

GIRDED FOR THE WORK

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A SERMON
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“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind.”
1 Peter 1:13.

WE noticed, in reading the chapter from which our text is taken, that the Apostle Peter first mentioned the glorious Doctrines of Grace and the marvelous benefits bestowed by God upon Believers and he, afterwards, drew from them a practical inference. “Therefore,” he said, “gird up the loins of your mind.” A Doctrine of God may become dangerous if it is not reduced to practice—and all the Doctrines of God’s Word may readily be turned to good and practical account if we are willing to so employ them. Those who regard a Doctrine of God simply as a subject for debate or an opportunity for displaying one’s argumentative powers, miss the mark altogether, for we are taught the Truths of God in order that they may lead us to holiness of life. This is the object of God in giving us more of His Light—that, by that Light, we may become more full of the Light of God and be the means of conveying His Light to others. Therefore, when your mind is instructed concerning some grand Truth of God, after you have sucked the honey and joy out of it, always say to yourself, “But what are the bearings of this Doctrine upon my life? How should it influence me? What would God have me do as the result of receiving such teaching as this?” From what Peter had already said, like a true logician, he draws a wise inference and says, “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

We shall only have time to consider the first few words of the Apostle’s exhortation, “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind.” And, concerning them, we will ask three questions, First, *What are we to do?* Secondly, *Why are we to do it?* And, thirdly, *How are we to do it?*

I. First, let us enquire, WHAT ARE WE TO DO? “Gird up the loins of your mind.”

The metaphor used by Peter is a very simple one. The garments of the Easterns, as you know, are not like ours, but are long flowing robes and, unless the raiment is well gird about the wearer, there is little or nothing that he can do in the way of active exercise. In a spiritual sense, the injunction, “Gird up the loins of your mind,” is a very proper one to be addressed to those of us who have various loose and flowing things which are almost as natural to us as garments are to the body. They must be gird about us very tightly or else they will become an encumbrance and a hindrance.

We may possibly understand what is meant by our text if we, first, *consider the opposite condition.* Some persons are notorious for their laxity—whatever they have about them is very loosely attached to them. I am grieved to say that there are some professing Christians who are very lax even in matters of morality. It is a great shame that it should be so with any of them and we feel that there must be hypocrisy at the bottom of such a state of things as that. Others are very lax in their beliefs—they are ready to believe anything or nothing according to whatever is said by the last speaker to whom they have listened. Some are very lax in their observance of Gospel ordinances. They act as though Christ had given them commands which they might obey or disregard according to their own pleasure. Nothing connected with them seems to be really fastened to them so as to hold them and, for their part, they hold nothing firmly—everything is loose and slipping away from them.

Now, I take it that the Apostle exhorts all professing Christians of that character to get out of such a state of heart! And I would urge you, dear Friends, to do the same. Gird up the loins of your mind as to your personal conduct. Be

strict about it, not lax! Never fear incurring the opprobrium of being too precise. If the name of Puritan is appended to you, accept it joyfully as a badge of honor and wish that you were more of a Puritan than your assailants suspect! Whoever else is lax, you remember that you serve a jealous God and, therefore, be very jealous of the honor of His Word, and jealous of the observance of His commands, and jealous concerning your whole life. In this sense, “gird up the loins of your mind.”

Some professors are ready enough to believe, but they have no intensity in their beliefs. They are orthodox as far as they go, but they do not go far enough. They have no great concern about religion—they are merely tattooed with Christianity. It is only skin deep with them, it never gets into their hearts or affects their souls. There are many preachers, nowadays, who hold various views of the Truth of God, but they hold nothing tenaciously. I have often wished to ask some Broad Churchmen if they did not think that the martyrs were great fools in laying down their lives in defense of the Truth, for I am sure that, according to the teaching of many whom I know, they must regard those who were faithful unto death as little better than madmen! I think that some of the teachers of the modern school believe that there is no Truth of God that is worth a man’s dying for. They say that something is white, but they add that white is a very, very light shade of black if you look at it from a certain standpoint. Another thing is undoubtedly black, but that is merely a somewhat darker shade of white! Here is a certain Truth which they say they believe, but there are some circumstances or conditions in which they do *not* believe it, so practically it is not a matter of faith to them at all. If ever you press them too closely upon any point, they always have a back way of escape open—in fact, they do not really believe anything at all with their heart and soul!

