

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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WHAT WE HAVE, AND ARE TO HAVE.

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## A Sermon

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C. H. SPURGEON,

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“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”—2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

EVERY man who is engaged in a good work desires that it may be lasting. “Establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it,” was not only a very appropriate prayer from the mouth of Moses, who had led the children of Israel through the wilderness, but it is also a very appropriate prayer to be presented by every minister of Jesus Christ. We desire to build that which will endure the fire of the great testing day;—not wood, hay, and stubble, but gold, silver, and precious stones.

The apostle Paul, like all true servants of Christ, was very anxious about those who had been converted, and formed into churches by him. He desired that all the professed converts should be real converts, and that the members of the churches, in the various countries where the gospel had been preached, might be well trained and instructed, and might know the truth, and be firmly rooted in it. It somewhat saddened him that the Christians at Thessalonica had been disturbed by a rumour about the speedy coming of Christ. He was grieved that they had been troubled concerning this matter, and he was still more sorry that they had not men amongst them able to guide them at such a crisis, for they were like children carried away by novelties. The apostle wanted them to be firmly established in the faith, to know the truth, and to have it abiding in their hearts, so that they would be able to stand fast in the evil day, whatever error might be raging round about them.

I think, brethren, that this prayer of the apostle is very suitable for this present period. We have rejoiced to see a large number of persons coming out as professed followers of Christ; but what is wanted is that they should be so enlisted in the army of Christ that they will remain faithful even unto death. We do not want

our work to be shallow and superficial; we want it to be like that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." It is heart-breaking service to sow the good seed of the kingdom upon the rocky ground, for it springs up so rapidly simply because it has no depth of earth; and then, when the burning heat of the sun shines upon it, it withers away because it has neither moisture nor root. It would be far better to have half a dozen souls really brought to Jesus Christ, and enduring to the end, than to have half a dozen thousand blazing away with a false profession for a time, and then returning like the dog to his vomit, or like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Our Lord's own declaration is, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." It is that endurance, that holding out to the end, which is the point to which we would direct all our endeavours on behalf of our hearers and our converts, and the point about which we would most earnestly pray to our God.

Because these Thessalonians had been somewhat fluttered and disturbed, the apostle was distressed concerning them, and he therefore exhorted them to steadfastness: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle;" but after exhorting them to stand fast, he did not feel that this was sufficient. So he stopped writing, laid down his pen, fell on his knees, and prayed to God to make them stand fast; and when we realize how feeble our utmost exertions are, we may well join fervent prayer to them; and when we remember that the flesh is so weak, and that, even when men resolve to stand fast, their feet are very soon caused to slip, we may well cry to the great Holder-up of his saints to keep them from falling, or even from stumbling. The preacher's work is only half done when he has exhorted his hearers to stand fast; he must then fall upon his knees, and pray for them. And you, who teach others in the Sunday-school and elsewhere, must recollect that, whatever you exhort your scholars to do, you should always pray to God to lead them to do it. This is a blessed compound of preaching and praying; it makes a rich amalgam of Christian ministry when there is, first, the testimony of truth for God to men, and next, the pleading with God on the behalf of men. Regard, then, our text as the apostle's prayer for the Thessalonians, and for all of us who believe in Jesus, that we may stand fast in this evil day, and that, having done all, we may still stand steadfast whoever and whatever may oppose.

Paul's prayer is instructive, for it directs our attention to two things; first, to *what we have already*: "Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." And then it tells us *what we are to have*, what is the natural result of what we have already: "Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

I. First, then, brethren, we are to consider **WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY.**

The apostle mentions, first, the source of all our blessings, and then the streams. "Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even

our Father;" there is *the source of all our blessings*; and, to my mind, it is exceedingly suggestive to notice that word "our" put in twice in the early part of the text. Paul does not write, "Now, *the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even the Father*;" but it is "*Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father.*"

