

THE CAUSE AND EFFECT OF HEART TROUBLE

NO. 3076

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 1908.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 12, 1874.

“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
John 14:27.

THERE appeared to be great cause for their heart to be troubled and abundant reason for being afraid, for their Lord was about to be taken from them. What would a few timid disciples be able to do without their Master? He had always been their Teacher, Friend and Guide. When they had been assailed by adversaries, He had always espoused their cause and routed their enemies. They were safe enough as long as He was with them, but what would they be without Him? And, alas, He was going away to die! He was about to be dragged away like a common felon, falsely accused by bribed witnesses and then put to the cruel and shameful death of the Cross. Would not the ignominious death of the Captain be followed by the destruction of the army and the disastrous close of the holy war? The disciples might well be seriously afraid when they knew that their great adversary was very powerful, exceedingly cunning and desperately determined to crush out the new kingdom. It must have sounded somewhat strange in their ears that the Savior should say to them, “Do not be troubled about it, and do not be afraid.”

I am sure that the tone of voice which He used would prevent them from imagining that He was mocking them. Sometimes when a man is in very great trouble, it sounds almost like mockery to say to him, “Let not your heart be troubled.” “How can I help it?” he says. “How can I be otherwise than troubled under such a trial as this? You tell me not to be afraid, but if you were in a similar position, wouldn’t you be afraid?” And we are half inclined not to repeat the exhortation, lest we should seem to be exulting over the weakness of the desponding. But we must not forget that Jesus Christ was, Himself, in trouble at that time—and yet He was perfectly calm. He was about to bear the brunt of the storm, yet He was not afraid and, therefore, being a fellow sufferer with His disciples in the trouble and being Himself the perfect pattern of sublime patience and dauntless courage, He could most properly say to them, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” And, moreover, there would be such a charm about the way in which He would say it, and such a gracious influence would go with every syllable, that the most cowardly among them must have been strengthened—and the most desponding would endeavor to shake off his fears. May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, apply to every troubled soul here, our Savior’s words of exhortation which form our text, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

I. And, first, dear Friends, let me remind you that if we are troubled and fearful, THERE IS VERY OFTEN AN EVIL CAUSE AT THE BOTTOM OF IT.

“An evil cause?” asks one. Yes, an evil cause. Permit me to use a paradox and say that it is not trouble that troubles a man so much as something else that is the secret of the trouble. I have seen many in sore trouble who, nevertheless, have not been troubled. They have been tried, but their heart has not even been wounded in the trial. The more their troubles have come upon them, the higher have they risen in Divine Grace. As their afflictions have abounded, so have their joys abounded through Christ Jesus! Do not tell me that sickness naturally depresses, for I have seen many under various forms of sickness who have been able to sing cheerily upon their beds and to praise God amid the fires! Do not tell me that poverty puts an end to a Christian’s joy, for it is not so. The golden oil that feeds the lamp of the Christian’s joy is not drawn from the wells of earth—it comes from quite another source. The Christian’s joy does not spring from what he possesses, nor his sorrow from what he lacks. As his exaltation does not come from the world, so neither does his

depression, if he lives near to God. So it is not *trouble* that troubles saints—it is something far worse than that. Let us see if we can discover what the evil cause of it may be.

With some, it is *an unhumbled heart*. I am afraid that there are many Christians in great trouble who are so proud that they will not admit that God has a right to deal with them as He is dealing. They think that there ought to be some more lenient dispensations of Providence for them. They imagine themselves to be the kind of persons upon whom the sun should always shine, who ought to walk in silver slippers and whose path should be always smooth. And if it is not so, they fancy that God is dealing harshly with them—that He is not kind to them—and they doubt His love. You may tell them that the martyrs suffered far more than they do. You may point them to many of their fellow Christians who are in much worse circumstances than they are, but that will not reconcile them to their own trials. The fact is, there is a self-love about them which has exaggerated itself beyond all due proportions into a sinful self-esteem! And this proud, vain-glorious idea of what they ought to have and ought to be, rebels against the Sovereignty of God and refuses to submit to the will of the Most High!

