

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

“THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD.”

A Sermon

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“These are the true sayings of God.”—Revelation xix. 9.

BEFORE I use our text in a larger sense, it is due to our reverence for the Word of God to expound this short sentence in its immediate connection, for the angel here declared that certain things which had been spoken in John's hearing were “the true sayings of God.” You will observe that he bade the apostle “write” what he had heard. It was so weighty that John was not to trust it simply to his memory. It was so necessary that it should be remembered that he had to record it so that it might be handed down to future generations. “Write,” said the angel, and then, as if to give John reasons for writing, reasons why these truths should be permanently recorded, he added, “These are the true sayings of God.”

What were those true sayings? I shall not dwell long upon them, but just hastily allude to them. The first which appears in this chapter is the great fact that God will judge and condemn the harlot church. There are two churches in the world to-day. The one is the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, composed of believers in him who worship God in spirit and in truth, whose creed is the Word of God, and whose power for life and service is the indwelling Spirit of God. There is another church; you know what a shameful name is applied to her in this chapter, and you also know that she deserves to be called by that name, for she has indeed corrupted the earth with her fornication. In the old Jewish time, idolatry was called spiritual harlotry; and there are millions of idolaters daily bowing down before images, and rags and bones

that ought long ago to have been buried in the earth. The Church of Rome seems to have gathered up all the relics of the idolatries of other ages, and then to have capped them by saying that a substance, which is only bread before the "priest" consecrates it, becomes God afterwards, and then the idolater eats his god,—a monstrous piece of blasphemy and superstition unworthy of Dahomey itself. That is the harlot church, which God will surely judge; and when he does, terrible will be that judgment. Amongst the tremendous things of the last day will be the total overthrow and utter destruction of this "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Come ye out from her, O ye people, lest ye be partakers of her plagues; for terrible will her plagues be in the day when the Lord shall avenge upon her the blood of all his saints and martyrs whom she has slain. This, then, is one of "the true sayings of God."

The next true saying is concerning the glorious and universal reign of the great God. For John "heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." There has been a long war between God and idols of various names. Among the ancient idols were Baal, and Ashtaroth, and Dagon, but all had to bow down before Jehovah. Then Jupiter, and Saturn, and Venus, and Mars were worshipped as deities by the heathen, and now gods many and lords many still dominate a large part of the human intellect; but they are all doomed to fall, and the one invisible Creator of heaven and earth, almighty and eternal, will yet reign throughout the whole universe without a rival; and then shall be heard again that great shout that John heard during the wondrous revelation in the Isle of Patmos, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Let us never imagine that God's throne is in peril. Let us never fancy that the truth can be defeated. Truth is God's daughter, and he covers her with his great shield, and fights for her with his invincible omnipotence. Do not tremble for the ark of God, do not despair, or even despond; the Lord will win the victory over all the powers of evil. This also is one of "the true sayings of God."

The next true saying was this, that Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God,—so called because of the atoning sacrifice which he presented on Calvary,—will have a full reward for all his sufferings: "For the marriage of the Lamb* is come, and his wife hath made herself ready . . . Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper† of the Lamb." Jesus Christ came into this world to find his beloved ones, and he found them in bondage; and having taken upon himself their nature, he became their next of kin; and then, according to the ancient law, he redeemed them, and bought them unto himself, and he has espoused unto himself

* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 2,096, "The Marriage of the Lamb."

† See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 2,428, "The Marriage Supper of the Lamb."

all those that trust in him. All believers in him, in whatever visible church they may be, make up the one Church of Jesus Christ which he hath redeemed from among men with his precious blood, and in the latter days he will have that Church to be his reward. At present, Christ has but a poor reward for all his sufferings. Comparatively few reverence him, his people are a feeble and scattered folk; but there are days coming in which the Lord Jesus Christ shall have all whom he bought with his blood. He shall have for himself all whom he came to save. He shall not be disappointed; “he shall not fail, nor be discouraged.” The Lord shall abundantly reward him for all his agonies. “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” This also is one of “the true sayings of God.”

