

REST AS A TEST

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A SERMON
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“Ask for the old path, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”
Jeremiah 6:16

A VERY short time ago, I gave you, in print, [See *The Sword and the Trowel*, March, 1879, “Incidents of Travel Clustering Round a Text.”] a sermon upon this text which, I daresay, many of you well remember. I am not now going to pursue the same line of thought as I then followed. I have taken this text again, not to preach from all its words so much as from one single truth which is clear in it, namely, that you may judge which is the old path, and which is the good way in which you ought to walk, by this test—if you are in the old path, the good way, you do find rest for your soul.

You may, therefore, judge of your position at the present moment and test the quality of your religion—for there are many false faiths, and erroneous creeds, and man-made religions, and evil spirits that have gone out into the world—but you may try them all by this test, if you are, indeed, in the old path, the good way—in God’s own way—you do find rest for your soul.

I need not have taken the same text again, for this truth is clearly taught in many other passages of Scripture. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in that memorable soul-saving invitation of His, says, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

From these words, it is clear that, if I have really come to Christ, He has given me rest. And if I have, in very deed, taken His yoke upon me, and learnt of Him, I have found a still further rest. But if I neither have rest given to me, nor have a rest which I find, I am led to the conclusion that I have not come to Christ, and am not wearing His easy yoke. Is not that clear reasoning and should we not thus judge ourselves by what is so manifestly true?

Moreover, we have not only the words of Christ to support us in this reasoning, but we know that it is the distinguishing feature of His Gospel that it does give this rest of heart. The types and sacrifices under the law never gave any permanent rest. For, although he who brought a sin-offering found peace for the moment, by and by he had to bring another sacrifice.

The great day of atonement, when it was duly observed with all its holy pomp and ceremony, brought a blessing on the people, but then, there had to be another day of atonement the next year. Now, if the consciences of those who presented the various victims, had been cleansed from dead works, there would have been no need that there should be a further remembrance made of sin. But none of these things could make the comers thereunto perfect. Rest of conscience was not possible under the shadows. It is only to be found in the substance. Every morning had its bleeding lamb and every evening had another bleeding lamb—blood was perpetually being shed.

*“Fresh blood as constant as the day,
 Was on their altar spilt,”—*

but our Lord Jesus Christ has this testimony for His glory alone, “This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God,” for all His sacrificial work was done.

In the atonement of Christ, there is a real and effectual expiation which there was not in all the types of the law, and the man, who has once received that expiation, is forever absolved before the judgment seat of God from all his sin. Having believed in Jesus, he sees in his Savior's sacrifice a full atonement for the whole of his guiltiness, and realizes that he is delivered from it, and therefore, he has peace and rest of heart, for Jesus does make us perfect in the things that appertain to the conscience.

Walking in the light as He is in the light, His blood cleanses us from all sin, and we understand what Paul meant when he wrote, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

If you have not found rest of heart, dear friend, you have missed that blessing which is peculiar to the Gospel dispensation. If you have not found in Christ perfect quiet for your soul, you put Him on a level with Moses, and you seem to make out that you will want either another sacrifice, or another something, to make you clear of guilt in the sight of God. This would be casting Christ down from His priestly throne and robbing Him of the brightest jewel in His crown, and this we must never do. So, if we have found the right way, and are walking therein, we must have rest for our soul, for this is the peculiar mark of it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the parable of the prodigal son, pictured to us the result of returning to God in the right way. I need scarcely quote our Savior's words, for you are probably all familiar with them. That younger son had no rest while He joined himself to a citizen of the far country, who sent him into his fields to feed his swine. He hungered and he thirsted all the while he was there, but he had no sooner come home and confessed his faults in his father's ear, and received his father's kisses and words of welcome, than where do we see him? Toiling to gain acceptance with his father? Working in his father's fields until he has earned the right to be again called a son?

