

WHY CHRIST IS NOT ESTEEMED

NO. 3033

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1907
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AT MAZE POND CHAPEL, LONDON

“We esteemed him not.”
Isaiah 53:3

[One of the most prominent preachers of the so-called “New Theology” has recently given fresh currency to the old Jewish idea that Isaiah 53 applies to the prophet Jeremiah! The following sermons by C. H. Spurgeon, all upon various verses of this chapter, show what *he* thought about the matter, #1075, “A Root Out of a Dry Ground;” #1099, “The Man of Sorrows;” #2499, “Christopathy;” #834, “The Universal Remedy;” #1068, “A Simple Remedy;” #2000, “No. 2000 or Healing By the Stripes of Jesus;” #2887, “A Dire Disease Strangely Cured;” #694, “Sin Laid on Jesus;” #925, “Individual Sin Laid on Jesus;” #1543, “The Sheep Before the Shearers;” #173, “The Death of Christ;” #561, “Expiation;” #2186, “Our Expectation;” #2963, “Unmitigated Transgressors” and #2070, “Christ’s Connection with Sinners the Source of His Glory”]

THIS must be the universal confession of the human race. From the highest monarch to the meanest peasant, from the loftiest intellect to the most degraded mind, from the admired of all men to the unknown and insignificant, this one confession must come—“We esteemed him not.”

Whether we examine the sensualist rioting in the delights of the flesh or the formalist starving his body to fatten his pride, the merchant laboring to acquire wealth, or the spendthrift recklessly scattering gold with both his hands, the profligate black with profanity, the moralist rejoicing in his goodness, or even the devoted Christian, we shall make them all acknowledge that, either now or at some past period, they esteemed not Jesus. We make no exception, for even the holiest of God’s saints, those who now are—

*“Foremost of the sons of light,
Nearest the eternal throne;”*

those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb—even they once “esteemed him not.” And the brightest saints still upon the earth, those who are most earnestly and faithfully serving the Savior, at one time “esteemed him not.”

I am going, first, *to prove that this was true*. Next, to dive deeper and try *to find out the reasons why we esteemed not Jesus*. And afterwards, I want *to remind you of the emotions which this fact ought to create in our minds*—the fact that, at one time—and in the case of many of us it was true not many years ago that “we esteemed him not.”

I. First, then, I have TO PROVE THAT THIS WAS TRUE.

Look, then, my friends, first, at *the overt acts of your transgression against the Lord Jesus Christ*. Go back in imagination to the scenes of your youth and recollect your former transgressions. Some of you have your heads covered with the snows of many a winter, and you have been for forty or fifty years wearing the harness of the soldiers of Jesus Christ, and you have fought the good fight ever since you enlisted under the blood-stained banner of the cross, yet you can never forget some things that happened before that happy day when you first sang from your heart,

*“’Tis done! The great transaction’s done;
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine.”*

It might not be profitable to mention in detail those sins of long ago, yet some of you have a very vivid remembrance of them, and although the Lord has graciously forgiven them and blotted them out of His book of remembrance, your own conscience will not let you forget them.

There are others of you who were, either by your early associations, or by the restraints of sovereign grace, kept from openly sinning against God as many others did, yet you know that *your lives were not in accordance with the law of God*. You were, in comparison with many of your fellows, moral, upright, amiable, yet, so far as Christ was concerned, you “esteemed him not.”

Your friends and companions could find no fault with your character, but you know now that, all the while, there was a fatal flaw which was plainly manifest to the eye of God. In the case of some, the apparent excellence was all on the surface, but underneath there was a mass of rottenness and sin of which they can only think now with shame and sorrow. That, too, has all been forgiven and forgotten by God—yet it lingers in their own remembrance in a most salutary fashion, for it makes them hate all forms of iniquity and turn from them with utter loathing.

Besides the overt acts of sin which some of you committed—and the less public but none the less deadly evils of which others of you were guilty—there was further evidence that you did not esteem Christ in the fact that *you did not esteem His Word as you should have done*. Possibly, just to quiet your conscience, you read a chapter from it in the morning and another in the evening, or you listened to it while your parents read it at family prayer. But how dull and dry it seemed to you. You could revel in a novel and be completely fascinated with fiction, but the inspired truth of God was a weariness and a burden to you.

