

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE ROAD TO HONOUR.

A Sermon

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“Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”—1 Samuel, ii. 30.

OUR chickens generally come home to roost. Our thoughts of other men become other men's thoughts of us. According as we measure out to our fellows, so do they measure back into our bosoms, for good or for evil. So especially, in reference to the Lord himself, the God of justice sooner or later causes a man to reap his own sowing, and gather his own scattering. See how the Lord keeps touch with his friends and foes, and pays them in their own coin,—“Them that honour me I will honour, and they that depise me shall be lightly esteemed.” A man's life is often its own echo. He sinned, and he suffered after the likeness of his sin: you may see the sin in the punishment, as you see to-day the foot-mark of the Egyptian dog in the brick which he trod upon when it was yet in the soft clay. The man sinned again, for it is the nature of sin to repeat itself and grow into habit: and behold, another sorrow was born in the likeness of that other sin. Thus the man lived in the present, and formed his future life by one and the same act. He spoke, and the echoes spoke to him in the years following. So does life repeat itself; so does the seed develop the flower, and the flower again produce the seed. It is an endless chain; for the thing that has been is the thing which shall be. A man may live to see a grim procession of all his old sins marching past him, robed in the sackcloth and ashes wherein justice dooms them to be arrayed. So is it also with our joys. God gives us joy after the similitude of our service. Godly fear fills her garden with many flowers, and her house with music of divers kinds, and the Lord appoints to her that she shall live of her ministry, and that her oxen shall eat of the good corn which they tread out for others. When we have been faithful to God, he is ever faithful to us, and sends us a full reward. If we walk contrary to him, he will walk contrary to us; but if we delight ourselves in him, he will delight himself in us to do us good. There is good-will to men of good will, and evil shall slay those whose lives are evil.

If you wish to see this exemplified in Scripture, how many instances
No. 1,811.

rise before you ! Enoch walks with God because God pleases him, and then we find that he pleases God. Noah obediently rests the issues of his life upon the truth of God, and God gives him rest. Abraham was famous for trusting God, and it is wonderful how God trusted him. The Lord seemed to put his honour as well as his oracles into the guardianship and custody of Abraham. "Shall I," saith God, "hide this thing that I will do from Abraham, my friend?" Oh, no. God unbosoms his heart to Abraham, for Abraham has unbosomed his heart to God. See, on the other hand, Jacob. He is a good man and true, and I like not to speak of the failings of the faithful. There is a Ham-like propensity in some to point out the nakedness of God's saints ; but it is much better to go backward and cover them with the garment of love. Yet we cannot help seeing that Jacob was not so in harmony with God as he should have been, and therefore his life lacked the majestic serenity which attended Abraham's. He begins life by bargaining and by cheating his brother ; and all his life long he was bargained with and cheated beyond his heart's content. His cunning came home to him : what he was to Esau, Laban was to him. Yet, as he wrestled with the angel in mighty prayer the Lord gave him the wrestler's name of honour, and as he trusted in the Lord even in his saddest estate the Lord preserved him even to the end. As an instance on the other side, take Moses. He would not be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; but gave up all prospect of a kingdom in Egypt. But what did he get ? He became a greater king than any Pharaoh. He led through the wilderness a nation compared with which the Egyptians are mere barbarians. He had all the rank and dignity that could fall to the greatest ruler of his age or of any other age ; and his honour after death is to this day infinitely beyond that of all the Pharaohs rolled into one. Moses is an imperial name : among them that are born of woman, whose fame is greater ? He is no loser now : he honoured God and he was honoured. Take David, on the other side, and see how his transgressions came home to him. I will not speak of the better character of David just now, though that would abundantly illustrate how God repays his faithful ones : but, when he sinned, the sorrows that embittered the latter end of his life were the reflection of his own offences. One is struck with the family likeness between David's sins and sorrows. Remember the names of Absalom and Adonijah, and you cannot forget the lust and the falsehood of him to whom these young men were both sons and punishments.