No, but received with music and dancing, in the best room of his father's house, to be fed upon the daintiest fare that his father's household could afford, and to be welcomed back to his father's heart, to go no more out for ever. Well, now, if you have never heard any music and dancing—if your soul has never partaken of the fatted calf—if the Father's kiss has never breathed peace to your troubled spirit, then, methinks, you cannot have come home to the great Father. For, had you done so, there would have been peace in your heart and conscience.

Further, we find that this rest, which is spoken of in the text, has come to those who have trodden the good old way. There are plenty of instances in the Word of God, but one will suffice us as a specimen of many more.

How restful is the apostle Paul even amid much that might perplex him! When he is writing his letters, he seems as if he wrote poetry rather than prose when he begins to touch upon the condition of a justified man. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." You know that there are many other passages, to the same effect, which I need not quote, all of which prove that he had true peace of heart.

Think, too, of his behavior under trying circumstances. What wonderful calmness he exhibited in times of trial! Before Nero, the cruel lion, on board ship when the vessel was driven upon the rocks, or in the prison where he and Silas sang the praises of God at midnight. Wherever you find him—even when he becomes "such an one as Paul the aged," and he needs his cloak, for the Mamertine prison is cold, still he is always calm, quiet, happy, peaceful.

Yet I need not quote the case of the apostle Paul, there are multitudes of Christian men and women alive who are equally witnesses that the good old way is the way of peace. They are disturbed sometimes, yet their heart is not troubled. I know, perhaps, as well as anyone here, what deep depression of spirit means, and what it is to feel myself sinking lower and lower. Yet, at the worst, when I reach the lowest depths, I have an inward peace which no pain or depression of spirit can in the least disturb.

Trusting in Jesus Christ, my Savior, there is still a blessed quietness in the deep caverns of my soul, though, upon the surface, a rough tempest may be raging, and there may be but little apparent calm. Many of you know that it is so with you also. If you have come to terms with God, through Jesus Christ,

the great Reconciler, then there is for you “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,” which “shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

I. This, then, is the kind of plumbline that we are going to use to see whether our soul is upright, whether the foundation of our spiritual building is well and truly laid—**IF WE ARE REALLY IN THE GOOD OLD WAY, WE HAVE FOUND REST UNTO OUR SOULS.**

This rule proves the rightness of *the way of salvation by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ*. For, if you examine all the ways that are opposed to this, you will find that they bring no rest whatever. All the other ways are only different forms of seeking salvation by our own works. The Romish church has embodied to the very full the doctrine of salvation by works, with which indeed is our great quarrel, the same that Martin Luther took up. The Papists would have it that works justify a sinner, but Luther rightly maintained, according to the teaching of Scripture, that faith alone justifies in the sight of God.

Well, now, according to this way of justification by works, they tell us that a man is accounted just before God because of his good works, especially such as his attendances at the various ceremonies of the church, his reception of “sacraments” and the like. But I am bold enough to say that no one, in the church of Rome, ever did have or ever could have, legitimately, any rest of heart through his own good deeds, either living or dying.

I have purposely added the word “dying” because I want you to note what is the highest state of blessing to which the best Catholics hope to attain at death. When I was in Rome, I stood in the church of St. John Lateran, and I saw there a notice that there was to be “a mass or the repose of the soul of his eminence, Cardinal Wiseman.” “Well,” I thought to myself, “if there ever was a man who served his church well, and who was distinguished, not only as a saint, but as a prince of the church, surely this was the man—yet when the cardinal dies, he goes somewhere or other—I do not know where, but it is somewhere where he has not any repose, because there are to be masses for the repose of his soul, as there were for the repose of the soul of the late pope.”

Now, if even popes and cardinals go where they do not have any repose, where do ordinary Catholics go! It must be a very poor look-out for them. If I were in their place, I would turn Protestant, trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and go to heaven when I might die. There is nothing to be had, you see, for money. The best thing that man can do, is not worth anything in the sight of God, so let no one of us place the slightest reliance upon it.

Take, any other form of this error, and you will find that there is no rest in it. The common, somewhat diluted, Protestantized doctrine of salvation by works has just the same flaw in it. If I am to be saved by my own works, when may I know that I have done enough? Never! Never! Even if I could ever have done, enough in quantity, I shall soon undo it all by some sin or mistake which would make it valueless.

