

THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE PATIENCE OF CHRIST

NO. 2028

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, JUNE 17, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God,
and into the patient waiting for Christ.”*
2 Thessalonians 3:5.

FOR the moment, Paul in spirit is coasting the purple shores of the celestial country. With his Thessalonian friends he is making a joyful voyage within hail of Immanuel's land. The sail is bright with the sunlight and the keel is marking a silver track behind it. The Apostle's happy soul has left far in the stern the deceivableness of unrighteousness and the rocks of error. It comes into his heart that he would gladly steer his friends into certain of those lovely creeks which run up far into the inner recesses of the sacred fatherland. Shall he turn the helm that way? He pauses, for the navigation is difficult. One must be greatly expert to thread the streams which descend from the sunny fountains.

It is not given to all saints to follow safely all the windings of the rivers of delight. Paul had been with his Brethren at sea in the place where the Lord sank all their transgressions in the depths and he had been with them in sore affliction when neither sun nor moon appeared—and in all such seafaring he was in his element. But, brave pilot as he was, he could not pretend to penetrate all the richer and rarer experiences which bring elect souls nearest to the heart of the great Father. Therefore, instead of offering to be their pilot, he bowed his head and prayed, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

The special entrance into the goodly land, which the Apostle desired for his friends, was one which mere insight, wit, knowledge, or instruction could never give them. If so, he would have directed their minds that way at once. But the perception of the heavenlies is only given to heavenly faculties. The attainments which Paul desired for his friends were not beliefs of the head but indwelling of the heart. To return to our figure of sailing up the creeks and rivers into the center of the glorious country—that delicious voyage was only possible to the more refined and spiritual powers of the soul. Those sweet waters could only be navigated by the heart and the heart itself would need Divine direction before it could find the entrance to them.

There is a path which the vulture's eye has not seen and the lion's whelp has not trod—only God sees and knows it. The Beulah country of spiritual wisdom, especially in its higher reaches, is a matter for personal Revelation from God to each one of His own. We are here hopelessly in the dark if we have no light from above. And even with that light we do but see the difficult nature of our way and fail to enter upon it until the light becomes a force and He whom we desire to know directs our hearts into communion with Himself. Yes, yonder are the radiant coasts and the rivers of life up which our boat might sail into the center of “the island of the innocent.” Yet our great Apostle does not rush into the office of pilot but humbly acts as intercessor, crying, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.”

All this whets our desires! Who would not wish to go where only choice spirits can enter and where these can only come as the Lord directs their hearts? Paul could give his converts external directions, he could guide his more advanced Brethren in the work, walk and warfare of life. And he did so with all simplicity and earnestness. He urged them to abound in this grace and to avoid that folly. But he felt that his exhortation would be inefficient unless their hearts were touched. Here he felt his own powerlessness and so he cast the grand matter of heart-work upon the Lord Himself. As the heart naturally baffles all physicians so spiritually it is far beyond our knowledge. Who among ministers can guide you? Therefore, may “the Lord direct your hearts.”

God alone knows the heart and God alone can rule it—for this ruling Paul makes request. “The Lord direct your hearts.” Let us borrow his prayer and turn it to our own personal use—“Domine dirige nos.” The place for God in reference to the heart is that of supreme director. When the Lord lays His hand on the heart, which is the helm of the ship, then the whole vessel is rightly directed—this, therefore, is what we beseech Him to do. When the Holy Spirit comes into

the heart and takes supreme control of the affections, the whole life and conversation are after a godly sort, Oh, that He may prove this fact to each one of us! Some think much of liberty—I long far more to be in perfect subjection to the Lord my God. Oh, how I wish for a Master, a Dictator, a Director! Oh, that my Lord would take the reins and bring my every thought into captivity to His own will, henceforth and forever!

