

SEEING IS NOT BELIEVING, BUT BELIEVING IS SEEING

NO. 698

A SERMON
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AT CORNWALL ROAD CHAPEL, BAYSWATER.

*“Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”
1 Peter 1:8-9.*

A VERY formidable difficulty frequently besets earnest but uninstructed minds who are seeking the Savior, they do not find it difficult to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is a Savior, that He is mighty to save, but their difficulty lies in getting at Him. They believe that the medicine will cure, but their question is, how shall they drink it? They are convinced that a touch of the hem of the Savior's garment would heal their diseases, but their question is how to touch, by what means shall they be brought into contact with Christ, and a Savior become *the* Savior of their souls? The constant aim of the Gospel ministry should be to remove such difficulties as these out of the way of coming souls, and we shall try this morning, as God shall help us, to lift out that stone and fill up that miry place in the king's highway, that some may today be enabled to come to Jesus, understanding what that coming means, and exercising it before they leave this house.

It is very common to meet with persons who say, “I wish that I had heard the Savior—actually heard Him speak. If I could have listened to that matchless eloquence of which it is written, ‘Never man spoke like this man,’ I would have been convinced, melted, led to penitence, and inspired with faith. I wish I could have heard Him pronounce those words, ‘Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ I would have leaped from among the crowd, and I would have cried, ‘Master, I come, your invitation draws me, here I am, a heavy-laden sinner, give me rest.’”

You have also wished that you had been able literally to touch Him, to have put your finger into the print of the nails, and to have thrust your hand into His side. It seems to you that then you could have believed. If you might have been privileged with even the touch of the woman who did but touch the hem of His garment, much more if you might have been privileged to lean your head upon His bosom with John, you would then have believed, you think, as a matter of course, and there would have been no sort of difficulty in the way of your salvation. You have sighed, “Oh that I could have heard, have touched, and have seen Him, these would have been three pearly gates through which I might have come at Him. I could have reached Him then, if I might but have exercised my senses upon His blessed person.”

Your soul has lingered over the thought of seeing Him. You have especially wondered whether it would have been possible to have seen Him upon Tabor, with His garments glistening whiter than any fuller could have made them, and yet not have believed. You have thought it impossible. You have said, “If I could have been among the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane to have seen the bloody sweat and marked the tokens of the drops of blood still on the frosty ground, and if I could with tearful eyes have seen Him at the scourging and the spitting, if I could have wondered and wept with Mary at the foot of the cross, and seen the blood drop from His hands and feet, I would then have been saved, it would have been easy to believe, if there had been something to see.”

At first sight indeed, this is a very plausible statement, and seems as if there must be truth in it, but believe me, my dear hearer, there is none at all, and I may say of the Savior very much what Abraham said of Lazarus, You have the Gospels and the Epistles, and you have the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, and if you believe not, neither would you have believed if you had been among the company who

saw Jesus, touched His person, and listened to His voice. It is a mistake, a great mistake—as I think a moment’s reflection would show you—to conceive that contact with Jesus through the senses would produce faith. Mark the fact that out of the mass who did see Jesus, and who did hear Him, few, very few believed.

The crowd which gathered round the crucifixion, which might seem to be the most moving scene in the story, were not bettered by what they saw. As the multitude gazed, instead of tears they yielded laughter, instead of penitence they exhibited blasphemy. There they gathered, thousands of them of all sorts, the highest and the lowest, the intelligent and the uneducated, and all alike they spat the venom of their hatred upon the Crucified One. They cried, “If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross.” Seeing was not believing, but disbelieving and hating.

They had beheld His miracles before His being nailed to the cross. They had seen dead Lazarus come forth from the tomb, and marked those that had the leprosy, and other incurable diseases suddenly healed. They had, moreover, feasted upon the bread which He Himself had created for them, and yet they believed not. Why then do you conclude that you would have done so? There is nothing better in your heart than in the hearts of other men. Doubtless you would have seen all, and have been astonished and possibly affected, but the probabilities are that you would have remained what you are now, if not something worse, an unbeliever, an unsaved one.