Remember that our sorrows usually spring out of ourselves and that when self is conquered, sorrow is, to a great extent, banished from the human heart. We may have a rebellious spirit concerning the Providence of God in many ways. I have heard of one whose husband had died and she was wearing mourning for him many years after his death. She refused to be comforted until a member of the Society of Friends said to her very pointedly, “Woman, have you not forgiven God yet?” and the remark struck home to her. There are some who actually quarrel with God over the loss of husband, or wife, or child, or parent, or friend. Now, in such a quarrel as that, one or the other must bend—and it is certain that God cannot! He has done what was right and He had a right to do what He pleased. It is the unhumbled heart which sets up its judgment in opposition to God’s judgment and dares to think that God has been unkind or even unjust. It is this wicked pride which is at the root of some of the worst sorrows which have embittered the lot of mankind! O my dear Friend, shall not God do as He wills with you and with yours? God gives, so shall He not take? Will you receive good at the hands of the Lord and will you not receive what you think to be evil? Are you so different in disposition from Job that you cannot and will not say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord”? Then I must remind you that the Holy Spirit will never begin to comfort you until this unhumbled spirit of yours is subdued! You must get rid of this rebellion against the Most High, or else your heart must continue to be troubled—

*“Mortals, be dumb! What creature dares
Dispute His awful will?
Ask no account of His affairs
But tremble and be still.”*

If it is God who has done it, no question can be raised concerning it. If it is God who has done it, no doubt as to the rightness of it can arise in the mind of any intelligent Believer. Brothers and Sisters, if we could see what God sees, we would feel that the heaviest trouble we have ever had was the thing that we would choose above all other things! You probably sometimes think that the course of Divine Providence is very mysterious, but were you as well informed concerning all the circumstances as the Lord is, you would say, “That is the course I, myself, would have chosen.” I do not doubt that when Believers get to Heaven and look back upon their pathway on earth, and recall God’s dealings with them, they will admire the amazing loving kindness and unerring wisdom of God in arranging all that they have passed through—and that they will feel that they would not have anything altered, but have had it all just as it has happened.

In many others, perhaps in the majority, the cause of heart trouble lies in *mistrust of God*. This is especially true in reference to being afraid. They are afraid that their present trials will crush them, or that some future trial will cause their destruction. But, Brothers and Sisters, you need not be afraid because of the greatness of your trial, for you must be well aware that others have had greater trials and yet have survived them! Nor need you be afraid because of the severity of your present distress, for you have been in equal distress before and yet have been delivered out of it! The real secret of your being troubled and afraid lies in the fact that you doubt your God. Either you do not think that He is equal to the emergency, or else you conceive that He has forgotten you, or is angry with you, or that His mercy is clean gone and that He will be favorable to you no more.

In any case, you are dishonoring Him by doubting Him. I know that it is the notion of some people that a state of doubting is really a high state of perfection. I heard, the other day, of a man of whom I was told that he had walked in holiness and godliness for many years, yet he had never uttered an expression which could lead anyone to think that he really believed himself to be saved. He did not dare to say that lest he should be guilty of presumption. As I listened to the story, I could not help asking, "How long has he lived in this state?" "Forty years," was the answer. "Well then," I replied, "he has been living for these forty years in grievous sin, for there is no sin which so dishonors God as does the sin of unbelief. And for a professor of religion to continue, year after year, in such a state as that until it becomes chronic is indeed terrible." Yet, as I said just now, there are some persons who think it right to continue in such a state as this. I do not wonder that their hearts are troubled! Beloved, if you believe in your God, you know that He will bring you through your present trouble and all future trials as well. If you truly love Him, you know that all things are working together for your good. Therefore, let not your heart be troubled! No, it cannot be, for your faith will drive out your fear—your confidence in God will keep your heart from being troubled.

The third evil cause of trouble of heart in some is, I fear, *covetousness*. I believe in calling things by their right names. I have known persons who have possessed quite enough to guarantee to them according to all human probabilities that they would never lack food and raiment as long as they live—yet they were troubled. Why? Well they were losing some of their money. But why did that trouble them? It was because they had not obeyed that injunction of the Apostle, "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content." I have known persons who have had so much money that if they had lived to be as old as Methuselah, they would probably have had plenty—yet, when some small loss happened to them, you would suppose that they were so poor that they must go to the workhouse! Although they had abundance left, they were afraid because of their covetousness. A man may be covetous of his own things as well as of the things of other people. He may covet his own goods by grasping them, holding them and making them his god—and when the Master comes to take away some of the goods which He has lent to him as His steward—he is troubled and afraid and cannot endure the loss of that which he has learned to love too well! It is very difficult for man to have much money running through his hands without some of it sticking. It is very sticky stuff—and when it once sticks to the hands, they are not clean in the sight of the Lord! Unless a man is able to use money without abusing it, accepting it as a talent lent to him and not as a treasure given to him—it will very soon happen that the more money he has, the more troubles he will have. Just in proportion as our substance is increased, our daily cares will be increased. And on that very soil which we most covet will grow the thorns and thistles which will make our bed uneasy by night and our deathbed hard to lie on when we come to die! So beware of covetousness, Brothers and Sisters, for otherwise you will very soon fall into trouble and fear.