The source of our present comfort and of our future perseverance is the fact that Jesus Christ is ours. Look at him now, with the adoring eyes of your reverent contemplation, in his glorious Deity and his perfect manhood. Look at him in the manger; behold him on the cross; regard his perfect life and his redeeming death; behold him in his resurrection, his triumphant ascension, and his perpetual intercession; and look forward to his promised return from heaven. Beloved believer, he is yours,—all yours. In all those positions and conditions he has given himself to you and to me, and we may together say, "*Our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Oh, how precious is this truth to our soul! Being divine, he is omnipotent; and that almighty power he wields for *us*. Being divine, he is omniscient; and those sleepless eyes of his are ever on the watch for *us*. Being divine, he is immutable; and that eternal love of his, which knows no shadow of a change, is fixed upon *us*. All his attributes, and himself also, he places at our disposal, so let each one of us gratefully respond, "Thou art my portion, saith my soul." Enlarge your thoughts concerning the Lord Jesus; think most highly of him; extol him with your heart and with your tongue; but remember that, when you have reached the utmost heights that you can attain in your estimation of him, he is yours, altogether yours, and you can say, with Paul, "*Our Lord Jesus Christ himself.*"

"Our Lord is risen from the dead,  
Our Jesus is gone up on high;  
The powers of hell are captive led—  
Dragg'd to the portals of the sky.

"There his triumphal chariot waits,  
And angels chant the solemn lay;—  
Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates!  
Ye everlasting doors, give way!"

And then the apostle adds, "And God, even *our Father.*" We sometimes tremble at the thought of God our Father, as well we may. How could we ever approach him were it not for God in human flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ? But when we have once really trusted in Christ, it is an easy matter for us to look by faith to God, and to rejoice in him; and, with the deepest reverence of soul, let us know that God,—the ever-blessed God,—the terrible God,—the omnipotent God, who shakes both heaven and earth with his voice, who toucheth the hills, and they smoke,—this God is our God; and all his attributes of power, as well as those which we usually consider to be more full of grace, are exerted on our behalf. I do not know anything that is more comforting in times of trouble than this great truth. I met, yesterday, a gentleman, who told me that he was converted, some thirty years ago, through the instrumentality of a great-uncle of mine, with whom he lived as an apprentice. He said,

"There was a terrible thunderstorm, and the old gentleman was sitting by the fireside, and we youngsters were afraid, the flashes of lightning were so vivid, and the thunder pealed out so terribly; but," he added, "the old gentleman rose from the fireside, went to the window, and as he looked out, he began to sing,—

"The God that rules on high,  
And thunders when he please,  
That rides upon the stormy sky,  
And manages the seas :

"This awful God is ours,  
Our Father and our love ;  
He shall send down his heavenly powers  
To carry us above.'"

The gentleman said to me, "I never forgot the impression I then received of that good man's quietude of mind, and of the evident delight which he took in that display of the divine omnipotence. There seemed to him a sweetness in the eloquence of his Father's voice, though it made every timber in the old house to shake."

Yes, brethren, the apostle brings these things to our minds so that we may realize that, in having "*our* Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even *our* Father," we have on our side those who will be true to us for ever, and therefore we ought to continue to be comforted in heart, and stablished in every good word and work. If you had trusted only to a dead Saviour, you might well go and weep over his tomb;—if you had such gods as the heathen have, then might all consolation be withholden from you; but with an almighty Saviour who ever liveth to make intercession for you, and with an omnipotent and omniscient Father who ever liveth to watch over you as his dear children, you must not so much as think of being disquieted in spirit, nor even dream of being moved from the firm foundation of your faith, and hope, and love.

While still thinking of this source of our consolation, it will help us if we notice, next, that the apostle specially mentions the person of Christ: "Our Lord Jesus Christ *himself*." Why did he put in that word "himself" just there? It would have sounded all right if he had written, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us." Ah, but he wanted to call our very particular attention to the real personality of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to make us feel that, in him,—not merely in what he does, and what he bestows, but in "*himself*" is the source of our comfort: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ *himself*." O brethren, is there any surer source of joy to a Christian than Jesus Christ, the incarnate God? John writes, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" and, from the inspired Word, I know that God has taken humanity into union with Divinity, and that he, who stands at the right hand of God, even the Father, is the Son of Mary, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. Why, there is comfort in the knowledge that he is there as the representative Man who has taken redeemed human nature right up to the

throne of God,—picked up human nature as it lay, all bruised, and mangled, outside the gate of the earthly paradise, and taken it up into the heavenly paradise, from which it never can be expelled. There must be, in the heart of God, thoughts of love to man, since his only-begotten and well-beloved Son is a man. When you think of your Saviour, you are not to think exclusively of him as God, but also to think of him as man, for he was born into this world, and lived in it; he ate, and drank, and slept, and walked, as we do; and he also died, as we do; and in his humanity, as well as in his Divinity, he has gone into the glory. Leaving out, for the moment, what he has done for us, we may well rejoice in what he is himself as Immanuel, God with us. There is music in the very sound of that sweet name, and there is the very essence of music in “our Lord Jesus Christ himself.”