Besides, it should never be forgotten that those who did believe in Jesus Christ in His own day, had to get out of and beyond the sphere of the senses in order to believe. Let me show you what I mean. I am not certain that what they saw helped them to believe. I think it did the reverse. I grant you that to see the holiness and the self-consecration of the Lord Jesus must have had a convincing influence upon gracious hearts, but then, let me ask you, would the sight of the deep poverty of the Man of Sorrows lead you to believe in His Godhead? Would an association with Him in His rejection and dishonor lead you to believe in His celestial glory? Is it likely that if you had seen Him betrayed, and dragged away to an ignominious doom, that the shameful scene would have been an assistance to your faith? Would not your faith have had need to triumph over all that the eye beheld, and would it not have been needful to use the soul’s eyes rather than the poor optics of the body in order to see the Son of God in the Son of Man?

How was the Messiahship, the Godhead, the glory and the power of Christ to be seen by the eye? That which was seen was to a great extent hostile to faith, contradictory to it, and faith to be exercised had to struggle with what it saw. Does not the prophet tell us that when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire in Him? He is a root out of a dry ground, He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. That which was seen of the Christ was a difficulty in the matter of faith instead of being an assistance to it.

Yet further, I say when they did believe, they went beyond the mere evidence of sense. Even Thomas, in that celebrated interview with Christ, when he made the utmost use of seeing, and touching, and handling, went much farther than mere sight could conduct him. The putting of his finger into the print of the nails, and thrusting his hand into the side was convincing evidence that Christ had risen, but it does not seem to me to be evidence of what Thomas drew from it, namely, “My Lord and my God.” Here faith went beyond what the finger revealed. The eye and hand showed a wounded man, but faith could see Godhead and authority, and therefore bowed and accepted the risen Man as being from now on her Lord and her God.

Now a number of reflections of this kind I think would go very far to show you that instead of it being certain that had you seen and heard and touched the Savior you would have believed, it is, on the contrary, quite certain that you might not have believed, and that if you had done so it would not have been the result of your seeing, but it would have had to be accounted for on quite another ground, namely, that described by the Savior, when He said to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto you.” You would not have had faith in Christ as the result of

sight. The Holy Spirit must have wrought faith in you if you had received it, that same Spirit who is able and willing to give you faith today, though now you see not the Savior.

The question returns, “If I cannot come into contact with the Savior by seeing, by hearing, by touching, tell me how I may, for I do desire that virtue should come out of Him to me. I am sick, I would be healed. I am lost, I would be saved. But by what means can I attain unto that salvation which He came upon earth to bestow?” The answer is in the text, and we shall bring it out by the following method—First, we will observe, *How we come into contact with Jesus*, secondly, *What virtue flows from that contact*, and then, thirdly, *What then—what are the inferences from this truth?*

I. To begin then upon this point, HOW DO WE COME INTO CONTACT WITH JESUS?

The uppermost point of contact, the most apparent and visible in the believer’s life, is *love*. Observe—“Whom not having seen, you love.” The apostle Peter twice puts in the “not seen,” as if he felt that though he himself had seen (for had been with Jesus in the most private of His retirements), yet these Hebrew saints, strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, had not seen Jesus. And He dwells much on the fact because he knew that they were types and specimens of all succeeding believers, of us among the rest. Therefore, recording the fact that they had not seen Jesus, he describes them as loving Him whom they had not seen.

Now then, dear friends, the first point of contact with Christ is love, and I think I can show you that we can, nay, that we do love Him whom we have not seen. Jesus Christ is incarnate God. He who fills all things and yet is not contained by all things that are made because He is greater than them all, condescended to become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He was born of the virgin and laid in the manger. In His flesh we have not seen Him.

We might have gazed upon that infant’s face and seen Him in the flesh, and yet we might not have loved Him, but now, as our believing hearts think of Him as incarnate, our minds go back to Bethlehem and Nazareth, and our recollection pictures Him as a man among us men, and as our soul sees Him first as an infant of a span long, and then suffering all our infirmities, and tempted in all points like as we are, and when we reflect that He need not so have suffered, but condescended to cast aside His glory wherein He counted it not robbery to be equal with God, that He might be on a level with us, why, then, without seeing Him we love Him. Blessed man, blessed God, condescending to be man for me! At the very thought of Your leaving the highest throne of glory, I love You! Foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but You had not where to lay Your head, and yet You were Lord of all! My soul needs not to see You—she loves You.

