

A SINGLE EYE AND SIMPLE FAITH

NO. 335

A SERMON
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 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON
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*“The light of the body is the eye:
 if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.
 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.”
 Matthew 6:22-23*

THIS sentence has in it the nature of a proverb. It is well worthy of frequent quotation, as it is applicable to such various circumstances. It is one of the most pithy, sententious utterances of our Savior. So full of meaning is it that it would be utterly impossible for us to draw out all its analogies. It is capable of adaptation to so many different things that the ablest commentators despair of being able to give you the whole of its fullness.

But remark, that very much of the meaning is to be discovered by the use, as the varieties of our personal experience furnish varieties of practical reflection. For example, we may interpret the passage of *conscience* as the eye of the soul—*conscience* must be clear and simple. If the conscience, which is the candle of the Lord, and which searches the secret parts of the belly, be not light but darkness, how great must the darkness be!

If a man has not enough conscience to know darkness from light, and light from darkness, and he puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, if that only power, on which seem to tremble some rays of the ancient light of manhood, be darkened—if the lighthouse be quenched, if the windows be sealed up—how great indeed, must be the darkness of man! We cannot wonder, when once a man has a depraved and seared conscience, that he runs into iniquity willingly, commits sin with both hands, and goes from step to step till he obtains the highest seat in the scale of sin.

The symbol of the eye here may also refer to the *understanding*, taken in a yet broader sense than as the conscience, for, I suppose, that conscience is after all, but the understanding exercised about moral truth. If the understanding of man be dark, how dark must be man's soul! If that which judges, and weighs, and tests, if that which is to us the teacher, the recorder of the town of Mansoul, if that be amiss, if the recorder makes wrong entries, if the understanding has bad scales and uses divers weights, how gross indeed, must be the ignorance of man!

What! Seal up the windows of the house, surely the thickness of the walls will not so much keep away the light as the sealing up of the windows. Let but the understanding be enlightened, and the rays will diffuse themselves, and illuminate every faculty of the whole man, but ah, if it be darkened, man is in darkness as respects all his powers.

Yet again, the term “eye” may also respect the *heart*, for in some sense, the heart is the eye of the soul. The affections turn the man in a certain direction, and whither the affections go the eye is turned. There is such a connection between the heart and the eye of man, that well might this text have such a reference. If the affections be pure, the man will be pure, but if the affections themselves be perverted, debased, degraded, we need not marvel that the man's whole life should be degraded, debased, and filthy too.

You see the aptness of the proverb by the numerous moral truths it may serve to illustrate, but time will only allow me to take it in more than one or two aspects, and may God bless what I shall have to say to all our hearts.

I shall regard our text as having to do, first, with *the eye of our faith*, and secondly, with *the eye of our obedience*.

I. First, with THE EYE OF OUR FAITH.

Faith to the spiritual man is his eye. It is with that he looks to Christ—looks unto Him whom he has pierced, and weeps for his sin. It is by faith that he walks, not by natural sight, but by the sight which is yielded to him by his spiritual eye—his faith. It is by this faith that he sees things not as yet visible to the eye of sense, realizes the unseen, and beholds the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things which the natural eye cannot discern.

Faith is to the Christian an eye both quick and sharp, an eye which discovers sin, an eye which discerns the Master's will, an eye which looks forward, and down a lengthy race course to the reward which awaits all those who so run as to receive the prize, looking unto Christ Jesus. Faith peers across the stream of death, and descries the rest which remains for the people of God. Faith has indeed, so sharp a vision, that it sees the glories which God has prepared for them that love Him, beholds the face of the crowned Redeemer in bliss, and meekly bows before Him in adoration.

Faith then, is the eye of the believer's soul. Any diseases therefore, in our faith will bring disease into the entire man. If our faith be weak, then the light in our entire spirit will be very hazy. He who staggers at the promise through unbelief, will stagger in other places besides his faith, he will stagger on his knees, his hands will become weak, and his heart will often palpitate. He who can see well with the eye of faith can do all things.

If our faith be the measure of our strength, he that is strong in faith is strong to do mighty exploits. By his God shall he break through a troop, in the name of his God shall he leap over a wall. But he who is afraid of the promise, staggering at its greatness, instead of adoring the greatness of the giver—he who looks at the blessing, and trembles because of his unworthiness, forgetful of the graciousness of Him who gives gifts to the undeserving—he must be a weak and sorrowful man.

