

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

SOMETHING WORTH SEEKING.

A Sermon

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“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”—Matthew vi. 33.

THERE is just as much need of this exhortation to-day as there was when our Saviour first uttered it. These are times in which fretful care is very apt to enter into the hearts of believers; and if our Lord were here in person now, he would admonish us to be rid of such care, for carking care is not becoming in a child of God. It is so opposed to faith, and to the life of God in the soul, that it ought to be struggled with and driven out; none of us who are trusting in Christ ought to allow ourselves to become the victims of it.

Fretful care is altogether unnecessary in a believer. Our Lord says, in this very chapter, “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” If, therefore, God will do it, why should you worry about it? If you saw a farmer feeding his barn-door fowls plentifully, you would not believe a slanderer who said that the man starved his children; and as long as you see God providing for the baser creatures, and even the wild beasts that he has formed, rest you assured that he will take care of his children. Therefore is fretful care unnecessary.

And, further, it is useless. Even if you feel yourself bound to fret, of what possible service will all your fretting be? Would the fowls of the heaven be better fed if they sullenly moped on the boughs in
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winter time, or if they croaked and cried out against the God who created them? And if you begin croaking, what will you gain by it? Can you by complaining add a cubit, or even an inch, to your stature? If there be no rain, will the fretfulness of the farmer compel the clouds to come, and empty themselves on his meadows? If the husbandman should fancy that it is raining too much, will his grumbling seal up the bottles of heaven? If your trade be dull, will it be made any brisker by your murmurings? If your business yields you no profit, will you get any profit out of your complaints? This worrying is a poor business; it cannot bring any good results. Carking care, therefore, is as useless as it is unnecessary.

Our Saviour dissuades us from it by a third argument. He says that it is heathenish: "After all these things do the Gentiles seek." We need not wonder if those who have no knowledge of God, no Saviour, no Father in heaven, should try to get all they can out of this world, for they have no other. Well may they make gold their god, for they have no God who can give them any pleasure or delight; but it should not be so with you who are the twice-born, the immortal, the God-descended. You who have eternal life within you, you in whose bodies the Holy Ghost is dwelling as in a temple,—and it is so with you unless you are hypocrites, and are making a pretence to that which is not true,—you should not be fretting and stewing about what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed? Endowed with such a noble nature, called to higher things than the heathen have ever dreamed of, descend not to the trifles which content them, but let your spirit rise above these earthly things.

To help you to do so, is the object of the present discourse; and, first, dear friends, I shall try and show you *the proper sphere of care*: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Then, in the second place, I shall try to tell you of *the proper quietus of all anxious care*: "All these things shall be added unto you."

I. Here is first, then, THE PROPER SPHERE OF CARE. There is nothing in man but has its special function and end; and there is in all of us, to a greater or less extent, the propensity to care. There are some men, and some women especially, who are very careful souls; it would not matter in what station of life they might be placed, they would always be very thoughtful, much given to looking ahead, and possibly much inclined to look on the dark side of everything. Now, dear friend, if this be your propensity, here is a way of turning it to good purpose; let your deepest, most intense, and most thorough care, be exercised in this direction, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

What is it that we are to seek? The text says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." God has set up his kingdom in this world; inside the kingdoms of men, there is the kingdom of God, wherein he rules. It is of another kind from all earthly kingdoms, for Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world." It is a purer, higher, truer, more durable kingdom than any Cæsar has ever been able to set up.

Our desire should be, first of all, to *enter into the kingdom of God*,—the kingdom of the new life, the kingdom of perfect liberty, the

kingdom of faith in Christ, the kingdom of union to Christ, the kingdom of the power of the Spirit of God. Have we all entered it? If we have not, let us seek that kingdom immediately. Before we seek our own door, let us seek first this kingdom of God, that we may take up our citizenship in it, and become loyal subjects of the great King. The way of admission into the kingdom is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Seek thus to enter the kingdom of God.

Once in it, then *seek to enjoy its privileges*. When you have become the subjects of the great King, ask him fully to rule in your spirit, and therein to set up his throne of righteousness. Ask that you may have all the peace that appertains to that kingdom, all the holiness which is the characteristic of that kingdom, all the rest, and all the joy, and all the spiritual wealth, and all the sacred ennobling which come to men who are brought under the sway of the Lord's Christ, whose gracious Spirit brings every thought into captivity to his sovereign will.

