

ONCE DEAD, NOW ALIVE

NO. 2388

A SERMON

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1894

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON

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“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

Ephesians 2:1

I PREACHED to you, this morning [See sermon #2046, Consolation from Resurrection], the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and its various bearings, but unless you have experienced spiritual resurrection, you do not understand that doctrine, and you cannot grasp its meaning. Spiritual resurrection may be understood in theory, but it cannot be really comprehended until we ourselves have been raised out of spiritual death. Ever remember that in the things of God, knowledge is only to be gained by personal experience. If you would understand regeneration, you must be born again. If you would understand faith, simple as it is, you must yourselves believe.

Tonight I want to give you another exposition of spiritual quickening as it is described in my text, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” There are three things about which I am going to speak to you, first, *you were dead*, secondly, *some of you have been quickened*, and thirdly, of those of you who have been quickened, it can be truly said that *you are now alive*.

I. First then, YOU WERE DEAD.

I think that I must, in imagination, take you into that death chamber. The blinds are all drawn down, there is a great hush about the room, here is a coffin, it is covered with a white cloth, turn it back gently, and stand with me, and look at the person who lies sleeping there. He is dead. Alas! there is woe in the family, for the brother is dead. Here is the terribly true picture of what we were by nature, I mean, what we all were, and what many still are. God grant that they may be delivered from this sad condition!

To find out what spiritual death means, I shall ask you to remember that this dead body here is characterized by an *absence of sense*. Be not afraid, it is your brother man, come close to him and speak. He does not hear you. Speak more loudly, he does not answer you, he gives no sign of recognition. Shout at the very top of your voice, stoop down and speak into his ear. Alas! it is the clay cold ear of death, upon which no effect whatever is produced.

I remember when I was spiritually just like that. I could not hear even the voice of Jesus, though it was very soft and tender. He said, “Come unto me,” but I did not respond to His call. There were others near me who did, but I was dead, and took no notice.

Then there came a louder sound, a voice of threatening, a message of condemnation. God spoke from the top of Sinai, and hurled at me the ten great thunderbolts of His law, yet still I did not hear. I had broken all those commands, and I must bear the penalty of disobedience, the law told me so, but I did not hear. Friends led me sometimes, dead as I was, where both the law and the Gospel were fully preached, but I did not hear, I could not hear. Sounds went past the drums of my ear, and my body heard, but the ear of my heart was not reached. I could not hear, for I was dead.

Let us see if our friend in the coffin can see. Here, lift up the coffin lid, wave a lighted candle before his eyes, pull up that blind, let in the sunlight. He does not see and he cannot see. There are none so blind as the dead, and there was a time with me—and I use myself sorrowfully as an example—when I could not see. I could not see my Lord, I could not see His love, I could not see His bleeding heart, I could not see His thorn-crowned head, I saw no beauty in the altogether lovely One. I was wrapped up

in my own worldly pleasure, and in myself, and I was not alive unto God. Ah, me! this is indeed death, to be unable to hear or to see.

Can this dead body perceive anything by smelling? Here, bring that smelling bottle and place it close to the man's nostrils. It contains the strongest volatile salts that would make the tears come to some of our eyes, but it does not affect him. Burn the rarest incense, fill the chamber with the smoke, yet he reckons nothing as to what sweet perfume is in the room.

And well do I remember when my mother told me that there had been much unction about the sermon, and my father said that the Lord was there, and that it was as when one breaks a box of ointment, and the house is filled with the sweetest odors, but I declare to you that I discerned nothing of its fragrance. There was to me no spiritual sweetness, no subtle delight about the doctrines of the Gospel, for I was dead.

Perhaps this man may have lost the power of sight, and hearing, and smelling, but yet he may be alive. Let us see if he has any sense of taste. Bring here the most nauseous drug, or give me gall and wormwood, and I will put a few drops on his lips. These things are not loathsome to him. Now let us try sugar and honey, and all things that are luscious and sweet. Evidently you might as well lay these things upon a slab of marble, for the dead man has no taste for them.