This true saying also declares that, in the latter days, when Christ comes again to this earth, he will find his Church here. He will bring with him a part of that Church, and he will find here part of that Church which shall be his bride for ever and for ever. A description of the purity which is her glory is given in the verse which precedes our text: “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” So that the Church of Christ will be arrayed as brides should be, in the garments of light and purity; she will also be chastely arrayed,—not like the harlot church, in purple and scarlet,—but “in fine linen, clean and white.” Christ’s Church shall be a pure Church, a simple Church, a humble Church, and yet, for all that, a beautiful Church in the eyes of Jesus Christ. She shall be a perfect Church, and her beauty shall be her righteousness. And where shall she obtain that righteousness? It is said that it shall be given to her. It will not be any righteousness which she has herself manufactured, for each of her members has the same desire as Paul had when he wrote, “That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” The Church of God, then, when Christ receives her as his bride, will be dressed in the imputed righteousness which comes to her by faith. It is the righteousness which Jesus Christ spent his life to work out, the righteousness which never had a stain upon it, for Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” Oh, blessed be God for this glorious fact that for ever Jesus Christ will have a Church of this kind. This also is one of “the true sayings of God.”

The practical point for us to remember is this,—let us endeavour to get as far as ever we can from the meretricious church described in the 18th chapter. If you read that chapter through, you cannot mistake the church to which it refers, for the portrait is a photograph. Get as far as ever you can away from that mystery of iniquity. Shun sacramentarianism as you would shun the plague. Abhor the priesthood as you would the arch-fiend himself. Turn away from all idolatry, and worship God alone. Keep to the Bible, and forsake everything that is of man’s invention.

Cleave to the simple teaching of God's Word in doctrine, in practice, in the ordinances, and in everything. Cling, in fact, to the pure Church of Jesus Christ. If you ask me where you can find that Church, I may tell you that you can find part of it here, and parts of it scattered all over the land, and over a great part of the world. Believers in Christ are known to the Lord, for he knoweth them that are his; they are not as others are, for they have received an inner spiritual light and life; they no longer care for the world, nor for the world's religion; they seek to walk where Jesus Christ marked the way with his own pierced feet; "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." This is the Church that loves the righteousness of Christ, the Church that preaches up Christ, her great Husband and Lord, the Church that magnifies his atoning sacrifice, the Church that believes in his merits, and not in human merits, and that trusts in his death, and not in anything that men can do to save themselves. Cling to that Church, beloved; cleave to it. Be numbered with it, give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till you know that you are amongst those people to whom is granted the privilege of wearing the righteousness of Christ as "fine linen, clean and white." The Lord grant that, in that dividing day, not one member of this assembly may be driven away with the beast and the false prophet; but may we all be found with the bride, the true, chosen, chaste, pure Church of Jesus Christ that has endeavoured to follow him through evil report and good report, never bowing at the feet of kings, never accepting their proffered gifts, but remaining true to God and Christ all her days!

Having spoken thus upon the connection of this passage, I desire now to address you, for a short time, upon these words as they refer to the entire canon of Scripture. I may take this blessed Book, this whole inspired Bible, and say of its contents, "These are the true sayings of God." I want to make two remarks; the first is, that *some of these sayings we have already proved to be true*; and the second is, that *the rest of them we are fully assured are true*.

I. First, then, SOME OF THE GREAT SAYINGS IN THIS BOOK WE HAVE PROVED TO BE TRUE. There is nothing like tasting, and handling, and trying, and proving for ourselves what we find in the Scriptures.

Among other things, this Book says that *sin is an evil and a bitter thing*. Some of us have proved that to be true, for sin became, when we were awakened by God's Spirit, our plague, our torment, our curse; and to this hour, though God has forgiven the sins of as many of us as have believed in Jesus Christ, we never sin without suffering injury as the result of it. I ask any child of God here whether he ever was a real gainer by sin. Was sin ever anything to you, beloved, but a loss,—an evil through and through? Have you not had to smart for it many and many a time, and do you not say, "Of all the evil things that ever came from hell, there is none that can match sin"? Yes, we have proved that this saying of God is true.

