

CONFIRMING THE WITNESS OF CHRIST NO. 2875

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 1904.

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“Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.”
1 Corinthians 1:6.

IT is not always the most gifted church which is in the most healthy state. A church may have many rich, influential, or learned members—many that have the gift of utterance and understand all sciences—yet that church may be in an unhealthy condition. Such was the case with the church at Corinth. Paul, in the opening of his Epistle, tells them that he thanks God always on their behalf for the Grace of God given unto them by Christ Jesus, that in everything they were enriched in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that they were behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Corinthians were what we would call, nowadays, judging them by the usual standard, a first-class church. They had many who understood much of the learning of the Greeks. They were men of classic taste and men of good understanding, men of profound knowledge and yet, in *spiritual* health, that church was one of the worst in all Greece and, perhaps, in the world! Among the whole of them, you could not find another church sunk so low as this one, although it was the most gifted.

What should this teach us? Should it not show us that gifts are nothing unless they are laid on the altar of God? That it is nothing to have the gift of oratory? That it is nothing to have the power of eloquence? That it is nothing to have learning, that it is nothing to have influence unless they all be dedicated to God and consecrated to His service? I said, “it is nothing”—I mean, it is nothing *good*. Alas, it is worse than nothing good—it is something evil, it is something dreadful, it is something terrible for a man to have these gifts and yet to misuse them, for they shall only furnish fuel for a fiercer flame than he would have endured had he not possessed such abilities! He who buries his ten talents may well expect to be given over to the tormentor.

This is the next lesson that is taught us—let us never judge men by their talents—but by the use which they make of their powers, by the end to which they devote their talents, by the interest which they bring to those pounds which their Master has entrusted to them. Paul, in the commencement of his Epistle, very gently hints at the right use of gifts and talents. And he tells us that they are sent to us that we may “confirm the testimony of Christ.” If we do not use them for this purpose, we misuse them! If we do not turn them to this account, we abuse them! We ought to use our endowments as the Corinthians did *not* use theirs, but as they ought to have done—in confirming the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Corinthians had more powers than any of us have. Many of them could work miracles—they could heal the sick, they could restore the lepers, they could work wonders by the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some of them could talk several languages and, wherever they went, they were able to speak the language of the people among whom they abode. This was because they were not able to spend much time in learning languages and there needed something special to support the infant Church. It was then but a sapling—it required a stake in the ground by its side, that it might lean upon it, and might grow and be strong. It was a little plant that needed to be sustained and, therefore, God worked miracles. But now it is the stalwart oak and has its roots bent round the staunchest rocks in creation—now it needs not any support by miracle and, therefore, God has left us without extraordinary gifts. But whatever gifts we have, we are to use them for the purpose mentioned in the text—that is, for the confirmation of the testimony of Christ Jesus.

There are two points which we shall speak of as the Holy Spirit may enable us. First, *The testimony of Christ*. And, secondly, *What is meant by our confirming it?*

I. First, then, THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST. We are told, in the text, that there was a “testimony of Christ” which was “confirmed in you.” Our first enquiry is, What is meant by the “testimony of Christ”?

That this world is fallen is the first Truth of God in all theology. “We have gone astray like lost sheep,” and had there not been mercy in the mind of God, He might justly have left this world to perish without ever calling it to repentance. But He, in His wondrous long-suffering and His mighty patience was not pleased to do so. Being full of tender mercies and loving kindness, He determined on sending the Mediator into the world, whereby He might restore it to its pristine glory and might save for Himself a people whom “no man could number,” who are to be called the elect of God, loved with His everlasting love! In order that He might rescue the world and save those elect ones, the Lord of Hosts has constantly ordained and sent forth a perpetual priesthood of testifiers. What was Abel with his lamb, but the first martyred witness of the Truth of God? Did not Enoch wear his mantle when he walked with God and prophesied concerning the Second Advent of Christ? Was not Noah a preacher of righteousness among a gainsaying generation? The glorious succession never fails! Abraham comes from Ur of the Chaldees and from the hour of his call till the day when he slept in Machpelah, he was a faithful witness. Then we might mention Lot in Sodom, Melchisedec in Salem, Isaac and Jacob in their tents and Joseph in Egypt. Read the Scripture history and can you fail to observe a golden chain of united links, hanging over a sea of darkness, but yet uniting Abel with the last of the Patriarchs?