But look at his person, not merely as man, but as the God-man who has offered a complete atonement for his people's guilt. Up yonder, enthroned in glory, is your Saviour, not merely as man, but as the Mediator between God and men, who has completed his great sacrifice, accomplished all his Father's purposes, and fulfilled his Father's will, so that he could truly say, “It is finished.” Look at him, by faith, as the glorified man, glorified because, having descended into the grave bearing his people's sin, he came up out of the grave without sin. He “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification;” and his resurrection was the proof that he had—

“To the utmost farthing paid  
Whate'er his people owed.”

Surely it should bring the sweetest consolation to you to think of Jesus Christ, as the Representative of his people, gone up into the glory, and soon to come to this earth again to reign “before his ancients gloriously,” when the bodies of all his saints shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body, and so shall be “for ever with the Lord.” Brethren and sisters, may “our Lord Jesus Christ *himself*” manifest himself unto you, with those dear upraised hands of his, with the scars still visible; and as you gaze upon him, may you realize that he is giving to you “everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,” and therefore may your hearts be comforted, and may you be stablished in every good word and work! How can you be moved from your steadfastness so long as you can see him? How can you ever depart from him who has won your affection, and holds your soul fast with cords of a man, and bands of love? Surely you must cling to him for ever and ever. I feel that I must say with the poet,—

“A very wretch, Lord! I should prove,  
Had I no love for thee:  
Rather than not my Saviour love,  
Oh, may I cease to be!”

The apostle, however, does not let us forget that, in union with our dear Redeemer, at one with him in every purpose of grace, is “God, even our Father, which hath loved us;” and he bids us think,

not so much of his person, which we cannot comprehend, as of his love. So, beloved, let us try to view God our Father in the attitude of loving us. Truly, this is a boundless and unfathomable sea. We can neither fly across it, nor dive into its depths. Remember, believer, that the Lord loved you long before the foundation of the world. You are so insignificant in the scale of being that, if he had quite forgotten you, you might not have wondered; and yet, or ever the mountains were created, or he had kindled the morning star, in the glass of his decrees he beheld you, and even then he loved you. Recollect how Jeremiah was inspired to write, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Dwell on that wondrous truth, that God has loved you with an everlasting love. Suck the honey of consolation out of that glorious fact; surely, if your faith is at all in exercise, you will find much sacred sweetness there.

God loved us, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "even when we were dead in sins." God loved you when you resisted his Spirit, loved you when you despised his Son, loved you out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, loved you into a state of grace, and so loved you into loving him. And he has loved you ever since with an unabating love; though he has sometimes chastened you for your profit,—for his love is wise and discriminating,—he has never deserted you, but his love for you has been constant and true. He has often been grieved with you when you have sinned against him, for his love is a holy love which cannot endure iniquity, yet he has forgiven you, for his love is a gracious love. He has always loved you, and is loving you at this moment. Surely this fact ought both to comfort the believer's heart, and to hold it fast; and this is what the apostle was aiming at when he wrote our text. What can bind a Christian to his God so well as a sense of love divine? If it be but shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost, you will not be tempted away from your Heavenly Father's house, neither will you be weary of your Heavenly Father's work, nor tired of your Heavenly Father's words. That which comes to us perfumed with love is always sweet and precious, so let us rejoice to remember "God, even our Father, which hath loved us."

And, beloved, do not forget that, having once loved you, he always will love you. When this great world has passed away, and, like a dream, has vanished into nothingness, you will still live, because Jesus will still live, and you will still be loved by "God, even our Father," because Jesus will still be loved by him. As you are in him, you shall be for ever in him, and for ever be the object of the Father's love. These are simple matters to speak of, but they are sublime truths to live upon. Bread is a common thing, but a hungry man thinks it very precious. O ye hungry children of God, cut large slices from the loaf that is set before you now, and gratefully feed upon it! Here is "our Lord Jesus Christ himself," in his complex person as God and man, as a fountain of comfort to his people, and here is "God, even our Father," in his everlasting love to us, as the same fountain under another aspect.

Then the apostle, having pointed out to us the divine source of all our blessings, bids us survey *the streams which flow from that source*: "which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." Beloved, the consolation which God gives to us is not temporary, but eternal; such consolation is worth having, and when we get it, we may well rejoice over it.