Further, being in the kingdom of God, and enjoying its privileges, then *seek to extend that kingdom*. Go forth every morning, conquering and to conquer. With the weapons of love and kindness, seek to win men to Christ. Enlisted in this holy army, carry on a constant crusade for Christ. From your earliest waking thoughts, till you fall asleep at night, be intent, first and foremost, to win other hearts to Christ. Let all your care go in this direction,—to serve God, to live for God, to glorify God. Seek this as earnestly as the merchant seeks more trade, as the miser seeks more gold, as the sick man seeks a return of health: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

Together with this, there is another thing to be sought: "his righteousness." It may mean, *seek that righteousness which God has prepared for us through his dear Son*. Seek to be justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ. But I do not think that is what is meant in this place. Seek God's righteousness; that is, seek a holy character, *seek first of all to be right*, not to be rich. Seek first of all to be just, not to be wealthy. Seek first of all to obey God, not to become the master of others. Seek not to be great, but seek to be good, let this be your one ambition: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." The one aim of the life of a Christian should be always to do the right. It may sometimes seem expensive, and involve sacrifice, but it is always safe; and in the long run, it will prove to be the most profitable to do that which is according to the mind of God. Keep you to the King's highway; never get out of it by trying the devil's "short cuts." Act not according to human policy, but remember that ancient advice, "I counsel thee to keep the King's commandment." Thou shalt find it to be the loadstar of thy life if thou dost seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

You and I are bound to seek God's righteousness in our own lives; but we should also *seek to spread that righteousness in the world*. Is there anything that tends towards temperance? I am a Christian, so I am on that side. Is there anything that helps to make men honest? I am on that side. Is there anything that is for the real liberty of mankind? Is there anything that puts down oppression?

Is there anything that rectifies social wrong? Is there anything of purity left under heaven? I am on that side, sir. We remember the statesman who was wont to say that he was on the side of the angels; that is the side on which every good man ought to be, on the side of everything that is pure, and right, and holy, and heavenly. I cannot understand the indifference of some people to the crime that flows in black torrents down our streets. It seems to me that, if I am a Christian, I am to seek to promote the kingdom of righteousness everywhere; and that the side I ought to take in social life, and politics, and everything else, is the side of righteousness.

"Stand up, stand up, for Jesus," everywhere, because Jesus stands up for that which is true and right, both towards God and towards man; and never fear the consequences. The right harms nobody except those who ought to be harmed; and if, for the moment, the right should seem to bear hard upon certain special interests, yet taking the world all round, and taking God's ages in their length and breadth, the right will prove to be best for all who follow it. The Christian man is bound first to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

The text says, Seek it. But how are we to seek it? If you are not in that kingdom, seek it at once by prayer, seek it by earnest cries to God; seek it specially by faith in Jesus Christ, that you may enter into that kingdom now. But if you are in it, then seek it by continually being watchful that you be not overtaken by unrighteousness, that you be not led to do anything which would injure the kingdom of your God and Saviour.

Seek the kingdom of God as a man seeks goodly pearls, seek it as the traveller in an unknown land seeks to find its rivers and its streams; with your whole heart seek after God, and his truth, and everything that is right.

Notice that the text says, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God;" that is, first in order of time. Young men, seek God first; get your hearts right with God first. The highest should come first, and the highest is God. The most enduring should come first, and God is eternal. That which concerns your highest part should come first, and your soul is more precious than your body; your body will soon become food for worms, but your soul will outlast the stars. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," for this is the first thing; and take things in their proper order, for so shall you take them aright. Seek the kingdom of God first while yet the blood leaps in your veins, ere you are sluggish with approaching age, or even death itself; while yet your eye is bright, and your mind is clear, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Seek this first in the week. Be ever observant of that first day of the week; give it all to God. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Seek it first in each day. Give God the first few minutes of every opening morning; always begin thy day with God. Seek first in order of time the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

And then seek it first in order of degree. If thou needest health, seek it; but seek first the kingdom of God. If thou desirest knowledge, seek it; but seek first that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of

wisdom. If thou wantest wealth, seek it in that moderate way which is allowable to thee; but first of all let thy treasure be in heaven. Seek thy God first, before everything else. Thou mayest seek to have the love of those about thee, but seek first the love of God. Thou mayest seek a wife, and thou shalt not do ill if thou seekest aright; but seek first thy God. Thou mayest seek a house, and seek to build up a family, and be a blessing to those about thee; but first seek thy God. Let thy rule be, first an altar, then a tent; first seek unto God, and then that which is nearest and dearest to thee of earthly things.

