

Spurgeon on Ephesians II

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Ephesians 2:9 Not Boasting, But Trusting

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Not of works lest any man should boast.” — Ephesians 2:9.

This is very plain. There is no mistaking the sense. We are saved by grace, and not by our own doings. A reason is assigned. If we were saved by our own doings, it would be natural and certain that we should boast. It is well that the apostle is so very explicit here and elsewhere upon this doctrine, for men will fall against and blunt the edge of his statement. Self-righteousness is the natural religion of every degraded heart. Only the Spirit of God can make a man really receive and acknowledge the truth. The apostle seems determined that if any reject it, it shall not be for want of clearness in his statement as a teacher. He does not beat about the bush, or go round about, or mince matters; but he comes at once to the point, “By grace are ye saved,” and then he gives the negative, the backstroke of the sword, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” This is the old controversy of Christianity from the very beginning. The first heavy fire of the Gospel ordinance was directed against the Judaisers. They said salvation was by ceremonies and the works of the law. In all sorts of shapes and ways, sometimes straightforwardly, and sometimes cunningly, they tried to get into the Christian Church the idea that the works of men could have some merit in them, and contribute in some degree to their salvation. The apostle was a very sturdy opponent of this subtle innovation. His epistle to the Romans, his epistle to the Galatians, his epistle to the Ephesians, and, indeed, all his writings, seem like so many cannon dragged to the front, and discharging red-hot shot against the very idea of salvation by the works of the law. “By the works of the law there shall no flesh living be justified,” says he, “for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Further down in the history of the Christian Church this old conflict was renewed very vehemently by Martin Luther and his brother Reformers against the Church of Rome. You must not think that the great point of difference between the Protestants and Romanists is whether we shall obey that respectable old gentleman at Rome or not or whether we shall have our ministers dressed in blue and scarlet and fine linen, or in common broadcloth, like ourselves. Those trifles may become important as ostensible signs of profession, but they are not the main point at issue. They are merely the husk of the controversy. The real battle between the Papists and the Protestants turns on this. Are men saved by works, or are they saved by grace? All the reformers that ever tried to reform the Church of Rome by interfering with her mummeries and her monasteries, her priests and their vestments, her holy-days and celebrations, and I do not know what besides, were all just fiddling away with a wasted force at some of the external branches of that horrible old upas tree; but when Luther came fresh from the cell with that light still beaming on his eye, “We are justified by faith,” then it was that the axe was laid at the root of this tree. There is nothing wanted to bring down popery but the constant promulgation of this one truth, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”; for salvation is not of man, neither by man; it is of the Lord, and it is given to as many as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts. In fact, this is the standing controversy to day, before which all other controversies dwindle into significance. The outside world still has it that they will be saved by their own doings. The host of God’s elect, stript of their own righteousness, and made to put on the righteousness of Christ, stand each man with his sword upon his side, and his shield in his hand, defensive for this one truth, this vital truth, the all-important truth of the gospel; for this, brethren, we ought, every one of us, to be prepared to shed our blood. To, obliterate or to disguise this truth, were to put out the lamp that illuminates this dark world; take away the only ointment that can heal earth’s wounds; to destroy the only medicine that will ever cure the diseases of humanity. “Justified by faith, saved by grace, not of works, lest any man should boast.”

At this time, briefly, let us consider a great negative — “not of works”; a great reason — “lest any man should boast”; and then throw in one after the other, with very little order, a few thoughts about this great matter.

I. A Great Negative — “Not of works.”

Now, brethren, it must not be of works, because that way has been tried, and has proved a complete failure. Adam was placed in the garden of Eden under circumstances peculiarly conducive to his happiness. The law which was to test him was remarkably simple. It contained but one command, “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat.” Adam was not, as we are, vitiated; his constitution had no tendency to sin; he was pure and perfect, with well balanced judgment, and without bias one way or the other. He had never sinned; he need not ever to have sinned. It seems to me, he had nothing to gain by sin. His paradise was as perfect as it could be. God had been pleased to give him everything necessary to make him abundantly happy; but under these circumstances, the most favorable in which humanity was ever placed, the way of acceptance before God by works broke lamentably down. Whether after a short or long term of probation, we will not say — it is folly to speak where Scripture is silent — certain it is that, when tempted, he lapsed, for the woman took the fruit, and the man also partook of it. Then acceptance by works became like a potter’s vessel, shivered with a rod of iron. Man had tried the way of merit, and bitter, indeed was the award. Despair, ye sons of Adam, where your father failed, though hitherto untainted; ye with perverted will, with imagination apt to picture pleasantries in sin, with judgment warped and strained by innate depravity, by the infection of example, and by the force of surrounding circumstances — think not that ye can stand upright where perfect Adam fell. Hope not to find a way back through the gates of paradise, for there stands the cherub with his flaming sword still, and no flesh living shall henceforth be saved by his works. The way of salvation by works is utterly unsuitable for us. It is not only fruitless, proved to be so, but it is inconsistent. Anything which involves an impossibility it is vain to propose. Propose to a man without feet that he should walk, or to a man without eyes that he should distinguish colors — you see the folly; but is it not equally absurd to recommend a convict to seek a peerage? It is impossible for any one of us to obtain merits before God. We have all confessedly sinned already. Our present status debars us from entering the list for future honors. By what means are we to put away this old sin? There it stands. Suppose we obey God from this time forth till we die without a single fault; we shall then only have done what it was our duty to perform and God had a right to expect of us. There will be no balance left, nothing to put per contra against our sins, nothing to our credit as a reduction of our liabilities; we should only have paid the current account, supposing that to be possible. The debt will still remain there. The odd score who is to pay that, “Oh!” says one, “we apply to Christ for that.” No, no, sir; if it is to be by works, you must keep to works, for the apostle lays it down in the 11th of Romans that, “if it be of grace, it is not of works, and if it be of works it is not of grace.” Two principles these, which will not mingle; have which you like. They are like oil and water, or, rather, like fire and water; they are opposed to each other. If Christ is to save you, he must do it altogether. He will never be a make-weight for you, depend upon it. He did not come into this world to make up a few deficiencies — not at all so. He will not have you boasting, he will not have you sharing with him the honor of your salvation. God demands of every man a perfect life; having all sinned, we cannot bring him a perfect life. You have cracked that vase: well, if you do not break it again, it is cracked already. “Oh!” but you tell me, “it is only in a little place.” Yes, but if there is only one link in the chain broken which drags up the miner from the bowels of the earth, it is quite enough for his destruction that one link is broken. There is no need to have a dozen links fretted through with rust, the one flaw is sufficient. If you will be saved by works, you must be absolutely perfect; for it is inconsistent with the justice of God that he should accept any but perfect obedience from the creatures that come under his sway. Can you render this?

If you know yourselves, you will say “we cannot.” You will look on the flames that Moses saw when Sinai was on a blaze; you will tremble and despair of ever saving yourselves thus.