And if I should persevere in well-doing even to the end of my life, and do the best I can all the while, have I not reason to fear that I might still fall short of the divine standard, because my motive or my spirit is faulty, and so at the last, I should not have the quantity of good works necessary to make me a Christian? Unless you lessen the requirements of the law of God, salvation by works can only be possible upon the condition of absolute perfection—but absolute perfection is beyond any man’s reach, seeing that he has already sinned.

If, however, you lower the standard, and say that sincere obedience will avail instead of perfect obedience, who is to decide as to the sincerity? How is a man to be certain even that he is always sincere? May he not, sometime or other, have an admixture of insincerity with his love, and if so, may not that, like a little leaven, sour the whole lump?

So unsatisfactory and unreliable is this doctrine of salvation by works that Cardinal Bellarmine, who was one of the greatest of the Romish theologians, towards his latter end used words something like these—“That, while it is right to tell the people that they must be saved by their works, yet, inasmuch as few persons can ever tell that they have done sufficient good works to merit salvation, it is, probably,

upon the whole, safer to trust in the blood of Jesus Christ than in our own works,” and I hope that the cardinal himself did so.

If you put your trust in the blood of Jesus, and rely for salvation upon what Christ has done, you may not only say that it is, upon the whole, safer than trusting in what you do yourself, but you may be sure that it is altogether the better, the diviner, the truer way, for among many other blessings, it gives you peace and rest, which the other system never does and never can. To be continually flogged, like the galley slave tugging at the oar and to have conscience ever crying, “Do, do, do. This do, and you shall live. Fail in doing this and you shall die,” is to live a dog’s life, a slave’s life. Nay, it is to remain dead in trespasses and sins.

But when you come to the Gospel plan of salvation, “Believe and live. Trust Christ, and you are both accounted righteous and made righteous. Rely upon what Jesus Christ has done and suffered, and is still doing,” and then you have God’s Word to rely upon, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,” “He that believeth on him is not condemned,” “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” When I have complied with the conditions God lays down, that is, when I have believed in Jesus and have been baptized, I say, “It is enough, my Lord. Your servant is saved. Here I find rest unto my soul.” O beloved, ask you for the old path of pardon through the Savior’s sacrifice, and walk therein, and you shall find rest unto your souls!

Another old way that I want you to walk in is, *the way of believing the Word Of God like a little child*. Here is this blessed Book, and I can honestly declare that, as a rule, I see only one meaning to it. Yet, as I read it, I find that there are some difficult passages which I cannot understand. I try all I can, but if I fail, I rejoice that my Heavenly Father will not condemn me if I do not understand them. How can a little child understand all that His father knows? I am even glad that there are some difficult passages, because they are a trial to my faith. Yet all that is essential for me to know, it seems to me, is as plain as possible when I just read it as I would read another book.

But there are some people who always read the Bible through red or green spectacles, and they see there some wonderful system of theology which I have never yet discovered. In fact, they can find in a text of Scripture what no ordinary person ever would see. I think they must put it there before they find it, though I suppose they do not think so.

Then there are others who read the Bible philosophically. I do not know, often, what they mean, nor can I make head or tail of what they say. One needs to have been born in Germany in order to understand some of their remarks. They seem to enshroud the Bible with a cloud of smoke, so that they do not see in it what I perceive, but they see something very wonderful indeed.

Ah, well, brethren! I believe that you do not get any peace for your soul out of God’s Word either by trying to clip it down to fit in with some system of your own making, or by spiriting it away in some metaphysical incomprehensibility. But if you just take the Bible in its plain sense, and say, “That seems to me to be what my Heavenly Father means by this passage. It looks very simple and clear to me. I, an unsophisticated person, reading it after seeking the Holy Spirit’s instruction and guidance, think it is so, and I believe it, and I act upon it,” you will find peace and rest of heart in that way of studying the Scriptures.

