing upon His heart when the spear wrote there this great word—“WRATH”—“the wrath of God on account of sin.” He knows what heart-writing means. Deep on His heart are inscribed His people’s names. He understands heart-writing, and He can do for His disciples what has been done in Him. He has such a gentle hand, such loving fingers, such a great heart to move that hand, that He is the great Heart-writer, and there is none that can match Him in writing upon human hearts.

Further, WHEN GOD WRITES UPON THE HEART, HE WRITES BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT, AND USES HIS WORD AS THE PEN.

There are several pens that God uses, and one is His Written Word. This is a gold pen, with a diamond point. It is marvelous how God can sometimes write on the heart with a text of Scripture, a promise, a threatening, a word of doctrine, of exhortation, or of rebuke. When He writes with that diamond pen, there is never any mistake, never any scratching or catching in the paper, but all is well written then.

Then He sometimes writes on human hearts by His ministers. Mr. John Berridge once preached a sermon upon a different text from mine, but I may quote from his sermon. He says that ministers are like pens. There are some University ministers, he says, and they try to make them the same as people make steel pens nowadays, they make them by the gross, and though they have their excellences, and many of them are highly educated men, yet they also have their deficiencies. John Berridge compared himself to an old goose quill. He said that he could not make such fine lady-like up-strokes as the University steel pens could, but he thought that God often made heavier down-strokes on the heart by him than ever he did by the University gentlemen.

And that is the case with some of us. We have to be nibbed several times before we are fit to write with at all, and when we do write, we sometimes make a sorry blotch of it, yet the Lord does help us, rough and ready as we are, to make some heavy down-strokes on the sinner's conscience, and if this be done, it is a reason for thankfulness, and we will bless the Lord for it. Pens, however, must sometimes be nibbed, and so ministers must sometimes feel the sharp knife of affliction so as to make them more fit to preach God's Word.

Need I remind you, beloved, that a pen cannot, write of itself? Just take that pen, and lay it down on the paper. Can that pen write "Paradise Lost?" Why, it cannot even stir, it cannot write a single letter of the alphabet, much less can it write a poem. And so is it with the minister, he can write no truth in the sinner's heart and conscience except his Master holds him in His hand, but when the Master begins to write, oh, then, how well it is done, and how the white paper of the new heart receives the divine handwriting, and it remains indelibly there!

Neither would it avail for writing that there be the best pen in the world without ink, and the analogy in this case is with the Holy Spirit. The minister must be dipped in this ink. He must have the Holy Spirit with him, or else it is no matter what he may be—he may be a goose-quill, or he may be the polished steel, he may have been well-nibbed, he may have written much in his time, but he can write nothing now without the ink. Mr. Joseph Irons used to pray, as he went to his pulpit, "Oh, for an unction from on high! Oh, for an unction from on high!" And methinks this may be the preacher's prayer whenever he goes to preach, "Oh, for an unction from on high! Oh, for much of this divine ink—much of the Holy Spirit!"

Surely we may praise and bless the Lord whenever we see His law written upon a human heart, because it is God's law, because it is God who writes it, and because it is the Spirit of God who is the Agent, through the Word, by whom that writing is put there. Let us join in hearty thanksgiving to Father, Son, and Spirit, the covenant-keeping God, who writes His law in our hearts.

And it may be well to make a special note of this fact, **IT IS GOD'S LAW WHICH IS WRITTEN UPON THE NEW HEART.**

I do not think it is the law as it stands in the letter, either in Exodus or in Deuteronomy, but it is the spirit of the law that is written upon the Christian's heart. With regard to the law as a letter, we may say, "The letter killeth," it is the spirit, the essence of the law, which the Christian is to mind, and which is written on his heart. Under the old law, the Jew was often put to much inconvenience. For instance, the law of the Sabbath day, as it then stood, was, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work." Now, some Christians read it in that way even to this day, but when the Savior was on earth, His disciples rubbed the ears of corn together in the fields, and ate thereof, on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees complained of this, but the Savior replied to them that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

The Sabbath was never meant to be a fixed and tight bond to crush us and make us feel like slaves during the time it lasted, but it was made for our use, to be devoted to the best and highest of purposes. The Pharisees would never have healed anybody on the Sabbath, that, they thought, was dreadfully wicked, but Jesus Christ hallowed the Sabbath day by acts of mercy.

And now He gives to the Christian a day of rest, not, indeed, such a day of rest as it was to the Jew, but He gives us this, that we may perform works of mercy, works of piety, and works for necessary uses. These we do perform, and when we do so, there are some who cry out that such-and-such a Christian is

not a Sabbatarian. No, and the Christian man has no need to be. His law of the Sabbath is not the old law, as he finds it in Deuteronomy or Exodus, but the law of the Sabbath as he finds it, according to Christ, which is this, that the day is a day of rest, and holy pleasure, a day in which we are to serve God with all our might, and any kind of work which is wholly God's work, and in which we can serve God, is a work which we are permitted, nay, which we are enjoined to perform.