It was just so with me spiritually. I knew not in those days, the sweetness of the Gospel of Christ, nor even the bitterness of sin. I had no taste, for I was dead, and that is what you all were, my brothers and sisters. That is what some are who are sitting at your side in the pew, dead, having no taste for heavenly joys.

But perhaps, after all, these senses may be gone, and yet life may remain. Let me see if the man can feel, let me press his hand very gently. No, he does not press mine in return. I will stoop down and kiss the face of this my brother, but there is no smile upon his countenance, though he would have smiled in other days. He is dead, and he can feel nothing of pain or joy. It is a dreadful thing to be sitting in God's house, as perhaps some of you are, feeling nothing whatever.

I would give my eyes, nay, I would give even my life to save this company if I knew how to speak so as to reach men's hearts, but there is no mode of human language that can make a dead heart live, or make a stony heart to beat with the pulsations of life. This comes from another and a higher power than mine. But apart from the operations of the Spirit of God, all are by nature dead, and this is what some of you are even now, spiritually dead, and therefore devoid of holy senses.

There is another test that we may apply to see if there is an *absence of desire*. I will speak to this dead man and say, "Friend, you lie here dead, do you know it? You who cannot feel, or hear, or see, do you wish to live? Do you desire to live? There is no answer to my question, but I can tell you that because he is dead, he does not even desire to live, and this too, is the state of many spiritually. They have not any wish after heavenly things.

You are quite content if you have money enough to pay your way, or if you have enough to enjoy yourself at the theater, or in some worldly gaiety, but as for God, and Christ and heaven, these may all go for anything that you care. You have no desire for them, you are dead, and dead to the very things for which men were made to live, and by which alone men do live. You are dead, and you have no desire after life.

Shall I speak to the corpse again? It is no use, for the man has no senses and no desire. Beside that, there is an *absence of power*. Has not this man the power to get life, the power to do something good? I lift his hand, it drops down powerless. I try the other hand, it is no sooner up than it falls down again. It is evidently useless to attempt to force him to any action, for he is without power.

We also were "without strength." Oh, how can this dead man live if he can do nothing towards making himself alive? I will tell you that by and by, but meanwhile, this is an essential part of death, that the man is "without strength."

Further, in those who are naturally or spiritually dead, there is an *absence of fellowship with the living*. If this man cannot do anything for himself, let us get him up and dress him. Come hither, good

woman, you who washed him, come, and put on his best clothes, and make him sit up. It was not long ago that we saw the picture of a dead emperor lying dressed in his warrior's garments, so dress this man up in his Sunday suit, and let him sit at the table with his wife and children.

You shudder at the suggestion and tell me that it is impossible. Yet the Egyptians set a skeleton at their feasts, so as to remind themselves of death, and it was not altogether unwise, but if I had my choice of a place at the table, I should not elect to have our bony friend next to me, and I think that if the dead were seated at our festivals, we should all naturally shrink from that part of the table.

Thus you can see what death does spiritually, it shuts you out of fellowship with the living people of God. You were in a room the other night, where there were half-a-dozen Christian people, and you said to yourself, "This is about the dulllest evening I have ever spent." You went to a service the other day, where there was much prayer, and you made fun of it when you came away, it was so dreary to you. Yes, of course it was, and if you were condemned to go to heaven—no, I have not made a mistake, I mean what I say—if you were condemned to go to heaven, it would be a hell to you.

You would not be able to endure that constant praise of God, that perpetual adoration of Him, which is the occupation of the blessed, you would have no heart for that. "Let me out," you would say, "I had rather go to my own place than stay here." Thus, you see, you are dead, and the dead are shut out from fellowship with the living.

Then once more, there are *tokens of decay*. We will not take this man from the coffin, we will let him lie there. Look at him, it is now four days since he was pronounced dead. I noticed, when I came into the room just after his death, that his face looked perhaps more sweet than it did during his lifetime. It often happens that when the time of the extreme pain which brought on death has come altogether to an end, the face seems to regain its former sweetness which was obliterated by the pain, and the man looks more beautiful than before, and often the countenance appears restful, though the heart before death was full of anguish.