Little-faith is safe, but he is seldom happy. It is very rarely that Ready-to-halt can dance upon his crutches. Miss Much-afraid is usually of a sorrowful countenance. But Great-heart is a man whose face is anointed with fresh oil, and Faithful is he who can look into the midst of the fires and fear not their fury, while Hopeful is one that can pass through the river Jordan itself and cry, "Fear not, I feel the bottom and it is good."

Diseases, I say, in our faith will bring disease into the whole spiritual man, and weakness here will make us weak everywhere. If our faith also be variable, if it has its uphills and its downhills, its ebbings and its flowings, then it will in every ebb and flow affect the whole spiritual being. When faith is in its flood-tide, the soul floats joyously above every rock, nor fears even the thought of quicksand.

But when faith is at its ebb, then—though blessed be God the tide never goes so low as to wreck the vessel—yet sometimes she seems to bump upon the sands, or the rocks grate against her keel. It is hard sailing with Little-faith. It is difficult traveling on the road to heaven when faith varies and is unstable as water. That Christian cannot excel whose faith is of an inconstant character.

But my brethren, there is one disease of faith which will not merely bring disease into the soul, but positive death, there is one sickness of our faith which is mortal, which must bring the man who labors under it inevitably to destruction, and that is a want of singleness in our faith, the want of simplicity in it.

He who has two grounds of trust is lost. He who relies upon two salvations, and cannot say of Christ, "He is all my salvation, and all my desire," that man is not only in danger of being lost, but he is condemned already because in fact he believes not on the Son of God. He is not alive to God at all, but rests partly on the cross, and then in some measure on something else. He only is the quickened and living child of God whose faith is "fixed on nothing less than Jesu's blood and righteousness."

It is with this disease of faith I have to deal this morning. Be it so, that the light of your body is the eye of your faith, therefore when thy eye be single, when you see but one object, and look unto Jesus alone, your whole body shall be full of light. There shall be the light of peace and joy in Christ Jesus.

But if thy eye be evil, and it must be evil if it is not single, if it be divided between two objects, know that your whole body shall be full of darkness, doubt and despondency shall cast its thick shadows over you now, and yet worse you shall be presently overtaken with the Egyptian darkness of despair, when God shall cast you away.

For hear me, you who are trusting to two things—trusting partly in Christ, and partly in your good works, or in ceremonies, or in almsgiving, or in prayer, or in your experience, or your doctrinal knowledge, all or any of these as objects of confidence, do but treacherously cast a slur upon the name of Jesus, the Savior of men.

What, sirs! and is not Jesus able enough to save with His own right hand that you must come and seek some assistance for Him? Why, man, you make Him to be less than omnipotent, for omnipotence can do all things without assistance. And yet you would intermeddle with Him, and think that He has not might enough to save, unless you shall supplement His strength by the addition of your own.

What would have been said to the brightest angel if he had stepped forward with impertinent audacity to assist his Maker in the creation of the world? Or what would be said of Gabriel himself, if he should offer to bend his shoulders that he might assist the Eternal One in bearing up earth's huge pillars, and sustaining the arches of heaven? Surely, such impertinence would be punished with the direst doom!

And yet were his sin less blasphemous than yours, you that think Christ's blood is not enough to ransom you, and you must bring your own gold and silver, and precious stones? What have I said? Nay, you must bring your dross and dung to eke out the Savior's redemption. You say His cross is not high enough, and the transverse beam not broad enough to bear you up and lift you up to heaven, and so you would add your puny strength to the strength of Him who is God's equal, who is the eternal God Himself, though He bear our sins in His own body on the tree!

Oh, soul, have done with such pride, I pray you, for such pride must sink you lower than the lowest hell. It was by less pride than this that Satan fell, and surely you will not escape. Christ will never let you enter heaven while you do blot, and blur, and stain, and smear the escutcheon of His omnipotence. Be done then, with seeking to have two objects for your trust.

Besides, let me ask you now with whom it is that you would yoke the Son of God! Are you about to yoke Him to yourself? Shall the eternal God plough with you, a puny worm, a creature of today—one that knows nothing, that is, and yet is not, that is gone before the breath of the morning gale? What! would you yoke Leviathan with a worm, or seek to put a gnat to the chariot with an elephant? If you did, the disparity would not so shut out every semblance of reason as to put yourself in conjunction with JEHOVAH's Christ.