We believe, moreover, that as a man there were beauties in His character of such a sort that it must have been impossible spiritually to appreciate them without loving Him. Now, we never saw Him when He forgave His enemies, when He answered meekly those who railed at Him. We never saw Him in all His splendid life of disinterested philanthropy, nor do we regret that we did not, but when we read the story of His life, our heart pictures Him who went about doing good. And falling adoringly by faith at His feet we say, Such a character is lovely! Such a Person commands our hearts, and though we have not seen Him, yet the mental sight of His portrait, as it is drawn by those four master artists the evangelists, wins our affections and holds our souls fast.

It is true too that we never saw the Redeemer’s griefs, we never peered into that face, more marred than that of any man, we did not see Him in the garden in the agony, nor behold Him upon the cross when the cry of “Lama sabachthani!” started heaven and earth, but we have mused upon all, and with the spirit’s eye have seen all.

We need no great strength of imagination to think of Him until *Ecce Homo*—“Behold the man!”—rings as clear from the page of Scripture as though it came from Pilate himself. We have realized by meditation the scars upon His back where the plowers made deep furrows. We have thought upon the thorn-crown and marked the ruby drops. We have considered Him staggering beneath His cross along the Via Dolorosa. We have marked Him as His hands and feet were pierced. We have counted the purple drops, and said, “Thus our sins were washed away,” and though we have not seen Him, we do not want

sight to make us love Him, for the very thought of Him, the contemplation of His intense agony for us, who were His enemies, constrains us to love Him. We are fastened to that cross forever, crucified with Him, the nails which fasten us being the mighty love He bore to us.

Now, beloved, though we never saw Him dead, and did not handle that sorely marred but blessed body, that casket for awhile deprived of its inestimable jewel, His sinless soul, yet when we think of Him as lying in the cold prison of the tomb, embalmed in spices, we cannot but shed tears, and which are only wiped away by the glorious truth of His resurrection. So all the story through we feel that in each one of the positions the Savior commands from us as much love as if we had been present there to see Him—nay, that perhaps the sight might have produced too much astonishment, if not of terror, to have permitted us to indulge with freedom the holy passion of consecrated love. Possibly, we might have been so amazed, astounded, perhaps even alarmed, when we saw the circumstances which surrounded the Master's grief, that we might have forgotten Him in His surroundings, but now we can sit alone in our little upper room, or beneath some silent shade in the calm retreat, which so well agrees with prayer and praise, and there all alone, and still we can bring the Savior before our mind and feel that we love Him.

Now, my dear hearer, I think you will see that this, although it does not seem to be so real a contact as touching Him, is truly, if you think of it, more real. I may see things and yet not truly perceive them. You may travel through a country without understanding it. You see a thousand things in daily life which do not sufficiently catch your mind for you really to grasp them, but here is a case in which, without the exercise of sight, it is plainly quite within the range of our ability to get the very soul, and heart, and essence of the entire matter. And after all it is not the seeing—that must ever be external—it is the thinking upon the thing, the understanding, the being affected with it, which is the real point of contact.

So, love to Christ becomes as real a means of union, as strong a bond to bind as ever sight and touch could be, and infinitely more so. You may touch without realizing, but you cannot love a fiction, you cannot love a myth. Love makes the Savior real to the heart. When I preach sometimes, and my love is cold, and my zeal is flagging, I talk about the Master as though He were but an historical personage, some one that had lived and gone. But when my heart is warm towards Him, then I talk of Him as though He were in the pulpit with me, as though I could see Him, as though you too could see Him, as though I was speaking of our own familiar friend who was here in the midst of us. Every spiritual mind knows, and I need not remind him of it, that love does realize Christ, and thus the contact which love makes between Christ and the soul is more real than any which the hand or the eye could form.

