

THE CHRISTIAN'S HELMET

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A SERMON
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“And for a helmet the hope of salvation.”
1 Thessalonians 5:8

THE very mention of a helmet may well seem to REMIND EVERY CHRISTIAN HERE THAT HE IS A SOLDIER.

I. If you were not soldiers, you would not need armor. But being soldiers, you need to be clad from head to foot in armor of proof. I suppose every Christian here knows, as a matter of theory, that he is a Christian soldier and that he has been enlisted under the banner of the cross, to fight against the powers of darkness until he wins the victory.

But we all need to have our memories refreshed upon this matter, for soldiering, in time of war at any rate, is not a very pleasant occupation and the flesh constantly attempts to give it over. That “we have no abiding city here,” is a truth which we all know, and yet the most of us try to make the earth as comfortable for ourselves as if it were to be our abiding residence. We are all soldiers—we know that—but still, too many Christians act as if they could be the friends of the world and the friends of God at the same time.

Now, Christian, recollect once or all that you are a soldier. Did you dream, young man, that as soon as you were baptized and added to the church, the conflict was all over? Ah, it was then but just beginning. Like Caesar, you then crossed the Rubicon and declared war against your deadly enemy. You drew your sword then—you did not sheathe it. Your proper note on joining the church is not one of congratulation, as though the victory were won, but one of preparation—for now the trumpet sounds and the fight begins.

You are a soldier at all times, Christian. You ought to sit even at your table as a soldier sits and you should go out especially into the world as a soldier goes out. Never take off your armor, for if you do, in some unguarded moment you may meet with serious wounds. But *keep your armor ever about you and be watchful*, for you are always in the midst of enemies wherever you may be.

And even when the persons who surround you are your friends, there are still evil spirits unseen of men who watch for your halting—and you must not put up your sword, for you are to wrestle against principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, against whom you must ever be on the watch. You are a soldier, man—remember that.

Nor are you a soldier in barracks, or at home, but *you are a soldier in an enemy's country*. Your place is either in the trenches or else in the thick of the battle. You who are sick are like soldiers in the trenches. You are patiently hoping and quietly waiting, as it were, upon the ramparts, looking for the time to come. But others of you, out in business and engaged in the concerns of life, are like soldiers marching in a long file to the conflict, like the housemen dashing on to the front of the battle. More or less, according to your circumstances, you are all exposed to the foe and that at every period of life.

Where are you, let me ask, but *in the country of an enemy who never gives any quarter*? If you fall, it is death. The world never forgives the Christian—it hates him with a perfect hatred and it longs to do him ill. Only let the world see you commit half a trip, and they will soon report and magnify it. What might be done by other men without observation, if it were done by a Christian, would be noticed, reported, and misrepresented.

The world understands that you are its natural antagonist. Satan perceives in you a representative of his old enemy the Lord Jesus, and you may rest assured that he will never give you quarter if once he gets an opportunity of destroying you. Mind the enemy, mind the enemy, for he is one of a malicious spirit.

You have to fight with one, too, *who never yet made a truce*. You may come to terms and parley, but the powers of evil never do. You may hang out the white flag if you like. The foe may seem for a time as though he gave you credit, but do you never give your foe any credit. He hates you when he seems to love you best. "Dread the Greeks, even when they bring you gifts," said the tradition of old—and let the Christian dread the world most when it puts on its softest speeches. Stand, then, upon your guard, you warriors of the cross, when least you fear, the cringing foe will come behind you and stab you, under the pretense of friendship. Your Master was betrayed with a kiss, and so will you be, unless you watch unto prayer.

You have to do with an enemy *who never can make any peace with you, nor can you ever make any peace with him*. If you become at peace with sin, sin has conquered you—and it is impossible, unless you give up the fight and yield your neck to the everlasting thralldom—that there should ever be peace for so much as a moment.