But, again, while the way has been proved to be fruitless, and is certainly unsuitable, it is a way which, with all his talking, no man ever does fairly try. I have often noticed that those who prate loudest of good works are those that have the fewest good deeds to make mention of. Like little traders in the streets with their little stock of commodities, they had need cry and advertise their wares, because they have so little to sell; whereas a diamond merchant or dealer in bullion sits still and never makes a noise at all, because he has precious treasure by him. Your hard talkers about good works generally come from some disreputable haunt. They will even boast that their sentiments are better than their habits. Well they need be. I have seen them put their black and smutty fingers upon the bright gospel of Christ, and say, “This leads to licentiousness.” Pity, then, sir, you should ever approach it, since you can find licentiousness fast enough without it! Pure minds see God in the gospel. They veil their faces, and bow before its majesty. Ah! well might I preach up morality; but not as the way of salvation, or what would be the result of it? What said Chalmers during the early part of his life? He said, “I preached up sobriety till nearly all my followers became great drinkers; I preached up honesty till I manufactured thieves; the more I

preached of the right which man ought to do, the more I found men doing wrong." These are not his words, but they are the sense of his own solemn confession when he came to read the pure gospel, and began to preach it with all his heart. So is it with every man, and I suppose it ever will be. Dry essays about duty run off and slide, like oil, down a slab of marble; while the proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God in pardoning the chief of sinners attracts men to Jesus, breaks their hearts, causes them to hate sin, sets them upon reformation, makes them holy, and helps them to persevere even to the end. "Not of works," says the text — and we come back to it. If salvation were by works, and could be so wrought out, hark! then Calvary would be a superfluity; the cross of Christ, with all its wonders, would be a work of supererogation on God's part, the work of redemption would be a subject of derision for us. Is there no salvation, or is there salvation somehow else? Must God come down and take the form of man, and in that form must the Christ of God suffer even unto death, and all for nothing — for it comes to that? If man can save himself, what need ye that ado, ye angels? Hush your Christmas carols! What need ye those gazing eyes and that absorbing wonder, as ye watch the manifestation of the Lord of glory, incarnate amongst men? What needs it that the prophets talk of the Lamb of God, and point us to the infinite sacrifice? What needs it that Jesus wears the crown of thorns, and bows his head to die for us? There are men who say we can work our own passage to the stars, and by our merits enshrine ourselves amongst the blessed. Sirs which shall I believe — that God has wrought a work that need not have been, or that you are under the spell of a fatal delusion? "Let God be true, and every man a liar." You can find no way to heaven but by the cross.

"Could your zeal no respite know,

Could your tears for ever flow

All for sin could not atone

Christ must save, and Christ alone."

Those persons who prate most of salvation by works, whether they acknowledge it or not, do really lower the standard of holiness, and abate the dignity of the law of God. You come to probe them, and the old story which Whitefield and John Vaudois fought against so valiantly of Saxon obedience, is the petition of the self-righteous man's creed. "Well," says he, "I can't keep all the law; I own that. As to thoughts, and deeds, and words, I can't be quite clean, but I will do my best." Now, what is this but to lower altogether the law of God, because you cannot come up to God's law? Is the Almighty God to come down to your terms? Do you think to compound with him? Can your miserable three farthings in the pound satisfy a divine law? This never will be. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," saith Christ "but not one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail." This is the Word of God spoken from Sinai, "Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." God will not take part payment. Holiness, let me tell you, sirs, is a very different thing from that morality which some men boast of. Why, I almost hold my breath when I encounter some men's morality, that they talk so much of. Those loose tongues that chatter so glibly against the Gospel as fomenting licentiousness, if they did but once cry, "God be merciful to us sinners," would come much nearer to playing their right part. Men that are sinning daily, in open violation of common virtue will talk as though they were pure in all their tastes, holy in all their thoughts, and above suspicion in all their lives. Oh! no. God's holiness is something grander, sublimer than you and I have guessed at; and we shall not reach to that by our works, at any rate, for they are blotted, and blurred, and marred, and spoiled upon the wheel, like the figures of an ill-taught potter, and we cannot presume to exhibit them before the living God.

II. A Great Reason Is Given — a few words on it — "Not of works lest any man should boast."

If any man could get to heaven by his own works, what a boaster he naturally would be! I am sure he would be so on earth. This is the part he would play. He would hear that God, in his mercy, had been forgiving some great sinner, and that there was joy in heaven over him, and he would say, "I cannot take my share in such pleasures as that. I have never transgressed his commandment; I find myself very tightly bound, and I do not get much joy of it. Here is that renegade who has been given to sin, and he is to be saved. I do not like it." You know where to read the story in Luke's Gospel, "He was angry, and would not go in, therefore came his father and entreated him, And he, answering, said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends; but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." Pretty specimen of a son, but the picture of what any man would be who felt, "I owe God nothing; I am all right; I am saved by my own works." What a churl he would be in the Church! I am sure I should be very sorry to admit such

a man to our assemblies. I should feel that he was quite out of place with poor sinners saved by grace like ourselves, who have nothing to boast of. It would make the whole Church wretched to have such people in church fellowship. Why, if we did not idolise them, we should hate them. I do not know which of the two it would be; certainly they would be much out of place in our assemblies with their boasting. And what would they do in heaven? Why, the very reverse of what all the spirits are doing who are there; these all sing, "We have washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"; they would have to say, "We kept our raiment white ourselves." When the ransomed spirits cast their crowns at his feet, the self-righteous souls would hold high their crests and wear their tiaras, saying, "We have won them ourselves, and we have a right to them." It would spoil heaven. Heaven would not be the perfection of harmony. Such beings would occasion discord in the glory-land, a greater discord than seen in the universe since the fall. No, no! it is "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Do I hear somebody say, "We do not maintain that men are to be saved by works altogether, but partly by God's grace, and partly by their own works." Well, I will suppose for a moment that this strange monster can be manufactured — a saint compounded part of grace, and part of works. Well now, in what proportion are these two opposite qualities to be brought together? how much grace, and how much works? Half works? Yes. Then how about those poor fellows-who come very near half? Well, one quarter works? Yes. And then three-quarters grace? Well, perhaps, some more, and some less. Some three-quarters works, some half works, and some only one-eighth works, and so on. You will have to arrange them very orderly, you know; and depend upon it that as soon as they find out the proportion of their salvation that was by works, in that proportion they will begin to boast. I should I know, and I do not think I should be to blame if I did. I should say, "Now, here am I saved half by my works. Here is a lot of these poor believers in Christ, who were saved altogether by grace, but I have contributed of my own means a full half to my salvation. I do not mind just lifting my crown a little — just own I had help in getting it on my head, but I am not going to cast it down at his feet, every man has a right to what is his due." I thought Napoleon did a good thing, when, on the day of his coronation, he took his crown, and put it on his own head. Why should he not take the symbol that was his due? And if you get to heaven, one half by grace and one half by works, you will say, "Atonement profited me a little, but integrity profited me much more." Do I seem to you to talk sarcastically? Be it admitted I do. Were it possible for me to kick this idea of human merit like a football round the world, sirs; were it possible to set it in the pillory of scorn, and pelt it with I know not what of filth, I should feel that I had the apostle Paul standing by my side, and saying, "What things were gain to me, those I courted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"; and I should hear him say of his own righteousness "I count it as dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him." He could not have taken a coarser figure, nor one which expressed more thoroughly his hearty contempt of everything like self-righteousness, "I count it as dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him." "Lest any man should boast," this is a good and sufficient reason why salvation should not be of works. Now: —

