

THE SEARCH WARRANT

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“But there are some of you that believe not.”
John 6:64.

ARE there indeed? Yes; He that searches the hearts says so. Then it is high time for us to inquire, “What is it to believe in Christ? What is it to believe to the saving of the soul?” It is not merely to consider the gospel to be true. It is not simply to endorse the doctrine that Christ is God. Those who hold a sound creed may be destitute of precious faith, and those who are able to defend the Divinity of Christ with admirable scholarship may, nevertheless, be without God in the world. To believe in Christ includes much more than a religious profession. It is so to believe the gospel as to forsake all other beliefs for the possession of its blessed hope; it is to imbibe the spirit of the Word while you accept the letter of its pure teaching; or, in other words, it is to come to Jesus, and to prove, in your own souls, His power to save.

Just as the faith of Abraham led him to leave his kindred, and his father's house, under the guardian care of Jehovah, so saving faith leads a man to leave his self-sufficiency, with all the carnal pursuits and ambitions that encircled, like a farmstead, his natural and primitive abode, and to go forth, led by Jesus Christ, not knowing where he goes. Just as faith led the harlot Rahab to anticipate the doom of Jericho, to hang the scarlet line in her window, and then to rest securely in her house, though the town walls, upon which it was built, were shaking, so, by faith, the sinner comes to the blood of sprinkling, hangs the promise of redemption in the window of his soul, and though he feels himself to be, naturally, no better than others, yet he rests secure because that scarlet line is there, and he is safe. Or, to use another figure, just as the Hebrew householder slew the lamb, dipped the bunch of hyssop in its blood, sprinkled it upon the lintel and the two side posts of his house, and then calmly ate the Passover supper, though he knew that the destroying angel was flying through the land of Egypt, and though, perhaps, he could even hear the shrieks of the dying and the wailing of the bereaved, yet he remained quietly in his house knowing that though he might be the guiltiest of men, the blood secured his safety according to the promise of God.

To believe in Jesus, then, is to trust our soul's salvation to what Jesus has done for us, to prove what He is doing in us, and to rely entirely upon His promise to save us even to the end. It is to drop from the giddy elevation where we stand on the rotten timbers of self-righteousness, and to fall into the omnipotent arms of Him who stands ready to receive us; it is to tear off the rags of our own spinning that we may be clothed with the righteousness which is from heaven. Faith is the reverse of sight. It is to believe that we are saved when sin tells us that we are lost. It is to believe that Christ has cleansed us when we still feel defilement within. It is to believe that we shall see His face in glory when clouds and darkness enshroud our path, and doubts and fears distress our heart. This is the faith which saves the soul.

We are not saved by faith itself as a meritorious work. There is no merit in believing in God; and even if there were, it could not save us, since salvation by merit has been once for all solemnly excluded. Nor does faith save us as an efficient cause. Faith is the channel of salvation, not the fountain and source of it. Hence faith, though it saves, never boasts. He that boasts has not faith; and he that has faith can say, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” When the poor man, who was bitten by the fiery serpent, looked to the bronze serpent upon the pole, it was his eye that saved him; yet it was not the merit of looking, nor was it his eye that was the efficient cause of his cure; but all the glory of it was to be given to God who had ordained that the bronze serpent would be the means of healing to all who looked to it. So, faith is the eye with which we look to Christ, yet it has neither merit nor efficacy in itself; all the merit and efficacy lie in the precious blood of Him to whom we look.

Again, faith is an empty hand; yes, it is the filthy hand of the leprous sinner, and Christ puts His mercy into that black hand. Is there any merit in the hand? God forbid! Is there any efficiency to save in the hand? Oh, no, my brethren; the hand which gives must have the glory, not the hand which takes. He who bestows the blessing must have the honor of it, not the faith by which we receive the blessing from Him.

Now, having thus spoken upon what faith is, and having tried to show you its peculiar position in the work of salvation, I am solemnly reminded, by our text, that “there are some of you that believe not.” The context shows that these words were spoken by Christ to His disciples. They were gathered around Him, and He was addressing them; some of them had murmured because what He said to them was too “hard” for them to receive, and the Lord Jesus, being able to read their hearts, could say to them, “There are some of you that believe not;” and the inspired Evangelist adds, “For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who would betray Him.” I am going to speak, first, about *those whose unbelief is secret*; and, secondly, about *those who are known to us to be unbelievers*.

