

“HE BLESSED HIM THERE”**NO. 3219**

A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.*“He blessed him there.”*
Genesis 32:29.

JACOB had said to the Angel, “Tell me, I pray You, Your name.” In answer to that enquiry, he was gently rebuked. The Angel did not come to ratify Jacob’s curiosity, but He came as a messenger from God with a blessing—“and He blessed him there.” There are a great many things we would like to know when we read the Bible. But if we read it so as to find salvation, that will be much better than having our curiosity gratified. When we come to hear a sermon, too, we should like, perhaps, to meet with some fine passages, or to have some telling anecdotes that we could carry away with us. But if, instead, the Lord’s messenger shall give us a blessing from God, Himself, it will be infinitely better! The disciples, after the Resurrection, wanted to know from the Savior something about the times and seasons, but He did not tell it to them. He said to them, “You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you.” That was far better, far more valuable to them—and though for the time it might not please them so much, yet, for all practical purposes, it enriched them far more! Angels’ names we can afford to leave, but God’s blessing we must have and we cannot do without it!

I. Let us just think, for a minute or two, WHAT THIS BLESSING WAS WHICH JACOB GAINED AS THE RESULT OF A NIGHT OF PRAYER.

I wonder whether anybody here has ever spent a night in prayer. Is there a man among us who has ever wrestled with the Angel for so long? Alas, I am afraid to put the question and ask for an answer lest I should only gain one through your silence! Brothers and Sisters, it is not easy to continue for a whole night in prayer. It has been well observed that it is easier to hear a sermon two hours long than to pray for an hour. The more spiritual the exercise, the sooner we tire. Joshua was not weary of fighting in the valley, but Moses’ hands began to grow weary with holding them up in prayer. Yet surely there have been times in our lives, as in that of Jacob’s, when a night of prayer would have been becoming. Surely we have been in as great straits and struggles as he was and have needed the benediction of Heaven as did that much-trying Patriarch. Perhaps it would be well, before long, to try to accomplish this feat and wait, from sunset to sunrise with God. The old knights, before they took a higher degree of knighthood, spent a night in some church and were supposed to be in prayer. He that shall really spend a night in prayer shall win celestial blessings. He shall lie down a Jacob, but he shall rise up a prince! There is a distinct advance from Jacob to Israel, from being a supplanter to being a prince! Prayer gives an incalculable blessing and this is the advance Jacob gained—an incomparable advance in spiritual things.

But besides that, he gained as the blessing attending that night’s prayer, *deliverance out of great peril*. He thought that he and his would have been slain by Esau, but the Angel blessed him and not a single lamb of all his flock was hurt, neither were the women and children put to the slightest fear! Prayer brought down Heaven’s shield to cover Jacob in the hour of danger!

Again, he got what was still better under some aspects, *reconciliation with his brother*. He had done his brother grievous wrong, but his brother forgave him. I do not know, but I think a Christian would almost sooner be exposed to peril than live under a sense of having committed an injustice. It is a great relief to your mind, when you have done so, to find it all set right again. To think, “I did that man a wrong, but it is gone and forgiven forever,” is a blessing worth praying all night to obtain!

Happy was Jacob, also, to have *the breach healed between himself and his brother*. To meet him, fall upon his neck and kiss him—to feel that being so near akin they should no longer be divided in heart. Are you divided from your brother? Has any root of bitterness sprung up to trouble you? Have the friendships of life been curdled by dislike? It were well to have a night of prayer to get them back again—and again to serve side by side with your fellows. I take it to be a vast blessing to a Christian to be delivered from the temptation to retaliate, to be saved from all hardness of heart and bitterness of spirit. The Angel, when He gave Jacob that, blessed him, indeed!

Besides all these blessings—in addition to having risen in rank before God, to having had his wrong amended, to having been forgiven by his brother, to being restored to friendship—I do not doubt that from that night a blessing rested upon Jacob’s heart and the dews of that night fed his soul for years to come! He was anointed with fresh oil from that moment! And as he rose, limping upon his thigh, he was not merely a better man by title, but better by nature! He had been away in a far-off country with Laban and much of the dew of his spirit had gone from him. But now that he had got back again into Canaan, the Angel sealed his return by giving him the blessings of the return!

Such were the blessings of Jacob and I should not wonder if there is someone here who has said, “I know in a measure, personally, what those blessings are and wish I enjoyed them to the fullest.” My prayer, Beloved Brothers and Sisters, is that even tonight God may bless you! According to your necessity, may He shape the blessing, but oh, may He bless you, indeed, and bless you here!