Now, when religion is held in that fashion, it is tantamount to irreligion. If I held doctrines which did not hold me, I should stammer in the declaration of them and I could not suppose that anyone else would accept them from my half-hearted advocacy. He who has not a fixed fulcrum for his lever, whatever machinery he may have, will never move the world—and nothing will be accomplished *by* you, my Friend, or accomplished *in* you, unless there are certain Truths of God which you no more question than you question your own existence—certain munitions of rocks behind which you make your soul’s dwelling place and find yourself at ease. “The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks,” and they thus prove their wisdom! And when a man, whatever his feebleness may be, has certain rocky fundamental Truths into which he tunnels so as to hide himself, then he is well protected. But all that looseness of which I have been speaking is a throwing away of strength. Laxity is the helper of unbelief and tempts to all manner of evil the souls of those who are under its malign influence.

Therefore, dear Friends, do not be lax in your belief, but believe what you believe. Hold what you hold and know what you know. Do you ask, “How can that be?” Well, by being taught of God, for God teaches Infallible Truth. What a man teaches himself, or learns from his fellow men, may all have to be laid aside, for it is liable to be erroneous. But that which God the Holy Spirit burns into his heart and conscience, as with a hot iron, shall never be taken from him! You may kill him, but you will not take the Truth of God from him. You may cut him in pieces, but the man is so joined to the Truth that he cannot be separated from it. “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind.” Get your mental straps tightened up. Bind the blessed Truth of the Gospel more closely than ever to your soul!

Further, this condition of mind to which Peter refers is not only the opposite of laxity and looseness, but it is also opposed to that effluence, or lack of grip, lack of unity, lack of concentration which runs away with the usefulness and force of so many professors. These men love God after a fashion and hold His Truth in a way, but, then, there are many other things which they love and hold quite as much! Their energies run—no, I should say, *trickle* into a hundred channels—but there is no force in them. If they could all be made to flow in one channel, they might rush onward like a torrent and bear everything before them, yet it is not so with them, but quite the opposite! They are all in pieces. They never get to be one entire man. The prayer of David has never been fulfilled in their experience, “Unite my heart to fear Your name.” They cannot cry with the sweet Psalmist of Israel, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.”

And not being fixed to one point, neither are they united as one person. Their condition is exactly described by the Prophet Hosea, “Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty.” It is a blessed thing for a Christian to be strapped up in one bundle and not to be divided into a number of separate parcels. “Set your affections on things above,” is a misquotation that I have heard many times, but there is not such a text as that in the Bible. Paul wrote to the Colos-

sians, “Set your *affection* on things above,” that is, have all your affections bound up into one supreme, all-embracing affection, and then fix it all upon Christ. When the many men within the man become all one man and he is, as we say, “all there,” and you *know* that he is “all there,” then he has, indeed, girded up the loins of his mind. May we all obey this Apostolic command and earnestly avoid the opposite!

In trying further to show what our text means, I would say that I think the short way of putting it is this, “Pull yourself together.” We often say, in some great crisis or emergency, “I must, somehow or other, pull myself together.” That is just the meaning of the Apostle here. Do you not sometimes find yourself very listless, languid and limp? You hope the life of God is within you, but you almost question whether it is or not, for it is not vigorous or joyous. You do not seem to take an interest in the things of God as you once did. You say, with Cowper—

*“Your saints are comforted, I know,
And love Your House of Prayer!
I sometimes go where others go,
But find no comfort there.”*

Somehow or other you appear to have fallen to pieces—there is no cohesion about you and you are sure that you are not in a right condition. Well, then, our text is the very message you need, as it means, first, concentrate all your powers and faculties to the service of God and the worship of God. Let this be your song—