Very striking as an instance of the retaliation of providence is the case of Adoni-bezek. When they cut off his thumbs and his great toes, so that he might lose all power to draw the bowstring, and all power, indeed, to go to battle at all, because he could not stand safely in the conflict, he confessed that threescore-and-ten kings to whom he had done the same thing had picked up crumbs under his table. It was his own remark that as he had done God had requited him. Samuel, when he smote Agag, told him that, as his sword had made women childless, so should the sword of the Lord that day make his mother childless by slaying him. Most memorable of all is the instance of Haman and his gallows, fifty cubits high. See how he swings thereon. He built the gibbet for Mordecai. Ah, no ; he built it for himself. Thus

are deeds reflected upon those who do them; thus do the cruel fall into the pits which their own hands have digged. Malice uses a sort of providential boomerang. The man flings it with all his force at the foe, and it comes back to him; not into his hand that he may use it again, but across his brow to smite him even to the dust. Take heed what ye put into the measure that ye mete out to others, and especially to God; for "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

I want to speak this evening very practically and to the point. I shall therefore allow but little garnishing, and simply deal out the plain truth. May the Spirit of God make the meditation useful to us all!

I. And, first, we will speak upon THE DUTY INCUMBENT UPON US ALL, but especially upon God's people, OF HONOURING THE LORD.

As we are God's creatures we are bound to honour God. Think of what he is in himself. He is such a one that if we had no relation to him, but had simply heard of him by the hearing of the ear, we should be bound to honour him. So perfectly holy, so inconceivably gracious, so full of everything that makes up perfection, so devoid of any fault or failure, the infinitely glorious Jehovah should be—must be—honoured by every right-minded man. But then, as he is our Creator, and we owe our very existence to him, it becomes us to pay him reverence. "It is he that made us, and not we ourselves." He is our Preserver: "We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." He feeds and leads us every day. Some of you people of God ought, indeed, to honour God with all your hearts because you know that you are his children, and to you adoption yields a fulness of rich comfort. He asks, "If I be a Father where is mine honour?" He has chosen you, and put you among his children: will you not honour him? The Father has loved you with an infinite love; the Son of God has poured out his heart's blood for you; the Spirit of God has tenderly striven with you, and even now dwells in you; will you not honour the Triune Jehovah? Think of the relationship which grace has established between you and the ever-blessed One, and in deepest gratitude you will confess that you are bound to honour the Lord your God.

Among those that bow lowest before him let us be found. If we have crowns of any sort, if any honour or good repute belongs to us, let us cast all at his feet. Angels with veiled faces adore the Lord; let us veil our faces with the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever. To him the cherubim and seraphim lift up their ceaseless cry; let us also unite in joyous praise before the Lord our God. Surely none of you would deny the obligation that rests upon every creature, but especially upon every regenerate creature, to bless and praise and honour the Lord our God. I shall not stay, dear friends, to enter into any argument upon a subject which commends itself to every conscience. If your hearts are right you feel that to honour God is your joy. I know that you love to glorify him. His praise is viewed by you not only as a duty, but as a privilege, and a delight. Oh for more of the power of the Holy Ghost, that we may glorify God by his own Spirit!

Just notice *how* we ought to honour him, and consider wherein this

duty lies. We should honour him *by confessing his deity*: I mean the deity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The Athanasian Creed is too long, and it enters too much into details; but, in the essence of it, it is most solemn truth; and, though I should not dare to say that the man who did not believe every word of it would "without doubt, perish everlastingly," yet I should feel great trembling for myself if I could not from the depths of my heart subscribe to the blessed doctrine of the Trinity in Unity: one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods but one God." In the way in which God reveals himself let us honour him by accepting his own revelation. We must honour God by receiving that view of him which he deigns to grant us. What know you and I of God? We are nothing: how should we comprehend the All in all. We are insects begotten and buried within a few hours: how shall the creatures of a day understand the Eternal? Men talk about what God must be or should be. What do they know? Can the dust beneath our feet form a just judgment of the stars? It might do so much more readily than we can form any idea of God save that which he is pleased to impart to us by his own revelation. Let us adore Jehovah, as we find him in the Old and New Testaments. If there be any that deny the deity of the Lord Jesus, let us not come into their secret, nor in any respect be joined with their error. Assuredly the Lord Jesus, whom men called the Nazarene, is to us none other than "God over all, blessed for ever. Amen." If men deny the personality or deity of the Holy Spirit, let us the more reverently yield to all his sacred movements within our bosoms, and rejoice to adore him, as intensely as if we strove to make up for the many slights which grieve him. We should honour God in our worship both in public and in private, intensely paying homage unto the God of Israel, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We need not perpetually repeat a form of words, but it will be well for all our private and public worship to flame with the great truth which sparkles in these words—"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