What are the consolations which God gives to his people? I need not mention all the forms of consolation, for, to meet each separate case of distress, there is a special message of comfort, and every promise that God gives you is part of the everlasting consolation with which he has enriched all his chosen people. The potent "shalls" and "wills" of Jehovah stand fast like his throne, and never can be changed. Hath he given you a promise, and shall he not fulfil it? Ay, and fulfil it again, and again, and again, as long as you shall need to have it fulfilled, for his promises are inexhaustible, and full of manifold riches of blessedness to the believing soul. God's promise of consolation is based upon the "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." God has entered into a covenant with Christ on the behalf of all his people, and from the provisions of that covenant he never will depart, for he has "confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

"His oath, his covenant, and his blood,  
Support me in the sinking flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay:  
On Christ the solid rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand."

Pardoned sin is, to my mind, one phase of the "everlasting consolation" which God hath given to us; for, be it known unto you that God does not forgive your sin to-day, and then lay it to your charge again to-morrow. Little children give presents, and then want to have them back again; and fickle men often play fast and loose with one another; but when God forgives, he forgives for ever, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;" that is to say, he never repents, and takes back the gift which he has bestowed. Hast thou received absolution from the lips of thy God? Then, thy sins shall never again rise up against thee in judgment, for they have been cast into the depths of the sea. "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve."

What "everlasting consolation" there is also in the great doctrine of adoption! We become the children of God when we are born again; "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." A man's child is always his child, and God's child is always his child. A man cannot unchild his own son or daughter; and if thou art a child of God, thou shalt be a child of God throughout eternity. The life that God has put into thee is not

transient, as Jesus said concerning his sheep, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." What rich consolation there is for you in this blessed truth! The very life which becomes yours by your adoption into the family of God is an everlasting life; it must, therefore, yield you "everlasting consolation."

Time would fail me to remind you of all the various forms of consolation which the Spirit of God applies to the heart of the believer, and every phase of it is everlasting. Therefore, brethren, let us not be moved away from the hope of the gospel. Let us not cast away our confidence, "which hath great recompense of reward." Let us not be disturbed or disquieted; let not our hearts be troubled. If we have everlasting consolation, let our joy also be perpetual.

And then the apostle, still further to comfort our hearts, and stablish us in every good word and work, tells us that God has given us "good hope through grace." You know what that good hope is,—the hope that he will preserve us unto the end,—the hope that we shall be raised from the dead in God's good time,—the hope that we shall be accepted in the day of Christ's appearing,—the hope that we shall be with him where he is, and shall behold his glory, and share it with him for ever and ever. This is a good hope because it has a good basis to rest upon. God has given this hope to all who believe in his Son, Jesus Christ; and as God is true, the hope is a good hope. A hope that is founded upon a lie is a vain hope, but a hope that is founded upon a promise of God is a good hope. It is a good hope because it is a hope of good things,—so good, my dear friend, that you cannot find anything to match them in the whole world. It may well be called a good hope, for it is the hope of perfection, the hope of being transformed into the image of Christ, the hope of everlasting delight. It is the best of all hopes, and we cannot say more of it than that. It is a good hope because of its operation on the heart. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure;" for the man who has a good hope through grace longs to be purged from sin, to be waiting and watching for his Lord's appearing, and to have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God.

Now, brothers and sisters, since so much of what God has given to you is at present the subject of hope, do you not see how bound you are to remain in the posture of waiting and hoping, and neither to be discouraged, nor yet to turn deserters? May the Lord "comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work," because you are saved by hope, and the realization of that hope is not visible at present; for, if you saw it, you would not continue to hope for it. You are expecting greater things than you have ever realized yet; it is better on before, for your faces are toward the sunrising. We were told, some time ago, by a philosopher, that our nation had been shooting Niagara, and taking a leap in the dark. Well, that may be, or may not be; but this I know, believers in Christ are not descending Niagara, for they are ascending; and their leap, whenever they do leap, is not into the

dark, but into the light, and into light that is brighter, and brighter still. Our progress is away from evil up to good, from good to better, and from the better to the best of all, in infinite progression, by the divine impulse of the grace of God; for it is by grace: "good hope through grace." We do not get this good hope through nature, or through our own free-will; but we get it through grace. Grace has given us what we have already received, and grace also gives us the hope of what we have not yet received. Grace lets us see the things that are ours at present, and grace enables us to realize the things that shall be ours in the future.