What a heavenly content I feel in yielding myself to the sacred Trinity! The God who made us may most fitly be called upon to govern us. When we recognize the glory of the whole Godhead we perceive the perfect suitability of such direction as will come from the Three in One God. Albeit that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in this verse by name, He is mentioned by His operations, for it is the Spirit of God that deals with the hearts of Believers. I take rare pleasure in our text, because we have the blessed Trinity in unity in these few words, “The Lord”—that is, the Holy Spirit who dwells within Believers—“direct your hearts into the love of God (by whom I understand the Father) and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

May the Trinity in Unity work with us and fulfill in each of us this prayer of the Apostle that our hearts may be directed into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ! Paul would have his Thessalonian friends advance in a straight line. Our heart is to be as a vessel that is not left to beat about, nor to come into harbor by a circuitous route, but is steered directly into the fair haven. May the Spirit of God take us and give us a straight tendency towards the holiest things and then at once bring us into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ.

But here we must do a little translating or interpreting. Observe in the Revised Version a difference of translation. There we read “into the patience of Christ.” This is a great improvement upon our former translation. But, although it is accurate, it is not complete—it does not take up the whole of the meaning. In our Authorized Version we have “the patient waiting for Christ,” but in its margin we find “into the patience of Christ”—showing that the earlier translators felt that “the patience of Christ” would be a good translation. And yet, after considering it in all its bearings, they thought that Paul did not quite mean the patience of Christ, but that he meant a patience which we exert towards Christ.

Is there not weight in this? Does not the context support it? As the love into which we are to be directed is love to God, so the patience into which we are to be directed must be a patience towards Christ. Our grand old translators expressed this Truth by language which may be inaccurate as mere wordings, but it is deeply correct as to its sense. Surely Paul did mean “the patience towards Christ which manifests itself in the patient waiting for Christ.” If you consider all this you will see that we have no infant-class lesson in the text before us! Here are nuts for young men who have cut their wisdom-teeth. May the good Spirit help us to reach the kernels.

Having turned the text over many times, I thought that we might be able to gather up a considerable amount of its real meaning if we thought of it thus—first, here are two precious things for us to enter into—the love of God and the patience of Christ. And, secondly, here are two eminent virtues to be acquired by us—the love of God, that is, love to God and the patience of Christ—the patient waiting for Christ.

I. To begin, then, here are TWO PRECIOUS THINGS FOR US TO ENTER INTO. We cannot enter into them except as the Lord directs our hearts. There is a straight entrance into them but we do not readily find it. It needs the Holy Spirit to direct our feet along the narrow way which leads to this great blessedness.

The first precious thing which we are to enter is the love of God. Beloved, we know the love of God in various ways. Many know it by having heard of it, even as a blind man may thus know the charms of an Alpine landscape. Poor knowledge this! Others of us have tasted of the love of God, have talked about the love of God, have prayed and have sung concerning the love of God. All very well, but Paul meant a dove of a brighter feather. To be directed into the love of God is quite another thing from all that we can be told of it. A fair garden is before us. We look over the wall and are even allowed to stand at the door while one hands out to us baskets of golden apples. This is very delightful. Who would not be glad to come so near as this to the garden of heavenly delights?

Yet it is something more to be shown the door, to have the latch lifted, to see the gateway opened and to be gently directed into the Paradise of God. This is what is wanted—that we may be directed *into* the love of God. Oh, that we may feel something of it while we meditate upon it! Beloved, we come, when we are taught of the Spirit of God, to enter into the love of God by seeing its central importance. We see that the love of God is the source and center, fountain and foundation of all our salvation, and of all else that we receive from God.

At first we are much taken up with pardoning Grace. We are largely engrossed with those royal robes of righteousness with which our nakedness is covered. We are delighted with the viands of the marriage banquet—we eat the fat and we drink the sweet. What else would you expect from starving souls admitted to the abundant supplies of heavenly Grace? Afterwards we begin more distinctly to think of the love that spread the feast, the love that provided the raiment, the love that invited us to the banquet and gently led us to take our place in it. This does not always come at first.

But I pray that none of us may be long receiving the gifts of love without kissing the hand of love. That none of us may be content to have had much forgiven without coming and washing the feet of our forgiving Lord with our tears and declaring our deep and true love to Him. O saved soul, may the Lord fill you with personal love to that personal Savior through whom all blessings come to you! Remember, you have all good things because God loves you! Remember that every cake of the heavenly manna, every cup of the living water comes to you because of His great love wherewith He loved you. This will put a sweetness into what you receive even greater than that which is there intrinsically, sweet though God's mercies are in their own nature and quality. Oh, to enter into God's love by perceiving it to be the well-head of every stream of mercy by which we are refreshed!