To yoke an angel with a fly were absurd enough, but to put yourself side by side with the Lord's Anointed that you may do a part, and He may do the rest—oh man, be not so mad. Let go of the absurd idea, and know that Jesus is Savior alone, He will have no helper, no peer, no assistant. He will do all or He will do nothing, for when you put another with Him, you do dishonor and degrade Him.

Is your baptism to assist His blood? drops of water on an infant's brow to save its soul? or a bath in which you are immersed to help you wash away sins which no mortal's blood could purge? What! and is the eating of bread and wine to be the means of saving a soul because Christ's own flesh and blood could not suffice to save? I love both of these sacred ordinances, both baptism and the Lord's supper, but if you bring them as part-saviors and rest on them, I say, away with them! away with them! away with them!

An antichrist, even when made of gold, is as damnable an antichrist as when made of dross, and even God's own ordinances, if they are put as helpers to Christ, or if observed with a sense of merit, must be met with the cry, "Away with them! Away with them!" for they cannot save, and they may destroy. "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily," and he does so who trusts to them, "eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." They may condemn, they cannot save apart from Christ.

And will you add your almsgiving to Christ? What! and is your paltry dirt to buy a heaven which Christ's blood is not enough to buy? What! and will you add your prayers? Are your prayers to have a merit in them which His strong crying and tears have not already? Pray earnestly and constantly, I beseech you, give of your alms abundantly, but oh, rest not in these things, for good as they be, they will certainly exclude you from heaven, if they in any measure whatever make a part of the foundation of your hope.

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

Oh you whose eye is not single, let me remind you of another thing. Do you not know, O man, that your idea of mixing your merits or your doings up with Christ betrays an utter ignorance of what you are and of what your good works are? Your good works are stained with sin. Your best performances need to be washed in blood. When you have prayed you have need to ask forgiveness for your prayer. Though you should give your body to be burned, and spend your whole life in the service of Christ, yet at last you will have to confess you were but an unprofitable servant. You will have to be saved by grace or not at all.

It is your ignorance, man, that makes you think you can help Christ, for you are naked, and poor, and miserable. You may chink your counterfeit merits in your hand and say, “I am rich and increased in goods,” you may look upon your spangled cobweb robe, and say, as the dew drops hang on it, “I am adorned with diamonds, and clad in needlework and fine linen.” But ah, soul, it is but a spider web, and only your ignorance makes you think otherwise.

Oh that God the Holy Ghost may enlighten you. That eye which sees anything good in the creature is a blind eye, that eye which fancies it can discern aught in man, or aught in anything he can do to win the divine favor, is stone blind to the truth as yet, and needs to be lanced and cut, and the cataract of pride removed from it.

Yet again, O sinner, you say, “My merits and my doings will help Christ.” Why, man, is not this contrary to all precedent? Who has helped Christ as yet? When He stood in the Eternal Council with His Father, who gave Him wisdom? Who was prompter to our divine representative, and put words of wisdom on His lips? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him? Did He not ordain the covenant alone?

And when He came to build the heavens and arch the skies, were you with Him then? When He laid the pillars of earth, when He weighed the clouds in scales and the hills in balances, was there any to be His counselor? Were you one of the king's cabinet? Oh you audacious worm! to counsel Him and to help Him in redemption, when you could not help Him in the planning of redemption, nor in His creation work.

Who was with Him when He routed the enemies of His people and redeemed their souls with blood? Hear Him, “I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none.” The blood upon His garment is His own blood, not the blood of any of His fellow comrades. His disciples forsook Him and fled. He looked and there was no man, He wondered that there was no man to save. His own arm brought salvation, and it is His own righteousness which upheld Him.

And do you think after He has fought the battle alone that He needs you to be His ally and save you? Does He want your strength to back up His eternal might? Stand back, and lay your finger upon your mouth and say, “Lord I am vile! You have finished the work which Your Father gave You to do, and I cannot interfere therein. You have done it, You have done it all, and I accept Your finished righteousness, Your complete redemption.

