

JUDE'S DOXOLOGY

NO. 2994

A SERMON
 PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 1906
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
 ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 7, 1875

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”
Jude 1:24-25

PAUL'S writings abound in doxologies. You will find them in different forms scattered throughout all his epistles. But he is not the only apostle who thus pauses to magnify the name of God. Here is “Judas, not Iscariot,” but the true-hearted Jude, who has been writing an Epistle which seems all ablaze with lightning, it burns so terribly against, certain orders of sinners. Almost every word that Jude writes seems to have the roll of thunder in it, he appears to be more like the Haggai of the Old Testament than the Jude of the New. Yet he cannot close his short Epistle until he has included some ascription of praise to God.

Learn from this, dear friends, that the sin of man, if we are ever called to denounce it, should drive us to adore the goodness and glory of God. Sin defiles the world, so, after you have done your best to sweep it out, resolve that, inasmuch as man has dishonored the name of God, you will seek to magnify that name. It is true that you cannot actually redress the wrong that has been done, but at any rate, if the stream of sin has been increased, you may increase the stream of loyal and reverent praise. Take care that you do so. Jude is not satisfied with having rebuked the sons of men for their sin, so he turns round to glorify his God.

Observe that these doxologies, wherever we meet with them, are not all exactly the same. They are presented to the same God, and offered in the same spirit, but there are reasons given for the doxology in the one case which are not given in the other. Our morning text [See Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No. 1,266, “Paul's Doxology”] told us of what God is able to do, and so does this. They both begin with praising God's ability, but while Paul spoke about the greatness of that ability in what it could do for us, Jude speaks of the greatness of that ability in preserving us from falling, and perfecting us so that we may be presented faultless before the presence of the glory of God. Let us, in an adoring frame of mind, think over this sublime subject.

I. First, LET US ADORE HIM WHO CAN KEEP US FROM FALLING.

I address myself, of course, near only to God's own people. When shall we ever see a congregation in which it will be needless to make such a remark as that? I cannot call upon some of you to adore God for keeping you from falling—for, alas! you have not yet, learned to stand upright. God's grace has never yet been accepted by you. You are not on the Rock of ages, you have not yet set out upon the heavenly pilgrimage. It is a wretched state for you to be in, in which you cannot worship him whom angels worship. It is a sad state of heart for any man to be in! to be excluded—self-excluded—from the general acclamations of joy in the presence of God, because you feel no such joy, and cannot, therefore, unite in such acclamations.

But to the people of God, I have to say this dear brothers and sisters, we need keeping, therefore, let us adore him who can keep us. As saved souls, we need keeping from final apostasy. “Oh!” saith one, “I thought you taught us that those who are once saved shall never finally apostatize.” I do believe that doctrine, and delight to preach it, yet it is true that the saved ones would apostatize, every one of them, if

the Lord did not keep them. There is no stability in any Christian, in himself considered, it is the grace of God within him that enables him to stand. I believe that the soul of man is immortal, yet not in and of itself, but only by the immortality which God bestows upon it from His own essential immortality.

So is it with the new life that is within us. It shall never perish, but it is only eternal because God continues to keep it alive. Your final perseverance is not the result of anything in yourself, but the result of the grace which God continues to give you, and of His eternal purpose which first chose you and of His almighty power which still keeps you alive.

Ah, my brethren, the brightest, saints on earth would fall into the lowest hell if God did not keep them from falling. Therefore, praise Him, O ye stars that shine in the church's sky, for ye would go out with a noxious smell, as lamps do for want of oil, did not the Lord keep your heavenly flame burning. Glory be unto the Preserver of His church who keeps His loved ones even to the end!

But there are other ways of falling beside falling finally and fatally. Alas, brethren! we are all liable to fall into errors of doctrine. The best-taught man, apart from divine guidance, is not incapable of becoming the greatest fool possible. There is a strange weakness which sometimes comes over noble spirits, and which makes them infatuated with an erroneous novelty, though they fancy they have discovered some great truth.

Men of inquiring and receptive minds are often decoyed from the old paths—the good old ways, and while they think they are pursuing truth, they are being led into damnable error. He only is kept, as to his thoughts and doctrinal views, whom God keeps, for there are errors that would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect, and there are men and women going about in this world, with smooth tongues and plausible arguments, who carry honeyed words upon their lips, though drawn swords are concealed behind their backs. Blessed are they who are preserved from these wolves in sheep's clothing. Lord, thou alone can preserve us from the pernicious errors of the times, for thou art "the only wise God our Savior."