If we further enter into the love of God, we see its immeasurable greatness. There is a little word which you have often heard, which I beg to bring before you again—that little word “so.” “God *so* loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Come, you surveyors, bring your chains and try to make a survey of this word “so.” No, that is not enough. Come here, you that make our national surveys and lay down charts for all nations. Come, you who map the sea and land and make a chart of this word “so.”

No, I must go further. Come here, you astronomers, that with your optic glasses spy out spaces before which imagination staggers, come here and encounter calculations worthy of all your powers! When you have measured between the horns of space, here is a task that will defy you—“God *so* loved the world.” If you enter into that you will know that all this love is to you—that while Jehovah loves the world, yet He loves you as much as if there were nobody else in all the world to love. God can pour the infinite love of His heart upon one object and yet, for all that, can love ten thousand times ten thousand of His creatures just as much. O Heir of God, your store of love is not diminished because the innumerable company of your Brethren share it with you! Your Father loves each child as if He had no other. Peer into this abyss of love. Plunge into this sea. Dive into this depth unsearchable. Oh, that God might direct you into the immeasurable greatness of this love!

Neither be you afraid to enter into this love by remembering its antiquity. Some fight the great Truth of the eternal electing love of God. But to me it is as wafers made with honey. What music lies in that sentence—“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love!” When this great world, the sun, and moon and stars, had not yet flashed the morning of their little day, the Lord Jehovah loved His people with an everlasting love. In the Divine purposes, which were not of yesterday, nor even of that date of which Scripture speaks as “In the beginning”—when the Lord created the heavens and the earth—God loved His own people.

He had chosen you, thought of you, provided for you and made ten thousand forecasts of loving kindness towards you before the earth was. Beloved Believer, you were engraved on the hands of Christ even then. Oh that the Lord would direct you into the antiquity of His love. It shall make you greatly prize that love to think that it had no beginning and shall never, never have an end.

Again—I pray that we may be directed into the love of God as to its infallible constancy. The unchangeable Jehovah never ceases to love His people. It would be a wretched business to be directed into the love of God only to find it a thing of the past. O believing Soul, you have not to deal with things which once were gems of the mine but now are dreams of the night. Oh, no! The love of God abides forever the same. When you are in darkness the Lord still sees you with an eye of love—

***“He saw you ruined in the Fall,
Yet loved you notwithstanding all.”***

When you were without strength, “in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Since you have known Him He has never varied in His love. When you have grown cold He has loved you. When you have grown cruel He has loved you. You have grievously provoked Him till He has taken down His rod and made you smart. But He has loved you in the smiting. With God there is as much love in chastening as in caressing. He never abates in fervor towards His ancient

friends. Has He not said, “I am the Lord. I change not. Therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed”? I pray the Lord to direct us into the immutability of His Divine love, for this is a great medicine in the day of soul-trouble.

When conscious of imperfection, when darkened by the shadow of a great fault, when trembling under apprehension of wrath it draws you back again if you can feel, “Still my Father is my Father, still will He receive His wandering child and press His prodigal to His bosom and rejoice over me and say, ‘This My son was dead and is alive again.’ ” O Child of God, your questionings of Divine love are grievous to your God. But if you can learn this Truth and be led into it—that He loves you evermore the same—it will help you right graciously.

This love we ought to know and if the Lord will lead us into it we shall know that it is omnipresent. I mean by this, that whatever condition we may be in, the Lord is still active in love towards us. You are going across the sea to a far country but your Father’s love will be as near you on the blue wave as on the greensward of Old England. You have come out tonight alone—time was when you did come to the House of God in company. But it may be that graves and deserts furnish sad reasons for your present solitude. Still, you are not alone, your Father’s love is with you.

