

## THE MAN WHO SHALL NEVER SEE DEATH

### NO. 2169

[This sermon was preached, in great sorrow, after the sudden death of the senior deacon of the Tabernacle church, Mr. WILLIAM OLNEY. He had been more than 50 years a member, and for many years our right-hand man. His zeal in service was only rivaled by his patience in suffering. Love was his prominent characteristic. He was graciously impetuous, and yet persistently constant. While he was a very ready speaker, he was not a mere talker; but was as liberal with his gifts, and as abundant in his prayers as he was frequent in his exhortations. Never Pastor had an abler or more earnest helper. His son right worthily sustains the honor of the house; but scarcely could any dozen workers fill up the gap which the father's death has caused in the departments of prayer meetings, foreign missions, home evangelization, and orphanage. Help, Lord, for a great man has fallen in our Israel! C. H. S.]

A SERMON  
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 19, 1890,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keeps My saying, he shall never see death.  
Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that You have a devil.  
Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and You say, If a man keeps My saying,  
he shall never taste of death. Are You greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?  
and the prophets are dead: whom make You Yourself?”  
John 8:51-53.*

IN the previous part of this chapter we hear the Jews, with malicious voices, assailing our blessed Lord with this bitter question, “Say we not well that You are a Samaritan, and have a devil?” How very quietly the Savior answered them! He did answer them because He judged it necessary to do so, but He did so with great patience and with sound argument; “I have not a devil; but I honor My Father.” Clear proof, this! No man can be said to have a devil who honors God, for the evil spirit from the beginning has been the enemy of all that glorifies the Father! Paul, who had not read this passage; for the gospel of John was not written then; was nevertheless so filled with his Master's spirit that he answered after a like manner when Festus said, “Paul, you are beside yourself; much learning does make you mad.” He calmly replied, “I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.”

This was a fine copy of our Savior's gentle and forcible reply; “I have not a devil; but I honor My Father.” brethren, whenever you are falsely accused and an evil name is hurled at you, if you must reply, “give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” Be not heated and hurried, for if so, you will lose strength and will be apt to err. Let your Lord be your model. The false charge was the occasion of our Lord's uttering a great truth of God. On they rush, furious in their rage, but He flashes in their faces the light of truth. To put down error, lift up truth! Thus their deadly saying was met by a living saying; “Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keeps My saying, he shall never see death.”

Nothing so baffles the adversaries of the faith as to utter with unshaken confidence the truth of God. The truth which Jesus stated was full of promise and if they willfully rejected His promise, it became worse to them than a threat. Christ's rejected promises curdle into woes. If these men, when He said to them, “If a man keeps My saying, he shall never see death,” yet went on reviling Him, then their consciences, when afterwards awakened, would say to them, “He that believes not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” If the believer shall never see death, then the *unbeliever* shall never see *life*. Thus the gospel itself becomes “a savor of death unto death” to those who refuse it and the very word which proclaims eternal life threatens eternal death to the willfully unbelieving.

I pray that, this morning, we may be put into a gracious frame of mind and may be so helped to keep Christ's saying, that we may inherit this wondrous promise; “If a man keeps My saying, he shall never see death.” May the Holy Spirit specially aid me while I first speak upon *the gracious character*; the man who keeps Christ's saying. Secondly, I would dwell upon *the glorious deliverance*; “He shall never

see death.” Thirdly, taking the two later verses of my text, I would honor *the great Quickener*, for evidently, according to the Jews, our Lord was making much of Himself by what He said. And in truth, the fact that the believer shall never see death does greatly magnify the Lord Jesus. May He be glorified in our mourning hearts while we think of our departed friend as one who shall never see death!