Let us further honour God *by acknowledging his rule*. This is more difficult by far, to most minds. Let it be to you and to me a fixed matter that whatever God forbids we will loathe, and whatever God commands we will follow after. Our failures as to his will should greatly grieve us. When we are conformed to his mind, we shall give him the glory of our sanctification, but we shall be deeply thankful that it has pleased God to make us well-pleasing in his sight. Beloved, I want you especially that are members of the visible church to take care that the rule of Christ over you is supreme. Never hesitate when the command is plain. Evident duties should never be the subjects of questioning. It is not yours to reason why; it is yours if need be to dare and die in your loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our supreme Lord, and we would not wish even to breathe apart from him. It is rebellion against him even to begin to reckon whether obedience will be profitable or not. What greater profit can you desire than to do his will? His sovereign's pleasure is the soldier's best

reward. Shall we not think it joy enough to live for him who died for us? The price of blood was paid for us by his five wounds on the tree of Calvary, are we not henceforth Christ's very own? Yes, let us honour God by a definite, prompt, joyous, constant obedience, as grace shall help us.

Next to that let me add a very important thing. Let us honour the holiness of God and the justice of God and the mercy of God *by repentance whenever we feel that we have done wrong*. You remember how Joshua bade Achan confess, and so give glory to God. There is a measure of honour paid to God by the man who, being conscious of having done wrong, laments it, acknowledges the wrong, and prays for pardon. The prayer of a penitent is true adoration. When I seek for mercy of God, I do thereby confess the rightness of his law and the justice of its threatened punishment, and I do also confess my belief in the goodness of the heart of God, and the graciousness of his nature; and therefore I appeal to him, for Jesus' sake, to put away my sin. A guilty heart cannot better honour the Lord than by a frank acknowledgment of sin, and by casting itself upon the abounding mercy of the God of grace. Do not hesitate, ye guilty ones, to do this. You can make no reparation for the wrong you have done; but the very least thing, and at the same time the very greatest thing you can do, is to say, "I have sinned and done this evil in thy sight, but O most gracious God be merciful to me a sinner." Thus may the sinner give honour unto God.

But, oh, beloved, if you have rejoiced in pardoning love, I would press upon you to honour God *by acknowledging the wisdom of his teaching*, and by a teachableness which accepts his doctrine. I am afraid that many ministers are training men to set aside faith, and to live by carnal reason. This is flat treason against the Lord and his Christ. Faith, to me, means this: whatever God says in his Word I believe; and if I do not understand the fulness of its meaning, I wait for further light, knowing that it must be true if God has said it. But now men judge the Scriptures instead of being judged of the Scriptures. Their own consciousness is to be "the judge that ends the strife," and this part of Scripture is put aside, and that is lifted into undue prominence, according as human judgment questions or approves. This must not be. We live not by thinking, but by believing; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." We live, not by excogitating fresh ideas of what God ought to be, and original conceptions of what God ought to do, but by looking into the Book and believing the fact.

We honour God when we *believe Holy Scripture to be inspired*—infallibly inspired; and, taking it as such, say, "It is not mine to question it, or to argue against it, but simply to accept it." It is to me the delight of my life to admit into my very soul great master truths which I am unable to compass, and yet receive into myself by affection and humble reverence. I cannot comprehend the truth by my understanding, but I apprehend it by my faith, and thus it becomes mine. To love is to understand; at least, it is so to me. Choice food of mysterious truth is received into the mouth of my faith, it gradually dissolves within the stomach of my thought, till I take it by an assimilating and digesting faculty into my very self, and know it even as I am known. This

inward sense of truth is a more real knowledge than mere reason can ever obtain. I know the philosopher sneers. What of him? He is not worth sneering at. Brethren, our whole nature must honour God and worship at his footstool. Is my intellect to play the monarch before God? Nay, but that crown, that royalty of man—his understanding—must be cast before Jehovah's feet. The subjugation of the intellect seems to me to be a great part of conversion, and I question whether men are converted at all unless their reasoning powers bow down at Jehovah's feet as subjects and disciples.

Oh that we might honour God, by vindicating his truth against all comers, saying, "Let God be true and every man a liar"!