Suppose, my Friend, you have more wealth than another man possesses? Then you owe to God more gratitude than that other man does! Besides, if you have more to carry than another man has, probably you also have more care than that other man has—and what is there in that to make you proud? Would even a donkey that has to carry a double load be proud because its burden was twice as heavy as that of another donkey? No, it would not be so stupid! The man who has one stick when he starts on his journey has all that he needs. Shall another man who carries 20 sticks boast over him when only one of them will be any use to him? He that has a sufficiency should be satisfied with it, but he that has more than a sufficiency has no cause to be proud concerning it. If you have more than others have, you have a greater trust and a greater charge than others have—therefore be humbler than others are and wait upon God more than others do. You have a full cup to carry, so you need a steady hand and must beware of having an unsteady head. Ask God to keep you meek and lowly as your worldly circumstances rise, for so you will rise with your circumstances. But if you are exalted and puffed up because God prospers you, you will come down even though your circumstances go up! It is poor prosperity when a man becomes outwardly richer, but inwardly poorer—when he has more gold, but less Grace—when he has more land, but less love to God. May God in His mercy preserve us all from such "prosperity" as that, and also preserve us from the pride which so often accompanies such prosperity! Remember what Paul was Inspired to write to the Corinthians—"Who makes you to differ from another? And what have you that you did not receive? Now if you received it, why do you glory as if you had not received it?"

I am afraid there are some professors who are troubled and afraid through an unequally bad cause, namely, *envy*. Alas, some good men have fallen into this gross sin! The Psalmist was envious when he saw the prosperity of the wicked.

And he said, “Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all the daylong I have been plagued, and chastened every morning.” It seemed as if he had the rough side of the road although he feared his God, while the wicked had the smooth path. Yes, and the poor Christians is very apt to get into a similar state of mind and to say, “How is it that I have to pine in poverty while God’s enemies are pampered in luxury? Why should I have to go hungry and in rags, while Dives, yonder, is clothed in purple and fine linen and fares sumptuously every day?” If any of you have felt like this, the best way to cure you of your daily trouble must be to get you no longer to look with the green eyes of jealousy upon the good things that others have, but to feel that God has a right to give where He pleases. And if He chooses to give an abundance of husks to the swine, you who are His children should be the last to envy them!

I think I have, at least once before, quoted in your hearing an illustration used by William Huntington with reference to those who live by faith, depending upon the daily bounty of God. He says, “Their case is something like that of a daughter whose father does not give her a large dowry when she is married, but who gives her what is called in the country, a hand-basket portion. That is to say, one day he will send down to her house a ham. Another time a basket of eggs. Sometimes a sack of flour. But every week something or other is sent to her from her old home, ‘with father’s love,’ and by these continued tokens of love, the daughter probably gets more than if she had received her portion in a lump sum. And she gets her father’s love sent with it every time.” It is possible that if the Lord gave to His people all at once, everything that they would need this side of Heaven, they might afterwards think that He had forgotten them, or they might forget Him! But His daily gifts, bestowed in answer to their prayers—and each one coming with their Father’s love stamped upon it, will keep Him constantly in their remembrance! In this way we shall have many loving reminders that He does not forget us—and oft-renewed assurances that He changes not and will also not suffer His children to lack any good thing. Let then the fact that God gives us all that we have, sweeten it all and make us satisfied even if that all is sometimes only a scanty supply.

In other cases I am afraid that *anger* is the cause of heart trouble and fear. Some people—I will not say some Christians, because where anger abides in the heart, it is very questionable whether the life of God can exist there at the same time! But some professors have grown angry, possibly without reason. And because they could not work their will upon the person who had offended them, they have never been at rest—and they have really done themselves serious injury through cherishing such an evil spirit! It is a desperately bad case when a professor of religion begins to feel as Haman did when Mordecai would not bow down to him. It was nothing to Haman that he was the greatest favorite of King Ahasuerus as long as Mordecai at the gate would not cringe before him. You also know how he purposed to rid himself of his enemy and how he was hanged on the very gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. His sad end ought to be a warning to all who are at all like he was in spirit. I implore you, Beloved, to love one another! And if at any time you have been grieved and vexed by others, forgive them. A forgiving spirit is a ready way to please. Your hearts must be troubled if you have in them any vestige of malice, or anger, or enmity, or unkindness toward anybody. “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” And if any can have God’s peace to the full in their hearts, it is those who are fully at peace with their fellow men. Search and see, therefore, whether your trouble of heart may not have been caused by something of that sort.