**I.** First, consider THE GRACIOUS CHARACTER; “If a man keeps My saying, he shall never see death.” Observe, *that the one conspicuous characteristic of the man who shall never behold death is that he keeps Christ’s saying or word.* He may have other characteristics, but they are comparatively unimportant in this respect. He may be of a timorous nature; he may often be in distress; but if he keeps Christ’s saying he shall never see death. He may have been a great sinner in his early life but, being converted and led to keep Christ’s saying, he shall never see death! He may be a strong-minded man who keeps a firm grip of eternal realities and therefore becomes supremely useful; but none the more for that is this promise true to him. The reason for his safety is the same as in the case of the weak and timorous; he keeps Christ’s saying and therefore he shall never see death. Divest yourselves, therefore, of all enquiries about other matters and only make inquisition in your own heart upon this one point; do you keep Christ’s saying? If you do this, you shall never see death.

Who is this man who keeps Christ’s saying? Obviously, *he is a man that has close dealing with Christ.* He hears what He says. He notes what He says. He clings to what He says. We meet with persons nowadays who talk about faith in God, but they do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as the great sacrifice and Reconciler. But without a Mediator there is no coming to God. Jesus says, “No man comes unto the Father, but by Me.” His witness is true. Brothers and sisters, we glorify Christ as God Himself. Truly, the unity of the Godhead is never doubted among us. And while “there is one God,” there is also “one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.” Forever remember that Christ Jesus as God-Man, Mediator, is essential to all our communion with the Father. You cannot trust God, nor love God, nor serve God aright unless you willingly consent to His appointed way of reconciliation, redemption, justification and access which is only through the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

In Christ we draw near unto God. Attempt not to approach unto Jehovah, who is a consuming fire, except through the incarnate God. Tell me, my hearer, is your faith fixed upon Him whom God has set forth to be the propitiation for sin? Do you come to God in God’s own way? He will not receive you in any other! If you reject the way of salvation through the blood of the Lamb, you cannot be keeping the saying of Christ, for He says, “He that has seen Me has seen the Father”; and He says this of none else.

These people, next, making the Lord Jesus their all in all, revered His word and therefore kept it; they respected, observed, trusted and obeyed it. By keeping His saying is meant, first, that *they accept His doctrine.* Whatever He has laid down as truth is truth to them. My hearer, is it so with you? With *some* their great source of belief is their *own thought.* They judge the divine revelation, itself, and claim the right, not only to interpret it, but to correct and expand it. In the fullness of self-confidence, they make themselves the judges of God’s word. They believe a doctrine because the light of the present age confirms it or invents it. Their foundation is in man’s own thought. In their opinion, parts of Scripture are exceedingly faulty and need tinkering with scientific hammers.

The light of the Holy Spirit is to them a mere glowworm as compared with the light of the present advanced age. But he that is to share the promise now before us is one who believes the Savior’s word because it is His word. He takes the sayings of Christ and His inspired apostles as being true, because so spoken. To him the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is the warrant of faith. This is a very important matter; the foundation of our faith is even more important than the superstructure. Unless you ground your faith upon the fact that the Lord has spoken, your faith lacks that worshipful reverence which God requires. Even if you are correct in your beliefs, you are not correct in your spirit unless your faith is grounded on the authority of God’s own word.

We are to be disciples, not critics. We have done with quibbling, for we have come to believing. In this our departed deacon stood on firm ground. By him every teaching of the word was accepted with a lively, child-like faith; and though tempted by the school of doubt; he was not in the least affected by its reasonings. To him the gospel was dear as life itself. As *he* did, so must we believe Christ’s doctrines.

Next, the gracious man *trusts Christ’s promises.* This is a crucial point. Without trust in Jesus we have no spiritual life. Say, my hearer, do you rely upon the saying of the Lord Jesus, “He that believes in

Me has everlasting life"? Do you believe in the promise of pardon to the man that confesses and forsakes his sin; pardon through the precious blood of the great sacrifice? Are the promises of Christ certainties to you, certainties hallmarked with His sacred, "Verily, verily, I say unto you"? Can you hang your soul upon the sure nail of the Lord's sayings? Some of us rest our eternal destiny solely upon the truthfulness of Christ. When we take all His promises together, what a fullness of confidence they create in us!—

