

GOD'S GLORY OUR REReward

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A SERMON
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*“The glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.”
 Isaiah 58:8*

THE church of God is an army marching through an enemy's territory. She can never reckon upon a moment's peace. If she were of the world, the world would love its own, but because true saints are not of the world, but Christ has chosen them out of the world, therefore the world hates them. As the Amalekites suddenly fell upon the children of Israel, unprovoked and without giving any warning of their hostile intention, so, not only in times of persecution, but in these apparently softer days when the world does not use the stake and the sword, at all seasons the world is ready to pounce upon the church of God and to call in its grand ally, the devil, to overthrow and destroy, as far as possible, the militant hosts of Israel.

Every Christian, then, must be a soldier and take his share in the battles of the cross. We must not look upon our life as being a pleasure-journey through a friendly land, but as a march—a march through the very midst of foes who will dispute every foot of our way.

Now, if we thus view the church of God as an army, it is consolatory to know that we have a vanguard—“My righteousness shall go before thee.” We take our Lord Jesus Christ to be “the Lord our righteousness.” He is the Forerunner and He has gone before us, even through the river of death, and up to the skies, that He may prepare a place for all those who have enlisted under His standard.

Our text, however, speaks not of the vanguard, but of the “rereward.” There is always danger there, and it is comforting to the saints to behold so glorious a shield borne in their rear by so mighty an arm—“The glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.”

It is but little I have to say to you this evening, but may God make that little profitable to you! We will, first of all, *dwell upon the rereward and inquire what it is which is here intended. And secondly, we will try to show how the glory of the Lord brings up the rear and protects the saints on every side.*

I. In the first place, WHAT MAY WE UNDERSTAND BY THE REReward?

Taking the text to refer to *the church of God as a body, we remark that there are always some who bring up the rear. God has never left His church without men to stand in the front. A few choice men have always been raised up by God, and they have led the way, both in testimony and in suffering. The race of the prophets will never be extinct.*

“The scepter,” in this sense, will not depart from the members of the church until Christ shall come a second time. The teacher shall not be taken out of his place, nor the candlestick be removed, nor the bread of life be taken away. But the mass of the church are rather like the body of the army, marching on and fighting well, but not attaining unto the first three mighties.

We have, moreover, in the church of Christ, a considerable proportion of those who are always behind. Some of those are here tonight. You feel yourselves to belong to the rear, *because you are so weak in faith. It is a blessed thing to enjoy full assurance of faith and yet no doubt there are thousands in the fold of Jesus who never reach this attainment. It is a great pity that they should not reach it, for they miss much happiness and much usefulness. But still,*

*“Thousands in the fold of Jesus,
 This attainment ne'er could boast;*

*To His name eternal praises,
None of these shall e'er be lost.
Deeply graven
On His hands their names remain."*

There are some who, from their natural constitution and other circumstances, are very apt to despond. Like Mr. Fearing, they not only go through the Slough of Despond, but as Bunyan says, they carry a slough of despond about with them. They are little in faith, but they are great at foreseeing evil. They are always expecting some dreadful ill and they cower down before a shadow.

I thank God that those of you, who have faith but as a grain of mustard seed, shall not be left to fall away—the glory of the Lord shall gather you up with the rest of the saints. The stragglers, the wounded, the halt, the lame—though these cannot march with the rest as we could desire, though, like Mr. Ready-to-Halt, they have to go on crutches—yet the glory of the Lord shall be their shelter and protection.

Then there are some of you, who are not exactly weak in the faith, but in your *humble estimate of yourselves*, you put yourselves in the rear. “I am very poor,” says one, “it is but little that I can ever give. Even if I gave two mites, as the widow did, I might almost give all my substance in so doing. I am obscure, too, for I have no talent. I cannot preach. I can scarcely pray in the prayer meeting to edification. I hope I love the Lord and that I am one of the stones in the walls of His church, but I am quite a hidden one.”

