

GOOD CHEER FROM CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER THE WORLD

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A SERMON
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“These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”
John 16:33

[Other Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are #1327, Volume 22—CHRIST THE OVERCOMER OF THE WORLD and #1994, Volume 33—SWEET PEACE FOR TRIED BELIEVERS—read/download both sermons free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

The Believer is in two places, and he lives two lives. In the text there are two places spoken of—“in Me” and, “in the world.”

The saint's noblest life is “hid with Christ in God.” This is his new life, his spiritual life, his incorruptible life, his everlasting life. Rejoice, Beloved, if you are in Christ, and enjoy the privilege which belongs to that condition—“that in Me you might have peace.” Do not be satisfied without it! It is your right through your relationship to the Prince of Peace. Because you are in Christ, your life of lives is always safe and should be always restful. Your greatest interests are all secure, for they are guaranteed by the Covenant of which Jesus is the Surety. Your treasure, your eternal portion, is laid up with Him in Heaven where neither rust nor robber can enter. Therefore, be of good cheer! Be restful and happy, for you are in Christ and He has said, “These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace.”

You are sorrowfully conscience that you also live another life, for you dwell in the midst of evil men, or, as the text puts it, you are “in the world.” I need not enlarge upon that fact, for probably, dear Friend, every time you go out to business or to daily labor, you find by the ungodly speeches of graceless men, that you are in the world which lies in the Wicked One. Even while you dwell in the sweet seclusion of domestic life, though your family has been graciously visited, and your dear ones are all Believers, yet even *there* matters occur which make you feel that you are “in the world—a world of sin and sorrow. You are not yet in Heaven—do not dream that you are. It would be a pity for a sailor to expect the sea to be as stable as the land, for the sea will be the sea to the end and the world will be the world to you as long you are in it.

The Savior warns His people, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” That is to say, your condition will at times be as unpleasant as that of wheat under the flail, for the Latin word, “tribulation,” signifies threshing. Many blows of the flail are needed to separate your chaff from your wheat and, therefore, while you are in this world, you are on the threshing-floor. The Greek word which Jesus used is not quite of the same import as our English-Latin word, but it means pressing grief and searching trial. You must at times experience trial while you are in the world, though not always to the same degree, for God gives some of His people much rest even while here below—but this does not arise out of the world—it is His own special gift. “In the world you shall have tribulation” is as sure a fact as that in Christ you shall have peace!

Now, because of this tribulation and the sorrow which is likely to come of it, our Savior gives us the words of good cheer to which our attention is directed in the text. We have first to show *what sorrow the comfort is aimed at* and, secondly, *what is the actual comfort here bestowed*.

I. WHAT IS THIS TRIBULATION IN THE WORLD AT WHICH THE SAVIOR'S WORDS OF COMFORT ARE AIMED?

It includes *the afflictions which come upon us because we are men living among men* and not yet at Home among angels and glorified saints. We dwell among beings who are born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Between other men and us there are many points of difference, but we share with them in the common infirmities, labors, sicknesses, bereavements and necessities of our fallen race. We are outside of Eden's gate with the rest of Adam's family. We may be

greatly beloved of God and yet be poor. God's love to Lazarus did not prevent his lying at the rich man's gate, nor hinder the dogs from licking his sores. Saints may be sick as well as other men—Job and David and Hezekiah felt sore diseases. Saints go into the hospital as well as sinners, for their bodies are liable to the same accidents and ailments. Such diseases as men bring upon themselves by vice, the godly escape and, therefore, as a rule, God's people have a great advantage over the reckless and reprobate in point of health. But, still, in this respect the best of men are only men and it will often be said, "Lord, he whom You love is sick." Upon the bodies of the godly the elements have the same power as upon others—upon them the hot desert wind blows, or through their garments the cold penetrates—the sun scorches them in the fierceness of its summer heat, or chilling dampness threaten the flame of life. In this respect, one event happens unto all, though not without mysterious and blessed differences. No screen is set around the godly to protect them from physical suffering—they are not living in the land of Goshen so that light cheers their dwelling while the dense fog hangs over the rest of the land! Scant is the need to dwell up this theme, for it is well known that "many are the afflictions of the righteous," because they are in a world which, for a while, is made subject to vanity.