III. A Few Thoughts Without Order; but I hope they may catch your attention, and stick in your memory.

Some say — I know it is a common observation — this talking about sinners coming to Christ just as they are, and trusting in him alone for their salvation, is very dangerous. Respectable persons, and people who think themselves qualified to be critics, generally make some such observation as this, "it is very dangerous." Now my dear friends, if you will condescend to listen for a minute, I would remind you that neither you nor I have anything to do with making the gospel, We may think the gospel ought to be so-and-so, but that does not make it so. And if I should choose to think, or if you should, that such and such a doctrine is very dangerous, that neither makes it true nor makes it false, for, after all, the great solemn appeal about all matters of religion is not to you, nor yet to me We stand on an equal footing there; you may think one thing, and I may think another. But the Judge — the Judge that ends the strife where wit and reason fail, must decide. The great question is, "What saith the Scriptures? What does the Old Book say?" If it does not teach that the salvation of a sinner is altogether by grace, and not of works, it does not teach anything at all, and there are no words in any language that do mean anything. I must be made to believe that black is white, and that God has purposely and wilfully written a book to deceive us, before I can believe salvation to be by works; for the expressions about this matter are not a few; they are not casual, they are not dark and mysterious, they are not metaphorical, they are plain, simple, and obvious. I challenge any man — I will not say any theologian — but any man of common-sense that can read the Bible — whether he use our version, or prefer the original — if he will but read it honestly, he can come to no other conclusion in reading the Epistles of Paul than this, that salvation is by grace through faith in the merits of Christ, and not at all by the works of the law. Now, that is a thing that ought to decide and end the matter. I ask you not to heed anything I say; do not take my word for it; my ipse dixit is nought; it is in God's Book, and on your heads be it

if you deny it. "Oh!" said one to another, "I didn't like your preaching the other night." "What didn't you like in it?" "I didn't like your preaching up salvation to sinners." "Oh! that is nothing to me, the quarrel is not between you and me, but between you and my Master; you must settle that with him. I have nothing to do with manufacturing doctrines; my business is to retail them as I find them in the Scripture. If you do not like them, you must leave them, but it is at your own peril." Let me say to all of you, I beseech you cast not away your own soul.

Every one of us ought to remember that a great deal of that commodity in this world known by the name of good works is not good works at all. What is a good work? I should venture to say that anything that has in it the element of selfishness is not good. You may question that, but I think it is the highest virtue to be unselfish. If a man be found to be virtuous, as we say, with the design of benefiting himself, has not he spoiled his virtue? The very design of seeking merit by what he does, spoils the possibility of merit. A man is not a servant of God while he is only serving himself. It is only when he gets rid of self that he becomes truly good. To pray may be good or not, according to whether it is real prayer. To attend the House of God, or give alms to the poor, may be good or not good, according to the heart. But external duties are not good works. Nay, though a man should be faultless in his external life, yet if the motive were sinister and the desires unclean, his works would all taste of the fountain from whence they came and not be good in the sight of God. Did it never strike you that in our works the heart must always be the great matter? Cowper, in his Task, has very wonderfully wrought out this subject in the best blank verse. He pictures two footmen employed by you — one of them is a very polite, quick, nimble, handy fellow — but, as he says, he serves you for your house, your housemaid, and your pay. Let either of these be gone, and he is gone, too. But the true servant is Charles, that stands behind the chair, that is troubled if your appetite seems to fail, that has been with you from a boy, that if you were poor, and hadn't any pay to give him, would cling to the posts of your doors, that would live for you and die for you — that is the man whom you love as a servant. So it is with virtue; the best and highest of good works are those that spring from love, real love to God. Now, where do you find this? In the man who rejects Christ? No; his works are those of a slavish fear; he does not serve God out of love, but because he trembles at the thought of hell. But when a soul is brought to trust in Jesus, then the heart loves God, the service of God becomes a great delight; and the man who says, "I am not saved by works," works ten times harder than ever he would have done, if he had hoped to be saved by his own doings, and his works are better works, because he has devoted love which infuses into them a sacred excellency which else had not been there.

Be it for ever known and understood, that when we preach salvation by grace, we do not undervalue morality. Nay, brethren, we exalt it. I will give you proof. There is a hospital; it is free to all the sick; but there is a notion about town that nobody may enter there except those who do something to heal themselves. Now, I will suppose that I am sent as a missionary to go amongst the sick and tell them, that their own health is not worth a farthing, that they are to come to the hospital gates just as they are, that at the hospital they look at disease as a qualification, and not at health. Somebody might say, "Here is this man undervaluing health." My dear brother, I am doing no such thing. Do you think I should be trying to get these sick people into the hospital, if I undervalued health? It is not health I undervalue; it is the quackery that mimics health; it is this empiricism which films over men's diseases, which had need be dealt with otherwise. Why, if thousands in London were dying because they had the notion that they could not be received at the hospital unless they healed themselves, surely it were the kindest and best work a man could do, and the quickest means to promote the popular health, to go and disabuse men of this absurd notion. If my brother, when we bade you come to Christ, we told you that, after coming to him, you might live in sin as you did before, we should be worthy to be hanged. But when we tell you that Christ is a Physician, and his Church a hospital, and that he can hear you if living in sin, we do not by any means decry your morality, but only tell you that it is but a piece of quackery, until you come to Christ.

"Speak they of morale, oh! thou bleeding Lamb!

The best morality is love to thee!"

The best holiness is to love Christ and to serve him, actuated by the motive of gratitude; and if you try merit before you come to him, it will only plunge you into deeper sin. You cannot blot out your iniquities. Still I know the scandal will be repeated, but if any choose to repeat it, the lives of those who have preached up salvation by grace, furnish the best answer. In the days of Charles the first and Charles the Second, you would have found the party, headed by Laud in the Church of England, crying up ritual, crying up good works; you would have found on the other hand, the Puritanic party rigidly preaching up justification by faith, and salvation by grace. Now, sirs, where did you find the country parson that preached in the morning upon good works in the afternoon? Why, with a girl on either side dancing round the Maypole, according to the Book of Sports, and if you wanted him a little later in the evening, you would have to send some trusty parish beadle to bring him in from the village alehouse.