Yes, but that was a little while after death when I noticed this sweet expression of face. How is it with the corpse four days, five days, say, six days after death? Ah, me! come undertaker, screw this coffin lid down, it is not meet that any other eyes should look at this ghastliness, or that anyone else should see those tokens of decay.

It is just so spiritually. The young man who is dead in sin, may under his mother's care at home, look very beautiful, there may be no trace of spiritual death about him. You might think him, and he may think himself, better than a great many Christians. Have I not heard him say that it is so? But give him time to show what he really is. Bring him to London, place him in a large warehouse, let him go out in the evening and let there be nobody to meet him but the strange woman. Ah, within how short a time the destructiveness of horrible sin may be seen in his character!

Could that fond mother who sent him from her fireside comparatively pure, see what he has become, she might almost say, "Bury him out of my sight." This is the way we were all going to decay till our Lord Jesus appeared to us, and stopped the corruption by dethroning death, and putting spiritual life into us through faith in Himself.

I think that perhaps, I have said enough on this part of my subject, so I will not take you to that death chamber again.

II. Now, in the second place, dear friends, to all who have believed in Christ it can be truly said, "YOU HAVE BEEN QUICKENED."

So the text says, "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Do you recollect how that happened? I can only speak about myself in such a matter as this, because one man cannot enter into another's experience, but I think that what I see in myself, you have seen in yourselves, you who are alive unto God. There came a time when I began to live. I recollect it well, I can not only remember when the new life first came into my soul, but I can distinctly recall the first effect of it.

I am told that when a man has been drowning, and he begins to return to consciousness, when they rub him back to sentient life, the first sensation is that of *exquisite pain* as the blood begins to flow, again in the channels in which it had been quiescent. When the life-blood began to flow in my heart spiritually, it gave me nothing but pain. I was lost, and I felt that it was so. I was not dead, was I, if I felt?

Then I heard the Gospel, and I did hear it too, with awful distinctness. I remember to have had on one occasion, a slight deafness, and when the surgeon had attended to my ears, and I went into the street, I wished myself deaf again, for all the noises were so dreadful to my ears, so intense was every little sound.

We ought to thank God that we do not hear more than we do, if we heard more, we should not hear anything at all, we should hear so much that the different sounds would not convey any meaning to our mind. So was it with me, I heard too much. The thunder of the law deafened me, and when I heard the voice of the Savior, it seemed to say, "You have rejected Me, and I have left you to perish. The door of mercy is now shut, and will not be opened to you."

I began to feel what sin really was, and to realize that I could not escape from it, and that a just God must punish me. Yet I consented to the punishment, dreadful as it was, and confessed that I did not wish the Lord to be unjust even to save me. This was the tremendous terror of my state, that I had received a living consciousness of what was right, and sided with the right, yet all the while felt that the righteous Judge condemned me.

What happened after that? Being quickened, and having felt this pain, after a while I woke up as out of an awful sleep and I seemed to say to myself, "Where am I?" I had been *born into a new world*. Some of you know the eggshell of this poor sinful world, but you do not know the real life of it. A man may go dreaming on through this world, seeing the sun, and moon, and stars, and all things that are visible, but he may never have discovered the true life which is invisible.

So it was with me. If all of a sudden this lamp here could be made into a living thing, it would be a strange change for it to find itself alive in the midst of this crowd of people, where it has stood so long, a poor, dead, metallic thing. There was some such change as that wrought in me, I thought that if the world was not new, I was. Something wonderful had happened to me, I can tell you that I had a sort of twist that day, and I have never got over it, and I have no wish to get over it.