II. Now, secondly, let us enquire, WHAT WAS THE PLACE WHERE JACOB GOT THIS CHOICE BLESSING?

And the answer comes, first, it was a place of very peculiar trial. He had just got out of Laban’s clutches to fall in the way of Esau. He had fled from a lion and now a bear met him—and he feared that his wives and children would be utterly destroyed by his revengeful brother. It was a fearful trial and the mere fear of it must have left scars on his heart. Yet, “He blessed him there.” Is not this a very usual circumstance with the people of God, that their severest trials are the times of their choicest mercies? I remind you how often this has been the case, and how true Cowper’s words have been—

*“The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.”*

Believe that, for the present trial in which you are, perhaps, now entering, it shall be written, “He blessed him there where He tried him.” He will bless you there, where He is trying you—in the waters, in the furnace when you are being refined again and again, and the hot coals are being heaped upon you—He will bless you there! The disciples feared, we are told, as they entered into the cloud, but it was there that they saw the Savior transfigured. And often we fear the cloud into which we enter when we are only passing into the secret place of the Most High, where, under the shadow of the Almighty, we shall have yet more delightful visions of Himself!

If we were wise, we would begin to welcome trials. We would rather fear to be without them for, up till now, what do we not owe to the furnace, to the rod, to the threshing-flail? Scarcely has a mercy of any great spiritual value come to us at all except by the way of the cross! I am sure I may look upon every choice blessing I have enjoyed as having come to me in rumbling wagons like the good things which came from Egypt to old father Jacob. We have been blessed in places of trial—let us not, therefore, dread to go to such places again, but go on our way towards Heaven feeling that whatever difficulty we meet with shall only be another of the spots in which God shall bless us. “He blessed him there.”

It was also a place of pleading. That is most noteworthy. “He blessed him there,” where he had spent a night in prayer. Where he had a wrestling match with an unknown Stranger. There where he would not let the Angel go. There where he held Him fast until he gained the benediction. “He blessed him there.” If you are short of blessings, resort to the place of mighty prayer—

*“Beyond your utmost needs
His love and power can bless!
To praying souls He always grants
More than they can express.”*

All things are open to the man who knows how to pray importunately. “The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force.” Mark you, Jacob’s wrestling was no child’s play. I have seen painters attempt to depict it and only now and then have they caught the true idea. But one of them represents Jacob as trying most lustily to give his an-

tagonist a back fall and, no doubt, he did tax his strength to the utmost until, in the dead of night, he was faint—faint with the toil he had gone through.

Begging of God must be real work. It is said of begging that it is the worst trade in the world, but a man who is to make anything of prayer must throw his whole soul into it. Your prayers that have hardly life enough in them to live, your words that hang like icicles beneath your tongues, that are scarcely heard even by yourselves, how do you think that they will be heard by God? If there is not enough prayer in us to stir our own hearts, how can we expect that God should be moved by our entreaties? It was not so with Jacob—“He blessed him there.” There he prevailed, and if you want a blessing, you must get it in that way. When you get to the state that you will take no denial—that you would sooner die than not be blessed—you shall get it.

Again, in addition to its being a place of trial and a place of pleading, *it was a place of communion*. Do you recognize it? Jacob called it, “Peniel”—that is, “the face of God”—because there he had seen God face to face. O Beloved, these are things to feel rather than to speak about! To see God! Blessed, indeed, are “the pure in heart” when they get this benediction fulfilled in their experience and come so into union with Christ as to be able to look to God with an eye that is not blinded with fear! Oh to speak with God, pouring out our hearts before Him and to hear Him speaking with us, the promise no longer lying like a dead letter on the page, but leaping out of the page as though alive, as though God had just spoken it and we were hearing it from His Divine mouth! Do you know what this blessing means? Can you read Solomon’s Song through and stay, “I understand it”? Is it your experience that you have ever fed on the body and blood of Christ, having His very life in you? If you have, then you have seen God and it will be said of you, “He blessed him there.” Brothers and Sisters, we miss a thousand blessings because we are too busy to commune with God! We are here, there, and everywhere, except where we ought to be. We are running to this and to that instead of sitting with Mary at the Master’s feet. He blessed Mary as she sat there, and there, too, will He be sure to bless us—