“I am willing to be anything, that You may be all in all, I take Your grace as a free gift, I come to You naked to be clothed, helpless to be helped, dead to be made alive, I come to Your merit without pretence of any, I come, although without any fitness, without any qualification, with a hard heart, with a stubborn will, yet I come to You just as I am. Lord, do the work from beginning to end, work in me to

will and to do of Your good pleasure, and then help me to work out my own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Sinner, with divided hope, a solemn thought I have to suggest to you on the terribleness of your delusion, remember if you trust in any measure to your works you are under the law, and as many as are under the law are under the curse. Oh, what multitudes of professed Christians might be thundered at by that text. It is true they would not say that they hoped to be saved by legal works, but then they hope to be saved by certain works which they regard as being the works of the Christian dispensation.

Now remember, there never were three covenants, but only two. One is the covenant of works. If any man is to be saved by that, he must keep the covenant and never break it, but inasmuch as every man has already broken it, whosoever is under that covenant is accursed. He is accursed by the law. The ten great commandments utter ten solemn curses upon him.

The other covenant is a covenant of grace. There is no covenant half of works and half of grace. The covenant of grace is a covenant of free gift, in which Christ gives to all those who willingly receive, but asks nothing of them, albeit, that afterwards He works in them all that His Spirit loves and makes them to serve Him out of gratitude, not that they may be saved, but because they are saved, not to win salvation, but because they have obtained it, and wish to let that salvation manifest and develop itself in all their daily acts.

Many professing Christians, I believe, imagine that there is a remedial covenant, a sort of sincere-obedience covenant, in which if a man does as much as he can he will be saved by that. Oh, sinner, God will never take a composition of you. There is no court of heavenly bankruptcy where so much in the pound may be accepted, and the debtor then discharged. It is all or none. If you come to pay, it must be to the uttermost farthing. Agree with thine adversary quickly, therefore, and take the receipt of your debt freely from His loving hand, for if not, and you attempt to pay, you shall never be let out of prison until all is paid—and that will never be, though you swelter in the pains of hell forever and ever.

I know that people labor under the idea that going to church and chapel, taking the sacrament, and doing certain good deeds that pertain to a respectable profession of religion, are the way to heaven. It is the way to hell, believe me. Although it is strewn with clean gravel, and there are grassy paths on either side, it is not the road to heaven for all that.

You know how I have insisted in reading the chapter this morning, upon the certainty of good works. I have told you that it is only by this that you can be known, and that you are not Christians unless you produce good works. But at the same time, beloved, if you rest on anything but Christ, or on anything with Christ—if you try to prop up His grace—if you try to add to the perfect robe of His righteousness—you are under the law, and you are under the curse, and you shall find that curse in the daily trembling of your conscience, and meet with it in its fullness at the awful day of God, when the Lord shall curse every soul that is under it.

But one remark more and I will leave this point of the singleness of the eye of faith. If you can be saved by two things, then the glory will be divided. A quaint minister once said if sinners went to heaven of their own works, and their own will, they would throw up their caps and say, “glory be unto myself”—men would take the honor, and certainly the praise, if they contributed any part to their own salvation. The song would not be, “Unto him that loved us,” but “unto Him and myself” or “with my works and my merits.”

Think you, sirs, that Christ died to win divided homage and share a divided throne? Did He come from heaven’s highest glories and stoop to the cross of deepest woe that His name might be sung in conjunction with your poor name? Oh, no! God forbid that we should indulge in so profane a thought. He must be all, He must have all the crown, and every jewel in it shall be His own.

“Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the honor and glory and majesty, for ever and ever.” Every syllable of every song, every shout of every angel, every cry of every redeemed one, must bear the same sacred burden, and must rise up to the same divine throne, and we ought, we *must* go,

bow, and ascribe to Him, and Him only, “Glory, honour, and majesty and power, and dominion and might, for ever and ever. Amen.”

Suffer this word of exhortation. Poor sinners trust Jesus Christ now. Just as you are, come to Him now. Bring nothing with you, come empty handed. Robe not yourself, come naked. Wash not yourself, come filthy. Seek not to soften your heart, come with it hard as it is. Try not to get a little comfort, come despairingly. You can come no how else.

