

CHRIST'S TESTIMONY RECEIVED

NO. 2158

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 10, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true."
 John 3:33.*

IN opening this discourse I would call your attention to the different statistics given by John's disciples and by John himself. In the 26th verse, the disciples say, "All men come to Him"—that is their judgment of how the ministry of Jesus was succeeding. John, in the 32nd verse, said, "And no man receives His testimony." If we view them as both correct, then the disciples looked at outward appearances and in their view the cause of Jesus seemed to be prospering to an overwhelming degree—"All men come to Him." But John looked below the surface, at the true *spiritual* results and his verdict was, "And no man receives His testimony."

Be very doubtful of *statistics*—they depend very much upon the person compiling them. Some, with sanguine spirit, say everything that is delightful and encouraging. Others, with more serious and with, perhaps, more severe judgment, say much that is depressing. I am inclined to take both these opinions with a grain of salt. Each one was intended for truth, but neither of them was exact. We often hear persons say that there are crowds attending such a ministry, the people block up the gangways, they fill every seat and the preacher is very useful for "all men come to him." This may be true and yet there may be few conversions and little spiritual results so that another may as truly say, "No man receives his testimony."

Ah, dear Friends, we can never be satisfied with a numerous congregation—we want souls to receive the testimony of Christ! Even though we may thank God that all sorts and conditions of men lend willing ears to our teaching, yet only one note sounds the knell of our joy! If we hear it said, "No man receives His testimony," we are sad at heart. Forgetting what the disciples reported, let us now look at what John said, "No man receives His testimony." He did not mean, literally, that no one received the Truth of God, for his next word was, "He that has received His testimony." He meant that *comparatively* none received it. Compared with the crowds who came to Him, compared with the nation of Israel, compared with the human race, those who received Christ's testimony were so few that his sadness made him call them *none*.

John, though he went a little below the mark, was not far from the truth when he said, "No man receives His testimony." In these profound and wordy days, this is called the "pessimist" view of things. However, if it were not precisely the truth, it was mournfully near it. Today, Christ is preached and many will come to hear about Him but, alas, few receive the Gospel into their hearts! Go through these crowded streets and mark how few receive the sacred testimony! Go into our provincial towns and country villages and note how few receive the Truth as it is in Jesus. When you look at the denominational rolls at the end of the year, what small additions have been made! I think one section of the Church reports one addition for the year. If any community reports as high as three or four per cent, people think wonders are accomplished!

The world can never be converted at the rate at which we are now going, for the increase of population is greater than the increase of the Churches. We are relatively further back than we were. There are more Christians, but there are fewer Christians in proportion to the population! There is much reason for crying earnestly to God to work more mightily upon the hearts of men. How glad was John to think that some had received Christ's testimony! How hungry he was that there should be more! In what earnest tones does he set forth his Lord's claims in the verses around our text! He would have men go beyond himself and find Christ and receive *His* testimony. This is how the case stands. Men had wandered far from God. God desired that men should come back to Him and therefore He sent a witness to men to tell them of His kindly feelings towards them and to show in His own Person, teaching, life and death how really and truly God desired that men should be at peace with Him.

The only-begotten Son was born into our world and took our Nature, that He might be a witness to the people of the Character of God towards us, that we, knowing how God felt, might be led to cry, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord." He would have us touched with tender relentings when we discover the greatness of the love and mercy of God towards us by seeing Him seeking and saving the lost in the Person of His only-begotten Son. Of that subject I am going to speak this morning, keeping as closely as I can to the text and crying to the Holy Spirit for aid.

First, *observe the Testifier* carefully. Look at Him and see who it is that has come to reveal the Father unto us. Secondly, *hearken to His testimony*. What is it? Know it and believe it. Thirdly, *note the rejecters*—"No man receives His testimony." How sad is the fact! Then, coming closer, still, to the text, *commune with those who do receive His Heaven-given testimony*. Of these it is said that they have set to their seal that God is true.

