

THE CHRISTIAN'S MANIFESTATION

NO. 3004

A SERMON
 PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1906
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
 ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 5, 1866

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”
1 John 3:2

[The earlier part of this sermon was revised by Mr. Spurgeon in readiness for publication.]

THE text mentions “now,” and then passes on to the future, and speaks of “yet.” It does, however, speak of, “now,” and after all, despite our trials, there is much to make us happy in our present condition. “Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God.” Our manifold temptations and infirmities cannot make us lose the blessings that come to us through our adoption into the family of God. “Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD?” Today, even today, we are the blessed of the Lord, and we find in godliness the blessing of “the life that now is.”

Yet, beloved, for all that, we are still forced to cry—

*“Alas for us if Thou wert all,
 And nought beyond, O earth!”*

If this were all our life, it would have been better for us not to have lived. Woe unto us if we had to live here always! Young says—

“Were there no death, e'en fools might wish to die,”—

and certainly, wise men would do so, for brethren, this is a life of distractions, cares, anxieties, disappointments, and what is worse, it is a life of sins, and sorrows, and bitter repentances for wrong doing. This life is to us a traveler's life, with all the inconveniences that we meet with in traveling. We are here today, and we are gone tomorrow. Sometimes the heat consumes us, and at other times the cold bites us. We are like men at sea, we have not yet cast our anchor, nor furled our sails, nor reached the port where we are bound, and the sea in which we are sailing is rough, tempest tossed, and beset with rocks, and shoals, and quicksands.

Our soul is often half a wreck, and longs for the desired haven, where “the wicked cease from troubling,” and “the weary be at rest.” Ours is a soldier's life, we have to be constantly fighting, or else continually upon our guard. Think not, thou who hast just buckled on thy harness, that you have won the victory, for the good soldiers of Jesus Christ must fight from morn till eve, from youth's gay morning till the eve of grey old age.

I would not paint life in sadder colors than it needs, but I dare not shut my eyes to the fact that this is a sad world, and that our path is one of sorrow, for it is “through much tribulation” that we “enter into the kingdom of God.”

*“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
 Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”*

It is to that other and better land that I would, for a little while, bear away your thoughts. We shall borrow the wings of our text, and like the eagle, soar towards heaven.

We will begin with this sentence, "IT DOTHT NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE SHALL BE."

What we are to be, we can scarcely guess. Indeed, we cannot guess at all merely by the use of our senses. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit," but only to our spirit. Flesh and blood, as they are, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and cannot even guess what that kingdom is like. This is not the place where the Christian is to be seen. This is the place of his veiling, heaven is the place of his manifestation. This is the place of his night, yonder is the place of his day. Our portion is on the other side of the river, our days of feasting are not yet.

Some of the reasons why "it doth not yet appear what we shall be" may be as follows. First, *our Master was, to a great extent, concealed and hidden, and we must expect to be as He was.* Is it not written, in this very epistle, "as he is, so are we in this world"? Jesus said to His followers when He was here upon earth, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord."

My brethren, see that man wearing a coat "without seam, woven from the top throughout"—the carpenter's son, the heir of poverty, the companion of the humblest classes of mankind. Can you see in Him God over all, blessed forever? If you can, you are not looking with the eyes of your flesh, I am sure, for in that manner, you cannot detect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ beneath so humble a garb.

The veil which the Savior cast about Himself was not so thick but that some rays of His glory burst through when He trod the waves, rebuked the winds, and raised the dead, but still, it was sufficiently dense, for He cried, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." You will see that Christ was concealed as you recollect that although, as Dr. Watts says—

"All riches are His native right,"—

yet, when He had to pay the temple tax, He had to work a miracle so that Peter might be able to catch the fish which had the exact amount required in its mouth. He was so poor that He had to live upon the charity of His followers. Would you have believed that *He* was the Lord of all creation if you had seen Him up on yonder lonely mountain's side without a bed to rest upon, or sitting wearily upon Jacob's well at Sychar, and asking a sinful woman to give Him a little water to drink? The Savior was, indeed, masked and hidden so that the vulgar eye could not detect His glory.

