THE FIRST DAY OF CREATION

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A SERMON
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"And God saw the light that it was good."
Genesis 1:4

WE shall, this morning, leave all discussion as to the creation of the world to those learned divines who have paid their special attention to that subject, and to those geologists who know, or at any rate think they know, a very great deal about it. It is a very interesting subject, but this is not the time for its consideration. Our business is moral and spiritual rather than scientific.

We justify our present discourse by quoting that remarkable parallel text which the Holy Spirit has given us in the second epistle to the Corinthians, fourth chapter, and the sixth verse, where Paul says, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The creation was an instructive type of the new creation. God's methods of forming the old creation illustrate His ways in preparing and perfecting His people who are new creatures in Christ Jesus. So we shall gather light from an analogy which is evidently warranted by the New Testament. We trust we shall not be guilty of inventing things fanciful, strained, or merely curious—our object is edification and consolation—and not a display of ingenuity. May the eternal light of the Holy Spirit shine upon us now, that by His light we may see light.

Man's fallen nature is a very chaos, "without form and void," with darkness thick and sevenfold covering all. The Lord begins His work upon man by the visitation of the Spirit, who enters the soul mysteriously, and broods over it, even as of old He moved upon the face of the waters. He is the quickener of the dead soul.

In connection with the presence of the Holy Spirit, *the Lord sends into the soul, as His first blessing, light*. The Lord appeals to man's understanding, and enlightens it by the Gospel. The heavenly light reveals to man his obligations to God and his forgetfulness of them. It shows him the evil of sin, his own guilt, and consequent danger, and the impossibility of his escaping from that danger by any efforts of his own.

That same light, also, reveals to man God's way of salvation—shows him the person of Christ, His work, its suitability, and its freeness—and lets him see how he may obtain an interest in redemption by the simple act of believing. It is a blessed thing for any man when the Lord God says concerning him, "Let there be light."

If you keep your eyes upon the chapter, you will observe that *the light came into the world at first by the word*—"God said, 'Let there be light.'" It is through the Word of God contained in this book, the Bible, that light comes into the soul. Let me correct myself—it is by Him who is called the *Logos*, THE WORD, that light is poured into the heart of man, for, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

This is that true light which lights every man that comes into the world. The Spirit, you see, is engaged in the new creation—He broods over the soul. The Son of God is the Creator also—He is that WORD without whom nothing was made, and by whom light came. And the Father unites in the same sacred work, for it is He who speaks and it is done.

It needs the Trinity to new-create a soul. Oh, triune God, our souls which are new-created, worship You with the trinity of their nature—spirit, soul, and body.

The light which broke in upon the primeval darkness was of a very mysterious kind, and came not according to ordinary laws, for as yet neither sun nor moon had been set as lights in the firmament. Can we tell how spiritual light first dawns on nature's night? It darts upon some souls without the aid of apparent ministries, immediately from God. Indeed, though the Lord sends light by this means or by that, yet in every case the light is His own work, and the means are in themselves so evidently powerless that the whole glory of the work belongs to the Lord alone.

How He removes darkness from the understanding, and illuminates the intellect, is a secret reserved for Himself alone. Mysteriously, then, the light enters into the soul of man. But one thing is clear concerning it—however it comes, if it be true light, it is always God-given, and comes alone from the great Father of lights.

No gracious light ever will or can come to any man except directly from God Himself. There was no latent light in the chaotic mass of world, no brilliancy to be developed out of the primitive darkness. It was needful that JEHOVAH should interpose, and that His fiat should pour in light from above. O heart of man, you are darkness itself, but in the Lord is your light found!

The light came instantaneously. Six days were occupied in furnishing the earth, but a moment sufficed for illuminating it. God works rapidly in the operation of regeneration—as with a flash, He darts light and life into the soul. The operations of grace are gradual, but its entrance is instantaneous.

Although instantaneous, it is not, however, shallow and short-lived. The light did not depart because of its rapid coming—it was a permanent boon which earth received in that glad hour. *The light remained*, and increased, and though in every spot upon the globe there are necessary interludes of night, and though there has been an evening as well as a morning to all succeeding days, yet our globe has never been forsaken of the blessed light since the day when first the eternal Word flashed it forth upon the face of the deep.