I must honestly confess that, before I knew the Lord or was seriously seeking Him, although I found the historical parts of the Bible interesting, a great portion of the Scriptures appeared to me to be dull and meaningless. As for anyone reading the Word as a treat, I could no more understand how that could be done than a blind man could appreciate the beauties of the scenery that could be discerned by sightseers on the top of a mountain.

I might perhaps be mentally charmed by some beautiful passages in the Bible, but as to its hidden spiritual meaning, I had no true perception. If I were sick and in fear lest I was about to die, down would come my Bible and I would read it diligently for a while. But as for taking it as my everyday companion—that idea never occurred to me until the Holy Spirit began to work conviction in my heart, and then I was glad enough to turn to the neglected Book, to find an answer to the all-important question, “What must I do to be saved?”

If you, my brethren and sisters in Christ, could each one relate your own experience, I expect you would, many of you, have to join with me in saying, “We esteemed him not, for we did not hold in proper esteem the Sacred Scriptures in which He had been revealed to us.”

Another proof that we did not esteem Christ was the fact that *we did not esteem His people*. We may have thought that, as a class, they were a harmless set of enthusiasts, or we may have reviled them as hypocrites and deceivers, although we had no reason for applying such titles to them.

As for myself, from my earliest days I had the priceless privilege of being associated with those who practiced what they professed, and I had such gracious examples set before me, both in my father’s house and while I was at my grandfather’s, that I ought to have appreciated Christian people at their true value, as I do now, when I delight to sing, with good Dr. Watts,

*“My soul shall pray for Zion still,
While life or breath remains;
There my best friends, my kindred dwell,
There God my Savior reigns.”*

But why need I linger over the minor matters when you know, and I know, that *we did not esteem Christ Himself?* This is proved from the fact that we were so long before we sought Him as our Savior, before we came to Him and trusted Him as our All-in-all.

How many years some of us lived without really praying to Him, or communing with Him! His name was not melodious to our ear, nor entrancing to our heart. In those days, we might have adopted the prophet's language as our own—"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

"O Thou adorable Jesus!" a Christian will say, "my life, my hope, my joy, my light, my way, my end, my all. There was a time when Your groans in Gethsemane, Your agonies in Gabbatha, and even Your death on Calvary's cross seemed to be things of no account to me. You were no more to me than was Barabbas, and had I mingled amongst the crowd that surged around Pilate, I might have cried with the mad mob, 'Away with him! Crucify him! Crucify him!' I heard Your Gospel preached, but it was only like a tale to which I had so often listened that it no longer had any interest for me. O Jesus, Thou wondrous incarnation of the grace of God to guilty men, how could You so long endure the neglect and enmity of him who now, with shame and confusion of face, confesses that he esteemed You not?"

Ah, brethren! I feel that I cannot preach as I fain would upon such a theme as this which touches me in the very depths of my soul. If I could, by any means, bring the truth of the text home to your hearts, if the Holy Spirit were but poured upon you so that you would all inwardly confess, even if you did not audibly say, "We esteemed him not," my object would be gained and I should have proved the truth of Isaiah's utterance.

II. Now, in the second place, we are TO TRY TO FIND OUT WHY WE DID NOT ESTEEM THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The first reason that I would mention why we esteemed not Jesus is, *because we esteemed ourselves so highly.* Self-esteem naturally keeps Jesus out of the heart. And the more our self-esteem increases, the more firmly do we fasten the door against Christ. Love of self prevents love of the Savior. The sinner sets up an idol-god—himself—on the throne where God alone ought to sit.

Hear this, O you heathen, and blush for the wickedness of men who live in this land of many privileges, in this enlightened age—and some of whom even profess and call themselves Christians! Instead of bowing down to blocks of wood and stone, or worshipping the sun, and moon, and all the host of heavenly bodies, they are worse heathens than even you are, for they prostrate themselves before *themselves* and adore their own merits, their own good deeds, their own charity, and so on.

Christian, was not this the reason why you did not esteem Christ—because self was everything to you in the days of your unregeneracy? If anyone had then told you that your heart was corrupt to its very core, what would you have replied? You would have answered, "I feel that I am as good as anyone else whom I know and better than most of those I see around me." If you had been informed that all your good works were but varnished sins, and that the very best of them were foul and full of faults, would not your blood have boiled with indignation?

