

WITHHOLDING CORN

NO. 642

A SERMON
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*“He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him:
but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.”
Proverbs 11:26*

IF I dared, I should always preach upon the comfortable promises and gracious doctrines of God’s Word. I find it most delightful and easy work to expatiate upon those themes of revelation which abound in sweetness, and are full of savor and preciousness to the child of God.

I said, “*If I dared,*” and you will ask me why I dare not? The answer is, because I have a solemn conviction on my mind that if I would be clear of the blood of all men, I must strive to make my range of ministry as wide as the range of revelation and I must not shun to declare the whole counsel of God.

I feel bound to go not where my wishes would lead me, but where Holy Scripture has made a track for my feet. There are certain texts in the Scriptures which are very seldom preached upon, because it is thought that there is little Gospel in them, and that the people when they go home will say to one another, “Well, I was not fed this morning.” Those who aim at pleasing men may well be shy of such subjects.

But I hold that since God in His wisdom has placed these passages in the Bible, He intended His servants, the preachers of the Word, to expound them. We are, it strikes me, not to preach from selections of Scripture only, but from the whole of the Sacred Volume, for “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

I freely confess that I do not know why I have selected this text this morning, except that it haunted and hunted me until I could not forbear to preach upon it. It seemed to force itself upon me and to bore its way into my soul like a rifle shot. I thought it over and over, and could not make much of it, until I yielded up myself to it, saying within myself, “If the Lord has anything to say to the people out of my mouth, here it is—let Him use it.”

If there should be any persons among our country friends, or our corn-dealing townsmen, who this morning feel at all touched by the text, I cannot help it. There is my Master’s message to them, and I can only deliver it with the best intentions, hoping that those to whom it comes home may be profited by it. It will, however, soon be clear to you that the verse before us has, besides its first meaning, a weight of very important spiritual teaching in it, to which we shall all do well to take heed.

The text, as it stands, has to do, as you clearly see, with owners of corn and dealers in it. In Solomon’s days there were very frequent famines. Communication between one nation and another was so extremely difficult that the transportation of wheat in any large quantities was not attempted, and therefore if a failure in the crops occurred in one district, the scarcity in that neighborhood was not compensated by abundance in another, and terrible famines prevailed.

Certain persons in those days not only stored up all the corn which grew in their own fields, but purchased as much as they could of others, so as to raise the market above its natural level. This, under the circumstances, was a very high affront put upon God, for instead of bearing their part in His judgments, these men enriched themselves by the poverty of their starving neighbors.

There have been such people ever since Solomon's day, and although the present system of free trade has nearly put an end to that kind of thing, there are doubtless some who would again withhold their corn, even at famine prices, if they could rise the price still higher. How does Scripture deal with this peculiar form of greed in trade?

I cannot but admire the wonderful reserve of Holy Scripture, for as Mr. Arnot well observes, "In this brief maxim no arbitrary rule is laid down to the possessor of corn, that he must sell at a certain period and at a certain price—and yet the hungry are not left without a protecting law.

The protection of the weak is entrusted not to small police regulations, but to great self-acting providential arrangements. The double fact is recorded in terms of peculiar distinctness, that he who in times of scarcity keeps up his corn in order to enrich himself is loathed by the people, and he who selleth it freely is loved. This is all. There is no further legislation on the subject."

Our narrow wisdom might have wished for some definite law upon the subject, something like a sliding scale, but the great ruler of heaven and earth falls into no such error. Laws which interfere between buyer and seller, master and workman, by any form of law, are blunders and nuisances. Parliaments and princes have hung on to the antiquated absurdity of regulating prices, but the Holy Ghost does nothing of the kind.

All the attempts of men to control the price of bread and wheat is sheer folly, as the history of France may well prove. The market goes best when it is left alone, and so in our text, there is no law enacted and no penalty threatened, except that which the nature of things makes inevitable.

God knows political economy, whether men do or not, and leaving the coarse machinery of police regulations, He puts the offender under a form of self-acting legislature which is far more efficient. The text seems to say, "Well, if you have no love to your neighbor and choose to keep your wheat, I make no law to break open your granary or pull down your ricks, but you will most certainly gain the hatred, contempt, and curse of the people among whom you dwell."

You see, dear friends, that the man may do as he pleases about selling or not, but he cannot escape from the curse of the people if he chooses to lock up his grain. And on the other hand, if he will sell at a proper price, or as another translation reads it, break his bread, that is to say, give it to the starving if they cannot buy it, he will receive blessings not only from the people but from heaven itself.