Nor may we forget that we endure a second set of tribulation *because we are Christians*. Ishmael was not mocked, but Isaac was, for he was born after the promise. Esau's posterity never suffered bondage in Egypt, but Israel must be trained by hard service. *Persecution is for the righteous*, wicked men are in honor among their ungodly associates. Slander shoots her poisoned arrows, not at the vicious, but at the virtuous. Birds do not peck at sour fruit, but they wage war upon the sweet and ripe. Holy men must expect to be misrepresented, misinterpreted and often willfully maligned—while hypocrites have their reward in undeserved homage. Carry what load you choose upon your shoulders and no one will notice it unless, indeed, they obey the good old rule and "respect the burden." But if you take up Christ's Cross and bravely bear it, few will respect the burden, or praise the bearer! Graceless men will add weight to your load, for the offense of the Cross has not ceased. The seed of the serpent still has enmity against the Seed of the woman, and one and another will commence biting at the heel which treads the sacred way of Christ. It is the nature of the wicked to hate the righteous, even as the wolf rages against the sheep. This world cannot be the friend of the friend of God unless, indeed, Belial can have concord with Christ—and this we know is impossible! In one form or another, the Egyptian will oppress the Israelite till the day of the bringing out with a high hand and an outstretched arm. If today the enmity is restrained in its manifestation, it is because the law of the land, by the good Providence of God, does not now allow the rack, the stake, or the dungeon. Our Lord said to His first disciples, "In the world you shall have tribulation," and He explained it to mean that men would put them out of the synagogues. Yes, that the time would come when those that *killed* them would think that they did God service! Tribulation of that sort remains up to the measure in which it is not hindered by Divine Power. The spirit out of which it sprang cannot die till men are renewed. A man's foes are still they of his own household. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

Nor is the opposition of the world confined to persecution. It sometimes takes the far more dangerous form of flattery—pleasing baits are held out and allurements are used to decoy the Believer from his Lord. Many have been grievously wounded by the world when it has met them with the kiss of Judas on its lips and a dagger in its right hand wherewith to slay the soul! Woe unto those who are ignorant of its devices! This is a sore trouble under the sun, that men are false—their words are softer than butter, but inwardly they are drawn swords! This has often surprised young Christians. They imagined that since the godly were charmed at the sight of their early graces, all others would be equally pleased. They are dumbfounded when they find that their good is evilly spoken of. Is any hearer of mine one of these raw recruits? Let him learn that to be a soldier of the Cross means real war—not a sham fight! He is in an enemy's country and the time will yet come when, as a veteran warrior, he will be surprised if he lives a day without a conflict, or is able for an hour to sheathe his sword—

*"Must I be carried to the skies,
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?
Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood
To help me on to God?
Surely I must fight if I would reign—
Increase my courage, Lord!"*

*I'll bear the toil, endure the pains,
Supported by Your Word'*

Certain tender hearts are not only surprised, but they are daunted and grieved by the world's opposition. Gentle, loving spirits who would not oppose anybody if they could help it, keenly feel the wanton assaults of those whom they would rather please than provoke. The sensitiveness of love renders the choicest characters the most susceptible of pain under cruel opposition—especially when it comes from beloved kinsfolk. To those who love God and man, it is at times an agony to be compelled to appear as the cause of strife, even for Christ's sake. We would gladly follow peace with all men, yet are we often forced to cry—

*“My soul with him that hates peace
Has long a dweller been!
I am for peace, but when I speak,
For battle they are keen.
My soul distracted mourns and pines
To reach that peaceful shore
Where all the weary are at rest,
And troubles vex no more.”*

We are sent forth as sheep among wolves—and this jars upon our gentleness which loves far better to lie down in the green pastures near the Shepherd and in the midst of flock.

We are most of all grieved to think that men should not love Christ. It makes us deeply sorrowful that they should not see the beauties of the Man of Sorrows. In our inmost hearts we are wounded when they wound our Well-Beloved. That they oppose *us* is little—but that they stumble at the great Foundation Stone upon which they will surely be broken, is terrible to perceive! They sin against light and love. They sin against their own souls—and this is a tribulation which bruises every holy heart and causes every loving spirit to bleed.