Then, again, should it ever come to the alternative of God or earthly things, seek first the kingdom of God. Let all other things go, but seek thou first thy God. Look at the martyrs when they had to choose between Christ and death, or dishonour to Christ and life; they never deliberated, brave spirits that they were. They were never anxious about their answer to their accusers, for it was given unto them what they should speak; and they reckoned not with lions, or with the fierce flames, or with the cruel rack. They sought God first, never counting any cost, for no cost could be great for such jewels as they had to conserve. They flung their lives away without a sigh, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and they were no fools, they were gainers by their losses. The ruby crowns they wear to-day and for ever are the full reward of all their sufferings. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Let that override everything. Let it, like Aaron's rod, swallow up all other rods. Be this thy passion that shall consume thee. Be this, if need be, called of men "thy fanaticism,"—better still, thy enthusiasm,—the Spirit of God within thee that shall make all things else as dust and ashes in thy esteem.

Before passing to the other part of the subject, I must just notice who ought to do this; they especially ought to do it who call themselves followers of Christ; "Seek ye first." These are the people whose Father is in heaven: "Your heavenly Father." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." They are the people for whom God most graciously provides, and the people who yield obedience to him; it is of them that the Lord Jesus Christ said that his Father would take care: "Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Provided for by God, seek ye first the kingdom of God. You wear his livery, you eat his bread, you drink from his cup, his broken body is your meat, his shed blood is your drink, he himself is your hope, your all; therefore, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

You who aspire to be among this favoured band, unless you throw away the hope of the adoption into the family of God, unless you refuse to have God for your Father and your Friend, you, I say, must be included in these to whom Christ says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." You young men and women who are beginning life, I charge you, lay this text to heart. You, sirs, who are just about to enter upon new businesses, take care that you soil not your consciences when you unpack your goods. See to it that, from this day and till your last day, it is first God and then thyself; nay, not so; first God, then thy neighbour, and then thyself,

See that thou have a higher motive than mere greed of gain, or honour, or comfort; now say within thyself, "God helping me, I will obey this command of my redeeming Lord, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.'"

There, dear friend, is sphere enough for your care. If you want to care, care away; care for God, and care for nothing else. If you want to fret, fret at your sins. If you want something that is worth agitating for, agitate for righteousness. If you want something that shall consume your faculties with zeal, here you have it; if you want something worth seeking, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

II. Pause just a moment for solemn thought about this matter, and then let us notice THE PROPER QUIETUS OF ALL OTHER CARE.

Child of God, dost thou believe thy Father? Thou wilt not say me nay. Dost thou believe thy Father? If so, listen. "And all these things shall be added unto you."

"All these things." So first, if you make God your care, *all things necessary for this life shall come to you*. Listen: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." "Just now," says one, "I do not see how I am to make both ends meet." Then, brother, there is all the more reason why you should leave all to God. Remember how the hymn puts it,—

"In some way or other, the Lord will provide:
It may not be *my* way, it may not be *thy* way:
And yet in his *own* way 'the Lord will provide.'"

Rest thou sure of that. David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." If thou wilt care only to seek thy bread thyself, if thou wilt make thy gain thy great object in life, then thou mayest provide for thyself; but if thou wilt serve God, if thou wilt mind his business, he will mind thy business; and as surely as he lives, he will provide for his own.

"All these things." Notice what they are; it is what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed. It does not say that we shall have the best broadcloth, or silks and satins. It is not dainties, not the fat of the land, not wine and strong drink that is promised; but thou shalt have what thou mayest eat, and what thou mayest drink, and wherewithal thou mayest be clothed. If thou wilt only trust in thy God, and serve him alone, it shall be with thee as it was with Jacob at Bethel, for God fulfilled his covenant that he made with him there. The Lord will take care that "all these things" shall be added unto you. See to it, then, that you care for him, and he will care for you.