Brethren, this is a matter of fact, that any man of any observation must have seen, that there is no transaction which ever brings such ill-will upon a man, such general condemnation, especially from the poor, as withholding the corn. Common consent condemns the hoarder and human nature revolts at his offense. Ask anyone you choose to meet, except he be himself deep in the same mire, and he will join you in crying out against it. Of course there are many ways of defending the deed, but there is no way of escaping the fact that the people curse the doer of it in their hearts.

"Well," says one, "it is my own corn, I may do as I like with it." Just so, nobody said you could not. Nobody disputed your rights—only you are warned that in hoarding it you are sure to get the people's curse. You cannot alter that. It will follow and hang about your heels, and as far as the fact is known, it will make men curl the lip at you and sneer if they are your equals, while the working-men deep in their hearts will abhor you.

No matter how kind you may be to the poor in other matters, nor how you may have given your money in other ways, your holding the corn will be a scorn among your enemies, and an offense to your best friends. It is not always an ill sign when the voice of the people is against a man, but in this case Scripture endorses it, and he who dares to run the risk is none too wise.

"Ah," says another, "I do not see the wrong of withholding. There are laws of supply and demand, and the preacher does not understand political economy." The preacher, however, thinks he does understand it, and even if he does not, a child can comprehend the text before him, and with what we have to deal just now.

Solomon here tells you that if you like to carry out political economy in the withholding way, you will get cursed for it, and depend upon it, YOU WILL. Facts are stubborn things, and this is one that

withholding corn earns me the curse of the people, and that is what no Christian man would wish to bear.

“But what business is that of the preacher’s?” He answers that he thanks God that he has no share in it whatever, but he is set in his place to rebuke what God rebukes, and he is doing no more than expounding God’s own Word upon the matter. Whether you hear or forbear, there is the truth, and may the Lord bless it to you.

“Well, we ought not to hear such things on Sundays.” What, not read our Bibles on Sundays—not explain the meaning of a text on Sundays? You would not have heard me on a Monday some of you, and therefore you have it today. Do not be angry with the text, but look at it and read it, and then afterwards choose as you will.

“He that withholdeth corn,” God says, “the people shall curse him.” And if you wish to have ill-will, and the bad word of thousands of poor cottagers, and all others who have human sympathies, then withhold your corn.

Thank God, the worst monopolizer cannot do much mischief nowadays, for by the gracious providence of God, which has burst the fetters of commerce, we are not likely to feel any very great straitness of bread in this country. Should our own crops fail, the harvests of other lands supply the masses with their food. The crime is growing scarcer and scarcer, but if any cases still survive, and men choose to follow so ruinous a course, they will get cursed for it in mutterings deep if silent, and in sneers as bitter as they are well-deserved.

By your leave, I shall now take a step above my text, using it as a ladder to mount to a yet higher truth. *If it brings a curse upon a man to withhold the bread which perishes, what a weight of curse will light upon that man who withholds the bread of eternal life.*

If the people shall curse the man who keeps back the bread which merely sustains the body, what shall be the withering denunciations which shall overwhelm the soul of him who deals deceitfully with the bread of eternal life? That seems to me to be a fair deduction from the text, and at that truth we will aim this morning.

First, *I shall attempt to show the ways in which the bread of life may be withheld from the people, and the curse which will follow.* Secondly, *I shall try to depict the blessedness of the man who “breaketh it,” as another translation has it, to the people.* And then, thirdly, *we shall conclude by opening our own granaries and breaking some of this bread among the assembled multitude.*

I. First, he that withholds the bread of life will surely get the people’s curse upon him. HOW CAN THIS BE DONE?

1. It may be readily accomplished by *locking up the Word of God in an unknown language, or by delivering and preaching it in such a style that the people shall not comprehend it.* The Romish church for many years kept the sacred Scriptures in an unknown tongue, and resisted all attempts to translate the Book of God into the vulgar language of the people. What a curse Rome has had resting on her head. To those who know the enormity of this wickedness in holding back the Word of life, it is scarcely possible to think of Rome without invoking judgment upon her.

What myriads of souls went down to the pit perishing through lack of knowledge during what were called the Dark Ages! What fearful imprecations they must be uttering even now upon Popes, and Cardinals, and Priests who had the key of the kingdom, but would neither enter themselves, nor allow others to enter there!