Everything seemed different to me, I looked at all things through new eyes, and heard with new ears, and somehow, I discovered what I had never dreamed of, for I talked to God, Christ was near me, His Spirit was within me, I saw living men and women in this new world, and I began to wish to get amongst them, and would have been glad to have washed the feet of any of them so long as they would permit me to be in their company! I remember that experience, do not you? We must all have felt something like that if we have really been born from above.

And then, being thus alive, we had *to learn everything*. You see, a person just born into the world and knowing nothing, is like a newborn infant. I suppose that when an infant first sees, it cannot measure distances, it does not know whether a thing is close to it, or far away. All that the eye can bring to it seems flat at the first. Mothers do not always reflect how little their children know, and how all the things that we know as a matter of course were really learned by experience.

Once we did not understand much, just like babies that do not at first comprehend what is said to them, and could not reply to it even if they understood it. There are a few simple words, or syllables, by which they speak to mother and father, and you are very pleased when they are able to say them, and you talk of it to one another as a great achievement when baby has uttered a whole sentence.

I have heard you, and I remember doing the same thing myself, it is so natural for us to like to hear the first words of our children. That is just how it was with God and ourselves spiritually, we had everything to learn. We were alive, but we did not know much, we were rather puzzled by some of our big brothers and sisters, but our heavenly Father accepted our broken utterances, and our oft-mistaken words. We did see, though we did not know much about the laws of perspective. We did hear, though

we did not understand music and harmony. We did feel, and that was a proof that we were alive. Oh, what a mercy that was!

Very soon, we began to have *new wants*. Do you recollect that experience? We felt a new hunger, we had never had that while we were dead. We wanted to feed on the truth of God. Do you not remember when you went to hear a certain popular preacher deliver one of his wonderful sermons, and everybody else spoke of it as “splendid,” but you said to yourself, “I do not know what there was in it, but certainly I did not get any food for my soul”?

Another time, you were taken to hear a plain, simple minister who talked about Jesus and His love, and others exclaimed, “He is a poor preacher, with no name, and no fame,” but you said, “I do not know how it is, but I am satisfied with the feast I have had, I feel as if I had been sitting at the King’s banqueting table.” Ah, God’s people know the difference between flowers and fruit! They know the difference between meat, and mere plate, and spoon, and fork, and they are not to be deceived.

You remember when you began to hunger and to thirst, and oh! when you drank your first draught of the living water, you could not make out what it was. You see, you had been dead, and all these things were new to you. What was hunger? What was thirst? How did you come to have such sensations? You never hungered after Christ, you never thirsted after the Gospel, while you were dead in sin, but now you have many things that are quite new to you, new fears, new cares, new doubts, new aspirations.

Let me remind you that you also had *new joys*. Your heart began to dance at the sound of Christ’s name. You never danced at the sound of that name while you were dead, but when you had received spiritual life, that dear name had all the music of heaven in it when it rang in your ears, and your heart responded, “Jesus, precious Jesus—

*“No music’s like Thy charming name,
Nor half so sweet can be.”*

Oh, what rapture you had in those early days! You went forth with joy, and were led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills broke forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field did clap their hands. That delight has not gone from you now, has it? You are still happy in the Lord, you can sing as joyously as ever—

*“Oh happy day, that fix’d my choice
On Thee, my Savior, and my God:
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad!”*

You see how it is with you now, life has brought you as a new creature into a new world, old things have passed away, behold, all things have become new. So far, I hope that many have been able to follow me.

II. Now comes the closing point, and I must say only a few words upon it, for I should like you to sing a verse of “Happy Day,” before we separate. The third division is **YOU ARE NOW ALIVE**.

Yes, as many as have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are spiritually alive. Does not He say, “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live”?

You are spiritually alive. Very well then, *do not go back to the grave*. It was a madman’s taste to go and live in a cemetery. The demoniac at Gadara had his habitation among the tombs, and surely nobody in his right mind would think of having such an abode as that. If you are alive, do not go and live in the grave.

