

**THE WARNINGS AND THE REWARDS
OF THE WORD OF GOD
NO. 2135**

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 16, 1890,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Moreover by them is Your servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.”
Psalm 19:11.*

THIS is the declaration of one of God's servants; “by them is *Your servant* warned.” Only for men made obedient by divine grace is this passage written. My hearer, are you God's servant? Let us begin with that question. Remember that if you are not God's servant, you are the bond-slave of sin, and the wages of sin is death.

The Psalmist, in this psalm, has compared the Word of God to the sun. The sun in the heavens is everything to the natural world; and the Word of God in the heart is everything in the spiritual world. The world would be dark, dead, and fruitless without the sun; and what would the mind of the Christian be without the illuminating influence of the Word of God? If you despise Holy Scripture, you are like one that despises the sun! It would seem that you are blind, and worse than blind, for even those without sight enjoy the warmth of the sun. How depraved are you if you can perceive no heavenly luster about the Book of God! The Word of the Lord makes our day! It makes our spring! It makes our summer! It prepares and ripens all our fruit! Without the Word of God, we should be in the outer darkness of spiritual death. I have not time, this morning, to sum up the blessings which are showered upon us through the sun's light, heat, and other influences. So is it with the perfect law of the Lord; when it comes in the power of the Spirit of God upon the soul, it brings unnumbered blessings; blessings more than we, ourselves, are able to discern.

David, for a moment, dwelt upon the delights of God's Word. He said, “More to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” The revelation of God enriches the mind with knowledge, the heart with comfort, the life with holiness, and the whole man with divine strength. He that studies, understands, and appropriates the statutes of the Lord is rich in the truest sense; rich in holiness for this, life and rich in preparedness for the life to come. You have mines of treasure if you have the Word of God dwelling richly in your heart. But in the sacred Book we find not only an enrichment of gold laid up, but a present abundance of sweetness to be now enjoyed. He that lives upon God's Word tastes the honey of life; a sweetness far superior to honey; for honey satiates, though it never satisfies. The more you have of divine teaching, the more you will wish to have, and the more will you be capable of enjoying. He that loves the inspired Book shall have wealth for his mind, and sweetness for his heart.

But David is mainly aiming at the practical. So, having introduced the sun as the symbol of God's Word because of its pleasurable influence, he adds, “Moreover by them is *Your servant* warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” On these two things we will meditate under the following heads:—First, *their keeping us*—“By them is *Your servant* warned”; secondly, *our keeping them*—“And in keeping of them there is great reward.”

I. First, **THEIR KEEPING US**; “By them is *Your servant* warned.”

We are in an enemy's country. We are always in danger; we are most in peril when we think ourselves most secure. You will find in the histories of the Bible that the most crushing defeats have fallen upon armies *suddenly*; when they were off their guard. The army of Christ has need always to set its pickets, and appoint its sentinels lest the adversary take us unawares. We can never tell when we are likely to be assailed; we shall be wise to assume that we are always surrounded by enemies. God's Word is our keeper, the watcher of our souls; and when a danger is approaching it rings the alarm and gives us

warning. The different parts of Scripture; the statutes, the doctrines, the ordinances, the promises, the precepts—all of these act like pickets to the army, and arouse the Lord's soldiers to resist sudden assaults. "By them is Your servant warned."

In what way does God's Word warn us? In many forms it thus operates. I would say, first of all, by *pointing out sin, and describing its nature and danger*. We have here the mind of the Lord as to moral conduct, and so we are not left to guesswork; we know by unerring teaching what it is that the Lord abhors. Those Ten Commandments are the lanterns set around an opening in the street that no traveler may drive into danger. God only forbids that which would injure us, and He only commands that which will be for our lasting good. Spread out before you the law of God, and you may say of it as you read it, "By these commandments is Your servant warned." In my walks I see notices bearing the words, "TRESPASSERS BEWARE!" And I am kept from wandering.

It is well to be acquainted, not only with the letter of the law of the Lord, but with the *spirit* of it. Numberless sins are condemned by the Ten Commandments; truly we may say of the law of God, "Your commandment is exceedingly broad." All of these are foghorns warning us of dangers which may cause shipwreck to our souls.