But where is the man who preached salvation by grace whilst at the conventicle? "Oh!" says one, "he is at home, singing psalms with his family." Doesn't he go round the Maypole? "No; the old bigot, he never breaks the Sabbath; he says it is against the law of God." Well, but isn't he in the alehouse? "No; I dare say the old superstitious creature is on his knees somewhere, praying." Everybody knows this was the fact. The Puritanic theology bred Puritanic living; the doctrine of justification by faith made men holy; but the other party that preached this wonderful doctrine of salvation by works, went pretty far to prove that they could not be saved by their works, at any rate. The long-haired cavaliers, with their scented locks, and their abominations not fit to be uttered by pure tongue, or heard by the ear of decency- these were your workmongers, your upholders of salvation by your own doings. But the man that ordered well his household in the fear of God, the man that could bend to God, but not to a tyrant, the man that loved his country, and would sooner die on Edge Hill or Naseby than he would lay down the faith he held dear to him; that is the man who preached that we are justified by faith, and not at all by the works of the law. You shall find holiness grows out of the one doctrine which is despised; and wickedness springs from the other, which is advertised as a panacea for all ills.

If there be any here that think they can be saved by their own works, I have no gospel to preach to them whatever; I will not interfere with them. My Master has said, that there is no need of a physician to them that are not sick. Good people, virtuous people excellent people, you that are going to heaven all on your own account, don't quarrel with us poor sinners, that we choose to have what you despise. If you do not want the medicine, let us drink it, and be not bitter against us if we choose another way than yours. If your road is broad enough, and there are enough companions in it, let us alone if we choose the narrow path.

But yet I cannot coolly dismiss you so. If you are naked, and poor, and miserable — I will not insult you-I counsel you by my Master, get gold tried in the fire that you may be rich, and white raiment that you may be clothed, and if ye know not how ye can buy it, I will tell you, it is without money and without price; it is freely given, and shall be given to you if you will. Shake your hand of that venomous serpent of your own self confidence; shake it into the fire, I pray you; it is the best place for it. You may come with empty hands to Christ and he will give you all your soul can want. When you come to die, you will find that good-works theory unable to bear you up. The best of men have looked upon their lives from that closing scene in another manner than ever they did before. One said, he was gathering up all his works, his good works and his bad works, too, and flinging them all overboard, that he might just trust simply in a crucified Savior. At any rate, friend, if thou art prepared to risk thy soul on thy works, I am not prepared to risk mine on aught that I have done. No, I am not afraid to meet the trial hour, I am not afraid to look thee in the face to-night, and say, "I will meet thee on that tremendous day, and we will see whose confidence is the better. Thou shalt take thy works if thou will, and I will take my Lord; and thou shalt rest in what thou doest, but I will not rest in anything I do." Oh! rest well upon him, and I will tell you what will happen when the whirlpools of Almighty wrath shall be round about thee. Thy good works shall, go like those deceitful life-buoys we heard of the other day, and thou shalt sink but never did a soul sink that could cling to Christ. It is an unheard of thing that Christ has ever let a sinner perish, for he has said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Now, whether you have been righteous or wicked, whether you can cry yourselves up, or whether you bewail yourselves that you are deep in the mire of sin — go, stretch out the hand and take Christ, turn the eye to Jesus, dying upon Calvary's cross, and look to him: —

"There is life in a look of the Crucified One."

There is life at this moment for you. I wish that every one in this dense mass would look to my Master. There is grace enough in Christ for every one of you. No sinner was ever lost because there was any stint in Christ; no, but because they would not come, but thought themselves too good for him. Come as you are — just as you are and trust Christ; and then mark you, you will be saved. You will be saved from the love of sin; you will be saved from the power of it: you will begin a new and holy life; you will henceforth be full of good works, which shall abound to the glory of God; and with these good works upon you, you shall be like a tree that is covered with rich fruit, acceptable to God. Still your root shall not be your fruit, but your root shall be a; simple faith in a precious Christ, whom this night I have declared unto you. So God bless you. Amen.

Ephesians 4:32 For Christ's Sake"

NO. 614

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For Christ’s sake.” — Ephesians 4:32.

This is the great argument of awakened sinners, when they seek mercy at God’s hands. Aforetime they could boast of their own righteousness; they could rest upon their feelings, their resolutions, their goodness of heart, or their prayers; but now that God the Holy Spirit has shewn them what they are, and revealed to them the desperate evil of their hearts, they dare not offer any other plea than this — “For Christ’s sake.” They look, and there is no man to succor; they cast their eye around, and there is no helper, and their heart knows neither peace nor hope till they behold the person and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and then straightway their mouth is opened with arguments, and they can plead with God with prevailing reasons, saying, “For Christ’s sake, for Christ’s sake, have mercy upon me.” Indeed, beloved, this is the only argument which can prevail with God in prayer, whether the prayer cometh from saint or sinner. It is true that God did not originally love us for Christ’s sake, for his electing love was sovereign and absolute: the Father loved us not because the Savior died, but the Savior died because the Father loved us from before the foundation of the world. Nevertheless the one only channel of communication between a loving Father and his elect people is the meritorious and glorious person of Christ. The Father gives us no privilege except through his Only-Begotten, nor are we looked upon as accepted or acceptable, except as we stand in and through our Lord Jesus, accepted in the Beloved, perfect in Christ Jesus. I must use no other argument when I plead with God but the name of his dear Son, for this is the sum of all heavenly logic. Whatever covenant mercy I may wish for, this is the key which will unlock the storehouses of heaven, but none other name will prevail with God to scatter his mercies among undeserving sinners. He who knows how to plant his foot on the solid foothold of “for Christ’s sake,” needs not fear like Jacob to wrestle with the angel of God. But if we forget this in our prayers, we have lost the muscle and sinew from the arm of prayer, we have snapped the spinal column by which the manhood of prayer is sustained erect, we have pulled down about our own ears the whole temple of supplication as Samson did the house of the Philistines. “For Christ’s sake,” this is the one unbuttressed pillar upon which all prayer must lean: take this away, and it comes down with a crash; let this stand, and prayer stands like a heaven-reaching minaret holding communion with the skies.

In two ways, as the Holy Spirit may enable us, we will read the words before us. It is God’s argument for mercy — “For Christ’s sake.” It is our reason for service — “For Christ’s sake.”

I. God’s Argument For Mercy. He forgives us “for Christ’s sake.”

Here let us first look at the force of this motive; and then, secondly, let us notice some qualifications in it, which may, through God’s blessing, be the means of comforting seeking sinners who desire to find rest in and through Jesus Christ.

1. Let us consider the force of this motive by which God is moved to forgive sinners, “For Christ’s sake.”

You know that if we do a thing for the sake of a person, several considerations may work together to make our motive powerful, that we may be willing, not only to do some things, but many things; nay, all things, for the sake of the individual admired or beloved.