You are tonight, perhaps, in a very strange part of your spiritual experience—you have not gone this way before. But the road is not new to eternal love. Go where you may, the air is still about you—go where you may, your Father’s love is all around you. Higher than your soaring, deeper than your sinking is all-surrounding love. You are going home, perhaps, to a bed from which you shall not rise for months. You have no apprehension just now of what lies before you in the immediate future. It is as well you should not know. I should be slow to lift the curtain of merciful concealment even if it were in my power to do so. There is no necessity to know details when one or two grand facts provide for all contingencies.

Trouble not yourself about the morrow. If you are to be sick or if you are to die, your Father’s love will be with you still. Therefore go on and fear not. He cannot, will not, turn away from you. An omnipresent God means omnipresent love and omnipotence goes hand-in-hand with omnipresence. The Lord will show Himself strong on the behalf of them that trust Him. His love, which never fails, is attended by a power that faints not, nor is weary. Oh, may the Lord lead you into such love as this! May the Holy Spirit lead you into the innermost secret of this joy of joys, this bliss unspeakable.

And I would also wish that you may be directed into the love of God as to its entire agreement with His justice, His holiness, His spotless purity. I firmly believe that God loves sinners but I am equally sure that He hates sin. I do believe that He delights in mercy but I am equally clear that He never dishonors His justice, nor frustrates the sternest threat of His Law. It is our joy that a holy God loves us and does not find it needful to stain His holiness to save the unclean. We are loved by one so just, so righteous that He could not pardon us without atonement. Even today He will never spare our sins but He will drive the love of them out of us by chastisement, even as He has washed the guilt of them away by the precious blood of His dear Son.

O Beloved, we have a holy God who is determined to make us holy. He would have us love our wives. And he sets before us a holy model—“Even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.” All true love goes towards purification. And the true love of God goes that way with an invincible current that can never be turned aside. O Believer, your God loves you so well that He will not let a darling sin stay in your heart. He loves you so strongly that He will not spare any iniquity in you. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth. Therefore I will punish you for your iniquities.” Out of His pure love He will chasten and refine till He has made us pure and able to abide in fellowship with His perfect nature.

I have thus spoken a little upon a vast theme. I fear it will seem to you mere surface-work. And yet I pray that it may lead you to deep knowledge of Divine things so that you may apprehend God’s love as yours. And that you may feel the power, the unction, the savor which come out of His love. I pray this knowledge, by His Grace, will make your heart as sweet and aromatic as a chamber in which a box of precious ointment has been broken. Oh, that you might be led into the innermost secret of the Lord’s love till it shall saturate you, influence you, take possession of you, carry you away! The Lord direct you into the love of God.

The second part of the prayer upon which we shall have to dwell is, “The Lord direct your hearts into the patience of Christ.” Now, Beloved, I have another great sea before me, and who am I that I should act as your convoy over this main

ocean? Here I am lost. I cannot take my bearings. I am a lone speck upon the infinite. I will imitate the wise Apostle and pray, “The Lord direct your hearts into the patience of Christ.”

What a patience that was which Jesus exhibited for us in our redemption! To come from Heaven to earth, to dwell in poverty and neglect and find no room even in the inn! Admire the patience of Bethlehem. To hold His tongue for thirty years—who shall estimate the wonderful patience of Nazareth and the carpenter’s shop! When He spoke, to be despised and rejected of men. What patience for Him whom Cherubim obey! Oh, the patience of the Christ to be tempted of the devil! One can hardly tell what patience Christ must have had to let the devil come within ten thousand miles of him, for He was able to keep him far down in the abyss below His feet.

There is not much in a patience which cannot help itself. But you well know that all the while Christ could have conquered all foes, chased away all suffering and kept off all temptation. But for our sakes, as Captain of our salvation, that He might be made perfect through suffering, His patience had its perfect work, right on to Gethsemane. Do you need that I tell you this? Golgotha, with all its woes, its “lama Sabacthani,” its abysmal griefs—do I need remind you of the patience of Christ for us when the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all? Patient as a lamb, He opened not His mouth but stood in omnipotence of patience, all-sufficient to endure. You have heard of the patience of Job but you have need to enter into the patience of Jesus.