This calls for constant watchfulness, since our very love to men might become, unless salted by the Grace of God, a cause of decay to our purity. Some spirits love fighting and are never more happy than when they can denounce, resist, secede and contend. These are members of the Church Militant in another than the best sense. When the Grace of God enters their hearts and consecrates their obstinacy into firmness, they make fine men in a way, but if we measure them by the scale of love, and that, I take it, is the standard of the sanctuary—for he is most like God who loves most and he has come nearest to the image of Christ whose heart is fullest of tenderness—these rougher spirits turn out to be rather dwarfs than giants in the Kingdom of God. We must have backbone and must be prepared to contend earnestly for the faith, but yet the more love we exhibit, the better! And, therefore, the more pain it will cost us to be continually at war with unloving spirits. This is a part of the tribulation which we must endure—and the more bravely we face it, the more thoroughly shall we win the battles of peace and purity!

Is not this enough upon the darker side of the picture?

II. Let us now consider WHAT THE COMFORT IS WHICH JESUS GRACIOUSLY OFFERS US. “Be of good cheer,” He says, “I have overcome the world.” This is a glorious sentence spoken by the greatest Conqueror that ever lived—in whom all His people shall yet be “more than conquerors.”

Here let us view our Lord in His blessed Person, for there is much of good cheer in the contemplation. Remember, first, that *our blessed Lord was a Man*. Believe all that this means, for many are apt to think that because He was God as well as Man, therefore He was not so fully a Man. The tendency is to separate Him from the race and so from ourselves, but I pray you, Friend, to respect that Jesus was in some respects more a Man than any of us!

There are some points in which no one man is all that manhood is—but Jesus was the summary of all manhood. I might almost venture to say that He had about Him the whole Nature of mankind as it respects to the mental conformation of both man and woman, for He was as tender as woman though as strong as man. Holy women, as much as godly men, find in Jesus all that is in their own souls. There is nothing effeminate in Him and yet all the loveliness which is feminine—read His life story and see. He was Man in the broadest sense of the term, taking up in one the whole genus. Men are of certain ranks and grades, but Christ is without limit, save only that in Him was no sin. Though a Jew, He bore no special national peculiarity, for Gentiles find in Him their next of kin. You apply no descriptive word to the Son of Man, except that you call Him “the Man of Sorrows.” He was a Man who greatly suffered in body and in mind, and

displayed His Manhood by the bravery of His endurance—a Man rejoicing in man's joy, depressed in man's grief—a Man who ran up the entire scale of humanity, from its deepest to its highest tone. Now, if a typical man has overcome the world, then man has done it and man can be enabled to do it again! This inspires courage and vanishes despair. It was the mighty power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in Him by which Jesus overcame the world—and that same quiet power, if it dwells in us, will make us win the same victory by faith. The arch enemy has been conquered by Man and our hearts may be comforted by the conviction that by God working in us, we, too, shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly!

It is cheering to remember that wherein our Lord's was a special case, it is to our comfort, for He, as Man, entered into the conflict under serious disadvantages which we cannot labor under. He was weighted with a care unique and unexampled. Be our charge what it may, it cannot be comparable to His heavy burden as the Shepherd of Souls. We think ourselves overburdened and speak of life as though it were rendered too stern a conflict by the load of our cares and responsibilities. But what comparison is there between our load and that of Jesus? A pastor with a great flock is not without his hourly anxieties, but what are those to the cares of the Chief Shepherd? He watched over the great multitude which no man can number—who were committed to Him by the Father—and for these He carried all their grief! Here was a burden such as you and I, dear Friend, cannot even imagine! And yet, without laying aside the weight, He fought the world and overcame it! Let His name be praised and let His victory be the comfort of all that labor and are heavy laden—

*“His is the victor's name,
Who fought our fight alone!
Triumphant saints no honor claim—
His conquest was His own.”*

Remember, next, that He was loaded with substitutionary sorrows which He bore for us. These are not ours. He came into the world to suffer griefs that were not His own. He had human guilt laid upon Him to bear and, because of that, He was bowed down till He was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. Some seem to think we are to imitate Christ in being men of sorrows as He was. No, no! The argument is the other way! Because Jesus took our sorrows, we may leave them all with Him, rolling our burden upon the Lord. Because He was grieved for me and in my place, it is my privilege to rejoice with unspeakable joy in full redemption! No weight of sin remains to press us to the dust! Christ has carried it all away—and in His sepulcher He has buried it forever! Yet never let us forget what an inconceivable pressure our sin put upon Him, for remembering this, it becomes the more a comfort to us that, notwithstanding all, He could say, “I have overcome the world.”