Studying the Word of God, we are made to see that sin is exceedingly sinful, since it dishonors God, makes us enemies to our best friend, yes, and drives us madly to destroy our own souls. Sin, according to God's Word, is murderous; it slew the Savior of men. Wherever sin comes, death follows it. Sin may bear pleasure in its face, but it has ruin at its heels. Eternal destruction is the finishing of the work of sin. God's Word is very plain, and explicit about these grave facts. It forbids our trifling even with the *appearance* of evil; it warns us against sins of thought, and temper as well as against transgressions of speech, and act. He that is graciously familiar with his Bible will be preserved from those pitfalls into which so many have rushed in their careless contempt of God's Word, and holy commandments. A precept of Scripture is like a lighthouse upon a quicksand or rock. It quietly bids the wise helmsman steer his vessel another way. The whole coast of life is guarded by these protecting lights, and he that will take note of them may make safe navigation. But remember, it is one thing for the Scripture to give warning, and another for us to take it! And if we do not take warning, we cannot say, "By them is Your servant warned." Oh, that our hearts may be in such a state that a hint from the Word may set us on our watch against evil!

Next, the Word of God warns us *by reminding us of our duties*. We are not only taught negatively what we should not do, but positively what we ought to do; and thus we are warned against sins of omission. I wish that professors who are neglectful of many points in the Savior's example would study His character more, marking down the points where they come short of it. If we were to read the lives of holy men recorded in Scripture, and notice where we fail to be like they, it might do us much service. Truly, Lord, Your servants would be profitably warned if we more often inquired, "Lord, what would You have me do?" Turning over these sacred pages we remark a choice blessing coming upon a man of God in connection with a certain virtue. Then we are warned to cultivate that virtue if we would have that blessing. The Lord does not pay us for our work as though we were hirelings, and our labor meritorious; but still, according to His grace, He rewards His faithful servants, and so diligently encourages them to obey. Every Bible precept should be an arrow aimed at the heart of our carelessness and forgetfulness. Then should we often say with David, "By them is Your servant warned." Like our Lord in His youth, we must be about our Father's business, and we must continue there till, like He, we can say, "I have finished the work which You gave me to do."

The Word of God also *warns us of our weakness in those duties which it commands, and of our tendency to fall into those sins which it forbids*. It sets before us a noble example, but it bids us remember that only by divine power can we follow it. It spreads before us a program of perfect holiness, but it does not flatter us with the notion that by our own strength we can carry it out! It humbles us by showing that we cannot even *pray* as we ought without the Spirit's teaching, nor so much as *think* a good thought without His aid. Scripture is continually warning us of the deceitfulness of our hearts, and of the tendency of sin to advance from one stage of evil to another. Holy Scripture shows us our spiritual inability, apart from the divine Spirit; and greatly do we need warnings in this way, for we are given to

be self-sufficient. Pride will shoot forth with the very least encouragement. We buckle on our harness, and begin at once to shout as if the battle were won. How soon we think ourselves near perfection, when, indeed, we are near a fall! We are apt to sit down and imagine that we have won the race when we have not yet traversed one half the way! The Word of God continually checks our carnal confidence, and disturbs our self-satisfaction; it bears constant protest against our imagining that we have already attained when we are as yet only babes in divine grace. How plainly it tells us, "He that trusts in his own heart is a fool!" It shows us where our great strength lies, but it calls us off from all trust in our own past experience, or firmness of character, or strength of determination, or depth of sanctification, to lean solely and alone upon heavenly grace which we must receive hour by hour. If we give way to pride, it is against the admonitions of the divine statutes, for in this matter, "By them is Your servant warned."