Oh, the patience within Christ Himself! God never seems so like a God as when He divinely rules Himself. I can understand His shaking earth and Heaven with His Word. But that He should possess His own soul in patience is far more incomprehensible. Marvel that omnipotent love should restrain omnipotence itself. In the life and death of our Lord Jesus we see almighty patience. He was very sensitive—very sensitive of sin, very sensitive of unkindness, and yet, with all that sensitiveness He showed no petulance but bore Himself in all the calm grandeur of Godhead. He was not quick to resent an ill but He was patient to the uttermost. As I have said before, there went with His sensitiveness the power at any time to avenge Himself and deliver Himself but He would not use it.

Legions of angels would have been glad to come to His rescue but He bowed alone in the garden and gave Himself up to the betrayer without a word. And all the while He was most tender and graciously considerate of everybody but Himself. He spoke burning words sometimes—His mouth could be like the red lips of a volcano as He poured out the burning lava of denunciation upon “scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.” But the resentment was never aroused by any injury done to Himself. When He looked that way it was always gentleness—He cried, “Father, forgive them. For they know not what they do.” Oh, the wondrous patience of Heaven’s own Christ!

Enter into His patience *with* us as well as *for* us. How He put up with each one of us when we would not come to Him! How He wept over us when we neglected Him! How He drew us with constancy of love when we tugged against the cords! And when we came to Him and since we have been with Him, what patience He has had with our ill manners! If I had been Christ, I would have discharged such a servant as I have been long ago. Often have I gone to His feet and cried, “Dismiss me not Your service, Lord.” I know how justly He might have stripped His livery from my back. But He has not done so. Have you not often wondered that He should still love you? He is affianced to you and He hates divorce.

But is it not marvelous that He keeps His betrothal with you and will do so, though you have often defiled yourself and forgotten Him? Blessed fact, the ring is on His finger rather than on yours and the marriage is as sure as His love. He will present you unto Himself, “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” one of these days. But oh, His patience with each one of us! How He has put up with our unbelief, our mistrust, our hard hearts, our indifference, our strange ways! Never lover so kind as He! On our part never return so unworthy. Blessed be the patience of our Best Beloved!

Now, Beloved, what is wanted is that we be directed into this patience of Christ. The choicest saints in different ages of the world have studied most the passion of our Lord. And although nowadays we hear from the wise men that it is sensuous to talk about the Cross and the five wounds and so forth, for my part I feel that no contemplation ever does me so much real benefit as that which brings me very near my bleeding Lord. The Cross for me! The Cross for me! Here is doctrine humbling, softening, melting, elevating, sanctifying. Here is Truth that is of Heaven and yet comes down to earth—love that lifts me away from earth even to the seventh Heaven.

Have you ever read the words of holy Bernard, when his soul was all on fire with love of that dear name of which he so sweetly sang—

*“Jesus the very thought of You
With sweetness fills my breast”?*

Why, Bernard is poet, philosopher and Divine, and yet a child in love. Have you studied Rutherford’s letters and the wondrous things which he says about his own dear Lord? For an hour at Glory’s gate commend me to heavenly Master Rutherford. Have you ever held fellowship with George Herbert, that saintly songster? Hear him as he cries—

*“How sweetly does my Master sound! My Master!
As ambergris leaves a rich scent
Unto the taster,
So do these words a sweet content,
An oriental fragrance, my Master!”*

O Friends, I can wish you no greater blessing than to be directed into these two things—the love of God and the patience of your Savior. Enter both at the same time. You cannot divide them—why should you? The love of God shines best in the patience of the Savior. And what is the patience of Christ but the love of the Father? “What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” May the Lord lead us into both of them at this hour and continue upon us the heavenly process all the rest of our lives, in all experiences of sorrow and of rapture and in all moods and growths of our spirit!

II. But now I must ask your attention for the few minutes that remain to me to what is, perhaps, still the real gist of the text—HERE ARE TWO EMINENT VIRTUES TO BE ACQUIRED.

“The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.” Beloved, let the love of God to you flow into your hearts and abide there till it settles down and bears on its surface the cream of love to God, yielded by your own heart. The only way to love God is to let God’s love to you dwell in your soul till it transforms your soul into itself. Love *to* God grows out of the love *of* God.