I hope you understand what the apostle meant in setting all this before you. If I had the tongues of men and of angels, I could not tell you the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of these gracious words. Let me read them to you again: "Now *our* Lord Jesus Christ *himself*, and God, even *our* Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." That is what we already have.

II. Now I want to clinch the nail by speaking of WHAT WE ARE TO HAVE as the result of what we already have.

Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, first, *that the Lord would comfort their hearts*; and, brethren and sisters in Christ, may the Lord comfort your hearts! God does not wish you to be sad. A certain Persian king would allow no one to wait upon him if he had a sad countenance. It is not so with our Lord, for he looks with a tender eye upon those who are heavy of heart, and he does not forbid them to come into his presence. At the same time,—

"Why should the children of a king  
Go mourning all their days?"

If you have everlasting consolation, my dear sister, what reason have you for such constant fretting? If you have a good hope through grace, my dear brother, why did you say, the other day, that you were tempted almost to give up all hope? May the Lord comfort your hearts! Perhaps you think it is a small thing for the Lord's people to be comforted; but God does not think so. He said to his servants, the prophets, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." It was not one alone whom he told to do this, but he said, "Comfort *ye* my people," as though he summoned all his servants, and said to them, "Whatever you do in denouncing sinners, and in stirring up my people to work for me, never forget this part of your duty: 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.'" Our Lord Jesus Christ did not think that it was a small thing for his people to be happy; for, on the very night in which he went forth to his passion, among the last words that he uttered were those blessed ones which have cheered millions of mourners: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

The normal condition of a child of God—I mean, his healthy condition—is one of repose, rest, comfort, and delight. Certainly, the Lord has given special promises to those who reach this state of mind; such as this, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he

shall give thee the desires of thine heart." He means, then, to give great things to those who honour him by trusting him so that they cease to be troubled, and are comforted, whatever happens. What aileth thee, daughter of sorrow? Art thou poor? So was thy Lord; yet I never read that he complained at what his Father willed. Why shouldst thou complain of the dispensations of providence? Art thou sick, my dear brother or sister? Thou wilt not be the first child of God who has pined away into heaven if that should be thy lot. Perhaps the Lord means thus gradually and gently to take down thine earthly tabernacle; but, if so, remember what Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Ah!" say you, "but it is one who is very dear to me who is dying." Yes, but when the Lord lent you your husband, or your wife, or your child, he did not tell you that any of them would live for ever. Be thankful that you have had these loans so long; after all, they are not really yours; and if the Lord takes back what he lent to you for a while, why should you be so cast down? "I have lost all," cries one. Have you lost your God? "No." Then you have not lost your all. May the Lord comfort your hearts, my dear friends, because, if you are unhappy, you dishonour your God by your doubts and fears, and you often hinder those who would enter into the kingdom. They see your sad face, and they say, "Christ's yoke must be a heavy one, and his burden must be intolerable. Look at the face of that Christian man or woman." I would rather that they should say to you, "We would fain go with you, for there is a brightness about your face that we would like to have. We perceive that your Master is a good Master, and that he cheers and comforts your hearts."

I believe that thoroughly happy Christians, those who really enjoy the things of God, are also amongst the most stable Christians; I think that is why Paul was guided to put the truth as it is in our text. You cannot get a man to give up that which is his daily delight. I never wonder when I hear of some professors giving up Christianity, for they have never experienced the joy of it; it was only a burden to them. When a poor fellow has a load on his back that does not belong to him, and does not yield him any comfort, but only galls his shoulders, you are not surprised if, when he gets to one of those rests for porters in the City, he lays down his load, and walks away and forgets it, and is very glad to forget it. But if it was his own property, his own treasure, you would not find him forgetting it, or going away and leaving it behind. The thing out of which you get the most joy will, in the long run, be the dearest thing to you; and if you continually rejoice in the Lord, your joy will greatly help you in resisting the many temptations to scepticism and superstition to which others will yield. You will stand fast in the Lord because you will be held there by the golden rivets of joy which God has given you in communion with himself.