The first thing which will move us to do anything for another’s sake is his person, with its various additions of position and character. The excellence of a man’s person has often moved others to high enthusiasm, to the spending of their lives; ay, to the endurance of cruel deaths for his sake. In the day of battle, if the advancing column wavered for a single moment, Napoleon’s presence made every man a hero. When Alexander led the van, there was not a man in all the Macedonian ranks who would have hesitated to lose his life in following him. For David’s sake the three mighties broke through the host, at imminent peril of their lives, to bring him water from the well of Bethlehem. Some men have a charm about them which enthralls the souls of other men, who are fascinated by them and count it their highest delight to do them honor. There have been, in different ages, leaders, both warlike and religious, who have so entirely possessed the hearts of their followers that no sacrifice was counted too great, no labor too severe. There is much to move the heart in excellence of person. How shall I, in a fitting manner, lead you to contemplate the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing that his charms as far exceed all human attractions as the sun outshines the stars! Yet this much I will be bold to say, that he is so glorious that even the God of heaven may well consent to do ten thousand things for his sake. Brethren, we believe our Lord Jesus Christ to be very God of very God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, essential Deity. Jesus is no distinct God, separate from the Father, but, in a mysterious manner, he is one with the Father,

so that the old Jewish watchword still stands true. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord," and yet Jesus is Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness. Besides this, he, for us men, and for our salvation, took upon himself the form and nature of man — became incarnate, as the virgin's Son, and, as such, lived a life of perfection, never sinning, always full of love and holy service, both to God and man. There he stands: by the eye of faith we may see him — "God over all, blessed for ever;" and yet man, of the substance of his mother, he stands to plead before the eternal throne; Almighty God, all-perfect man. He wears upon his head a crown, for he is a prince of the house of David, and his dominion is an everlasting dominion. Upon his bosom glitters the bejewelled breastplate, for he is a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec, and over his shoulders hangs the mantle of prophecy, for he is a prophet, and more than a prophet. Now, as he stands there, adored of angels, worshipped by cherubim and seraphim, having the keys of heaven, and earth, and hell at his girdle-master of winds and waves, Lord of providence, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords; I wonder not, that such a person should prevail with the Father, and that God, for his sake, should bestow innumerable blessings upon the unworthy for whom he pleads. He is the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely! His head is as the much fine gold; his lips like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is most sweet, yea he is altogether lovely. "The whole creation can afford

"But some faint shadows of my Lord;

Nature, to make his beauties known,

Must mingle colors not her own.

Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,

Nor heaven, his full resemblance bears;

His beauties we can never trace,

Till we behold him face to face."

In the surpassing majesty of his person lies a part of the force of the plea. A far greater power lies in near and dear relationship. The mother, whose son had been many years at sea, pined for him with all a mother's fondness. She was a widow, and her heart had but this one object left. One day there came to the cottage door a ragged sailor. He was limping on a crutch, and seeking alms. He had been asking at several houses for a widow of such-and-such a name. He had now found her out. She was glad to see a sailor, for never since her son had gone to sea had she turned one away from her door, for her son's sake. The present visitor told her that he had served in the same ship with her beloved boy; that they had been wrecked together and cast upon a barren shore; that her son had died in his arms, and that he had charged him with his dying breath to take his bible to his mother — she would know by that sign that it was her son — and to charge her to receive his comrade affectionately and kindly for her son's sake. You may well conceive how the best of the house was set before the stranger. He was but a common sailor; there was nothing in him to recommend him. His weather-beaten cheeks told of service, but it was not service rendered to her: he had no claim on her, and yet there was bed and board, and the widow's hearth for him. Why? Because she seemed to see in his eyes the picture of her son — and that book, the sure token of good faith, opened her heart and her house to the stranger. Relationship will frequently do far more than the mere excellence of the person. Bethink you, brethren, Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. Our God had but one begotten Son, and that Son the darling of his bosom. Oh, how the Father loved him. It is not possible for us to measure divine love, for we have no measuring line. Human love at best is only finite even when it reaches its very highest. When we lunge into the depths of human love, there is yet a bottom; but divine love has neither shore nor bound. Little can we tell what unity of essence means. The divine persons are one in essence — one God. We cannot therefore conceive what affection must spring from this closest of all known unities. Oh, how Jehovah loves him! And yet that dear Son of his, for our sakes left the starry throne of heaven, became a man, suffered, bled, and died; and when we come to mercy's bar, bringing with us Christ's own promise, the eternal Father sees Jesus in our eyes, bids us welcome to mercy's table and to mercy's house, for the sake of him who is his only begotten Son.

Still I have only advanced to the border of my subject. The force of the words "For Christ's sake" must be found deeper still, namely in the worthiness of the person and of his acts. Many peerages have been created in this realm which descend from generation to generation, with large estates, the gift of a generous nation, and why? Because this nation has received some signal benefits from one man and has been content to ennoble his heirs

for ever for his sake. I do not think there was any error committed when Marlborough or Wellington were lifted to the peerage; having saved their country in war, it was right that they should be honored in peace; and when for the sake of the parents perpetual estates were entailed upon their descendants, and honors in perpetuity conferred upon their sons, it was only acting according to the laws of gratitude. Let us bethink ourselves of what Jesus Christ has done, and let us understand how strong must be that plea — “For Jesus’ sake.” The law of God was violated; Jesus Christ came into the world and kept it — kept it so that out of the whole ten commands there is not one whose clamorous tongue can lay anything to his charge. Here was a divine dilemma: God must be just, yet he willed to save his people. How could these two things meet? Where was the man who could break down the mountain which separated justice and mercy, so that they could kiss each other. God must punish sin, and yet he will be gracious to whom he will be gracious. How shall these two things agree? Forth came the priests, with their various sacrifices; but the slaughter of bullocks, and heifers, and rams, and he-goats, could not make God just. What comparison could there be between rivers of the blood of fed beasts and the sin of man? But Jesus came — the great solution of the divine enigma — Jesus came: eternal God, but yet perfect man, and he bowed his head to the ignominious death of the cross; his hands were pierced, his feet were nailed, his soul was sorrowful, even unto death.

“Jesus, our Lord and God,

Bore sin’s tremendous load,

Praise ye his name;

Tell what his arm hath done,

What spoils from death he won;

Sing his great name alone;

Worthy the Lamb!”

God was just: he punished human guilt in the person of man’s representative, Jesus of Nazareth. God is gracious: he accepts every believing sinner for the sake of Jesus Christ. Think, then, of what Christ has done, and you will see the force of the argument. He has honored the law of God, which man had dishonored, and has opened a way for God’s mercy, which man’s sin had fast closed up. Oh, God, thy Son has brought back what he took not away: he has taken the prey from the mighty, and the lawful captive he has delivered; like another David, he has snatched the sheep from the jaw of the lion, and delivered the lamb from the paw of the bear. Like another Samson, he has slain thine enemies, and taken the gates of their strongholds upon his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill. Every wound which he endured upon the cross, every stroke which he felt in Pilate’s hall, every drop of blood which he sweat in Gethsemane, strengthens the plea “for Christ’s sake.”