Well, now, concerning love *to* God—if you receive it fully into your souls it will nourish the contemplative life. You will want to be alone. You will prefer to sit silently at Jesus’ feet while others wrangle over the little politics of the house. You will give up being busy-bodies, talking in six peoples’ houses in an hour—quietude will charm you. You will love no company so much as the society of Him who is the Best and the Most. To be with God in quiet will be your highest enjoyment. You will not say, as some do, “I must have recreation.”

Contemplation of God is recreation to the child of God. It creates the soul anew. And is not this the truest recreation? Whenever God’s creation in us seems to have grown a little dim, love to God will gender and nourish the contemplative life and so make us come forth as new creatures, fresh from our Maker’s holy hand.

It will also animate the active life if you love God. You will feel that you must yield fruit unto your Lord. Your soul, when full of the love of God, will cry, “I must go after the wanderer. I must care for the poor. I must teach the ignorant.” You cannot love God and be lazy. Love to God will stir you up. Contemplation teaches you to sit still and this is no trifling lesson. But after sitting still, you rise with greater energy to go about the one thing needful, namely, the service of your Lord’s love.

Love to God will also arouse enthusiasm. We want more persons in the Church who will be a little daring—rash men and women who will do things which nobody else would think of doing, such as will make their prudent friends hold up their hands and say, “How could you? If you had consulted with me, I could have given you many a wise hint as to how it ought to have been done.” This has been my lot of late. I have been surfeited with notions as to how I should have acted. Yes, my Friend, I know you of old. You have wisdom at your fingers’ ends. But let me quietly whisper that you would have done nothing at all. You would have been too anxious to save yourself from trouble.

It is an easy thing to tell a man how he ought to have done it. And yet that man, perhaps, may be suffering intensely for having done bravely a well-meant deed. Instead of your showing sympathy with him, you treat him to the remark, “It might have been done better in another way.” There was never a child that was near drowning but what the man that plunged in and drew him out of the river ought to have done it in a better way. He wetted himself too much. He waited too long. Or he handled the drowning one too roughly. Alas, for silly criticisms of gracious deeds!

If you come to love God with all consuming zeal you will not be hindered by criticisms. You will testify for Jesus freely, because you cannot help yourself. It has to be done—somebody has to sacrifice himself to do it and you say to

yourself, “Here am I, Lord, send me. At every risk or hazard, send me. For Your dear love’s sake I count it joy to suffer shame or loss. I count it life to suffer death that I may honor You.” Love to God will arouse enthusiasm.

It will also stimulate holy desire. They that love God can never have enough of Him—certainly never too much. Sometimes they are found pining after Him. When we love the Lord, we chide the laggard hours which keep us from His coming. Time has not wings enough—

*“My heart is with Him on His Throne,
And ill can brook delay,
Each moment listening for the voice,
‘Rise up and come away.’”*

A heavenly love-sickness sometimes makes God’s handmaids swoon. For they long to see the Beloved face to face and to be like Him and to be with Him where He is. The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God in some such fashion as this. For it will make you sit loose by all things here below.

Do you ever feel that your wings are growing? Do you ever sigh, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest”? And this love, better still, will transform the character. It is wonderful what a difference love makes in the person that is possessed with it. A poor timid hen that will fly away from every passerby loves its offspring and when it has its chicks about it, it will fight like a very lion for its young. And when the love of Christ comes into a timid Believer, how it changes him! It takes the love of sin away and implants a sublime nature.

Only God knows what a mortal man can yet become. Of women sunken in sin, what saints the Lord has made when He has filled them with His love! When the sun shines on a bit of glass bottle far away it flashes like a diamond. A little fleecy vapor in the sky rivals an angel’s wing when the sun pours itself upon it. Our Lord can put so much of Himself, by means of His love, into the hearts of His people that they may be mistaken for Himself. John made a blunder in Heaven and fell at the feet of one of his Brethren, the Prophets—for he had come to be so much like His Lord that John could hardly tell the one from the other. Had he forgotten that word, “We shall be like He. For we shall see Him as He is”? It does not yet appear what we shall be but love is the transfiguring power in the hand of the Holy Spirit. If the heart is directed into the love of Christ, it is on the highway to holiness.