***"How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!"***

Furthermore, the gracious man *obeys His precepts*. No man can be said to keep Christ's sayings unless he follows them practically in his life. He is not only teacher, but Lord to us. A true keeper of the word cultivates that spirit of love which is the very essence of Christ's moral teaching. He endeavors to be meek and merciful. He aims at purity of heart and peaceableness of spirit. He follows after holiness even at the cost of persecution. Whatever he finds that his Lord has ordained, he cheerfully performs. He does not kick at the Lord's commands as involving too much self-denial and separation from the world. He is willing to enter in by the strait gate and to follow the narrow way because his Lord commands him. That faith which does not lead to obedience is a dead faith and a false faith. That faith which does not cause us to forsake sin is no better than the faith of devils, even if it is so good—

***"Faith must obey her Father's will,  
As well as trust His grace:  
A pardoning God is jealous still  
For His own holiness."***

So now you see who the man is that keeps Christ's sayings. That man receives, through the Word of God, a new and everlasting life, for the Word of God is a "living and incorruptible seed, which lives and abides forever." Wherever the seed of the word drops into a soil which accepts it, it takes root, abides and grows. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." It is by Christ's sayings, or by Christ's word, that life is implanted in the soul; by that same word the heavenly life is fed, increased, developed and at length perfected. The power and energy of the Holy Spirit which work through the word are used as the beginning, the sustaining and the perfecting of the inner life. The life of grace on earth is the blossom of which the life of glory is the fruit.

It is the same life all along, from regeneration to resurrection. The life which comes into the soul of the believer, when he begins to keep Christ's sayings, is the same life which he will enjoy before the eternal throne in the realms of the blessed. We may know what keeping Christ's sayings is from the fact that He Himself has set us the example. Note well the 55<sup>th</sup> verse, where Jesus says concerning the Father; "Yet you have not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but *I know Him, and keep His saying.*" We are to keep our Lord's saying, even as He kept His Father's saying!

He lived upon the Father's word and therefore refused Satan's temptation to turn stones into bread. His Father's word was in Him so that He always did the things which pleased the Father. When He spoke, He spoke not His own words, but the words of Him that sent Him. He lived that the divine word might be executed; even on the cross He was careful that the Scripture might be fulfilled. He said, "He that is of God hears God's words" and this was so truly the case with Him that He said, "My ears have You opened." The word was everything to Him and He rejoiced over His apostles because He could say of them, "They have kept Your word." He, whose word you are to keep shows you how to keep it! Live towards Him as He lived towards the Father and then you shall receive the promise He has made: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keeps My saying, He shall never see death."

If love is the fulfilling of the Lord's saying, our dearly-beloved but now departed friend kept the saying of Christ; for in that matter many believers have done virtuously, but he excelled them all. He has not looked on death.

**II.** Now we turn to the delightful part of our subject, namely, THE GLORIOUS DELIVERANCE which our Lord here promises; "He shall never see death." Our Lord did not mean that he shall never die, for He Himself died and His followers, in long procession, have descended to the grave. Some brethren are cheered by the belief that they shall live until the Lord comes and therefore they shall not

sleep, but shall only be changed. The hope of our Lord's appearing is a very blessed one, come when He may. But I do not think that to be alive at His coming is any great object of desire. Is there any great preference in being changed beyond that of dying? Do we not read that, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep"?

This is a great truth of God. Throughout eternity, if I die, I shall be able to say I had actual fellowship with Christ in the article of death and in descent into the grave, which those happy saints who will survive can never know. It is no matter of doctrine, but yet, if one might have a choice in the matter, it might be gain to die—

***"The graves of all His saints He blessed,  
And softened every bed:  
Where should the dying members rest,  
But with the dying head?"***

How dear will Christ be to us when, in the ages to come, we shall think of His death and shall be able to say, "We, too, have died and risen again"! You that are alive and remain will certainly not have a preference over us, who, like our Lord, shall taste of death. I am only speaking, now, of a matter of no great moment, which, as believers, we may use as a pleasant subject of discourse among ourselves. We grieve not that our brother has fallen asleep before the Lord's glorious appearing, for we are sure that he will be no loser thereby.