We are now arrived at a new era in the history of the Church, but it is not destitute of light. See there the son of Amram, the honored Moses. That man was a very sun of brightness, for he had been where darkness veiled the unutterable light of the skirts of Jehovah. He climbed the steep sides of Sinai. He went up where the lightning blazed and the thunders lifted up their awful voice. He stood upon the mountain-burning summit and there, in that secret chamber of the Most High, he learned, in forty days, the witness of forty years and was the constant enunciator of justice and righteousness. But he died, as the best men must. Sleep on in peace, O Moses, in your secret grave. Fear not for the Truth of God, for God will be with Joshua as He was with you!

The times of the judges and kings were sometimes densely darkened, but amid their civil wars, their idolatry, their persecutions and their visitations, the chosen people still had a remnant according to the Election of Grace. There were always some who walked through the earth, like the ancient Druids in the woods, wrapped in white garments of holiness and crowned with the glories of the Most High. The river of the Truth of God might run in a shallow stream, but it was never utterly dry. Next, come to the times of the Prophets and there, after traversing a dreary period when the world was only illumined here and there by such lamps as Nathan, Abijah, Gad, or Elijah, you find that you have come to the light of meridian day, or rather to a cloudless sky crowded with stars! There is the eloquent Isaiah, the lamenting Jeremiah, the soaring Ezekiel, the well-beloved Daniel and lo, behind these four high priests of prophecy, there follow twelve, clothed in the same garb, performing the same service! I might style Isaiah the pole star of prophecy. Jeremiah resembled the rainy Hyades of Horace. Ezekiel was the burning Sirius. And as for Daniel, he resembles a flaming comet, flashing on our vision but for a moment and then lost in obscurity.

I am not at a loss to find a constellation for the minor prophets. They are a sweet group, of intense brilliance, even though but small—they are the Pleiades of the Bible. Perhaps, at no former season, were the stars of God marshaled in greater numbers, but yet, amid all preceding and succeeding gloom, the sky of time was never in total darkness! There was always a watcher and a shining one there. God has never abandoned the world, He has never quenched its lamp of Testimony, He has never said, “Go, you vile thing,” and spurned it from His Presence. He might deluge it once with water. He might rain fire and brimstone upon Sodom. He might drown a nation in the sea. He might destroy a generation in the wilderness. He might devour kingdoms and root them up—but never, never would He extinguish the perpetual flame of the Testimony of His Truth!

I was thinking, just now, of a picture which I saw, a few days ago—a beautiful painting of a brook with steppingstones in the water, upon which the traveler crossed. And the idea has just flashed upon my mind—surely the stream of man’s wickedness and the stream of time may be crossed by those steppingstones of Testimony. There you have Noah, and he is a steppingstone, to step on to Abraham. And from him to Moses, and from Moses to Elijah and so on—from Elijah to Isaiah, from Isaiah to Daniel, and from Daniel down to the brave Maccabees. And what is the last steppingstone? It is

Jesus Christ, the faithful and true Witness, the Prince of the kings of the earth! Jesus was, in one sense, the last Testifier of the Truth of God. We are left to confirm it to others and we shall, just for a few moments, enlarge on what the testimony of Jesus Christ was.

First of all, in order to justify me in calling Jesus Christ a Testifier, I want to refer to one or two passages of Scripture where you will see that He came into the world to be a Testifier and Witness to the Truth. Turn to the 3rd chapter of John, and the 31st verse. John the Baptist says, “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. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies, and no man receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set to His seal that God is true.” There we find John, who was the harbinger of our Savior, speaking of Christ as giving a testimony, speaking of Him as One who came into the world for the special purpose of testifying to the Truth of God.