Ah, well! poor though you are, despised and forgotten, the glory of the Lord shall secure your safety. It was said of the tribe of Dan, “They shall go hindmost with their standards,” and there must be some to be in the rear. So, while the rich may rejoice in what God has given to them, yet you, in your contentment with your lot, may be thankful for your poverty and bless the name of the Lord that, though you may be in the rear, you are yet in the army—and you shall soon—as much as those in the van, have your full share of the spoil.

Possibly there are some who get into the rear from a much more painful cause, namely, from *backsliding*. I would not say a word to excuse backsliding, for it is a dreadful thing that we should depart from our first love or lose the vigor of our piety. It is dangerous to get even half a yard from the Savior's side. To live in the sun, like Milton's angel—that is blessed living. No lack of light or warmth there.

But to turn our backs on the sun, as the descendants of Cain did of old, and to go journeying away from Christ—this is dangerous in the extreme. “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.”

Many men talk of David's sin—it were well if they would recollect David's repentance and David's broken bones, after he had received pardon. He never was the same man afterwards that he was before. His voice was hoarse and cracked. You can tell the Psalms that he wrote after his fall, for his pen quivered as he wrote them, and yet, blessed be God, he could say, “Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.”

Even to these falling ones, Christ is kind. Though they have wandered from Him, His voice is not that of condemnation, but of consolation. Return, you backsliding ones! He owns the marriage bonds still. “I am married unto thee, saith the LORD.” Backslider, let this be some comfort to you, if you are bewailing your backslidings. But oh! if you are not conscious of them, or are conscious of them, but are not mourning them, tremble, tremble, lest backsliding should become apostasy and you should prove beyond question that you never had a sound work of grace in your heart. Now, whoever it may be, in the militant host of the Lord, who is in the rear, here is our comfort—that the glory of the Lord shall be the rereward.

Only one or two of you can guess, in any adequate measure, what the care of such a large church as this is. I have sometimes felt as Moses did when he said to the Lord, “Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child?”

But here is my consolation, “The LORD knoweth them that are his.” And those of you who do not always show due faith and courage—who do not advance to the front, as we could wish, in Christian service, we, nevertheless, commend you to the care of our God, praying that the rear may be divinely preserved. We wish that you would quicken your pace, that you would grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but we know that, even as it is, you shall be found of Him in peace in the day of His appearing, since your righteousness is found in Him, and you are not trusting in yourselves.

But now, *supposing the text to refer to the individual Christian*, how shall we translate it?

We will translate it in three ways. First, *as relating to our past*—that which is behind us. We need a protection from the past. Now, what is that which is behind us? There is something to rejoice in, for God has been gracious to us, but there is very much to mourn over, for we remember our former lusts in our ignorance, things whereof we are now ashamed.

Christian, look back awhile upon those sins of yours, the sins of your youth and your former transgressions—sins against law and against Gospel, sins against light and against love, sins of omission and sins of commission. What about them? Suppose that, like a pack of hungry wolves, they should pursue you? Suppose they should come after you, as Pharaoh and his chariots and his horsemen went after the children of Israel, when they escaped out of Egypt? Ah! then the glory of the Lord shall be your rereward.

Christ and His atonement shall come between us and our sins, and He shall drown our enemies in the Red Sea of His blood, even as he drowned Pharaoh and all his raging hosts who pursued the chosen people. Fear not your past sin, Christian. Tremble at the thought of it, by way of repentance, but thank God that you shall not be called to account for it, for all your sins were numbered on the Scapegoat's head of old, and He took them, and made an end of them, and carried them away forever. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?” As to past sin, the glorious atonement shall bring up the rear.

Then there are *our past habits*. How much of injury we still suffer from these! A man who has been accustomed to witness scenes of vice will frequently have most fearful pictures painted upon his eyeballs, even when they are closed for prayer. Yes, and when the sacred hymn is going up to heaven, a word in it may suggest a snatch of a profane song, or bring to the recollection even blasphemy itself.

