

DANIEL'S BAND
NO. 2256

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 15, 1892
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“O Daniel, a man greatly beloved.”
Daniel 10:11

IT did not do Daniel any harm to know that he was greatly beloved of God, or else he would not have received that information from heaven. Some people are always afraid that if Christian people obtain full assurance, and receive a sweet sense of divine love, they will grow proud and be carried away with conceit.

Do not you have any such fear for other people, and especially do not be afraid of it for yourselves. I know of no greater blessing that can happen to any man and woman here, than to be assured by the Spirit of God that they are greatly beloved of the Lord. Such knowledge might do some of us, who are Christians, the greatest conceivable good.

Daniel was not injured by knowing that he was greatly beloved. It has often been said that Daniel is the John of the Old Testament, and John is the Daniel of the New Testament. Those two men, Daniel and John, were choice saints. They rose to the greatest height of spiritual obedience, and then to the greatest height of spiritual enjoyment.

The knowledge that we are greatly beloved of God, instead of doing us harm, will be a means of blessings in many ways. If you know, my dear brother, of a surety, that you are greatly beloved of God, you will become very humble. You will say, “How could God ever love me?”

*‘What was there in me to merit esteem,
Or give the Creator delight?’*”

I think a sense of God's love is even more humbling than a sense of our own sin. When the two are blended, they sink the soul very low, not in depression of spirit, but in its estimate of itself.

A sense of God's love will also excite in you great gratitude. “Oh!” you will say, “how can I repay the Lord for such an amazing favor?” You will be conscious that you never can repay Him, but you will begin working out all sorts of schemes and plans to try to show how much you value the love of God. You will bring out your alabaster box from its hiding place, you will willingly enough break it, and pour the precious ointment upon the dear head of Him who has loved you so greatly.

I am sure that a certainty of having the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is one of the greatest promoters of holy gratitude, and holy gratitude is the mother of obedience. When we feel how much we owe, then we seek to know the will of God, and take a delight in doing it. Whatsoever He saith unto us, we are glad to do as a proof that we really are grateful for “love so amazing, so divine.”

This will also consecrate us. I believe that to know certainly that you are greatly beloved of God, will make you feel that you cannot live as others do. You cannot trifle with sin. He who lives in the heart of the king must be faithful to him. If called to stand in God's immediate presence as a courtier and a favorite, you must take care how you behave yourself, and you will do so. “Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” In

proportion as we are sure of His love, our love to Him will burn like coals of juniper, which have a most vehement heat, and everything contrary to the will of God will be consumed in that blessed flame.

A sense of divine love will also strengthen us. What is there that a man cannot do when he is in love even with one of his own race, but when he gets to be in love with God, and knows of a certainty that he is greatly beloved of God, he would cut his way through a lane of devils, he would face an army of angels and defeat them all, for love is a conquering grace. When faith is side by side with love, it—

*“Laughs at impossibilities,
And says, ‘It shall be done;’”*

and love goes and does it, for there is nothing which the love of God will not enable us to do.

Moreover, this assurance of God's love will make us very courageous. If you are a man greatly beloved and you know it, you will be a brave man. Let me never come into collision with the sword of that man whom God greatly loves, he will cut me in halves. The love of God makes a hero of the man on whom it is fixed. He is in the thick of the fray, he defies sin, and death, and hell. He will burn for Christ, he would be ready to burn a thousand times when once he was assured that he was the object of the peculiar love of God, and like Daniel, could be addressed as “a man greatly beloved.”

This will make a man glad. If we are greatly beloved of God, how can we be miserable and discontented? Oh, no! If you are a man greatly beloved, you will trip with light feet over the hills of sorrow. You will be glad in the Lord, even when you have much to depress and discourage you. You will begin the music of heaven even here, for a sense of God's love in the soul sets all the bells of the heart ringing. He is the gladdest man who has the greatest assurance that he is “a man greatly beloved.”

I have said all this as a preface to show you that you need not be afraid of knowing that God loves you. Some seem to think that a state of doubt is a state of discretion. It is a state of folly. Full assurance of the faithfulness and truthfulness of God is nothing but common sense spiritualized. To believe a lie is folly, but to believe the truth is wisdom. If you are a believer in Christ, though the very least and weakest of believers, thou art a man greatly beloved. Believe it, and be not afraid to rejoice in it. It will have no influence over you but that which is sanctifying and health-giving.