But come now to His cross. He was naked when He bought you, and you must be naked when He wins you. He was in shame when He served for you, and you must be ashamed when He shows His love to you. He drank the wormwood when He redeemed you, and if the wormwood of despair be in your mouth, yet come to Him now, and say to Him now, “Heal my backslidings, receive me graciously, and love me freely,” and when you have said it, “Venture on Him, venture wholly,” throw your arms about His cross, and be this the spirit of your faith—sink or swim, here I must abide. I know I perish if I withdraw, I cannot perish here. Jesus, let Your pitying eyes look down on me. I do believe, I will believe that You have power to save even me. I trust You with my all forever.”

If you can say that, sinner, then you are saved, your sins are forgiven you, go in peace. Take up your bed and walk you palsied one. “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth I bid thee stretch out thy hand, thou with the withered arm.” Awake ye, arise and live. He that believeth is justified from all things. Your sins are gone, your soul is accepted. You are saved this morning, and you shall see His face, and sing His love in glory everlasting.

II. Now, I come to my second point.

It is a singular fact, that to obey and to believe is in the sacred language very much the same, so that truly to believe Christ is to give security for a willing obedience. As soon as ever we believe Him we obey Him. In fact, Christ does not promise to save us if we disobey His laws. But His promise is this, if we trust Him He will save us, but then He has His way of saving us, and He will only save us in His own way, and if we really trust Him we shall yield to His ways and be willing to be obedient to His commands.

The eye of obedience however, sometimes in the Christian is not single—I mean in the professed Christian. Really that word has been so dishonored that I often use it without meaning the true child of God thereby, and sad that I should be compelled too often to apply the term “Christian,” to those who are not of Christ, and who have never learned His love nor have known His name.

There are many professors whose eye of obedience is not single. They live in this world they say “For Christ,” but really no one can believe them. If you can judge them by their fruits, they seem to live for almost any other object than Christ. At any rate, if they do give Jesus their allegiance, they seem to give Him but half their heart, and serve Him with a love that is neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm. Sometimes they are zealous for Jesus, and at other times just as eager after the things of this world.

Nay, I must confess that even true Christians do not always keep the eye single, the mote gets into it, if not the beam, and there are times when even God’s minister has to bow his knee, and with bitter weeping to confess that he cannot keep his motives always single. I have often to mourn over this myself. I can say from my inmost heart that I love my Master’s cause, but I have to ask myself this, “Do not you love to see your Master’s cause prosper by you better than by another?” Oh that wicked thought, that ever it should cross our hearts! And yet, what minister of Christ is there that has not to confess it, if he but examine himself.

I do feel that when we are in our right state, we would as soon souls were saved by anybody else as ourselves, and just as lief that God should bless another as us. For it can make no difference to us, if we really love the Master, who it is by whom He honors Himself. Our honor, our standing, ought to be less than nothing—yet it will creep up.

One serves Christ at times very earnestly, but then gets the fly into the sweet pot of ointment—the wishing to serve Christ that self may share in the pleasure of doing good. We must be content to do good and have no self gratulations to indulge, content to serve Christ and know no reward, content to serve

our generation, though our names should be cast out, content, though we should only hope to hear the “Well done” when we shall be in our Master’s presence.

Well now, let me say a few things about having a single eye. Professors, I speak to you at large, whether you be Christians or no. Get rid of that evil eye which looks asquint and crossway, looking one way at the world and the other way at the cross, not straight forward at any object, but is turned here, and there, and everywhere. Remember, this is the worldling’s eye. The worldling thinks he can serve God and mammon, and will you think the same, you professed follower of Christ? Will you try to serve two masters who are at deadly enmity to one another?

I tell you, man, when God will say to you, “Take no thought for the morrow, be careful for nothing,” mammon will say to you, “Look ahead, be careful about everything,” and when God says to you, “Give of thy substance to the poor,” mammon will say, “Hold it tight, it is that giving that spoils everything,” and when God will say unto you, “Set not thy affections on the things of earth,” mammon will say, “Get money, get money, get it anyhow,” and when God saith, “Be upright,” mammon will say, “Cheat your own father if you can win by it.”

Mammon and God are at such extreme ends of the earth and so desperately opposed, that I trust, Christian, you are not such a fool, such an arrant fool as to attempt to serve them both. If you do you have the worldling’s eye, and you are a worldling yourself.