*“Oh that I could forever sit
With Mary at the Master’s feet!
Be this my happy choice—
My only care, delight and bliss,
My joy, my Heaven on earth, be this—
To hear the Bridegroom’s voice!”*

But once more. Where Jacob got the blessing, *it was a place of conscious weakness*. The Angel touched the sinew in the hollow of his thigh. While he got the blessing, he got lameness, too, and he might be well content to carry that lameness to his grave! I have often found that the place where I have seen most of my own insignificance, baseness, unbelief and depravity has been the place where I have found a great blessing. Did you ever try to preach and fail in the doing of it—and then found that God blessed you there? Have you ever tried to be earnest with the Sunday school children and were earnest, too, but in your own judgment you made a fool of yourself? Have you not found that God blessed you there? Is it not one of the greatest blessings that can occur to us to be made to think little of ourselves? May not God be enriching us most when He is emptying us and preparing us for the largest possible benediction when He is making us to see how destitute in all things we are?

The most unpleasant places to us in life are often the places where the blessing comes most. “He blessed him there.” He took the rich man from his palace and made him live in a cottage, but, “He blessed him there.” He took the strong man from his vigor and laid him on a sick bed. But, “He blessed him there.” He brought down the man of full assurance into a state of trembling and anxiety, but, “He blessed him there.” He brought the man of busy usefulness down to be a patient sufferer, unable to stir hand or foot for the Lord he loved so well, but, “He blessed him there.” He took the man of good repute and allowed his character to be evilly spoken of—and his good name to be withered—but, “He blessed him there.” It is often so. We limp with lameness, with shrinking of the sinew, the precious thing wherein our strength seemed to lie! But that may be the very way to a benediction which otherwise we would never have received.

I would then encourage each one of you to seek a blessing, wherever you may be. I think most of you have been in the house of trial—seek to get a blessing there. The place of pleading, at any rate, is open to you all—get a blessing there. The sacred spot of communion—we may get the blessing that is always to be found there. And I suppose most of you have had your times of tumbling, of stripping and getting very low—may you get a blessing there!

III. So I turn to notice very briefly that THERE ARE OTHER PLACES WHERE CHRISTIANS GET BLESSINGS besides the place where Jacob won his.

Beloved, there is a place (how shall I speak of it?) where the Lord has always blessed us. It is *of old in eternity*. God is so glad to bless His people that He began doing it long ago! “Long ago,” do I say? He began before time began! He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. When the Decree was given, when the Covenant was established, when the Election was determined, He blessed each one of us there, if indeed we are Believers in Jesus—

*“Sons we are through God’s election,
Who in Jesus Christ believe
By eternal destination,
Sovereign Grace we here receive!
Lord, Your mercy
Does both Grace and glory give.”*

I might point to a thousand spots all down the line of history and say that all of us who are in Christ were blessed there! But I will only linger at the Cross and say, “Where Jehovah was made a curse for us and suffered in our place, He blessed us there! And at that open, empty tomb, from which escaped the living Savior whom the bands of death could not hold, He blessed us there! He who died for our transgression, rose again for our justification and by His Resurrection—He blessed us there! And when He stood on Olivet about to depart and pronounced the blessing upon His disciples, He blessed us there! And as He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive—from His royal chariot He cast down lavishly with, both His hands ten thousand gifts for the sons of men which He had received even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them—He blessed us there! And up in Heaven where He sits till His work is done, He points to His wounds, and points to our names, and reminds the Father of His eternal love to us! He has blessed us there, for He has raised us up and “made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

But as *there are places in your own experience*, Beloved, where He has blessed you, I would take some of you back in your history to the moment when you first knew the Lord. I often try to refresh your memories about that—and I do not think I can do it too often. Where was the spot when, laden with woes and sins, you saw Jesus Christ and looked to Him and at once were lightened? Where was it? When was it? Twenty years ago, perhaps. With some of us, more than that! With others, only two or three years ago. With others of you, perhaps, it is only a week ago! Well, whenever it was, when He led you to see the Savior, He blessed you, there, as you never had been experimentally blessed before! I should not wonder if the day is marked down in your diary, though there is little need it should be, for it is marked on the tablets of your memory and you will never forget it. O blessed spot! O happy moment when Jesus first met with me! He blessed me there! Well, since that time, have there not been other places where He has blessed you?