So does the Word continually *warn us against the temptations which are in the world in which we live*. Read its story from the first day of Adam's fall to the last chapter of its record, and you shall find it continually representing the world as a place of trial for the heir of heaven. It is, indeed, as a sieve in which the true corn has no rest, but much tossing to and fro. Christ seems praying over us every day as we read the Scripture, "I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one." If you fancy that your position in life puts you beyond temptation, you are sadly deluded. Poverty has its evil side, and riches are full of snares. Even in a Christian family we may be seduced into great sin as well as among the ungodly. There is no place under heaven where the arrows of temptation cannot reach us! With this also comes persecution, for because we are not of the world, the world hates us. "In the world you shall have tribulation," is a sure prophecy. If you meet with no persecution, you should remember that the smiles of the world are even more dangerous than its frowns. Beware of prosperity! Thank God if you have the world's wealth, but hold it tenderly, and watch over your heart carefully lest you bow before the golden calf. Adversity has less power to harm than prosperity. Of the evils peculiar to various positions, the Holy Spirit tells us in these sacred pages: "By them is Your servant warned." We are continually warned to put on the whole armor of God, and not to lay aside the shield of faith for a moment. We are urged to watch at all times, and to pray without ceasing; for in the most quiet life, in the most pious company, and in the regular work of the day, dangers are lurking. Where we think we may be very much at ease, lying down as on a bank of flowers, we are most likely to be stung by the deadly serpent. We are like the first settlers in America; the cunning Red Indians of temptation may be upon us with the deadly tomahawk of lust while we are dreaming of peace and safety.

Here, let me add, *we are warned over and over again against the temptations of Satan*. Certain theologians, nowadays, do not believe in the existence of Satan. It is singular when children do not believe in the existence of their own father; but it is so that those who are most deluded by him are the loudest in repudiating all faith in his existence. Any man who has had experience of his temptations knows that there is a certain mysterious personage; invisible, but almost invincible; who goes about seeking whom he may devour. He has a power far beyond that which is human; and a cunning that is equal to that of a thousand of the most clever of men. Satan will endeavor to influence our minds in a way which is contrary to their true intent; to turn our thoughts in directions which we abhor; to suggest questions about truths of God of which we are certain, and even blasphemies against Him who, in our heart of hearts, we worship lovingly! But, beloved, the power of Satan in a Christian's life is a force with which he must reckon, or he may fail through ignorance. Some especially have had sore conflicts with this evil one, and certain tried ones are scarcely a day without being tormented either by the howling of this dog, or else by his snapping at their heels. He cannot possess us as he possesses many of the ungodly, but he *worries* whom he can't devour with a malicious joy. Whatever "modern thought" ministers may have to say about Satan, the inspired Scripture does not leave us ignorant of his devices, but sets us on our guard against his terrible power, bidding us pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One." The temptations of the world and of the flesh are more upon our level than the assaults of Satan—he is the prince of the evil forces, and his attacks are so mysterious, so cunningly adapted to our infirmities, and so ingeniously adjusted to our circumstances, that unless the Lord, the Holy Spirit, shall daily cover us with His broad shield of divine grace, we shall be in the

utmost jeopardy. O Lord, by these words of Yours is Your servant warned to resist the enemy and escape his wiles! Glory be to Your loving care!

The teachings of the Lord also *warn us to expect trial*. The Bible never promises the true believer an easy life. Rather it assures him that he is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. There is no soaring to heaven on the wings of luxurious ease; for we must painfully plod along the pilgrim way. We see on the pages of inspiration that we cannot be crowned without warfare, nor honored without suffering. Jesus went to heaven by a rough road, and we must follow Him. Every believer in the cross must bear a cross. If things go easily with you for a long time, do not, therefore, say, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved,” for God has only to hide His face, and you will be troubled. Those happiest of men, of whom it could be said that God had set a hedge about them and all that they had—these, in due course—had to take their turn at the whipping post, and smart under the scourge. Even Job, that perfect and upright man, was not without his troubles. Beloved, expect to be tried! And when the trial comes, count it not a strange thing. Your sea will be rough like that which tossed your Lord; your way will be hot and weary like that which your Master trod; the world is a wilderness to you as it was to Him. “Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to you.” Seek not to build your mansion *here*, for a voice cries to you out of the Word, “This is not your rest, for it is polluted.” Think of that verse of our favorite hymn—

*“Why should I complain of want or distress,
Temptation, or pain? He told me no less.
The heirs of salvation, I know from His Word.
Through much tribulation must follow their Lord.”*

Therefore, beloved, you are forewarned that you may be forearmed!