Remember, again, that our Lord in the battle with the world, was the center of the attack. When the whole host marches to the fight, we, each one, take our place in the ranks and the war goes on against us all. But where, do you think, the arrows fly most thickly? Where were the javelins hurled one after the other, thick as hail? “The Standard-Bearer among ten thousand” was the chief target! It seems to me as if the Prince of Darkness had said to his armies, “Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King of Israel,” for He was tempted in all points like as we are. You and I encounter some temptations, but He endured them all! I have mine and you have yours, but He had mine and yours, and such as are common to all His saints—and yet, standing in the thick of the fray, He remained unwounded and cried aloud—“I have overcome the world.” Divine Grace, then, can also clothe us with triumph, for against us no such supreme charges of hosts upon hosts will ever be led. The whole band has gathered together against Him—but never against any one of His feeble followers!

Remember, also, that the Redeemer was, in many respects, a lonely Man. If we need spiritual succor, we know someone to whom we can go. If we need converse with a superior mind, we can find such an one among our Brothers and Sisters. But our blessed Master could scarcely find a kindred spirit, and never an adviser. Like some lone mountaintop which towers above all surrounding heights, He stood alone where winter's snowstorms beat full upon Him, spending all their fury on His unshielded height! We are but valley dwellers and rise not to His loftiness. To whom could He tell His secret grief? To Peter, James or John? As well might a mother whisper to her babe the throes that rend her heart! He did once, in deep distress, resort to the three noblest spirits among the 12 Apostles, but they slept for sorrow and could not watch with Him one hour! O lonely Christ, if You did overcome this world alone, how surely shall Your warrior Brothers and Sisters overcome it when they stand shoulder to shoulder, cheering each man his fellow and, above all, when You are in the field communicating Your victorious valor to the whole host!

I have not finished this setting forth of the disadvantage under which the Savior lay, for I beg you to notice that there were possibilities about our Lord that were never ours. A man who does not know his letters is little tempted to be proud of his learning. And the man who lives from hand to mouth and never has a penny to lay by can hardly be tempted to be purse proud! We poor creatures could not be tempted to the same degree as our great Lord. The multitude would have taken Him by force and made Him a king—no, more—all the kingdoms of the earth were proffered Him and instead of suffering poverty and yielding Himself up to death, He might have pushed Caesar from his throne! The world with all its honors, the cattle on a thousand hills and secret mines, and rocks of gold and silver were all His—and He might have left His life-work to be the greatest, richest, mightiest monarch that ever reigned—had He not been Jesus, to whom such things are the dirt beneath His feet! But none of us have such great offers and brilliant opportunities and, therefore, we have not such a battle to fight as He had. Shall we not, by His help, overcome the lesser temptations, since He went on to victory over the greatest that can be imagined?

Remember, too, that the intense zeal that burned in His spirit, had He been capable of ever yielding to a temptation, might have suggested to Him in a hundred ways, a turning aside from His own line of action by which He had resolved to conquer the world. He came to vanquish evil by the force of love and truth through His Spirit. If some of His followers had been girt with His power, they would not have kept to His order of battle! I stood in Rome, one day, at the bottom of the Santa Scala, and watched the poor votaries of superstition creeping up those so-called sacred steps upon their knees, imagining them to be the very stairs which our Lord descended when Pilate said, "Behold the Man." As I saw certain priests watching their dupes, I longed for a thunder bolt or two with which to make a clearance of Pope, cardinals, and priests! But the spirit our Lord Jesus was not so hot—for when James and John asked, "Lord, will You that we command fire to come down from Heaven and consume them?" their Lord replied, "You know not what manner of spirit you are of." We may never have been tempted to ask fire from Heaven because we knew that we could not get it—but our Lord had only to ask His Father and He would presently have sent Him legions of angels! See with grief what a part of the Church has done—certain professors easily fell into the snare which their Lord avoided!