It is a sad thing to have learned the arts of sin, to have acquired habits of passionate temper, of pride, or covetousness, or of falsehood. We may well tremble lest these old enemies should at last prove too much for us. We have left them behind us—they do not lead and guide us as once they did—but they dog our steps. The dominion of sin has been broken, but the law of sin is still there to vex us. The tree is cut down, but the sprouts still spring from the root and are all too vigorous, especially at times when they have been watered by circumstances, for at the scent of water they will bud and grow.

Ah! then, we must take our bad habits to the Lord Jesus. We must ask Him to manifest His glory by helping us to conquer them and we shall yet break these bonds which had become like fetters of iron. We shall snap them as Samson of old did his green withes and we shall be free. But the glory of the Lord must do it, and we shall have to give Him all the praise.

So, the whole of the past, if you take it in any of its aspects, need not cause the Christian tormenting sorrow, for he can believe that all his sinful past is left with God, so that, as neither things present, nor things to come shall be able to separate him from the love of God, so not even things past shall be able to do it.

But again, understanding the text as referring to the individual believer, we may speak of the rear as signifying *that part of our nature which is most backward in yielding to the power of divine grace*. Brethren, often, to will is present with us, but how to perform that which we would, we find not. The understanding is convinced and that leads the van. Firm affections are awakened and they follow after. But there is a weaker passion which would, if it dared, consent to sin—and that is this flesh of ours in which there dwells no good thing.

It is this dangerous rear, this weakest part of our nature, which we have most cause to dread. O friends, you know but little of yourselves if you do not know this, that there are such weak points about you that you might be overthrown in a moment if almighty grace did not preserve you.

Peter is laughed at by a silly maid and he falls. "How are the mighty fallen!" How little a thing brings an apostle to the level of a blasphemer! As for this rear part of our army, what shall we do with it? It is here that God's glory will be seen in conquering and overcoming. "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," and gives us victory in the very place where we were accustomed to say, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Those straggling passions, which we cannot marshal as we would, into regular order. Those wandering thoughts. Those downward desires. That cold heart, which will not grow warm, as we would have it, but will lose its holy glow—all these powers of ours shall be brought into subjection and sanctified by grace. God shall gather up the stragglers and bring the whole man safe to perfection by the sanctifying power of the Spirit.

Once again, still understanding the individual Christian, may we not speak of our rear as signifying *the end of our days*? The glory of the Lord shall be the rereward of our mortal history. The van was blessed, when we looked to Christ, and were lightened, and our faces were not ashamed.

*"Many days have pass'd since then,
Many changes have we seen;
Yet have been upheld till now:
Who could hold us up but Thou?"*

But the rear of the march of life is coming. We shall soon be up to our necks in the cold river—the waves and billows must soon roll over us. We may desire to be with Christ, but death itself never can be desirable.

*"We shrink back again to life,
Fond of our prison and our clay."*

We long to be with Christ, for it shall be "far better" there, but that last pinch, when soul and body shall be separated, cannot be looked forward to without solemn awe. Oh, how sweet to think that Christ shall bring up the rear of our life! If ever we have had His presence, we shall have it then. We shall—

*"Sing when the death-dew lies cold on our brow,
If ever we loved Thee, our Jesus, 'tis now."*

Perhaps our last day will be our best and brightest day, and we shall be surprised to find what floods of glory there are around and above the floods of death. I see before me many, very many veterans. Your grey hairs tell of your nearness to heaven. I trust your locks are whitened with the sunlight of glory. Oh! be not afraid. You shall find it a blessed thing to sleep in Jesus—and even as you go to that last bed, you shall not tremble, for He shall be so manifestly with you that you shall not be afraid.

The glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward and what that glory shall be, what heart can imagine, what tongue can tell? The glory that excels, the glory of perfection, the glory of being made like unto the First-Born among many brethren. The glory of the Well-beloved which He had with His Father before the world was. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." Behold then your latter end. Oh, that our last days might be with the righteous and our last end be like theirs! The glory of the Lord shall be the Christian's rereward.

II. But now, only for a minute or two, let me show you HOW THE GLORY OF THE LORD thus, both in the case of the whole church of Christ and of each separate Christian, BECOMES THE MEANS OF GRACIOUS PRESERVATION.