I. First, let us OBSERVE THE TESTIFIER. Jesus, our Lord, as a Witness, is so wrapped up with the testimony which He bears, that you have to know Him before you can understand His witness—in fact, to receive *Him* is the same thing as to receive His testimony! If we have received Christ as what He is, we have received the testimony which He came to bear. Who is this Testifier? This Witness? We answer that, according to the context, it is "*He that comes from above.*" To save us there has not come to us a man whose origin was at his birth, but One who existed long before and descended from above! It is true that Jesus was born at Bethlehem, but it is equally true that He had a preexistence from before all worlds! The Word was from the beginning with God—"without Him was not anything made that was made."

He was God as truly before He became Man as ever He was afterwards. He that has come to save us has, in the highest sense, come from above. Let this kindle hope in the sinner's mind and let it draw forth faith in the Divine Ambassador. One has come from the highest heavens to lift those up, who, apart from Him must have sunk into the lowest Hell. Nearly 1,900 years have passed since He came and trod the roughest ways of this world and lived, sorrowed and suffered here below. From the hills of Heaven He came to this land of sin that He might lift us up and give us a Divine inheritance.

He was one of the very highest Character. Observe—"He that comes from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth: He that comes from Heaven is above all." All other messengers that God has sent have had much earthliness about them and, assuredly, we who are now His messengers have much of it. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels," but there was nothing in our Lord Jesus that could debase the Messenger. He was pure, perfect, heavenly—and though He bore our Nature, yet He shared not our sinfulness. And though He spoke in our tongue and brought down the mysteries of Heaven to our comprehension, yet still He spoke them in a heavenly style—a style to which a mere man could never have reached!

Moses wrote as a man and the Spirit of God only revealed Truth measurably by him. But our Lord Jesus Christ was full of Grace and Truth and He spoke with a Manhood united to Godhead, having the Spirit without measure. In all Jesus said there was a fullness, a power, a reality which mere men were not capable of containing. He was above all and others derived their authority from Him, "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Will you not listen to one so supreme? "God, who at sundry times and in different manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Surely it shall go ill with him that refuses such a Messenger!

As He was above all in Character, *so was He above all in rank*. None can be compared with Him for dignity—the angels may be peers of the heavenly realm, but He is the Crown Prince of the blood-royal of eternity! He is God over all, before whom cherubim and seraphim veil their faces. He deigned to become subject to parents, but He was, none the less, above all—Lord, Ruler, Head over all things! Though He stooped to seek and save the lost, He was still higher than the highest! Though He laid His Glory by, that He might wash His disciples' feet—yes, and wash our sins away in His own blood—yet He was still Master and Lord. "See that you refuse not Him that speaks. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaks from Heaven."

I cannot too highly speak of the Glory and honor and majesty which belong to our Emmanuel! If I had the tongue of men and of angels I could not sufficiently extol Him. He is the First-Born of every creature, yes, the Creator Himself! King of kings and Lord of lords is He and it is through so glorious a Person as this that God has sent to us a message of peace. Our ambassador is of a rank above all ranks that the Lord may show how highly He esteems His chosen of the race of man. We are greatly honored by dealing with so august a Messenger. Come, you willing hearts, and gladly receive the testimony of Him who is above all!

We are further told by John a very important fact which ought to weigh with every thoughtful mind. *The testimony of Jesus is Personal testimony*—"what He has seen and heard, that He testifies." The Prophets received their prophecies from the Holy Spirit who spoke to them of things which they had not seen. Sometimes they did not even understand what they wrote. They did not see those things of which they wrote for it is written that "many Prophets and kings have desired to see those things, but have not seen them." These things even angels desired to look into, but they were too mysterious for them. Our Lord Jesus Christ knows heavenly things of His own proper knowledge, for He has ever dwelt in the bosom of the Father. He knows the mind of God, for He is God. The secret intent and purpose of the Most High God are with His Son Jesus.