Well now, to help us think of Christ's great love to us, I am going to talk a little, first about *the case of Daniel*, the man greatly beloved, secondly, about *the case of every believer*, for every believer is a man greatly beloved, and thirdly, about *the case of some special saints*, believers who are the elect out of the elect, the choicest of the choice ones of the Most High. Of these it may truly be said that they are men greatly beloved.

I. First then, let us consider THE CASE OF DANIEL, who was “a man greatly beloved.

Because Daniel was greatly beloved of God, *he was early tried, and enabled to stand*. While he was yet a youth, he was carried into Babylon and there he refused to eat the king's meat, or to drink the king's wine. He put it to the test whether, if he fed on common pulse, he would not be healthier and better than if he defiled himself with the king's meat.

Now, religion does not stand in meat and drink, but let me say a good deal of irreligion does, and it may become a very important point with some as to what they eat and what they drink. Daniel was early tested, and because he was a man greatly beloved of God, he stood the test. He would not yield even in a small point to that which was evil.

Young man, if God greatly loves you, He will give you an early decision, and very likely He will put you to an early test. If you are greatly loved, you will stand firm, even about so small a thing as what you eat and drink, or something that looks less important than that. You will say, “I cannot sin against God. I must stand fast, even in the smallest matter, in keeping to the law of the Lord my God.” If you are enabled to do that, thou art a man greatly beloved.

Afterwards, *Daniel was greatly envied, but found faultless*. He was surrounded by envious enemies who could not bear that he should be promoted over them, though he deserved all the honor he received.

So they met together and consulted how they could pull him down. They were obliged to make this confession, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

O dear friend, you are greatly beloved if when your enemies meet to devise some scheme for your overthrow, they cannot say anything against you except what they base upon your religion. If when they sift you through and through, their eager, evil eyes cannot detect a fault, and they are obliged to fall back upon abusing you for your godliness, calling it hypocrisy, or some other ugly name, you are a man greatly beloved.

Further, Daniel *was delivered from great peril*. He was cast into the lions' den because he was a man greatly beloved of God. I think I see some shrink back, and I hear them say, "We do not want to go into the lions' den." They are poor creatures, but Daniel was worth putting in the lions' den, there was enough of him to be put there.

Some men would be out of place among lions, cats would be more suitable companions for them, indeed they are such insignificant beings that they would be more at home among mice. Lion's dens would not be at all in their line. They would imitate Solomon's slothful man and say, "There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets." There is not enough manhood in them to bring them into close quarters with the king of beasts.

Even among our hearers there are many poor feeble creatures. A clever man preaches false doctrine and they say, "Very good. Was it not well put?" Another preaches the Gospel and they say, "Very good, very good." Oh, yes! it is all alike good to some of you, you cannot discern between the true and the false, but Daniel could distinguish between good and evil, and therefore he was thrust into the lion's den.

It was however, a den out of which he was delivered. The lions could not eat him, God loved him too well. The Lord preserved Daniel, and He will preserve you, dear friend, if you belong to "Daniel's band." It is one thing to *sing*—

***"Dare to be a Daniel,
Dare to stand alone;"***

but it is quite another thing to *be* a Daniel, and dare to stand alone when you are at the mouth of the lions den. If you are like Daniel, you will have no cause for fear even then. If your trial should be like going into a den of lions, if you are a man greatly beloved of God, you will come out again. No lion shall destroy you, you are perfectly safe. The love of God is like a wall of fire round about you.

Once more, Daniel was a man greatly beloved, and therefore *he had revelations from God*. Do not open your eyes with wonder and say, "I wish that I had all the revelations that Daniel had." Listen to what he says, "I Daniel, was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me," and again, "As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart."

The revelations he received actually made him ill, "I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." He whom God loves will see things that will astound him, he will see that which will almost kill him, he will see that which will make him faint and sick well-nigh unto death.

When one said, "You cannot see God and live," another answered, "Then let me see him if I die." So those who are greatly beloved say, "Let me see visions of God whatever it may cost me. Let me have communion with Him even though it should break my heart and crush me in the dust. Though it should fill me with sorrow, and make me unfit for my daily business, yet manifest Yourself to me, my Lord, as You do not unto the world!"

Even men greatly beloved, when they deal closely with God, have to find out that they are but dust and ashes in His sight. They have to fall down before the presence of His glorious majesty, as the beloved John did when he fell at Christ's feet as dead.