God’s Word also warns us by prophesying to us of things to come. I cannot enter, just now, into what is a very interesting point of experience, namely, the singular fact that the Bible is used of God to warn individuals of events about to occur to them. The Book is full of prophecies for nations, but at times it becomes prophetic to individual believers. Have you never had impressed upon your mind a passage of Scripture which has followed you for hours, and even days, and you could not tell why, till an event has happened which has so exactly tallied with that Scripture, that you could not but remark it as having prepared you for the circumstance? Will not your morning reading sometimes forestall the sorrow or the duty of the day? Have you not often found that if you read the Bible consecutively, somehow or other, the passage which comes in due course will prove to be as truly a lesson for the day as if it had been written on purpose to meet your case? I am far from being superstitious or wishful to encourage faith in mere *impressions*—but I cannot shut my eyes to facts which have happened to myself. I know that I have received, through this Book of God, messages to my heart which have come with peculiar power, and suitability, so that I have been compelled to say, with emphasis, “Moreover by them is Your servant warned.”

But the Bible warns us all of certain great events, especially of the Second Advent of the Lord, and the coming judgment. It does not clearly tell us when our Lord will appear, but it warns us that to the unprepared He will come as a thief in the night. It warns us of the general judgment, and of the day when all men shall live again, and stand before the great white throne. It warns us of the day when every secret shall be revealed, and when every man shall receive for the things that he has done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it is good or evil. “By them is Your servant warned.” If I live like one of yonder cattle, in the immediate present, or if I have no eye for the future that is hurrying on; if my soul never places herself in vision before the judgment seat of Christ, or if I never foresee the day when heaven and earth, before the presence of the great Judge, shall flee away—why then I cannot be a diligent reader of the Word of God! If I search the Scriptures I shall be called to walk in the light of the last day, and shall be made to gird up my loins to face the dread account. Oh, that we might all be warned to be ready, that we may give our account with joy! Oh, that we may so take the warnings of Holy Writ as to be ready for death, ready for judgment, and ready for that final sentence which can never be reversed! If we were truly wise, these warnings would put salt into our lives, and preserve them from the corruption which is in the world through lust.

Beloved, I trust that every one of us who knows the Lord will use His holy Book as the constant guard of his life. Let it be like a fog signal to you, going off in warning when the road is hidden by a

cloud. Let it be like the red lamp on the railway suggesting to you to come to a stop for the road is dangerous. Let it be like a dog at night, waking you from sleep because a robber is breaking in, or as the watch on board a ship who shouts aloud, "Breakers ahead!" Let the Word of God be like one who, during the great flood in America, rode on a white horse down the valley, crying out, as he rode along, "To the hills! To the hills! To the hills!" The waters were following fast behind him, and he would have the people escape to the mountains lest they should be destroyed. O precious Book, thus bid me seek the hills! Ring the alarm bell in my ears, and compel me to flee from the wrath to come! Day and night, wherever I may be, may a word from the oracle of God sound in my ears, and keep me from sleeping on the brink of the abyss! May no enemy be able to steal upon us when sleeping in false security, for it is high time that we awake out of sleep! And this Book tells us so.

So far have we spoken upon the Word as keeping us.

II. And now, secondly, I have to speak to you upon OUR KEEPING THE WORD OF GOD.

"In keeping of them there is great reward." What is meant by *keeping* the testimonies of God's Word? You know right well that it will not suffice to have the holy Book in your houses to lie upon a table so that visitors may see that you have a family Bible! Nor is it enough to place it on the bookshelf where the dust may thickly cover it because it is never used. That is not keeping the Bible, but burying it! It does not warn you, for you smother it; you do not keep it, for you dishonor it by neglect. You must have a reverent esteem for it, and a growing familiarity with it if you would keep it. "Let the Word of God dwell in you richly."

To keep the Word of God is, first of all, *earnestly to study it* so as to become acquainted with its contents. Know your Bible from beginning to end. I am afraid there is but little Bible searching nowadays. If the Word of God had been diligently studied, there would not have been so general a departure from its teachings. Bible-reading people seldom go off to modern theology. Those who feed upon the Word of God enjoy it too much to give it up. Comparing spiritual things with spiritual, they learn to prize all the revealed truths of God, and they hold fast the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. Dear young people, if you never read a single book of romance, you will lose nothing; but if you do not read your Bibles you will lose everything! This is the age of fiction, and therefore the age of speculation and error—leave fiction and give yourself wholly to the truth of God! Eat that which is good, and spend not your money on that which is not bread. The Bible is the thesaurus of heavenly knowledge, the encyclopedia of divine science—read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the same, and then you will be keeping the sayings of God!