Lastly—I am sorry that time will fly so fast just now—we want our hearts to be directed into patience towards Christ. What a subject is this! Beloved, if our heart is directed into patience towards Christ we shall suffer in patience for our Lord’s sake and we shall not complain. Those about us will say, “It is wonderful how resigned he seems.” Or, “How gladly she bears grief for love of Christ!” And if it is the suffering of reproach and scorn for Jesus’ sake, if we are directed into the patience of Christ, it will not seem to be any trouble at all. We shall bear it calmly and in our hearts we shall laugh at those who laugh at us for Jesus’ sake.

Yet it is not all patience of suffering that we want. We want the patience of *forbearing*. We must learn not to answer those who blaspheme. “Bear and forbear and be silent.” Chew the cud in peace. Put up with much. When reviled, revile not again. The Lord direct your hearts into the patience of Christ.

We shall also want the patience of working—working on when nothing comes of it—pleading on with souls that are not converted. Preaching when preaching seems to have no effect—teaching when the children do not care to learn. We need the patience of Christ who set His face like a flint and would accomplish His work, cost what it may. He never turned aside from it for a moment. The Lord direct our hearts into patient working.

Then there is the patience of watching in prayer—not giving it up because you have not received an answer. What? Did a friend say she had prayed for seventeen years for a certain mercy and now meant to ask it no more? Sister, make it eighteen years and when you have got to the end of eighteen make it nineteen. May the Lord direct our hearts into the patience of Christ in prayer! We long kept Him waiting—we need not complain if He makes us tarry at His leisure. Still believe. Still hope. Still wrestle, until the break of day.

Pray for the patience of waiting His will, saying, “Let Him do what seems Him good.” Though it be for months, for years, wait on. Christ is glorified by our patience. Depend on it, the best way in which certain of us can extol Him is by letting Him have His way with us. Even though He plunge me into seven boiling caldrons one after the other, I will say—Let Him do what He wills with His own and I am His own. I am sure that He does not make the furnace one degree too hot. If He means to give His servant ten troubles, let His heavy hand fall even to the tenth, if so He pleases.

We want to be directed into patience towards Christ and especially in patience in waiting for His coming. That, no doubt, is very justly inferred and so it is put in our translation very prominently—"Patient waiting for Christ." He will come, Brothers. He will come, Sisters. It is true the interpreters of the Book of Revelation told us that He was to come three hundred years ago and there are thousands upon thousands of books in the British Museum which were very dogmatic upon this point and yet they have all been disproved by the lapse of time.

Men were as sure as sure could be that Christ would come just then. And He did not, for He is bound by His Word—not by their interpretation of it. He will come at the appointed hour. To the jots and tittles, God's Word will stand. He will come to the tick of the clock. We know not when. We need not ask. But let us wait.

Just now some of you may be, as I am, troubled because the Lord does not yet appear to vindicate His cause. And there is noise and triumph among the priests of Baal. The Lord direct our hearts into the patience of Christ. It is all right. Clouds gather. The darkness becomes more dense. The thunder rolls, friends flee in confusion. What next? Well, perhaps before we have hardly time for dread, silver drops of gracious rain may fall and the sun may break through the clouds and we may say to ourselves, "Who would have thought it?"—

*"You fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head."*

May the Lord direct each one of us into the patient waiting for Christ! I am sorry, very sorry, that there are persons here to whom all this must seem a strange lot of talk. They know nothing about it. Dear Souls, you cannot at present know anything about it. You must first be born again. A total change of heart must come over you before you can enter into the love of God or the patience of Christ. May that change take place tonight, before you go to sleep!

If the Lord shall lead you to seek His face, this is the way to seek it—trust His dear Son. Lifted on the Cross is Jesus Christ, the great Propitiation for sin. Look to Him and looking alone to Him, you shall be saved. He will give you the new heart and the right spirit with which you shall be enabled to enter into the love of God and the patience of Christ. The Lord direct you at this very hour, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307