They had the light, but they concealed it in a dark lantern, and the nations were compelled to sit in the darkness of profound ignorance and superstition, because they would not give them the light. Surely the people shall curse such forever.

But are these the only offenders? Is not their crime prolonged by those ministers who aim at delivering themselves in an oratorical style, with flowers of rhetoric far too fine to be reached by the common people? We have heard of some, and we fear we know some, who would rather round a period than win a soul, to whom it is their first and last object to deliver refined thoughts in elegant and

elaborate language, and having so done, having soared aloft on the spread-eagle's wing far out of sight, they are content to have dazzled the many and displayed themselves. Truly such men withhold the corn.

What can the poor countrymen, and servants, who are sitting in the aisles, make out of their eloquence? What can the work-people, who come in to hear something that may do them good, make out of their outlandish big talk? The terms of theology, the phrases of art, the definitions of philosophy, the jargon of science, are an unknown tongue to the young godly ploughman or praying shopkeepers.

"Alas!" says he, "this does not come to me—I cannot get at it." Possibly, in their ignorance, some people think the high-flyers very learned men, but in reality they are far from it, for plainness of speech is a better sign of learning than high-sounding words and soaring sentences.

Oh, dear friends, when we preach the Gospel plainly, I am sure we have our reward! When preaching in some village chapel, or from a wagon in a field, it is no small delight to watch the faces of the men in smock frocks, and the women in their print gowns, as they catch or feel the force of an inspired truth. Plain speech wins their blessing.

But to stand and talk right over the people's heads—what is it but having the corn and keeping it from those who want it? Simplicity is the authorized style of true Gospel ministry. "Having this ministry," says the apostle, "we use great plainness of speech." The common people heard the Master gladly, which they would not have done if He had spoken in high-flown language.

Whitefield, the prince of preachers, was mainly so because of the market language which he used. Let all of us who have the bread of life try to be very plain. You who write tracts, or preach in the street, or you that teach children, break the large slices of truth into small pieces, and crack the shells of the hard nuts. Take away the crust for the babes and pick out the stones from the fruit. Beware lest in seeking an excess of refinement you withhold the corn and win the people's curse.

2. But secondly, we may fall into this sin by keeping back the most important and vital truths of revelation, and giving a prominence to other things, which are but secondary. My brethren, if I were to stand in this pulpit, and for the next few months address you upon moral precepts, the excellence of virtue, or the faultiness of vice, if you could come out of this place and say, time after time, "We hear nothing about Jesus Christ. We do not know whether there be any Holy Ghost." If I were gifted with ever so much ability—and if these were my themes, however earnestly I pressed them, I should be guilty of withholding the corn, the true food of souls.

Morality brings no food to hungry souls, although it is a good thing in its place. Dissuasives from vice are not the bread of heaven, though well enough in their way. We need to have the great doctrines of grace brought forward, for the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and it is by preaching the truth as it is in Jesus, that souls are won to Him.

I grieve to think how indistinct some preachers are upon the doctrines of grace—they dare not say, "Election," or if they do, they tremble directly, and guard their words with shields so huge that the poor truth is crushed beneath them. As to final perseverance, effectual calling, particular redemption, or any of those grand truths wherein the fatness, and savor, and marrow of the Gospel is to be found—you may listen to some of them from the beginning of January to the end of December without hearing a word.

This will not do. This is taking away the backbone from the spiritual man. It is tearing away the vitals of the Gospel. It is giving to the people husks for wheat, and straw and chaff, instead of corn. Above all, that ministry is an abomination which puts Jesus Christ in the background.

My brethren and sisters, we must not only hear something about Jesus Christ, but our preaching must be *mainly* about Him. He must be its head and front—nay, let me say, in some sense—He must be *all* that the preacher has to preach. Christ Crucified must be the general summary of his ministry, and he must be able to say, when he retires from it, and is called up higher, "I have preached Christ. Of the things which I have spoken, this is the sum—I have preached my Master and what my Master gave me."

O my brethren, what a guilty ministry is that in which the blood has no place—the ministry which denies or undervalues the atoning sacrifice of the great Redeemer! God have mercy upon us that we

have not preached this fundamental truth so earnestly as we ought to have done, but still we can plead before Him, and say, we have truly desired to do it.

*“E’er since by faith I saw the stream
His flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.”*

What is the use of any ministry of which that is not true? It is withholding corn and in eternity the lost will curse their destroyer.