But more pleasant to talk of is another true saying of God which tells us that *the blood of Jesus Christ speaks peace to the conscience*. This Book tells us that the blood of Jesus speaketh better things than that of Abel. It tells us that, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." I put the question to those who have been justified by faith, those who have tested the power of the precious blood of Christ,—has it not given you peace with God? My witness is, that I never knew what peace of conscience meant until I learned what the Saviour's blood had done for me. There is no peace like the peace that comes from trusting in Jesus; it is "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," which keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Nay, more, the precious blood of Jesus, when it is applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit, not only gives peace, but it gives a divine exhilaration and sacred joy, as the Word says, "We also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." I appeal to your experience, is it not so? Have you not proved that saying of God to be a true saying? Oh, yes! there are scores, and hundreds, and even thousands here who can repeat this saying, and add, "Verily, we know it to be true in our own souls."

Further, God has told us in his Word, that *there is a cleansing power in faith, and hope, and love, and all the other Christian graces*. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." I put it to you who have faith and hope, have you not always found that, in proportion as you have these graces in active exercise, you can conquer sin? Perhaps you have some besetting sin; if so, have you not always been able to tread it under your feet when you have stood at the foot of the cross? When you have been full of love to Jesus, have you not also been most victorious over your inward corruptions, and most steadfast in resisting outward temptations? I know it is so, and there are some of us, in whom the grace of God has wrought such great wonders, changing us from what we once were, turning us inside out, making us such new creatures that, if we were to meet our old selves to-morrow, we should not know ourselves. When men tell us that the gospel is not the power of God unto salvation, we ask them how it is that, every day in the week, we hear of drunkards reclaimed, the unchaste made pure, thieves made honest, and persons of detestable temper made gentle and amiable; and how it is that we so often hear of the conversion of a husband and father, and that the wife and children at home bear witness that the conversion is no sham, but has made the cottage to be no longer a little hell, but more like a heaven upon earth. We say that the doctrine which can make such changes in men cannot be an untrue doctrine. When I have been troubled with scepticism, I have had to cure myself in this way. I have stood and looked up to the starry vault of heaven, and I have said, "Well, one thing I am clear about, and cannot doubt, namely, that there is a God. All these wondrous worlds did not grow; somebody made them. And there is

another thing about which I am clear, and that is that I love this God whoever he is, and that I believe him to be a pure and holy being, and I want to be the same as he is; and whatever side he is on, I am on his side. I feel an honour and reverence for him, and desire to follow him in that which is good and that which is true." Then I say to myself, "Did I always feel like that?" And I answer, "No, I did not. Now, that which makes me range myself side by side with God for that which is good and true, that which makes me love God, cannot be a lie, it must be true. And as it was the gospel of Jesus Christ that wrought that change in my soul, that gospel is true;" and so I get back again on firm rocky ground for my own soul to rest upon. And what I have said about myself is the witness of all who know the Lord. Their faith in God has had a sanctifying influence upon them, and so they know, in their own experience, that this saying of God is indeed true.