Oh, Christian, see how guarded you ought to be. How needful to be clothed with your armor! How needful to have it of the right kind, to keep it bright, and to wear it constantly! You are a soldier, a soldier in battle, a soldier in the foeman's country, a soldier with a cruel and malicious enemy, who knows neither truce nor parley, and who gives no quarter, but will fight with you till you die.

Heaven is the land where your sword should be sheathed—there shall you hang the banner high—but here we wrestle with the foe and must do so till we cross the torrent of death. Right up to the river's edge must the conflict be waged. Foot by foot, and inch by inch, must all the land to Canaan's happy shore be won.

Not a step can be taken without conflict and strife—but once there, you may lay aside your helmet and put on your crown, put away your sword, and take your palm branch—your fingers shall no longer need to learn to war, but your hearts shall learn the music of the happy songsters in the skies. This, then, is the first thought—that you are a soldier.

II. But the second thought is—BEING A SOLDIER, LOOK TO YOUR HEAD.

Soldiers, look to your heads. A wound in the head is a serious matter. The head, being a vital part, we need to be well protected there. The heart needs to be guarded with the breastplate, but the head needs to be protected quite as much, for even if a man should be true-hearted, yet if a shot should go through his brain, he would not be worth much as a soldier—his body would strew the plain. The head must be taken care of.

There are a great many Christian people who never have any trouble with their heads at all. There are certain religionists who get their hearts warmed and then they think that that is enough. Now, give me above everything else a good warm heart, but oh, to have that warm heart coupled with a head that is well taken care of.

Do you know that a hot head and a hot heart together do a deal of mischief, but with a hot heart and a cold brain you may do a world of service to the Master. Have right doctrine in the head, and then set the soul on fire, and you will soon win the world. There is no standing in that man's way whose head and heart are both right—but to neglect the head has been a serious mischief with many Christians.

They have been almost powerless for usefulness because they have not taken care of their brains. They have got to heaven, but they have not got many victories on the road, because their brains have been out of order. They have never been able to clearly understand the doctrines—they have not been able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. They have not, in fact, looked well to the helmet which was to cover their heads.

The text refers us to our head because it speaks of a helmet—and a helmet is of no use to any part except the head. Among other reasons why we should preserve the head in the day of battle, let us give these—*the head is peculiarly liable to the temptations of Satan, of self, and of fame.*

It is not easy, you know, to stand on a high pinnacle without the brain beginning to reel. And if God takes a man and puts him on a high pinnacle of usefulness, he had need to have his head taken care of. If a brother is possessed of a considerable amount of wealth, there is a great danger in that wealth unless there is a wealth of divine grace as well as a wealth of gold.

If a man is well spoken of, his sphere may not be very large, but if everybody praises him, he also will need to have his head well protected—for the little praise, even though it should come from fools—would be too much for a fool. The fining pot for silver and praise for the man. If a man can stand commendation, he can stand anything.

The severest trial which a Christian has to bear is, probably, the trial which comes from his kind but inconsiderate friends, who would puff him up if they could by telling him what a fine fellow he is. If your friends will not do this, you will probably have a friend within who will do it for you—and if *you* should forget it, the devil will not.

“What a capital sermon you gave us this morning, Mr. Bunyan,” said a friend, where John had been preaching. “You are too late,” said Bunyan, “the devil told me that before I came out of the pulpit.” Yes, and he will be sure to do it—and hence the need of having a helmet to put on the head, so that when you are successful, when you are getting on in life, when friends are speaking well of you—you may not get intoxicated with it. Oh, to have a good, cool helmet to put on your brain when it begins to get a little hot with praise, so that you may still stand fast and not be borne down by vanity.

O Vanity, Vanity, Vanity, how many you have slain! How many who then seemed upon the very brink of greatness have stumbled upon this stumbling-stone! Men who seemed as though they would enter heaven, but a little bit of honor, some glittering bribe, a golden boon, has turned them aside, and they fail. Take care of your heads, brethren.