Or if someone had told you that your best righteousness was only like a heap of filthy rags, fit for nothing but to be burned, you would surely have replied, "I have a righteousness of which I have no reason to be ashamed. And although I do not say that it is perfect, yet I hope I shall have as good a chance of standing before God's throne as anybody else will have."

"Such were some of you" and as long as you thus highly esteemed yourselves, of course you did not esteem the Lord Jesus Christ. Does the man who is in perfect health esteem the physician? If all were always well, who would care for the doctors? Would they not laugh them to scorn? Does the man who is rich hold in high esteem the one who would give him alms? "Nay," says he, "give your alms to those who need them. I do not require them."

Will a man who has the proper use of his limbs care for crutches? “Nay,” says he, “hand them over to the lame. I have no need of them.” In like manner, we did not esteem Christ because we felt that we had no need of Him. We thought that we could do very well without Him, at least for the present. There might come a time when He might be able to give us a lift over a fence, or if we came to a muddy place in the road, He might be willing to lay His cloak down for us to step on so that we might not soil our feet. But as for the rest of our journey, we thought we could get on very well by ourselves, though we might be glad for Christ to help us into heaven at the last.

Perhaps no one of us would have put the matter quite so plainly as I have done, but that would have been the practical effect of our self-esteem, and that is why we did not esteem Christ, for self-love had completely engrossed our hearts. Self and the Savior can never live in one heart. He will have all or none. So, where self is on the throne, it cannot be expected that He should meekly come and sit upon the footstool.

Another reason why we esteemed not Jesus was *because we esteemed the world so highly*. We were like the man of whom John Bunyan tells us, who was quite willing that others should have the joys of the world to come so long as he could have all that he wanted in the present life. The worldling still says, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,” and to him this present evil world is the bird in the hand—and he thinks of all the bliss of heaven as though it were but a bird in the bush. “Let me live while I live,” says he, “and have all the happiness that I can here, and let them have the next world who can win it.”

With some of us, it is not very long ago since we also talked like that—and scorned the glories that are everlasting, and we put far away from us Jesus Christ and His great salvation. “We esteemed him not” because we loved the earth and all its follies, because we were so busy gathering its poisoned dust into heaps or delighting ourselves in its unsatisfying pleasures.

It is not until the rope is cast loose that the balloon can soar above the clouds—and it is not until the cord that binds us to the things of this earth has been cut that our soul can hope to mount towards the things which are unseen and eternal. Until we have been weaned from the world, we shall never esteem Jesus as the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely One in whom is all our delight.

A third reason why we did not esteem Christ was *because we did not know Him*. It is true that we knew a great deal *about* Him, but we did not know HIM. We had read what the evangelists had recorded concerning Him, we knew much concerning His doctrines, perhaps we had even tried to keep some of His precepts, yet we did not personally and savingly know Him.

There is a great distinction between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ Himself—between knowing what He did, and knowing who and what He is—and really knowing Him in the sense in which He used that expression when He said, in His great intercessory prayer to His Father, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Yet it is only through Himself, by the infallible instruction of His ever-blessed Spirit, that we can thus know Him, as the apostle John writes, “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” The poet was right when he wrote,—

*“His worth, if all the nations knew,
Sure the whole world would love Him too.”*

And Rutherford said, “Surely, my Lord, if the whole world could see thee, the whole world must love thee. If thou wouldst but open only one of thine eyes, and look upon them, they must run unto thee, ravished with delight, for thou art so fair, my precious Jesus, that thou only needest to be seen to be loved.”

But the worldling has never seen Christ, so he does not know Christ, and does not love Christ! Ah, poor worldling! If you had but seen my lord as I saw Him in the hour when He said to me, “I, even I, am

He that blotteth out your transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”—if you could, with the ear of faith, have heard that divine declaration, sweeter even than the music of the harps of heaven—in a single moment you would have loved the Lord Jesus with such an ardent passion that the bonds of life would scarcely have been strong enough to keep you in this clay tenement, but you would have longed to fly away and be with your beloved Lord forever.

And worldling, could you have such a visit from Jesus as now and then the believer is privileged to have—if you could experience but five minutes of the bliss that a Christian has enjoyed, so that he has been obliged afterwards to say, as Paul did, “Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth”—if you could thus be “caught up to the third heaven,” and hear unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter, if you could once behold our blessed Savior, you would be compelled to love Him, for He is so lovely, so gracious, so glorious that you could not any longer think unkindly of Him. Those who think wrongly of Christ have never known Him. And we, who do know Him, confess with shame that the reason why for so long “we esteemed him not” was because we knew Him not.