Everybody wants to have an anchorage somewhere or other. Many have gone over to Rome because they foolishly imagined that they would there find an infallible church, but if you believe in an infallible Bible, and in an infallible Spirit explaining it, you have all the infallibility that is necessary for mental and spiritual rest. And let me assure you that, if you will but determine that you will believe whatever God says simply because He says it, whether you understand it or not, and if this Book becomes to you the standard of appeal on all disputed points, you shall find rest unto your souls, instead of the disquietude which is bred so abundantly, by so-called “thinking” gentlemen, in these modern times, and which is fed by the articles in Reviews which spread all sorts of doubt on every hand.

If you will just come to the Bible and say—

*“This is the judge that ends the strife,
Where wit and reason fail;”—*

you will find rest unto your souls. That is another good old way in which I urge you to walk.

A third way I can recommend to you for giving peace of mind and heart is, *the way of living daily by faith in God*. A great many persons fall into the idea that life is to be divided into two parts—so much is secular and so much is religious. That is a gross error. The whole of a Christian’s life should be religious. It should be just as much a part of his religion to deal honestly in trade as to be orthodox in his creed. We are to live unto Christ, we are, as an old saint expressed it, to eat and drink and sleep eternal life.

“We are Christians,” would have been the answer of the first disciples of Christ if you had asked them what they were. Are you a tent-maker, Paul? “I am a Christian.” But you make tents, do you not? “Yes, but I do it all for Christ.” How so? You take the money for the tents and live upon it. “That is in order that I may not be chargeable unto any, that thereby the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be freely proclaimed among the heathen. Every stitch I take through the hard canvas is done for Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior. While I live, I live unto Him, and when I die, I shall go to be with Him forever.” Well, now, beloved, your whole life should be like that. You should spend it all for Christ.

See that the whole of it comes under the governance of faith in God. Have faith in God about everything—even about that little child that is evidently sickening—trust the child with God. Have faith about that doubtful customer whose bill is running up so high—I do not mean, have faith in him, but trust in God, and then use the right means to prevent the man from robbing you. Bring everything to God, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving.

It is wonderful how differently the days roll round, when they are prayed over, to what they do when you enter upon them entirely by yourself. If you ask God’s guidance even about little things, and especially about the things in which you think you do not need any guidance—for that is, often, where you need it most—your days shall be spent in peace and restfulness. If you have learnt to bring every burden to the Lord, every care, and every trial, and every loss—yea, and every joy—then you shall find rest unto your souls, for this is the good old way of living by faith in which Abraham walked, and it is the way of peace and rest.

Another good old way is, *the way of obedience to the divine commands*. You can be your own master if you like, but that is not the way of peace. But if God be your Master, and you consult His will in everything, and say, “I might have preferred to do that, but instead thereof I shall do this, because I see that it is in consonance with the command of God,” you will have peace of mind and heart in doing it, but you would have found no peace in doing the other thing.

Suppose that doing right should involve you in trouble, you will be able to bear it very cheerfully because you will say, “This comes through no fault of mine and it is a pleasure to suffer for doing right.” I saw, the other day, a picture of John Bradford, the martyr, kissing the stake. He was represented as standing against the stake by which He was to be burnt alive, and He was embracing it, and kissing it. How could He do that? It is no joyous matter to be burnt quick to the death, but he felt that, as he must die for the truth and for faithfulness to his God, it was a sweet thing so to die. There is not much stake-kissing, I am afraid, among us now, but it ought to come to that, and it does when a man, conscientiously, and at all hazards, resolves, “I will say the right, and do the right, whatever happens.”

If you begin to tuck about, and to be guided by policy, not by principle—if you say, “I shall make just a little nick in my conscience here, and another nick there, and shall put it right by and by,” you will lose rest. When you get to bed at night, you will not look back upon the day’s proceedings with pleasure. When trial comes, you will have nobody to help you.

But on the other hand, if you can say, “In the name of God, have I gone forward in all simple honesty, resting and confiding in Him,” you shall find that the Lord will not let you be loser through trusting Him. You shall be borne up, and brought through, and you shall bless and praise the gracious

Master, who is such good Paymaster, and who so well rewards those who diligently seek Him. That is another good old way in which I advise you to walk.