*“O bless the Lord, my Soul!
Let all within me join,
And aid my tongue to bless His name,
Whose favors are Divine.”*

“Gird up the loins of your mind,” that is, let the Truth of God go right around you, so that no part of you is left out of the hallowed circle. Be completely contained within the belt of pure and precious Truth. Nobody knows what he can really do when he is “all there.” The capacities of manhood are something terrible when they are turned into the wrong channel. Look at a man who goes insane. Insanity is, in some senses, a weakness, yet, sometimes, when a man has become insane, he has possessed the strength of five or six ordinary men! Now, if we could have just the opposite of that—a sanity which nevertheless concentrated and increased all the powers of our entire being—what is there that we might not be able to do? This is what the Apostle means when he urges us to gird up the loins of our mind.

This expression further signifies not only concentration, but full awakening. We are not half-awake, Brothers and Sisters, as a rule. Sometimes we are, but when God the Holy Spirit gives us the new Life in all its fullness, there is then within us ecstatic joy, firmness of resolution, strength of will and a bravery of holy faith that can risk everything upon the faintest word of the unseen God. But, oftentimes, we need to cry as David did, “Quicken me, O Lord, for Your name’s sake.” In the 119th Psalm, how very frequently that prayer occurs, “Quicken You me.” The Psalmist was a living man, or he could not have prayed to be made alive, but, being alive, he wanted to be made *more alive*. I have told you before of a strange picture which I saw at Brussels, in which the artist has represented the Resurrection in a very remarkable fashion, showing the people as partly alive. There is one man with his head restored to life, but his arms remain as skeletons. There is another alive down to his breast, but his legs and the rest of his body are still under the dominion of death. It is an extraordinary idea, yet I am afraid that there are many so-called Christians who are just like that. They have just enough life in them for the salvation of their souls, but scarcely enough to make them earnest and diligent in the cause of God. Now, Brothers and Sisters, if this is the case with you, wake yourself up, pull yourself together, “gird up the loins of your mind.”

If you do so, in addition to this concentration and awakening, there will be a holy resoluteness about you, an intensifying of any resolve that you have made to serve the Lord. Sometimes, you feel, “This is the proper time for me to draw near to God, but I really do not feel in the spirit for it.” Now, pull yourself together and determine that you will not allow any of this nonsense! We must pray—and when we feel that we cannot pray, then is the time when we must pray more earnestly than ever! We are never so much in need of prayer as when we have the least inclination to the holy exercise. I delight in preaching the Gospel when I am conscious that the Lord is with me, but there are times when I have to say, “I do not feel fit for this great task.” Whenever that is true of any of us, we must hear Peter saying to us, “Gird up the loins of your mind.” Brother, it is the devil who wants to keep you from serving the Savior! He expects that God is going to be with you and to bless you, so he tries to unfit you for the service. Then say, “By the Grace of God, I mean to

do it, and if ever in my life I poured out my very soul, it shall be now. Instead of running away from the task, I will run to it! Into the very center of the enemy will I rush, like David when he said, ‘By You I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.’” Oh, for that firm putting down of the foot, that steadfast determination that the duty of the hour shall be performed and the privilege of the hour shall be enjoyed! We will not be drifted from it, or driven from it, or bribed from it! What have you and I to do with going to sleep? Those who are children of darkness may sleep in the night, but we are children of the day, the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon us! So, “let us not sleep as do others,” but let us gird up the loins of our mind and, in the name of the Most High God, let us resolve not to be found half-hearted and lukewarm, but to be wide awake and all-alive in the service of our Lord!

Still further to explain our text, let me say that it must also mean, “*Get rid of hindrances.*” The Oriental girds up his loins that he may not be tripped up by his long flowing garments—and this is the kind of thing that acts as a hindrance to a Christian’s progress. Not hindrances from Satan and the world, alone, but from himself—from things about himself that cling as much to him and seem as necessary for him as garments are for our bodies. These things will often get in the way and trip us up when we are running, or hinder us when we are walking.

