

PREFACE
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Perhaps the notes and pastoral letters which are appended to the later sermons of this volume will best explain the feelings which I entertain towards the readers of my sermons. I feel that they are my friends. Many, doubtless, read to cavil, to criticize, and to condemn, but a vast number have charity enough to overlook the faults, grace enough to profit by the truths, and kindness enough to allow me a place in their hearts.

Innumerable are the loving epistles which I have received from those to whom these sermons have been blessed. From all denominations of Christians have I received cheering words of sympathy and affection. From none more frequently than from members of the Established Church. I can appreciate the high Christian feeling which has constrained my brethren to bear with all the things in which we cannot agree, and cordially to accept me as a brother beloved, because of those glorious truths in which we alike rejoice.

I would, therefore, in this preface salute all the brethren, desiring that grace, mercy, and peace may be multiplied unto them from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May our prayers be heard for each other, when we earnestly pray the Father of Mercies to fill us all with the Spirit of His Son, that we may be conformed unto His image in all things, and at last may appear with Him in glory.

And now what can I say fresh by way of preface to this fourth volume? Assuredly I am shut up to one subject and that involves a repetition of the song of former years. I must sing of judgment and mercy, and at the risk of incurring the charge of egotism, I will here record my praise.

Personally I have experienced a twofold and memorable deliverance—once by an escape from a terrible accident at Halifax, of which this volume contains a record. And yet again, by a happy recovery from the most trying and painful sickness. May my life be henceforth doubly devoted unto the service of the Lord!

In the ministry, too, the Lord has been very gracious. The people have never failed to gather in immense multitudes, nor have the brethren ceased to wrestle in prayer that the Word may be prospered. But my special crown of rejoicing lies in the success which a condescending Master has given to one who feels far more than ever his utter and entire unworthiness of such a favor, for these sermons have upon them the stamp of the Lord's right hand, seeing that He has employed them for conviction, conversion, and edification.

It may, perhaps, be interesting to the reader to know that the sermon entitled, "Looking unto Jesus," has received many and singular seals from the Lord. It has been pre-eminently blessed. At our church meetings, many conversions are ascribed to its instrumentality as a preached sermon, and from numerous incidents which have come under the notice of the saints in all parts of this country, I find that the reading of it has been attended with a like unction from on high.

This fact I do not wonder at, for it is but another proof of the sovereignty of God, since the sermon is one of the most simple of the series, and would probably be overlooked by those who are seeking for anything original and striking. The Master is in the sermon, and therefore, it has rejoiced the hearts of His people when applied by the Holy Spirit.

Another sermon, entitled, "A Call to the Unconverted," has been the means of awakening very many to a sense of their lost condition. So greatly was it owned of God at the time of its utterance, that it has been reprinted as a little book, so as to be circulated in another form at the usual price of a sermon.

Next to these, the discourses upon the following subjects have been the most remarkably used for the conversion of sinners—"Conversion of Saul of Tarsus," "Paul's Sermon Before Felix," "What Have I Done?" "The World Turned Upside Down," and "The Glorious Gospel."

I value a sermon, not by the approbation of men, or the ability manifest in it, but by the effect produced in comforting the saint and awakening the sinner. Is not this, after all, the practical way of estimating all that is spoken or written?

A fresh source of consolation has been opened to me from the information I receive of the good attending the public reading of these printed preachings. In lonely places there are churches of Christ whose only ministry is found in these pages, save when a passing evangelist is led to open his mouth among them.

In rooms in the crowded haunts of poverty, these are read to hundreds who could scarcely understand any language more refined. While at races, and fairs, and even at pilgrimages of the Romish Church, these have been used by earnest brethren as a means of obtaining an audience in the open air.

In America, more than one hundred and fifty thousand volumes have been sold. In Australia, two local editions have appeared, besides those which have been exported by the London publishers. A Welsh edition has been issued monthly, and several of the sermons have been translated into Dutch, German, and French, while the English circulation remains undiminished.

But what of all this, unless the Spirit of the Lord shall apply the Word with power? In vain true doctrine and faithful warning without His divine influence. Brethren, pray for us! that the Word may be more and more a "savour of life unto life" in the souls of those who shall peruse these pages.

There is one theme of rejoicing to which I am constrained to allude. The importance of the pulpit is evidently beginning to be recognized. I greatly rejoice in the opening of St. Paul's Cathedral and other large buildings for the ministry of the Word. May the zeal of the churches increase and may the preaching be the proclamation of *the truth as it is in Jesus*. Sound Doctrine is as essential now as in the days of the Reformation. We must not congratulate ourselves on the mere assemblage of crowds, but we must see to it that *the Gospel* is preached, not mere moral maxims and ceremonial observances.

I have observed numerous typographical errors in this volume, and would remark that the sermons are printed in haste to supply an eager demand, and that the printers are often so hurried that they cannot possibly afford that careful scrutiny which would be given to a book prepared and printed at leisure.

With love to all the people of God,

I am,

The Servant of Christ and His Church,

C. H. Spurgeon

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.