Another of "the true sayings of God" is this. He has said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We have done as he bade us, and so *we have proved the efficacy of prayer*. It is all very well to sneer at answers to prayer, as some have done, and to propose various tests, which none could accept unless they were idiots; but the question cannot be disposed of in that way. There are honest people about by thousands who aver that God does hear their prayers. Not hear prayer? If any man were to say to me, "You have no eyes, you have no head, you have no arms, you have no legs," I should say to him, "I don't know how I can convince you that I have all these parts of the human body if you look at me, and then repeat your assertion; but I am absolutely certain that I have all these things; and if anyone says to me, "God has not heard your prayers," I answer, "Why, he hears them every day. I receive answers to prayer so constantly that I cannot doubt the fact any more than I can doubt my own existence." And I am not a solitary one in this matter. I am less than the least of all God's servants, and there are many men who are mighty in prayer, men who have their will of God, who go to him in secret, and ask what they will, and it is given unto them. I could mention their names, but I will not; but even we, who are amongst the feeblest of the Lord's people, can tell of many answers to prayer that we have received. Many persons write to ask me to pray for certain special cases. I do not know why they should do so, for my prayers can have no more effect than their own; and I often receive letters containing grateful thanks for answers that have been given to prayers that I have thus put up for others, and all these people are not fools. Some of them are such intelligent persons that they are regarded as leaders in their various circles, and others of them have at any rate managed to lead honest, sober, consistent Christian lives, and they believe that, if they can join their prayers with those of another brother in Christ, the Lord will grant their requests, and he does so constantly. They are not deceived by their own fancies

or imaginations. Some people say, "They are mere coincidences which you call answers to prayer." Well, call them coincidences if you like; but to us they are no such thing whatever they may be to you; and while we pray, and the answer comes, whether by a coincidence or not, it will not signify much to us so long as we do really receive the answer, and are made to rejoice in our souls, and to bless God for hearing our supplications. We have again and again proved that there is a God that heareth prayer, and the promise to hear and answer prayer is among "the true sayings of God."

Once again, we know that it is according to the teaching of God's Word that *faith will sustain his people in the time of trouble and trial*. This truth we have ourselves proved, and we have seen it illustrated in other Christians. That same sustaining power is promised to us in the hour of death. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." David said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me." Now, if there is ever a time when a man is honest, one would think it is when he lies face to face with death. People cannot usually play the hypocrite then, though there have been some daring enough to do even that; but, for the most part, men are startled out of mere fancies when they come to the reality of departure out of this world. How fares it with Christians when they are about to die? Why, beloved, we are not speaking about dreams, but of solid facts that we daily verify in our visitations of our flock, when we say that they die joyfully. One of our dear sisters, who was known to some of you, has just been called home. Through a long period of acute pain, which rendered her condition unusually distressing, her joy and peace were almost too seraphic to be talked about. When I met some of her friends in the house, they said to me, "Well, sir, we have derived more spiritual benefit in sitting here talking with our friend than we have got from any sort of religious exercise." Words have fallen from that humble woman's lips that would read like poetry, joyous words between the gasps for breath; and wonderful anticipations of the glory-land have been given to her in the midst of much physical weakness. And when we speak thus of one of our members, we may say the same of hundreds of them, for it is the usual experience with them on their death-beds. I wish more of you could see them die, and learn the way in which a Christian can expire. I always think, when I come away from the death-bed of a child of God, that I have added to my previous stock of facts proving the faithfulness of my God. I would believe the Bible without a single fact to back it up, but there is a vast quantity of external as well as internal evidence of the truth of the Scriptures. I would believe my God if he never gave me anything to see with my eyes or to hear with my ears. His own Word should be enough for me; but these blessed sounds and scenes, these cheering sights and holy triumphs make it not merely a matter of faith to believe the gospel, but also a matter of common sense. It seems impossible to

doubt when you see the evident power there is about true godliness, and the majestic might that dwells in faith to strengthen the weak against the last grim foe. Yes, we have proved many of these things to be "the true sayings of God."