Further, we honour God's love by *a daily trust in him*. You honour God, you that scarcely know where to-morrow's bread shall come from, when, having said, "Give us this day our daily bread," you work for it and bless his name that you have work to do. You that suffer sickness, but patiently yield yourselves up to the divine will, believing that even your pains are for your good, and that all is for the best,—you are honouring God by trusting his love. Unbelief dishonours him; but a simple childlike confidence pays homage to him, as true and as acceptable as the song of Cherubim and Seraphim. Trust God about domestic cares, and bodily pains, and daily frets, and you most truly honour him.

And, lastly, upon this point, we also honour God, dear friends, when we *confess his goodness by patiently enduring his will, and especially by rejoicing in it*. The other night our subject was, "We joy in God," and I wish we could keep it as our standing motto. It is such an honouring of God when we take great delight in him. Pulling long faces, pining over our troubles, and whining over our fears—this does not honour God. But in the midst of darkness and gloom still to say, "The Lord is good, and his mercy endureth for ever, therefore will I sing unto the Lord as long as I live,"—this is to honour him. If I be in prison, God shall be my liberty; if I be sick, he shall be my health; if I be poor, he shall be my riches; if I be cast down, his smile shall lift me up. I will praise him while I have any being. This it to honour the Lord, and to all who thus praise him the promise of our text is made, "Them that honour me I will honour."

II. Now this brings me, secondly, to notice THE INFLUENCE UPON OUR DAILY LIFE OF THIS HABIT OF HONOURING GOD.

A man who honours God does this practically; it is no form or farce with him, but a deep practical reality. He does it often *by consulting with God*. What shall I do? Here are two ways that may be equally right or equally wrong. I do not know which to take. The answer is, "Bring hither the ephod." I like that old Scotchman's word when he was puzzled about a matter of duty and wanted to end the debate—"Reach me yon Bible. That settles all." Go to your knees, and cry to God in prayer, and crooked things shall be made straight. Be willing to be guided and you shall be guided. If you blunder on in your self-sufficiency you will soon be in a slough; but if you will wait upon God your steps shall be ordered of the Lord. We honour God by taking counsel of him. Do this about all things, and all things will go right. It is wonderful how very easily things move when the

Lord directs, and how wearily they drag when we trust to our own understanding.

We honour God in our daily life *when we confess him*. It is comparatively a small matter to confess Christ before the church, though I have known some of you rather frightened of doing that. Some are almost afraid to come and talk to me about their own salvation. If anybody is afraid of me he must be a great goose, I am sure, for there is nothing in me that should frighten anybody. I am too glad and too delighted to see anybody about his soul to be frightful to any one. If you go to see any of the elders you will find them more tender still. At any rate, do not be afraid of them. *But the tug of war is to confess Christ before the world*. For the merchant, for instance, to stand up for that which is good and right when he is in a web of false trading, and surrounded by unscrupulous dealers,—this is honouring the Lord. For the workman in the shop, when the men are making fun of every holy thing, to say, “Well, now, I believe in all that, and if you want to laugh at anybody you may laugh at me, for I am on the Lord’s side”—this is honouring God. But the tendency is to sneak away and remain quite quiet. Christ seems to have nobody to speak up for him. Is it really so? Is that dark hour being repeated, “Then all the disciples forsook him and fled”? Everybody will speak up for the devil. You can hear them in the street far into the night; but as to Christ, how many are there to give him a good word in this time of rebuke? The bulk of religious professors are cowards. Let it not be so with you; but honour God, dearly beloved, by making a confession of Christ even though it may involve you in ridicule. Be decidedly gracious all the more because it will bring you into ill odour. Be firm for that which is right, not wishing to provoke opposition, but being quite able to bear it if it must be borne. Be men! Men are scarce creatures nowadays: men, I mean, who set their faces like a flint and are not to be moved from their integrity and their love to Christ, come what may. Honour God daily by a holy manliness.