Alas, I must also mention another evil cause of heart trouble and fear. It is that which is displayed by persons of a *very fretful disposition, peevish, self-willed, and very exacting of other people*. Some of them are good people, too, when they are in their right minds and in a right humor! But when they happen to be in their fits, the best place to be in regard to them is as far off as possible! This kind of disposition may sometimes spring from constitutional peculiarities, or it may be the result of sickness and, therefore, we ought to be very patient with such people. But if any of us are at all afflicted in that way, we ought not to expect too much patience from other people, neither ought we to try their patience more than we can help. It should be our determination, in the name and strength of God, to fight against the propensity to be troubled, vexed, cross and murmuring—for all of us know what a disagreeable thing it is. I do not wonder that God is angry with murmurers—and it is not very surprising if we also get vexed with them. Suppose you help a poor man again and again, yet he never shows the slightest gratitude, but always has more complaints and murmurs more each time he comes to you? It will give you no pleasure to have further contact with him. Let us all take care not to fall into that state of mind—a child of God should not be like that. Certainly he is not like his Master if he is, for you never read

of Jesus Christ murmuring or fretting and being peevish. You never heard anyone who really knew Him say that Jesus Christ was one of those exacting people whom nobody could please. Why, on the contrary, He was one of those whom you could scarcely displease! And even when wicked men nailed Him to the tree, He prayed for them, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” [See Sermons # 897, Volume 15—THE FIRST CRY FROM THE CROSS; #2263, Volume 38—CHRIST’S PLEA FOR IGNORANT SINNERS and #3068, Volume 53—UNKNOWN DEPTHS AND HEIGHTS—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

“Let not your heart be troubled,” for the probability is that if you look below the trouble, you will find that there is underneath it some evil thing which is the real cause of the trouble. Therefore, O you children of God, in whom dwells the Spirit of God, strive against it!

II. Now, in the second place, and briefly—if we are God’s children, we ought not to have our heart troubled and afraid because THERE IS REALLY NO GOOD REASON IN ALL THE WORLD FOR SUCH TROUBLE AND FEAR.

Remember, first of all, that *you are forgiven*. Nothing ought to be a cause of trouble to a man whose sins are forgiven. There is a poor man, at this moment, lying in prison in the condemned cell. Suppose that you were able to go to him and say, “Here is a free pardon for you.” If, after that, you were to say to him, “You will have to work hard all your life. You will have to live in a poor cottage,” I am sure that he would say, “I don’t care what work I do, nor where I live, so long as I am pardoned! If I do but escape the gallows, you may do anything else that you like with me.” So, dear Friend, you are forgiven, you are a child of God, you are an heir of Heaven and you can never be cast into Hell! Cannot you also say, “Well, then, you may do what you will with me, so long as I am pardoned”? When a man’s sins are forgiven, what cause can he have to complain? Rather would we say with the Psalmist, “He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” And therefore let each one of us say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies.”

Then next, there is no cause for you Christians to be troubled, *for your best interests are perfectly safe*. You have not lost your spiritual birthright and you will never lose it! Being children of God, you are children of God forever! You have not lost your redemption—you were bought with a price and you are free forever. You have not lost your union to Christ. You are still one with Him and because He lives, you shall also live. You have not lost your hopes of Heaven. You have not lost your interest in the eternal joys. You have not lost the justifying righteousness of Christ, nor the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. All these precious things and many more are yours—therefore you have no cause to be troubled or fearful. If you were going home after this service and you were carrying a very large sum of money in your pocket—and if, when you reached your destination, you put your hand in your pocket and found that you had lost your handkerchief. And if you put your hand in your pocket, again, and found that the bag of gold was all right, you would surely not trouble about the loss of your handkerchief! Your money being safe—the loss of which would have been your ruin—you would be so delighted that you would not mind about your trivial loss. Suppose we heard of great shipwreck and that among those who were rescued was a man who, as soon as he was brought ashore, set up a great lament because he had lost his hat? Everybody would laugh at him for being so foolish—and that is very much like the trouble of a child of God who sits down and frets and worries over insignificant trifles while his immortal interests are all safe! His soul is safe. God is His, Heaven is His. He has not lost any of his real treasures. Therefore let him give heed to the Master’s words to His first disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Remember, too, O children of God, that *the troubles you are now enduring have not come to you by chance*—they were laid upon you by the gracious hand of the all-wise Jehovah who is your loving Father and Friend—

*“To His Church, His joy and treasure,
Every trial works for good—
They are dealt in weight and measure,
Yet how little understood.
Not in anger,
But from His dear covenant love.”*

Well then, if God sends you your trials, why are you troubled and afraid because of them?