But the text tells us of another point of contact—"in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing." We are again reminded here that we do not see, but we are assured of the possibility of believing in Him without sight. I must take you again to the Savior's life.

Beloved, we did not see Him die—that terrible misery, that fearful ignominy we never did behold. We did not sit still during the three hours of black darkness which covered all the land, we did not hear Him say, "I thirst," nor mark them as they thrust the sponge full of vinegar up to His blessed lips, but we have believed on Him. Ah, have I not by faith made real to myself the Savior on the cross? Have I not by faith seen Him and cast myself there and said, "Ah, Lord, I trust my whole eternity with You? My soul, my spirit, my body, everything that is mine trusts in You." I know, and you know who have believed Him, that you could not if you saw Him trust Him more really than you do now. His death is the unbuttressed pillar of your confidence and the sole foundation of your hope. In Christ you have believed, and you know that your sins are forgiven, that His righteousness is imputed to you, and that you stand accepted in the Beloved.

This is not to you a matter of hope, it is a matter of firm conviction. If you perish you will perish at the foot of the cross, but you are convinced you will never perish there. You have not seen, but you have believed. As to His resurrection also. You did not see Him when He rose early in the morning from the tomb, and the watchmen in terror fled far away, but you have believed in Him as risen. Have you not

thus believed? We are persuaded that Jesus lives, and we derive consolation from the fact. We believe concerning Him that death has no more dominion over Him. Immortal, He cannot die again. The lamb of the Jewish passover was slain every year, but He, our Lamb lives, no more to die, for He has accomplished the work of His death, and now lives to carry on the work of His great after-life. We do trust Him. Why not? What more reason for trust could I have if I had seen Him rise than I have now when I believe the fact? I cast myself upon the truth that my Lord is risen. I believe that because He lives I shall live also and it is possible to believe this as firmly as though we saw it.

Beloved, at this moment Christ is in heaven pleading for us. We cannot see the ephod and the breastplate, we cannot hear the tones of majestic love in which our great High Priest pleads before His Father's throne, but we believe that He intercedes successfully there for us. We choose Him to be our advocate in every case of sore distress, in every case of grievous sin, we believe that because He is at the Father's right hand He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, and we leave our suit with Him in perfect confidence.

Believing in Jesus brings us into as real a contact with Him as seeing Him could possibly produce, for you cannot believe in what you think to be fiction. You cannot trust your soul, and your best and most weighty interests with a mere myth. Your faith must be convinced of Christ, and must have had communion with Him, or else it would not be faith at all, so that you see, dear friends, both love and faith are two clear points of contact. These are the two bonds which unite us to the Savior. While some must necessarily go about to teach that there is a connection with Jesus brought about by infant sprinkling and by confirmation, by what certain gentlemen are pleased to call "the blessed Sacrament," we solemnly testify in the name of Him that lives and was dead, that the true way of coming to Jesus lies in faith and love, and without these you may baptize and confirm and give sacraments *ad nauseam*, but you have not approached the Lord. The true Christ is not there at the font, nor there with the lawn sleeve, nor there at the altar, nor with your acolytes, thurifers and other performers, but He is to be found where the heart longs after Him, where the soul trusts Him, where the spirit loves Him. Even the two Scriptural ordinances are but in the outer court, and are nothing of themselves, the true keepers of the door of Jesus' house are faith and love.

I read the other day of a certain renovated Puseyite synagogue having a path up to it called the *Via Crucis*. I must confess to having had but slender acquaintance with the playthings and nursery games of that sect, and I have no idea of what is meant by their *via crucis*, but this I know, the true *via crucis*, or way of the cross, is to believe and to love.

We were told not long ago by an Anglican priest that the history of the spiritual life was portrayed in the edifice in which he officiated, he began with regeneration in the font, and led his hearers by easy stages till he perfected them in the chancel or up in the steeple, I cannot remember which. All that may sound very pretty, I think it shamelessly puerile, to me it looks like a return to the absurd superstitions of the Dark Ages. I have no more reverence for their genuflections, performances, and theatricals than for the incantations of an old hag who pretends to be a witch. There is nothing manly, much less divine, in the new-fangled Romanism. God's religion is spiritual, theirs is carnal and sensuous. "The day comes, and now is, when they who worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him." For spiritual men there is not wanted incense, banners, dalmatic, or cross, nor any external thing, but the mental action of the inward nature exercised upon the Lord Jesus in love and trust. How simple this is!