Sometimes you can honour Christ *by some distinct service that you can do for him*, or by some special obedience to his will. I know times wherein there are great temptations put in the way of men. Now, mind that you honour God at such times by an unhesitating allegiance. There is wealth apparently to be had for the putting out of your hand; only you could not do it with a clean conscience. Now, honour God, and be bravely poor rather than be shamefully rich. “Get thee behind me, Satan,” must be ready in the trial hour. You have an opportunity of making a great change in your position in life; but, at the same time, you would be deprived of opportunities of usefulness, both of giving and of getting good—then let your choice be made promptly. I have always admired the example of the pious Jew who was told that a certain city on the Continent would excellently suit his business. “But,” he asked, “is there a synagogue there?” and when they said that there was no synagogue he preferred to stay in another place, that he might worship God, though he would do less business. I do not know that this is often the case among Jews any more than it is among Gentiles; and, I am sorry to say that I know many Gentiles to whom God’s worship is no consideration whatever—they would go to

the bottomless pit if they could make large profits. It does not matter where they go, or what becomes of them, so long as gain can warm the palms of their hands. They trample on the name of God and upon Christ's cross, as the Dutch are said to have done in Japan, in order that they may prosecute their business. This spirit is from beneath. God save us from it! Say to yourself, young man, in the very beginning of life, "I will serve God. If I can make money, very well; but my first object is to honour God. If I can gain a competence, if I can have sufficient to retire upon in my old age, I will be very thankful; but I am going to do right and to serve God as long as I live, come wealth or come poverty, come honour or come shame." You are the man that God will honour; I am sure of it.

Then you can honour God with *your substance* when he gives it to you. I will not say much about this; but all through Scripture it is laid down as one mark of a child of God that he holds what he has as a steward, and that he uses it for the promotion of the kingdom of God, and the helping of the poor and the needy. Wherever he is he does not seek substance merely to aggrandize himself; but with all his getting he desires to get a liberal heart, without which the richest man is still a pauper. He longs to be useful to the cause and the kingdom of Christ. He believes in the joy of dedicating his tithe and more unto the Lord. He has heard a voice in his ears, saying, "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thy increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

In a word, the man that really honours God seeks to *praise him*. He wishes to make the Lord's name great throughout all the world. His main object in living is that he may make Jesus known,—that he may win more hearts to God, the blessed Father, more minds to Jesus, the brother of humanity, and more souls to the Holy Spirit, the Quickener of the heaven-born race. Oh for a thousand hearts wherewith to love our Lord God, a thousand tongues with which to speak for him, a thousand lives wherewith to glorify him!

But, alas! there are many, I grieve to say, who do not seem to care about honouring God at all. And what is the influence of this upon their lives? Two or three words only upon this sorrowful business.

The influence of this upon their lives is, first, that they do not care to know anything about God, and his Christ, and his Spirit, and his gospel, and his way of salvation. So, if they have a Bible they look at it now and then, but they never seriously read it—never sit down to study it—never turn to God in prayer that they may be instructed in the inner meaning of the Word. They live much the same as they would live if God were dead. It would not make any very great difference to them if there were no God and no Saviour, for they so utterly forget Jehovah and his Anointed. They do not take the trouble to go across the street to hear about him whom they call Redeemer. If there were a lecture upon geology,—if there were a great gathering upon politics and the extension of the franchise, they would be there; but as to serving God—well, they do not seem to think that there is any weight in his claims or importance in his will. They show in their lives that they do not honour God, because they attach no importance to anything that he commands or forbids, or to his grand purposes of grace for our fallen

race. Whether men are saved or lost does not matter to them. Whether Christ died or did not die is no concern of theirs. Those wonderful things which hold angels spell-bound with admiration have no attraction for these men, for whom they ought to have every attraction. Christ dies for men, and yet men pass by and say, "It is nothing to us." These are not only the baser and more thoughtless sort, but persons of intellect and culture do the same.

Hence it comes to pass that these people do not obey God. They obey the laws of their country; they respect the rules of civilized society; but as to the laws of God, they have no care about them. God is so insignificant a factor in their life-thoughts that what laws he may have made or may not have made are no concern at all to them. He may threaten them with hell, but they defy his wrath. He may put before them the joys of heaven, but they would not care for bliss that meant holiness and communion with God. They utterly despise God, and, therefore, depend upon it, they will be despised by him at the last. In that day when they will be swept away as the offal of the universe—in that day when they shall be driven from his presence and from the glory of his power, then shall they know how he hath them in derision. He shall say—even he of the tender lip, and of the pierced heart, and of the tearful eye—even *he* shall say from off the throne, "Depart ye cursed," for they have proved their cursedness by their despising of God, whom they ought to have loved and sought and trusted above all things. He will despise them and banish them into shame and everlasting contempt, for they despised his mercy, and poured contempt upon his justice. The contempt of God and of holy angels and of redeemed spirits must for ever and ever rest on those who showed a contempt of God while here below.