I might mention every trial you have had and say, “He blessed you there.” I might mention every benefit you have received and say, “He blessed you there.” But time would fail me. Only I will remind you that when you have been prompt to obey your Lord and keep close to Him—and have not allowed any cloud to come between you and Him, He has blessed you there! If you have kept up that spirit of obedience, take care to let your eyes be to Him as the eyes of a handmaiden are to her mistress, for He will bless you there! And have you not found that when you have been most empty and had least self-reliance, He has blessed you there? When you have been very weak and little in your own esteem, and felt that you were nothing, and less than nothing, and ready to die—has He not blessed you there? When you have been kept low, without an ambitious thought, down on the very ground before Him and have been afraid to look up from a sense of unworthiness, has He not blessed you there? Oh, then, keep to the low places! There is no place so safe as the Valley of Humiliation—

*“He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low, no pride.”*

He has blessed you there! It would be difficult for me to say where God has *not* blessed me. Wherever He has led me, wherever He has directed me, seeking His blessing I have found it and, therefore, will I bear my witness to His faithfulness.

Well, by-and-by, when your time will come to die, He will bless you there. Before that time, you may be a sufferer, but He will bless you there. You may lose the dear husband who now is your strength, or the beloved wife who now is your comfort, but He will bless you there! You may have to go to the grave with one child after another—and you your-

self may be very weak and scarcely have life left within you, but He will bless you there! What He has been He will be. If God could change, we might doubt, but since He never changes and is without shadow of turning, let us look back through the many days since we first met Him and He met us. Remember that we have been held up till now and that He has helped us in every time of need! And then ask—

*“After so much mercy past,
Will He let us sink at last?”*

What I am saying is very commonplace and might suggest itself to anybody here. But, at the same time, when you get into trouble, it does not always suggest itself and you have need to be reminded of these simple principles. He blessed you there, and in such places He will bless you again!

One more word about that, and it is this. Has not He often blessed you *in the House of Prayer*? Has He not blessed you in listening to the Gospel? I know He has. Never, therefore, neglect the House of God. Has He not blessed you at the Prayer Meeting? Cannot you say, “He blessed me there”? Well, then, let us see your face there as often as possible! Has He not blessed you at the Communion Table? Oh, if there is under Heaven an ordinance that is Christ’s mirror. If there is under Heaven a hand that can withdraw the blind and pull up the lattices and let us see the King in His beauty, it is the Lord’s Supper! He has often blessed us there! Let those who despise the Table of the Lord stay away—but those who have got the blessing will wish to be there often and come again and again, saying, “Sirs, we would see Jesus.”

IV. We have seen what Jacob’s blessing was and where God blessed Jacob. We remember where He has blessed us and now, in the last place, let me ask, IS NOT THIS ONE OF THE PLACES WHERE WE MAY EXPECT HIM TO BLESS US?

Is there a man here who, never, to his own knowledge, had a blessing from God and who is saying, “I wish God would bless me, even me”? Are you willing, if God helps you, to give up all your sins? Would you wish to be clear of them? Well, Soul, if you desire that, God will bless you right now! For, if you would be rid of sin, God also wishes you to be rid of it—and so you and He are agreed. He will be sure to blot your sins out and tread them under His feet through His dear Son, Jesus Christ. Do you say that you need a blessing? I will put another question to you. Are you willing to have Jesus Christ be your Savior, not in part, but altogether? Will you let Christ be the first and the last? Will you take Him not to be a makeweight, but a Savior who can save you from head to foot, who can give His blood to cleanse you, His righteousness to cover you, Himself to be All-in-All to you? Soul, if you will take a whole Christ, He waits to be received by you! Only trust Him and He is yours! “To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.”

There was a soul, once, that wanted Christ and, “He blessed him there!” There was a soul once that wanted to be rid of sin and, “He blessed him there.” There was a soul that said, “Lord, save or I perish!” And “He blessed him there.” There was another whom said, “God be merciful to me, a sinner” and, “He blessed him there!” There was one that cried to Him and He did not seem to hear—but at last she came in the crowd and touched His garment’s hem—and He blessed her there! And there was another whom He called a dog. “Yet,” she said, “the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table,” and He blessed her there! O anxious, seeking, timid, trembling Souls, do trust in Jesus! Rest in Jesus and He will bless you now—and you shall go on your way rejoicing!