Our Lord has said, "If a man keeps My saying, he shall never see death," and this does not relate to the few who will remain at His second advent, but to the entire company of those who have kept His saying, even though they pass into the grave. What does this promise mean? It means this, in the first place; *our face is turned away from death*. Here am I, a poor sinner, convicted of sin and awakened to a fear of wrath. What is there before my face? What am I compelled to gaze upon? The Greek is not fully interpreted by the word "see"; it is a more intense word. According to Westcott, the sight here mentioned is that of "a long, steady, exhaustive vision, whereby we become slowly acquainted with the nature of the object to which it is directed."

The awakened sinner is made to look at eternal *death* which is the threatened punishment of sin. He stands gazing upon the result of sin with terror and dismay. Oh, the wrath to come! The death that never dies! While unforgiven, I cannot help gazing upon it and foreseeing it as my doom. When the gospel of the Lord Jesus comes to my soul and I keep His saying by faith, I am turned completely round. My *back* is upon death and my face is towards eternal life! Death is removed, life is received and more life is promised. What do I see within, around and before me? Why, life, and only life; life in Christ Jesus! "He is our life." In my future course on earth, what do I see? Final falling from grace? By no means, for Jesus says, "I give unto My sheep *eternal life*." What do I see far away in the eternities? Unending life! "He that believes in Me has everlasting life."

Now I begin to realize the meaning of that text, "I am the resurrection: he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." And again, "I am the life: he that lives and believes in Me shall never die." The man who has received the saying of the Lord Jesus has passed from death unto life and shall *never* come into condemnation! Consequently he shall never gaze on death. All that lies before the believer is life, life more abundantly, life to the fullest, life eternal! What has become of our death? Our Lord endured it. He died for us. "He His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree." In His death as our Representative we died. There is no death penalty left for the believer, for not the least charge can be brought against those for whom Christ has died. Hence we sing—

***"Complete atonement You have made,  
And to the utmost farthing paid  
Whatever your people owed:  
Nor can His wrath on me take place,  
If sheltered in Your righteousness,  
And sprinkled with Your blood."***

Shall *we* die for whom Christ died in the purpose of God? Can our departure out of the world be sent as a punishment when our Lord Jesus has so vindicated justice that no punishment is required? When I behold my Lord die upon the cross, I see that for me death itself is dead.

Then comes in another sense of the expression. "He that keeps My saying shall never see death," means that *his spiritual death is gone, never to return*. Before the man knows Christ, he abides in death and wherever he looks he sees nothing but death. Poor souls! *You* know what I am talking about, you that are now under concern of soul, for you try to pray and find death in your prayers, You try to believe, but seem dead as to faith. Alas, you ungodly ones! Although you know it not, death is everywhere within you. You are "dead in trespasses and sins." Your sins are to you what grave-clothes are to a corpse! They seem your natural investiture; they cling to you; they bind you. Little do you know what corruption is coming upon you, so that God Himself will say of you, "Bury the dead out of My sight."

As soon as ever the gospel saying of the Lord Jesus comes to a man with power, what is the effect? He is dead no longer; he begins to see life! It may be that at first it is a painful life; a life of deep regrets for the past and dark fears for the future. It may be a life of hungering and thirsting; a life of pining and panting; a life that needs something; it scarcely knows what; but it cannot live without it. This man sees life and the more he keeps his Savior's word, the more he rejoices in Christ Jesus, the more he rests on His promise, the more he loves Him, the more he *serves* Him, the more will his new life drive death out of sight! Life now abounds and holds sway and the old death hides away in holes and corners.

Though oftentimes the believer has to mourn over the old death which struggles to return, yet he does not gaze upon that death of sin as once he did. He cannot endure it. He takes no pleasure in the contemplation of it, but cries to God for deliverance from it. Grace frees us from the reign of death as well as from the penalty of death; and in neither of these senses shall the keeper of Christ's saying ever look upon death. "But," cries one, "will not a Christian die?" I answer, not necessarily, for some will remain at the coming of our Lord; and these will not die. Therefore there is no legal necessity that any should die since the obligation would then rest alike on all. But good men die. The tokens of death are seen in mournful array upon my pulpit.