Oh, take heed, dear friends, that you do not despise God. Eli, who was God's high priest, fell into this sin because he thought more of displeasing his sons than he did of displeasing his God. He said to himself, "I cannot speak sharply to Hophni. He is my eldest son, and a man of ripe years. He does behave very badly; but what can I do? I fear I must speak a word to him, but I will do it softly. And Phinehas—Phinehas has some fine points about him. I think he will come right by gentle means; I must not say anything sharp to him." Now in this he honoured his sons with a false honour, and did not truly honour the Lord. I sometimes tremble myself lest I deal too gently with some here present; and I would pray to be forgiven when, in tenderness of heart, I have not liked to speak sharply upon evil things which I know must grieve the Spirit of God in some that are the Lord's people. I would to God you would take more care of yourselves, and watch yourselves, and not grieve the spirit of your minister by things that are not consistent with the will of God, and the holiness of Christ. Do see to it, beloved members of this church, that you do not dishonour my Lord. Do not bring me under this great temptation to speak timidly about these things. We can easily do it, you know; and so can you when you see sin in a brother and do not rebuke that brother when you ought to do so, or when those that are put by God under your own care are allowed to sin with impunity. God help us to be found honouring him, for if we do not rebuke sin, we shall be

dishonouring him, and that may spoil our life as sadly as Eli spoiled his.

In a word, friends, if we do not honour God we shall not make God our guiding star; we shall not make his glory to be our chart and compass; but we shall live to get money,—to get money by fair means or foul, cost what it may. What a Gradgrind a man becomes when he forgets God, and only remembers gold. Oh, the wretches there are who do not care how many poor people are starved so long as they can make a larger profit: into their little miserable souls it never enters that it is a shame to starve the needle-woman or the worker of any kind, by putting them to a killing toil in order to earn the scantiest of food. Some make ambition their guiding star, and when this is the case they do not care what they say in the House of Commons or elsewhere, so long as they can keep themselves before the public. They make a speech to-day which they contradict to-morrow; they blurt out of their mouths the first thing that comes into their heads, whether it be mischievous or beneficial. Be it false or be it true it is no odds to them so long as their speech will catch the ear. Only for themselves do many politicians live. And so with other men besides. The poet will sing that he may show what a poet he is, but he does not dedicate his magic of language to the God who is only to be praised. All gifts should be used for God—all art of genius, and science of mind, and skill of hand. These talents come from him, and to him should they be devoted; but alas! in most cases they are used for meaner ends. There are men whose guiding star is licentiousness: they live to please themselves and to gratify the flesh. Wretched, dung-hill breed as they are, they will go back to the oblivion whence they came, after having, I fear, polluted many who else might have escaped from these corruptions. God save men of this corrupt kind, while yet forgiveness can be found; and may we all come to this resolve—that we will honour God.

III. Now mark—and this is the last point—THE REWARD OF ALL THIS. “Them that honour me I will honour.”

Is not this a grand reward? It is not, “They that honour me shall be honoured,” but, “Them that honour me *I* will honour.” *Does God honour men?* He promises to do so. Compared with the honour which the Lord is able to give, there is no honour which is worth naming in the same day. When God honours a man the glory is glory indeed. One of the French kings gave to a conquering general some £500 a year, or thereabouts, for a wonderful deed of prowess, but the soldier told the king that he would have preferred the gold cross. I do not think I should have had such preference for a bauble; but honour is a precious commodity. To get honour from God is very different from getting it from a king. It was said of Alexander that, of two nobles who had served him well, he gave to one ten thousand talents, and to the other a kiss; and he that had the money envied him who received the kiss. One kiss from the mouth of God would outweigh kingdoms. Honour from God,—favour from God—this is a high reward, which cannot be weighed against ten thousand worlds, and all the glory thereof. “Them that honour me I will honour.”

Suppose that a man is a preacher, and in his preaching he seeks to glorify God only, and sets forth the finished work of Jesus, and cries

earnestly, "Behold the Lamb of God," God will honour him. He shall not labour in vain, or spend his strength for nought. Suppose another man is living *in the midst of his family*, praying for the conversion of his children, setting them a holy example, chiding them for their faults, and encouraging them in all good things; shall he be without a blessing? Nay. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Some of us know the blessing of honouring God in our families. Where there is family prayer, where God is set before the young as the chief end of their being, God will surely honour such parents by giving them a believing household.