Turn further on in the same Gospel and you will find, in the 8th chapter and 18th verse, our Savior says this of Himself, “I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me bears witness of Me.” I refer you, also, to the 18th chapter of John and the 37th verse where Pilate says to Jesus, “Are You a king then?” And He replies, “For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” There, again, you find our Savior speaking of Himself as a Witness. I might refer you to some passages in Isaiah where he speaks of Christ as a Witness, but I will only keep to the writings of our friend, John, so we will now turn to the Book of Revelation. In the first chapter, at the 5th verse, you find him saying, “Jesus Christ, who is the faithful Witness.” In the third chapter of the same Book, at the 14th verse, “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness.” Now, then, I think I am not dishonoring my Master by calling Him a “Witness.” I have placed Him side by side with a glorious cloud of witnesses and I have said He is the last Witness. And I think I have not dishonored His blessed name when I find He calls Himself a “Witness.” Let us enlarge upon this head for a moment or two. Christ is the very King of witnesses! He is the greatest of all witnesses and superior to every other! He does not differ from any other in the things He testifies, for they all testify to the same Truth of God which this glorious Witness is superior to every other!

First, let me remark that *Christ witnesses directly from Himself* and that is one thing in which He is superior to all the Prophets and the other holy men who testified to the Truth. What did Isaiah say? What did Elijah say? Or Jeremiah? Or Daniel? They only said second-hand things—they spoke what God had revealed to them. But when Christ spoke, He always spoke directly from Himself. All the rest only spoke that which they had received from God. They had to tarry till the winged seraph brought the live coal. They had to gird on the ephod, the curious girdle and the Urim and Thummim—they must stand listening till the Voice said, “Son of man, I have a message for you.” They were but instruments blown by the breath of God and giving forth sounds only at His pleasure. But Christ was a Fountain of living water. He opened His mouth and the Truth of God gushed forth and it came directly from Himself. In this, as a faithful Witness, He was superior to every other. He could say, “What I have seen, and heard, that do I testify. I have been inside the veil. I have entered into the sanctum sanctorum. I have dived into the depths, I have soared into the heights—there is not a place where I have not been, there is not a Truth of God which I cannot call My own. I am no voice of another.” In this respect, He surpassed every other witness!

Secondly, Christ was superior to every other witness from the fact that *His testimony was uniform*. It was always the same testimony—we cannot say that of any other witness. Look at Noah. He was a very good testifier to the Truth of God, except once, when he was intoxicated—he was a sorry testifier to the Truth then. David was a testifier to the Truth, but he sinned against God and put Uriah to death. What shall we say of Elijah, that man in shaggy garments? He was a testifier to the Truth, but he was not so when he fled from Jezebel and God sent an angel to say to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” Abraham was another witness, but he was not so when he said his wife was his sister. The same might be said of Isaac. And if you go through the whole list of holy men, you will find some fault in them and you will be obliged to say, “They were very good testifiers, certainly, but their testimony is not uniform. There is a plague-spot which sin has left upon them all. There was something to show that man is nothing but an earthen vessel, after all.”

But Christ’s testimony *was* uniform. There never was a time when He contradicted Himself. There never was an instance in which it could be said, “What You have said, You now contradict.” See Him everywhere, whether on the cold mountaintop at midnight in prayer, or in the midst of the city. Observe Him when He walked through the cornfields on the Sabbath, or when on the lake He bade the waves, “Be still.” Wherever He was, His testimony was uniform. This can-

not be said of any other witness. The best men have their faults. They say that the sun has spots and so I suppose that the most glorious of men, whoever they are, who will shine most brightly in the firmament forever and ever, will have their spots while on earth. Christ's testimony was like His own coat, woven from the top throughout—there was not any seam in it at all.

Yet, further, *Christ's testimony was perfect in testifying to all the Truth of God.* Other men only gave testimony to parts of the Truth, but Christ manifested it all. Other men had the threads of Truth, but Christ took the threads and wove them into a glorious robe, put it on, and came forth clothed with every Truth of God. There was more of God revealed by Christ than in the works of Creation, or in all the Prophets. Christ was a Testifier to all God's attributes and He left none of them unmentioned. Do you ask me whether Christ bore testimony to the Justice of God, I tell you, "Yes." See Him hanging there, languishing on Calvary, His bones all dislocated. Did He bear testimony to God's Mercy? Yes. See those poor creatures who were limping just now—the lame man is leaping like a hare, the poor blind man is beholding the sun and rejoicing! Did Jesus witness to the Power of God? I say, "Yes." You see Him standing in the little boat and saying to the winds, "Be still!" and holding them in the hollow of His hand. Has He not borne testimony to everything in God? His testimony was perfect! Nothing was left out—everything was there.