When does this happen? Sometimes there creeps over the mind of the Believer the thought of security and, consequently, of there being little need of watchfulness. There is true security in Christ and that sets the mind on its watchtower. But there is a false security in which Satan says, “All is well with you. You are not like these young people who have lately joined the Church—you are an old experienced Christian—so there is no fear of your falling into temptation. You are an old fox, you cannot be caught in the traps of which they will have to beware. You may go a great deal further than those young people may, and do a great many things which would be dangerous for them, for you are all right.” When you are deceived by the tempter, you sit down and say to yourself, “My mountain stands firm; I shall never be moved.” You fold your hands and smile with a delusive happiness—under the notion that all must go well with you!

O dear Friends, there is nothing that will lead to stumbling and falling sooner than this fancied security! This is, indeed, having loose garments! You have special need to watch and pray. Always be afraid of that experience which Satan tells you exempts you from the necessity of being on your guard, for you are in an enemy’s country and there is a foe lurking behind every bush! And he alone is safe who cries to God, “Hold You me up and I shall be safe.” But they who are carnally secure are in the very midst of danger. Let us not get into that lax and loose condition, but let us gird up the loins of our mind.

Some are all ungirt and have their garments hanging so loosely about them that they are unable to do anything effectively because they are continually perplexed with a thousand wandering thoughts. They do not think rightly about anything because they think in a loose fashion about everything. They never act as do the bees which I have often watched. These busy little creatures find the bell of a flower and plunge right in till you cannot see them. What are they doing? They are getting all the honey that is stored at the bottom of the flower! Meanwhile, what has the butterfly done? He has flitted lightly over half the flowers of the garden and he laughs at the bee for wasting so much time in one flower, yet, at night, the butterfly has nothing to do but die, while the bee has been storing her house with sweet nutriment. It is a blessed thing when we get right into the bell of the flower of the Gospel and are determined to penetrate its secret places to extract the delicious essence of the Word, that we may feed thereon and grow thereby. It is no use having a brain that is taken up with 50 different subjects and yet does not master any one of them.

There was a class of men called the Encyclopedists, who endeavored to gain universal knowledge and, certainly, some of them were prodigious scholars. But with you and with me, Beloved, it will be well to call in all these wandering thoughts and make the Lord Jesus Christ our Encyclopedia, and to determine not to know anything among men save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When you act thus, you have secured the choicest honey in all the world, while those who attempt to learn a thousand other things may really gather nothing that is worth preserving. A man of one book is, after all, the man of power. And the man who has but one objective in life—who lives only for Christ and lives alone upon Him—is the gracious man whom God will use for blessed ends!

Another loose garment that is likely to trip us up is too much care about the things of this world. I think that a man needs, sometimes, to hesitate as to whether he should enlarge his business. He may have just enough to do to keep going what he already has in hand—and he will be able to steal out to the weeknight services and to take his place in the Sunday school. But it may be that if he undertakes more responsibilities, he will be unable to spare any time for his Lord’s

service. His capital is small, though it has sufficed him up to now—but if he tries to make it serve in his larger undertakings, he will always be worrying about how he shall be able to meet his obligations—and he will be running from pillar to post with a thousand anxieties as to how he is to get over his difficulties. Is it not amazing that people should be so anxious to get more anxieties? The path of wisdom is to try to escape them and, especially as age increases, to feel that the last part of our life ought to be Sabbatic—it should be a period of rest. Surely, the last seventh of our lives, at least, should be a preparation for the everlasting Sabbath when we hope to dwell with our Lord forever! It is well for a man when he can make it so, but too much to do, too much to think of, too much care and too much trouble are very apt to trip up a Christian. “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind.” Strap yourselves up a bit. You know riches take to themselves wings and fly away. One of the best things you can do is to clip their wings every now and then—and send the feathers round to the College, or the Orphanage, or the Colportage Society, or some other good work! In that way you are more likely to keep what you now possess and to have a blessing with it.