And dear friends, we need keeping from an evil spirit. I do not know whom I should prefer—to see one of my dear Christian brethren fall into doctrinal error, or into an un-Christian spirit. I would prefer neither, for I think this is a safe rule—of two evils, choose neither.

It is sad to hear some people talk as if they alone are right, and all other Christians are wrong. If there is anything which is the very essence and soul of Christianity, it is brotherly love, but brotherly love seems to be altogether forgotten by these people, and other Christians, who, in the judgment of sobriety, are as earnest, and as true-hearted, and as useful as themselves, are set down as belonging to a kind of Babylonian system—I hardly know what they do not call it, but they give it all sorts of bad names, and this is thought to be a high style of Christianity. God grant that the man may be forgiven who thought it to be a worthy purpose of his life to found a sect, whose distinguishing characteristic should be that it would have no communion with any other Christians! The mischief that, man hast done is utterly incalculable, and I can only pray that, in the providence of God, some part of it may die with him.

O brethren and sisters, I charge you, whatever mistakes you make, not to make a mistake about this one thing—that, even if you have all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth you nothing, even if you could get a perfect creed, and knew that your mode of worship was absolutely apostolic, yet if you also imbibed this idea that you could not worship with any other Christians, and that they were altogether outside your camp, your error would be far worse than all other errors put together, for to be wrong in heart is even worse than to be wrong in head. I would have you true to God's truth, but above all, I would have you true to God's love.

My brother, I think you are mistaken about this matter or that, but do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, I love you. I have no doubt, that I also am mistaken about some things, but do not therefore withdraw your hand, and say that you cannot have fellowship with me. I have fellowship with my Father who is in heaven, and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and with His blessed Spirit, and methinks that it ill becomes you, if you call yourself a son of that same God, to refuse to have fellowship with me when I

have fellowship with Him. God save you from this evil spirit, but you may readily enough fall into it unless the Lord shall keep you. Your very zeal for truth may drive you into a forgetfulness of Christian love, and if it does, it will be a sad pity. O Lord, keep us from falling in this way!

But there are falls of another sort which may happen to the brightest Christian, I mean, falls into outward sin. As you read Jude's Epistle through, you will see what apostates some professors became, and you will be led to cry, "Lord, keep me from falling!" And if you were the pastor of a large church like mine, you would see enough to convince you that traitors like Judas are not all dead—that, amidst the faithful, the unfaithful are still found—that there are bad fish to be thrown away, as well as good fish to be kept, and every time we execute an act of discipline—every time we have to bemoan the fall of one who looked like a brother—we may thank God that we have been kept, and may sing this doxology, "Unto him that is able, to keep us from falling, be glory and power for ever."

And dear friends, there is a way of falling, out of which people are not so often recovered as when they fall into overt sin, I mean, falling into negligence as to natural or Christian duties. I have known professors who have been very lax at home—children who were not obedient to their parents—husbands who did not love their wives as they ought—wives who were quite at home at this meeting and that, but very negligent of their domestic duties. And mark you, where that is the case, it is a thing to mourn over, for the Christian ought to be absolutely reliable in everything he has to do.

I would not give two pence for your religion if you are a tradesman, but not fair in your dealings. I do not care if you can sing like David, or preach like Paul, if you cannot measure a yard of material with the proper number of inches, or if your scales do not weigh rightly, or your general mode of business is not straight and true, you had better make no profession of religion. The separation at what, is called "religious" from the "secure" is one of the greatest, possible mistakes. There is no such thing as a religion of Sundays, and of chapels and churches, at least, though there *is* such a thing, it is not worth having.

The religion of Christ is a religion for seven days in the week—a religion for every place and for every act, and it teaches men, whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the glory of God. I pray that, you may be kept from falling away from that religion, and that you may be kept up to the mark in serving the Lord in all things, and attending diligently to the little commonplace, matters of daily life.

And you know, dear friends, there is another sort of falling, that is, when the heart gets gradually cold—when the Christian wanders away little by little—when the life becomes more or less inconsistent with the profession. Oh, how many professors get into this state! They are like people who are not as well as they used to be. They do not know when they began to feel worse, it was months ago, and every day they have got weaker, till now you can see their bones, though once they were full of flesh. Now they discover that, whereas once they could have walked ten miles without fatigue, half a mile or less wearies them. Their appetite, too, has gradually gone, they scarcely know how.