We could not say that of any mere man. I believe we cannot say that of any modern preacher. Some people say that they can hear Mr. So-and-So because he preaches so much Doctrine. Another likes all experience and some want all practice. Very well, you do not expect that God has made one man to say everything, do you? Certainly not. One class of men defends one class of Truths and another, another. I bless God that there are so many denominations. If there were not men who differed a little in their creeds, we would never get so much Gospel as we do. One man loves high Doctrine and he thinks he is bound to defend it every Sabbath—so much the better! Some do not speak of it at all, so that he helps to make up for other people's deficiencies. Some men are fond of fiery exhortations—they give them every Sabbath and they cannot preach a sermon without them. But, then, others do not give them at all, so that the lack of one is supplied by the superabundance of the other. God has sent different men to defend different kinds of Truth, but Christ defended and preached all! He took them, bound them in one bundle and said, "Here is myrrh, aloes, cassia and all precious spices altogether—here is the whole Truth of God." Christ's testimony was perfect.

Mark, once more, before I come to the confirmation of this testimony, *Christ's testimony was final.* His was the last testimony, the last Revelation that will ever be given to man. After Christ, nothing. Christ comes last—He is the last steppingstone across the brook of time. All who come after Him are only confirmers of the testimony of Christ. Our Augustines, our Ambroses, our Chrysostoms, or any other of the mighty preachers of olden times, never pretended to say anything fresh. They only revived the Gospel—the same old-fashioned Gospel which Christ used to preach. And Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingli, and Knox—they only came to confirm the Truth of God. Christ said "*finis*" to the canon of Revelation and it was closed forever! No one can add a single word to it and no one can take a word from it. We Dissenters are sometimes charged with inventing a new Gospel. We deny it. We say that our Owen, Howe, Henry, Charnock, Bunyan, Baxter, or Janeway and all that galaxy of stars of the pulpit did not pretend to say anything new—they only revived the things that Christ said, they only professed to be confirmers of the Witness. So has it been with the great men we have lost during the last century. Whitefield and his brother evangelists and men who stood in the same position as Gill, or Booth, or Rippon, or Carey, or Ryland or some of those who have just been taken away—they did not pretend to say anything new. They only said, "Brothers and Sisters, we come to tell you the same old story. We are not testifiers of new things—we are only confirmers of the Witness, Christ Jesus."

II. Now we come to the second part of our subject and that is THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST IS TO BE CONFIRMED IN YOU. There are two points here. First, *the testimony of Christ needs to be confirmed in ourselves.* And, secondly, *it needs to be confirmed in others.*

First, then, to every Christian the testimony of Christ needs to be confirmed in his own heart. O Beloved, that is the best confirmation of Gospel Truth which every Christian carries about within him! I love *Butler's Analogy*—it is a very powerful book. I love *Paley's Evidences*, but I never need them myself, for my own use. I do not need any proof that the Bible is true. Why? Because it is confirmed in me! There is a Witness, which dwells in me, which makes me bid defiance to all infidelity, so that I can say—

"Should all the forms that men devise

*Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart."*

I do not care to read books opposing the Truths of the Bible, I never need to wade through mud for the sake of washing myself afterwards. When I am asked to read an heretical book, I think of good John Newton. Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, said to him, "Have you read my *Key to the Romans*?" "I have turned it over," said the Doctor. "And is this the treatment a book must meet with which has cost me so many years hard study? You ought to have read it carefully, and weighed deliberately what is said on so serious a subject." "Hold," said Newton, "you have cut me out full employment for a life as long as Methuselah's! My life is too short to be spent in reading contradictions of my religion. If the first page tells me the man is undermining the faith, it is enough for me. If I had the first mouthful of a roast tainted, I do not need to eat it through to be convinced—I ought to send it away." Having the truth confirmed in us, we can laugh all arguments to scorn! We are placed in a sheet of mail when we have a witness to God's Truth within us. All the men in this world cannot make us alter one single iota of what God has written within us! Ah, Brothers and Sisters, we need to have the Truth confirmed within us! Let me tell you a few things that will do this.