Sometimes a person says to me, “Tell me, sir, may I go to such and such a place of amusement?” When I hear the name of it, I say, “Well, if you want to go, go, if you are dead, go and be buried with the dead, we do not need any dead souls among the living in Zion. If that sort of thing is to your taste, go

and enjoy it, but if you are a child of God, it will not be your taste. If you are alive from the dead, you will not want to go and live in a charnel house.”

I once was in a place where there were said to be at least ten thousand skulls heaped up, one above another, from floor to ceiling, I should think that there must have been quite that number, and as I walked along through those rows of skulls, every one of them seeming to be grinning at me, I did not ask to be allowed to stay there all night.

So, he that is spiritually alive does not wish to dwell with sinners in ungodliness, their merriment would be his misery, that which is their delight would cause him the most exquisite pain. “Let me get out of this,” he would say, “this is no place for me.” To chain a living man to a skeleton would be a horrible torment, do not you, I pray you, be chained to a dead man, or a dead woman either, and do not seek your company among the dead. You are alive, therefore, do not go back to the tomb.

Next, you are alive, therefore *do not be carried on a bier*. I have seen living men carried about on biers. Here is a man who has long heard the good old-fashioned Gospel, but the other day he met with a believer in evolution, one of the monkey-worshippers of whom I told you last Thursday night [See sermon #2056, Idols Found Wanting, But Jehovah Found Faithful], whose father is not in heaven, but up a tree. “Oh!” said the foolish man, as he listened to the heresy-monger, “this evolution theory is a very wonderful thing.” and so three or four of them bore him off on a bier, carried him away from the truth as it is in Christ.

Of course, if the man is dead, the proper place for him is on a bier, but you are alive, therefore you know what the dead do not, and I pray that you may know it from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head, and stand up for the truth, defend it valiantly, and not be driven to and fro with every wind of doctrine, just as if you were only a stray straw in the street. Know what God has taught you, and be prepared to live by it, and to die for it, if need be. You are alive, therefore, be alive for the truth, and be not carried away on a bier.

Further, you are alive, therefore, *do not be wrapped up in grave clothes*. Have you any on now? I should not wonder if you have. There is a piece of red stuff that many living persons still wear, it is called, “bad temper.” Oh, get rid of that fragment of grave clothes, I entreat you! It smells of the tomb. The Lord help you to be sweet, and gentle, and meek! Do not wear your old grave clothes now that you are alive from the dead. Were you covetous? Were you lustful? Were you false? Get rid of all these grave clothes.

Oh, that God the Holy Ghost may sanctify you, spirit, soul, and body, till you are clean delivered from these ceremonies of the sepulcher! Lazarus came out of the tomb with his grave clothes on, but the Savior said, “Loose him, and let him go,” and they took the napkin from his head, and the winding sheets from about his body, and the man was free. Do not go about in a winding sheet, put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man. The Lord help you so to do!

You are alive, then another exhortation is, *get up and work*. You are alive unto God. Are you so alive that you mean to sit down and take it quietly now? Are you going to heaven in an easy chair? You have climbed up the Gospel coach, sat down on the box seat, and you say that you mean to sit there as long as you live? Oh, you good-for-nothing wretch, do not talk about being saved, why, you are not yet saved from selfishness!

When we are really saved, we begin to love other people as well as to love God, and we desire with all our might to spend and to be spent in the Lord’s service. You do not suppose that the Lord Jesus Christ came here to be a lackey to the lazy, do you? We are not saved by works, but if we have not works, we are not saved. We are saved by grace, but grace makes us a people zealous for good works. God grant that this purpose of mercy may be fulfilled in each one of us who was dead, but is now alive!

You are alive now, therefore *glorify Him who quickened you*. If I had lived in the days of our Lord, I should have liked, if it had been possible, to have had a cup of tea with Lazarus. I think that I should have asked him down to my house, and should have said to him, “Lazarus, tell me all about your resurrection. You were dead, and your sisters buried you, and Martha said to the Lord Jesus, ‘By this

time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.’ Tell me, did you really hear that voice that said, ‘Lazarus, come forth,’ and did you know the sweet tones of the dear Master’s call? Were you dead, and did that sound bring life with it? How did you feel when you found yourself lying on that cold stone shelf in the sepulcher, and when the light came streaming in where there had been a stone before to shut it out? Do you remember how you felt when you shuffled out, and came from the sepulcher all wrapped up in the grave clothes?”