Before I leave this point, I want to urge all believers always to treat the Bible as if it were all true. Do not let any of it seem to be a romance to you, but regard it all as real and true. I wish people were more business-like in dealing with the Bible, and that they would use more common sense with regard to it; we sometimes really fail to use it as if we believed it. Some persons appear to imagine that the excellence of their prayer consists in its length; but if they had more real belief in prayer, it would probably not be so long. Whenever I go to a bank with a cheque, I pass it to the clerk at the counter, take up the cash he gives me, and go about my business. That is how I like to pray. I take to the Lord one of his promises, and I say to him, "Lord, I believe thy promise, and I believe that thou wilt fulfil it to me;" and then I go my way knowing that I have the answer to my petition, or that it will come in due time. To kneel down for a certain specified period, and pour out a long string of selected sentences, would seem to me a mere performance, and I should get nothing by it. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Do not let your praying be a mere ecclesiastical or religious engagement; go to God as your Father and your Friend, fully convinced that your prayer will be answered. Thousands of prayers are never answered because those who present them do not expect that they will be answered. If a man prays to God, and does not believe that God will answer him, he will not answer him. We must, without wavering, unstaggeringly believe that God will hear us, and then he must hear us. Note that I say "must." But "must" is for the King! Yes, but he has bound himself by his own Word: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." These are Christ's own words, not mine; and their meaning lies upon the very surface. Let the Christian pray in faith, and then he will find that God will never run back from his word, but will keep his promise to all his believing people.

II. My second point was to be that THERE ARE SOME THINGS WHICH WE CANNOT PROVE JUST YET, BUT THEY ARE TRUE, FOR ALL THAT.

Now let me tell you what will come true one of these days. *Jesus Christ will come back to this earth.* That same Jesus, who went up from the top of mount Olivet, will so come in like manner as he was seen to go up into heaven. He will come with a mighty blast of the archangel's trumpet, and in amazing pomp and splendour, attended by myriads of angels and vast hosts of the redeemed; but he will surely come. It may not be to-day, it may not be for many an age; but in such an hour as men think not the Son of man will come. When he does come, remember that, if you are alive, you will have to stand before his judgment seat; but if you die before that time, your body shall rise again, and

your soul shall return to it, and there in your flesh shall you see the Son of God. That very Saviour whom to-night I preach to you, who will save you if you believe in him, will then come to sit upon his throne; and if you have lived and died without believing in him, he will come to judge you, and to pronounce upon you that dreadful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Christ will come, and you will all rise, and either be accepted or condemned by him. "These are the true sayings of God."

Further, *there will be a heaven for all those who are found believing in Jesus.* Christ will take them there to be with him where he is, that they may behold his glory. They shall enter into most blessed fellowship with him in all his joys and glories, and that world without end. If you do not believe in Jesus, you will miss all that, and where he is you will never come. The door will be shut against you, and the outer darkness where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth must be your portion for ever, for this is another true saying of God, that *there is a hell for all who do not believe in Jesus.* As surely as there was a place of bliss for Lazarus, so surely was there a place of woe for Dives. As certainly as there is a heavenly fold for the sheep of Christ, so is there a hell for the goats. "These are the true sayings of God." Do not despise them; do not doubt them. Some of you, who are unconverted, may be within a few minutes of death. I was struck, the other Monday night, when I was coming to the prayer-meeting here, by the appearance of a poor man, one of our church-members, who was sitting by the fire in the room behind looking very sickly. It was bitterly cold, but I soon saw that death was making him colder still. I felt that, in a short time, he must die however much care we might take of him. We took him home in a cab, and in a few hours he was gone. He was an old disciple, so he had entered into his rest; but I thought, "It is strange that there should so often be deaths in this Tabernacle." Every now and then, while I am preaching the Word here, there comes to me a message, "There is a person dying here." Beside that, death makes havoc continually among our thousands of members; sometimes, three or four die in one week. And out of this vast congregation, I do not know how many will die this week; probably we shall not all of us see next Sabbath, but certainly we shall soon depart out of this world. We shall fly away, and whither, whither, whither shall we go? I do not want to seem to be fanatical, but I will solemnly put this question to every one here,—as you do not believe that you will die like a dog, and as you do believe that you will live in another state, are you prepared for it? And as most of you, at any rate, believe that faith in Jesus is the only preparation for the future state, have you believed in him? Have you sought God by prayer? Is Jesus Christ your Lord and Saviour? If you are obliged to say, "No,"—I cannot hold your hand, (there are too many for me to do that,) nor can I take you by the button-hole, and detain you for a while, but I would fain detain you as that ancient mariner detained the wedding guest, and say to you,

“Are you wise to live in danger every day of death and judgment, and yet to remain unprepared? Ought it not to be the first business of your life, by faith and prayer, to make your calling and election sure?” If you are wise men and wise women, surely a word will be enough for you; and if you are not wise, may God make you so! May he lead you, this very hour, to confess your sins, and to seek his mercy, and may every one of us be found in Christ in that great day! Then shall we rejoice for ever in “the true sayings of God.” The Lord grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

PSALM CXIX. 89—104.