Ah, these are the sick folk with whom the physician has more trouble than he has with those who are suddenly seized by some well-known disease, and that gradual decline of spiritual health, which does not come all at once, but little by little, is one of the most perilous of evils, and we have need continually to cry, "Lord, keep us from this," and to praise His name that He is able so to keep us.

Thus I have shown you that we need keeping, and brethren, *none but the Lord can keep us*. No man can keep himself, without God's grace, he will surely fail. And no place can keep us. Some people think that, if they could get into such-and-such a family, they could keep from sin, but they are mistaken. In every position which man occupies, he will find temptation.

We have heard of the hermit, who hoped to get rid of all sin by living in a cave. He took with him his little brown loaf and his jug of water, but he had hardly entered the cave before he upset his jug and spilt the water. It was a long way to the well, and he got so angry with himself for what he had done, that he soon discovered that the devil could get into a cave as quickly as he could, so he thought he might as well go back, and face the trials of ordinary society.

There is a story which they tell in Scotland of a family who were thriftless, and therefore did not succeed, but they thought it was one of the "brownies" that kept them from getting on, so they decided to "flit." They put all their things into the cart, but just as they were about to start, they heard a noise that made them cry out, "The brownie is in the churn," so, wherever the churn went, the brownie would go too. And you may remove wherever you like, and think, "If I get into such a position, I shall escape from temptation," but you will find that "the brownie is in the churn" still, and he will follow you wherever you may go. You cannot be kept from falling by choosing another situation. You had better stop where you are brother, and fight the devil there, for perhaps the next place that you select as the scene of combat may not be as suitable as the one you have now.

"Ah!" says one, "I wish I could get to—"

*"A lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade;
Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more."*

Yes, yes, but that is not the way to conquer sin, is it? Suppose the battle of Waterloo is just beginning, and here is a soldier who wants to win a victory, so he runs away—gets off to Brussels, and hides himself in a cellar! Is he likely to be numbered among the heroes of the day? No, brethren, and if there is any sin to be overcome in this world, there is no credit to the man who says, "I am going to hide somewhere out of the world." No, no, my brother, accept the lot that God has provided for you, take your mace in the ranks of His soldiers, and whatever temptation comes, look up to Him who is able to keep you from falling, but do not dream of running away, for that is the way to fall, that is being dedicated before the battle begins.

Nobody but God can keep you. You may join whatever church you like, you may wear a hat with abroad brim, and say "thou" and "thee," you may meet with those who break bread, and preach nothing but the Gospel of the grace of God, you may dwell amongst the best people who ever lived, but you will still be tempted. Neither place nor people, neither manners nor customs can keep you from falling, God alone can do it.

But here is the mercy, *God can do it*. Notice how Jude's doxology puts it, "To the only wise God our Savior." It is because He alone is wise that He alone is able to keep us from falling. He does it by teaching us the truth, by warning us against secret sin, and by His providential leading. Sometimes, He keeps temptation from us, at other times, He allows a temptation to come to us that, by overcoming it, we may be the stronger to meet another one. Oftentimes, He delivers us from temptation by letting affliction come upon us. Many a man has been kept from falling into sin by being stretched upon a bed of sickness. Had it not been for the loss of the eye, he would have looked upon vanity. Had it not been for that broken bone, he would have run in the ways of ungodliness. We little know how much preservation from falling we owe to our loss and crosses.

The story of Sir James Thornhill painting the inside of the cupola of St. Paul's is probably well known to you. When he had finished one of the compartments, he was stepping backward that he might get a full view of it, and so went almost to the edge of the scaffolding, and would have fallen over if he had taken another step, but a friend, who saw his danger, wisely seized one of his brushes, and rubbed some paint over his picture. The artist, in his rage, rushed forward to save his painting, and so saved his own life.

We have all pictured life, what a fairy picture we made of it, and as we admired it, we walked further and yet further away from God and safety, and got nearer and yet nearer to perilous temptation, when trial came, and ruined the picture we had painted, and then, though scarcely knowing why, we came forward and were saved. God had kept us from falling by the trouble He had sent to us.

God has often kept us from falling by a bitter sense of our past sin. We have not dared to go near the fire again, for our former burns have scarcely healed. I have also noticed, in my own case, that when the desire for sin has come with force, the opportunity for sin has not been present, and when the opportunity of evil has been present, then the desire has been absent. It is wonderful how God prevents these two things from meeting, and so keeps His people from falling.