But, next, "*all these things*" shall come by way of promise. To the ungodly man, "these things" come; but they come by way of hard work. He says they come by way of chance; but to you who believe, they shall come by way of promise. When you eat bread, you shall say, "Blessed be the Lord who hath given me this bread which he promised me." When you drink water, you shall say, "Blessed be the

Lord who hath given me this refreshing draught which he promised me." And when you put on your raiment, though it be by no means dainty, but be of the commoner kind, yet you shall feel that it is the livery that God has sent his servant; and as you put it on, you shall say, "This comes from the hand of the great Universal Provider, even the Lord God." "All these things shall be added unto you." It is not so much the thing you have, as the way in which you have it, that brings you the blessing. I spoke, the other Sunday night, about the old Scotchwoman and her porridge; she said that she liked her porridge, but she rejoiced and blessed God that she had a covenant right to the porridge, for the covenant had given her a right to what she should eat and what she should drink. It is a great mercy to see the mark of the Lord's hand on the common blessings of every day, and to say to yourself, "It has come true as my Lord said, 'All these things shall be added unto you.'" They come by way of promise; you do not have to seek them, for they are added unto you.

And, further, *they come to us in a way of infinite wisdom.* Dear child of God, your bread and your water and your raiment are all measured out by God. If you have but little, God knew that you could not do so well with more. There are some children, you know, who must not have too much dinner; they would be ill if they did. If you sometimes are placed in a condition of straitness, it is because only by poverty can some of you ever get to heaven. I do not doubt that there are some men who behave grandly in their sphere of life, who, if they were placed in another sphere, would conduct themselves in an unseemly manner. Many a man has tried to scramble up a rock to see whether he could not get to the top, and he has come down again a dozen times because he was always safer down below. His was not the head that could bear the dizzy height, and therefore the great Lord would not let him go there. Do you want to have what God knows would hurt you? Do you want doubtful blessings? Is it not better to say, "My times are in thy hand"? If you are a child of God, and you care for him, he will care for you. He will measure out your cloth. He will measure out your water. He will measure out your food. He will give you what you should have; so let the prayer of Agur be your prayer also, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me."

Again, if we thus look to God, and trust his promise, "All these things shall be added unto you," then *these things will come to us without any fretting or fuming.* If God makes us rich, we shall say, "Well, I never asked for wealth, but now that it has come, I only long for grace to use it aright." And if it does not come, you will say, "Well, I never expected it. I thank and praise his name for what I have, and ask for grace that I may know both how to abound and how to suffer loss." That which comes with fretting and fuming has often lost all the goodness of it before you get it. Too often, men are like boys who hunt butterflies. See the boy with his hat off, dashing after the fly. It has gone, and he pursues it here and there and yonder, and at last he has caught it, but in catching it he has crushed it to atoms, it is good for nothing. So have men pursued wealth; they have toiled and laboured till, when they have gained the wealth they sought, their

health has gone, or their mind has failed them, and they have not been able to enjoy it. But that which comes to us in the golden barque of infinite mercy, brought across the sea by a better Pilot than our prudence, comes most sweetly, and we bless and praise and magnify the Lord for it all.

And, once more, that which God adds to us thus *shall come to us without absorbing us*: "All these things shall be *added* unto you;" so that, you see, you yourself will be there, and all these things shall be added unto you. To some men wealth has come like the massive shields in the Roman story. When the vestal virgin agreed to open the gates to the soldiers, they promised to give her as her reward that which they carried on their left hands. She meant their golden bracelets, and she dreamed that she would be rich; but as each man came in, he flung his shield upon her, and so she was killed and buried beneath the weight. So has it often been with the gains of this world; they have come to the man, but they have buried him, and there has been no man left. According to *The Illustrated London News*, he has left a good deal of money, but there has been no man left, the man has been gone long ago. The man was all absorbed, crushed, doubled up under his money, and he himself was gone. I have used before an illustration which I cannot help using again. When you go to a shop, and buy some goods, you will get the string and the brown paper given in with what you buy; so, when a man lives for God, and for eternal life, he will get all the things he wants here given in without seeking for them. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." When a man gets his string and brown paper, well, they are very useful, but he does not begin crowing about them; the string and brown paper are nothing but the wrappings of something that is more valuable. Yet there are some fellows, who are really nobodies, who have not anything of the highest value, but they have such a lot of string and brown paper, that they expect us all to fall down and worship their string and brown paper; and, what is perhaps worse than that, they fall down and worship their own string and brown paper themselves. But the child of God does nothing of the kind; he says, "I wanted this blessing, and it has come, thank God; but I did not live for this, I did not live for this." Dr. Johnson said to one who showed him his beautiful garden and park, "These are the things that make it hard to die." Oh, but it is not so for a Christian! Good Mr. Gurney, one day walking through his beautiful garden, said, "This paradise helps me to think of what the Paradise above will be, and makes me long to be there." And I trow that it ought to be so and will be so with us. If we are first of all seeking the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, it will be safe to trust us with wealth, and it will be equally safe to trust us with none at all. Having grasped the nobler thing, we shall neither be over-balanced if we gain, nor despairing if we lose. So I leave with you both the precept and the promise of the text: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." May this be true of all of you, dear friends, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

JOHN XIV.