Yet our dear brother did not die as the penalty of his sin. He was forgiven and it is not according to God's grace or justice to punish those whom He has forgiven. O my hearers, if you do not believe in the Lord Jesus, death will be a penal infliction to you! But death is changed in its nature in the case of a believer in Jesus. Our death is a falling asleep, not a going to execution! It is a departure out of the world unto the Father, not a being driven away in wrath. We quit the militant host of earth for the triumphant armies of heaven by the gate of death; that which was a cavern leading to blackness and darkness forever has, by the resurrection of our Lord, been made into an open tunnel which serves as a passage into eternal glory! As a penal infliction upon believers, death was abolished by our Lord and now it has become a stairway from the grace-life below to the glory-life above.

"If a man keeps My saying, he shall never gaze on death," may further mean, *he shall not live under the influence of it*. He shall not be perpetually thinking of death and dreading its approach and that which follows after it. I must admit that some Christians are in bondage through fear of death; but that is because they do not keep their Master's saying as they ought to. The effect of His saying upon us is frequently such that instead of being afraid to die, we come to *long* to depart! In such a case we should realize the verses of Watts, who tells us that could we see the saints above we should long to join them—

***"How we should scorn these robes of flesh,  
These fetters and this load!  
And long for evening to undress,  
That we may rest in God.  
We should almost forsake our clay  
Before the summons come  
And pray and wish our souls away  
To their eternal home."***

I have to check some dear brethren when they say to me, "Let me die the death of the righteous." No, do not talk as Balaam did, but rather say, "Let me live, that I may glorify God and help my sorrowing brethren in the Lord's work." I pray you, do not hasten to be gone; and yet this impatience proves that death has lost its terrors for us. We do not see death looming before us as a coming tempest; we do not gaze upon it as a fascinating horror which makes our faces pale and casts a lurid glare on all around us. We see not the darkness, for we walk in the light! We fear not the rumbling of the chariot, for

we know who rides to us therein! *We shall never see that which is the reality and essence of death*, namely, the wrath of God in the second death. We have no cause to fear condemnation, for “it is God that justifies.” That final separation from God, which is the real death of human nature, can never come to us. “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” That ruin and misery which the word, “death,” describes, when used in relation to the soul, will never befall us, for we shall never perish, neither shall any pluck us out of Christ’s hands!

*When the believer dies, he does not gaze on death.* He walks through the valley of the shadow of death, but he fears no evil and sees none to fear. A shadow was cast across my road, but I passed through it and scarcely perceived that it was there. Why was that? Because I had my eye fixed upon a strong light beyond; and I did not notice the shadows which otherwise would have distressed me. believers are so rejoiced by the presence of their Lord and Master that they do not observe that they are dying. They rest so sweetly in the embrace of Jesus that they hear not the voice of wailing. When they pass from one world into another, it is something like going from England to Scotland; it is all one kingdom and one sun shines in both lands! Often travelers by railway ask, “When do we pass from England into Scotland?” There is no jerk in the movement of the train. There is no marking of the boundary; you glide from one into the other and scarcely know where the boundary lies. The eternal life that is in the believer glides along from grace to glory without a break. We grow steadily on from the blade to the ear, and from the ear to the full corn; but no black belt divides the stages of growth from one another. We shall know when we arrive, but the passage may be so rapid that we shall not see it. From earth to heaven may seem the greatest of journeys, but it is ended in the twinkling of an eye!;

*“One gentle sigh, the fetter breaks,  
We scarce can say, ‘He’s gone,’  
Before the ransomed spirit takes  
Its mansion near the throne!”*