What is this “glory of the LORD” which shelters the weak and preserves the saints? May we not understand it to mean, first of all, *the glorious attributes of God? God's mercy* is one of His glories. It is His great glory, you know, that He is a God passing by iniquity, transgression, and sin, and remembering not the guilt of His people.

Now, brethren, as to our past sins, and our weaknesses, and all those other senses in which we understand the rear of our spiritual host—as to all these, the mercy of God will glorify itself in them all. Notwithstanding our weakness, mercy shall find a platform for the display of itself, and where sin abounded, there shall grace much more abound.

When you think of the greatness of your sin, think also of the greatness of God's mercy at the same time. As Master Wilcox says, “If thou canst keep thine eye on the cross, when thou art repenting, away with thy repenting.” A sense of sin, which is not also attended with a belief in God's mercy, is not an evangelical sense of sin. Oh, to know the superabounding mercy of the loving God who delights in mercy, His last-born, but His best-beloved attribute! He will glorify Himself by His mercy in delivering you when you most need it.

So will He also use the glorious attribute of *His wisdom*. It takes a wise captain to conduct the rear of the army. To lead the van needs courage and prudence, but to protect the rear often needs more wisdom and even more courage still. And God will show the wisdom of His providence and the fidelity of His grace in taking care of the weakest of the host, and in preserving you, believer, in that place where you are most in need of preservation.

So will He also show *His power*. Oh, what power it will be that will be needed to bring any of us to heaven! We need a God to get us there. Nothing short of divine strength will ever be able to preserve any of us. So crushed and hardened, and sometimes so stung with the venom of the old serpent, how shall we who are in the rear be kept unless the bare arm of God is revealed? The glory of the Lord in mercy, wisdom, and power, shall shine transcendentally in our case.

And here, too, shall be conspicuous *the immutability of God*. Beloved, of all the attributes of God next to His love, this is, perhaps, the sweetest to the tried Christian, namely, His immutability.

***“Immutable His will;
Though dark may be my frame.”***

You are not trusting in a Savior who was yours yesterday, but is not faithful today, or who will fail you tomorrow. Every word of His promise stands sure and He Himself stands fast to it. How the immutability of God will be illustrated in those who have had a long life and borne trials all through it, but who find, at the last, that Christ, who loved His own which were in the world, did love them even unto the end! Yes, the weakness, which you now discover and mourn over, shall only afford an opportunity for the faithfulness of God to reveal itself in your case. The glory of the Lord, in all its attributes, shall bring up the rear.

May we not also understand, besides His attributes, *His providence*? The providence of God is part of His glory. Thus He shows the skirts of His royal robes amongst the sons of men, as He has dominion over all the events of time. Ah, yes! you may rest assured that, in all those points in the Christian church which are the most weak, and the most behind, the providence of God will be seen in bringing the entire army of God home, safely home, victoriously home.

Looking at the history of the whole church, it is cheering to us to see that God has never sustained a defeat. And when His army seems to have been repulsed for a time, it has only been drawn back to take a more wondrous leap to a yet greater victory. One wave may recede, but the main ocean advances, the great tide of our holy faith is coming up, and as we watch wave after wave dying upon the shore, we must not weep, or think that God is sustaining a disappointment, for the main flood must advance, and it shall, till all the mud of idolatry and human sin, and all the sand of human rebellion shall be covered

with the silver tide of truth and love, and against the rocks of eternity, the great waves of Gospel truth shall forever beat.

Courage, my brethren, the Lord will bring up the rear by His providence, ruling and overruling, making evil produce good, and good something better, and better still in infinite progression. Not only to the whole church, but to you also, individually, shall it be so. And in due time, if you will but wait, you shall not be disappointed, but your light shall rise in obscurity and the days of your mourning shall be ended. The glory of the Lord shall thus be our rereward.