It was with a young man [In this paragraph, Mr. Spurgeon was evidently describing his own experience at his conversion and afterwards] a day of seeking and he entered a little sanctuary and heard a sermon from the words “Look unto Me, and be you saved.” He obeyed the Lord’s command and, “He blessed him there.” Soon after, he made a profession of his faith before many witnesses, declaring his consecration to the Lord—and “He blessed him there.” And soon he began to labor for the Lord in little rooms among a few people and, “He blessed him there.” His opportunities enlarged and, by faith, he ventured upon daring things for the Lord’s sake—and “He blessed him there.” A household grew about him and together with his loving wife he tried to train his children in the fear of the Lord—and “He blessed him there.” Then came sharp and frequent trials and he was in pain and anguish, but the Lord “blessed him there.” This is that man’s experience all along—from the day of his conversion to this hour! Uphill and down dale his path has been a varied one, but for every part of his pilgrimage he can praise the Lord, for, “He blessed him there.”

There may perhaps, be some Christians here in trouble. Brother, Sister, I do not ask you what your trouble is, and I do not want to know. But there is a little text I would like to whisper to you—“Casting all your care upon Him, for He

cares for you.” Will you not trust to Him after that? If so, He will bless you there! Is your trouble concerning temporal need? Let me put this passage into your mouth as a sweet morsel, “Your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him.” Suck that down and He will bless you there! Oh, what a blessing will come out of the marrow and fatness of that thought! Is there a poor Christian here who says, “I feel half ashamed to go to the Communion Table. I am so unworthy”? You never were worthy and never will be! Turn your eyes again to the Cross! Look to the Savior for worthiness. He will bless you there! “I feel so cold and chill,” says another. Think of the Savior’s love to poor, dead, cold sinners such as you are and He will bless you there! If you are very cold, it is no use thinking of the cold in order to get hot—the best thing is to go to the fire. And if you feel dull and dead, do not try to get better by looking within and examining yourself—fly away to Jesus Christ and He will bless you there! Let all of us now say, “Dear Lord, meet with us, show us Your hands and Your side.” And if we come to His Throne in that spirit of desire, He will bless us there!

The Lord be with us all, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
MATTHEW 10:24-42.

Our Lord had been sending forth His 12 Apostles to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and to work miracles in His name. Having given them their commission, He warned them of the treatment they could expect to receive and then fortified their minds against the persecutions they would have to endure.

Verses 24, 25. *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?* The name, Beelzebub, or Beelzebul, meaning the “god of filth” or, as some say, “the god of flies,” was applied by the Jews to the very worst of the evil spirits. They supposed that there were some devils worse than others and the very head and master of them all they called Beelzebub. And now they supplied this title to our Lord Jesus, Himself! Well then, if men should give us evil names and evil characters, need we marvel? Shall Christ be spit upon and despised—and shall you and I be honored and exalted? You have heard of Godfrey de Bouillon, the Crusader who entered Jerusalem in triumph, but who refused to have a golden crown put upon his head because, he said, he never would be crowned with gold where Christ was crowned with thorns. So do you expect to be honored in the world where your Lord was crucified?

26. *Fear them not, therefore, for there is nothing covered that shall be revealed; and hidden that shall not be known.* “They will misrepresent you, slander you and speak evil of you—but if your good name is covered up now, it shall be revealed one of these days—perhaps in this life, but if not in this life—certainly at the Day of Judgment “when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known.” It is really marvelous how sometimes in this life slandered men suddenly obtain a refutation of their accusers and then it seems as if the world would serve them as the Greeks did their successful runners or wrestlers when they lifted them upon their shoulders and carried them in triumph!

27. *What I tell you in darkness, that speak you in light: and what you hear in the ear, that preach you upon the housetops.* [See Sermon #2674, Volume 46—LEARNING IN PRIVATE WHAT TO TEACH IN PUBLIC—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeon.org>.] This is what we are to preach—what Christ tells us. And this is how we are to get the matter of our discourses—be alone with Christ, let Him talk to us in the darkness—in the quietude of the closet where we commune with Him in prayer. Then this is where we are to preach, “upon the housetops.” We cannot literally do this, here in this land upon our slanting roofs, but in the East, “the housetops” were the most public places in the city—and all of them flat—so that anyone proclaiming anything from the housetops would be sure of an audience, and especially at certain times of the day! Preach, then, you servants of God, in the most public places of the land! Wherever there are people to hear, let there not be any lack of tongues to speak for God!