But we cannot keep them without going further than this—we *must be zealous in their defense*. May it be said of each one of us, "You have kept My Word." When you find others denying God's truth, hold the faster to it! When they argue against it, be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. It is not an easy task to stand fast in the faith, today, for the current which runs towards unbelief is strong as a torrent, and many have been taken off their feet by it, and are being carried down to the cataracts of error. May God help you to say with the pilgrims in Vanity Fair, "We buy the truth"! Buy it at any price, and sell it at no price! It ought to be dearer than life, for it was so to the martyrs of our own country, and to the Covenanters of Scotland in whose steps we would tread. They cared little whether their heads were struck off or not, but they cared *everything* for King Jesus, and the statutes of His Word. Beloved, happy in the end will that man be who for a while has suffered contempt, and misrepresentation, and separation from his brethren because of fidelity to the truth of God! Come what may, he that sides with truth will be no loser in the end. Oh, for more Luthers nowadays—we need them! Those who buckle to error are everywhere; even those in whom we trusted have betrayed their Lord.

But this is not all, we must go much further—*there must be a careful observance of the law of the Lord*. We cannot be said to keep God's Word if we never carry it out in our own lives. If we know the commandments, but do not obey them, we increase our sin. If we understand the truth of God, and talk about it, but are slow to live according to it, what will become of us? This is not to keep God's Word, but to hold the truth of God in unrighteousness! This may, in some cases, be a presumptuous sin. When your knowledge far exceeds your practice, take heed lest you are guilty of sinning willfully. We must

keep the Word of God in the sense in which our Lord used the word when He said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

Once more, even this is not enough—we are to keep the truth of God not only by reverent study of it, by zealous propagation of it, by careful observance of it, but also by *an inward cleaving to it in love*, and a cherishing of it in our heart of hearts. What you believe, you must also love if you are to keep it. If it comes to you in the power of God, it may humble you, it may chasten you, it may refine you as with fire; but you will love it as your life. It will be as music to your ears, as honey to your palate, as gold to your purse, as heaven to your soul! Let your very self be knit to the faithful Word. As new-born babes desire the unadulterated milk, so desire the teachings of the Spirit that you may grow thereby. Every word of God must be bread to us after which we hunger, and with which we are satisfied. We must love it even more than our necessary food; for that which God has spoken we must have an ever-burning, fervent love which no floods of destructive criticism can quench or even damp.

But now the text says, “In keeping of them there is great reward”—and here you must have patience with me while I set out *the great reward which comes to obedient believers*. There are many rewards, and the first is *great peace of mind*. “Great peace have they which love Your law: and nothing shall offend them.” When a man has done what God bids him do, his conscience is at peace, and this is a choice gift. I can bear anybody to be my foe rather than my conscience. We read of David, “David’s heart smote him.” That was an awkward knock! When a man’s own conscience is his foe, where can he run for shelter? Conscience smites home, and the wound is deep; but when a man can conscientiously say, “I did the right thing. I held the truth. I honored my God,” then the censures of other men go for little. In such a case you have no trouble about the consequences of your action, for if any bad consequence should follow, the responsibility would not lie with you—you did what you were told. Having done what God Himself commanded you, the consequences are with your Lord, and not with you. If the heavens were likely to fall, it would not be our duty to shore them up with a *lie*. If the whole church of God threatened to go to pieces, it would be no business of ours to bind it up by an unhallowed *compromise!* If you should fail to achieve success in life—what *men* call success—that is no fault of yours if you cannot succeed without being dishonest. It will be a greater success to be honest, and to be poor, than to grow rich through trickery. If, through divine grace, you have done the will of God, your peace shall be like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. Can you think of a greater reward than this? I cannot. A quiet conscience is a little heaven.