Only such men eagle-eyed as John were able to say, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Our Lord's wisdom, and grace, and power, and all His other illustrious attributes were concealed beneath the veil of our inferior clay. Dr. Watts was right, as I reminded you just now, when he wrote—

*"Worthy is He that once was slain,
The Prince of Peace that groan'd and died;
Worthy to rise, and live, and reign
At His almighty Father's side*

*Power and dominion are His due
Who stood condemned at Pilate's bar;
Wisdom belongs to Jesus too,
Though He was charged with madness here.*

*All riches are His native right,
Yet He sustained amazing loss;
To Him ascribe eternal might,*

Who left His weakness on the cross."

So fully did He veil His glory that some even ventured to call Him Beelzebub, and to say that He was a gluttonous man and a winebibber!

Now, Christian, as you think of all this, do you wonder if worldlings do not know you, and only speak of you to slander you? Do you wonder if your integrity is questioned, and your most manifest virtue is misrepresented, and if the grace which really is within you is caviled at and despised? How should the world know you when the Savior Himself was not discovered? As the bright gleams of His divine glory were almost wholly concealed, surely the weaker gleams of your earthly and human glory must be altogether hidden. That perhaps, is the first reason why "it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

I think I may also remark, brethren, that *we are not yet fit to let it appear what we shall be*. "The son in the house," says one, "is treated as if he were a servant, and even worse than if he were a servant. A servant is not chastised, he may do many wrong things, and yet escape without a stripe, yet it is not so with the son. Why does not his father give him the honor and dignity which belong to his sonship?"

Simply because he is at present only a child and he must be treated as a child for a time, in order that he may be fitted to adorn his sonship. It would spoil him to receive at once all that is to be his when he enters upon his inheritance. He is the heir to all his father's estates, yet he has to be thankful to his father for even a penny, and he receives his pittance week by week, as though he were a poor pensioner upon his father's bounty or a beggar at his door.

Why does not the father give this heir to large estates a thousand pounds? Why does he not entrust him with a great store of wealth? Because he is in his nonage, and if he were trusted with a large sum of money at so early an age, he might grow profligate, and so be unfitted to use his wealth rightly if he should reach riper years.

Brethren, you and I, if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are kings—not only sons of God, but kings who are to reign with Him forever. Then why are we not treated like kings? You know that in some earthly royal families, it is thought best for the prince, the heir-apparent to the throne, that he should be a soldier or a sailor, and serve his country in that capacity, so that, when he comes to the throne, he may understand how to wield his scepter for the good of all classes of his subjects.

So, Christian, is it with you. You are so childish at present, you have so lately begun to learn the nature of divine things, you are uninstructed, you know but in part, and you know that part so badly, that it would not be fitting that your greatness should be revealed to you at present. You must be held back for a while till you have been better trained in the Holy Spirit's school, and then it shall appear what you shall be.

A third reason why it does not yet appear what we shall be is, I think, because *this is not the world in which the Christian is to appear in his glory*, for if he did, his glory would be lost in this world. The multitude climbed to the tops of the trees, or the roofs of the houses, whence they might see Caesar or Pompey returning with the spoils of war, and the multitudes still clap their hands when a warrior has overcome his country's enemies, and so become a great man. But the world cares little or nothing about self-denial, about Christian love, about consecration, and devotion to Christ and His cause, yet these things are the glory of a Christian.

That more excellent, that spiritual worth which flashes from the eyes of the holy angels and of the saints in glory, is almost unappreciated here. Your Master has had this glory, though it was usually veiled while He was here below, yet the people cried out, "away with him, away with him, crucify him," and if you had here, to its full extent, the glory which will be revealed in you in heaven, people would say the same concerning you.