Recollect, too, that *your present trials are working for your eternal good*, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Do you not

know that your troubles have already been blessed to you? Were you ever so spiritually enriched as you have been in times of storm and in hours of pain? Have you not often thought, when you grew well again, that you would like to go back to the bed of suffering, that you might grow in Grace as you did when you were there? So, as your trials have thus enriched you, why should you be troubled and afraid because of them?

Then, beside this, *all the troubles of the children of God will work out to God's Glory*. The poet was right when he represented God, Himself, as saying of His people—

*“From all their afflictions My Glory shall spring,
And the deeper their sorrows, the louder they'll sing.”*

Will you not, therefore, be glad to be troubled, seeing that thus God is being glorified in you?

Remember, too, that *your trials will soon be over* and then there will begin the bliss of Heaven which will never, never end. So the Christian pilgrim can sing—

*“The road may be rough, but it cannot be long.
And I'll smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song.”*

What if the shallows of the night fall grimly around you and the cold blast chills you to your bones? 'Tis but a little sleep and then morning breaks, and the sun rises in the land where—

*“Everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers—*

and you shall be where no night winds can ever come, or darkness ever again oppress your happy spirits! Therefore, comfort yourselves and comfort one another with these cheering thoughts.

III. Lastly, Believers ought not to be troubled or afraid because, as such a spirit comes from evil and there is no just cause or reason for it, **SO IT GENERALLY LEADS TO EVIL.**

It leads to evil to yourself. It is a very mischievous thing for a child of God to be constantly troubled and afraid. It makes him selfish—he gets to looking for comfort for himself. It makes him weak, faint, fretful and so leads him to yet further rebellion and murmuring against the Lord. God seems to attach very great importance to His people being happy. You know Isaiah was Inspired to write, “Comfort you, comfort you My people, says our God.” And David was moved to say, “Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous: and shout for joy, all you that are upright in heart.” And again, “Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yes, let them exceedingly rejoice.” While Paul writes to the saints at Philippi, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” “The oil of joy” is to the soul what oil is to the body—it gives suppleness and helps to make us strong—

*“Why should the children of a King
Go mourning all their days?”*

He would not have them do so for their own sakes. Genuine Christians may have two Heavens if they will—a Heaven below, and a Heaven above—we may drink of both the upper and the nether springs if God's Grace shall enable us to believe in God and to believe also in Jesus Christ. So let not trouble be your trouble, for it is an evil thing for yourself.

Further, do not let it be your trouble because *it leads to evil to your fellow Christians*. They see your mournful face and they are very apt to catch the infection. Some of you remember dear old Mr. Dransfield, our beloved elder who has gone to Heaven. Whenever he used to come into this building, it was like the shining of the sun! On a Lord's-Day morning when he came into the vestry, if it was a heavy, foggy morning, he would say to me, “Well, my dear Pastor, the morning is not very bright, but we can be very happy in our souls even on such a morning as this is. The fog cannot get into our hearts, blessed be God!” And then he would be sure to tell me some cheering thing that had happened during the week—some soul had been converted—or something that would help to gladden us all before we began the service. I have heard of deacons who have always been sure, on the Sabbath morning, to tell the minister any unpleasant thing that had happened during the week—so as to depress his spirit in order that they might feel duly miserable under his ministry during the rest of the morning. Never do that, Brothers and Sisters, but be bright and cheerful for the sake of your fellow Christians. I always think there is quite enough misery in the world without my making any more. There are more than enough wild beasts to howl in this wide wilderness, so I need not do any howling. Let us be among the people of whom it is written, “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them.” As God's great caravan of saints goes traveling through the Sahara of this world, let them make the clarion of holy joy ring out triumphant notes till the desert itself shall “rejoice even with joy and singing.”