I. First, **THERE ARE SOME WHOSE UNBELIEF IS SECRET**, it is known only to Christ.

If you had looked upon those disciples of Christ, you would have judged that they had received the gift of eternal life; you would have said, “God forbid that I should condemn any of those men who have come out from an ungodly generation, and have professed to be followers of the Prophet of Nazareth!” Although it would be wrong for us to judge our fellow creatures, Jesus judged His disciples and judged them rightly, for He can penetrate even to the heart. He can discern the secret thoughts, and intents, and motives of all men. And the day is coming when He will finally judge the whole race of mankind. His eye even now pierces through the hypocrite’s disguise, but His hand shall tear it away when He shall say to those who cry to Him, “Lord! Lord!”—“Verily I say unto you, I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of iniquity.” We know not the hollowness of their pretense, but Christ knows all about it; and if the Holy Spirit shall help us, we may be enabled to show it to themselves. Oh, that it may be so, even now, that they may stand with their souls revealed, and their consciences convicted, and that they may now seek faith, seeing that they have it not!

What reason for alarm and for heart-searching there is here, for it is to be feared that *even in the ministry, there are some who have not faith!* Yes, brethren, there have been, in all ages, men who have worn the robes of God’s ambassadors, but who have not been themselves at peace with Him. It is a solemn and dreadful fact that there have been men who have broken the bread at the Lord’s Table, and who have been leaders in God’s Israel, yet who, notwithstanding that, have had neither part nor lot in the matter. Brethren in the ministry, and young men, who occasionally go out to preach the Word, and who are hoping, by and by, to have a settled pastorate, let us ask ourselves this question—Is it not possible that we, although preachers of the Word, may yet be without faith? Are we seeking to teach others what we have not ourselves learned? Are we only like scaffolds, used in the building of Christ’s Church, yet not ourselves part of the spiritual structure; or like Noah’s laborers, who helped to build the ark, yet were themselves drowned by the great deluge? Are we like Elijah’s ravens, which brought him bread and meat from Ahab’s table, yet themselves remained unclean birds of evil omen? Let us seriously question ourselves thus, for God has sometimes done good works by bad men; yet this has not saved the men themselves, even as it was with Judas, who worked miracles as the other apostles did, preached as they did, yet who, nevertheless, was “a son of perdition,” who went unto “his own place” among the lost.

Further, is it not possible that *there are some, in the other offices of the church, who have not faith?* Men and brethren, let me speak to you who are the fathers in Israel. Though but young myself, yet, as God’s servant, delivering His message, I speak to you with authority. Is it not possible that you may serve tables, as deacons of the church, and yet that you may be yourselves an intruder at Christ’s Table? You may be an elder and an overseer of others, and yet have to say, “They made me the keeper of the vineyards; but my own vineyard have I not kept.” It is solemn work to be made a watcher over the souls of men; but what must be our position if, after watching over others, our own soul should still be in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity? “I speak as unto wise men; judge you what I say.” Office-bearing and the choice of the church cannot guarantee your salvation.

And as this is true of some ministers, and of some church officers, *it may be true of others who are engaged in various works of piety*. I thank God that we have here many Sabbath school teachers, tract distributors, street preachers—in fact, I hope that there are very few persons, in this church, who are not regularly engaged in doing good in one way or other. If there are, among them, any who do not believe, I

am happy to say that I do not know them; yet is it possible, dear friend, that you are teaching a Sunday school class, although yourself needing to become as a little child before you can enter the kingdom of heaven? May you not be distributing messages of mercy to others, in the streets, or from door to door and yet be yourself in need of that mercy? If that is your sad case, you are like a man with a leprous hand dealing out medicine to the sick. Take care, Christian workers, that in this day of activity, when there is so much to do, you do not neglect the personal act of faith which unites your soul to Christ. See to this vital and all-important matter. Make clean the outside of the cup and platter, as far as you can, but see that the inside is not full of hypocrisy. However active you are in the Lord's service, I pray that your exclusive self-examination may be as earnest as your expansive zeal. May you be as much concerned to be yourselves saved as to proclaim salvation to others!