The last reason I will mention is the very core of all the other reasons. There need be no surprise that we did not esteem Christ, *for we were spiritually dead*. I will suppose that there sits, away yonder, a man over whom I want to exert a certain influence. I will further imagine that I am a skillful musician and that I touch the strings of my harp in such a manner as to bring forth the most delightful melody, yet the man takes no notice whatever of it.

Then I turn to an instrument of quite another sort—a cornet or a bugle—and blow a blast that startles all of you—yet still that one man gives no heed to the sound. Why is it that, charm we never so wisely, he is like the deaf adder, and regards neither the sweetest nor the shrillest or loudest noise?

I try to attract his attention in another way. I place before him the daintiest dish that the cleverest cook in all England can prepare, or I bring some rare delicacy from a distant land—but he regards the food no more than he did the music. I will try another plan to reach his senses. I will bring Him—

*“The choicest flowers that were e’er grown
Since Eden’s joys were blasted.”*

I will hold them close to his face and let their fragrance ascend to his nostrils. Yet he heeds not. What will arouse him? Let heaven’s thunderpeals roll like the drums in the march of some mighty warlord, but the man moves not. Let the lightning flash all around us till it seems as though the end of the world had come, but the man stirs not.

What shall I do to awake him? Shall I beat him with a whip or strike him with a sword? All is in vain, and at last I perceive that the man is dead and that all my efforts have been wasted. Now the riddle is solved, the secret revealed, the knot untied—*the man is dead*. And so I wonder no longer that he esteemed not music, or food, or flowers, or that he feared not thunder, lightning, or the sword.

And brethren and sisters in Christ, though He has quickened us, there was a time when we were “dead in trespasses and sins,” and like Lazarus in his grave, we were becoming more and more corrupt as every moment passed.

III. Now, having proved the truth of the text, and given you various reasons why we did not esteem Christ, let me, in conclusion, ask WHAT EMOTIONS OUGHT THIS FACT TO CREATE WITHIN OUR SOULS?

First, I think that the recollection of this truth, that “we esteemed him not,” ought to produce in us *the deepest penitence*. I cannot understand that Christian who can look back upon his past life without a tear. If he can turn to the black pages of his history, which not only have no record of goodness, but are full of entries concerning his sins against his present Lord and Master, and yet not weep at the remembrance of them, surely he can never have learned the true nature of sin.

O Christian, it would be becoming on your part to catch the spirit, if not literally to imitate the action of that “woman in the city, who was a sinner,” of whom we read that, “when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house,” she, “brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.”

Our Lord’s explanation of her conduct was that “she loved much.” Is it because you do love your Lord so little that you do not manifest your grief over your past sin as that poor woman did? Recollect that, although you did not esteem Him, He had loved you with an everlasting love, and He had purchased your soul’s redemption at the great price of His own most precious blood. He stood before you, holding in His pierced hands the roll of the eternal covenant which set your soul at liberty, and gave you a full discharge. Yet you did not esteem Him.

O Christian, will you not weep even at the remembrance of the way in which you did treat the best Friend you have ever had? Recollect that you did virtually nail Him to the tree and pierce Him to the heart. Dr. Watts spoke for all believers when he wrote the self-condemning words,—

*“Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear.*

*“Twas you that pulled the vengeance down
Upon His guiltless head:
Break, break, my heart, oh burst mine eyes!
And let my sorrows bleed.”*

And now, beloved brethren and sisters in Christ, having for a while allowed our penitential sorrow thus to find suitable expression, let us strike a higher note, and remembering that there was a time when we did not esteem Christ, *let us now rejoice in the great salvation which He has procured for us.*

It is true that we have great reason for sorrow that we should ever have been so vile as not to esteem Him to whom we owe everything for time and for eternity. Yet we have much more reason to adore the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of that love of Christ, which passes knowledge, and which carried out to completion the wondrous plan whereby all our iniquities have been blotted out, and we have become “accepted in the beloved.”