This is not the world in which you are to display your full honors. When a king is journeying through a foreign country, he does not wear his crown, nor the rest of his regalia, he often travels *incognito*, and even when he reaches his own country, he does not put on his royal robe for fools to

admire at every village wake and fair. He is not a puppet-king, strutting upon the stage to show himself to the common people, but he reserves his grandeur for great public occasions and grand court ceremonies. In this poor sinful world, you Christians would be out of place if you could be what you shall yet be. You also must go, *incognito*, through this world to a large extent, but by and by, you shall take off the travel worn garments that you have worn during your earthly pilgrimage, and put on your beautiful array, and be manifested to the whole universe as a son or a daughter of "the King eternal, immortal, invisible."

And to close this part of the subject, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," because *this is not the time for the display of the Christian's glory*. If I may use such an expression, time is not the time for the manifestation of a Christian's glory. Eternity is to be the period for the Christian's full development, and for the sinless display of his God-given glory. Here he must expect to be unknown, it is in the hereafter that he is to be discovered as a son of the great King.

At present it is with us as it is with the world during winter. If you had not seen the miracle wrought again and again, you would not guess, when you look upon those black beds in the garden, or when you walk over that snowy and frosty covering, crisp and hard beneath your feet, that the earth will yet be sown with all the colors of the rainbow, and that it will be gemmed with flowers of unspeakable beauty. No, the winter is not the time when the beauty of the earth is to be best seen, and Christian, you also must pass through your winter season.

Ay, but let that wintry weather once be over, let the bleak December winds howl into your ears, let the cold and cheerless January come and go, let "February fill-dyke" also pass, and behold, the springtime comes. I might almost say that grey hairs come upon your head like the snowdrops appear upon the earth, as the harbingers of spring and of summer, and your soul shall yet blossom "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," and all the graces and excellences of the Christian shall be revealed in you. It is winter with you now, but the summer comes.

If you stand, as many of you have often done, at the seaside, you have noticed that at certain hours of the day there is a long expanse of mud, or of dry sand, and it may not seem to one who sees it for the first time as though the sea had ever rolled over it, or that it ever will. Ah, but "it doth not yet appear" what it will be. It is ebb-tide now, but wait till the flood comes, and then you will see the whole of that black mire or that yellow sand glistening in the sunshine.

So, the flood of glory is rising, Christian, can you not see the breakers in the distance, the white crests of the incoming waves? God's great sea of eternity draws nearer and nearer, can you not hear the booming of that mighty flood? Soon shall your ransomed spirit float and bathe in that sea of glory, where not a single wave shall cause you a moment's grief or pain. This is not the time, Christian, in which you are to be fully revealed.

You are, today, like that ugly shriveled seed, there is no beauty in it that you should desire it. Ay, but wait a little while, and the sweetly perfumed flower shall shed its fragrance in the air, and make the gazer pause to admire the matchless colors with which God has been pleased to paint it, then shall its full glory be known and seen.

At present, you are in your seed stage, and your sowing time is coming. Tremble not that it is so. There will be a time for your poor flesh to sleep in the silent grave, but at the voice of the archangel, and the blast of the trumpet of the resurrection, you shall arise. Just as the flower rises in spring, the dead body, which was put into the tomb, shall rise incorruptible in the image of the Savior.

So, you see, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be," because the Lord Jesus Christ was not fully revealed here, because we are not fit to appear in glory, because we are not here in the midst of the men and women who should see us in our glory, and because it is not yet the right time for us thus to appear. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven," but this is not the time for the full manifestation of Christians, and therefore, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Having spent so much time over the previous clause, we will merely hint at the teaching of the next words of the text, "BUT WE KNOW THAT, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR."

So, then, *it is quite certain that Christ will appear*. John does not stop to prove it. He speaks of it as though it were perfectly understood that Christ would again appear, and he mentions what is to be the nature of that appearing.

Christ will appear in person. This is what the two angels declared to the disciples after His ascension, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," That is, as the incarnate God, He will come back from heaven.

When He comes, *He will appear full of happiness*. There will be no more sorrow to wrinkle His brow, no more furrows to be plowed on His back, no fresh wounds to be made in His hands or his feet, no more offering of a sacrifice for sin, but He will come to rejoice with His people forever.