A martyr was fastened to the stake, and the sheriff who was to execute him expressed his sorrow that he should persevere in his opinions, and compel him to set fire to the pile. The martyr answered, “Do not trouble yourself, for I am not troubling myself. Come and lay your hand upon my heart, and see if it does not beat quietly.” His request was complied with, and he was found to be quite calm. “Now,” he said, “lay your hand on your own heart, and see if *you* are not more troubled than I am! And then go your way and, instead of pitying me, pity yourself.” When we have done right, we need no man’s pity, however painful the immediate consequence. To do right is better than to prosper; a heart sound in the truth of God is greater riches than a houseful of silver and gold; there is more honor in being defeated in truth than in a thousand victories gained by trickery and falsehood. Though fame should give you the monopoly of her bronze trumpet for the next 10 centuries, she could not honor you so much as you will be honored by following right and the truths of God, even though your integrity is unknown to men! In keeping the Word of the Lord there is great reward, even if it bring no reward; the approbation of God is more than the admiration of nations. Verily this is great reward!

The next great reward is *increase of divine knowledge*. If any man will know the will of Christ, let him *do* that will. When a young man is put to learn a trade, he does so by working at it; and we learn the truth which our Lord teaches by obeying His commands. To reach the shores of heavenly wisdom, every man must work his passage. Holiness is the royal road to scriptural knowledge. We know as much as we do. “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.” It may be you sit down and consider the doctrine, but you cannot understand it. You turn it over, and consult a learned divine—but still you cannot understand it. Be obedient, pray for a willing heart to do the will of God, and you have already received enlarged capacity; and with it a new light for your eyes! You will learn more by holy *practice*

than by wearisome *study*. The Lord help us to follow on to know the Lord, for then shall we know! Practice makes perfect. Obedience is the best of schools, and love is the ablest of teachers. To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge is the gift of grace to the faithful—is not this a great reward?

Moreover, in keeping the commandments *we increase in conformity to Christ and, consequently, in communion with God*. He that does as Christ did is like Christ, for our likeness is moral and spiritual. In measure we receive His image as we work His deeds, and then, as Christ lived in constant fellowship with God because He always did the things that pleased God, so do we walk in the light as God is in the light—when we yield obedience to the divine will. If you walk in sin, you cannot walk with God. If you will be obedient, then shall all clouds be chased away, and your light shall shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Sinning will make you leave off communion with God, or else communion with God will make you leave off sinning—one of the two things must occur. If you are kept from sin, and made to be obedient, you shall bear the image of the heavenly, and with the heavenly you shall have daily communion.

This will be followed by the fourth great reward, namely *power in prayer*. Jesus says, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.” If you will read in the Gospel of John, you will frequently see how success in prayer is, in the case of the believer, made to depend upon his complete *obedience*. If you will not listen to God’s Word, neither will He listen to your word! Some people complain that they have no power with God—but has God any power with them? Look to the faultiness of your lives, and cease to wonder at the failure of your prayers! Inconsistent life downstairs means unprofitable prayer upstairs—if, indeed, there is any prayer at all! You cannot have God’s ear in the closet if He never has your ear in the shop. If you live as worldlings live, the Lord will treat you as He did Cain, to whose offering He had no respect. Wonder not at your leanness in private devotions if there is license in your public life! O Lord God the Holy Spirit, sanctify us in our daily lives, and so shall we obtain access to God through Jesus Christ, and our pleading shall be accepted in Him!

One great reward is *habitual holiness*. The man who has, by divine grace, long kept the way of the Lord, finds it more easy to do so because he has acquired the habit of obedience. All things are difficult at the beginning, but all things grow easy as we proceed. I do not say that holiness is ever easy to us—it must always be a labor, and we must always be helped by the Holy Spirit; but at the same time it is far easier for a man to obey who *has* obeyed, than for one to obey who has lived in constant rebellion. If you have faith, you will have more faith almost as a necessary consequence. If you pray much, you will pray more; it is all but inevitable that you should do so. There are believers whom the Lord has put on the *rails* of life; they do not run on the road like common vehicles; they are placed on tram lines of habit, and so they keep the ways of the Lord. Sometimes a stone gets on the track, and there is an unhappy jolt, but still they do no iniquity, but keep on in one straight line even to their journey’s end. This is a great reward of divine grace. If you are obedient, you shall be rewarded by being made *more* obedient. As the diligent workman becomes expert in his art, so shall you grow skillful in holiness. What a joy it is when holiness becomes our second nature; when prayer becomes habitual as breathing, and praise is as continual as our heart-beats! May hatred to sin be spontaneous, and may desire for the best things be the habit of our soul! I scarcely know of a greater reward than this habitual holiness which the Lord in His grace bestows on us.