I will make only one more remark upon Daniel's case, and that is this, *he stood in his lot*. Because he was a man greatly beloved, he had this promise with which to close his marvelous book, "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shall rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." He was a man greatly beloved, but he does not understand all that God has revealed, and he is to go his way and rest quite satisfied, that whether he understood it or not, it would work him no harm, for when the end came, he would have his place and his portion, and he would be with his Lord forever.

The next time you get studying some prophecy of Scripture which you cannot make out, do not be troubled, but hear the voice of God saying, "Go thy way. Wait awhile. It will all be plain by and by. God is with you. There remains a rest for you, a crown that no head but yours can wear, a harp that no fingers but yours can play upon, and you shall stand in your lot at the end of the days."

Thus I have briefly described the case of Daniel.

II. In the second place, I am going to speak of THE CASE OF EVERY BELIEVER who is also greatly beloved of God. I must be very brief because of the communion service which is to follow.

Every believer has been *called out from others*. My brother, look at the hole of the pit whence thou wast digged. Like Abraham, you have been called out from your family, and from your father's house. Possibly, you have not a godly relative. Many here are the only ones of their kith and kin that ever knew the Lord, so far as they know of or can remember.

Behold in this the sovereign, electing love of God. Are not you a man greatly beloved? Even if you have come of a godly stock, yet you have seen others who seemed to be nearest to the kingdom, and yet have been cast out from it. Admire the grace of God which has called you, and your father, and your grandfather, and your brother, and your wife, and maybe children too. Oh, be grateful, and bless the name of the Lord! But "who maketh thee to differ from another?" Who but God, the Giver of all grace, has made you to differ from the ungodly around you? Therefore, adore Him for His matchless mercy, His distinguishing grace.

Remember too, that if you have been called out from a sinful world, and transformed into a child of God, this is the token that you have been *chosen from the beginning*. God loved you long before He began to deal with you in the way of grace. Ere you were born, Christ died for you, and ere this world was made, God loved you with an everlasting love.

*"Before the day star knew its place,
Or planets ran their round,"*

your name was in His Book, and your image was on the heart of Christ, whose delights were with the sons of men.

Remember His words by the prophet, Jeremiah, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Feed on that precious truth, inwardly digest it, let it enter into your very soul. He has loved me with an everlasting love, then surely, I may claim the title of "a man greatly beloved."

Remember too, that in the fullness of time, you were *redeemed with the precious blood of Christ*. Your God took upon Himself your nature, and on the cross He bore your sins in His own body on the tree. The chastisement of your peace was upon Him, and with His stripes you are healed. The blood mark is on you now, you are one for whom He died in that special way which secures effectual salvation to you.

He loved His church and gave Himself for it, and this is the song of that church in heaven, "Thou has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast

made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth.” If you have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, verily, I say unto you, you are “a man greatly beloved.”

You have been also *pardoned and put among the Lord's children*. Remember your sin for a moment. Dare you remember it? Have you remembered it? Then forget it, for God has blotted it out. He has cast all your sins behind His back. The depths have covered them, there is not one of them left. They sank like lead in the mighty waters of oblivion, and they shall never arise to condemn you. You are forgiven.

Perhaps you were a drunkard, a swearer, disobedient to parents, or unchaste, but whatever your sin, the blood of Jesus has cleansed you and you are whiter than the snow, and He has covered you with the robe of His perfect righteousness, and you are “accepted in the Beloved.” Are you not a man greatly beloved?

I remember one who came creeping to the Savior's feet, it was myself, black as night, condemned in my own conscience, and expecting to be driven to the place where hope could never come. I came to Christ wearing the weeds of mourning, but in a moment, when I looked to Jesus, He put on me the garments of salvation. He took away my sin, He placed a fair crown upon my head, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. Blessed be His name!

If there is a man in the world who can sing—

*“Oh, 'twas love, 'twas wondrous love,
The love of God to me!
It brought my Savior from above,
To die on Calvary;”*

I am that man, and you can sing it too, dear friend, cannot you? I mean if you have been forgiven your trespasses for Christ's sake. I feel sure that your heart is speaking now, even if your tongue is silent, and it says, “Indeed, as a pardoned man, I am greatly beloved.”

Since the Lord forgave your sin, you have been a praying man, and God has *heard your prayers*. From the horns of the unicorns has He delivered you, out of the depths of the sea have you cried, and He has rescued you like Jonah. With the psalmist, you can say, “Verily, God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.” Are you not greatly beloved?