There is a story told of a certain farmer in France, who, in the days of bad farming, produced wonderful crops from his ground, so that all his neighbors believed him to be addicted to witchcraft, and when they summoned him for the practice of it, he brought up before the court his two sturdy lads, his oxen, and his plows, and said, "These are the implements of my witchcraft, I simply work hard." Now I fear there are many who, if asked what is the way of their coming into union with Christ, have all sorts of mysterious, laborious inventions, but we bring before you nothing but just these—trust and love, these are the instruments of our religion. Like the apostles, we need no wagon to carry with us our altar,

our vestments, and other paraphernalia, we preach the Gospel, and exhort men to faith and love, and have no need of drapery, and architecture, and rubrics, and ceremonies. Trust and love, these two things bring the spirit into contact with the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are prepared against all the world still to hold these two things, and believe that were those other things to fail, and turn out to be a delusion and a lie, these will succeed to the salvation of the soul. “Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice.”

Still, the point is, that carnal people will imagine that if there could be something to touch or smell they should get on, but mere believing and loving are too hard for them. Yet such thought is not reasonable, and I can show you so. Occasionally one meets with an illiterate working man who will say to those whose occupation is mental, “I work hard for my living,” insinuating that the mind-worker does not work at all. Yet I ask any man who is engaged in a mental pursuit, whether he does not know that mental work is quite as real work—and some of us think more so—as working with the hand or the arm. The thing is mental, but is none the less real. An illiterate man cannot see that it is work at all, but he who is capable of mental labor soon feels the reality of it.

Just transfer that thought. Coming into contact with Christ by touch looks to most people to be most real, that is because their animal nature is uppermost, coming into contact with Jesus by the spirit seems to them to be unreal, only because they know nothing of spiritual things. Thoughtless persons think that mental pain is nothing. Mere animal men will often say, “I can understand the headache, I can understand the pain of having a leg cut off,” but the pain of injured affection, or of receiving ingratitude from a trusted friend, this is by the rough mind thought to be no pain at all. “Oh,” says he, “I could put up with that.” But I ask you who have minds, Is there any pain more real than mental pain? Is it not the sharpest when the iron enters into the soul? Just so the mental operation—for it is a mental operation—of coming into contact with Christ by loving Him and trusting Him is the most real thing in all the world, and no one will think it unreal who has once exercised it.

So then, poor seeking sinner, it comes to this, you have not to go anywhere, or say anything, or do anything, but, sitting where you are, if you can trust the Son of God with your soul, if you can love the altogether lovely One, the thing is done, you have touched Him after a spiritual sort, and all the virtue that comes out of Jesus by a touch you have. There is life in a look, we often say, but this is the kind of look—the look is loving and trusting, they go together, they are born at the same time. We love those we trust, and we trust those we love, and if you love and trust Jesus you are saved.

II. I must have your patient attention to the second part of the subject. WHAT VIRTUE IS THIS WHICH FLOWS FROM HIM?

When a soul has touched Him by love and faith, what virtue comes? The apostle answers, “Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.”

The first result of trusting and loving Christ is joy, and joy of a most singular, remarkable kind. It is far above all common joy. It is spoken of as “unspeakable”—“joy unspeakable.” Now earth-born joys can be told to the full, one man can tell his joy to his fellow and his fellow understands, for he is earth-born too. But spirit-born joys cannot be told because we have not yet received a spiritual language. I suppose that is the language reserved for heaven, where spiritual minds shall talk to spiritual minds without being confined to the poor poverty-stricken words of earth so necessary to us while yet in the body. The joy is unspeakable because you cannot possibly describe its true essence. If a man should try to tell all spiritual joys to his fellow he would feel silenced like Paul, and feel that he had heard things which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Holy Rutherford in his letters has gone far to picture to us what the Christian’s joy is, and so has Solomon in the Book of the Song, but carnal men cannot comprehend Rutherford, and as to the Canticles, there is no book in the Bible which staggers a worldling so much as the Song. He says, “Oh, it is a mere love-tale.” Of course it is to you, O carnal reader, but the reason is in yourself, it was not possible for Solomon to put into language the experience of divine love, except by the use of metaphor.