Even so, when God sends grace into the soul of man it comes in an instant, but it does not so depart. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." The darkness struggles for the mastery, but the light once given none shall quench—it must and shall shine forth more and more unto the perfect day.

All this is worthy of our careful note, but the point which we are about to dwell upon is this—our text concerns only the first day of creation, and the Lord's consideration of that first day's work, and His approval of it.

The first day of creation fairly pictures the commencement of our spiritual life, our conviction, conversion, and first faith in Jesus. My object shall be to speak words of comfort to beginners, that I may cheer those upon whom the true light has only lately begun to shine. And I shall also give a few words of advice to older people as to their duty to these newly-enlightened ones.

I. Our first observation will be this—THE LORD SEES WHATEVER HE CREATES.

"*The LORD saw the light*." *He was the sole observer of it*. Neither eye of man, nor bird, nor beast was there to behold the golden glory, but God saw the light. Newly enlightened one, it may be you are pained because you have no Christian companion to observe your change of heart. Cease from your sorrow, for God beholds you.

Have you seen yourself a sinner, and do you therefore weep in secret places? Have you begun to see the Savior, and do you look to Him in loneliness of spirit, and find in Him a joy with which a stranger intermeddled not? It is but a small matter that no human eye has seen your repentance and your faith, for He beholds them, even He who gave them birth.

It may be that neither father nor mother has perceived the change, and perhaps had they perceived it, they may be such that they would not have rejoiced in it. But let this be your comfort—your heavenly Father sees you and His heart pities you.

When the prodigal was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and even thus, your heavenly Father sees you. And as this was enough for the prodigal, so it is enough for you. Upon your tears of penitence He has fixed His eye, and upon your glance of faith He has turned His gaze. "The LORD saw the

light"—this grand truth should be very sweet to those whose faith is lonely, who meet with many discouragements, and little or no sympathy.

Like Hagar in the desert you should rejoicingly say, "Thou God seest me." "The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." David said, "I am poor and needy, yet the LORD thinketh upon me."

Oh, young beginner, the Lord sees the work of grace that is in you. Though it be but in its first day, *He* does not turn His eye from the light which He has kindled. And as long as this is the case, you need not fear.

The orator of old thought Plato alone quite enough for an audience. Much more then may you consider that the Lord alone is all that you need by way of observation, and you may joyfully pray with the Psalmist, "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name."

That light had come into the world in a noiseless manner, yet the Lord saw it. The entrance of God's Word which gives light is effected in "solemn silence of the mind." If men make an illumination, we can hear the crackling of their fireworks all over the city. But when God illuminates the earth with the sun, the orb of day arises without a sound.

The ancients talked of the chariot of the sun, but whoever heard the sound of wheels or the tramp of horses in the sky? The health-bearing wings of the morning cause no tumult in the air when they are spread abroad. "When morn her rosy steps in the eastern clime advancing, sows the earth with orient pearl," her footfalls are not heard.

True, the birds salute her coming with glad songs, but she herself steals onward without voice. Even thus grace enters the soul, and not a whisper is breathed, yet the Lord sees the light. Light is its own advertisement, it needs no trumpet to announce it. And it is the same with grace.

Dear young friend, in you the work of grace has been a very quiet one. Perhaps you remember no remarkable sermon, no horrible dream, no sick-bed experience, no grim terrors of the law, such as have happened to others of God's people. You have been treated as Lydia was whose heart the Lord opened, or like Timothy, you have known the Scriptures from your youth.

Be not, therefore, led to suspect your sincerity, or to doubt the reality of the work of grace. Although the work in your soul has been so quiet, so hidden from the eyes of men, so unremarkable and commonplace, yet take comfort from our text, "The LORD saw the light." No trumpet proclaimed it, but the Lord saw it. No voice went forth concerning it, but the Lord saw it, and it was enough. And in your case it is the same.

The earth itself could not recognize the light, yet the Lord saw it. Poor dull chaos, what could it know? And as for primeval night, the light shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. How often does the young believer stand in doubt as to himself! How frequently does he inquire, "Is this light or is it not?"

Nor is he alone in such great searchings of heart, for there are times with some of the more advanced of us, when we are very glad to think that the Lord sees the light, for *we* cannot see it. Times when, through doubt and fear, and a keen sense of sin, we begin to question whether the Lord has ever shone upon us at all.