Remember too, if you try to do this we may suspect you of having the hypocrite’s eye. As Matthew Henry says, “The hypocrite is like the waterman, he pulls this way, but he looks that. He pretends to look to heaven, but he pulls towards his own interest. He says ‘he looks to Christ,’ but he is always pulling towards his own private advantage. The true Christian however, is like a traveler, he looks to the goal and then he walks right straight on to it, he goes the way he is looking.” Be you then not like the hypocrite, who has this double eye, looking one way and going the other.

An old Puritan said, “A hypocrite is like the hawk, the hawk flies upward, but he always keeps his eye down on the prey, let him get up as high as he will, he is always looking on the ground. Whereas, the Christian is like the lark, he turns his eye up to heaven and as he mounts and sings he looks upward and he mounts upward.” Be you one of God’s own larks. Be an honest lark, looking and going in the same direction with a single purpose, for your double purpose will make the world suspect you of hypocrisy.

Yet further remember, Christian, unless you have a single eye your usefulness will be entirely ruined. This has been the spiritual death of many a man, who bade fair to do good in the world, but who did not live with one object.

I have known ministers preach a sermon, in which they wished to profit all, but they wished to please the deacon in the green pew too, and the sermon fell dead to the ground. We have known men too, anxious to win sinners, but at the same time they were equally anxious that they should be thought well of in their oratory, so that they should not say a course rough word, for fear of degrading their standing among the eloquent of the age. It is all over with the usefulness of such.

A Christian minister, above every man, must have no object in life but to glorify his God, and whether it be fair weather or foul weather it should be nothing to him. He should be a man who looks for fights and expects storms, and in proportion to his faithfulness he will be sure to meet with both. He must be one who girds up his loins and makes ready for the battle, let him understand it is to be battle, and make no preparation for the flesh.

And Christian, if you would do good in this world, you must live for that simple object, and not live for anything else. If you run after two objects, you will not come upon either, or rather, the world will get the mastery over you. When Christians have two aims they are like two rivers which flow near the city of Geneva, the Arve and the Rhone. The Rhone comes flowing along, a beautiful blue—a blue which painters give to Italian skies, and to the rivers of Switzerland. It is no exaggeration, they are as blue as they are painted.

The Arve comes down from the glacier, a chalky, dirty white. I stood sometime ago at the place where these two rivers join. It was not long before the Arve had quenched the Rhone, all that beautiful blue had fled away and nothing but white was seen. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

If your life is made up of two streams, worldliness running in like the Arve, and you hope to have spirituality running in like the blue Rhone, you will soon be mistaken. Your spirituality, if their be such a thing, will become a stalking horse to your worldliness, your religion will be swallowed up, for you cannot serve two masters, cannot serve either of them well, and you cannot serve Christ at all if you are divided in your aims.

And then further than this, Christian, do you not know that if you have divided aims you will be an object of contempt to the world? The world comes to despise the church at this very period because she perceives that the church is not chaste to her husband Christ.

Ah, I love not to say what I am going to say, but really when I have looked on some professing Christians, a thought I do not like to indulge has crossed my mind. I have seen them so worldly, so sharp in their business, so mingled with the world, that you could not tell which was worldling, and which was Christian, and I have thought, did Christ shed His blood to make such a thing as this? Is the only thing that Christ's redemption can produce a thing no better than nature can bring forth?

For I have seen worldly men better than such Christians, in many virtues excelling them. And I have thought, "What! is it worth while making all this noise about a redemption that does not redeem these men any more than this, but leaves them slaves to the world?" And I have looked at them, and the tear has been in my eye as I have thought, "Is this the Holy Ghost's work? and was there any Holy Ghost necessary here at all? would they not be as good men without the Holy Spirit, as they seem to be with Him? Is this the best thing heaven can produce? Has heaven been in labor and brought forth this mouse? Is this all the Gospel has to give?"

Now, judge ye, whether I am not warranted in such thoughts, and if they cross my mind, think how often such thoughts must flit across the mind of the worldling. "Oh," says he, "this is your religion is it? Well, it is not such a mighty thing after all. I bought such goods at such a shop, and I was fairly taken in. This is your Christianity is it?" "I worked for such a master," says another, "he is a deacon, he is a skinflint too. This is your Christianity." "Ah," says a laborer, "I am employed by So-and-so, and he is just as proud and domineering in his behavior to his workmen, as if he were a Pharaoh, and not a follower of Christ. This is your Christianity, is it?"