Frequently, too, men who do not gird up the loins of their minds are tripped up by mental troubles. They are troubled about this and worried about that. Things are not according to their mind and, instead of doing their best, and then leaving the matter with God, they are constantly fretting and fuming. I know some good women who make their home utterly miserable by being always in a worry. Often, it is only about whether such-and-such a room has been dusted, or whether something has been washed. And there are plenty of husbands who go on in the same foolish way, for we are all of one race and we are all far too anxious to borrow trouble when we have none of our own. Yes, and some are very adept at manufacturing troubles! They have a little trouble factory at the top of the house and they like to get up there and try to make something to be disquieted about. A trouble that God sends, He will take away, but if you make it yourself, you may take it away yourself. Homemade troubles are just like homemade clothes—they do not often fit very well, but they last longer than any others. So I warn you against them—the troubles, I mean—pray put them aside! Obey Peter’s injunction, “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind,” and let these fancied troubles go to the winds!

There are others whose loins are not gird up because they are fearful, despondent, discouraged in their work for the Lord. Have you not heard them moaning in this style—“I do not think I shall ever take my class any more.” “I do not feel that I can stand up and preach at the corner of the streets again.” “I do not see how I can give another tract to that man—he swore so dreadfully.” Come, Brother, “gird up the loins of your mind.” You need to pull that strap more tightly around you and to get your garments well secured. I see that they are beginning to fly about in the wind and, if you are not careful, one by one they will blow away from you. Be not discouraged! Fear not! Do not despair of success! The God whom you serve will not let His Word fall to the ground, but you shall see that though you went forth weeping, bearing precious Seed, you shall come back rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you!

I need not go over all the many ways in which a Christian man’s garments may impede his labors, but our text applies to them all. One other meaning of Peter’s words, “Gird up the loins of your mind” is, *be ready*, as a man who has his coat buttoned up is prepared to face the storm. Be ready for troubles. Be ready for evil tidings. Be ready for service. Be ready for suffering, be ready to live, be ready to die. Take for your motto the sailors’ cry, “Ready, yes, ready,” and say, “Whatever my Lord’s will may be, I, His servant, with my loins gird and my staff in my hand, am ready for it.” As old Master Trapp says, “Be handy with your loins gird about.” Have your robes all well fastened so that you will not be tripped up by them. Being handy, in this sense, is also to be handsome—no man looks better than when his garments are well gird about him. When they became loose, they spoil the appearance of his figure, but when he keeps himself well prepared for his service, then is he beautiful in the sight of his Master who loves to see His servant ready for fighting, ready for journeying, ready for whatever may happen to him, or be required of him. Therefore, pull yourselves together and so “gird up the loins of your mind.”

II. Now, secondly, WHY ARE WE TO DO THIS?

First, *the fourfold character of the Christian life requires it*. A Christian ought to be at least four things, as well as many others which I have not time to mention now. First, he is a pilgrim. He is on a journey—he is passing through this world to a better one. How can a man travel swiftly and safely unless his garments are properly prepared for the journey? And the pilgrims to Zion must gird up the loins of their mind if they are to reach their destination.

A Christian is, next, a racer. He is running in a race and he needs to win the crown. He has started for the goal and the prize of his high calling is glittering before his eyes. He is the man who must heed the command, “Therefore gird up

the loins of your mind.” How can you run with endurance the race set before you if you do not “lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset you”? If entanglements are to be avoided, the garments of the racer must be tightly gird about him.

Moreover, the Christian is a warrior. How can he overcome his foe if he has not put on his armor and is not well clad for the struggle! How shall he fight while his movements are impeded by loose garments? You know what the old soldier said to the Duke of Wellington when he was asked whether he had been at Waterloo. He said that he had and then the Duke enquired of him, “Suppose that battle had to be fought again, how would you like to be dressed?” The man answered, “If I had to take part in that fight again, I should like to be in my shirtsleeves.” There was great commonsense in that reply and it may teach us a useful lesson. A Christian man does not fight well for his Master unless he gets, as it were, into his shirtsleeves and takes off all his dignity and everything which hinders him from rendering effective service and doing the most he can do for Christ.