As our dear friend, Dr. Taylor, said in prayer this morning, we have a mercy seat to which we can always go. Not only have we gone to it in the past, but we may go to it whenever we need. We have the *entree* of the King's palace at will. Are we not men greatly beloved?

Besides that, remember that the Lord has *upheld you* until now. In your pilgrim path, how many times have your feet have almost gone! How often you have been tempted, ah! worse than that, how often you have yielded to temptation, yet here you are, your character not ruined, your soul not lost, your face towards Jerusalem, and the enemy's foot is not on your neck yet, and it never will be, glory be to the name of the Lord! When I think of all our experiences in the way in which the Lord has led us, I can truly say of all His people that they are men and women greatly beloved.

Now tonight you are invited to *feast with Christ and His church*, not to come and be dogs under the table, but to sit with Him at the royal banquet, with His banner of love waving over you. You are invited to be His companions here, His comrades at this feast. Oh, what a festival is this sacred supper! Haman thought himself honored when he was invited to his king's banquet, but what shall we say who are bidden to come to this high festival?—

*“What food luxurious loads the board,
When at the table sits the Lord!
The wine how rich, the bread how sweet,
When Jesus deigns the guests to meet!”*

Only one thing more will I say under this head, but this story is so marvelous that we may be forever telling it, and yet it will never all be told. The love of Christ to some of us has been so wonderful, that when we once begin the theme, we seem to forget all about time and wish there were no fleeting hours to bid us end our story! Eternity itself will not be too long for telling out "the old, old story, of Jesus and His love."

But what I was going to say is this, *we shall be with Him soon*. Some of us sit here heavy at heart, and there are wrinkles on our brow, and there is a weariness in the frame which makes the wheels of life drag heavy. Beloved, it is but the twinkling of an eye, so brief is life, and we shall be with Him where He is, and shall behold His glory.

Do you ever try to realize the greatness of that love that will take you to be with Christ, to dwell with Him, and to share His glory forever? Can you not put the incorruptible crown on your head tonight in fancy, nay, in faith? Can you, even now, begin to wave the palm of victory, and strike the harp of everlasting praise? Do you feel as if you could, even now, join the sacred songsters above, and sing the heavenly hymn, the hallelujah chorus of the ages yet to be?

As surely as we are in Christ tonight, we shall be with Christ by and by. Oh, men greatly beloved, to have such a future as this before you ought to make your heaven begun below!

III. Time fails me, so I must speak of THE CASE OF SPECIAL SAINTS, those who are in a peculiar sense men greatly beloved.

There are some men who are, as I said at the beginning of my discourse, elect out of the elect. Remember that Christ had seventy choice men, His disciples, but then He had twelve choicer men, His apostles, and He had three of these who were with Him when the others were not, and out of these three He had one John, "that disciple whom Jesus loved."

His love is so sweet, that while I would be grateful to be even outside the seventy, so long as I might be among the five hundred brethren who saw Him after He rose from the dead, yet I would then have the ambition to get in among the seventy, and not for the honor of it, but for the love it would bring, I would like to be one of the eleven, and for the same reason I would fain be one of the three, and I would, above measure, be thankful if I might be that one whom Jesus loved. Have you not the same holy aspiration?

Well now, let me tell you that if you would be among the choicer spirits, greatly beloved of God, you must be *men of spotless character*. Christ loves great sinners, and even saints that fall and stain their garments He will not cast away, but you will never enjoy the fullness of Christ's love unless you keep your garments unspotted from the world. You cannot find a fault in Daniel, and if you want to live on earth so as to be in heaven while you are here, and to drink the wine of Christ's love to the bottom of the chalice, even the spiced wine of His pomegranate, you must watch every step and observe every word, for our Lord is very jealous, and half a word of evil will grieve Him.

If you would walk in the light as He is in the light, and have constant fellowship with God, I beseech you, be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect, and follow after unsullied holiness. The pure in heart shall see God. Oh, that you might everyone have this purity! It is those who have not defiled their garments who shall walk with Christ in white.

The next point is that men who are greatly beloved are *men of decision*. When Daniel had the lions' den in prospect, because of his faithfulness to His God, "he went into his house; and his window being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." There was no compromising in Daniel's case.

If you want to be greatly beloved, do not attempt any compromise with sin. Have nothing to do with policy, and craft, and holding with the true and the false at the same time. If God is to use you in His service, you must be like the tribe of Levi, separate from your brethren, and you must ever be ready to stand up bravely for God and for His eternal truth at any cost. It is my earnest desire that we may have in this church many men and women of this kind, who will be, as Mr. Moody puts it, out and out for Christ.