Verse 89. *For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.*

It is not a changeable or vanishing thing: “Thy word is settled,” settled for ever, settled “for ever in heaven.” As God changes not, so the Word which he has spoken to his servants changes not. If the foundations of the faith could be removed, what would the righteous do? What would any of us do? But, with an eternally fixed Word of God, we have something solid to build upon, a foundation on which we may confidently rest our everlasting hopes.

90. *Thy faithfulness is unto all generations:—*

God, who kept his promise to Abraham, keeps it also to us though we are far down the ages; and he will keep it to our children and our children’s children as long as the world endures, and then for ever and ever. We need not be afraid to leave the generations to come in his hands. “Thy faithfulness is unto all generations:”—

90, 91. *Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. Thy continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.*

This material world, whose laws appear to be so fixed, abides only because God has established it; but a day will come in which he will roll these things up like an outworn vesture, and he that sitteth upon the throne shall make all things new. But, at present, we have, in the fixity of the laws of nature, a type of the fixity of the promises and purposes of God.

92. *Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.*

Notice the love of God’s servant to God’s Word: “Unless thy law had been my delights.” The word is in the plural, for the psalmist not only took a delight in it, but all his delights were there. It was the sea of happiness wherein he bathed his entire soul. “Unless it had been so,” says he, “I should then have perished in mine affliction.” One of the best preservatives for the heart in times of trouble is an intense delight in the Word of God. Ob, to get away from this noisy world, from the turmoil of life, and its endless discussions and controversies, and to sit down, and quietly listen to what that Word has to say to us! This is the best way to recuperate drooping and fainting spirits.

93. *I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.*

Nothing makes a man remember the Word so well as the fact that it has quickened him. If you owe your spiritual life and the support of it to the Word of God, you will not forget that Word. If you feel that, every time you come into contact with it, it inspires you with fresh life, you will be anxious to be often diligently reading it.

94. *I am thine,—*

That is a grand thing for anyone to be able to say; what a heaven of bliss lies slumbering in those three words, “I am thine,”—

94. *Save me ;—*

That is a good argument : “ ‘ I am thine ’ by redemption, so do not lose me. ‘ I am thine ’ by a new creation, so let not the enemy steal me away from thee. I am thy servant, so exercise a master’s rights over me, and protect me from all my foes. ‘ I am thine, save me ; ’ ”—

94. *For I have sought thy precepts.*

Notice how the psalmist here twice singles out the precepts rather than the promises ; even hypocrites may love the promises, but only sincere believers love the precepts. The true servant of God loves the burdens which his Lord and Master lays upon him, and he only wishes that he had more strength to bear still more of them.

95. *The wicked have waited for me to destroy me :—*

“ They have lain in ambush, they have waited to catch me tripping, to ruin my character if possible ; so what shall I do ? Counterplot them ? No. Watch them night and day ? No. ‘ The wicked have waited for me to destroy me : ’ ”—

95. *But I will consider thy testimonies.*

There is something that seems to me calmly defiant about the psalmist’s resolve. He does not say, “ The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will fight them.” No ; but he says, “ I shall read my Bible, and I shall follow its directions. I shall act in obedience to my God, and in that way I shall baffle them.” To be obedient to God is the surest way to be victorious over wicked men. Keep thou God’s Word, and God will guard thy head in the day of danger.