Still, still I think I have not yet arrived at the force of the words. If any stipulation has been made, then the terms “or his sake” become more forcible, because they are backed by engagements, promises, covenants. In Christ’s case solemn promises have been exchanged. There was a distinct engagement made between the Judge of men and the Redeemer of our souls, and the prophet Isaiah has published the engagement, “He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.” Yet again, “I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;” and still further, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” There was a distinct transaction then of ancient date between the Father and the Son, in which the Son stipulated that he would bear the sin of his people; he was to be the scapegoat for his people Israel; and then it was solemnly engaged on the part of the Divine Judge of all the earth, that he would give him the souls of the redeemed to be his portion for ever. Now, brethren, there is a strength in the plea, “for Christ’s sake.” Oh God, with reverence would we speak of thee, but how couldst thou be just if thou did not save those for whom Jesus shed his precious blood. Brethren, we speak as unto honest men: would you, being men, first of all accept a surety and a substitute, and then expect the debtor to pay the debt himself? Look at human governments-if a man were drafted into the army and should find a substitute, does the law afterwards seize the man himself? And shall God be less just than man? Shall the supreme king of heaven be less just than the kings of earth. If Christ has paid my debt, payment God’s justice cannot demand of me; it cannot expect the same debt to be twice paid. Justice cannot demand payment

“First at my bleeding surety’s hands,

And then again at mine.”

If Christ served in that dread warfare for me as my substitute, how can it be that after this I should myself be driven to the edge of the sword. Impossible! Beloved, see that scapegoat yonder. Israel's sins have been confessed upon it. The high priest has laid his hand on the victim's head, it is led away by the hand of a fit man; he sets it free, watches it — it is out of sight. He climbs a rock, looks far away to the east, the west, the north, the south — he cannot see it, he waits awhile, looks with anxious eye, it is gone! and he comes back and tells the people of Israel that the sin has been typically carried away upon the scapegoat's head. Now, Christ is the fulfillment of the scapegoat. Our sins were laid on him: he is gone — gone where? “Ye shall seek me but ye shall not find me,” saith he: gone into the desolate regions of the dead. The scapegoat, Christ, has carried away into his own tomb the sins of all his people for ever. Now, was that a farce, or was it a reality? Did Christ take away sin, or not? If he did, then how can men be punished for sins which Jesus took away, for the sins for which Christ was punished? If he did not suffer for sin, then where is the deliverance for a soul of Adam born? Oh you that receive general redemption, you know not what you receive; you who talk of a universal atonement which does not make an atonement for all sin, know not what you affirm; but we, who speak of a special atonement made for every soul that ever hath believed or ever shall believe, we speak of something sure, certain, worthy of the soul's resting itself upon, since it doth save every soul for whom it was offered up.

There remains only one other thought upon this point. It tends very much to strengthen the plea “for Christ's sake,” if it be well known that it is the desire of the person that the boon should be granted, and if, especially, that desire has been and is earnestly expressed. Oh how glad we ought to be to think that Christ when we plead his name, never tells us that we are going too far and taking liberties! No, beloved, if I anxiously ask for mercy, Christ has asked for mercy for me long ago. There is never a blessing for which a believer pleads but Christ pleads for it too; for “he ever liveth to make intercession for us.” Our supplications become his supplications and our desires when indited of the Spirit are his desires. In heaven he points to his wounds, the mementoes of his grief, and he cries — “Father, for my sake grant this favor to these poor undeserving ones; give them blessing as thou wouldst give me blessing: be kind and gracious to them, as thou wouldst be kind and tender towards me.” This makes the plea omnipotent. It is not possible but that it should mightily prevail with God.

2. Pausing a minute, let us enumerate some few other qualifications of this plea by way of comfort to trembling seekers.

This motive, we may observe, is with God a standing motive; it cannot change. Suppose, poor sinner, that God offered to forgive for your own sake. Then if at one time you were penitent and broken-hearted, there would be hope for you; but at another time you might be bemoaning the hardness of your heart and powerlessness to repent, and then there would be no motive why God should bless you; but you see Christ is always as much worthy at one time as another, and therefore God has the same reason for blessing you, a poor wandering soul to-day, as he can have had twenty years ago, and if you have grown grey in sin, if you have become like a sere piece of wood ready for the fire, yet this motive does not wear out; it has the dew of its youth upon it. God for Christ's sake forgives little children, and for the same reason he can forgive the man who has passed his threescore years and ten. As long as you are in this world, this is a standing reason for mercy.

Remember, again, that this is a mighty reason. It is not merely a reason why God should forgive little sins, or else it would be a slur upon Christ, as though he deserved but little. Canst thou tell how great thy sin is? “Oh,” sayest thou, “It is high as heaven, it is deep as hell;” now canst thou tell how great Christ's worthiness is? I will tell thee that his worthiness is deeper than hell can be, and higher than heaven itself. What, if thy sin could reach from east to west, and from the highest star to the depth of the abyss, yet the worthiness of Christ is a fullness which filleth all in all, and therefore it would cover all thy sins. Thy sins, like Egypt's hosts, are many and mighty; Christ's worthiness is like the flood of the Red Sea, able to drown the whole, so that not one of their host shall be left; they shall sink into the bottom like a stone. Thy sins are like Noah's flood, which drowned all mankind; Christ's worthiness is like Noah's ark, which swims above the tide and mounts the higher as the flood grows deeper. The deeper thy sin the more is Christ's merit exalted above the heavens when Jehovah forgives thee all thine iniquities. Think not little of Christ. I would not have thee think little of sin, but still think more of Christ. Sin is finite; it is the creature's act. Christ is infinite; he is omnipotent. Whatever then thy sin may be, Christ is greater than thy sin, and able to take it away.

Then, brethren, it is a most clear and satisfactory, I was about to say, most reasonable reason, a motive which appeals to your own common sense? Can you not already see how God can be gracious to you for Christ's sake? We have heard of persons who have given money to beggars, to the poor; not because they deserved it, but

because they would commemorate some deserving friend. On a certain day in the year our Horticultural Gardens are opened to the public, free. Why, why should they be opened free? What has the public done? Nothing. They receive the boon in commemoration of the good Prince Albert. Is not that a sensible reason? Yes. Every day in the year the gates of heaven are opened to sinners free. Why? For Jesus Christ's sake. Is it not a most fitting reason? If God would glorify his Son, how could he do better than by saving, "For the sake of my dear Son, set the pearly gates of heaven wide open, and admit his chosen ones. See these myriads of spirits, they are all admitted to their throne of immortal glory for the sake of my dear Son. They are happy, but they are happy for his sake. They are holy, but they are holy for his sake." Casting their crowns at his feet, they sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." You perceive at once that this reason appeals to common sense, and therefore I hope, dear friends, you will lay hold of it.