All that He reveals to men of the mercy of God He has Himself seen and heard. He was an eye and ear witness of the mind and will of Jehovah. Christ's teaching is not second-hand—"No man knows the Father, save the Son." Who taught Him wisdom? From where has this Man knowledge? From Himself, from His own eternal experience—as dwelling with God before all worlds He speaks to us. Do you want a better Messenger, my Hearers? How can the Lord serve you better than by sending One who knows what He declares—knows it by having heard and seen and handled it? With the God who made the heavens and fashioned the earth He ever dwelt, as One brought up with Him and He was daily His delight. The Lord God has sent as Ambassador to you One whom He "possessed in the beginning of His way, before His works of old." What more can you desire?

And then, further, the Baptist goes on to tell us that *the testimony of Jesus is identical with the Words of God Himself*. "He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that Christ is true." Do you think I am reading amiss? The Scripture says, "that God is true." The testimony of Jesus and the testimony of God are one—and when you believe Christ Jesus, you believe God! Further on we read, "for He whom God has sent speaks the Words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him." If you deny what Christ says, you make God a liar, for you have not believed His testimony concerning His Son. So fully is the witness of Jesus backed up and supported by the Words of God—so fully does Jesus represent the purpose and the mind of the Father—that to doubt Him is to doubt the Eternal God!

Now, if you have a plan of salvation put before you by God's Messenger—which is most assuredly the very mind of God Himself—will you reject it? Will you fly in the face of God by rejecting salvation which comes stamped in every letter of it with Divine authority? I pray you, my Hearers, if you have not yet believed in Jesus, remain no longer in unbelief of Him, for it is unbelief of the Lord God, unbelief of the Triune Jehovah who made you and who keeps the breath in your nostrils! See what a Messenger we have, then, who speaks not His own words, but the words of Him that sent Him. Those words are full of Grace and Truth for they are full of God.

Read a little further on, in the next verse and you will see that this Messenger whom God has sent is One *in high esteem with God*. "The Father loves the Son." To show His great love of Him, He "has given all things into His hands." You have not, now, to deal with God out of Christ, for all things are now put under the mediatorial government of the Son of God. Christ Jesus, the Mediator between God and men, has all things in His power—the government is upon His shoulder. It has pleased the Father to put all things under the Man Christ Jesus—

*"Life, death, and Hell,
And worlds unknown
Hung on His sacred will."*

Jesus is absolute Master of all things. Angels fly and devils tremble at His nod and all the wheels of Providence revolve in perfect order according to His will. If you listen to His testimony of Grace, remember that He has all power to back it up and make it true to you. "He is able to save to the uttermost." All power is given unto Him in Heaven and in earth. God has put all things under His feet—and He who is thus the Lord of All—has come to treat with you concerning reconciliation. Turn not on your heels, you busy men! Say not that you have no time to attend to Him! You must attend to One whose kingdom rules over all. Dare you treat Him with indifference? Will not the awe of His majesty constrain you to hearken to His voice?

Once more only. Concerning this Testifier, we learn that *He is the Lord and Giver of life* and if we will but accept His testimony we shall live thereby. He has life in Himself and He has power to quicken whomever He will. "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life." And to make the matter still more pressing, the word of warning is added, "He that believes not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abides on him." God can never be pleased with a person who

gives the lie to His own Son. He has, in boundless pity, sent His Son, His only-begotten Son, to live and die that men might be saved—how shall He endure to see Him rejected? “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

And if this Son of His love is refused. If the guilty insult the Father by rejecting the Son, what can remain but righteous wrath? If a deed of mercy, unspeakable, immeasurable, comes to be despised by you, then the anger must abide upon you. There is no hope for those who refuse Jesus. Flatter not yourselves that there is another way of escape, in some future state, for if there could have been another way, God would not have given up His Son to shame, suffering and death! Faith in Jesus is the only door of hope! Shut that upon yourselves and you shut yourselves in utter darkness, in helpless, hopeless misery! What can help you if the wrath of God abides on you? This must mean a misery unspeakable, without the slightest alleviation.

O my dear Hearers, I wish I had the power to set forth my Lord as the Witness! As I cannot do this as I would, I commend to you the passage of Scripture itself. The sentences are short, sharp, crisp, clear—and they show you who He is whom God has sent on the great errand of Divine love. Refuse Him not, I implore you!