Above all, it is by the Divine Spirit that God bears us up as upon eagle's wings. The Spirit teaches us to hate sin, and to love righteousness, and so we are daily kept from falling.

Brethren, join with me in adoring the Lord that *He will keep us to the end*. Have we committed our souls into the hands of Jesus? Then, our souls are safe for ever. Are we trusting to Him to keep us till the day of His appearing? If so, He will keep us, not one sheep or lamb out of His flock shall by any possibility be destroyed by the wolf, or the bear, or the roaring lion of hell. They shall all be His in the day when they pass again under the hands of Him that telleth them.

II. Now, secondly, LET US ADORE HIM BECAUSE HE WILL, AT THE LAST, PRESENT US "FAULTLESS BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY WITH EXCEEDING JOY."

There will come a day, brethren, when we must either be presented in the courts of God as His courtiers, or else be driven from His judgment seat as rebels against His authority. We look forward with the confident expectation that we shall be presented as the friends of Christ unto God even the Father, and that is, indeed, a cause for adoring gratitude.

Do you notice how Jude puts it? "To present you faultless." *There shall be none in heaven but those who are faultless*. There shall by no means enter into those holy courts anything that defileth. Heaven is perfectly pure, and if you and I are ever to get there, we must be pure as the driven snow. No taint of sin must be upon us, or else we cannot stand among the courtiers of God. His flaming throne would shoot forth columns of devouring fire upon any guilty soul that dared to stand in the courts of the Most High, if such a standing were possible. But we are impure—impure as to our acts, and worst of all, impure as to our very nature, how then can we hope ever to stand there? Yet, dear brethren and sisters, our confidence is that we shall. Why?

Is it not because *Christ is able to present us faultless there*? Come, Christian, think for a minute how faultless Christ has made you so far as your past sin is concerned. The moment you believed in Him, you were so completely washed in His precious blood that not a spot of sin remained upon you. Try to realize that, whatever your past life has been, if you now believe in Jesus Christ, you are cleansed from all iniquity by virtue of His atoning sacrifice, and you are covered by a spotless robe of righteousness by virtue of His blessed life of perfect purity and obedience to His Father's will. You are now without fault so far as your past sin is concerned, for He has cast it all into the depths of the sea, but you feel that you are not without fault as to your nature.

"Oh!" say you, "I feel everything that is evil rising at times within me." But all that evil is under sentence of death. Christ nailed it to His cross. Crucifixion is a lingering and very painful death, and the culprit struggles ere he breathes his last, but your sins have had their death-blow. When Christ was nailed to the cross, your sins were nailed there too, and they shall never come down again. Die they must, even as He died. It will be a blessed hour when sin shall at last give up the ghost—when there shall be not even the tendency to sin within our nature. Then shall we be presented faultless before the throne of God.

"Can that ever be?" asks one. Well may you ask that question, brother. Can it ever be that we shall not be tempted by one foul lust, nor be disturbed by one unbridled passion, nor feel the emotions of envy or of pride again? Yes, it shall surely be. Christ has secured this blessing to you. His name is Jesus, Savior, "for he shall save his people from their sins." He must and will do this for all who trust him. Rejoice that he will do this, for no one but God can do it. It must be "the only wise God our Savior" who can accomplish this, but accomplish it He will. Does your faith enable you to picture yourself as standing before the throne of God faultless? Well then, give to the Lord the glory which is due unto Him for such a wondrous act of grace as that.

This is how you are to be presented by Christ in glory. There is a great stir in a family when a daughter is to be presented at court, and a great deal is thought of it, but one day, you and I, who have believed in Jesus, shall be presented to the Father. What radiant beauty shall we then wear when God Himself shall look upon us and declare us to be without fault—when there shall be no cause for sorrow remaining, and therefore we shall be presented with exceeding joy!

It shall be so, my brother, it shall be so, my sister, therefore do not doubt it. How soon it shall be, we cannot tell, possibly, tomorrow. Perhaps, ere the sun rises again, you and I may be presented by Christ “before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” We cannot tell when it will be, but we shall be there in His good time. We shall be perfect, we shall be “accepted in the Beloved,” and therefore, “unto him be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

III. That is the note with which I have to close my discourse. LET US, BECAUSE OF THESE TWO GREAT BLESSINGS OF FINAL PRESERVATION AND PRESENTATION BEFORE HIS GLORY, OFFER UNTO THE LORD OUR HIGHEST ASCRIPTIONS OF PRAISE.