But we must not talk about ministers of whom there are not many here—we will come down to you. Many of you are Sunday school teachers—now you can sin in this way in the very same sense. Suppose as a Sunday school teacher you are content with making the little ones read through the lesson, satisfied with filling up the hour or the hour-and-a-half, and feeling you have done a good deal in making the little fellows sit still and so on.

Ah! my brother and sister, it is very solemn work. You have undertaken to teach these young immortals, and if you are satisfied with just making them go through the routine, take heed, lest when they grow up they come to curse you.

I am afraid that many Sunday school addresses have no Gospel in them. I do not see why the same Gospel should not be preached to children as to grown-up people. I think it should. To stand up in a Sunday school and say, “Now, be good boys and girls, and God will love you,” is telling lies.

I know the teachers of our school feel the importance of delivering the truth as it is in Jesus to their children, and you therefore tell them, “You are lost and ruined, and your salvation is in Jesus Christ—look to Him and live.” The teacher whose general teaching is not full of Christ will be called to a sad account in the day when Christ shall come.

Dear teachers of the school, whatever you do not know, do know your Lord, and whatever you cannot get into the youngsters’ heads, do make it a matter of prayer that you may get a knowledge of Christ and His atoning blood into their young hearts by the Holy Ghost. The same is also true of those of our beloved friends who conduct Bible classes, or who in any way teach the people.

I do not know that I have any necessity to say this to the most of you here, but still I will say it for the good of others—you must not, my brethren, get away from your great theme. It is of no use to go to the people empty-handed, we must take them bread—we only mock them by offering them stones, if we talk to them about the histories and precepts of Scripture, and forget the cross.

Let our teaching be full of grace and truth—let us deliver our souls of every doctrine as we find it in Scripture, and let us be determined that if men do perish, it shall not be for want of knowing the way of salvation.

3. We may withhold the bread of life, dear friends, *by a want of loving zeal in our labor*, because the mere telling out the plan of salvation is of no great service. God may bless it, but He does not often do so.

That which God blesses to the saving of sinners is truth attended by the earnestness of the speaker, the loving anguish of a heart which stirs the preacher’s soul. What shall I say here? For if I speak, I do but condemn myself.

Think of the preaching of Baxter. He preached for many years, but he said he never went into his pulpit without his knees knocking together. And Martin Luther said the same. Truly it is enough to make any man tremble, when he feels that he is God’s mouth to immortal souls. “If they perish, and thou warn them not, their blood will I require at thy hand.” Surely this ought to give a melting heart and streaming eyes to God’s ministers!

But I say, I remember reading of Baxter’s ministry—oh what pleading there was in it! The man seemed as if he never would go out of the pulpit till his hearers had received the truth. He wept, and

sighed, and sobbed, unless they came to Jesus Christ. You know how he followed them to their houses, watched them through the streets of Kidderminster, and would give them no rest till they thought about eternal things, and he was privileged thus to break the bread of life to many thousands, although his body was as full of physical pain as his heart was of holy anxiety. O for something of Mr. Baxter's spirit to make us love the souls of men as he did!

We are guilty of withholding corn unless we preach with a sympathizing, loving, tender, affectionate, earnest, anxious soul. Brethren and Sisters, you are most of you doing something for Jesus Christ. Let me therefore put this very plainly to you. If you get through your work for God as a mere matter of form, however true may be that which you have to say, and however carefully you may deliver it, yet still if the truth you deliver is not delivered with holy anxiety, with earnestness, with fervor, with love, with affection, and above all, if it be not attended with prayer, take heed lest in some day to come you get the curse of those from whom you withheld the bread.

How would you like, Sunday school teachers, to see a lad in your class grow up and go into sin? How would you like to meet him some day on a sick bed, when his vices had at last brought him to his end? How would you like that he should look into your face and say, "Ah! teacher, you were never earnest with me. You told me the truth, but you told it to me so coldly that I did not believe it. If I had seen one tear in your eye, I think there would have been one in mine. If I thought you felt what you were saying, I sometimes think I should have felt it too. But you merely kept me still and told me it all, as if it were no great matter, and so I doubted the whole, and from doubt went on to unbelief and ran into sin, and here I am.

"O that you had wept over me as such and such a teacher did with my brother! How different is my brother from what I am. He was in another class, and his teacher took him before God in prayer—prayed with him as well as for him, told him the truth, but he did more, labored to drive it home as with a great hammer, while he pleaded with him to lay hold on eternal life. Teacher, would to God that you had been more earnest with me."