He shall never gaze on death; he shall pass it by with no more than a glance. He shall go through Jordan as though it were dry land and scarcely know that he has passed a river at all! Like Peter, the departing shall scarcely be sure that they have passed through the iron gate which shall open of its own accord; they shall only know that they are free. Of each one of them it may be said, as of Peter, “He knew not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.” Fear not death, for Jesus says, “He that keeps My saying shall never see death.” Follow the soul when it enters upon the other world; the body is left behind and the man is a disembodied spirit; but he does not see death. All the life he needs he has within his soul by being one with Jesus. Meanwhile, he is expecting that at the trump of the resurrection his body will be reunited with his soul, having been made to be the dwelling and the instrument of his perfected spirit. While he is absent from the body, he is so present with the Lord that he does not look on death.

But the Judgment Day has come, the great white throne is set, the multitudes appear before the Judge! What about the keeper of Christ’s saying? Is he not afraid? It is the day of days, the day of wrath! He knows that he shall never see death and therefore he is in no confusion. For him there is no, “Depart, you cursed.” He can never come under the eternal sentence. Look! Hell opens wide her tremendous mouth. The pit which of old was dug for the wicked yawns and receives them! Down sink the ungodly multitude, a very cataract of souls. “The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God.” In that terrific hour, will not his foot slip? No! He shall stand in the judgment and shall never see death.

But the world is on a blaze! All things are being dissolved and the elements are melting with fervent heat! The stars are falling like the leaves of autumn and the sun is black as sackcloth of hair. Is he not now alarmed? Ah, no! He shall never see death. His eyes are fixed on life and he himself is full of it. He abides in life! He spends that life in praising God. He shall never gaze on death, for Jesus says, “Because I live, you shall live also.” O blessed eyes that shall never look on death! O happy mind that has been made confident in Jesus Christ of an *immortality* for which there is no hazard! Our dear brother was the embodiment of life in the service of the Lord. Last Sabbath he sat in this seat behind me and responded in his very soul to the Word of the Lord. Last Monday was spent all day in the service of God and this church, in the heartiest manner. Though a great sufferer, his spirit carried him over his bodily weakness

and he constantly exhibited an amazing zeal for God and the souls of men. To the last the old ruling passion was strong in him; he would speak for his Lord. He was so struck down that he did not know that he was dying. He found himself in heaven before he was aware, and I dare say he said to himself, "I thought I was going to the Tabernacle, but here I am in the temple of my God! For many a year I took my seat among my brethren below, or went about serving my Lord among His people and now I have a mansion above! And now I behold His face! But I will now see what there is to do." Yes, he will serve God day and night in His temple, just as he did here, for he was never tired of work for Jesus. He was always at it, and always full of life. He never beheld death while he was with us, for he overflowed with life! And when physical death came, he did not gaze upon it but simply bowed his head and found himself before the throne.

What a glorious word is this! Alas for you who are ungodly! You are made to *look* on death. It haunts you now! What will it be in the hour of your death? "What will you do in the swelling of the Jordan?" Nothing remains for you but the wages of sin, which is death. The ruin and misery of your souls will be your endless portion. You will be shut in with the finally destroyed, ruined and wretched ones forever! This is a dreadful looking for of judgment. It ought to startle you. But as for the believer, surely the bitterness of death is past. We have nothing more to do with death as a penalty or a terror any more than we have to do with spiritual death as the choke-damp of the heart and the mother of corruption.