Further, when He comes, *He will appear in His glory*—not as the man of Nazareth, to be despised and spit upon, but as "The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." If any of you are tempted to ask, "When will He come?" I give you His own assurance, "Surely I come quickly," so go your way and pray, as John did, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," yet do not forget Paul's inspired sentence, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

Christ is coming, beloved, literally coming—not figuratively, and by His Spirit, but literally, actually, really.

***"Lo! He comes with clouds descending
Once for favor'd sinners slain."***

He is coming in glory, to dwell in the midst of His saints forever. This is our blessed hope, "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Now, passing on, "We know that, when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.

There are other passages in His Word where we are distinctly told that His manifestation will be coincident with our manifestation. Here we are told that "when he shall appear, we shall be like him," and the reason given for this is, "for we shall see him as he is."

Let us, while pondering the text, then, meditate upon this great truth, "We shall be like him." This afternoon, meditating upon this glorious assurance that I shall be like Christ—and I fully believe that I shall be like him—it did seem to me as if it were almost too good to be true.

Yet it is true that *we are to be like Christ, first, as to our body*. Here, we are like the first Adam, of the earth, earthy. But we shall, one day, have a body like that of the second Adam, a heavenly body. Like the first Adam, we are mortal now; like the second Adam, we shall be immortal by and by. Christ's body is not now subject to any pains, or to any decay or disease, neither shall our body be.

It is quite true that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," yet it will be this very body of ours that will inherit the kingdom of God, only that which is corruptible in it, that which is mere flesh and blood, will then have been removed. As the apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, in that wonderful chapter about the resurrection, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." It is "a spiritual body" which the Lord Jesus Christ has today.

I cannot imagine how glorious the Savior is in heaven, but I always think of Him, even when He was upon this earth, as being far fairer than any artist ever depicted Him. I have gazed a long while upon many paintings of Christ, both in England and abroad, but I have never yet seen one which appeared to me to be equal even to my ideal of the Savior. I have looked, and I have said, "Oh, no! He was far fairer than that, there must have been more beauty in His face than even that great master has portrayed."

Well, brethren, if that is true concerning Him as He was when among the sons of men, how true it must be concerning Him as He is now! He is fairer than all the fair spirits that surround the heavenly throne. He is “the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys.” Amongst the shining seraphim and cherubim, none can be compared with Him, and Christian, you are to be like Him. Whatever are the characteristics of the Savior's glorified body, they are to be the characteristics of your body also.

You are to have an immortal body, a spiritual body, a body incapable of pain, and suffering, and decay, a body which shall be suited to your emancipated spirit, a body having a wider range than this limited earthly sphere, having greater powers at locomotion, perhaps flying, swiftly as light, from world to world, or possibly having the power even to outrun the lightning's flash. I do not know how wondrous Christ's glorified body is, but I do “know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him (even in body); for we shall see him as he is.”

But far more important than that, *we shall also be like Christ in soul*. Have the eyes of your spiritual understanding or sanctified imagination ever looked upon Christ's spotless, perfectly developed soul, that equably adjusted spirit, in which no one power or passion was too prominent or predominant, but in which His whole being was beautifully molded and rounded, according to the perfect pattern of moral excellence and beauty?

Now, beloved, you are to be just like that—not quick in temper, as perhaps you now are, but meek and lowly as He was—not haughty and prone to pride, but humble and gentle as He was—not selfish and self-seeking, but as disinterested and as tender to others as He was, in fact, perfection's own self.

It was said of Harry the Eighth that if all the histories of all the tyrants who ever lived had been lost, you might have composed them all with the material from the life of that execrable monster, and I will venture to say that if all the biographies of all the good men and holy angels that have ever existed could be blotted out of existence or memory, they might all be written again with the material from the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, for in Him dwells all excellence and all goodness.