And is not *the head liable to attacks from skepticism?* People who have no brains are not often troubled with doubts, but people who have brains have probably felt that whether they resolved to use them or not, the brains would use themselves. It is very good of our good fathers to tell us not to read dangerous books, very good of them indeed. But we do read them for all that—and though we tell the young folks sometimes not to read this and that heretical treatise, and we wish they would take our advice—yet somehow or other they get hold of such things and will ponder them.

Brethren, I do believe that, in such times as these, when everything is so free, and when discussion is so common—we must expect that our young fellows will look at a great many things which they had better leave alone, and their heads will be endangered thereby, for the bullets of skepticism threaten to go right through their brains.

Well, what then? As we cannot take Christians out of the way of the bullets, we should give them a helmet to preserve them therefrom. He who has a hope of salvation—a good hope that he is saved, a hope that he shall see the face of Christ with joy at last—is not afraid of all the quibbles of skepticism. He may hear them all, and for a moment be staggered by them, as a soldier might be who had a sudden shock or even a wound, but after a while he recovers himself and feels sound enough to enter into the conflict again.

And the Christian can say—

*“Let all the forms that men devise
Assail my faith with treacherous art;
I’d call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”*

It has been very well observed that a man is not often a very thorough democrat after he gets a little money in the bank. Well, I think it is very likely that when a man gets a little stake in his country, he

begins to be, to the merest extent, conservative. As soon as ever a man gets a stake in Christianity and feels that he has got salvation in Jesus Christ, he gets to be very, very conservative of the old-fashioned truth. He cannot give up the Bible then, because it is a broad land of wealth to him. He cannot give up Christ, for He is *his* Savior, *his* salvation. He cannot give up a single promise, because that promise is so dear to his own soul. The helmet of salvation, then, will preserve the head in times of skepticism.

The head, again, is very greatly in danger *from the attacks of personal unbelief*. Who among us has not doubted his own interest in Christ? Happy you who are free from such trouble. But there are seasons with some of us when we turn our title deeds over, and we are sometimes afraid lest they should not be genuine. There are times when, if we could, we would give a world to know that we are Christ's, for at times we cannot

*“Read our title clear
To mansions in the skies.”*

Well, beloved, this is very dangerous to our heads, but the man who has got the helmet of a right, sound, God-given hope of salvation—who has received from God the Holy Spirit a helmet which I am going to describe by and by—when these doubts and fears come, they may distress him for a little while, but he knows the smell of gunpowder and he is not afraid. In the midst of all of Satan's accusations, or the rising up of his old corruptions, or the threatenings of the flesh and of the world, he stands calm and unmoved, because he wears as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

Nor are these all the dangers to which the head is exposed. *Some persons are attacked by threatenings from the world*. The world brings down its double-handled sword with a tremendous blow upon the heads of many Christians. “You will suffer the loss of all things for Christ if you are such a fanatic as to do as you do. You will be poor, your children will want bread, your wife will be worse than a widow, if you are such a fool.”

“Ah,” says the Christian, “but I have a hope of salvation,” and the blow, when it comes, does not go through his head, but just falls on the helmet and the world's sword gets blunted. “I can afford to be poor,” said Dr. Gill, when one of his subscribers threatened to give up his seat and would not attend, if the doctor preached such and such a doctrine. So says the Christian, “I can afford to be poor. I can afford to be despised. I have in heaven a better and more enduring substance.” So, by the use of this blessed helmet he is not destroyed by the threats of the world.

We want our young people to wear this helmet, too, *because of the errors of the times*. The errors of the times are many. We have to deal not merely with skepticism, but with superstition. They are tempted on the one side, they are tempted on the other. This and that you will have cried up. “Lo here,” and “Lo there.” And there will be many misled who are not the people of God. “If it were possible, they would deceive the very elect”—but the elect are not deceived because their heads are not vulnerable to these errors, for they wear the hope of salvation and they are not afraid of all the “ites” or the “isms” in the world. The man knows he is saved.