Now I speak *to the church members in general*. I thank God that He is adding to this church every day. Sometimes, I hear a whisper, from one side, that those of us, whose business it is to examine candidates for church fellowship, are too severe in our judgment of them; and, on the other side, there are some who say that we are not searching enough. Brethren, it is enough for me, and my fellow laborers in Christ, when we can say with that singleness of spirit, and not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, we have sought to serve God in this matter. I do verily believe that for the most part, what we have bound on earth has been bound in heaven, and what we have loosed on earth has been loosed in heaven. At any rate, if we have erred in any case, it has been neither by favor nor by prejudice; but we have sought, after lifting up our hearts to heaven, to give a righteous judgment in every instance. Yet, with all the care that may be exercised, there is not, beneath the cope of heaven, a single church that is perfect. Some of you, who are now here, are members of this church, and some are members of other churches, yet it is almost certain that "there are some of you who believe not." I do not profess to be able to separate the tares from the wheat, but Jesus can do it, He knows those among you who have no faith. You may talk about faith, and yet not really have it yourselves. You may have a great gift in prayer, and yet not have faith. You may be an acceptable preacher, and yet not have faith. You may walk uprightly before your fellow men, and yet not have faith. You may be a generous subscriber to every holy work, and yet not have faith. How nearly a man may be a Christian, and yet be lost, after all! The counterfeit may be made to look so like the genuine that men may look at it again, and again, and again and yet may pronounce the real to be counterfeit, and the false to be genuine. The Lord grant that if there are, in this congregation, any who have a name to live, and yet are dead, they may be awakened to a sense of their true condition before God before it is too late, and that Christ may give them life! Brethren, I do not know that at the present moment, if I have any doubt of my own personal interest in Christ; yet I do know that it is a very solemn thing to be too sure, and that it is a damnable thing to be presumptuous concerning such a matter. There will be times, with all of us, when it will do us good to sit down, and seriously ask, "Are these things so, or are they not?" Let us dig down to the very foundations of our faith, and see what it is upon which we are building for eternity. There will be times when all our past experience will be blown to shreds, like the sail of the mariner in a great gale. There will be times when our strongest evidence will snap like a mast broken by the fury of the storm. There will be times when all our comforts and joys will go like hen-coops washed overboard from a laboring ship. Oh, what a blessed thing it is, at such a time as that, to cast our great bower anchor into the sea, and to calmly sing—

*"In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil."*

When anyone can say—

*"His oath, His covenant, and His blood,
Support me in the sinking flood;"—*

he may feel that he is everlastingly secure, and that Jesus is indeed his Savior. May the Holy Spirit enable you to judge—for we cannot—whether you have this saving faith or not!

II. Now, in the second place, I am to speak about THOSE WHO ARE KNOWN TO US AS UNBELIEVERS.

First, there is a very pleasing class of persons here, who say, "*We have no faith, but we are very anxious to have it.*" I bless God for you, dear friends, and I wish that we had thousands like you. You feel your need of Christ, you long to be saved, you hate sin, you hate self-righteousness; yet you have no faith. There are certain questions that each of you often puts to us. First "May I believe in Christ?" I answer—

Of course you may, because Christ bids you do so; and what He bids you do, you may do. "But am I fit to believe in Him?" No fitness is required. "But am I the person who may believe in Jesus?" There is no special person indicated, for the gospel runs on this wise, and it is to be preached to every creature under heaven, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." As to the question whether you may believe in Jesus, whoever you are, I say—Yes, certainly; come and welcome, for Christ has said, "Who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely." Your next question probably is, "Can I believe?" I do not know, but I should think that you can. I will put a few questions to you—Can you believe that Christ is God? "Yes." Can you believe anything that God says? "Yes." You can believe, then, for Christ said it—and Christ is God—that He came to seek and to save that which is lost, and you know that you are lost. God says, through His servant, the apostle Paul, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" and you know that you are a sinner; therefore He came into the world to save you. You can believe that, surely. I know many persons, who say that they cannot believe, when in truth they can, yet they do not know that they can. How is it, then, that there are still so many who believe not?

The chief reason is because they will not believe; they are too proud, they love their own righteousness too much, they think themselves too wise to submit to the righteousness of Christ. But you say, "Can I believe in Jesus?" I say rather—Can *you*? I ask you the question. You who are black as hell, can you believe that Christ can save you? "Yes, sir," you say, "I can believe that." Can you believe that He is willing to save you—good and gracious Christ that He is—hanging on the cross, and bidding you trust Him? "Oh, sir!" you say, "I cannot help believing that." Well, then, you have proved that you can believe, for you have done it already. I used to think that believing in Christ was some mysterious thing, and I could not make out what it was; but when I heard that it was just this, "Look unto Me, and be you saved," I found that the only reason why it was so hard was that it was so easy. If it had been a more difficult matter, then my proud spirit would have tried to accomplish it; but being so easy, my proud spirit would not do it. You remember why Naaman could not wash in the Jordan, as the prophet bade him; it was because he would not, his proud spirit would not let him. "I thought," he said—that was where the mischief lay, for what right had he to think? "I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" That is why he could not wash in the Jordan, because he would not, but persisted in asking questions, needing to be wiser than God.