First, *the very fact of our conversion tends to confirm us in the Truth*. "Oh," says the Christian, "do not tell me there is no power in religion, for I have felt it! I was thoughtless like others, laughed religion to scorn and those who attended to it. My language was, 'Let us eat and drink, and enjoy the sunshine of life.' But now, through Christ Jesus, I find the Bible a honeycomb which hardly needs to be pressed to let the drops of honey run out it is so sweet and precious to my taste that I wish I could sit down and feast on my Bible forever! What has made this alteration?" That is how the Christian reasons. He says, "There must be a power in Grace, otherwise I never should be so changed as I am. There must be the Truth of God in the Christian religion, otherwise this change would never have come over me." Some men have ridiculed religion and its followers and yet Divine Grace has been so mighty that those very men have become converted and experienced the new birth! Such men cannot be argued out of the truth of religion. You may stand and talk to them from dewy morn to the setting of the sun, but you can never get them to believe that there is no Truth in God's Word, for they have the Truth of God confirmed in them.

Then, again, another thing confirms the Christian in the Truth and that is, *when God answers his prayers*. I think that it is one of the strongest confirmations of the Truth of God when we find that God hears us. Now I speak to you, on this point, of things which I have tasted and handled. The wicked man will not believe this. He will say, "Ah, go and tell those who know no better!" But I say that I have proved the power of prayer a hundred times because I have gotten to God and asked Him for mercies and have received them. "Ah," say some, "it is only just in the common course of Providence." "*Common course of providence?*" It is a blessed course of Providence! If you had been in my position, you would not have said that. I have seen it just as clearly as if God had rent the heavens and put His hand out and said, "There, My child, is the mercy you asked for." It has come so plainly out of the way that I could not call it a common course of Providence!

Sometimes I have been depressed and downcast—and even out of heart at coming to stand before this multitude—and I have said, "What shall I do?" I could fly anywhere rather than come here anymore. I have asked God to bless me and send me words to say, and then I have felt filled to the brim, so that I could come before this congregation or any other! Is that a common course of Providence? It is a *special* Providence—a special answer to prayer! And there are others here who can turn to the pages of their diary and see, there, God's hand plainly interposing. So we can say to the infidel, "Begone! The truth of God is confirmed in us and so confirmed that nothing can drive us out of it!"

You have had the Truth confirmed in you, my dear Friends, *when you have found great support in times of affliction and tribulation*. Some of you have passed through deep trouble. Some of you have been sorely tried and have been brought very low, but can you not say with David, "I was brought low and the Lord helped me"? Can you not recall how well you bore that last trouble? When you lost that dear child, you thought you could not bear it so well as you did. But you said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Many of you have loved ones under the sod—your mother, father, husband, or wife. You thought your heart would break when you lost your parents, but when your father and your mother were taken from you, then the Lord took you up. He told you, poor widow, that

He would be a Father to your children—and have you not found it so? Can you not say, “Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord has promised”? That is the best confirmation of the Truth of God.

Sometimes, persons come to me, in my vestry, and they want me to confirm the Truth of God outside of them. I cannot do that, I want them to have the Truth confirmed *in* them. They say, “How do you know that the Bible is true?” “Oh,” I reply, “I never have to ask such a question as that, because it is confirmed in me. The Bishop has confirmed me!” I mean, “the Bishop of souls,” the Lord Jesus Christ, for I never was confirmed by any other! And He has so confirmed me in the Truth of God that no one can take it out of me. I say to these people, “Try religion yourself and you will see its power. You stop outside the house and you want me to prove what is inside the house—go in yourself—‘taste and see that the Lord is good,’ blessed are all they that trust in Him.” This is the best way of confirming the Truth to ourselves.