But may we not believe that the glory of the Lord, which brings up the rear, is *the Lord Himself*? After all, we cannot dissociate the glory from the glorious One. God Himself we must have if we would see His glory. Ah, brethren! the wine of communion with our Father and His Son Jesus Christ is the surest preservative against fear. And especially ought we to cultivate this communion when we feel that we are most in danger.

Near to the Savior's bosom it does not matter what we suffer. Close to God, He who is full of infirmities will overcome them all. Whatever your besetting sin may have been, put your head upon the Savior's bosom, and that besetting sin shall not overthrow you. Close to the Master, and since His garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, you shall never want for perfume. Have Christ with you and you cannot walk in darkness, however dark your way may be.

Get to your chambers. Wait upon Him in prayer. In coming down from those chambers with your souls refreshed, say to Him, "Abide with us from morn to eve," for you may rest assured that, in this holy communion, you shall find the true protection, while they who neglect this are most apt to slip with their feet.

And so, let me close these few words of address by *entreating you always to fly to the glory of the Lord whenever you feel your danger*, and even when you do not feel it, for it is well to be there. "Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Trust not in man, nor put any confidence in the glory of man. Rest not in your circumstances, nor your wealth, nor your health, for the glory of all these shall pass away as the beauty of the flower in the field, which is soon cut down beneath the mower's scythe.

Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength. You sons of men, trust in your God and you shall be secure beneath the shadow of His wings. You sinners, fly to the Savior. "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found." Look to the cross of Jesus and put all your dependence in His sufferings and His merits—and you who have done so already, trust more than ever to your God, and to your God alone, in every hour of ill, and every night of grief.

The Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

LUKE 12:1-44

In this chapter our Savior dispels the fears of His disciples concerning temporal things, and especially their fear of persecution and their fear of want.

Verses 1-2. *In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.*

What, therefore, can be the use of hypocrisy? Hypocrisy leads a man to pretend to be what he is not. His only hope lies in not being discovered. But as Christ declares that "there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known," hypocrisy becomes insanity as well as iniquity. Therefore, keep clear of it in every shape and form.

3-5. *Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.*

There is nothing, comparatively, to fear in death considered by itself. If that were the end of man, he need have little or no fear even of God Himself. But inasmuch as, after death, there is another state which is everlasting and unchangeable, there is grave cause for the ungodly to fear Him who, “after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.”

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

So particular is the care of divine providence.

7. *Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

And if He counts the sparrows, and cares for them, He certainly will not forget you.

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

Mind what you are at, then, you who never confess Christ before men, because according to the context of this passage, you are set down as having denied Him. Christ first speaks of those who confess Him and then of those who do not confess Him, and He describes them as virtually denying Him. On another occasion, Christ said, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” Examine that attitude of yours, which you suppose to be neutral, and see how Christ regards it—and then ask yourself whether you can be satisfied to remain in it any longer.

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

What is the sin against the Holy Ghost? We do not know and I think it is a great mercy that we do not know. I will tell you one reason why I think it is a great mercy, and that is, because the devil is continually tempting poor distracted souls to commit that sin. I have, within the past week, seen several persons who have been frequently tempted to commit it. Only, happily, they did not know what the sin against the Holy Ghost was. And therefore they could not persuade themselves into the belief that they had committed it.

I have seen many people who have told me that they have committed the unpardonable sin, and I have asked them to sit down and tell me what that sin was, for if they could do so, I should find out something that I did not know. In every instance, I have very soon been able to say to them, “Though I do not know what the unpardonable sin is, I am quite certain that what you mention is not that sin, for such sin as yours has frequently been forgiven.”

It is a blessing that we are left in the dark concerning that matter. Only as I have often said to you, do not presume upon your ignorance. This warning is something like the notice you see put up on certain great men's estates, “Man-traps and spring guns set here.” If you go round the mansion, and say to the owner, “If you please, sir, will you tell me where the man-traps and spring guns are?” He will say, “No. Why should you want to know where they are? You keep from trespassing and then it will not matter to you where they are.”

That very indistinctness about the warning is a part of the preventive power which surrounds it. You have no right to go trespassing there at all, so keep away from the place. And you are not told what the unpardonable sin is, though there is a sin which is unto death, and there is a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which shall not be forgiven.