This will generally be followed by another great reward, namely, *usefulness to others*. He that keeps the commandments of the Lord will become an example that others may copy, and he will wield an influence which shall compel them to copy him. Don’t you think that many Christians are spiritually childless because they are disobedient? How can God allow me to bring others to Himself if I myself backslide from Him? The power to bless others must first be a power within ourselves; it is useless to pump yourself up into a pretended earnestness at a meeting, and then to think that this sort of thing will work a real work of grace in others—the seed of *pretense* will yield a harvest of *pretenders*—and nothing more. Nothing can come out of a man unless it is first *in* him, and if it is in him it will be seen in his life as well as in his teaching. If I do not live as I preach, my preaching is not living preaching. I could mention men of great talent who see no conversions; and one does not wonder; for even in *their*

lives there is no holiness, no spirituality, no communion with God! I could mention Christian people with very considerable gifts who have no corresponding measure of divine grace, and therefore their labor comes to nothing. Oh, for more holiness! Where *that* is manifest, there will be more usefulness.

Lastly, we shall have the great reward of *bringing glory to the grace of God*. If we are made holy, men seeing our good works will glorify our Father who is in heaven—and is not this the very end of our existence? Is not this the flower and fruit of life? I pray you, therefore, walk humbly and carefully with God, that He may be honored in you.

There are two things I want to say before I sit down. The first is, *let us hold fast, tenaciously, doggedly, with a death grip, the truth of the inspiration of God's Word*. If it is not inspired and infallible, it cannot be of use in warning us. I see little use in being warned when the warning may be like the idle cry of, “Wolf!” when there is no wolf. Everything in the railway service depends upon the accuracy of the signals; when these are wrong, lives will be sacrificed. On the road to heaven we need unerring signals, or the catastrophes will be far more terrible. It is difficult enough to set myself right, and carefully drive the train of conduct, but if, in addition to this, I am to set the Bible right, and thus manage the signals along the permanent way, I am in an evil plight, indeed! If the red light or the green light may deceive me, I am as well without signals as to trust to such faulty guides. We must have something fixed and certain, or where is the foundation? Where is the fulcrum for our lever if nothing is certain? If I may not implicitly trust my Bible, you may burn it, for it is of no more use to me. If it is not inspired, it ceases to be a power either to warn or to command obedience. Beloved, others may say what they will, but here I stand bearing this witness—“The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.”

While you hold fast its inspiration, *pray God to prove its inspiration to you*. Its gentle but effectual warning will prove its inspiration *to you*. This precious Book has pulled me up many times, and put me to a pause, when otherwise I had gone on to sin. At another time I should have sat still had it not made me leap to my feet to flee from evil, or seek good. To me it is a monitor whose voice I prize! There is a power about this Book which is not in any other. I do not care whether it is the highest poetry, or the freshest science; each must yield to the power of the Word of God! Nothing ever plays on the cords of a man's soul like the finger of God's Spirit. This Book can touch the deep springs of my being, and make the life floods flow forth. The Word of God is the great power of God, and it is well that you should know it to be so by its power over you. One said, “I cannot believe the Bible.” Another answered, “I cannot disbelieve it.” When the question was raised—“Why do you believe?” the believer answered, “I know the Author, and I am sure of His truthfulness.” There is the point—if we know the Author, we know that His witness is true; and knowing it to be true, we take His warnings, and follow His commands. May the Lord work in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure—then shall the Book be more and more precious in our eyes—and this sense of its preciousness will be one of the rewards which come to us in keeping the statutes of the Lord. So be it unto you through Christ Jesus! Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—psalm 19.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK”—908, 479, 19.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

PLEASE PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST!

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