And if this happens to full-grown saints, it is not much wonder if it occurs to babes in grace, in the first morning of their life. If it should occasionally prove a very serious question—"Am I in the light or not?"—we need not marvel, for often have sincere children of God put up the anxious inquiry, "Is this light, or only darkness visible?"

How often do we mourn that we have scarcely more light than suffices to reveal our darkness and make us pine for more. Oh, troubled one, lay this home to your soul—the Lord saw the light when earth herself could not perceive it.

Let us not forget that *besides the light there was no other beauty*. The earth, according to the Hebrew, was "*tohu* and *bohu*," which, in order to come near to both the sense and sound at the same

time, I will render, "anyhow and nohow." It was confusion, emptiness, waste. Matter discordant and disorganized. And so God fixed His eye on the light, not on the chaos.

Even so, beloved friend, your experience may seem to be a chaos, nohow and anyhow, exactly what it should not be, a maze of unformed conceptions, and half-formed desires, and ill-formed prayers—but yet there is grace in you and God sees it—even amid the dire confusion and huge uproar of your spirit. What He has Himself created in you He beholds, considers, and delights in. And as for the sin that dwells in you, He only regards it as covered from His sight by the atoning work of His dear Son.

Remember, too, that *when the light came it had to contend with darkness*, but God saw it none the less. So also in your soul, there still remains the darkness of inbred corruption, ignorance, infirmity, and tendency to sin. And these cause a conflict, but the light is not thereby hidden from the eyes of God.

What a mercy this is that our God keeps His eye on the light rather than on the darkness. Oh, how I bless Him for that! If He were to ignore the light that is in us because it is feeble, and look only at our sin because it is abundant, He would certainly destroy us utterly.

But instead of that He casts our sins behind His back, while upon the new-born grace He fixes His steady gaze and says, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

For many reasons the Lord sees the light, but chiefly *He sees it because He made it*, and He forsakes not the work of His own hands. God can see grace in men where you and I cannot, because He knows where it is, seeing He Himself hid it in the soul. There is never a grain of grace in the world but what God has a register of it.

All the grace in men's hearts calls God, "Father," and God hears its voice and turns His eye that way. He knows His own children, and His eye and His heart are towards them continually for good. He knows the light which is of His own creating—there is not one stray sunbeam in the universe, nor one forgotten ray of light.

Neither is there a spark of forgotten grace, or a grain of salvation which has got out of its course. God cannot but remember His own grace, seeing that the giving of it is a work so dear to His heart, and the effect of that work is so precious in His esteem.

To sum up what we have said, you who have been converted to God may lament that in your soul there is no order, and that everything is tossed about. You may perceive no growth, no fruit, no virtue in your life, because you have not known the Lord long enough to produce much. But yet if there be light enough to reveal Christ in you as your only hope, be you of good cheer, for the Lord does not look for the fourth day's work on the first day. But He sees that in you which is of His own giving and creating—and He calls it good.

Seeing the light in you, He will perpetuate it so that you shall never walk in darkness. And He will increase it till the glory breaks upon you. Do you repent of sin? God sees the light. Have you bemoaned your shortcomings? God saw the light. Have you begun to pray? "Behold, he prayeth," says God, for He sees the light. Have you believed in Jesus Christ with even a trembling faith? God sees the light. Have you begun to hope in His mercy? He sees that hope, for the God that gave you its light still looks upon it.

II. It is time for us to pass on to a second head, which is this—THE LORD APPROVES OF WHAT HE CREATES.

"God saw the light *that it was good*." He took pleasure in it. Now, as far as this world was concerned, light was but *young and new*—and so in some of you, grace is quite a novelty. You were only converted a very little while ago, and you have had no time to try yourselves or to develop your divine graces, yet the Lord delights in your new-born life.

There are some older folk who are suspicious of the dawn of grace, and look very dubiously upon new converts, but in this they have not the mind of God. The old members of our churches in the country, twenty years ago, used to say, "We must not take in young converts too soon. We must summer and winter them before they are baptised." This they called prudence.

I wonder what they would think of prudent farmers who summered and wintered the lambs before they took them into the fold? Or prudent parents who summered and wintered their babes before they pressed them to their bosom? We ought right gladly to take the little babes in grace and nurse them for the Lord—and by no means despise their youth.