I will mention one other good old way, and that is, *the way of close communion with Jesus Christ*. Oh, what a blessed way that is! If you walk in it, you will say, from your inmost soul, unto the Lord, “If thou go not with me, carry me not up hence.” You will cry, “I must have Jesus with me or I dare not leave my chamber in the morning. I must have the assurance of His gracious company or I shall fear to fall asleep at night.” You will sing that delicious hymn, “Sun of my soul,” and you will pray to Him, and get the prayer answered,

*“When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My wearied eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought, how sweet to rest
Forever on my Savior’s breast!*

*“Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live:
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die.”*

So will you find such rest for your soul as you could never have known, in any other way. The sheep must rest when the shepherd is near. The spouse must rest when her Beloved brings her to the banqueting house and waves the banner of His love over her. So, keep near to Jesus, for you may be certain that there you will be in the good old way where you will find rest unto your souls.

I wish I had the tongue of the eloquent that I might worthily describe the rest which belongs to the people of God. Do not tell me that there is no rest for us till we get to heaven. We who have believed in Jesus enter into rest even now—why should we not do so? Our salvation is complete. The robe of righteousness, in which we are clad, is finished. The atonement for our sins is fully made. We are reconciled to God, we are beloved of the Father, we are preserved by His grace, and supplied by His providence with all that we need. We carry all our burdens to Him, and leave them at His feet. We spend our lives in His service, and we find His ways to be ways of pleasantness, and His paths to be paths of peace. Oh, yes; we have found rest unto our souls!

I recollect the first day that I ever rested in Christ, and I did rest that day, and so will all of you who trust in Jesus as I trusted in Him. To a laboring man, rest is indeed sweet. Suppose a man is called, through some sudden emergency, to work for twenty-four hours at a stretch. Oh, how every bone in his body seems to bless God when he at last is able to rest! It does not matter much if his bed is only the hard floor. He throws himself down, and every limb, as he stretches it out, seems to say, “Thank God, thank God, now I can rest!”

That is just how a poor burdened one feels when he comes to Christ. Till he gets to Him, the bed is shorter than that a man may stretch himself upon it. But when once he trusts in Jesus, he may stretch as much as he likes, and he shall find that he can satisfy his soul in the abundance of peace and rest that he finds laid up for him in Christ.

II. Now, secondly, I want to speak upon this theme—REST FOUND BY WALKING IN “THE GOOD OLD WAY” IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL.

Possibly, somebody says, “I can understand that you Christian people, who believe that you are saved through faith, and who sing, as you often do—

*“Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven’—*

“I can understand that you enjoy rest, but is that rest good for you, because you know that rest very soon degenerates into laziness?”

I have known a man who said that it would take a great deal of rest to exhaust him and I am fully aware that there are some who, spiritually, like the idea of rest, because as they misinterpret the term, it means to them downright laziness. Nothing to do, precisely suits their constitution. So, let me just show you that no evil consequences ever flow from the rest which God gives to our soul when we walk in the good old way.

For, first, *it brings satisfaction, but not self-satisfaction*. Somebody says, “If I knew that I was saved, I should feel as proud as Lucifer. I should say then, ‘That is quite enough for me. I do not want to go any further, for I am all I ought to be.’” Yes, my dear sir, I do not controvert your statement that, very likely, you would say that. While you are what you are, I believe you would talk so. But when God makes a man a new creature, such an idea as that does not enter his head.

When he says, “I am saved from condemnation,” he also says, “Now I desire to be saved from every propensity to go back to be what I was before. Now that I am clear of guilt, I desire to be saved from ever again living as I formerly did. God has given me salvation, but He means me to work it out, that is to say, He has worked it in me by His gracious Spirit, and I am to work it out in my life, and so to let others see, by my walk and conversation, that I am really saved.”