Beside being a pilgrim, a runner and a warrior, a Christian is a laborer—he is called to work in his Master’s vineyard. Now, if a man does not gird up the loins of his mind, he will be a very poor laborer and will show a very bad day’s work when the sun goes down. So again I say to you, dear Friends, pull yourselves together! With such holy work to do, endeavor to do it at your very best.

Remember, also, *the greatness of your task*. That should make you “gird up the loins of your mind.” The Christian life is no child’s play. To bear testimony for Christ is no trifle and if you wish to win souls, as I hope you do, Brothers and Sisters, you cannot do it unless your spirit is braced up to the very highest point by the Grace of God. Your work is such as might have filled an angel’s heart! And it *did* fill your Savior’s hands, so see to it that it is done in the best possible style.

The next reason why you should “gird up the loins of your mind” is *because of the slenderness of your strength*. You have so little power that you cannot afford to waste an ounce of it! If you are ever to thresh the mountains, there must be no wasting or throwing away, even inadvertently, of any of the little force which you have. If you would be mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, you must look well to your spiritual strength and never waste an atom of it.

Besides that, *remember the readiness of your foes*. If they can trip you up by laying hold upon a garment which is trailing behind you, they will do so. If it is possible for you to be vanquished, you will be vanquished, for you have enemies who watch you with eyes full of venom and malice because you belong to Christ. Therefore, “gird up the loins of your mind” and see that you put not any advantage in their way, or they will be quick to avail themselves of it!

Remember, also, *the misery you endure when you are not in a right condition*. If your minds are not girded up and you feel as I do, you must be very wretched. Whenever I feel that I cannot pray as I wish, I am very unhappy. When I come here and cannot join heartily in the song—well, I have to groan in the chorus someway or other—but I am not satisfied with doing that. When I feel at all wandering from God and my heart is getting astray from Him, I am not happy, I cannot be! Oh, no, blessed be God, when He made us the second time, He made us so that we could not rest anywhere but in Himself. Even our first creation necessitated our coming to God if we would be blessed, but our second creation makes it even more so! If the Lord is with us, we are merry all the day long and can praise and bless His holy name. There is no fasting for us while the Bridegroom is with us! But if He is once withdrawn, then shall the children, even of the bride chamber, fast. You know that it is so. Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, do not be content to be in this sad, loose, lax condition, but, “gird up the loins of your mind.” May the Lord, in His mercy, enable you to do so!

III. So I finish with just a few words upon the last question, which is, HOW ARE WE TO DO THIS?

One way is, when you are out of sorts, and out of order, *go and confess it*. Go and tell the Lord all about it. Search and see how you got into such a condition. Confess the sins that brought you into such a plight, then hate them with a perfect hatred. Feel that you cannot continue to live in such a state. Cry unto God, “O Lord, do not let me find any kind of happiness until I have it from Your own right hand and, until I am right with You, give me misery, brokenness of spirit and true godly sorrow for sin!” That confession will naturally melt into prayer for quickening. While you are mourning your misery, God will help you to pray yourself out of it! Never listen to the voice of the tempter who says, “Do not pray because you cannot pray,” but say within yourself, “Now I must pray more than ever. Now I will pray and, however poor and broken my prayer may be, such as it is, it shall be presented to God.”

Then, next, while you are on your knees, *resolve with energy that the evil shall not continue*. To make your resolution effective, cry to Him who first took you out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay—and set your feet upon a rock and established your goings—and ask Him to do that over again in another sense. He will as readily lift you up again as He did at the first. If you are willing to be half-dead, you may be wholly dead before long. If you are willing to be idle and sleepy, the spirit of slumber will steal over you just as if all the drugs that poison men had been poured into your soul! If it has been so with you to any degree, resolve, with hearty shamefacedness, that it shall not be so any longer.

And then, to help you carry out this resolution, *sit down and meditate much upon the love of God to you*—the eternal love, the boundless love, the love that chose you, the love that bought you, the love that sought you, the love that fought for you, the love that has worked in you all the good things there are in you! And, as you meditate upon that wondrous love of God, His Holy Spirit will work upon you. You will feel your heart beginning to thaw and the streams commencing to flow as the brooks do in the springtime when the icy grasp of winter has been relaxed. Therefore, give your heart up to such meditations as are likely to stir your spirit and to change its sad condition.