“Oh!” Lazarus would say, “my dear brother, I cannot tell you much about these things, but I remember that the first thing I saw, when they took the napkin off my eyes, was that blessed Man, my Lord and my God, and I knew that He had raised me from the dead, and I felt that I could lie at His feet and die again of overwhelming love. I loved Him so, for He had raised me from the dead. Do not talk about me, speak about Him, go forth, and preach about Him to others, wherever you have an opportunity, say that He raised me from the dead, that He can raise others from the dead, and He can make death yield up all his spoils, through the power of His resurrection life.”

That is what I want all you, who are spiritually alive, to do, go forth and tell what Jesus has done in raising the dead to life.

I have finished when I have said just this word to the unsaved. Trust Jesus, trust Him now, come to Him now even by one gracious stride of faith, for He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

EPHESIANS 4

Verse 1. *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you—*

Paul puts force into the argument by his manner of speaking. You can hear in his words the rattle of his chains. Here is a man who, for Christ’s sake, has lost his liberty, and who for that reason, pleads with his fellow Christians. “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you”—

1. *That ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.*

“Do not dishonor the good cause, let not your lives bring disgrace upon Christ, if you are called Christians, be Christians.”

2. *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

This is the very spirit of Christianity—to be able to bear and forbear, to be gentle, not to be selfish or self-seeking, or angry and passionate, but full of lowliness and meekness. Brethren, do not seek the highest place. If you do, you will at least have a contested election, for many want that position, but if you choose the lowest place, you shall have it, and nobody will try to run in opposition to you.

There is always plenty of room in the lowly places, and there is peace there, and let me whisper to you, they are really the highest places in the church of God. If we will go down, we shall ascend, but if we are striving to be great, and to be masterful, we shall not gain the ends we are seeking, and we shall not honor our Master.

3. *Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

That is a living ligature which binds the members of the body together. Try to keep in one spirit, united by “the bond of peace.”

4. *There is one body,—*

Christ never had two.

4. *And one Spirit,—*

There never were two Holy Spirits. The one Spirit that quickened the whole church of Christ is by Himself, alone.

4. *Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

You have only one ground of confidence, and you have only one heaven in which you hope to meet all your fellow believers.

5. *One Lord, one faith, one baptism,—*

There is only one Lord in the Christian church, and there is only one faith. There may be many forms of faith, but there is only one true faith. “One baptism.” There may be many baptisms so-called, but there can be only one that is the true baptism.

6. *One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

So that if we are one in all these things, we ought to be one in a hearty affection towards one another.

7. *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

That is, to every one of us who are members of His mystical body. The living members of the living body receive according to each one’s function and place in the body a measure of grace for the benefit of the whole.

8-10. *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

When He received gifts for men, and gave them to men, what did He give?

11. *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

Different gifts to different races.

12. *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

The early church could not have been without apostles and we cannot do without evangelists. May the Lord send many faithful men who will range over the whole country preaching the Word! Neither can we do without pastors and teachers, and it is idle to attempt to do so. Would God we had many more of the sort that Jesus gives! Those whom men make are worth nothing, but those whom Jesus gives are worth everything.

13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:*

When all Christian people shall be well developed, mature, then the whole body of Christ will come unto the stature of a perfect man. When will that be? There are some who are always looking for the perfect church of Christ, but they have not seen it yet.

When Eve was in the making, Adam did not see her, it was only when she was complete that she became visible, and today the real church of Christ is only in the making, and when she has been fashioned out of the side of Christ, then she will be presented to Him without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. All the various agencies which God has appointed are working together for the fashioning of this perfect body of the church.