The second thought was that it was our business not only to have the Truth confirmed in our own souls, but *so to live that we might be the means of confirming the Truth in others*. Do you know what Bible the worldly man reads? He does not read this Bible at all—he reads the Christian! “There,” he says, “that man goes to church, or chapel, and he is a member. I will see how he lives, I will read him up and down.” And he watches him and reads his conduct. If he is bad, he says, “Religion is a farce!” But if he is a man who lives up to it, he says, “There is something in religion, after all.” Wicked men read professors—they watch them to see whether they live up to their profession. Christians have Argus, with a hundred eyes, staring at them! Worldlings look at every fault with a magnifying glass and they make the smallest molehill into a great mountain! And if there is a speck in our eye, they will make it a beam—and they will say the man is a hypocrite!

It is the duty of every child of God to so live that he may confirm the witness of Christ. We should labor to do it in all the common things of daily life. “Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Some men think that religion lies only in great things. It does not, for it also lies in little things. Take any one day of our lives—we eat, drink, rise in the morning, go to bed at night—there is nothing very particular about the day. Our life is made up of little things and if we are not careful of little things, we shall not be careful of great ones. If we do not mind the little things, the great ones will go wrong. Oh, may you have Grace to live that the world may find no fault in you! And if in little things they see exactness and precision, (and too much precision will be better than the looseness of the morals of some professors), then they will say, “There is something in religion. That man’s life has confirmed it in my mind because he lives up to it.”

Then, again, *if you can bear the taunts of wicked men without returning them*, that will be a good way of confirming religion. When I have entered into controversy with some men and have been betrayed into heat of temper, I could have bitten my fingers off that I should have done so! If you can keep your temper when men laugh at you and if, when they revile you, you do not return it, you will confirm the Truth of God. They will say, “There is something in that man’s religion, otherwise he could not so keep his temper.” You have read of James Haldane. Once, when unconverted, he threw a ship’s tumbler at the head of a person who had insulted him. But when he was regenerated, on another occasion of insult, simply said, “I would resent it, but I have learned to forgive injuries and overlook insults.” Men were obliged to say of him, “There is something in the religion which can bring such a lion as that down and make him such a lamb.” Thus you will confirm the witness of Christ if you quietly endure persecution. If you can patiently bear the laugh and jeer of wicked men, you will confirm the Truth of God.

The last confirmation you and I, my Friends, will ever be able to give to the witness of Christ is coming very soon. There is an hour when we shall no longer be able to confirm the Truth by living for it, for we must die, *and that is the best confirmation of a man’s principles—when he dies well*. One of the noblest confirmations of the Christian religion is the fact that a man dies peaceable, a happy and even a triumphant death. Oh, if when you come to die, you are able to say, “O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” And if you can grasp the tyrant Death in your hands and hurl him to the ground and triumph in Him who said, “O death, I will be your plagues! O grave, I will be your destruction!” If you can die without fear, or repining, or remorse—knowing that you are forgiven. If you can die with the song of victory on your lips and with the smile of joy upon your countenance, then you will confirm the witness of Christ!

In conclusion, let me urge you, as followers of Christ Jesus, as those whom He has loved with an everlasting love, as heirs of immortality, as those who have been rescued from the pit of destruction, as professors of religion, as members of a Christian Church—let me beseech you to make it your first and last objective to confirm the witness of Christ! Wherev-

er you are, whatever you are doing, say within yourself, “I must so live and die that I may confirm the witness of Christ. I must so walk among my friends and neighbors that they will see that there is a truth and a power in religion.” And let me warn you not to undertake this task in your own strength—you will need power from on high, from the Holy Spirit, a fresh supply of Grace from the Throne of the heavenly Grace. It is a good plan that some persons adopt—they walk home, after service, and when they get there, they have a few minutes in prayer with their God. It is a blessed way of clinching the nail and making a sermon count.