II. Secondly, HEARKEN TO HIS TESTIMONY. What is the testimony of Jesus? What has the Christ to tell us concerning God? I will only use the three chapters which precede my text and I shall gather enough from them to give a fair outline of what Jesus tells us of the Father and His willingness to forgive and save. First, he tells us, *God has provided an Atonement*. Look at the 29th verse of the first chapter, where John says, “Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.” The very fact that the Son of God came here as Man to suffer for our sin proves that God has provided a great and all-sufficient Sacrifice.

God could not deal with a sinful world—it was too defiled with sin for Him to look upon it—but that sin of the world which prevented a holy God from dealing with a condemned race has been taken away by Jesus, so that now the Lord can visit man and favor him with the Gospel of peace and the work of salvation. This was necessary before a single individual could be saved. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” The death of Jesus has enabled God to commune with men. Oh, hear this! There is a Sacrifice for sin! My Hearers, believe it and make much of it. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin! Jesus has died and in that death He has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. All Believers are forgiven through His death. God is willing that you, believing in His dear Son, should be so forgiven as to be washed whiter than snow. That is Christ's testimony to you and he that receives it has set to his seal that God is true.

The next testimony of Jesus is that *the Lord has made a way of access between man and God*. Look at the 51st verse of the first chapter. He said to Nathanael, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter you shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” Jacob's ladder is not now before you as a dream, but as a reality. The Son of Man, the Incarnate God, God in Christ Jesus, is the way by which there can be commerce between man and God. We can go up to God and the angels of God, loaded with blessings, can come down to men. The gulf is bridged—a glorious stairway has been made across the dread abyss which separated guilty man from his offended God. Jesus Christ Himself, in His own Person, is that ladder and He bears witness thereof to you. Sin is put away and distance is removed.

What is the next part of His testimony? You will find it in the third chapter—*God is only to be approached in a spiritual way*. To come to God, “you must be born again.” That which is born of flesh is flesh and cannot commune with God, who is a Spirit. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit and can commune with the holy God and understand spiritual things. My Hearers, there is no coming to God by a priest of human consecration! There is no coming by outward ritual, form, or ceremony—“God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” You must have a spiritual Nature, that the Spirit of God may commune with you. Only by a spiritual Nature can you have communion with the great Invisible.

Your spirit can be in fellowship with God, the mighty Spirit, but what can you do till a spirit is created in you? This was our Lord's testimony to Nathanael and I suppose that, by some means, John the Baptist had heard of it. But whether he had or had not does not matter to my purpose at this time—it is certainly a part of the testimony of Jesus. Furthermore, our Lord bore testimony to the great fact that *God gives salvation to all Believers in Jesus* and to make that

very plain, He puts it thus—“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

You know the type. Bitten by the fiery serpents, the people looked to the bronze serpent and they were healed. Now, bitten by sin, you look to Him who was made sin for us and, looking to Him, your guilt passes away and the poison of your sinfulness meets its antidote. We look to Jesus and live! Our Lord bore witness to this with His own lips and then by the lips of His Apostles. He still cries, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth.” Yes, there is life in a look at the Crucified One! Believing is receiving. Accept Christ, whom God sends as a Messenger to you and in accepting Him you shall be saved.

Jesus also testified plainly that *from all who believe in Him the Lord has removed condemnation*. It is written, “He that believes on Him is not condemned.” He that believes is justified and, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Guilty and condemned as you may be at this hour, if you accept the Son of God to stand for you, you are not condemned! “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though by nature robed in rags, the Lord says, “Take away the filthy garments from him.” Your glorious challenge is, “who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died.”

Oh, this message of mercy from Jesus, is it not full and blessed? If I had the time I should like to have enlarged much upon the testimony of God in Christ Jesus, but here it means just this, that you, being guilty and condemned, can be justly forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus! You may be beloved of God because of His love to Jesus. You may be delivered from all the evil results of sin because of the death of the Well-Beloved. You can be saved! Yes, if you now believe in Christ Jesus, you are saved. All heavenly privileges are yours now—where you now sit—and shall be yours world without end. Glory be to God!