Suppose the Lord Jesus had been made a king and had marshaled an army? He might have set up an established Church and have maintained it by the power and wealth of the State. A temple might have been built in every parish in the Roman empire and the heathen might have been compelled to pay tithes for the support of the ministry and Apostleship. By the help of imperial prestige and patronage, nominal professors of the faith would have been multiplied by millions and, outwardly, religion would have prevailed! Would it not have been as great a blessing as our Established Church is to us? But the Lord Jesus Christ did not choose this method, for His Kingdom is not to be set up by any force than by that of truth and love! It was His purpose to die for men, but not to lift the mailed hand of power, or even the jeweled finger of rank to bring them into subjection. Jesus *loves* men to Himself—Love and Truth are His battle-ax and weapons of war. Thus He overcame the world which was in that most insidious form of worldliness—the suggestion to make alliance with it and set up a mongrel society, a kingdom at once earthly and heavenly, a State Church, a society loyal both to God and Mammon, fearing the Lord and serving the High Court of Parliament! It might have appeared to us to be the readiest means to bless the world—but it was not His Father's way, nor the way of holiness—and, therefore, He would not follow it, but overcame it! No force may be put on conscience. The altar of God must not be polluted by forced offerings. Caesar must not step beyond his province. However great the proffered benefit, the Lord never did evil that good might come!

Let us now observe that the main point of the comfort lies in the fact that not only did our Lord overcome the world as an individual, but *He vanquished it as the Representative Man*. Clear a space! Clear a space! A deadly fight is to be fought! Here comes into the battle, stalking along, a monster man towering high above his fellows. He is for Philistia! Here comes the champion of Israel, a ruddy youth. These two are to decide the day. Anxious eyes are turned towards the field of duel. Philistia, look to your champion! Israel, watch your stripling with beating heart! O maids of Judah, lift up your prayers for the son of Jesse, that he may play the man this day! As we watch that fight and see the stone sink into the champion's brow, and behold the youth taking off the giant's head and bringing it to the camp, we are ready to join in the dances of the jubilant women, for David has won the victory! See the result of his deed—the victory of David is the triumph of every man in Israel's land! It was a *representative* conflict—Israel against Philistia—and when Philistia's hero fell, Israel was the conqueror. Up to the spoil, O sons of Jacob! The uncircumcised are utterly routed! They fly! Pursue them and scatter them as dust before the whirlwind! Even so, when Christ overcame the world, the victory was won

on the behalf of all His people and today we face a vanquished foe. Up and spoil the enemy! Let your infirmities become the subject of your glorying! Let your tribulations become the themes of your thanksgivings! And if you are persecuted for righteousness' sake, do not whine and whimper as though some dread calamity had come upon you, but rejoice that you are made participators of the honors of Prophets and saints—and of your great Leader who won the battle as your Champion!

In closing, let us remember that here we have not merely representation, but also *union*. “I have overcome the world,” means more than, “I overcame in your name.” All Believers have virtually overcome the world, for they are one with Christ! Did my hands win the victory? Then my feet triumph! Did my head achieve the conquest? Then my heart shares the honor! The soles of my feet are victorious when my head is crowned. When Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, was victorious over the foe, every member of His Mystical Body, even the most uncomely, was, virtually, a conqueror in the conquering Head! So let us shout the victory and wave the palm branch, for we are more than conquerors through Him that has loved us! Said He not well when He bade us be of good cheer, for He had overcome the world? Therefore, struggling Brothers and Sisters, obey His word, and—

BE OF GOOD CHEER!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

JOHN 12:20-50.

Our Lord had gained a sudden popularity through raising Lazarus from the dead. And the people had attended Him with great enthusiasm as He rode through the streets of Jerusalem. For the time, things looked very bright with Him, but He knew that He was soon to suffer and to die. And the overshadowing of that great eclipse was already upon His heart. Note how He looked forward to it and how He spoke concerning it.

Verses 20-22 *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and entreated him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip came and told Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip told Jesus.* Probably these persons were proselytes to the Jewish faith. They had renounced their idols and they had come to worship the only true God. And now they had a wish to see Jesus—not out of idle curiosity, but because they felt a certain degree of respect for Him. They wanted to know more of His teaching and to learn whether He was, indeed, the promised Messiah. The disciples encouraged these seekers—they would not have brought mere curiosity-mongers to their Master, but they saw that there was something better in these Greeks—so they consulted together and their opinion was that they must tell Jesus about them.