He had to describe love as we have to describe God, speaking after the manner of men, and so he must speak after a natural sort, and therefore the golden canticle looks as if it were an earthly nuptial ode, whereas it is so high that the uninstructed cannot attain to it.

The joy of believers is unspeakable because there is no telling it. Earthly joy is often exaggerated, you can describe it in words too flatteringly expressive, but you cannot act thus with a Christian's joy. His joy is one that speaks better through his eyes than his lips, it makes his countenance glow with delight. I have seen men's faces lit up with heaven's sunlight when the joy of the Lord has been shed abroad in their hearts. The very people who a day ago looked dull and heavy look as if they could dance for mirth because they have found the Savior, and their soul is at peace through Him.

The apostle adds that it is *full of glory*. Many sensual joys are full of shame—a man with a conscience dares not tell them to his fellows. The joys of sense are oftentimes unfit to be whispered in the dark, and the joys of the world are mostly too selfish to be boasted of. The joy of making money is not full of glory, nor is the joy of killing one's fellows in battle. There is no joy like that of the Christian, for he dares to speak of it everywhere, in every company. We will tell the devils in hell that we are not ashamed to glory in the cross, and we will tell unbelievers upon earth the same. We will dare to say it to the teeth of the worst of men that we have a joy they know nothing about. And in heaven we shall not be ashamed to tell to principalities and powers of those draughts of love which we have been made to drink from the well of Christ Jesus. In whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Why is this joy of the Christian so unspeakable and full of glory? I think it is because it is so altogether divine. It is God's own joy, it is Christ's own joy. Can you guess what the joy of God is? No, perhaps not, but every Christian has within himself a portion of the joy of God, for God joys in Christ and glorifies Himself in Jesus, and so do we also joy and glory in Him, whom having not seen, we love.

Beloved brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, it is for you to prove to the world by your daily walk and conversation that it is so. For my own part, I will bear my own personal witness that I never knew the meaning of that little word "joy" till I knew Christ. I knew the childish glee of boyhood. I understand, alas! something of the frothy joy upon the cup of sin, but let me say—I am speaking to those of my own age especially—if I had to die like a dog and there was no hereafter, if I had nothing for my faith but the happiness which it yields me in this life, I would be a Christian sooner than I would be any conceivable form of existence. I would sooner be a believer in Jesus in the depth of poverty, racked with bodily suffering, and oppressed with the greatest possible persecution, than I would be without faith in Christ, in the noblest possible position with the greatest possible earthly enjoyments, for there is nothing after all like the joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Sometimes, when it is flood-tide with us, our joy is so great that we think we shall die—our joy is too strong for our frail body, and even when it is ebb-tide with us, yet we have a peace of God which passes all understanding, a peace which the world cannot give, and which, thank God, it cannot, cannot take away.

Now, brethren, many of you know this, and you know also that this joy unspeakable and full of glory is not dependent upon circumstances. You have had great success, this joy unspeakable and full of glory was not increased by that success, you rather trembled lest you should sin through being in high places, and you have had great trouble, but this joy unspeakable has not been diminished by it, you have felt that God was with you, and that all things would work together for your good. You have wept over your children when they have died, a mother's grief has filled the eye with tears, but still the joy unspeakable has cheered the heart. You have lost property, and been wrongfully despoiled of reputation, but the joy unspeakable has been unaffected by all this. You have done with your crown jewels what sundry of the princes on the Continent have done with theirs—you have sent them where they are safe, you have put your treasure in the better land on the other side of Jordan, in the islands of the blessed, in the land of the hereafter where Jesus is.