What a joy it is to us to know that we shall be like Him! Brethren and sisters in Christ, this blessed truth is enough to make you stand up or even leap in the exuberance of your joy. I have heard of our enthusiastic Welsh friends dancing during some of their preachers' sermons, and if it be this or a similar truth which makes them dance, who can wonder at it? “We shall be like him”—like Him in soul, with no more infirmities of temper, or sloth, or undue haste. Our human nature shall be rid of all its rags, and we shall be perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect. Oh, that the blessed day had already come, and that we were like our Lord! But “we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

*“Nor doth it yet appear
How great we must be made;
But when we see our Savior here,
We shall be like our Head.”*

Time fails me to say what I should have liked to have said, yet I ought to add that *we shall be like Christ*, not only in body and in soul, but *also in condition*. We shall be with Him where He is and we shall be as happy as He is, as far as our capacity for happiness goes. We shall be crowned even as He is crowned, and we will sit upon thrones even as He sits upon His Father's throne. He shall lead us to living fountains of water, and be our constant Companion, never going away from us again. He shall call us His brethren, and we shall share in His honor and glory.

The joy of which we shall partake shall be His joy, and it will be in us that our joy may be full. O Christian, think lofty thoughts concerning thy Lord in glory, and remember that you shall be like Him! I cannot help repeating that quaint little ditty which Rowland Hill was so fond of humming over in his old age—

*“And when I'm to die, 'Receive me,' I'll cry,
For Jesus hath loved, I cannot tell why;*

*But thus I do find, we too are so joined,
He'll not live in glory and leave me behind."*

So, "we shall be like him," and the reason why we shall be like Him is thus given by John, "FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS."

How is it that we shall be like Him because of that? Partly, *by reflection*. Perhaps you are aware that in the olden time, looking glasses (if I may use an Irishism), were not looking glasses at all, for they were made of polished brass. If a person looked into such a mirror when the sun was shining upon that mirror, not only would the mirror itself be bright, but it would also throw a reflection on the face of the person who was looking into it.

This is only according to the laws of light. When a man looks into a bright mirror, it makes him also bright, for it throws its own light upon his face, and in a much more wonderful fashion, when we look at Christ, who is all brightness, He throws some of His brightness upon us.

When Moses went up into the mountain to commune with God, his face shone because he had received a reflection of God's glory upon his face. He had looked into the blazing light of deity, as far as a created eye could look there, and therefore, that light was so brilliantly reflected in his own face that Aaron and the people were afraid to draw near him, and he had to cover his face with a veil while he spoke to them.

Further, beloved, we get to be like Christ by seeing Him *in type and symbol*, as through a glass darkly. The Lord's supper is one of the glasses, believer's baptism is another, the preaching of the Word is another, the Bible itself is another of these glasses. It is only a partial reflection of Christ that we get from all these glasses, yet as we look at it, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," or "by the Lord the Spirit."

But brethren, if there is such a sanctifying influence about the very reflection of Jesus Christ, *what a wondrous power it must have upon us when we see Him as He is!* When we shall gaze upon Him with unveiled vision, and see Him as He is, do you wonder that John says that then, "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"?

Oh, that amazing sight, that unique sight of Jesus as He is! It would be worthwhile to die a thousand painful deaths in order to get one brief glimpse of Him as He is. I do not think that Rutherford exaggerated when he talked of swimming through seven hells to get at Christ if he could not get at Him anyhow else.

A distant view of Him, as we have seen Him "leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills," has so ravished our souls that we have scarcely known whether we have been in the body or out of our body. When we have heard His voice, we have longed to be with Him. The very thought of Him has made us, like the dove separated for a while from her mate, long to cleave the air with rapid wing and fly home to our dovecote, and to our blessed Noah. What must it be to be there? What must it be to see our Savior as He is?

In some of the houses not far from here, I noticed some linnets in cages, in which there were tufts of grass, or small branches of trees as perches for the poor prisoners, yet they were singing away right merrily. I suppose that grass and those fragments of trees were meant to remind them, in this great, dirty, smoky Babylon, that there are green fields and wide forests somewhere. I thought, as I looked upon them, "Ah, you poor birds are like what I myself am! My Master has put me in a little cage, and bidden me bide here for a while, and He has given me my little tuft of grass as an earnest of my inheritance in the—

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood."