I suppose that many of you know this chapter by heart. I notice that, in all old Christians' Bibles, this leaf is well worn,—sometimes worn out. We have here our Lord's homely talk to his disciples ; it is full of sublimity, yet it is blessedly simple. There is a sort of unveiling of himself in this chapter. It is not so much like a public discourse as a private conversation, and this tends to make the Saviour's speech appear the more condescending, and yet also the more sublime.

Verse 1. *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

There is no cure for heart-trouble but heart-trust. "Ye believe in God,"—you do trust in Divine Providence, now trust in the Saviour's great atonement. You have come close to God already, come closer still to the Incarnate God, the Lord Jesus Christ; hear him say to you, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Your faith already deals with some things; now let it deal with more things. Your past troubles have been endured by faith; now endure the present in the same way.

2. *In my Father's house are many mansions:*

You are at home in Christ even now if you are a believer in him. Wherever you are, you are your Heavenly Father's own child; and you have realized the truth of what David wrote in the twenty-third Psalm, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Usually, when we are singing that sweetly-solemn hymn, beginning—

"For ever with the Lord,"

we are thinking about heaven. That is quite right; but "for ever" means now as well as the future, it covers time here as well as eternity in glory. We are with the Lord even now; whether we are down here or up there.

2. *If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

So that, when you go from this earth, you need not fear that you will be launched into space, or that you will have to plunge into the great unknown.

3. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

"I will come to you by my Spirit. I will come to you by-and-by, if my Father shall purpose it, in the hour of death; or if not, I will come in person at my second advent; but, in any case, I will be sure to come. My dear children, I am going away, but it is only for a little while. I am coming again, so be not troubled as though you had said 'Good-bye' to me for ever. 'I will come again,' and when I do come, I shall never go from you again."

4. *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

Yes, we do know where Christ has gone, and we also know the way.

5. *Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?*

I like to hear Thomas talk, even though his is a very unwise speech; I wonder when you and I ever made wise ones. We never do unless we borrow them, for all that comes of us naturally is childish and foolish, "for we know in part, and we prophesy in part." When the child becomes a man, he will put away childish things; but meanwhile our speech betrayeth us. We seldom speak even of any of the great mysteries of the gospel without uttering some words of our own which show that we have

never understood them yet. I think the Lord likes us to display our ignorance, first that we may know it, and then that he may remove it.

6. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Christ has gone to the Father's upper house to make it ready for all the redeemed family. We could never have entered there if he had not gone in first; and even now, there is no coming to the Father in faith or in prayer except by Christ, we must not even dream of communion with God except through our Lord Jesus Christ. Luther used to say—and to say very wisely, too,—“I will have nothing to do with an absolute God; I must come to God by Christ Jesus.” “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

7. *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.*

All of the Father that we can know is visible in Christ, “for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” And if we truly know Christ, we also know the Father. Christ always seems to be knowable, for he brings himself down to such a nearness to us that it seems easy to know him. Well, then, knowing Christ, we also know the Father, and have seen him.

8. *Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

Thomas spoke just now like a babe in grace, now here is Philip talking like another baby; yet how bold his speech is! “Lord, shew us the Father.” Why, no man can see the Father's face, and live! Yet here is a child of God apparently forgetful of that fact.

9. *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

Is not this a homely talk between the Master and his disciples? Said I not rightly that Christ here seems to unveil and unbosom himself? He lets these children of his talk away much at their ease; and I think we ought to be at ease when we are talking with Christ. Some like a very stately worshipper stand afar off. Let them enjoy it if they can; but as for us, we prefer something which permits us to come very near to our Lord.

10. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?*

Yes, Lord, we do believe that; thine eternal and inseparable union with the Father is a doctrine about which we have no question whatsoever.