Let me say, poor sinner, that it is a reason applicable to your case. If you can — think of any one good and solid reason why God should forgive you! Turn them all over. You cannot see one! I know the time when I could not find a half a reason why God should save me, but I could find fifty thousand reasons why he should damn me; but when I see that, "For Christ's sake," O that is a reason; that is a good reason — it is a reason I can get hold of. Suppose me to be the blackest sinner out of hell, how it will glorify Christ if, for Christ's sake, the blackest sinner that ever lived should be snatched from hell and taken to heaven for his sake. Suppose I have been a blasphemer, unchaste, an adulterer, a murderer — what then? "For Christ's sake." The more sin I have, the more glorious will the merit of Christ seem to be, when, in opposition to all my unworthiness, it brings me pardon and eternal life, and takes me to the enjoyments of his right hand. Sinner, grasp this motive. I know where you have been: you have been raking about in that filthy dunghill of your own heart. You have been turning the filth over, to find a jewel in it. You will never find one. The jewels which once belonged to mankind, were all lost by our father Adam. I know what you have been doing. You have been trying to be better in order to deserve well of God. Thus you thought you would manufacture a reason which should move the heart of God. Leave off this foolish work: come with nothing in your hands but Christ. When the Molossians were threatened by their king to be cut to pieces for their rebellion, they pleaded very hard, but no argument would touch his heart till, one day, one of their ambassadors saw his son in the palace; catching him up in his arms, he took and laid him down before his father's feet, and said, "For thy son's sake have pity upon us." Now, do this, sinner, take Christ in thine arms and say, "For Christ's sake." The whole pith of the gospel lies here. All true theology is comprehended in this, "For Christ's sake." Substitution — saving the guilty through the innocent; substitution-blessing the unworthy through the worthy. Do try this precious plea, poor soul, and I will warrant thee that, ere long, thou shalt find peace with God, if thou canst understand the power of this argument.

I may close these reflections by observing, that this is the only motive, the only motive which can ever move the heart of God. You may cry as long as you will, reform as much as you please, pray as earnestly as you like, but the gate of heaven will never stir to your knockings till you plead, "For Jesus' sake!" There is the "Open Sesame," which will make the gates of the city turn on their hinges; but if thou hast not this watchword, all thy doings and almsgivings, and praying, and what not, will be but a heap of filth, piled up against heaven's gate. Do remember that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid," and that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," save Jesus Christ, the Righteous. Use that! Plead that, and you shall succeed with God!

II. "For Christ's Sake," Is The Believer's Great Motive For Service.

Two or three hints as to what kind of service may be expected of us; then a little exhortation by way of stirring us up to do this service for Christ.

1. We begin with a few hints as to what service is expected of us.

One of the first things which every Christian should feel bound to do "for Christ's sake" is to avenge his death. "Avenge his death," says one, "upon whom?" Upon his murderers. And who were they? Our sins? our sins!

**"Each of our crimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear."**

The very thought of sin having put Jesus to death should make the Christian hate it with a terrible hatred. I do not wonder that the highlanders bit their lips and marched with awful determination and dread resolve of vengeance

against the rebel sepoys, when they recollected how the murdered women filled up the well of Cawnpore. Every man must have felt then that he was twenty men in one for retribution, and when his arm smote, he wished to concentrate all the might of justice into each stroke of his sword. When I recollect that my sins tore my Savior's body on the tree, took the crown from his head, and the comfort from his heart, and sent him down into the shades of death, I vow revenge against them. "O sin! Happy shall he be that taketh thy little ones and dasheth them against a stone,' yea, doubly blessed is he who, like Samuel, shall hew the Agag of his sins in pieces before the Lord, and not spare so much as one single fault, or folly, or vice, because it slew the Savior. Be holy, be pure, be just, be ye separate from sinners for Christ's sake.

Then, next, the Christian is expected to exalt his Master's name, and to do much to honor his memory, for Christ's sake. You remember that queen, who, when her husband died, thought she could never honor him too much, and built a tomb so famous, that though it was only named from him, it remains, to this day, the name of every splendid memorial — the mausoleum. Now let us feel that we cannot erect any thing too famous for the honor of Christ — that our life will be will spent in making his name famous. Let us pile up the unhewn stones of goodness, self-denial, kindness, virtue, grace; let us lay these one upon another, and build up a memorial for Jesus Christ, so that whosoever passes us by, may know that we have been with Jesus, and have learned of him. Should we not, for his sake, care for the growth of his kingdom and the welfare of his subjects? Ought we not to minister to the wants of his servants, and comfort the sorrows of his friends? If he has a poor brother anywhere, is it not at once an honor and a duty to aid him? As David cherished Mephibosheth, who was lame in his feet, for the sake of Jonathan, so should you and I look after every heavy-laden, faint-hearted Christian, for the sake of Jesus: bearing one another's burdens, because Christ bore our burden; weeping with them that weep, because Jesus wept; helping those who ask our help, because God has laid help upon one that is mighty, even our Redeemer.

And above all, "for Jesus' sake" should be a motive to fill us with intense sympathy with him. He has many sheep and some of them are wandering; let us go after them, my brethren, for the shepherd's sake. He has pieces of money which he has lost; let us sweep the house, and light our candle, and seek diligently till we find them, "for Jesus' sake." He has brethren who are playing the prodigal; let us seek to bring them back "for Christ's sake." "Let the soul of the poorest little street Arab, let the soul of the grossest scoundrel and the most abandoned harlot be very dear to us for Jesus' sake." "Let us care even for the obstinate and rebellious for Jesus' sake." As you look at souls think you see him weeping over them, as you look at perishing sinners think you see his blood bespattered on them, and you will love them "for Jesus' sake." Oh! brethren, you who are doing nothing for Christ, who come here and listen to me, who sit at his table and take the bread and wine in remembrance of him, what will you do when your Master comes, when you have to confess that you did nothing for him; your love was of such a sort that you never showed it, you talked of it, but you never gave to his cause, you never worked for his name? Out on such love as that! What do men think of it, a love that never shows itself in action? Why, they say, "Open rebuke is better than secret love of that kind;" you had better have rebuked Christ than to have had a sneaking, miserable, untrue, unloving love to him, a love so weak that it was never powerful enough to actuate you to a single deed of self-denial, of generosity, of heroism, or zeal. Oh, brethren, let it not be so with us any longer, but let us seek by God's grace that, "for Jesus' sake," we may have a sympathy with him in yearning over the souls of men, and endeavoring to bring them to a knowledge of his salvation.