He graciously sends me a few comforts on the way. Ah! but that poor little tuft of grass, what is it in comparison with the fields and the hedges which are the proper home of the singing birds which have

their liberty? And Christian, you do not know what it will be for you to have your cage door opened, that you may fly away to that blessed land where the true birds of paradise forever warble, from their joyful throats, the loudest praises to the great King who has set them free forever. Let us begin the music here, let us try even now to anticipate that happy day as we sing of—

*“Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest;”—*

where—

“The daylight is serene;”—

and where—

*“The pastures of the blessed
Are deck'd in glorious sheen.”*

I leave my text with you who love the Lord. As for you who do not love Him, I dare not give it to you. Oh, that you did love Him, and that you did trust Him! He waits to be gracious. Seek you His face and He will be found of you. Fly to Him, and He will not reject you. Trust in Him, and He will wash you from all your sins, and bring you to His presence in eternal glory, to go no more out forever. May He give you this unspeakable blessing, for His love's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 JOHN 2 AND 3:1-2

1 John Chapter 2. Verse 1. *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.*

This is one of the great objectives of all that is written by inspiration—that we may be kept from sin. O child of God, as you would fear to drink poison, as you would flee from a serpent, dread sin!

1. *And if any man sin,—*

Is it a hopeless case then? Far from it, “If any man sin,”—

1-3. *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

Holiness of life is the best proof that we know God. It matters not how readily we can speak about God, nor how much we suppose that we love Him, the great test is, do we keep His commandments? What a heart searching test this is! How it should humble us before the mercy seat!

4-6. *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

When we try to be, in every respect, what God's Word tells us we ought to be, then may we know that we are in God, but if we walk carelessly, if we take no account of our actions, but do, after a random fashion, whatever comes into our foolish hearts, then have we no evidence at all that we are in God.

7. *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.*

“From the time when Christ first began to preach, or when the Gospel was first preached in your ears.”

8. *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*

That which is new in the Gospel, in one sense, is not new in another, for though John was about to write what he called a new commandment, yet at the same time, he was writing something which was

not novel, something which was not grafted upon the Gospel, but which grows naturally out of it, namely, the law of love.

9. *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

God is love and God is light, therefore, love is light, and the light of God is love. Where enmity and hatred are still in the heart, it is proof positive that the grace of God is not there.

10-15. *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

For this sinful world is directly opposed to the Father. You cannot send your heart at the same time in two opposite ways—towards evil and towards good, you must make a choice between the two.

16-17. *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

It ought not, then, to be difficult to make a choice between these fleeting shadows and the everlasting substance.

18. *Little children, it is the last time:*

You may read the passage, "It is the last hour," as if John wanted to show how late it was, and how soon Christ would come, "It is the last hour:"—

18. *And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*

How much more emphatically John might write this verse if he were writing today!

19. *They went out from us,—*

For, alas! many of the antichrists came out of the church, they sprang up from among the followers of Christ, "They went out from us,"—

19-20. *But they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

"You who know God—and even the little children, the babes in Christ, know the Father—know all things, and you will not be led astray and deceived by these antichrists who have gone out into the world."

21. *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

The truth is all of a piece, and a lie cannot be a part of the truth. Christ does not teach us a Jesuitical system in which error and falsehood are mixed up with truth, the Gospel is all truth, and to those who believe it we may say, "Ye know the truth, and ye also know that no lie is of the truth."

22-23. *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father;*

They who deny the deity of Christ practically deny the Divine Fatherhood of God. It is not possible for us to understand the rest of the truth if we do not believe in Christ, who is *the* Truth. As the poet says—

***"You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of Him."***

23-28. *[But] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And that is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him;*

That which is the subject of promise is also the subject of precept, and the precepts of the Gospel are given to Christians because, in this way, God keeps His own promise, and so leads us to obey His precepts.

28-29. *That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

1 John Chapter 3. Verses 1-2. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.