The apostle mentions another blessing received by loving and trusting Christ. He says, “receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” Every man who trusts and loves Christ is saved. The common idea is that perhaps we shall get saved when we die. I know nothing of such a salvation. True salvation saves now. The apostle when he writes to believers always speaks to them as persons who are saved, not who shall be, but *are*. When salvation is once done, it is done forever. If you are saved, you are saved, you will be never lost. Those who trust Jesus and love Him are saved.

But it will be said, “How is that a matter of fact?” Well, it is a matter of fact two ways. First, they are conscious that they are saved from *the guilt of sin*. Of this they are conscious in themselves. The guilt of sin when it is on a man’s conscience is unmistakably there, for it weighs him down to such an extent that he cannot doubt it. Well do some of us recollect when we could not even sleep by night much less have comfort by day, because sin was on our conscience. We wished sometimes, as John Bunyan says, that we had been made frogs or snakes rather than men, for sin on the conscience makes manhood odious, and life itself undesirable, but when we believed and loved Jesus, we knew that our guilt was taken off the conscience. You say, “How did you know?” We knew just as we knew when it was on. If a man has a burden on his back, even though he has no eyes he can feel it, and as soon as it is gone, though he has no eyes he can feel that it is removed. So was it with us, when we believed in Jesus, our sin was all gone, our feelings were altogether different from what they were—

*“Now, oh joy, my sin is pardon’d,
Now I can and do believe.”*

We began to sing for very joy of heart. The removal of guilt is no fiction. It will be said it is a mere brain-sick enthusiasm. Have you ever tried it? If you have not, you are not fit to judge about it, but if you have experienced it you will say of it, “Oh if it be enthusiasm, blessed enthusiasm, let me never be rid of it. If this be a dream it is so divine that it should be true.” When we trusted Jesus, though we used no forms and ceremonies, we received the salvation of our souls.

Here is a point more tangible still, they who trust and love Christ are saved from *the power of sin*, and this is a practical point to be seen even by the eye, for instance, a man with a horrid temper; really almost insane from his anger, was led to trust Jesus and to love Him. There may be traces of that old temper in the man still, but I will defy you to find a gentler or more patient soul than he now is. That same man whose fist was so soon doubled, and whose eyes so rapidly flashed fire will now hear a vast amount of teasing, and look on and feel, “If I were what I once was I would join in this row, but now I pity and forgive.”

I can picture you another. There was a man who spent every night in the beer house or in worse places still. His house was a hell—his wife and family afraid to see him—the man a drunkard, a fornicator, and everything that was foul, but he came to believe and trust Christ. Now it is a matter of fact that he is a new man through believing. Ask his wife and she says, “Never was there such a change, our home is happy, our children happy, we have happy mornings and evenings, for my husband prays, that is not all, sir, my husband is such a heavenly-minded man that you could no more believe him to be the same man than you could believe that a lamb was once a lion.” Ah! the man has received the salvation of his soul! How did he receive it? Did we baptize a new heart into him? Did we confirm him into morality? Did we perfume him, intone him, and confess him into holiness? No! No. He trusts Jesus and loves Him, and all is done. He received the salvation of his soul by these simple means.

Now every man who has trusted and loved Jesus becomes a living witness to this. The vital power of religion is perceived by each man in himself. If you have a faith which has left you what you used to be, throw your faith to the dogs. If you have a faith in Christ which does not make you desire holiness it is a delusion that will drag you to the bottomless pit, for only the faith that works by love and purifies the soul is genuine. True trust in Jesus, and love to Him always does this, it makes the man receive the salvation of his soul from the thralldom of his baser powers, delivers him from the dominion of Satan

and of sin, and he becomes at once a sinner saved by grace, and all this by the two points of contact you see, trusting and believing.

III. I must not stop longer, but finish by a few words upon the third point. WHAT FOLLOWS THEN FROM THE WHOLE OF THIS?

It follows, in the first place, that a state of joy and salvation is the fitting, proper, and expected condition of every believer in Christ. If you are a believer in Jesus, and I see you sorrowing, what must I say? I do not mean sorrowing as the effect of mere providential arrangements, of course we sorrow as other men, and Jesus wept, but I mean this, if I see you constantly without joy unspeakable, if I mark that all your joy and hope are gone, what must I say? I begin to doubt whether you can be a believer, and if I may not raise that question, if it be certain that you have faith and love to Christ, I must say to you, my dear friend, that you have suspended their action, and therefore you have suspended the enjoyment of their result.