Once you get to know Christ personally for yourselves, and that He loved you, and gave Himself for you, and then rejoice that you are forgiven and justified through Him—the world will count you stupid and obstinate, but you will stand firm and be able to resist all its sarcasm and its ridicule. He who has made a refuge of Jesus Christ may stand safe, whatever errors may invade the land.

They tell us that the church of God is in great danger and that Popery will spread over the land altogether. I believe it will, but that it will spread over the *church of God*—no—I know far better than that. The church of God never can be in danger. Every man in whom is the life of God would be as ready to die tomorrow for the truth as our forefathers were in the Marian days.

Rest assured there would be found men to stand in the burning fagot still if the times required them—and our prisons would not long be without heavenly-minded tenants if the truth needed to be defended by suffering, even unto death. There *is* danger, great danger. There never was such danger in

modern times of Popery spreading over the land as now. But there is no danger to the man who has his helmet on.

No, let the arrows fly thick as hail, and let the foes have all political power, and all the *prestige* of antiquity that they may—a little body of true-hearted Christians will still stand out at the thick of the onslaught, and cut their way to glory and to victory through whole hosts, because their heads are guarded with the heavenly helmet of the hope of salvation. Soldiers, then, take care of your heads. I will say no more on that point.

III. God has provided a covering for your heads, let us therefore now CONSIDER THE HELMET WITH WHICH HE WOULD HAVE YOUR HEADS PROTECTED.

“The hope of salvation!” This is not the hope I spoke about this morning, for that was the hope that salvation was possible. This helmet is made up of an actual hope that, being already saved in Christ Jesus, you should abide unto eternal life. It is a personal hope, founded upon personal conviction, and is wrought in us by the Holy Spirit.

To begin, then, describing this helmet. *Who is its giver?* You ask our friend the soldier where he gets his regimentals from and he answers that he gets them from the government stores. He gets his regimentals from Her Majesty, and that is where we must get our helmets from. If any of you construct helmets of hope for yourselves, they will be of no use to you in the day of battle. The true helmet of hope must come from the heavenly arsenal.

You must go to the divine storehouse, for unto God belongs salvation, and the hope of salvation must be given to you by His free grace. A hope of salvation is not purchasable. Our great King does not sell His armor, but gives it freely to all who enlist. They take the shilling and accept faith. They trust Christ and they are enlisted—and then the armor is given them gratis. From head to foot they are arrayed by grace.

Do you ask, *who is the maker of this helmet?* Weapons are valued often according to the maker. A known maker gets his own price for his articles. Armorers of old took much trouble with the ancient helmets, because a man's life might depend upon that very useful means of defense. So we have here the name of God the Holy Ghost upon this helmet. A hope of salvation is the work of God the Holy Spirit in our soul.

It is the Spirit who brings us to Jesus, shows us our need of Him, and gives us faith in Him—and it is that same Spirit who enables us to hope that we shall endure to the end and enter into eternal life. Be not satisfied with a hope which is natural, but have a hope that is supernatural. Rest not satisfied with that which is made in the workshop of nature. Go not to those who buy and sell for themselves, but go to the blessed Spirit, who gives freely and upbraids not.

Or would you inquire, further, *of what metal this helmet is made?* That it is made of hope, we are told, but it is of the utmost consequence that it is a good hope. Beware of getting a base hope, a helmet made of paltry metal. There were some helmets they used to wear in the olden times which looked very well, but they were of no more use than brown-paper hats. And when a soldier goes into the fight with one of those on, the sword went through his skull. Get a good helmet, one made of the right metal.

This is what a Christian's hope is made of—he believes that Christ came into the world to save sinners. He trusts Christ to save him and he hopes that when Christ comes, he shall reign with Him—that when the trumpet sounds, he shall rise with Christ—and that in heaven he shall have a secure dwelling place at the right hand of the Father.