28. *And fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell.* A philosopher—Anaxarchus, I think it was—was known to say when a certain tyrant had threatened to kill him, “You cannot kill me. You may crush this *body*, but you cannot touch Anaxarchus.” So fear not those who cannot kill the soul—if that is safe, you are safe! Even Seneca frequently asserted that it was not in the power of any man to hurt a good philosopher, “For,” he said, “even death is gain to such a man!” And certainly it is so to the

Christian! For him to die is indeed gain! But oh, fear that God who can destroy the soul, for then the body, also, is destroyed with a terrible and tremendous destruction! “Fear Him.”

29, 30. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* [See Sermon #187, Volume 4—PROVIDENCE—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] So then, God takes more care of us than we take of ourselves. You never heard of a man who numbered the hairs of his head! Men number their sheep and their cattle, but the Christian is so precious in God’s esteem that He takes care of the meanest parts of his frame and numbers even the hairs of his head!

31, 32. *Fear you not, therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows. Whoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in Heaven.* What a glorious promise is this! “I will confess him to have been bought with My blood. I will confess him to have been My faithful follower and friend. I will confess him to be My brother, and in so doing I will favor him with a share of My Glory.” Have you confessed Christ before men? If you have trusted Him as your Savior, but have not publicly professed your faith in Him, however sincere you may be, you are living in the neglect of a known duty and you cannot expect to have this promise fulfilled to you if you do not keep the condition that is appended to it! Christ’s promise is to confess those who confess Him. Be you, then, avowedly on the Lord’s side. “Come out from among them and be you separate, says the Lord.” Outside the camp the Savior suffered—and outside the camp must His disciples follow Him, bearing His reproach!

33. *But whoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in Heaven.* Not to confess Christ is practically to deny Him. Not to follow Him is to go away from Him. Not to be for Him is to be against Him. Looking at this matter of confessing Christ in that light, there is cause for solemn self-examination by all who regard themselves as His disciples.

34. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.* Do not misunderstand the Savior’s words! Christ’s usually spoke in a very plain manner, and plainness is not always compatible with guardedness. Christ *did* come to make peace—this is the ultimate end of His mission, but for the present, Christ did not come to make peace. Wherever Christianity comes, it causes a quarrel because the light must always quarrel with the darkness and sin can never be friendly with righteousness! It is not possible that honesty should live in peace with thievery! It cannot be that there should be harmony between God’s servants and the servants of the devil! In this sense, then, understand our Savior’s words.

35, 36. *For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.* This is always the case, and I suppose will be to the end of the chapter. Whenever true religion comes into a man’s heart and life, those who are without the Grace of God, however near and dear they may be to him, will be sure to oppose him!

37-39. *He that loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that takes not his cross, and follows after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it.* In the days of the martyrs, one man was brought before the judges and, through fear of the flames, he recanted and denied the faith. He went home, but before the year was ended his own house caught fire and he was miserably consumed in it, having had to suffer quite as much pain as he would have had to endure for Christ’s sake but having no consolation in it. He found his life, yet he lost it. Now, in a higher degree, all who, to save themselves, shun the Cross of Christ, only run into the fire to escape from the sparks! They shall suffer more than they would otherwise have done. But whoever is willing to give up everything for Christ shall learn that no man is ever really a loser by Christ in the long run! Sooner or later, if not in this life, certainly in the next, the Lord will abundantly make up to every man all that he has ever suffered for His sake. Now comes a very delightful passage—

40. *He that receives you, receives Me, and he that receives Me receives Him that sent Me.* When, therefore, you are kind to the poor. When you help the people of God in their difficulties and necessities, you are really helping Christ in the person of His poor but faithful followers!

41. *He that receives a Prophet in the name of a Prophet.* That is, not as a gentleman, nor merely as a man, nor as a talented individual, but as a Prophet of God—

41. *Shall receive a Prophet’s reward; and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward.* Just the same reward which God gives to Prophets and righteous men, He will give to

those who receive them in the name of a Prophet or of a righteous man. A Prophet’s reward must be something great and such shall be the reward of those who generously receive the servants of God!

42. *And whoever shall give a drink unto one of these little ones—only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple—verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.* There have been times, even in our own country when to give “a cup of cold water” has been to run the risk of suffering death. In the dark days of persecution, some who were called heretics were driven out into the fields in the depth of winter to perish in the cold—the king’s subjects were forbidden—upon pain of death, to give them anything either to eat or to drink. Now, in such a case as that, giving “a cup of cold water” would mean far more than if you or I simply gave a cup of water to someone who happened to be thirsty. But our Lord Jesus Christ here promises to reward any who, for His servants’ sake, will dare to risk any consequences that may fall upon themselves.

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

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