The Lord did not leave the light to itself till it had been tried for years, but on the first day He smiled upon it and pronounced it good. He took delight in it because it was as much His creation, and as truly good as if He had made it ages before. Light is good at dawn as well as at noon.

The grace of God is good though but newly received. It will work out for you greater things by and by, and make you more happy and more holy, but even now all the elements of excellence are in it, and its first day has the divine blessing upon it. Grace in the bud is pleasant unto the Lord—let this truth fill the newly converted with intense delight.

Here we must mention again that it was *struggling light*, yet none the less for that approved of by Lord. We do not understand how it was that the light and the darkness were together until God divided them, as this verse intimates, but as John Bunyan says, "No doubt darkness and light here began their quarrel," for what communion has light with darkness?

The black darkness was in possession, but the arrows of light pierced it through and through. It strove to hold its own, but ere long it could be said, "The darkness is past and the true light now shineth."

Do you remember how it was with you when the light invaded the little world within you? I remember well the inward battle and sore conflict in my own case. What struggles! What contentions! What conflicts my soul endured when the light first broke in upon nature's night! My darkened heart rebelled against the light, hating to have its deeds reproved. But the light would not be extinguished or turned aside.

Backed by the divine command, it pierced its way until I joined the company to whom it is said, "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." My brethren, I am sure you are no strangers to this conflict, nor is it to you altogether a thing of the past. You are still in the conflict. Still grace and sin are warring in you, and will do so till you are taken home.

Let this help you, O you who are perplexed. Remember that struggling as the light is, God approves of it, and calls it good. Even the repentance which cannot repent as it would is good. The faith which cannot believe as it would is good. Life which smolders like fire in damp wood is good, and the Lord so esteems it. "A bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench."

As yet the light had not been divided from the darkness, and the bounds of day and night were not fixed. And so in young beginners—they hardly know which is grace and which is nature, what is of themselves and what is of Christ—and they make a great many mistakes. Yet the Lord makes not mistake, but approves of that which His grace has placed in them.

They have so little discernment that they see and do not see, for they see men as trees walking, but God sees *them* clearly enough. It is neither day nor night with them—they are in a fog, and lack power of discernment—but the Lord discerns them, for He knows them that are His. Let this be their joy that the Lord can analyze their condition, and He knows what is light in them and approves it.

As yet the light and darkness had not been named—it was afterwards that the Lord called the light "day" and the darkness "night." Yet He saw the light that it was good. And so, though you do not know the names of things, God knows your name. Though you do not understand the doctrines so as to speak of them correctly, yet He understands *you*.

Your ignorance of terms and names, your confusion of mind, and childish misapprehensions will not provoke the Lord or make Him overlook the grace which He has wrought in you. The sooner you can distinguish between things that differ, the better, but meanwhile the Lord distinguishes what is in you and loves the light which He has given you, for He never made a grace which He did not love, and never wrought a work in the soul of man which He did not approve.

The light of the first day could not reveal much of beauty, for there was none, and so, dear friend, *the light* within does not yet reveal much to you—and what it does reveal is uncomely, but the light itself is good—whatever it may make manifest. If the grace given you, my young friend, only reveals the depravity of your nature, if it only shows you the cage of unclean birds within you, and the wild beasts that rage and rave within your nature—if it only makes these growl in their dens more fiercely than ever because their reign is coming to an end—still it is light.

If it displays your nature as tossed about in sorry tumult and wretched disorder, yet the light is good, and God takes delight in it. When no varied landscape of land and sea, mountain and lake, meadow and forest charmed the eye, yet the Lord approved the light which shone over the formless mass. Let this cheer and comfort you—that in the same manner you have the approbation of God upon whatever of grace His hand has created within you.

But why did God say that light was good? I suppose it was because *its creation displayed His attributes*. The instantaneous coming of light revealed His power, His sovereignty, His goodness, His wisdom, and His love. He is not a God whose glory consists in darkness, but "He covers himself with light as with a garment."

Grace is a still more glorious manifestation of the divine character, and in it God glorifies His name. The grace that is in you has sufficed to show you the power and the justice of God—and something of His mercy and His love—and angels from heaven have beheld the same sacred attributes in the divine work within you. Therefore God loves grace because it makes Him known in many of His glorious attributes.