Next, if you would be men greatly beloved of God beyond all the rest of His people, on whom special shinings of His face shall come, you must be *much in communion with Him*. Daniel fasted and prayed, and communed with God with cries and tears, and God came and revealed Himself to him. He was greatly beloved, for he lived near to God. He was no far-off follower of his Lord. He dwelt in the full blaze of the Sun of Righteousness.

If a man is to be greatly beloved of God, he must *live above the world* as Daniel did. Daniel became a prince, a governor, a man of substance and position, but when Belshazzar promised to clothe him with scarlet, and to put a gold chain about his neck, if he could read and interpret the writing on the wall, he said to the king, "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give your rewards to another." Daniel did not want them.

When he became great in the land, he walked with God as he had done when he was poor. It is a dangerous thing for some people to be made much of in this world, their hands soon get turned, and they begin to think too much of themselves. He who thinks that he is somebody is nobody, and he whose head begins to swim because of his elevation, will soon have it broken because of his tumbling down from his lofty position. Daniel was a man greatly beloved, and God showed His great love to him by setting him in high places, and keeping him there in safety.

Once more, men who are greatly beloved by the Lord *live wholly for God and for God's people*. You see nothing of selfishness about Daniel. He neither seeks to be great nor to be rich. He loves his own people Israel, he pleads with God for the seed of Abraham. He is patriotic. He loves JEHOVAH, and he pleads with Him for God's own people. Now, if you want to be greatly beloved, give yourselves up to the service of God and His church.

*"Ye that are men, now serve Him,
Against unnumber'd foes;
Your courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose."*

No man need wish to be born in a time more suitable for heavenly chivalry than this. To stand alone for God in such an evil age as this, is a great honor. I pray that you may be able to avail yourselves of your privileges. How few care to swim against the current! A strong stream is running in opposition to the truth of God. Many say that the Bible is not half inspired. Many are turning away from Christ, refusing to acknowledge His deity, and some blasphemously speak of His precious blood as a thing of the shambles.

O sirs! if somebody does not stand out today for the cause of God and truth, what is to become of the nominal church and of a guilty world? If you are loyal to Christ, show it now. If you love Him, and His infallible Word, prove it now. Then shall you hear Him say to you also, "O man greatly beloved, go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." God grant it for Jesu's sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 JOHN 4:9-21

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—810, 808, 735

EXPOSITION BY CHARLES H. SPURGEON

1 JOHN 4:9-21

Verse 9. *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

There is love in our creation, there is love in providence, but most of all there is love in the gift of Christ for our redemption. The apostle here seems to say, "Now that I have found the great secret of God's love to us, here is the clearest evidence of divine love that ever was or ever can be manifested toward the sons of men."

10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

In us there was no love, there was a hatred of God and goodness. The enmity was not on God's side toward us, but on our side toward Him. "He loved us and sent his Son." The gift of Christ, the needful propitiation for our sins, was all of love on God's part. Justice demanded the propitiation, but love supplied it. God could not be just if He pardoned sin without atonement, and the greatness of the love is seen in the fact that it moved the Father to give His Son to an ignominious death, that He might pardon sinners and yet be just.

11. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

Here we have a fact and an argument. We ought to love. We ought to love after God's fashion, not because men loved us, nor because they deserve anything at our hands. We are too apt to look at the worthiness of those whom we help, but our God is gracious to the unthankful and to the evil. He makes His sun to rise and rain to fall for the unjust as well as for the righteous, therefore we ought to love the unlovely and the unloving. But just as God has a special love for His own people, we who believe in Him ought to have a peculiar affection for all who are His.

12. *No man hath seen God at any time.*

We do not need to see Him to love Him. Love knows how good He is, though she has not beheld Him. Blessed are they who have not seen God, yet who love Him with heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.

12. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.*

He is not far to seek. If you love one another, God is in you, He dwells in you, He is your nearest and dearest Friend, the Author of all other love. The grace of love comes from the God of love.

13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

And His Spirit is the Spirit of love. Wherever it comes, it makes man love his fellow man, and seek his good, and if you have that love in your heart, it came from God, and you dwell in God.

14. *And we have seen—*

Yes, there is something that we have seen. John writes for himself and his fellow apostles, and he says, "No man hath seen God at any time," but—

14. *We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.*

John saw Him live, and saw Him die, and saw Him when He had risen from the dead, and saw Him as He ascended. So he speaks to the matter of eyesight, and bears testimony that though we have not seen God, we have, in the person of the representative apostles, seen the Son of God who lived and labored and died for us.

15. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*

Let Christ be God to you, and you are saved. If in very deed, and of a truth, you take Him to be the Son of God, and consequently rest your eternal hopes on Him, God dwells in you, and you dwell in God.

16. *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.*

How far is this true of all of you? How many here can join with the beloved apostle and say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us"? We know it, we have felt it, we are under its power. We know it still, it remains a matter of faith to us, we believe it. We have a double hold of it. "We know," we are not agnostics. "We believe," we are not unbelievers.

16. *God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

This is not mere benevolence, there are many benevolent people who still do not dwell in love. They wish well to their fellow men, but not to all. They are full of indignation at certain men for the wrong that they have done them. John's words teach us that there is a way of living in which you are in accord

with God, and with all mankind, you have passed out of the region of enmity into the realm of love. When you have come there, by the grace of God, then God dwells in you and you dwell in Him.

17. *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement:*

That is a wonderful expression, "boldness in the day of judgment." According to some, the saints will not be in the day of judgment. Then, what is the use of "boldness in the day of judgment"? As I read my Bible, we shall all be there, and we shall all give an account unto God. I shall be glad to be there, to be judged for the deeds done in my body, not that I hope to be saved by them, but because I shall have a perfect answer to all accusations on account of my sin. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." If I am a believer in Christ—

***"Bold shall I stand in that grand day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
While through Thy blood absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."***

17. *Because as he is, so are we in this world.*

Happy Christian men, who can say that! If you live among men as Christ lived among men, if you are a savior to them in your measure if you love them, if you try to exhibit the lovely traits of character that were in Christ, happy are you.

18. *There is no fear in love;*

When a man loves with a perfect love, he escapes from bondage.

18. *But perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.*

There is a loving, holy fear, which is never cast out. Filial fear grows as love grows. That sacred dread, that solemn awe of God, we must always cultivate, but we are not afraid of Him. Dear heart, God is your best Friend, your choicest love.

"Yea, mine own God is He,"

you can say, and you have no fear of Him now. You long to approach Him. Though He is a consuming fire, you know that He will only consume what you want to have consumed, and will purify you, and make your gold to shine more brightly because the consumable alloy is gone from it. He will not consume you, but only that which would work for your hurt if it were left within you. Refining fire, go through my heart! Consume as Thou wilt! I long to have sin consumed that I may be like my God. Say you not so, my brethren?

19. *We love him, because he first loved us.*

The reason for our love is found in free grace. God first loved us, and now we must love Him, we cannot help it. It sometimes seems too much for a poor sinner to talk about loving God. If an ant or a snail were to say that it loved a queen, you would think it strange that it should look so high for an object of affection, but there is no distance between an insect and a man compared with the distance between man and God.

Yet love does fling a flying bridge from our manhood up to His Godhead. "We love him, because he first loved us." If He could come down to us, we can go up to Him. If His love could come down to such unworthy creatures as we are, then our poor love can find wings with which to mount up to Him.

20. *If a man say, I love God—*

Not, "if a man love God," but if a man say, "I love God." It is a blessed thing to be able to say, "I love God," when God Himself can bear witness to the truth of our statement, but the apostle says, *If a man say, I love God—*

20. *And hateth his brother, he is a liar:*

It is very rude of you, John, to call people liars. But it is not John's rough nature that uses such strong language, it is his gentle nature. When a loving disposition turns its face against evil, it turns against it with great vehemence of holy indignation. You can never judge a man's character by his books.

Curiously enough, Mr. Romaine, of St. Anne's Church, Blackfriars, wrote the most loving books that could be, yet he was a man of very strong temper indeed. Mr. Toplady wrote some of the sharpest things that were ever said about Arminians, but he was the most loving and gentle young man that ever breathed. St. John, full of love and tenderness, hits terribly hard when he comes across a lie. He is so fond of love, that he cannot have it played with, or mocked or mimicked. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar."

21. *For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

This is that "new commandment" which our Lord gave to His apostles, and through them to His whole church. "That ye love one another as I have loved you." John was, in a special sense, "that disciple whom Jesus loved." It was meet therefore, that he should be the apostle to be inspired by the Holy Spirit to bring "this commandment" to the remembrance of any who had forgotten it, "This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." God help us so to do, of His great grace! 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.