So it is with all the law. The Christian man does not go back to the law of Moses and say, "I feel very angry, I should like to know whether I may kill my brother." No, he has the law of God in his heart, and he does not want to kill anybody. He knows that he that is angry with his brother is a murderer, so he turns round, and says, "I forgive you, I forgive you freely."

Sometimes persons come and ask us questions which involve some degree of lust, but a Christian has the law of God in his heart, and he does not want to know whether this and that may be permitted as a sin of the flesh, but he remembers that "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," and so he spurns the sin. The law written on his heart is enough for him, and he delights in the law of God after the inward man, without needing to go to the letter—the killing letter—and reading in that the condemnation of offenses rather shall the promptings of holy motives.

The law of God is perfect, let us say nought against it, but it is not so glorious as the law which Christ has brought in, and which He exhibited in His own person. The glory of the law was great, but the glory of Christ's gospel is far greater. Remember, Christian, that there is to be written on your heart the whole of God's law, but it is the spirit of that law, and not the letter of it, which is to be written there, and what that spirit is you know, for our great Teacher epitomized it in one word, and that one word is "LOVE," love, that furnishes the impulse while it prescribes the duty.

The man who has God's law written in his heart will go right without a book—he will go right without having somebody at his elbow to nudge him. And why will he go right? Why does the steam engine go? Because it has steam within it, and the proper machinery, so it must go. You do not see twenty horses dragging a steam engine along, do you?

There are some folks who want to make laws to make other people good. That is not the way in which Scripture goes to work, but Scripture just alters the man's heart, puts new machinery in him, and the heavenly steam, and then he cannot help going right. You are not to have a law with twenty policemen behind it to drag a man to do right, that is not the thing to do. The man must be renewed by divine grace, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, and then, by the force and strength of that new nature, the law being written in his heart, he hates that which is evil, and cleaves to that which is good.

Some people cannot understand this, they know that they will not themselves do what is right except they are flogged to it, while they do what is wrong at every opportunity from an evil bias. But the Christian is a different man, he has been born again, and now he would want flogging to do evil, and even then he would not do it, but he wants no driving to that which is good, for the ways of God are his pleasure, and the pleasures of sin he hates. May we all in this sense have the law written on our hearts!

And what will that law be? Why, this word "LOVE." Love is the law of the Gospel. "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbor as thyself." This is the law of the Christian, and this is the law which is written on his heart. This is the sum and substance, the distilled essence of all the ten commandments. You may forget those ten commandments, O believer, if you will but remember this new law which is written on your heart, "Love, *love*, LOVE!"

Last of all, THE WRITING PRESERVES THE HEART, AND THE HEART PRESERVES THE WRITING.

Some of us who have a large correspondence sometimes have a grand burning. There are a lot of letters on my table, very possibly written by some of you, which will never get answered, but if people will write ten times as many as anybody can answer, they must not expect to get replies. Still, there they are, and sometimes there comes to be a general blaze, and while we are burning the letters up, every now

and then we say, "Ah, I'll keep that! Why? Well, it is in the handwriting of somebody we loved, but who is now dead, and we say, "Yes, I'll keep that, just put that away in one of the pigeon-holes, and there let it lie amongst the interesting letters." So, when God comes at last to look at all the writing of the universe, there will be a general burning, but He will come to one heart, and He will say, "Yes, keep that, that has My law written on it, and wherever I see My law, I see My dear Son's handwriting, He Himself died upon the cross that this heart should not be burned, I will keep that." If you have God's law written on your hearts, it will preserve you.

So, too, the heart preserves the writing. The Pharaohs have written wonderful inscriptions in Egypt upon their stone tombs, yet some of these have become defaced through the lapse of years.

*"Time has a mighty tooth,
And bites the granite through."*

But when a thing is written upon an immortal heart, no time can change it. The heart that had God's law written on it years ago had it still written there in the last expiring moments, as the believer talked with his God upon his dying bed. The flesh has been committed to the grave, but the handwriting is not gone, for the heart on which it was written has soared aloft, and there it is now before the eternal throne, and when the sun has grown dim with age, and the moon has waned never to wax again, and the stars have quenched their tiny lamps, when—

*"The great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve.
And like this insubstantial pageant faded.
Leave not a rack behind,"—*

just as a moment's foam dissolves into the wave that bears it, and is lost forever, when all the universe that God has made, except the heaven which is to exist forever, shall have passed away, then the handwriting of God upon that heart will be as clear and as legible as it is now. Ay, and if you can fly on seraph's wings far far away, till time seems a spot too small to be discerned by the keenest eye, if you have sped on till God has made and destroyed as many worlds as there are grains of sand by the seashore, till He has piled up, and dashed to pieces again, as many mighty universes as there are drops in the ocean—changeless even then, the imperishable writing of the divine hand shall still glitter on the immortal, eternal hearts that God has made and quickened, that they might be the pillars on which He might write the memorial of His love and holiness.

Oh, that my heart might have this writing on it! Brethren, I pray that it may be the case with you, and with all of us. But remember, the old heart must be broken, and the place to get a new heart is at the foot of the cross. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shall be saved." "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." He that trusts in Jesus builds upon a rock, he builds for eternity, and his happiness shall be secure.

The Lord send you away with His own blessing, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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.