23. *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.* He was about to die, yet He speaks of His death as *being glorified*. For the joy that was set before Him, He seems to overlook the intervening humiliation in the prospect of the Glory that would come of it through the salvation of multitudes of strangers from the very ends of the earth! He looks on these Greeks as the vanguard of a great army of Gentiles who would continue to come to Him and pay Him homage. Hear what He says next—

24. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.* [See Sermon #3024 Volume 53—CHRIST'S DEATH AND OURS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeon.org>.] He knew that He must die, for His living, preaching and miracle-working would never produce such results as His death would accomplish! He must go down into the ground, out of sight, and there must lie like a buried grain of wheat, that out of Him there might spring a great harvest to the Glory of God! And these Greeks were like a first handful, a wave-sheaf unto God, a promise of the great harvest that would be the result of His death—“If it dies, it brings forth much fruit.”

25, 26. *He that loves his life shall lose it: and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serves Me, him will My Father honor.* [See Sermons #463, Volume 8—CHRIST'S SERVANT—HIS DUTY AND REWARD; #2449, Volume 42—THE RULE AND REWARD OF SERVING CHRIST; #2651, Volume 45—THE CHRISTIAN'S SERVICE AND HONOR and #2874, Volume 50—PRECEPTS AND PROMISES—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeon.org>.] It is an honor to be allowed to serve Christ, but God will bestow still further honor upon those who faithfully serve Him!

27-29. *Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Your name. Then came there a Voice from Heaven, saying, I have both glorified it and will*

glorify it again. The people, therefore, that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spoke to Him. How ready they were to find an explanation for that “Voice from Heaven” which they could not comprehend! Some “said that it thundered: others said, An angel spoke to Him.” But here is Christ’s own interpretation of the mystery—

30, 31. *Jesus answered and said, This Voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the Prince of this world be cast out.* Satan may have thought that he had triumphed when Christ was crucified, but that death upon the Cross was the deathblow to the devil’s usurpation!

32, 33. *And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die.* [See Sermons #139, Volume 3—CHRIST LIFTED UP; #775, Volume 13—THE GREAT ATTRACTION and #1717, Volume 29—THE MARVELOUS MAGNET—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] There is no magnet like the death of Christ! He is still able to draw men unto Him because of the attractive force of His atoning Sacrifice.

34-36. *The people answered Him, We have heard from the Law that Christ abides forever: and how say You, the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walks in darkness knows not where he goes. While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light. These things spoke Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them.* At first sight, this may not seem to have been an answer to their question, “Who is this Son of Man?” Yet it was a very direct answer, for He was “the Light of the world” and, as the Light was soon to be withdrawn from them, there was all the greater need of Christ’s injunctions, “Walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you. While you have light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light.”

37-41. *But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the sayings of Isaiah the Prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Isaiah, when He saw His Glory, and spoke of Him.* [See Sermon #1844, Volume 31—ISRAEL AND BRITAIN—A NOTE OF WARNING—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Isaiah was sent upon a painful errand to tell the people that they would hear, but they would not understand—that they would see, but they would not perceive. And so it happened to Israel as a nation, and to this day Israel rejects the true Messiah. Oh, that none of us may imitate their evil example by negligence and contempt of the Revelation of God, lest after playing with Scripture and trifling with the Christ of God, the Lord should at last in anger declare that we should see, but should not perceive, that we should hear, but should not understand!

42, 43. *Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* Are there any here who believe in Christ, but who have never confessed Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue and lose the praise of men? Are you afraid of your family, your father, or your husband? Or is there some friend who would be angry with you if you confessed Christ? If so, be no longer such a coward, I pray you, but come out boldly and confess Him who will not be ashamed to confess you before His Father and the holy angels!

44-50. *Jesus cried and said, He that believes on Me, believes not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he that sees Me sees Him that sent Me. I am come as a light into the world, that whoever believes on Me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hears My word and believes not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejects Me, and receives not My words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak.*

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

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