O tried heart, you may believe, and I think I may say that you can believe! God is true; you know that, and it cannot be hard to believe when you know that. Christ is able to save; you know He is, so it cannot be difficult to believe in Him. Christ is willing to save; you know He is; then, is it hard for you to believe in Him? So I say that you can believe. May God bless you, and make you willing to believe; for, if He makes you willing, He will be sure to show you that you are able to believe.

The next class, without faith, is not one over which we can rejoice so much as over those who are anxious to have faith; I mean, *the despairing ones*. There are some souls that feel their sin to be very heavy. They have the gospel faithfully preached to them; but they are so proud that they will have it that Christ is not willing to save them, so they will not go to Him. There is such a thing as proud humility, when a person feels a sort of self-conception of being base. "No," he says, "I cannot take the medicine, I am too sick." Now that man is as much a suicide, spiritually, as though he took poison, or stabbed himself to death. God says that He is able to save you, but you say that He is not; you are lying in the very teeth of His promise, and charging Him with falsehood. The apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says that Christ is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him; yet you, in effect, say, "No, He is not." Why, you are imitating Satan, setting up your wisdom in the place of God's, instead of accepting God's Word as true.

I know that, when I first heard that Christ could save such a sinner as I was, I thought the news was too good to be true; but the Holy Spirit led me to trust in Him, and then I proved that it was true. If you are a poor miserable beggar, and some good man here should say to you, "Come home with me, and I will give you a good situation; no, more, I will take you into my home, and you shall be my son and heir;" you would say, "Well, I can hardly believe it, but I will go and see if it is true." I hope you will say to God, who has promised you far more than that, "Lord, I am as black a sinner as there is out of hell; but if You will, You can make me clean. Lord, do it; I give myself to You." And if, poor despairing soul, you can

say, "It is God with whom I have to deal, and He can do anything; it is a dying Savior with whom I have to deal, and He must be willing to forgive; it is the risen Redeemer of whom I have to think, He can speak peace to my soul, and He will do so;"—if you can thus trust yourself with Him, you will honor God, and you will be saved.

But there is a larger class still, in perhaps greater danger; I mean *the careless and thoughtless*. How many of you have come in here out of a curiosity which may never bring you here again? For you, death is a dream, heaven a fiction, and hell a bugaboo. You know that the Word of God is true, yet you never trouble yourself about its warnings and threatenings. You say, "Let us eat, and drink, and enjoy ourselves;" but as for your immortal soul, you have left that to take care of itself as the ostrich leaves its eggs in the wilderness. Permit me, for a minute or two, to show you that I care for your soul even if you do not care for it yourself. You, who are indifferent to your spiritual welfare, remember that you belong to the most hopeless class under heaven. The profane are frequently converted, but the indifferent not so often. I have noticed that those, who get into the habit of going first to one place of worship, and then to another, are very rarely saved; yet that is not because they oppose the truth. No; if they would do that, there might be some hope concerning them. When you are at home, take up a flint and an India rubber ball of the same size; then take a hammer, and strike both of them with it. Every time you smite the ball, you make an impression upon it, but it quickly returns to its original shape. When you hit the flint with the hammer, you may produce no impression for a time; but, by and by, after one of your blows, it is shivered to atoms. Many of you are like that India rubber ball. Under the preaching of the gospel, you are interested, moved, affected, but the impression is never very deep, and you soon return to your original form. You are shallow with regard to heavenly things; we cannot get at your conscience, we cannot reach your heart—would God that we could!

I pray you to remember, however, that there is a time coming when death will preach far more effectually to you than I can. I recollect a narrative of a young woman, a fair and lovely lady, whose mother was very proud of her. She had introduced her into all the fashionable circles of the city. Her dresses were always becoming, but also expensive, and even extravagant. She lived only to go to one party and another, and to one amusement and another. Her mother had not observed—for mothers do not like to notice such things—that there had been a great paleness on her daughter's cheeks. A rapid decline set in and, at last, to the mother's terror and the daughter's dismay, the doctor thought it his duty to say that it was impossible that she could live many weeks. Neither mother nor daughter had ever cared for ministers; religion would have stood in the way of their chosen pursuits, so they avoided it; but now the minister was sent for. He was an earnest, faithful servant of Christ; so, instead of striving to bolster her up with false hopes, he began to talk of death, and judgment, and eternity, and the wrath of God. The young woman deeply felt the force and the truth of his words, and said to her mother, "I cannot think what you have been doing with me. You have led me to believe that these fine dresses, and those parties and amusements, were all I had to live for; why did you not tell me I must die? Why did you not bid me prepare for eternity? O my mother would that you had told me that I must soon leave this world, and enter the eternal state!" She begged them to bring out her last fineries, and she said, "Mother, I feel it is too late now, for I shall die; but hang those things up, and look at them, and never bring up another child as you have brought me up; and as for yourself, I charge you to think how soon you, too, must die."