2. A few words, lastly, by way of exhortation on this point, and I will not weary your attention by longer talk.

Clear as the sound of a trumpet startling men from slumber, and bewitching as the sound of martial music to the soldier when he marches to the conflict, ought to be the matchless melody of this word, "For Christ's sake." It ought to make men perform deeds which should fit them to rank with angels. It ought to bring out of every regenerate man more than was ever forced from manhood by any other word let it have what charm it might. It ought to make the least among us valiant as David, and David as the servant of the Lord. Think, my brethren, what mighty wonders other words have wrought. For philosophy's sake what have not men suffered? They have wasted their health over unhealthy furnaces, breathing deleterious gases; they have worn out their days and their nights burning the midnight oil; they have spent their last farthing to acquire the secrets of nature, beggared themselves and their families, to unravel mysteries which have brought no more substantial reward than the honor of learned approbation and conscious power. The martyrs of science are innumerable. If some one would write their story it would make a bright page in human history. Think again of what men have done for discovery's sake by way of travelling. Take down the books of modern travelers and you wilt be astounded at their zeal, their courage, and disinterestedness. They have mocked the fever, have laughed at death, have left friends and kindred and the comfort of home, have gone to inhospitable climes among more inhospitable men, have

wandered about in weariness, wet with the rain, frozen with the cold, or burnt up with the heat, hungry and thirsty, sick and weary, have journeyed on and on to find the source of a river or a passage through a frozen strait. When I think of such expeditions as those of Ross and Franklin, I marvel at and reverence the endurance of humanity; how these bold men have braved old Boreas in his own ice-palace, and faced grim desolation in its own domain. The text "Quit you like men" gets a new emphasis when we think of these conquerors of famine, and cold, and peril; and shall the inquisitiveness of mankind prove a stronger motive than God — given love to Jesus! If so, shame be upon us!

Think, again, of what men have done for false religion's sake. In years gone by, the scimitar flashed from the Arab's sheath, and the Arab's eye flashed fire at the very name of Mahomet, For the one dogma, "God is God, and Mahomet is his prophet," blood flowed in rivers, and fields were strewn with the slain rejoicing to be slain, because they dreamed that Paradise was to be found under the shadow of swords. Think how the heathen cast themselves before the car of Juggernaut, to be crushed into a hideous mass of mangled flesh, and broken bones, and oozing blood, for their god's sake! their filthy horrid god's sake! How many have given themselves to die by Gunga's stream! how many a woman has gone up to the funeral pile, and thrown herself upon her husband's dead body, giving herself an offering to her cruel gods. I know not what men have not suffered for the horrid deities which they have chosen for themselves. Martyrs to fanaticism and deception are not a few, and shall the truth find us unready and unwilling to run risks for its sake!

Review, my brethren, the heroic struggles of the Lord's people, and here we turn to the brightest page of the world's annals! Think of the suffering of God's people through the Maccabean war! How marvellous was their courage when Antiochus Epiphanes took the feeblest among the Jews to constrain them to break the law, and found himself weak as water before their dauntless resolve. Aged women and feeble children overcame the tyrant. Their tongues were torn out; they were sawn asunder; they were broiled on the fire; they were pierced with knives; but no kind of torture could subdue the indomitable spirit of God's chosen people. Think of the Christian heroism of the first centuries; remember Blandina tossed upon the horns of bulls and set in a red-hot iron chair; think of the martyrs given up to the lions in the amphitheatre, amidst the revilings of the Roman mob; dragged to their death at the heels of wild horses, or, like Marcus Arethusa, smeared with honey and stung to death by bees; and yet in which case did the enemy triumph? In none! They were more than conquerors through him that loved them! And why? Because they did it all "For Christ's sake," and Christ's sake alone. Think of the cruelty which stained the snows of the Switzer's Alps, and the grass of Piedmont's Valleys, blood-red with the murdered Waldenses and Albigenses, and honor the heroism of those who, in their deaths, counted not their lives dear to them "for Christ's sake." Walk this afternoon to your own Smithfield, and stand upon the sacred spot where the martyrs leaped into their chariot of fire, leaving their ashes on the ground "for Jesus' sake." In Edinburgh, stand on the well known stones consecrated with covenanting gore, where the axe and the hangman set free the spirits of men who rejoiced to suffer for Christ's sake. Remember those fugitives for Christ's sake, "meeting in the glens and crags of Scotia's every hill, for Christ's sake." They were daunted by nothing — they dared everything "for Christ's sake." Think, too, of what missionaries have done "for Christ's sake." With no weapon but the Bible, they have landed among cannibals, and have subdued them to the power of the gospel; with no hope of gain, except in the reward which the Lord has reserved for every faithful one, they have gone where the most enterprising trader dared not go, passed through barriers impenetrable to the courage of men who sought after gold, but to be pierced by men who sought after souls. Think of the Moravians, first and choicest of warriors for God. Think of them selling themselves for slaves that they might teach other slaves the liberty of the gospel, consenting to be confined in the lazar house for life, with the absolute certainty of rotting away piece-meal with leprosy and with diseases fouler still, only that they might save the leper's soul and have an opportunity of teaching to the poor diseased one the way by which his spirit might be made whole through Jesus the great physician. And what have you and I ever done? Oh, pigmies, dwarfs, sons of nobodies, our names will never be remembered. What have we done? Preached a few times, but with how little fire; prayed at certain seasons, but with what little passion; talked now and then to sinners, but with what half-heartedness given to the cause of Christ, but seldom given till we denied ourselves and made a real sacrifice; believed in God at times, but oh with what unbelief mixed with our faith; loved Christ, but with what cold, stolid hearts. "For Christ's sake." Do you feel the power of it? Then let it be like a rushing mighty wind to your soul to sweep out the clouds of your worldliness, and clear away the mists of sin. "For Christ's sake," be this the tongue of fire that shall sit on every one of you: "for Christ's sake" be this the divine rapture, the heavenly afflatus to bear you aloft from earth, the divine spirit that shall make us bold as lions and swift as eagles in our Lord's service. Fixed, fixed on God with a constancy that is not to be shaken, resolute to honor him with a determination that is not to be turned aside, and pressing on with an ardor never to be wearied.

I cannot preach as I would on such a theme as this, but I leave it with you. How much owest thou unto my Lord? Has he ever done anything for thee? Has he forgiven thy sins? Has he covered thee with a robe of righteousness? Has he set thy feet upon a rock? Has he established thy goings? Has he prepared heaven for thee? Has he prepared thee for heaven? Has he written thy name in his book of life? Has he given thee countless blessings? Has he a store of mercies which eye hath not seen nor ear heard? Then do something for Christ worthy of his love. Wake up from natural sleepiness, and this very day, or ever the sun goeth down, do thou something in some way by which thou shalt prove that thou dost feel the power of that divine motive, "for Christ's sake." May God accept and bless you, dear friends, "for Jesus' sake." Amen.

**"See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the tree;
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."**

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