Then, also try to *let your understanding be convinced concerning your position and condition*. Think much about what the Lord's requirements really are. I like to see some passion in religion, but I am much more fond of *principle*. A man may be moved to great zeal and earnestness at certain revival meetings—and it is well if he has made the great decision—but I am glad if another man has sat down by himself and has calmly considered the whole question and, acting upon principle, has yielded himself to the Savior. He knows what is true. He knows what he is and where he is. He knows what God has done for him and what God expects from him and, without any passion or excitement, he steadily plods on and continues firmly confident in the Lord.

One translation of our text is, “Gird up the loins of your understanding.” Get your understanding tightly strapped up, for, in proportion as you know the Truth of God, the Truth shall make you free. When you can give to everyone who asks you for it, a reason for the hope that is in you, it is better than when you simply say, “I believe that I am saved because I am so happy,” for, perhaps tomorrow you may not be happy—and then you may fancy that you are not saved! That is simply going by your feelings and is a most unsatisfactory method. Rather say, “I understand, from the Scriptures, that the sinner is bid to believe in Jesus. And when he does so, God, Himself, assures him that he is saved.” Let your religious convictions be founded on good sound arguments! Get some “wherefores” and “therefores,” so that you may have something solid to stand upon. This is the meaning of the words, “gird up the loins of your understanding.”

I wish that all who profess to be converted knew what they were converted *from* and what they were converted *to*—and what being converted really means. I am afraid that a great many jump into what they call religion and then jump out of it again. If they only act according to the energy of the flesh, they will jump out of it before long. He who is converted only by eloquence will be unconverted when that eloquence is over. He who is converted merely by excitement is likely to be unconverted when that excitement has died away. But he who is *taught of God* and knows the solid Doctrines of God upon which we are grounded and settled, will steadfastly abide in the Truth of God.

I know that I have spoken all of this for nothing, so far as some of you are concerned, because you have nothing for which to gird up your mind and nothing with which to gird it. For you, as you now are, there is no inheritance. For you there is no place of joy, no hope of peace. O poor Soul, first remember that you must be born again, for it is no use to gird up the natural man that is unsaved! It is the new man that is to be gird about. Your first business is with God and with His Christ, and with the eternal Spirit. The first necessity for you is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to accept that Gospel which says, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” That being done, then you have something to gird up! God grant it to every one of you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—660, 632, 659.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

1 PETER 1:13-20.

Verse 13. *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* This is Peter's practical application of the great Truths of which he had been

writing. “Look ahead and expect great things. Live in the future. Project your thoughts beyond the centuries that are passing away into the ages which will never die.”

14, 15. *As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He who has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation.* Remember that you can never be really whole till you are holy, for holiness is spiritual sanity—it is the caring of the mind and heart from the disease which sin brought upon them.

16. *Because it is written, Be you holy; for I am holy.* Children of God, be like your Father! Prove that you are His true children by manifesting His Character. Let His lineaments be seen in your countenance—“Be you holy; for I am holy.” The Revised Version is, “You shall be holy; for I am holy.”

17. *And if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.* Be not presumptuous. Always remember that as there is a God who is to judge every man, you are to be judged and oh, that you might, through His Grace, be in such a condition of heart that you shall stand the last test and be found to be full weight when you are put into the balances of the sanctuary which God shall hold with steadfast hands!

18, 19. *Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.* You have seen the Character of your Father who is in Heaven. This should urge and help you to be like He—holy. Now you see the Character of your Redeemer, “a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Let this influence you to be holy, also.

20, 21. *Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.* It is no use to place them anywhere else! All other vessels are too frail to bear such a heavy burden, but, if your faith and hope are in God, then you have a security which none can destroy.

22-25. *Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another fervently with a pure heart: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower thereof falls away: but the Word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.* Blessed be God for an everlasting Gospel, founded on the Everlasting Covenant, which brings with it everlasting life to all those who believe in Christ Jesus the Lord!

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

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