If you were to proclaim liberty to a man who was in prison—if you went, and opened the door, and said to him, “Now, my good fellow, out of pure grace, Her Majesty freely pardons you, and orders you to be set at liberty;” according to your theory, that man would sit still, and say, “Well, I have got my pardon, I do not want anything more.” You know that he would not talk like that. The first thing he would do would be to want to come out, and go home, and see his wife and family.

And the very first thing that we feel, when we are saved, is that we want to see our Father who is in heaven, we want to know our dear brothers and sisters in Christ, and we want to do something to show the gratitude which we feel towards God for His abounding mercy towards us. I tell you that the grace of God breeds no self-satisfaction, for we think less of ourselves after we are saved than ever we did before.

Ay, and the more sure we are that we are saved, the deeper is our sense of our own unworthiness, and the more do we groan out, “O God, deliver me from the sin that still dwells within me!” He, who has to work out his salvation by his own merits and good deeds, may be content to live in sin, but he who is saved feels that he must no longer be the slave of sin. Yet he groans that he often is under bondage and he cries to God for something better, higher, nobler.

“Yes” says another objector, “but if a man knew he was saved, *it must breed sloth in him*, he would not want to do anything.” Again I reply that, if the man was what men are by nature, that is what would happen, but when a man gets changed by grace, it is very different. You think, you sons of Hagar, children after the flesh, that are under the law, that nobody will do anything unless he is paid for it. You suppose that there is no motive in the world but self-interest—to escape from hell and to win heaven. That is the only argument that can have any effect upon you, for you are slaves, you are bond-servants, and that, probably, is all the argument we can use with you at present.

But if you ever become children of God, you will find better arguments than these—nobler and more worthy of men redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. You will each one say then, “I am saved. I have nothing to do in order to be saved, that is all done; I am saved to a certainty. Now, for the love I bear my Savior’s name, I will do a hundred times as much as I ever could have done under the threat of damnation or the offer of entrance into heaven. Now, I am going to live according to the law of that love which—

*“‘Makes my willing feet,
In swift obedience move’—*

“and I will prove to all mankind, by my life, that the impulse of love can produce greater results than the impulse of fear, and threat, and self-interest.” Oh, yes! we get a new set of motives. The old ones may cease to influence us, but we get other and higher motives, which enable us to overcome the sloth to which, by nature, we are all too prone.

“But” says yet another friend, “if I believed that I was really saved, I should say, ‘Now I may live as I like.’” Ah, my friend! there is nothing I should like better than to live as I like, and do you know how I would live if I could live as I liked? I would never sin again. If I could live as I liked, you should be able to call me a straitlaced old Puritan, with whom you could not find a fault except that I was too strict. That is what I would be if I could live as I liked.

But if you, as an unconverted man, live as you like, I should not like to read the record of your life. But we are not talking about men in general, but about renewed men, those who have been changed by grace, and who have become children of God, who like to live after a very different fashion.

“Well,” you say, “but if I thought that God never could and never would cast me into hell, and that I was eternally saved, I should go and live in sin.” No, no, no, come now, you are quite bad enough, I am sure, but I will not believe even that to be true of you. I cannot think so badly of you as that.

There was a little boy, who had a very kind father, and there were some bad boys, living in the same street, whose father used to horsewhip them, and treat them very cruelly. But this boy’s father was the soul of love and kindness. There was an orchard that the bad boys wanted to rob, so they proposed to this other lad that he should go with them. “No,” he replied, “I shall not go, for I do not want to grieve my father.”

“Oh!” they said, “you know that, if we are caught, *we* shall catch it, but your father is so fond of you that He will not beat you, so you may freely go and do it.” “What!” he exclaimed, “do you think, because my father loves me, that therefore I will go and do wrong because of that? No, I will do nothing of the kind.” You sympathize at once with the boy, and say, “That is right.”

Very well, I hope you will sympathize with him so much that you will feel that this is the way a Christian acts. He has received so much love from God that He cannot do that which would grieve the One who has been so good and so kind to him. Our God forgives our transgressions and blots out the sin of His people, because He delights in mercy. Hence, that love of His has more influence over His redeemed ones than all the thunders, and threatenings of the law will ever have over the ungodly. We do enjoy this blessed rest, but we shall ever be ready for service, still be watchful against sin, and constantly be pressing forward towards growth in grace. It is a rest which a man may safely have and come to no harm thereby.