This hope is made up of proper and fitting deductions from certain truthful statements. That Christ died for *sinners* is true. That He died to save all who trust in Him is true. That *I* trust Him is true. Therefore that *I* am saved is true. And being saved, that *I* shall inherit all His promises is a matter of course.

Some people have a hope, but they do not know where they get it from, nor do they know a reason for it. When some people die, you hear it said, “I hope, I hope he is gone to heaven.” Well, I wish he may have gone, but I dare not say of some that I hope so, because hope must have a reason. An anchor is

of no use without its fluke. It must be able to hold fast. It must have, at any rate, the modern anchor—some weight about it with which it can hold to the bottom.

Hope must have its fluke, too. It must have its reason, it must have its weight. If I say I hope so and so, I am foolish for hoping it, if I have not a reason for hoping. If you were to say you hoped the person sitting next to you would give you a thousand pounds, it would be a most absurd hope. You may wish it if you like, but what ground have you for the hope?

But if somebody owes you a thousand pounds and you have his acknowledgement of the debt, you may then very well say that you hope it will be paid, for you have a legitimate right to expect it. Such is the Christian's hope. God has promised to save those who believe. Lord, I believe You—You have promised to save me, and I hope you will—I *know* You will.

The Christian's hope is not a fancy, not a silly desire. It did not spring up in the night, like Jonah's gourd, and it will not wither in a night. The Christian's hope is something that will bear a crack from a club, or a cut from a sharp sword. It is made of good metal. John Bunyan said of a certain sword that it was "a true Jerusalem blade"—and I may call this a true Jerusalem helmet and he that wears it need not fear.

Having shown the metal of which the helmet is made, let me now describe *the strength of the helmet*. It is so strong, that under all sorts of assaults he who wears it is invulnerable. He may stagger under a blow, but he cannot be hurt by it. Recollect what David said. All the troubles in the world once set on David and began to beat him—and they gave him many terrible blows. They thought they had certainly ruined him.

David was bleeding and was full of wounds. He half thought he would die and he tells us himself that he would have fainted, only he had a bottle of cordial with him called faith. He says, "I had fainted if I had not believed." But just at the time when they thought he would faint and die, suddenly the old hero that slew Goliath made all his enemies fly before him as he cried, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God." And he laid about him right and left, as he should. "I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

"Hope thou in God," Christian. Oh that blessed word, HOPE! You know what the New Zealanders call hope? They call it in their language, "the swimming thought," because it always swims. You cannot drown it—it always keeps its head above the wave. When you think you have drowned the Christian's hope, up it comes, all dripping from the brine, and cries again, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him!"

Hope is the nightingale that sings in the night. Faith is the lark that mounts up towards heaven, but hope is the nightingale that cheers the valley in the darkness. Oh, Christian, be thankful that you have so strong a helmet as this, which can bear all assaults and can keep you unwounded in the midst of the fray!

This hope of salvation *is a helmet which will not come off*. It is of main importance, you know, to have a helmet that will not be knocked off the first thing in the fight. That is why our policemen are dressed differently from what they used to be, because their hats used to get knocked off the very first thing.

So it will be with some people's helmets if they have a commonplace hope—but the Christian wears a helmet that he cannot get off anyhow. There was once a good soldier of Jesus Christ—this soldier happened to be a woman, however, and some women are the best soldiers Christ ever had—they are His true Amazons.

This good woman had been much attacked by a skeptical person and when she was very much confused with some of his knotty questions, she turned round and said to him, "I cannot answer you, sir, but neither can you answer me, for I have a something within me that you cannot understand, which makes me feel that I could not give up what I know of Christ for all the world."

You see, he could not get her helmet off—and the devil himself cannot drag the Christian's helmet off when he has once got it fairly buckled on. The world can neither give nor take away the hope of a Christian. It comes from God and He will never withdraw it, for His gifts and calling are without

repentance. Once let this helmet be put on and He will never remove it, but we shall hope on and hope ever, until we shall see His face at the last.