Meanwhile, it is equally true that all believers are intended to grow “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Some of them are yet in spiritual things only like children of a span long, others are but as boys and girls in the streets of Jerusalem, while some are half developed men and women. Oh, that we could all come “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”!

You know how the sergeants stand the recruits against a wall, and then measure them to see whether they are up to the army standard. Now stand upright, and see whether you have come “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Alas! how very short we are! Oh, that we could grow! Spirit of God, make us more like Christ!

14. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

There are plenty of so-called Christians of that sort nowadays, who are too weak to know anything for themselves. They are not settled and grounded, the last person who comes near them, and pulls their

ear a little hard, turns their head his way. The next person who will pull their ear a little harder, will turn their head another way. Be no longer children, I beseech you, brethren, but be men, know what you do know, hold it with the tenacious grip of a divinely implanted faith, and God help you to escape from those who lie in wait to deceive!

15-16. *But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Every part of the body supplies something that is essential to the whole. There are certain sacs and vessels the use of which we cannot tell, even the best anatomist does not know what are their uses, but he does know that if they are not there, health cannot be maintained, and in some instances life itself would expire if some vessel, quite insignificant, should be taken away. Let us believe that all God's people are essential to the completion of the body of Christ, and that all the workers and all the sufferers too, are needed to make up the church of which Christ is the Head.

17-19. *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling—*

That is a dreadful condition for anyone to reach, let us pray to God to save us from that terrible state of heart.

19. *Have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

Oh, dear friends, we must come apart from everything that is impure and unclean! May we never, by any conduct of ours, give countenance to unchastity and impurity! Christian people must be clear of these things.

20-25. *But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

They who lie in jest will find out that God puts it down as sinning in earnest. Let us never attempt to deceive. In the East, in olden times, and I might say as much of the present day, it was not usually reckoned a great sin to lie, the great evil was when the liars were found out. Oh, but the Christian man must be true in every word that he speaks, he must faithfully keep his promises and be known to be a trustworthy, reliable man. If you are not true, Christ will not own you as belonging to Him.

26. *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:*

If ever angry, be only angry with evil, and never retain anger in your heart. It must not last more than a day. They say that a wasp's sting dies at night, so let every resentful thought die away as the sun sets.

27. *Neither give place to the devil.*

He will knock at your door and try to get in, but do not offer him a chair. If he forces his company upon you, let him know he is not welcome.

28. *Let him that stole steal no more:*

If he has only been a petty pilferer, "Let him that stole steal no more." He that steals a pin will one day steal an ox if he can.

28. *But rather let him labour,—*

If he must have something that he does not at present possess, this is the way to get it, not by stealing it, but by laboring for it.

28. *Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.*

Observe that our trade must be a right one, not one that injures others, "Working with his hands the thing which is good." But what a remarkable verse this is! A man has been a thief, and he is to go and

get to work, what for? To supply his own necessities? Yes, but he is to rise to something higher than that. He is to work “that he may have to give to him that needeth.” What changes the grace of God makes in a man! He who once took from other people is taught to work that he may give to other people. This is indeed a turning of things the right side uppermost.

29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth,—*

Do not utter a dirty or corrupt word, nay, though it has a merry jest appended to it, do not speak it. “He pares his apple who would cleanly feed,” is a good proverb. Take away all that is corrupt about the story.

29. *But that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

What sweet talking there would be if we all spoke in this way, to “minister grace unto the hearers!” Ah! then, my dear friends, it would not matter how much we talked, if every word were salted with salt.

30. *But grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

The Holy Spirit’s being in you is your seal that you are the child of God, and the power by which you will be preserved till the resurrection, therefore, do not grieve that blessed Spirit.

31-32. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another,—*

“Kind” is a good old Saxon word, it means kinned. Be ye kind, like men who are akin to one another, look on all men as your brothers.

32. *Tenderhearted, forgiving one another,—*

You will have something that will need to be forgiven, and your brother will have something which you will need to forgive.

32. *Even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.*

The Lord write all these words upon our hearts, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—408, 397, 238, 658

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.