Jude says, “Both now and ever.” Well, we will attend to the “ever” as eternity rolls on, but let us attend to the praise of God “now”—at this moment, “To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power *now*.” Come, brethren and sisters, think of what you owe to Him who has kept you to this day, and will not let you go. Think of where you might have been, and think, I may say, of where you used to be, in your unregenerate state. Yet you are not there now, but here you are, without self-righteousness, made to differ from your fellow-men, entirely through the grace of God. You have been kept, perhaps twenty years, thirty years, forty years—possibly, fifty years. Well, unto Him be the glory, give Him the glory even now.

How can you do it? Well, feel it in your hearts, speak of it to your neighbors, talk of it to your children. Tell everybody you meet what a good and blessed and faithful God He is, and so give Him glory now. And be happy and cheerful, you cannot glorify God better than by a calm, quiet, happy life. Let the world know that you serve a good Master. If you are in trouble, do not let anyone see that the trouble touches your spirit—nay, more, do not let it trouble your spirit. Rest in God, take evil as well as good from His hand, and keep on praising Him.

You do not know how much good you may do, and how greatly you may glorify God, if you praise Him in your dark times. Worldlings do not care much about our psalm singing unless they see us in pain and sorrow and observe that we praise God then. I like, and the world likes, a religion that will wash—a religion that will stand many showers, and much rough usage. Some Christians' joy disappears in the wear and tear of life, it cannot endure the world's rough handling. Let it not be so with us, beloved, but let us praise, and bless, and magnify the name of the Lord as long as we have any being.

I know that, in speaking thus, I am only addressing a part of my congregation. I wish that every man and woman here were now praising the Lord, and I am sure that you could not have a better occupation to all eternity. Remember that, if you do not praise God, it is impossible for you ever to enter heaven, for that is the chief occupation of heaven, and remember also that praise from your lips, until those lips are divinely cleansed, would be like a jewel in a swine's snout, a thing altogether out of place.

For you, dear unsaved hearer, the first thing is not praise, but prayer—nay, not even prayer first, but faith. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” and then, in faith, pray the prayer which God accepts. But you must first believe in Jesus. “And what does believing in Jesus mean?” you ask. It means this, your sin deserves punishment, for God, who is just, must punish sin. But His Son came into the world to suffer in the stead of those who trust Him, and now, God can be just, and yet the Justifier of every soul that believes in Jesus.

In the person of His Son, God hangs upon a tree, and dies a felon's death, will you believe in the merit of that death, and in the love of God, who spared not His own Son in order that He might spare us? Can you trust Jesus as your God and Savior? Will you do it now? Then you are saved. The first moment of thus trusting God is the beginning of a new life—a life which will drive out the old death of sin. The moment that you do thus trust your God, you will be placed upon a new footing with regard to Him,

your whole aspect towards God will be changed. Repentance will take such possession of your spirit that you will be actuated by new motives, and swayed by new desires, in fact, you wilt be a new man in Christ Jesus. This is being saved—saved from the love of sin, saved from returning to sin, saved from falling, and so completely saved that Christ shall one day present you “faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.”

May God do this for every one of you, my hearers, according to the riches of His grace! It is my heart's last, best, and strongest desire that every one of you may be saved. May we all meet in heaven, before the throne of God, never more to be parted! While I am away, listen with all earnestness to other Heralds of the cross, and pray the Lord to bless their messages to your salvation, if mine have not been so blest. I pray that, by some instrumentality, you may all be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE

Verse 1. *Jude.*

That is to say Judas, not Iscariot,—

1. *The servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,—*

He does not say, “and brother of our Lord,” for we know that James and Judas were both of them among the Lord's kinsman according to the flesh, but now, after the flesh, knoweth he even Christ no more, but is content and happy to be known as “the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,”—

1. *To them that are sanctified by God the Father,—*

For the decree of election, the setting apart of the chosen is usually ascribed unto God the Father.

1 *And preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:*

We have here a very blessed description of the whole work of our salvation—set apart by the Father, joined unto Christ, and preserved in Him, and then, in due time, called out by the Spirit of God.

2. *Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.*

Christian letters should be full of love and good will. The Christian dispensation breathes beneficence, it is full of benediction, “Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.” May the Divine Trinity give you a trinity of blessings!

3. *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*

In the sense of being once for all given to the saints, the faith of Christians is not a variable quantity. It is not a thing which changes from day to day, as some seem to suppose, vainly imagining that fresh light is bestowed upon each new generation. No, the truth was delivered once for all, it was stereotyped, fixed, and it is for us to hold it fast as God has given it to us.