It was right that we should weep at the remembrance that we were numbered among the fallen, yet it is equally right that we should rejoice over the fact that we have been reclaimed. And what should be the very key-note of our song of rejoicing? Should it not be the sovereign grace of God? The reason why the Lord chose us unto salvation was certainly not because we esteemed His Son, Jesus Christ, more than others did, for, “we esteemed him not.” If you ask me why God chose His people, I can only answer that it is for the same reason that Christ gave concerning the things that were hidden from the wise and prudent, but revealed unto babes, “Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

There is one other emotion which every true Christian should feel—that is, *hope for his fellows.* If I feel sorrow for my sin and joy for my deliverance, I ought also to have hope for other people. Perhaps someone here is saying, “I have brought my son to the house of prayer time after time, and I used to hope that God would have mercy upon him, but now I have given up all hope.”

Stop, my brother. Do not talk like that. Do you not remember the time when it might have been said, concerning you and me, that we did not esteem Christ, and although your son does not now esteem Him, is that any reason why he should not yet do so? On the contrary, is not the manifestation of divine grace in your own case an encouragement to you in hoping for your son’s conversion?

“Oh!” says another venerable sire, “I have long prayed in vain for one of my children. These hands, which are now palsied with age, have been lifted up year after year to the God of grace, but I have lost

all hope of my child's salvation." But my hoary-headed friend, think not that your prayers have failed, even though they still remain unanswered. They are all filed in heaven, and when the required number shall be complete, when that petition which God has determined shall be the "effectual" one shall be presented, your child shall be saved. But why should you despair concerning your dear one? You know that, for many years, you did not esteem Christ, yet He is "altogether lovely" to you now. Then why should not your experience be repeated in the case of your child?

"Ah!" says another, "I live in such and such a district, among many of the worst people in London. I have tried to bring them under the sound of the Word, but cannot induce even one of them to come. I feel as if I must give up even hoping for their salvation. They seem to me to be too bad ever be saved." But my dear friend, you and I at one time did not esteem Christ—and if we really know what was in our own hearts, we shall say that these people are not much worse than we were.

Yet suppose they are as bad as you think they are—remember that striking saying of Whitefield's—"Jesus Christ is willing to receive the devil's castaways." A very fastidious lady, who heard that he said that, complained to the Countess of Huntingdon, and said how sad it was that he should talk in such a vulgar way. The Countess said, "Mr. Whitefield is downstairs. I will send for him and let him answer for himself."

When he came up and heard the lady's remark, he simply replied, "I have just been talking to a poor, sinful woman, who had been to hear me preach, and the one thing that comforted her was the sentence to which this lady objects, 'Jesus Christ is willing to receive the devil's castaways.'" "Ah!" said Lady Huntingdon, and others who agreed with her, "That is quite sufficient justification for you."

I can testify, from my own experience, that God often blesses some of our rough expressions more than our highly-polished ones. I have seen so many souls saved through some of the odd and singular sayings that I have felt moved to utter that I intend, God helping me, to go on in the same style, even though some people may continue to find fault with me for doing so.

I can certainly endorse Mr. Whitefield's remark, "Jesus Christ is willing to receive the devil's castaways." However vile and foul a sinner may be, I always feel, "That is just what I would have been but for the grace of God." Therefore, instead of imitating the priest and the Levite who left the poor wounded traveler to die so far as they cared, I feel anxious to go to the very worst of my fellow men and to say to them, "Why, my dear brother, there was a time when I did not esteem Christ, so I will not be angry with you because you say that you are not religious. I will not scold you because you do not read the Bible, or pray to God, or go to a place of worship.

"But I will try to win your esteem for my Master by telling you of His great love to sinners just like you. Though He was reigning with His Father in heaven, He gave up all His glory and came down to earth, to live just as any other poor man might have lived, only that He was without sin. He went about doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and at last, He willingly gave Himself up into the hands of wicked men, and died, 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.'"

So I would try to make the Gospel very plain to my poor friend, and tell him what the Lord had done for my soul, and assure him that, having saved *me*, there was no limit to His grace and mercy. I always admire the argument of Charles Wesley in those familiar lines,—

*"His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood avail'd for me."*

That was the same kind of argument that Paul used when he wrote, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for the pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Christian men and women, as you retire from this building, I leave these thoughts with you. At one time you did not esteem Christ, so now you have no right to be proud of your position as His followers, but should give to Him all the glory for your salvation, and you should hope for the salvation of others, even the very worst of your fellow creatures.