Beloved, seek to rid yourselves of any future regrets in this matter. It is no small satisfaction, when you hear the death-bell toll, to say, "Well, I did all I could for that soul, and whether it be in heaven or hell, my conscience is clear." You cannot save, but still, God who works by means, may make you the instrument of conveying salvation to sinners—or on the other hand, you may be made instruments of unrighteousness, through whom Satan may harden these children's hearts, even to their everlasting ruin.

I take the case of a Sunday school teacher, but I intend the remarks for every worker. O let us work for God with our whole hearts. God make us more awfully in earnest. Life is earnest, death is earnest, heaven is earnest, hell is earnest, Christ is earnest, God is earnest—let us be clad with zeal, as with a cloak, and go forth to serve the Lord with all our soul and strength, as His Holy Spirit shall enable us.

4. Fourthly, we may be found guilty of withholding corn *by refusing to labor zealously for the spread of the kingdom of Christ and the conversion of sinners.*

I am afraid that the churches of the past were not altogether without a curse because of their deficiency in the matter of missions and home evangelization. During the pastorate of my venerated predecessor, Dr. Gill, this church, instead of increasing, gradually decreased. And although the age in which he lived was honored with many great and excellent men, yet the state of our own denomination, and the Presbyterian body, and the Independent body in England was most lamentable.

Many of the churches were gradually sliding into Unitarianism, and the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ was scarcely preached, or where preached, it was without any power whatever. And I take it that the reason was very much that the churches were content to be edified themselves, but had no hearts of compassion for the perishing multitudes around and abroad.

But mark this—from the day when Fuller, Carey, Sutcliffe, and others, met together to send out missionaries to India, the sun began to dawn of a gracious revival which is not over yet, for bad as the state of the churches now is, yet it is marvelously an improvement upon anything before the age of missions.

Though not as zealous as we ought to be, the zeal of Christendom is one hundred times greater than it was then, and as for what is done for winning souls, brethren, the churches now are like a garden of the Lord compared with what they were then. I believe that the neglect of sending the Word to the heathen brought a blight and a curse upon the churches, which is now happily removed.

Yet even today we find professors who are always doubting. They never get beyond—

“’Tis a point I long to know.”

There they stick and never know whether they are saved or not. Full assurance is to be a tempting morsel which they have not yet tasted. Their eyes do not sparkle with heavenly delight. They know not what it is to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Their raptures are very few, their joys very shallow.

I will tell you why. In almost every case these people do nothing for souls. They withhold the corn, and therefore they get this curse in their souls, that they shall not enjoy their own religion because they do not want to lead other people into it.

If you put your hands into your pockets and say, “Well, glory be to God, I trust I am one of the elect, and whatever becomes of the rest of mankind really is not my concern. Every man for himself, say I”—that is such an unchristian spirit, so antagonistic to the whole life of Jesus Christ, that if you get sorely whipped in providence, I can only hope you may be blessed by it. But I would not pray that the rod may be removed until you are scourged into a better temper.

Commend me to the Christian who says, “I bless God I am saved. Now what can I do for others?” The first thing in the morning he prays, “God help me to say a word to some soul this day.” During the day, wherever he may be, he is watching his opportunity, and will do good if he can.

He is concerned about his children—it sometimes breaks his heart to think that they are not saved. If he happens to have an ungodly wife, it is his daily burden, “Oh God, save my wife!” When he goes to a place of worship, he does not expect the minister to make sermons always on purpose for him, but he says, “I shall sit here and pray God to bless the Word,” and if he looks round the chapel, and sees one that he loves, he prays for him, “God send the Word home to him.”

When service is over, a man of this kind will waylay the unconverted, and try to get a personal word with them, and see if he cannot discover some beginnings of grace in their souls. This is how earnest Christians live, and let me tell you, as a rule, though they have the griefs of other men’s souls to carry, they do not have much grief about their own. As a rule, their Master favors them with the light of His countenance. They are watering others and they are watered themselves also. May this be your work and mine!

But some of you say nothing for Christ at all. You are too timid you say, and others of you are too indifferent, too thoughtless about others. Oh, the opportunities many of you have lost! Oh, the many who have died to whom you might have spoken, but you did not! Oh, the people that are now in the darkness of ignorance who get no light from you! You have light, but you keep it. They are dying, and you have the healing medicine, but you will not tell them of it. May God deliver you from the curse of those who thus withhold the corn.