The man who honours God shall be honoured *in his own heart* by peace of conscience,—honoured in his own spirit by the conviction that it must be wisdom to be right and true and honest, and that it can never be under any circumstances right to do wrong, or wise to break a divine command. The highest policy a man can pursue, if he must pursue policy at all, is never to deviate from the strict path of right. A straight line is the shortest distance between any two places; and the shortest way to true happiness and prosperity is to do right though the heavens should fall.

Such a man honouring his God among his brethren shall be honoured of God *in the church*. If he has glorified God in the church by his earnestness and zeal and holy living, his brethren shall mark him, and esteem him. His godliness shall give him weight and influence, and though he may always prefer to take the lowest room, yet shall he be had in honour of them that sit at meat with him.

And *in the world* it shall be the same. I do not believe that a man truly serves God without in the long run winning the esteem of his fellow-citizens. They burned such men of old, but when they burned them they still honoured them; for all over this nation, when Popery was in its prime and saints were persecuted, the country people sat at their firesides and they talked of holy Master Taylor, or godly old Latimer, who had suffered for Christ's sake. Though they hardly dared speak for fear some spy would hear, yet they said what a shame it was; and they muttered to one another what a detestable religion that must be which killed the saints of God. This kind of feeling went through all the tradesmen of London, and even affected the apprentices and serving-men. In country towns and villages everybody said, "What a horrible system this must be which burns our pastors for preaching the gospel!" Then, all of a sudden, they shouted, "Down with it!" The fire, long smothered, at last broke out, and again they said of Popery, "Down with it!" Away went crucifix and pyx and priest; the mass and the mass-makers all went packing, as they had a right to do, for they never brought good to England or to any other land which harboured them. Indignation burned quietly in the land, and though for years it scarcely appeared, at last it found vent, and that thing was done for which it were worth while for all of us to die and ten thousand more: Popery went down, and the gospel went up. The gospel of Christ was proclaimed, and the Bible was unchained that every man might read it. Brethren, you will be honoured in your turn as those men are honoured to-day, if when the worst comes to the worst you are found faithful as they were. Therefore stand to your guns.

Stand to your guns if you die there, for the Lord is coming. I see the banner, I mark the white horse, I hear the Captain's voice. The trumpet rings out, "Behold, he cometh!" Honoured shall that man be who stands with loins girt in his place in the battle, in the day when the Captain is saluted as Conqueror all along the line.

What will become of the sneaking coward in the day of Christ's appearing? Where will the fearful stand, who did not dare to wear the name of Christ for fear of being laughed at? Where will the false-hearted be when the Lord Jesus flames forth in his majesty? Then shall they ask the rocks to cover them, and the mountains to fall upon them to hide them from his face. Dastards that they were, they shall not know where to fly.

Oh come, let us seek our Saviour's face to-night by humble prayer and holy faith. Let us bow before the redeeming Lord, and yield ourselves to him; and then from this day forward be this our one object—to crown him with many crowns who left his crown for us, and to honour God who in infinite mercy has delivered us from going down into the pit. How I wish I might stir some young heart to give itself up to Christ to-night. How I wish I might win some old heart for my Lord. Oh, shipmate, you have had that black piratical flag flying at the mast-head long enough. Down with it now, and sail under the blood-red cross for Christ, and for God, to-night. Let all the old cargo be turned out, and the new be taken in. May the Lord make a clean sweep of everything that is displeasing to him, and then come on board and take the helm and steer you till he brings you to the port of Everlasting Peace.

"Who is on the Lord's side?" Who that has not been on his side will enlist to-night? How is the enlisting to be managed? It is to be done as all enlisting is done. In our army they enlist a man by making him take a shilling. You are not enlisted by giving anything, but by receiving the King's money. Take Christ by faith. Receive him. Stretch out your hand. He shall be the earnest-money to you of the great reward that God will give his saints in the day of his glory, when he shall honour them and make them to "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

God bless you, and may we meet at the right hand of the throne in the coming of the Lord. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Samuel ii. 13—17,
27—36; iv. 10—18.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—95, 34 (Ver. I), 135 (Ver. II).