II. With great heaviness we have now to NOTICE THE REJECTERS—“No man receives His testimony.” You would have thought that the moment this testimony was delivered to the world every man would have hastened to hear it and would have believed it with joyful readiness! But alas, the very reverse happened! If I went to fish with such bait as this, I should expect to have a sea full of fish rushing towards me, but it was not so. Men, as a rule, will not accept this heavenly salvation—no man will receive it except moved by God the Holy Spirit. Why is this? In the case of many, *it is because they are earthly* and the message and the messenger are too heavenly for them.

They are earth-bound and earth-buried. They are so busy—how can they consider the grand fact that God has come down to save men? They will think of that great spiritual Truth of God one of these days when they have made sufficient money and can retire—when they have nothing better to do than to attend to the claims of God. God is second-rate, no, seventh-rate in their esteem! They are really so occupied and their thoughts are so taken up with daily cares of this life that God’s Grace must wait their convenience. I fear they will never be startled into thought until it is said of each one of them, “In Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” The rich man had kept his eyes downward upon his sumptuous fare and had never looked up to heavenly things—but the realities of eternity have awakened him. O God, grant that none of my hearers may keep their eyes down until they lift them up in Hell!

Some rejecters of the Word of our Lord, I have no doubt, were *too learned to believe in anything so simple* as the statement that God was among them in human form to live and die for men. Though this is, in very truth, the most sublime of all mysteries, yet human pride counts it a small matter. It is to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness. Men know so much that they will not know God! I am struck every day, when reviewing books of the present period, with how wise fools are nowadays. Pardon me. I will put it differently and say—how foolish the wise are nowadays. I mean the same thing whichever way I say it. They get a hold of the tail of a dead thing and they shout like men that find great spoil! Here is a great discovery—a discovery of nothing!

At one time they find Deuteronomy to be a fraud. Now there are two Isaiahs. Then the book of Ruth was written far down in the centuries after the exile. Jonah is a myth. Esther is a romance and so forth. Their criticisms are all false, as others of the same breed soon show. They are always finding some dead oat or other and setting it out on the table where the children’s bread ought to be. What mighty discoveries of man’s nests we have lived to see! Men of this nature will not receive the witness of Jesus—it is a pity that they should—He is honored by their rejection. You can scarcely read a book nowadays but you come across a bit of rotten stuff, the fondly-cherished nonsense of some writer who has a taste for that

which is far gone in decay. They will not believe God. How can they while they receive honor one of another, as learned critics?

It is today as it was in our Lord's time, "not many wise men after the flesh are called." Still have we to ask, "Where are the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?" Those who glory in fleshly wisdom cannot receive the testimony of the carpenter's Son—a testimony so plain that the poor and illiterate can understand it and enter into eternal life! I hope this will not be the case with any of the more cultured among *you*. Be willing to take Christ's yoke upon you and learn of Him.

Certain people did not receive the testimony of Jesus because they were too proud. Pedigree and privilege kept many away. Read this verse in the first chapter—"He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Why? Because they thought they were God's own already! Did they not wear a text of Scripture between their eyes? Had they not broad fringes of blue on their dress? Did they not tithe mint, anise, cumin and other pennyworths of herbs? Did they not fast thrice in the week and so on? What did *they* want with Jesus? Those who professed to belong to God and cried, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we," were too good to accept a Savior—too near to Heaven to need a Messenger from God.

But the real reason for rejecting the testimony of Jesus was this—*they were too evil to receive it.* Read verse 19—"Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." Ah, my unbelieving Hearers, if you were better men you would more readily accept the light of Christ! If men were not such sinners as they are, they would come to Him to learn the way of the Lord. Alas, the depth of man's guilt has hardened his heart and darkened his perceptions—and made him prefer darkness to light! Men do not see that they need deliverance—they hear music in the rattle of their chairs. May the Spirit of God come and convict men of sin—and when they are once convicted of it and foresee their doom, they will change their minds towards the Savior and be willing to hear the message of Divine Grace!