*“While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.”*

You may go to the very worst haunts of sin and vice, in this city or anywhere else, and trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, you may proclaim the Gospel of Christ to be the most abandoned men and women whom you can find, knowing that He is able “to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MATTHEW 26:14-45

Verse 14-15. *Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.*

At what a price did the traitor sell our blessed Master! O you who have been redeemed with His precious blood, set a high value upon Him, think much of Him, say much in praise of Him! Remember these thirty pieces of silver and never be guilty of despising the Lord of glory, as these chief priests did when they paid the price of a slave for Him.

16-19. *And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him. Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.*

See the absolute control which Jesus has over the minds of men. He can have any man’s house that He wants and He knows who will be glad to welcome Him. Yet this same Jesus was about to die—and this shows how perfectly voluntary was His sacrifice. He was not forced to stand in our place, nor was He compelled to suffer except by the constraint of His own great love. All was free, as became the freedom of His grace.

Then shall not our heart’s love flow out freely to Him? Shall we need to be scourged to obedience? Oh, no, beloved! So let us think what we can voluntarily do in honor of our divine Lord, who gave His all for us.

20-22. *Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful,*

And well might they be sad.

22. *And began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?*

What anguish does that question always stir within the heart and mind of every true believer! “Shall I ever betray my Lord and Master? Shall I ever deny or forsake Him?” God grant that none of us may ever do as Judas did!

23. *And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.*

He who had been entrusted with the charge of the finances of the little band of Christ’s immediate disciples—he who carried the bag—was the one who was about to betray his Lord. Since then, Christ has often been betrayed by those who have been in positions of trust, those who have led the way among

the disciples of Christ, those who have, as it were, been so familiar with Christ as to dip their hand with Him in the dish.

24-25. *The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.*

Judas seems to have been the last to ask the question, “Master, is it I?” Yet he was the guilty one—the one who had already covenanted with the chief priests to sell His Lord.

26-31. *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.*

Observe our blessed Lord’s habit of quoting Scripture. He was able to utter words of infallible truth which had never before been used, yet He constantly quoted from the inspired Scriptures. Those who nowadays cavil at the Word of God, and yet profess to be followers of Christ, find no excuse for their conduct in the example that He has left us, for He sometimes quoted Scripture when it might not have seemed to be necessary to do so.

Brethren and sisters in Christ, have your Bible first in your hearts, then at your tongue’s end, I was going to say at your finger’s end, so that you may always be able to give a good reason—a solid and divinely-authoritative reason—for any statement that you may make.

32-33. *But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.*

No doubt Peter said this from his heart, but “the heart is deceitful above all things.” Peter may have thought that he was stronger than his brethren, yet he was the very one who proved to be the weakest of the whole apostolic band. “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.”

34. *Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow,*

That is to say, before that period of time which was called the cock-crowing,

34. *Thou shalt deny me thrice.*

According to Mark’s record, the cock was to crow once before Peter had denied his Lord thrice, and this it did. And when he had given his third denial, it crowed a second time. And then his slumbering conscience was awakened and “he went out and wept bitterly.”

Some persons who are well-acquainted with the religious ceremonies of the Jews, say that the period called the cock-crowing was the time for the sacrifice of the morning lamb, and that it was about that time that Peter denied his Lord.

35. *Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.*

It is a great pity that Peter said this after he had received so plain a warning from his Master, yet he was not alone in his boasting.

35. *Likewise also said all the disciples.*

They all felt quite sure that under no circumstances could they be so base as to forsake their Lord. And if you think of the washing of their feet by their Lord and Master, the wonderful words of Christ to which they had listened, and that solemn communion service in the large upper room, you may not be surprised that they felt themselves bound to Christ forever—felt that they could never leave Him, nor forsake Him. Yet they all did so.

36-39. *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even*

unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Christ had to tread the winepress alone, yet He showed how complete was His humanity by wishing to have a few choice friends near at hand. Yet even the chosen three failed Him in His hour of greatest need.

40. *And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*

Peter had constituted himself the spokesman of the apostolic company, so the Master addressed the question to him, though it also applied to his companions—“What, could ye not watch with me one hour?” They had all declared their devotion to Him, yet they had fallen asleep while He had bidden them watch.

41-45. *Watch Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

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