96. *I have seen an end of all perfection : but thy commandment—*

“ Ab, there I find perfection : ‘ Thy commandment ’ ”—

96. *Is exceeding broad.*

It is so broad that there is no limit to it. One of the early fathers used to say, “ I delight in the infinity of Scripture ; ” and well he might, for there is no limit to it. Even one single text might suffice for a man’s meditation for a whole year ; if it did not, it would be because of the scantiness of the man’s meditative power, and not because of the exhaustion of the meaning of the verse.

97. *O how love I thy law !*

The psalmist breaks out into a transport of delight. He does not say how much he loved God’s law, for the simple reason that he could not tell us that ; but he says, “ O how love I thy law ! ”

97. *It is my meditation all the day.*

That is the best proof of the psalmist’s love of God’s law, for love shows itself by its constant familiarity with its chosen object. “ ‘ It is my meditation all the day.’ Every day, wherever I may be, I turn my daily experience into instructive meditation upon thy Word.” One of the best commentaries on God’s written Book is God’s Book of Providence when it is explained to us by his Holy Spirit.

98. *Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies : for they are ever with me.*

David knew how well God’s Word had instructed him ; and first he declared that he was wiser than his enemies ; and, next, that he was wiser than his former instructors :—

99. *I have more understanding than all my teachers : for thy testimonies are my meditation.*

The man who rightly meditates upon this wondrous Book is, after all, the truly wise man. His wisdom is that of the heart, received by the teaching

of the Holy Spirit, and it has a power of understanding in it that will make him wiser than those who are merely book-learned or man-taught.

100. *I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.*

First his enemies, then his teachers, and now his elders, the ancients,—he could excel them all; and he gave the reason for it: "Because I keep thy precepts." Take this Book away, and give the man all the human learning that he could ever acquire, and how little he would know, after all! But let him study this Book, and even in the absence of other books, (though that need not be the case with him,) such a man will still be wise,—wise for eternity.

101. *I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.*

The Bible is a very sanctifying Book. If we keep its precepts, it holds us back from many things into which we might otherwise have run. "I have refrained my feet from every evil way." Notice the universality of the obedience of a true saint. He does not say, "I will avoid all sin except a certain one for which I have a great liking." Oh, no: "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word."

102. *I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.*

Those who are taught of God are always well taught; they never unlearn what they have learned at the feet of Jesus. Those who backslide and apostatize were never truly taught of the Spirit of God.

103. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste!*

Have you a spiritual taste, dear hearer? It is one thing to hear the Word; it is another thing to taste it. Hearing the Word is often blessed, but tasting it is a more inward and spiritual thing; it is the enjoyment of the truth in the innermost parts of our being. Oh, that we were all as fond of the Word as were the old mystics who chewed the cud of meditation till they were fattened upon the Word of the Lord, and their souls grew strong in the divine love! I am sure of this,—the more you know of God's Word, the more you will love it. It is ignorance that misses the sweetness of it.

103. *Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

There is an indescribable sweetness in it. It is sweet to my heart; and when I utter it, how sweet it is to my mouth! I heard one observe, the other day, that he noted a great difference between the preachers of his youth and many of those of the present day. He said, "the old men used to enjoy the Word so much while they were preaching it; they preached it with their eyes beaming with delight in it. You could see that, if there was no savour in it for other people, there was a divine savour about it for the preachers themselves." This is the mark of the man who is taught of God,—that the Word is sweet to his mouth when he preaches it to others, as well as sweet to his taste when he meditates upon it himself.

104. *Through thy precepts I get understanding:—*

The practical parts of God's Word not only appeal to our understanding, but they give us understanding. That is a marvellous thing, but it is true. Sometimes, when you are arguing with a man who is dull of comprehension, you are apt to say, "Well, I can give you arguments, but I cannot give you an understanding with which to appreciate them;" but this Word can give us understanding: "Through thy precepts I get understanding:—"

104. *Therefore I hate every false way.*

The best test of a true spiritual understanding is an intense and vigorous hatred of everything that is false. The lover of truth is a follower of the truth; he is not a man of craft and guile. He keeps to the straight line, and in the long run it shall be proved that he is the man who is indeed taught of God.