He loves the light, too, because *it is like Himself*, for "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Light is ethereal, and almost spiritual, and therein like to Him who is a Spirit. Light makes manifest the truth, and therein is like the God of truth. The grace that is in you, if indeed it be grace, is yet more truly of the nature of God, for it is that living and incorruptible seed by which you are made partakers of the divine nature, and are enabled to escape the corruption which is in the world through lust. Satan is the prince of the powers of darkness, but another principle, even that of the light of God dwells in the man who believes in Jesus—and this principle must be good—for it is of God.

Light is eminently good, for *the Lord spent a whole day in creating and arranging it*—a whole day out of six. This shows that He attaches great importance to it. Moreover, He gave it the front rank by occupying the first day of creation's week upon it. Even thus the plan of grace was early in the mind of God. It was and is His masterpiece and He has never yet placed it in the background.

His eternal wisdom devised it from old, and that same wisdom continues to dwell upon it all through this long day of grace. The little grace which is in you is approved of God, for it is the fruit of His thoughts of old, and by it He has begun His new creation in you.

I suppose that the Lord approved of the light because it was *a seasonable thing*. It was what was wanted to begin with. Not but what God could work in the dark, for as to natural light, in that respect darkness and light are both alike to Him. We can all see that the works of His creating skill needed light, for how could plants, animals, and men live without it?

Assuredly the sanctifying operations of the Spirit of God require light in the soul—the understanding must be enlightened, for true religion cannot flourish in ignorance—and until there is some knowledge of God, none of the graces can blossom. When God the Holy Spirit new-creates a man, the first essential thing towards it is the illumination of his soul in knowledge and holiness, to know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Because it is so essential, the Lord pronounces it good.

So then, dear brethren, I have shown you that God took delight in His own work, and I have given you some reasons why He did so.

Now, you trembling beginners, I want you to feel that if God approves of the grace which He has wrought in you, He will preserve it. He will not suffer the light which He kindles to be quenched by the world, the flesh, or the devil. Yes, He will improve it, and cause your twilight to brighten into perfect day.

I would to God that some poor, troubled one could catch this thought, for I remember well the time when it would have been exceedingly consoling to myself. When I compared myself with older saints, I feared that there was little of the divine work in me. But if I had known, as now I rejoice to know, that God's work, even at the beginning, is approved by Him—that even the rudiments and elements of grace in the soul are looked upon by Him with divine satisfaction, I think my heart would have greatly rejoiced.

I want you lambs of the flock to feed on this tender grass. It is sweet food, suitable to your young days. Fear not, little flock. Your great Shepherd takes delight in you.

III. But now, thirdly, let me give you what will seem to be, but is not, the same thought—THE LORD QUICKLY DISCERNS ALL THE GOODNESS AND BEAUTY WHICH EXISTS IN WHAT HE CREATES.

The Lord did not merely feel approbation for the light, but He perceived reason for it—He *saw* that it was good. He could see goodness in it where, perhaps, no one else would have been able to do so.

Let us note, then, that *light is good in itself*, and so is divine grace. What a wonderful thing light is! Just think of it! How simple it is, and yet how complex. Scarcely have the students of light been able as yet to discover a tithe of its various qualities. Wonders have burst upon them, but there are many more to follow. What intertwisted colors go to make up the simplicity of the white light in which we rejoice?

Grace, too, is simple yet complex. The grace that quickens, the grace that convinces of sin, the grace that consoles, the grace that instructs, the grace that sustains, the grace that sanctifies, the grace that perfects—it is all a very simple matter, but how varied are its operations! How marvelous is the "all grace" which God makes to abound unto us.

Think of the triple ray which we find in grace—the grace of the Father in election, the grace of the Son in redemption, the grace of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Consider, admire, and adore the manifold grace of God.

Light, too, how common it is! We see it everywhere, and all the year round. The most despotic monarch cannot enclose the light for himself. The meanest beggar takes a royal share. It cannot be monopolized, but pays its gladsome visits to all alike.