So I say to all careless ones here—Think of the grave to which you must come, sooner or later; think of your last hours, and of the only true preparation for them. While it is true of you now that you have no faith, may it not be true very long; but may you, even now, seek and find faith in the Lord Jesus Christ! For, remember that not to believe in Christ is to be already exposed to the wrath of God. Not to believe in Christ is to be without salvation, and already under condemnation. There are many who do not know what it is to have a present salvation; but I bless God that there are also many who do know what a present salvation is. Do you know what it is? Not long ago I was asked this question "Is it possible for a man to be saved now?" "Possible? Possible? If it is not possible for him to be saved now, it is not possible for him to be saved at all; but the apostle Paul assures us that "now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation;" and no man should give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, until he feels and knows that this present salvation is really his. Oh, what peace it gives to know that you are now forgiven, now blessed, now saved! Oh, how sweet it is to be able to say that God is my Father, that I am His child, and that He will keep me in perfect safety, and bring me to be forever where He is! Oh, the delights of

this present salvation! It is better than a king's throne; it is better than a prince's riches. Present salvation—it is heaven on earth; it is the antepast of the peace of immortality. Heaven on earth can only be known by those who are saved, and who know that they are saved. May that be your case and mine, beloved! Christ's own words are, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned." May God bless us all with the true belief which is eternal life to all who possess it, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
LUKE 12:1-32.

The teaching of our Lord, in this chapter has very much to do with Christianity in connection with this present life, its cares and troubles. God has nowhere promised us exemption from affliction and trial. Indeed, it has been said, with much truth, that the Old Testament promise was one of prosperity, but that the New Testament promise is one of tribulation. You may rest assured that if it had been best for us to be taken away to heaven directly we were converted, the Lord would have done it, and that, as He has not done so, there are wise reasons why He keeps His people here for a while. The gold must go through the fire before it has its place in the king's crown, and the wheat must be exposed to the winnowing fan before it can be taken into the heavenly garner.

Verse 1. *In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trampled one another, He began to say unto His disciples first of all, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

Hypocrisy, however, of a kind that was calculated to spread, like leaven. If you know that a man is a hypocrite, you do not feel inclined to imitate him; but the Pharisees were such well-made hypocrites—such excellent counterfeits—that many people were tempted to imitate them. Our Lord teaches us, however, that it is no use being a hypocrite—

2. *For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.*

For many a day, the hypocrite's true character may not be discovered; but there is a day coming that will reveal all secrets; and woe unto the man whose sin is laid bare in that day!

3. *Therefore whatsoever you have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which you have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.*

It would be well if we all lived in such a fashion that we would not be ashamed to have everything we did placarded in the sky. I have heard of one who said that he would like to have a window in his heart, so that everybody might see what was going on. I think that if I had such a window in my heart, I should like to have shutters to it; and I question whether any man really could wish to have his heart open to the gaze of all mankind. But, at least, let our lives be such that we should not be ashamed for the universal eye to be fixed upon them. If you are ashamed to have any one of your actions known, be ashamed to do it. If you would be ashamed to hear again what you were about to say, do not say it. Check your tongue; be cautious and careful. Live always as one who realizes God's omniscience. While one of the ancient orators was speaking, on one occasion, all his hearers went away with the exception of Plato; but he continued to speak as eloquently as ever, for he said that Plato was a sufficient audience for any man. So, if there is no eye but the eye of God looking upon you, be just as careful as if you were in the street, surrounded by your fellow creatures; no, be more careful because you are in the presence of your Creator.

4, 5. *And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear Him, which after He has killed has power to cast into hell; yes, I say unto you, Fear Him.*

And how brave we shall be if we fear God! It is well put in that psalm which we sometimes sing—

*“Fear Him, you saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear.”*

This great filial fear will chase out all the little, mean, cowardly fears, for he who, in the Scriptural sense, fears God, can never be a coward in dealing with men.