I should like to go round among this regiment, as the commanding officers sometimes do, to have a look at you. This helmet is an old-fashioned kind of armor and in the old days the lieutenants and other officials, when they went round the regiment, used to look, not only to see that the men had their helmets, but to see that they had oiled them, for in those times they used to oil their helmets to make them shine and to keep the various joints, and buckles, and so on, in good order.

No rust was ever allowed on the helmets, and it is said that when the soldiers marched out, with their brazen helmets and their white plumes, they shone most brilliantly in the sun. David speaks, you know, of "anointing the shield." He was speaking of a brazen shield which had to be anointed with oil.

Now, when God anoints His people's hope—when He gives them the oil of joy, their hope begins to shine bright in the light of the Savior's countenance—and what a fine array of soldiers they are then! Satan trembles at the gleaming of their swords—he cannot endure to look upon their helmets. But some of you do not keep your hope clear—you do not keep it bright. It gets rusty out of use and then ere long it gets to sit uncomfortably upon you and you get weary with the fight. O Holy Spirit, anoint our heads with fresh oil and let Your saints go forth tonight terrible as an army with banners.

Do not let it be overlooked that *the helmet was generally considered to be a place of honor*. The man put his plume in his helmet, he wore his crest frequently there, and in the thick of the fight the captain's plume was seen in the midst of the smoke and dust of battle—and the men pressed to the place where they saw it.

Now, the Christian's hope is his honor and his glory. I must not be ashamed of my hope. I must wear it for beauty and for dignity, and he who has a right good hope will be a leader to others. Others will see it and will fight with renewed courage. And where he hews a lane of the foes, they will follow him, even as he follows his Lord and Master, who has overcome, and sits down upon His Father's throne. I hope there are many Christians here who keep their helmets bright—and that there are many more who desire to have such helmets to protect themselves and to grace their profession.

IV. YET THERE ARE SOME HERE WHO HAVE NO HELMETS. The reason is obvious. They are not Christ's soldiers.

Of course the Lord Jesus does not provide anybody with armor but those in His own service. But Satan knows how to give you a helmet, too. His helmets are very potent ones. Though the sword of the Spirit can go right through them, nothing else can. He can give, and has given some of you, a headpiece that covers your entire skull—a thick headpiece of indifference, so that no matter what is preached, you do not care. "What do I care?" say you—and that is your helmet.

Then he puts a piece in the front of the helmet called *a brazen forehead and a brow of brass*. "What do I care?" That is your cry. Then he takes care to fit the helmet right over your eyes, so that you cannot see—yea, though hell itself be before you, you do not see it. "What do I care?" Then he also knows how so to fit the helmet, that it acts as a gag to your mouth, so that you never pray. You can swear through it, but you cannot pray. Still you stick to your old cry, "What do I care?"

Ah, it is not very likely that any sword of mine will get at your head! Arguments will not move you, for that is a question that cannot very well be argued, "What do I care?" It is all very well for you to say that, but oh, I pray God the Holy Spirit to get at your head, notwithstanding that horrible helmet, for if not, God has a way of dealing with such as you are—when you come to die, you will sing another song!

When you come to lie there upon that bed of sickness and the grim day of eternity is in view, you will not be able to say quite so gaily as you do now, "What do I care?" And when the trumpet rings through earth and heaven, and your body starts up from your grave—and you see the great Judge upon His throne—you will not be able to say then, "What do I care?"

Your head will then be bare to the pitiless tempest of divine wrath. Bareheaded, you must be exposed to the everlasting storm that shall descend upon you. And when the great angel binds you up with your fellows in bundles to burn, you will feel then that you are not able to say, "What do I care?"

for cares will come upon you like a wild deluge when you are banished from His presence and all hope is gone!