4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares,—*

They did not boldly avow their heresy when they came in—they would not have been allowed to enter if they had done so—but they sneaked in, they climbed into the pulpit, professing to be preachers of the Gospel, when they knew, all the while, that they intended to undermine it. Basest of all men are those who act thus, “There are certain men crept in unawares,”—

4. *Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation,—*

Proscribed by God as traitors long ago. Those who have not the courage of their convictions probably have no convictions at all, but seek to undermine the faith which they profess to hold.

4. *Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Antinomians, “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,” falsely declaring that the law has no binding force upon the Christian’s life, and saying that we may do evil that good may come—and Socinians, “denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

If we have no real faith, we may appear to go a long way towards heaven, but we shall not enter the heavenly Canaan.

6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

See, then the need of stability, the need of abiding in the faith, and abiding in the practice of it, lest we should turn out to be like the Israelites, who, though they came out of Egypt, left their carcasses in the wilderness, or like the angels, who, though they once stood in God’s presence in glory, have fallen to the depths of the abyss because of their apostasy.

7-8. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

They cast off all restraint, they claim to have liberty to do whatever they like, and when reproved, they utter railing words against those who honestly rebuke them.

9. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

To what does this refer? I am sure I do not know. I cannot think it refers to anything recorded in the Old Testament, but to some fact, known to Jude, who here speaks by revelation, and records it. We believe it, and learn from it that, when an archangel disputes with the devil, he does not use hard words even against him, for hard words are an evidence of the weakness of the cause which they are used to support. Hard arguments softly put, are the really effective weapons, but it takes some of us a long time to learn this, and generally, in our younger days, we wear away our own strength by the violence with which we use it.

10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

It is a horrible thing when a man’s sin goes the full length of his knowledge, and he sins up to the degree of his possibilities.

11-12. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots—

“These are spoilers,” so it may be rendered.

12. In your feasts of charity,—

They spoil your love feasts at the communion table, they mar your fellowship when you gather together for worship.

12. When they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear:

Some of the best Christians, who come to the Lord’s table, come there in great fear and trembling, and I have known some, who have had an undoubted right to be there, half afraid to come. Yet those very persons, who have a holy fear lest they should come amiss, are those who really ought to come. “Feeding themselves without fear” is the mark of those who are further off from God.

12. Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds;

They believe according to what is said to them by the last man who speaks to them, they are easily persuaded to this doctrine, and to that, and the other.

12. Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit,—

They seem to be bearing fruit, but it drops off before it ripens.

12-13. Twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea,—

They have nothing to say for Christ, yet they must say something, so they are “raging waves of the sea,”—

13. *Foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*

These are the false professors of religion, the members of the church for whom there are seats reserved in hell. This is a dreadful thought, “to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever,”—not for the heathen, not for the open refusers of the Gospel, but for such as creep into the churches unawares, teach false doctrine, live unholy lives.

14-15. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

How Jude knew that Enoch said that, I cannot tell, it is another instance of inspiration.

16. *These are murmurers, complainers,—*

You know the sort of people alluded to here, nothing ever satisfies them. They are discontented even with the Gospel. The bread of heaven must be cut into dice pieces, and served on dainty napkins, or else they cannot eat it, and very soon their soul loatheth even this light bread. There is no way by which a Christian man can serve God so as to please them. They will pick holes in every preacher's coat, and if the great High Priest himself were here, they would find fault with the color of the stones of his breastplate.

16-19. *Walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.*

People who must, if they make a profession of religion at all, be continually breaking up churches, and holding themselves aloof from others, having no fellowship with anybody but those who can say “shibboleth” as plainly as they can, and sound the h pretty loudly.

20-22. *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference:*

Some of those professors, who are not living consistently with their profession, in whom you can see signs and tokens of sin, yet there may be some trace of repentance, some reason to hope that they will forsake the evil when they see it to be evil, “have compassion” upon them.

23. *And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*

When you have to deal with unclean professors, there must be an abhorrence and detestation of their sin even when there is great gentleness towards the sinner. We must never be such believers in the repentance of the guilty as to be willing to wink at sin, for sin is a great evil in any case, and repentance cannot wipe it away, and though it behooves us to be tender to the sinner, we must never be tender to the sin.

How beautifully this short and sad Epistle ends! Having described the many who, after making a profession, yet turn aside, Jude bursts out with this jubilant doxology:—

24-25. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—441, 245, 160

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