Beloved, *the man who has rest in his own soul is the man who can best serve God*. Queen Elizabeth once said to a great London merchant, “I want you to attend to some important business for me at the Hague.” “Your Majesty,” he said, “I am your humble, servant, but I have a large business here at home, and while I have that to attend to, I am afraid I could not discharge your Majesty’s business.” She said, “You go to the Hague, and see to my business there, and I will attend to your business here.”

Well, now, that was the man to go with a free mind to attend to Her Majesty’s business, and the Lord Jesus Christ seems to say to us, “You go and serve Me in the world, and I will see to the matter of your salvation.” The man to whom He thus speaks can give all His thought and care to living to the glory of God and to His service.

More than that—I will venture on a strong assertion—*no man is capable of virtue, in its highest sense, until he knows that he is saved*. Just think, if a man simply does that which is right because he expects to be rewarded by God for it, whom is he serving? Why, himself! Are you in the habit of taking your hat off to your working-men at night, and saying to them, “Much obliged to you, gentlemen”? Do they work out of pure love to you? Well, not many of them, I reckon. I do not think there are many masters, who are so specially attractive that anybody wants to serve them without a thought of salary or wages. No, I know that you thank no man for what he does if he is to be paid for it.

Suppose you try to live a good life in order to get to heaven by it, you are simply serving yourself. It is selfishness at the top, and at the bottom, and throughout it all. But the man who comes, and says, “I am a saved man. Eternal love has brought me to Jesu’s feet, washed me in His blood, and clothed me with His righteousness. No condemnation do I dread, for this day, or for all the days that are to come, for none can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.” He begins to serve God with all his might, he loves his fellow-men, and seeks to promote everything that is pure and holy and good. What is his motive? Gratitude, not self-interest—love to God, not love to himself.

No longer is the slave-driver’s whip cracked in his ear. No bribe of a glorious heaven to be won by merit is held before him. It is his already. Now is he capable of the highest virtue. Oh! that you all knew this blessed rest, for then I am sure you would serve God! You may have it, for Jesus says, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Why will you not have it? “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?”

I have only time for just this final word to you who have this rest. ENJOY IT. Enjoy it now. You are coming to the communion table—this place of sacred feasting and holy joy. You are not coming to kneel at it as if you were to adore the bread. You are to sit around the table, like persons at a common meal, yet all the while to be feasting with the great King of kings. So be sure that you enjoy Christ, who is your rest.

Are you satisfied with Christ? If you are not, you have not really got Him. If you have got Him, He is everything to you. “Ah!” you say, “satisfied with Him? Satisfied with Him? That is a very cold word. I am charmed with Him. No music is like His charming name. My soul is overflowing with love to Him.”

The other day, I saw a little cup suspended under a flowing fountain, so that the stream came right into it. The cup was quite full, and the stream kept flowing, the cup remained brimming over. And as I stood and looked at it, I thought, “That is very much like myself beneath the flowing of the Savior’s love. I cannot hold much, so it soon fills me, but I can pour it out to others as fast as it comes into me.”

O come, beloved, come all of you who know the Lord, and put yourselves, like little cups, under the flowing fountain and be filled with all the fullness of God! What a word that is! I do not know whether you understand it, I do not, “filled with all the fullness of God.” Why! you cannot get all the fullness of God into you, can you?

Suppose that a bottle were taken and held down into the sea till the water had filled it, then, when it is quite full, of course it sinks down to the bottom of the ocean. Now I think that the sea is in the bottle, and the bottle is in the sea, and that the bottle is full of all the fullness of the sea—it contains all it can hold, and then it has all the rest to hold it.

Now, just so, get as full as ever you can of the love of Christ, and then sink into the Godhead’s deepest sea, be plunged into His immensity and dwell there, filled with all the fullness of the ever-blessed God. The Lord bless you, for Christ’s sake!

Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—708, 23

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