Even thus the Scriptures reveal the freeness of divine grace—and experience shows that it shines on the poorest and the simplest—it enlightens the foolish and the ignorant. Yet what a precious thing is light. Those who are blind, what would they not give to see it! And if you and I were confined in a sepulchre, how earnestly should we long once more to walk in the light of heaven. So is the grace of God priceless yet free to every eye that is able to drink it in.

Light, too, how feeble and yet how strong! Its beams would not detain us one-half so forcibly as a cobweb, yet how mighty it is, and how supreme! Scarcely is there a force in the universe of God which is more potent. The grace of God, in the same manner, is contemptible in the eyes of man, and yet the majesty of omnipotence is in it, and it is more than conqueror.

Light, too, as we have said before, how noiseless! You never hear its footfall, and yet how effectual. So the grace of God comes not with observation, but its transformations are unparalleled. Light, too, how varied, as we see it in many phases and through differing mediums, and yet how uniform! How uniformly good!

Grace comes in many ways, and works variously, yet it is always the same, and its results are always pure, lovely, and of good repute. Well did God say that light was good, for who can make it otherwise? Who can defile it? The sunbeam lights on a dunghill, but its purity remains snow-white as the lily. Who can rob light of its beauty? Its excellence remains undimmed, though it pierce the gloom of a dark dungeon, feverish, and full of loathsome filth.

Light never ferments into darkness, nor decays into gloom. The leaves upon the trees have, in successive autumn blasts turned sere, and have fallen to the earth to rot, but no ray of light has ever withered. Many changes the world has passed through, but light is the same, the glory of its youth is on

it. The young sunbeams leap from the central fire, and visit us on wings unwearied, they themselves being adorned with all the freshness of earth's birthday.

Transfer all this to the grace of God and it will bear to be emphasized. Grace cannot be depraved, it is ever pure and good. It cannot be overcome, it will effect its purposes. It never corrupts, it is the seed of God which lives and abides forever. Oh, precious grace, if you be in the soul—if, as yet, it is but your first day—you are good.

Light is good, not only in itself, but *in its warfare*. The light contended with darkness, and it was good for darkness to be battled with. Grace has come unto you, young friend, and it will fight with your sin—and it ought to be fought with—and to be overcome.

The light which came from God was *good in its measure*. There was neither too much of it nor too little. If the Lord had sent a little more light into the world, we might all have been dazzled into blindness, and if He had sent less, we might have groped in gloom.

God sends into the new-born Christian just as much grace as he can bear—He does not give him the maturity of after years, for it would be out of place. Did not Jesus say, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Dawn is good as well as noontide. A babe in grace is beautiful, and the grace in him is suitable to his condition. Do not, dear brother, judge the babe because he has not the light and the grace which belong to a full-grown man, for that would be unreasonable.

Light was *good as a preparation* for God's other works. The great Creator was about to make plants. What could plants do without light? He knew that He would soon make fowl that fly in the open firmament, and beasts that graze the meadows, and is not light needed by all these? He knew that light, though it was but the beginning, was necessary to the completion of His work.

Light was needful that the eye of man might rejoice in the works of God, and so God saw the light that it was good, in connection with what was to be. And oh, I charge you who have to deal with young people, look at the grace they have in them in relation to what will be in them. Think not so much of the weakness of it as of the fact that it is only the green blade, and let your faith see the golden ear which will come from that tender shoot. See the oak in the acorn, the man in the child—and call them good.

What a mass of thought one might raise from this one truth of the goodness of light, and the goodness of grace, as to their *results*. Light produces the beauty which adorns the world, for without it all the world were uncomely blackness. Light's pencil paints the whole, and even so all beauty of character is the result of grace.

Light sustains life, for life in due time would dwindle and die out without it, and thus grace alone sustains the virtues and blessings of the believer. Without daily grace, we should be spiritually dead. Light heals many sicknesses, and grace brings healing in its wings. Light is comfort, light is joy, the prisoner in his darkness knows it to be so.

And so the grace of God produces joy and peace wherever it is shed abroad. Light reveals and so does grace, for without it we could not see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. O to walk in the light as God is in the light that so we may have fellowship with Him. O Lord, "send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me unto thy holy hill."

You see now that God perceived in light a mass of latent good, and in the same manner He perceives, in the first work of grace in the soul, an amount of good which the soul itself knows nothing of, and which even Christian observers, with kindly eyes, would not be able to detect.