**III.** This brings me to the third point; THE GREAT QUICKENER. Those Jews; what a passion they were in! How unscrupulous their talk! They could not even quote Christ's words correctly. They said, "You say, If a man keeps My saying, he shall never *taste* of death." He did not say so. He said, "Shall never *see* death." We may be said to taste of death as our Master did, for it is written that "He tasted death for every man." And yet in another sense we shall never taste the wormwood and gall of death, for to us it is "swallowed up in victory." Its drop of gall is lost in the bowl of victory. However, the Lord Jesus did not say that we shall never taste of death; neither did He mean that we shall not die, in the common sense of the word. He was using, to the Jews, words in that religious sense in which their own prophets used them. The ancient Scriptures so used the word, death, and these Jews knew their meaning right well. Death did not always mean the separation of the soul from the body, for the Lord's declaration to Adam was, "In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." Assuredly, Adam and Eve died in the sense intended, but they were not annihilated, nor were their souls separated from their bodies for they still remained to labor on earth. "The soul that sins it shall die," relates to a death which consists of degradation, misery, inability, ruin. Death does not mean annihilation, but something very different. Overthrow and ruin are the death of a soul, just as perfection and joy are its life forever. The separation of the soul *from God* is the death penalty; and that is death, indeed. The Jews refused to understand our Lord, yet they clearly saw that what Jesus claimed tended to glorify Him above Abraham and the prophets. Hidden away in their abusive words we find a sense which is instructive. It is not the greatness or the goodness of a believer that secures his eternal life; *it is his being linked by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ*, who is greater than Abraham and the prophets! The man keeps Christ's saying, and that becomes a bond between him and Christ; and he is one with Christ. Because of their Lord, the saints live and the living of the saints by Him brings to Him glory and honor. His life is seen in every one of His people; like mirrors, they reflect His divine life. He has life in Himself and that life He imparts to His chosen. As the old creation displays the glory of the Father, so the new creation reveals the glory of the Son. Believers find their highest life in Christ Jesus their Lord; and every particle of it glorifies Him.

It is also to our Lord's glory that we live by His word. He does not sustain us by the machinery of providence, but by His word. As the world stood out into being because God spoke, so do we live and continue to live because of Christ's saying. That which He taught, being received into our hearts, becomes the origin and the nourishment of our eternal life. It is greatly glorifying to Christ that, by His word, all spiritual life in the countless myriads of believers is begotten and sustained.

It is clear that the Lord Jesus is far greater than Abraham and all the prophets. Their word could not make men live, nor even live themselves. But the saying of Jesus makes all live who receive it. By keeping it they live; yes, live forever! Glory be to the name of Him who quickens whom He wills!

A sweet inference flows from all this and with that I conclude. *The glory of Christ depends upon the not seeing of death by all who keep His saying.* If you and I keep His saying and we see death, then Jesus is not true. If you, believing in Jesus, gaze on death, it will be proven that either He had not the power or the will to make His promise good. If the Lord fails in any *one* case, He has lost the honor of His faithfulness. O you trembling, anxious souls, lay hold on this—

*“His honor is engaged to save  
The meanest of His sheep.”*

If the saint of God, who has won thousands for Jesus, should, after all, perish, what a failure of covenant engagements there would be! But that failure would be just as great if one of the least of all those who keep our Lord’s word should be allowed to perish. Such a loss of honor to our all-glorious Lord is not to be imagined! Therefore if one of you who are the least in your Father’s house do really trust in Him; though you are encumbered with infirmities and imperfections; He must keep you from beholding death! His truth, His power, His immutability, His love are all involved in His faithfulness to His promise to each believer. I want you to take this home with you and be comforted.

Yes, and if I have some foul transgressor here this morning; the grossest sinner that ever lived; if you will come to Christ, lay hold upon His gracious saying; keep it and be obedient to it; you shall never see death! There is not a soul in hell that can ever say, “I have kept Christ’s saying, and I have seen death, for here I am.” There never will be such an one, or Christ’s glory would be tarnished throughout eternity! Keep His saying and He will keep you from seeing death!

How eagerly did my departed friend long for the conversion of those who came to the Tabernacle! He was never satisfied while any were unbled. He had great longings. He loved revivals and missions. Tidings of souls saved stirred his inmost soul. Oh, that his prayers, while he was with us, may be answered, now that he is gone from us! He not only lived among us, but he lived in our hearts! He needs no praise from me; his praise is in all the church. He will require no monument; all your hearts are his memorials. Never can I forget my beloved fellow worker either in time or in eternity! Beloved, the real William Olney has not seen death, although with many tears we must lay him in the grave next Wednesday. Pray much for me; my loss is not to be measured. Pray much for his dear family, whose loss cannot be repaired. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 7.**

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