Oh, I would you would take off that helmet! May God grant you grace to unbuckle it tonight, never to put it on again! Do care. You are not a fool, my friend, are you? It is only a fool who says, "What do I care?" *Surely you care about your soul. Surely hell is worth escaping from. Surely heaven is worth winning. Surely that cross on which our Savior died is worth thinking of. Surely that poor soul of yours is worth caring about!*

Do, I pray you, think, and not go hastily on. Oh, may Jesus Christ, who died for such as you are, bring you to trust Him. And then, unbuckling all that evil armor of, "What do I care?" you will bow before His cross and kiss His hands—and He will put upon you the golden helmet of a hope of salvation, and you will rise, one of the King's own soldiers, to fight His battles and win an immortal wreath of everlasting victory. May it be so with every one of us!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-28

Verses 1-2. *But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night.*

It will be a great surprise to the wicked. It will take them at unawares. Just at that moment when they least expect it, will Christ come, and as the thief comes to destroy and to kill, so will the coming of Christ be the death of their carnal ease—the destruction of their earthly hopes.

3. *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

A terrible text that, "They shall not escape." They shall not escape by their own power or force or wisdom. They shall not escape even by the annihilation which they might well desire, but which shall not come to them. They shall not escape.

4. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

You know that Christ will come. You expect the dissolution of this present state. To you, therefore, it will come as one who calls at daytime. You cannot know the hour. You must not know it. But since you know that He will come, and come to your joy—and since you are in the light, you look with gladness to that coming.

5-6. *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others;*

If we were children of the night, sleep is a proper occupation for the night, but as we are the children of the day, let us not sleep as others.

6. *But let us watch and be sober.*

Watchfulness and sobriety are appropriate duties for the day. To be ever serving our Lord with constancy, and to keep ourselves from the fascinations of the world which make men's minds drunk—may these two things be our daily care.

7. *For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*

There are a few who have reached to such a pitch of shameless idleness that they sleep in the day. And there are others who have come to such a state of debauchery that they are drunk in the day. But this is not the common way of things, nor even in the judgment of the most licentious of the world is this at all a proper state of things.

"They that sleep sleep in the night. They that are drunken are drunk in the night." Let us who are of the day be sober, and let us of course be awake, but let us be more than awake, since watchfulness is here joined to wakefulness, and watchfulness in a soldier requires that his armor be on. So Paul pushes the parallel a little farther.

8. *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.*

Soldiers, when they sleep, put off their armor. But in the day when they are awake and on their guard they wear their armor and are ready for the fray. See how much is involved in Christian wakefulness. God help us to carry out every virtue to its legitimate consequences—not to be wakeful after a fashion, but wakeful after God's fashion.

9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In making us children of light, he gave evidence that our appointment was for the light—that His eternal ordinances were that through that light of Gospel grace we should enter into the light of eternal glory by and by. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

10. *Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.*

They who have served their day and generation, when they sleep, are not parted from their Lord. They become not the children of the darkness by that fact, for He died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him. Whether we are living here or living there, we shall still live together with Him.

11. *Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.*

The more of this the better. Christian people should constantly converse with one another for mutual edification.

12-13. *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.*

You see, in the church of old, they edified one another, but for all that, they did not cast off God's ordinance of Christian ministry. There was rule in the church then as there should be now—and the apostle, when he speaks of this individual edification, this mutual instruction, does not forget to notice those who were the pastors of the flock. He says, "Know them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."

13. *And be at peace among yourselves.*

How can a church prosper if it is not?

14-16. *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore.*

Here follows a string of Christian precepts—a golden chain. "Rejoice evermore."

17-19. *Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit.*

Do not despise His operations, either in yourselves or in your brethren. Do not quench Him by neglect, much less by open opposition.

20-22. *Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

Not from that which other people choose to think evil, but from all real evil whatever it is—even from the very shadow that it casts and the shape which it assumes.

23-26. *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.*

Give one another a hearty shake of the hands. That is the western interpretation of the eastern form. Outward forms differ. The inward sense abides the same. Let brotherly love continue in a hearty friendliness among yourselves.

27-28. *I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. 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.