IV. This leads me to close with a practical observation, namely, that GOD RECORDED HIS ESTIMATE OF THIS FIRST DAY'S PRODUCT.

Here we have His judgement *expressed*—"God saw the light that it was good." This leads me to say to the young Christian, *the Lord would have you encouraged*. You have been looking at yourself since you have been converted, and perhaps you have grown desponding, and have cried, "Alas, I am vile. I did not know all that was in me."

No, and you do not know all that is in you now. "But I am so bad." Let me assure you, you are a great deal worse than you think you are. "Alas, sir, I see enough to drive me to despair." Yes, but if you

could see the whole truth about yourself, you would be driven to self-despair ten times over. You are so bad as to be hopeless, and you had better know it, too.

I often thank God for teaching me early that my old nature was dead and corrupt, so that nothing has surprised me since. I commenced as a penniless bankrupt, and hence I have never become poorer. I began naked, and therefore I have never lost a rag. I was dead, utterly dead, and therefore I have lost no strength.

It is a needful thing for you to know that in your flesh there dwells no good thing. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Put that down at the first, as an ascertained fact, and then nothing will amaze you afterwards. Your nature is incorrigible and incurable, but there is gracious light in you which God has put there, and God delights in you because of it.

Though you may have been born to God but a week ago, and are a poor little puling, crying baby in the nursery of the Lord's house, yet your Father loves you, and sets great store by the grace He has given you. Now, do not be downcast. Say to yourself, "The Lord has said that the faith which He has given me is good. He has said that this little love that I have to Him is good. I will be encouraged, for if He has begun a *good* work in me, He will carry it on."

My last word is to older Christian people. If the Lord says that His work in the first day is good, I want you to say so too. Do not wait till you see the second, third, fourth, fifth, or sixth day before you feel confidence in the convert and offer him fellowship. *If God speaks encouragingly so soon, I want you to do the same*.

A few words to a young Christian will be very greatly helpful to him, and his weakness craves them. Those of us who have been a long while in the Lord's ways ought to be ashamed if we are gruff, and sour, and critical. You know it was the elder brother, not one of the younger ones, who said, "This thy son hath come, who hath devoured thy living with harlots," and so on. Do not degenerate into the elder brother's spirit, I pray you.

You must grow older in years, but endeavor to remain young at heart. There is a tendency to look for far too much in young converts, and to expect in them a great deal more than we shall ever see. This is wrong. We shall not do them much good by criticizing them, but we may greatly benefit them by encouraging them.

We have all read in the papers this week about Captain Webb's swimming across the channel, and we noticed that every now and then his friends *gave him a cheer*. Would that help him? No doubt it did. There is nothing like a cheer to a fellow when he feels faint and weak. Give the weak brother a cheer, I say. When you meet with a young believer who is tossed about, give him a cheer. Give him a hearty cheer.

Tell him some choice promise. Tell him how the Lord helped *you*. Your few words may not be much to you, but they will be very much to him. Whereas the black look, which, perhaps, you really did not mean, may chill him to the very marrow of his bones. Many a poor young Christian has been frostbitten by the coldness of stern professors.

Let us make a rule to encourage the young and help them forward, for that work of encouragement may affect the whole of their future history. As the Lord said the first day was good, so He said the same right on, till at last He declared that it was "*very good*." In this way I trust it will be "good" with young converts from beginning to end.

That early blessing, which you may be the means of bestowing upon the young Christian, may be the first of thousands of commendations which shall culminate in, "Well done, good and faithful servant." At any rate, if you do this, my dear brother, it will reveal in you a God-like disposition. The Lord said that the first day's work was good. Be as God is, ready to see the good, if it be ever so little, and ready to speak well of it.

It will be for your own comfort to see and commend the young work of grace. If you have an eye to spy out what is good, either in young people or old people, it will be a very happy faculty. Those who

have a keen eye for others' faults are wretched beings. They look at the sun and they say, "He has spots." Then they gaze at the moon, and observe that its light is very pale. Better be blind than see in this fashion.

Let it not be so among you. But as God saw the light that it was good, so do you look for it and rejoice in it. Be on the side of weak grace, and your own grace will grow stronger. Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all, and in holy charity think no evil, but rejoice in the truth.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—GENESIS 1

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK."—104, 205, 891

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.