6, 7. *Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: you are of more value than many sparrows.*

God does not forget the sparrows, but He regards you with far greater interest and care, for He counts the very hairs of your head. He not only knows that there is such a person, but He knows the minutest details of your life and being. It is always a great comfort to remember that our Heavenly Father knows us. A dying man, who had been for many years a believer, had a minister at his bedside who asked him, "Don't you know Jesus?" "Yes, sir," he replied, "I do, but the ground of my comfort is that He knows me." And, surely, there is a great force in that truth. Your Heavenly Father knows you so completely that He has counted the hairs of your head: "Fear not therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

8, 9. *Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denies Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.*

What courage this ought to give us! In company where the very name of Christ is kicked about like a football—where everything is respected except true religion—it is not always an easy thing to come forward, and say, "I also am His disciple." But if you will do this, you have Christ's pledge that He will own you before the angels of God. If you do not do so, but practically deny Him by a shameful silence, you may reasonably expect that He also will deny you before the angels.

10. *And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven.*

This is one of the very difficult texts of Holy Scripture. We are told, in 1 John 5:16 that "there is a sin unto death," and I would have you very cautious of ever daring to trifle with the Spirit of God, since sin against Him is guarded with such special warnings. The flaming sword of divine vengeance seems to hang before the very name of the Holy Spirit; so, whatever you do, never trample upon His royal dignity, or blaspheme Him in heart or by lips.

11. *And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers—*

That is to say, the persecutors—"when they bring you there, to be tried for your lives, as many have been in past ages, and some still are,"—

11, 12. *Take you no thought how or what thing you shall answer, or what you shall say: for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say.*

I have often been amazed and delighted with the remarkable answers which were given to bishops and priests by poor humble men and women who were on trial for their lives. Perhaps you remember that Anne Askew was asked, in order to entangle her in her speech, "What would become of a mouse if it ate the bread of the holy sacrament?" She said that was too deep a question for a poor woman like her to answer, and she begged the learned bishop on the bench to tell her what would become of the mouse; to which his lordship answered that it would be damned. Now, what reply could be given to that but the one Anne Askew gave, "Alack, poor mouse!"? I do not know that anything better could have been said; and on other occasions, there have been answers which have been deeply theological, and there have been some which have been wisely evasive and, also some full of weight, and others full of grace and truth, for the Holy Spirit has helped His saints, in time of persecution, to answer well those who have accused them.

13-17. *And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? And He said unto them, Take heed, beware of covetousness: for a man's life consists not in the abundance of things which he possesses. And He spoke a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?*

There were empty cupboards in the houses of the poor, and there were hungry children to be filled; so this man need not have lacked room where he could bestow his fruits.

18-20. *And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, You fool—*

Which was the last thing he thought, he imagined that he was a very wise man: "But God said unto him, You fool,"—

20, 21. *This night your soul shall be required of you: then whose shall those things be, which you have provided? So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

Here our Savior shows us the frail nature of the tenure upon which we hold all earthly goods, and how it is not worthwhile to make these the chief things of our life; for, while they may leave us, we are quite sure, by and by, to have to leave them.

22. *And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought—*

No undue, anxious thought, for such is the meaning of the word used here: “Take no thought”—

22-30. *For your life, what you shall eat; neither for the body, what you shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them: how much more are you better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If you then be not able to do that thing which is the least, why take you thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? And seek not what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, neither be you of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knows that you have need of these things.*

So that, with the knowledge of His guarantees to you that you shall always have enough, what need have you to be care-worn and anxious? I have often looked at birds in a cage, and thought of the happiness and carelessness of heart which they seem to exhibit; and yet, if you were to forget to give them water, or if you were to fail to give them seed, how soon they would die! Perhaps the little creature has not enough to last it more than one day, but it goes on singing its tune, and leaves all anxiety about tomorrow to those whose business it is to care for it. You would be ashamed to let your bird starve; and will your Heavenly Father let you, who are not His birds, but His children, starve? Oh, no! “Your Father knows that you have need of these things.”

31, 32. *But rather seek you the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

He does not give you all that you would like to have, but He is going “to give you the kingdom.” He gives the lesser gifts to others, but He is saving up the kingdom for you. Luther once said, “All the empires of the earth are only so much meal for God’s swine; but the treasure is for His children. They may have less meal, but they shall have the eternal kingdom.” Oh, how blessed are we if, by faith, we know that this is true concerning us: “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom”!

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

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