So, dear Friend, go home, and say, “I solemnly vow, yet not in my own strength, but I solemnly vow, by Your Grace, that from this moment, forward, it shall be my aim to live more as a confirmer of the Truth of God! I did not know my high calling before, but I now know that I am a confirmer of Your Truth. Lord, help me so to live that there may never be any flaw in my conduct, never any vile word proceed out of my lips—make me so to live that I may confirm Your Truth! Lord, help me to confirm the witness of Christ!” Go and register that vow, and that resolution, and seek God’s Grace that you may not let it be a vow not carried out, but may you be able to live to the Glory of God, and to the honor of His blessed name! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

PSALM 84.

A Psalm for the sons of Korah. You remember how Korah, Dathan and Abiram were destroyed because of their rebellion against the Lord and their revolt against His chosen servants, Moses and Aaron. And you, no doubt, recollect how it is recorded that “the children of Korah died not.” Why they were spared, we cannot tell, except that it was an act of Sovereign Grace and if so, I can understand why they were afterwards selected to be among the chief singers in the house of the Lord, for who can sing so sweetly to the God of Grace as the men who have been saved by His Sovereign, distinguishing Grace? This Psalm is “for (or, of) the sons of Korah.”—

*“Who can praise the blessed God,
Like a sinner saved by Grace?
Angels cannot sing so loud,
Though they see Him face to face—
Sinless angels can never know
What a debt saved sinners owe.”*

Verse 1. *How amiable are Your tabernacles, O LORD of Hosts!* The outer portions and the inner parts as well—how lovely they all are! To be among Your people, to have sweet fellowship with them, how delightful it is, “O Lord of Hosts! “You dwell in Your tabernacles, O Jehovah of Hosts, like a king in the center of his army, and Your people encamp round about You!

2. *My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD.* Those children of God who have been for even a little while exiled from the court of the Lord, prize them all the more when they get back to them.

2. *My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.* There gets to be so deep a longing to appear once more in the house of the Lord that even this clay-cold flesh of ours, which with difficulty becomes warm towards good things, at last melts and joins in the common cry of the Believer’s whole being—“My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”

3. *Yes, the sparrow has found a house.* She is such a bold bird that she comes and picks up a crumb or two even in the courts of God’s house! So, Lord, let me be one of Your sparrows today—“Yes, the sparrow has found a house,”—

3. *And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God.* God’s house is dear to us for the benefit that it is to ourselves, but it is still dearer to us for our children’s sake as a nest where we may lay our young. What a double mercy it is when young people love to come with their parents to the house of God!

4. *Blessed are they that dwell in Your house: they will still be praising You. Selah.* The Psalmist felt that those who were always in the house of the Lord must always be full of music. I am afraid that it is not so in all cases, yet it should be.

5. *Blessed is the man whose strength is in You; in whose heart are the ways of them.* The man who throws his whole heart and soul into his worship of the Lord and his service for the Lord, is the man who gets the greatest blessing out of

the holy exercises in which he takes part. Half-hearted worshippers are an insult to God, but blessed is the man whose strength is in the Lord of Hosts and whose heart is in His ways.

6. *Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also fills the pools.* If they pass through valleys that are dreary and gloomy, they find them to be a benefit and a blessing, for they get refreshments on the road and also help to cheer other travelers.

7, 8. *They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appears before God. O LORD God of Hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.* David cannot go up with the multitude that keeps holy day so, feeling like Jacob when he was all alone at the brook Jabbok—like Jacob, he wrestles with God for a blessing. You can hear him crying out in the wilderness—“O Jehovah God of Hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob,” and He who heard the prayer of lonely Jacob by the brook, hears the cry of David and the cries of all His children who cannot join the great assembly of worshippers of God.

9. *Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Your anointed.* Jesus is the “shield” of His people, and He is “anointed” for His people and there is, in Jesus, so much of all that is good that when the Father looks upon us in Him, He can see goodness even in us poor sinners, for the goodness of Christ overflows to us and is accounted ours!

10. *For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.* Of course the Psalmist means that a day in God’s courts is better than a thousand spent anywhere else. See how he contrasts nearly three years with a single day, and he might have gone even further and said, “Better is one day with God than a thousand years without Him.” He gives us another contrast as he goes on to say—

10-12. *I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give Grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O LORD of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in You.* May all of us know that blessedness, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

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

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