Go back again to where you were, go and stand at the foot of the cross and trust Christ and love Him, and your joy must return. I am sure it will, I have tried it—I have tried it hundreds of times, I am unbelieving by constitution, frequently desponding, very often depressed, but I have never been in the depths of despondency without almost immediately coming up from them as soon as ever I have thought of Him, and my soul has rested upon Him and leaned on Him.

There is another inference to be drawn from my subject, and that is to the seeking soul. If you want comfort this morning, go to Christ. But I have here the old answer again—I have heard it scores of times—“Sir, you say, come to Christ, how can I come? If Jesus Christ were at New York I would know how to get at Him. I should understand what He meant by ‘come.’ If there were some appointed place in London where every soul might go, I could understand it.” Yes, that is to say, you could understand the mere carnal act of coming, but this coming is a spiritual thing, and it is just as real as if it were carnal. You come to Christ by thinking of Him, trusting Him, and loving Him, though you have not seen Him.

I say, then, come to Christ, trust Him, and love Him, and whatever your infirmities and spiritual difficulties, you shall get over them all, for if Christ undertake to get you through them He will do it. He is mighty to save. But you say, “I cannot believe, ‘Faith is the gift of God.’” I know it is, but perhaps you have it already. Dead men cannot believe, but the quickened can. The Son of God bleeds for sinners, the Son of God, on the tree, offers an atonement for human sin, can you trust Him? You answer, “I do trust Him.” Then you not only have the power to do it, but you are doing it. If you are convinced that Jesus is able to save you, and are willing to trust Him, you certainly can trust Him, for inability lies in the will, and as your will is now right all your inability is gone.

The power which the Holy Spirit gives is spiritual, a power which removes our natural opposition to Jesus, and when this is removed the power is given. If you do now trust Christ fall before Him and say, “Savior, God, deliver me. By Your life and by Your death, by Your griefs and passion, by Your resurrection and Your pleading at Your Father’s throne, deliver me. I trust You to deliver me, I cast myself upon You!” If you do this you are saved—you are saved now—you have no sin in God’s Book—every sin is blotted out, and therefore being justified by faith, you shall have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But you reply, “My sins are very great.” Yes, but however great your sin, it matters not. The same hand which can receipt a little bill can receipt a great one—it takes no more, when the money is paid. Now, Christ has paid all the debts of those who trust Him, and He can readily forgive you. “Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “Yes, but,” says another, “it is my propensity to sin that I am afraid of. How shall I ever break the neck of my corruptions?” *You* will never do it, but *He* will. Do you not remember that when they pierced His side there flowed blood—that was for pardon, and there flowed water—what was that for? That was for cleansing. He will be of sin the double cure.

Is it some sin or some lust that you would conquer, or an angry disposition? Take it to Him, those vipers die at the sight of Christ. There is no form of sinfulness to which you are habituated which Christ cannot remove. You *must* give them up, remember, there is no going to heaven and keeping your sins, you must give them all up, but then you are not to give them up in your own strength. You shall receive a strength which shall make you more than a man, you shall be a man with God living in you, for the Holy Ghost dwells in us, we are temples of God. When God dwells in the temple He can purge out a great deal which we cannot purge out, and He can make us clean though otherwise we would have remained impure.

“Still,” says another, “I have such a want of tenderness this morning. I have not thought about these things, I have lived a careless giddy life, must I not give some week or month or two to the consideration of these things, and then come to Christ? Must I not go home and humble myself before God, and then believe and love?” My dear hearer, do what you will after trusting, but trusting is the immediate remedy this morning. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

May you and I come to trust and love, and we shall soon prove to ourselves, if we cannot prove it to others, that there is a power and vitality in faith and love not to be found in all the performances of the priests, who are laboring to bring our nation back to the midnight of Romanism.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 PETER 1.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. 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.