May God, of His boundless Grace, save every man and woman and child to whom this sermon shall come! [And may He be as merciful to those who read this in the 21ST Century!] I am greatly pleased to see so many of you present on such a wet and stormy day as this—I hope the Lord means to bless you now that you are here. I remember going to the house of God one morning when there were only a few persons able to reach the place, there being a heavy snowstorm at the time. That morning I found the Savior by looking to Him upon the Cross and now I look with great interest upon services which are held in rough weather. I hope that those who have had the determination to come are more than common hearers—I trust that they have hearts that the Lord God has touched.

I hope you have come here with a desire to find salvation and if so, may you find it in the Lord Jesus at once! O Lord, grant it, I beseech You! All the while, remember, these rejecters of Christ *were under the wrath of God.* What a terrible condition! I will not dwell upon the awful fact, but let a man only know the meaning of these words and he will tremble in his seat—"He that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him." O Souls, how can you bear it?

IV. We will conclude by speaking upon the fourth point. Let US COMMUNE WITH THOSE WHO RECEIVE CHRIST'S TESTIMONY. The text says, "He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true." To receive is, in still plainer Saxon, "to take in." There is here the idea of retaining as well as receiving. We take in the testimony of Jesus that it may abide in us. We hear what Jesus says and we answer to it, "Lord, I believe." Our word is, "Master, say on. Whatever You say, I believe." We take in all that Jesus witnesses and we hold to it. We believe and we keep on believing. We come to Jesus and we are always coming to Him.

Some people begin with believing in Jesus and then turn aside to believe in their own feelings, but you must not do so—you must believe and keep right on believing. The just shall live by faith. We receive Christ and keep on receiving Him. "He that receives His testimony." Do you refuse *anything* to which Jesus witnesses? This is evil! Receive His testimony with unquestioning faith. Some men will believe any monstrous assertion of scientists, or spiritualists, or rationalists—but they cannot believe the plain witness of the Lord Jesus Christ! The man who takes in the teaching of Jesus and keeps to it, he is the blessed man!

He takes in the testimony of Jesus for himself and receives it as his own possession. That Jesus saves from sin is true. That He saves me from sin is a more personal truth! Christ will save those who believe. This is good. But, "I believe and

therefore I am saved," is better. Personal appropriation is the best receiving! Accept the Truth of Jesus for your own soul—seize it by the grip of a personal faith and then you have it! You have seen a boy with a burning-glass—he concentrates all the rays of the sun so as to produce a fire. Even so, by faith, concentrate the testimony of Jesus upon your own case and you will soon feel a wonderful power working in your soul! He that receives the testimony of Jesus makes it his own, feeds on it and is saved thereby.

Receivers of Christ's testimony allow nothing to make them doubt what He has said. When the Believer is down in the dumps and is passing through a dark time, he says, "What Jesus has said is true for all this. He has told me that if I believe in Him I have eternal life and I have it, however gloomy things may appear. I have a sluggish liver and it makes me feel low and miserable, but I have eternal life! My wife is sick to death and I have buried child after child and lost friend after friend—but I have eternal life! God's waves and billows go over me, but I have eternal life, for He says it and I cannot doubt Him." It is a grand thing to have your confidence outside yourself! It is glorious to have it all in Christ!

As long as you keep your confidence in your own self it will be a very poor stay for you. There is a ship at sea and a foolish landsman feels very confident of the safety of the vessel because they have a big anchor on board. My dear Man, what is the good of that anchor while it is on board? It would rather tend to sink the ship by its weight than to be of service to it. "Oh," he says, "but it is one of the best Admiralty anchors and we are safe while that is on board!"