10. *The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.*

Notice, dear friends, that even the Lord Jesus Christ did not profess to teach doctrines out of his own mind. He says, “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself.” Now, if it is so with the Master, how much more ought it to be so with the servants! But have you not noticed how it is with the great men of the pulpit in these days? It is, “What I have thought out, I make known to you.” It is, “What has come to me by the spirit of the age, the culture of the period, I tell you.” God save us from this kind of talk! It is no business of mine, I know, ever to come to you merely with a message of my own; for if the Lord Jesus Christ did not do so, what a fool his servant must be if he pretends to do it! No; if it is not revealed in this Book, neither shall it be taught by us, nor ought it to be received by you. So Jesus says to his disciples, “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself.” He glories in his union with the Father, and in the fact that he does not come as an independent teacher of thoughts of his own inventing, but he tells out to us what is in his Father's heart.

11, 12. *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

We cannot do Christ's redeeming work; it would be blasphemy to suppose that we could, for he said of it, "It is finished." But we can do the kind of work that Christ did in instructing men, and in being the means of blessing men. Many of the apostles brought to a knowledge of the truth more souls than their Lord did by his personal ministry. He was pleased, after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, to bring great multitudes to the faith by some of his servants, while he himself preached, comparatively speaking, to but few, only journeying up and down that little land of Palestine, and scarcely traversing all even of it. And if we will but trust him, and seek to imitate his wondrous life, we also shall do the works that he did, and do them on an even larger scale, and do them with even greater results.

13, 14. *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

Observe the breadth of prayer: "If ye shall ask any thing." Yet observe also the limit of prayer: "If ye shall ask any thing in my name." There are some things which we should not ask in Christ's name, as we have no promise about them, or because we have indications that they would be contrary to God's usual method of procedure. We must not ask, in the name of Christ, for what would be absurd or outrageous for us to expect God to grant, neither dare we use that sacred name in pleading for things which would only be for the satisfaction of our own will. We must let the will of God rise above all; but, subject to that will, we may ask anything in Christ's name, and he will do it.

15. *If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

Obedience is the truest proof of love. Some, out of supposed love to Christ, have attempted or committed acts of fanaticism; they have been enthusiastic, and, in many cases, doubtless, very sincere; but they have also been very unwise. Here is the best thing that you can do out of love for Christ: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

16. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;—*

"One who will not need to die, and so to be separated from you; but who, once coming to you, shall tarry with you throughout the ages;"—

17. *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

Do you not notice how this verse contradicts the current thought of the period about "the spirit of the age" being so much in advance of the Spirit of all past ages? Listen again to these words of our Lord: "The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive." The world is always receiving one form of falsehood or another; tossed to and fro, and never abiding long in one stay, it cries, "This is the truth," or "That is the truth," or "Now we have it; this is the truth." But Christ says, "The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

18. *I will not leave you comfortless:*

Or, "orphans," for that is the meaning of the original: "I will not leave you orphans."

18—20. *I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*

This is all very simple; the words are nearly all words of one syllable, yet there are depths here in which a leviathan might plunge, and lose himself.

21—23. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Only holy men can see the holy Christ, and it is only as we walk in obedience to him that we can have the Son of God walking with us, and the Father and the Son dwelling with us.

24. *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.*

Notice that important truth again, and observe what weight and what stress Christ lays upon it.

25, 26. *These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Brethren, ought we not to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, since the Father himself does everything in that name? Even concerning the sending of the Comforter, Christ says, "whom the Father will send in my name." Then, he would certainly have the Father and the children acting upon the same principles; the Father glorifying Christ by sending the Spirit in his name, and ourselves glorifying Christ by presenting our prayers and praises in that one adorable name.

27. *Peace I leave with you,—*

"I told you not to let your heart be troubled; now I go further, and I leave you this precious legacy of peace: 'Peace I leave with you,'—"

27. *My peace I give unto you:—*

"My own deep peace, which even my sufferings and death cannot disturb:—"

27—29. *Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.*

Oh, what numbers of things which Christ foretold have come to pass already! Have you, dear friends, believed all the more because of them? How many answers to prayer, how many deliverances out of trouble, how many helps in the time of need, have you had! Surely, when all this has come to pass, you ought to believe.

30, 31. *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.*

So the Saviour went forth to his passion and his death, that all might know the supremacy of his love to the Father and his love to his people. So let us, in our measure, be ever ready to say, "Arise, let us go hence," to service or to suffering, since our Saviour leads the way.