Make it to be so, Beloved. Here is Mr. Ready-to-Halt coming along on his crutches. Smile at him and bid him welcome. Here is Miss Much-Afraid. Do not go to her with the story of the dragons and the giants, but tell her about the great King of the way and about the Celestial City that you have seen from the top of Mount Clear! And if you find anyone who is giving way to despondency so much that he scarcely thinks that he can be a child of God at all, let the very light of your countenance tell him that there is no real reason for a Believer's distress of mind and lead him to expect that even *he* will find precious promises in the Word which shall enable him to rejoice in the Lord! I think that many Christians have scandalized the Lord's name and cause before the ungodly. Many professors make it appear that there is not much difference between the Church and the world—but I believe that there is sufficient power in true religion to lift a Christian right up above the world and to make him live in such a serene atmosphere that, notwithstanding all the briars and troubles that may come upon him, he will be able to say, as David did when he fled from Saul, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early."

Moreover, *this being troubled and afraid does much mischief among sinners*. They hear that we are the children of God, that we have found Grace and favor in the sight of the Lord and they watch to see what sort of people we are. If they see us prosper and see that we are happy, then they say, "Yes, we also are happy when we prosper." If they see us at services and meetings and find us rejoicing, they say, "Yes, of course, that is a sort of religious dissipation and they are happy." They watch till they catch us on the sickbed—and then when pain is sharp upon us, if they see us patient, they say, "There is something in religion after all." They wait till we are poor, or till we are bereaved—and then if we are calm under losses and crosses—and still praise the Lord, they say "Ah! There is something real in it." They watch when we come to die and if they can hear us sing some sweet song in the midst of the river, and can witness a calm hallowed peace resting upon us in the last solemn hour, they whisper to one another, "There is something real and true here. There is a supernatural power that makes these men able to die as we could not die." Thus they are often led by the Spirit of God to seek Grace for themselves—that they also may be saved!

Patient Christians and joyful Christians are better preachers in the homes where they live than we can ever be from our pulpits! And happy Christians who at all times, and under all circumstances, wear a cheerful aspect, greatly recommend the Gospel to others. You know that if you saw a man-servant who looked very thin and lean, and as he went about, he seemed to be always wringing his hands in misery and sighing, you would say, "That poor fellow must have a hard time of it. He has got a bad master, you may depend upon it. I should think he has small wages and very short commons. He lives in the house, doesn't he? There's very little to be had there, I am sure." You hear that the gentleman needs another servant and as you read the advertisement, you say, "That won't suit me, the poor wretch he already has is such a woe-begone creature that I don't wish to be as he is." How different it is in other households! A bright, cheerful man-servant says, "I have, been with my master for many years and the longer I live with him, the better I like him. He is the best master I ever heard or read of. I used to serve another man, but he treated me so shamefully that I ran away from him. But ever since I have been in this house I cannot tell you how happy I have been. I like my master's service, I like his other servants, I like his wages, I like everything about him! And I shall be very glad to see you in the same happy service." "Oh!" you would say, "That place will do well for me if the master will but have me." You know that there are more flies caught with honey than with vinegar—and there are more souls brought to Christ by happy Christians than there ever will be by all the dreadful gloom and solemnity which some people find it necessary to put on! I say that because I suspect that some of it is not genuine. There are some who think that it is right to look as if true religion were the summit of misery, but it is not so. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," lest you should bring up a bad report and make people think that the land which flows with milk and honey is not a good land, but a land that eats up the inhabitants thereof.

To close in a sentence or two—if you are always troubled and afraid, *you will bring dishonor upon the name of God* and you will make the ways of religion to be evilly spoken of. Let it not be so, O mourning Christian! Ask the Lord to help you to put away the ashes and to take the oil of joy instead of mourning, and the garment of praise in place of the spirit of heaviness—

***"Sing, though sense and carnal reason
Gladly would stop the joyful song!"***

*Sing, and count it highest treason
For a saint to hold his tongue!
Sing, for you shall Heaven inherit,
Sing, and never the song have done—
Sing to Father, Son, and Spirit,
One in Three, and Three in One!*

My one regret, in preaching this sermon is that I cannot address it to you all. There are some unconverted persons here who are troubled. I hope you will be still more troubled! I cannot say to you, “Do not be afraid,” for you ought to be even more afraid than you are and you have everything to make you afraid. But though you are troubled and afraid, remember that there is a Savior and that this Savior may be yours—for whoever believes in Him shall have his sins forgiven and shall be delivered from the wrath to come. If you believe in Him with all your heart, then my text may be addressed to you—but not till then. May God lead you so to believe and then we will say to you, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Amen.

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

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