Then the apostle adds, "and stablish you in every good word and work." *He wants God's people to be stablished in every good word.*

I suppose he means that he would have us firmly fixed in our belief of the doctrines of the gospel; and, beloved, you may very well say that you will keep to them till somebody shows you something better, just as I have read that, when the people of the State of Massachusetts wanted a set of laws, and they had not time to make them just then, they passed a resolution that they would be governed by the laws of God until they had time to make better ones. We may believe the doctrines revealed in the Word of God until we find better ones, and that we never shall do. Have those doctrines converted you? Then, be established in them. Does your experience confirm the truth of them? Then, cling to them. It is one of the characteristics of the doctrines of the gospel that, the older a man gets, the more he loves them. I always find that the older saints become more Calvinistic as they ripen in age; that is to say, they get to believe more and more that salvation is all of grace; and whereas, at first, they might have had some rather loose ideas concerning free-will, and the power of the creature, the lapse of years and fuller experience gradually blow all that kind of chaff away. Old saints get what is called "a sweet tooth." They love the sweet things of the covenant; they like their meat to have a rich savour. I am not old yet, but I confess that I get more and more fond of the sweet things of the gospel of grace, and cannot endure the novelties that are so current and so exceedingly popular nowadays. Oh, no; tell me of my Father's eternal love, tell me of my Saviour's precious blood, tell me of the Spirit's sacred indwelling, and my heart is glad; but tell me anything short of this, and my soul is not fed. I pray that you, brethren and sisters who are members of this Christian church, may know what you know, and hold fast to it. May you drive your roots down into the rich soil of infallible truth. May you not be as leaves of the forest, driven hither and thither by the winds because there is no life in you, but may you be "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season;" whose "leaf also shall not wither." God make you to be thus "stablished in every good word."

The apostle would also have those to whom he wrote *stablished in every good work*. Sometimes, an attack of this kind is made upon us: "It is no use trying to teach the gospel to children; we cannot suppose that they can understand its deep mysteries." I heard that said only the other day. Well, I can say that we have tried it, and we have found that, whether you choose to call them great mysteries or not, children do understand the gospel, and seem sometimes to comprehend it better than their fathers do, just because they are so childlike. The qualification for entering the kingdom of heaven is not fully-developed manhood, but rather that we should become as little children; and unless we do become childlike, we cannot enter the kingdom. Dear friend, do not be turned aside from your work by anything that is said concerning it. If people say that it is no use to go down to the lodging-houses, and talk to the poorest of the poor, be established in doing it because your Master did it, and because the everlasting consolation which comes to you through the grace of God makes you feel that the most

unworthy are the fittest objects for the gospel of Jesus. Since you received consolation from God's mercy, you may well be established in the belief that there is consolation in the mercy of God for the vilest of the vile.

Do not be turned aside from any part of your work, and especially from the blessed work of prayer. Some people tell us that prayer is useless, but what do they know about it? They have never tried it; but those of us who have tried and proved it, and who still practise it from day to day, know that prayer is heard. We may send a telegraphic message, yet it may never get where we want it to go; we may post a letter, yet it may never reach its proper destination; but when we pray, we are sure that we are heard, for we have distinct answers to our petitions, and our heart is filled with delight as we recollect the hundreds and thousands of times in which the right hand of the Lord has been stretched out to help us when we have cried unto him in our time of need. Be established in every form of good work, you who are part of the Lord's great army, meeting here for drill and for battle with the forces of evil. I beseech you, brethren, let not your hearts grow faint, and do not so much as think of retreating in the day of conflict. Lo! our victorious Leader, "our Lord Jesus Christ himself," is coming; wherefore, let every one of us play the man for our coming King. The fight will not be long, and woe be to the man who turns his back in the day of battle; but blessed shall he be who is found faithful even unto death. I speak thus to you, beloved, though I am fully persuaded that he, who has begun the good work in you, will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.

I wish that my sermon had a great deal more to do with some of you than it has, for I fear that there are many here to whom I have not been speaking. Therefore, my closing message shall be to the unsaved. My dear friend, I cannot bid you be steadfast, and I cannot talk to you of everlasting consolation, for you have not yet believed in Jesus Christ to the saving of your soul. There is an awful text of Scripture which at present applies to you. The apostle Paul, a cool-headed and warm-hearted man, who loved sinners, once wrote thus: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha;" that is, accursed at the coming of Christ! O my dear friend, that is what you will be if you love not our Lord Jesus Christ, and that is what you ought to be, and what the warmest-hearted lover of his race, who also loves his God, feels must be and ought to be your doom if you love not the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of that, and I pray that the Holy Spirit may lead you first to trust in Jesus, and then to love him, and so you shall be saved, and shall bless him for ever!

"Ye sinners, seek his grace,  
Whose wrath ye cannot bear;  
Fly to the shelter of his cross,  
And find salvation there."

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