We will only mention one more form of this evil. Some may be said to be guilty of withholding the corn, because while they themselves do not speak for Christ, *they do not help those who can*. No Christian man ought to go to bed with an easy conscience, if he has thousands of pounds which he does not require, which lies by unused for God. There must be many Christians in this rich country who have not consecrated their substance to the Lord.

When a man can say, “I have money which I really do not need, and my children do not require it, and this is money absolutely needed for God’s cause,” ought he to keep it from the Lord Jesus? Must you confess that so many missionaries might be sent out tomorrow, if you just drew a check and handed it over to the proper quarter, then why not do it? A destitute neighborhood needs a place of worship, and if I can build it if I would, how am I to answer for it to my Lord?

I cannot understand how a man can love God when he only lives to heap up riches. I can with great difficulty imagine such a case, but I fear that such cannot be real piety. It seems to me that if I have any religion in my soul, it will make me not only say with Dr. Watts—

*“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, may all,”*

but I think it would make me carry it out.

I will not propose to you that you should act indiscreetly in giving so as to beggar your families or deprive yourselves of what is necessary. You know I am not so foolish. But I am speaking to many Christians who have not only enough but to spare, but who will continue to accumulate, and accumulate, and accumulate, And I cannot think that they can feel that they are doing right in the sight of God.

O God! this great city needing preachers, needing the Gospel—thousands needing even bread to keep them from starving—and for Your professing people to be heaping their coffers fuller and fuller! Why surely, if I do this, I am heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, and I shall find it come into my bosom hot and fierce from the God of Sabaoth, to whom my gold and my silver will cry out against me.

Let us not be guilty of this, but each in our own station, as far as we can, let us be aiding others to preach the Word if we cannot preach it ourselves. Dozens of young men are desirous to enter our College and you can help *them* to go forth to preach, if you cannot preach yourself.

II. I am pleased to turn to the other subject for a minute or two. I am to speak upon THE BLESSEDNESS WHICH THOSE POSSESS WHO BREAK THE BREAD OF LIFE.

To describe it is altogether beyond my power. You must know, and taste, and feel it, beloved. There are many blessednesses in doing good to others. God is a good paymaster. He pays His servants while at work as well as when they have done it. And one of His payments is this—*an easy conscience*. If you have spoken faithfully to only one person, when you go to bed at night, you feel happy in thinking, “I have this day discharged my conscience of that man’s blood.”

You do not know how delightful a Sabbath evening is to some of us when God has helped us to be faithful. How sweet to feel, “I have made many blunders, shown many infirmities of the flesh, and so on, but I have preached the Gospel, and preached it with my whole heart to the best of my ability.” One feels a burden taken off one’s back, and there is a joy and satisfaction unknown to those who sit at home doing nothing.

You in your class at the Sunday school, I know you feel, when Sunday is over, though it is a very hard day’s work for some of you after the six days’ toil in the week, you feel, “I thank God I did not spend that afternoon in lolling about at home, but I did speak a word for Jesus.” You will find such a peace of mind that you would not give it up for all the world.

Then there is *a great comfort in doing something for Jesus*. Look into His face, what would you not do for Him? When first converted did you not think you could do ten thousand things for Jesus. The moment your burden was off your back and your sins forgiven, how you felt you could follow Him through floods and flames!

Have you lived up to your resolutions, brethren? Have you kept up to your own ideas of Christian duties? I do not suppose any of us can say that we have. Still, what little we have done has been an unspeakable delight, when we have felt that we have been crowning His head, and strewing palm branches in His path. O what a happiness to place jewels in His crown and give Him to see of the travail of His soul!

Beloved, there is a very great reward in watching *the first buddings of conviction in a young soul!* To say of that girl in the class, “She seems so tender of heart, I do hope that there is the Lord’s work there.”

To go home and pray over that boy, who said something in the afternoon to make you think he must know something more than he seemed to know! Oh, the joy of hope!

But as *for the joy of success!*—it is unspeakable. I recollect the first soul that God ever gave me—she is in heaven now—but I remember when my good deacon said to me, “God has set His seal on your ministry in this place, sir.” Oh, if anybody had said to me, “Somebody has left you twenty thousand pounds,” I should not have given a snap of my fingers for it, compared with that joy which I felt when I was told that God had set His seal on my ministry.