11-12. *And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*

He has often done this. If you will read in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, the answers given even by unlearned, illiterate men and women, who were taken quite at unawares, and assailed by subtle questions, you will see that they often answered in a remarkably wise way. They could not have answered better if the questions had been before them for months. They frequently baffled their cunning adversaries by their wisdom and sometimes by their wit, for the Holy Ghost taught them in the same hour what they ought to speak.

13. *And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.*

He rudely broke in upon Christ's discourse when He was preaching upon these important matters, because he wanted the Savior to act the part of a judge in his dispute with his brother.

14. *And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?*

Some present-day minister, if this request had been made to him, would probably have said, "Well, I may save some litigation, perhaps, if I attend to this matter." As a general rule, brother, you had better mind your own business. Your Master, who was far wiser than you are, would not entangle Himself with the affairs of this life, and usually, true wisdom suggests that we also should keep ourselves apart from them.

15-17. *And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?*

This was his dialogue within himself. He might have answered at once, "As I have more than I can use, I will give some away to the poor. Why should I want to lay up my fruits, to let them get moldy and corrupt? There are many poor people starving at my very gates—I will let them share in what God has so bountifully given to me." This might have been his answer to the question, "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" His reply, however, was a very different one.

18-19. *And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul,*

It is "my" all through—my fruits, my barns, my goods. The man was eaten up with selfishness and did not recognize the fact of his stewardship. He did not know that even his own soul did not belong to him—he thought it did—"I will say to my soul,"

19-20. *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*

"Thou fool." That is God's opinion of the man who means to build bigger barns in order that he may himself enjoy what is about to be taken away from him. He was a fool to be laying up in store for others to scatter. Many a miser's heirs have lived to ridicule him. He was the rake that gathered up a heap of gold—and they are the shovel and fork that scatter it. They drink the old man's health and are much obliged to him for stinting himself that they may drink so deeply.

21-22. *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought—*

It really means, "Make it not a matter of anxious care. Take no inordinate thought."

22-23. *For your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.*

Everybody admits the truth of this saying of the Savior, though all do not see everything that is involved in it. Therefore, as the soul is more important than all else, look well to your soul, look more to your life than to your meat.

24. Consider the ravens;

It is quite possible that some of them were flying overhead just at that time, and that Christ pointed to them and said, "Consider the ravens;"

24-25. *For they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?*

"You cannot lengthen your body." Or perhaps the Savior meant, "You cannot lengthen out your life."

26. If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least,

It really is a matter of very slight consequence whether you are a little shorter or taller.

26-29. *Why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.*

Full of carking care and anxiety about little things or indeed about anything.

30. *For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.*

Therefore He would have you so live—industriously, prudently, thriftily—that you shall get these things and shall not waste them when you have them. But He would not have you live in an anxious, worrying, depressed spirit, as if you had no God, no heavenly Father, no all-sufficient Friend—and as if there were no all-wise providence, and you were left to drift about uncared for and alone. It is not so. O God of the lilies and God of the ravens, You will be the God of Your people too!

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

He may not give you much here, but in due time, He will give you the kingdom. He may give to worldlings more of these secondary things—these husks, these mere illusions, these mirages of the desert—than He gives to you, but for you there is prepared a city that has foundations and a kingdom that shall never pass away. Therefore patiently wait until the appointed time and fear not, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

33-34. *Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

It is not only important to lay up that which can truly be called treasure, but also to lay it up in the right place—"a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth." Such treasure as that will not harm us if we set our heart upon it, and by and by, in God's good time, we and our treasure shall both be in heaven.

35-37. *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.*

This always seems to me to be one of the most remarkable of our Lord's utterances while He was here upon the earth. His whole life was one of condescension, which was never more clearly manifested than it was when He, the Lord and Master of all, took the position of servant of all, and washed His disciples' feet. Yet He here tells us that, if He finds us watching when He comes again, He will once more take His place as our servitor.

38-44. *And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the*

thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

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.