O simple Soul, an anchor is of no use while you can see it! Drop it down into the deep sea, out of sight, and then it will be of service. Hear the chain run out! Now the anchor is far down. It grips and holds the vessel. You must fix your confidence *within* the veil. Your anchorage of hope must be where mortal eyes can never see. Our rest lies in simply believing the Word of the Lord Jesus. I believe it though I do not feel it. I believe it though I cannot argue the matter out logically. I believe it because God says it to me through His great Witness, the Lord Jesus Christ. The foregoing will enable you to see the truth of the statement, "He that has received His testimony *has set to his seal that God is true.*"

In the olden time men did not often write their names because they could not write at all! Even kings set their seals because they could not give a signature. To this day, how often does it happen to me, as a trustee to a chapel or a school, to have a paper laid before me and I not only sign my name, but I put my finger on that red wafer which represents my seal and I say, "This is my act and deed"? When you believe in Jesus you have set your seal to the testimony of Jesus, which is the Revelation of the Lord. You have certified that you believe in God as true. What does that mean? It means not only that He has kept His promise as made to the fathers in the Old Testament and will keep it in Christ Jesus, but it means, also, that to you God is real. By faith in Jesus you have come to know the reality of God.

Before, you talked about an unknown God, but now you know Him and declare your faith in His reality and fidelity. Now you perceive substance and not shadow. Now you see mystery, but not myth. God is Truth and all that Jesus said of Him is Truth. He says, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life," and you find that God is true, for you live in newness of life! Jesus says, "He that believes on Him is not condemned," and you know it is so, for you enjoy a sense of pardoned sin! You have sealed the testimony of God by resting your own *soul* upon it. It seems a very joyful thing to me that I should be allowed to be a witness to the Truth of God. I feel honored by being allowed to subscribe my name to the testimony of Jesus.

Can you not do the same? Remember what it involves. You doubting Christians, what are you doing? You have already put your hand and seal to the promise of God and are you going to contradict your own signature and seal? When you first believed in Jesus you set to your seal that God is true. And now, because you have met with a little trouble, are you going to retract your witness? Do you fear that the Lord will not help you and save you? What are we to understand by that seal of yours? Is it, after all, untrue, or unreal? You know better! Shame on you for contradicting yourself! Remember, when you make God a liar you make yourself a liar, for you have already set your hand and seal to it that God is true—and seals and handwritings remain. You accepted the real Savior for your real sin and you believed in the real death of Christ for you—are you going to run back? Will you doubt your Lord after this?

God grant you may not, but, on the contrary, may you go on confirming the testimony of Jesus and setting it to your seal again and again that God is true! Give glory to God believing that what He has promised He is able also to perform. Never stagger at the promise through unbelief. All the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ Jesus to the glory of God by us—why, we set to our seal that God is true!

I have done, when I have said just this. Avoid, dear Hearers, anxiously, the double sin of unbelief. If you do not believe Jesus, you do not believe God. If you reject His Son, you reject Him. If you give the lie to the teaching of Christ, you give the lie to God. Flee from this deadly sin! Note well the simple matter upon which eternal life depends. "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life." He has it *now*. It is in his heart now and it is not for a time, for it is *everlasting* life. Note that as soon as a man believes God, he sets to his seal that God is true and then away flies all suspicion of his God!

Our sins are largely caused by our mistrust of God. You think that God denies you something that would be good for you and therefore you go and take it. You suspect God of being so cruel as to command you to do that which is to your injury and so you refuse to obey Him. Now if you believe that God is true, you will from now on give up what He bids you give up because you feel that it is well to do so. And you will act as He bids you because you are sure His command is wise and good. Between you and God there will be, from now on, a holy confidence—and what will that lead to? It will lead to holiness of life and earnest seeking to please God in whom you unreservedly believe.

You will love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, now that confidence is created. See what a change faith makes! Have you ever heard of a servant who believed hard things of her mistress? She thought her a tyrant and resolved that she would do nothing to please her. When she did her work, she did it very badly and thought it was quite good enough for such a creature as her mistress. But she heard something about her which entirely changed her opinion. Instead of thinking her a demon, she judged her to be little less than an angel! It might have seemed a small matter, but it was not so. She did her work zealously and gladly now that her suspicions were ended. Faith in her mistress affected her whole life.

So is it in spiritual things! Faith in Christ Jesus is the fountain of obedience, the ensign of a change of heart. God grant it to you all! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURES READ BEFORE SERMON—John 3:13-36.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—909, 249, 631.

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