“Who is it?” I asked. “Why, it is a poor laboring man’s wife! she went home broken-hearted by the sermon two or three Sundays ago, and she has been in great trouble of soul, but she has found peace, and she says she would like to speak to you.” I felt like the boy who has earned his first guinea, like a diver who has been down to the depths of the sea and brought up a rare pearl—I prize each one whom God has given me, but I prize that woman most.

Since then my God has given me many thousands of souls, who profess to have found the Savior by hearing or reading words which have come from my lips. Well, this joy, overwhelming as it is, is a hungry sort of joy—you want more of it, for the more you have of spiritual children, the more your soul desires to see them multiplied. Let me tell you, that to be a soul-winner is the happiest thing in this world, and with every soul you bring to Jesus Christ, you seem to get a new heaven here upon earth.

But what will be the joy of soul-winning when we get up above! What happiness to the Christian minister to be saluted on his entrance into heaven by many spiritual children! They will call him, “Father,” for though they are not married nor given in marriage, though natural relations are all over, yet spiritual relations last forever.

Oh! how sweet is that sentence, “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Do you know what the joy of Christ is over a saved sinner? You cannot guess it. You would need to know the griefs He suffered to save that sinner. O the joys He must feel when He sees that sinner saved as the result of His griefs—this is the very joy which you and I are to possess in heaven, “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Yes, when He mounts the throne, you shall mount with Him. When the heaven rings with, “Well done, well done,” you shall partake in the reward. You have toiled with Him. You have suffered with Him. You shall now reign with Him. You have sown with Him—you shall reap with Him.

You were despised with Him—you shall now be honored with Him. Your face was covered with sweat like His, and your soul was grieved for the sins of men as His soul was—now shall your face be bright with heaven’s splendor as is His countenance, and now shall your soul be filled with beatific joys even as His soul is. He who breaks bread, blessings shall be upon his head.

III. Now I have to open the GRANARY for a minute myself.

Hungry sinners, wanting a Savior, we cannot withhold the bread from you. You may never come to hear the Gospel again. We, therefore, will open the granary very wide. Christ Jesus, the Son of God, became man to save men, and inasmuch as God’s wrath was due to sin, Christ took the sin of all who have ever believed or ever shall believe on Him, and taking all their sins, He was punished in their room and place, and stead, so that God can now justly forgive sin because Christ was punished in the stead of sinners, and suffered divine wrath for them.

Now this is the way of salvation, that you trust this Son of God with your soul, and if you do so, then know that your sins are *now* forgiven you and that you are saved. Concerning this salvation, hear you just these few words.

It is a *satisfying salvation*. Here is all that you can want. Your conscience shall be at ease forever if you believe in Jesus—your biggest sins shall no longer trouble you, your blackest iniquities shall no longer haunt you. Believing in Jesus, every sin you have of thought, and word, and deed shall be cast into the depths of the sea and shall never be mentioned against you any more forever.

It is an *all-sufficient salvation* too. However great your sins, Christ’s blood can take all away. However deep your needs, Christ can supply them. You can not be so big a sinner as He is a Savior. You may be the worst sinner out of hell, but you are not too great for Him to remove—He can carry

elephantine sinners upon His shoulders, and bear gigantic mountains of guilt upon His head into the wilderness of forgetfulness. He has enough for you, however deep your necessity.

It is, moreover, a *complete salvation*. Sovereign mercy does not stand on the mountain and cry to you, “Climb up hither and I will save you.” Eternal mercy comes down the valley to you just where you are, and meets your case just as it is, and never leaves you till it has made you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Christ does not want you to pay one talent out of the hundred, and promise to pay for you the ninety-nine. He will discharge all your debts of sin. All that you want to take you up to heaven is provided in Jesus.

This is a *present salvation*—a salvation which, if it come to you, will save you *now*. You shall be a child of God this very hour, and ere that clock shall strike again, you shall rejoice in the peace which the Spirit of God gives you, if you believe on Him.

It is an *available salvation*, freely presented to you in Christ Jesus. Remember the text of two or three Sundays ago, “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” Jesus casts out none who come to Him. Oh that you may be led to come this morning.

Thus have I tried to avoid the sin of withholding corn. And if any in this house of prayer have been guilty of it, I pray you avoid the curse of the people, and seek the blessing of the Most High God, by this day endeavoring to scatter everywhere the bread of life. Go and work for God wherever you have an opportunity, and help us in our prayers and efforts to send forth more laborers into the harvest, for the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PROVERBS 11

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.