Indeed, the worldling has good ground for saying something like it. How has the fine gold become dim! How has the glory departed! The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how have they become as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! Oh Zion! your Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, but their face is become black as coal, and their skin is tarnished with mire. Your sons lie in the corners of the street like a wild bull in the net. Your strong men faint and your valiant ones fail, because your glory is departed from you.

Would to God we were all Christians who profess to be Christians, and that we lived up to what we profess. Then would the Christian shine forth "clear as the sun, fair as the moon," and what besides, think you?—why, "terrible as an army with banners". A consistent church is a terrible church, an honest, upright church would shake the world. The tramp of godly men is the tramp of heroes, these are the thundering legions that sweep everything before them.

The men that are what they profess to be, hate the semblance of a lie, whatsoever shape it wears, and would sooner die than do that which is dishonest, or that which would be degrading to the glory of a heaven-born race, and to the honor of Him by whose name they have been called.

O Christians! you will be the world's contempt, you will be their despising and hissing unless you live for one object. I know the world will pat you on the back and flatter you, but it will despise you all the while. When I am abused, I know what it means. I look at it in the right spirit and say, "Be it so, it is the highest compliment the world can pay me." If I am serving my God, I must not expect to be honored of men, but if I am not serving my God, I know I shall be despised of men.

So will it be with you. Get a single solitary thought in your mind, and that thought the precious love of Jesus, and go and live it out, and come what may, you will be respected though abused. They may say you are an enthusiast, a fanatic, a fool, but those names from the world are titles of praise and glory. The world does not take the trouble to nickname a man unless he is worth it. It will not give you any censure unless it trembles at you. The moment they begin to turn at bay, it is because they feel they have a man to do with. So it will be with you. Be men, each one of you, stand up for Christ, and the word you believe, and the world will respect you yet.

I met with a coachman some time ago, who said to me, “Do you know the Rev. Mr. So-and-so?” “Yes, I do know him very well,” “Well,” said he, “he’s the sort of man I like, he’s a minister, and I like him very much, I like his religion.” “What sort of a religion is it?” I said, for I was anxious to know what sort of a religion it was he could like. “Why,” said he, “you see this box seat, well, he has ridden on this box seat every day for this six months, and he’s the kind of man I like, for he has never said anything about religion all the while.”

That is the sort of Christian the world likes, and that is the sort they despise. They say, “Ah, we will not speak against him, he is one of our own.” And if he were to come out one day and speak about religion, what would they say? “He does not mean it, let him alone, he was silent as a man, and when he speaks, he speaks in his official capacity.” There is no respect for that man, for it is not the man in the office, but it is the office that overpowers the man for the time being.

Let it not be so with you, tread the world under your feet, and serve God with all your heart, for you may never expect to have peace in your conscience until you have turned all the idols out of your soul. Live for Christ alone, for where your consecration ends, there your peace ends too. Christian, you can never hope to stand accepted before God, while you only serve Him with half your heart, you can never hope to enter into heaven triumphantly when you have only used part of your manhood in the service of your redeemer.

I speak vehemently when I come to this point. I do pray you my dear hearers by your hope of heaven, by your hope to be delivered from the devouring fire, and to enter into a glory and bliss, either serve God or mammon. Whichever you do, do it with all your heart, but do not try to do both, because you cannot. Oh, if you be Christians live with all your might for Christ. Keep not back part of the price, like Ananias and Sapphires, but give Jesus all—

*“All your goods, and all your hours,
All your time, and all your powers,
All you have, and all you are,”*

and you will be a happy, blessed, honored, useful man. Divide your allegiance, and you shall be a hissing reproach to sinners, you shall be a pain to yourself, you shall be a dishonor here, and you shall be held up to shame and everlasting contempt when Christ shall appear in the glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him.

Charge, Christians, in the name of Christ, charge against the embattled marks of sin! But do it with one heart. Break not your rank, hold not out the flag of truce to the world with one hand, and draw the sword with the other. Throw away the scabbard. Be the sworn enemies forever of everything that is selfish and sinful. And trusting in the precious blood of Christ, and wearing the cross in your hearts, go forward conquering and to conquer, making mention of your Master’s name, preaching His Word, and triumphing in His grace alone.

God grant, if we must have two eyes, that they may be both clear ones, one the eye of faith wholly fixed on Christ, the other the eye of obedience equally and wholly fixed on the same object.

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