

Spared!

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that being spared by God's providence is a call to self-examination, repentance, and faithful service, emphasizing that those left alive have a divine purpose and must prepare for the final judgment.

Scripture: Ezekiel 9:8

Topics: "Divine Providence", "Judgment", "Grace and Repentance"

Description

In 'Spared!', C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound spiritual meaning behind being spared by God's providence amidst judgment and destruction. He calls listeners to a solemn self-examination, urging them to consider the purpose behind their survival and to respond with repentance and faithful service. Spurgeon vividly portrays the coming judgment and challenges both believers and sinners to prepare their hearts for eternity. This devotional sermon blends biblical insight with heartfelt appeal, encouraging a life fully committed to Christ.

Transcript

"I was left." Ezekiel 9:8.

THE vision of Ezekiel which is recorded in the previous chapter brought to light the abominations of the house of Judah. The vision which follows in this chapter shows the terrible retribution that the Lord God brought upon the guilty nation, beginning at Jerusalem.

He beheld the men of slaughter who come forth with their weapons. He marked them begin the destroying work at the gate of the Temple. He saw them proceed through the main streets and not omit a single lane—they utterly slew all those who were not marked with the mark of the writer's inkhorn on their brow. He stood alone—that Prophet of the Lord—himself spared in the midst of universal carnage and, as the carcasses fell at his feet, and the bodies stained with gore lay all around him, he said, "I was left." He stood alive among the dead because he was found faithful among the faithless—he survived in the midst of universal destruction because he had served his God in the midst of universal depravity.

We shall now take the sentence altogether apart from Ezekiel's vision and appropriate it to ourselves. And I think, when we read it over, and repeat it, "I was left," it very naturally invites us to take a review of the past. It also very readily suggests a prospect of the future and, I think, it also permits a terrible contrast in reserve for the impenitent.

I. First of all, then, my Brothers and Sisters, we have here a pathetic reflection which seems to invite us to take A SOLEMN REVIEW—"I was left."

You remember, many of you, times of sickness, when cholera was in your streets. You may forget that season of pestilence, but I never can—when the duties of my pastorate called me to continually walk among your terror-stricken households and to see the dying and the dead. Impressed upon my young heart must ever remain some of those sad scenes I witnessed when I first came to this metropolis and was, really, employed at that time to bury the dead rather than to bless the living. Some of you have passed through not only one season of cholera, but many, and you have been present, too, perhaps, in climates where fever has prostrated its hundreds and where the plague and other dire diseases have emptied out their quivers and every arrow has found its mark in the heart of some one of your companions. Yet you have been left.

You walked among the graves, but you did not stumble into them. Fierce and fatal maladies lurked in your path, but they were not allowed to devour you. The bullets of Death whistled by your ears and yet you stood alive, for his bullet had no billet for your heart. You can look back, some of you, through fifty, sixty, 70 years. Your bald and gray heads tell the story that you are no more raw recruits in the warfare of life. You have become veterans, if not invalids, in the army. You are ready to retire, to put off your armor and give place to others. Look back, Brothers and Sisters, I say, you who have come into the sere and yellow leaf—remember the many seasons in which you have seen death hailing multitudes about you—and think, "I was left."

And we, too, who are younger, in whose veins our blood still leaps in vigor, can remember times of peril when thousands fell about us, yet we can say, in God's house, with great emphasis, "I was left"—reserved, great God, when many others perished. Sustained, standing on the rock of life when the waves of death dashed about me, the spray fell heavily

upon me and my body was saturated with disease and pain—yet am I still alive— still permitted to mingle with the busy tribes of men!

Now, then, what does such a review as this suggest? Ought we not, each one of us, to ask the question, Why was I spared? Why was I left? Many of you were, at that time—and some of you are even now dead in trespasses and sins! You were not spared because of your fruitfulness, for you brought forth nothing but the grapes of Gomorrah! Certainly God did not stay His sword because of anything good in you. A multitude of clamorous evils in your disposition, if not in your conduct, might well have demanded your summary execution. But you were spared. Let me ask you why? Was it that mercy might yet visit you—that Grace might yet renew your soul? Have you found it so? Has Sovereign Grace overcome you, beaten down your prejudices, thawed your icy heart, broken your stony will in pieces? Say, Sinner, in looking back upon the times when you have been left, were you spared in order that you might be saved with a great salvation?

And if you cannot say, "Yes," to that question, let me ask you whether it may not yet be so? Soul, why has God spared you so long, while you are yet His enemy, a stranger to Him and far off from Him by wicked works? Or, on the contrary, has He spared you—I tremble at the bare mention of the possibility—has He prolonged your days to develop your propensities, that you may grow riper for damnation—that you may fill up your measure of crying iniquity and then go down to the Pit a seared and dry sinner, like wood that is ready for the fire? Can it be so? Shall these spared moments be spoiled by more misdemeanors, or shall

they be given up to repentance and to prayer? Will you now, before the last of your sins shall set in everlasting darkness, will you now look to Him? If so, you will have reason to bless God through all eternity, that you were left—because you were left that you might yet seek and might yet find Him who is the Savior of sinners!

Do I speak to many of you who are Christians, who, too, have been left? When better saints than you were snatched away from earthly ties and creature kindred—when brighter stars than you were enclouded in night—were you still permitted to shine with your poor flickering ray? Why was it, great God? Why am I now left? Let me ask myself that question. In sparing me so long, my Lord, have You not something more for me to do? Is there not some purpose, not conceived in my soul, which You will yet suggest to me—and to carry out which You will yet give me Grace and strength and spare me a little while longer? Am I yet immortal or shielded at least from every arrow of death because my work is incomplete? Is the tale of my years prolonged because the full tale of the bricks has not yet been made up? Then show me what You would have me do! Since thus I have been left, help me to feel myself a specially-consecrated man, left for a purpose, reserved for some end, otherwise I had been worms many years ago and my body had crumbled back to its mother earth! Christian, I say, always be asking yourself this question, but especially be asking it when you are preserved in times of more than ordinary sickness and mortality. If I am left, why am I left? Why am I not taken home to Heaven? Why do I not enter into my rest? Great Lord and Master, show me what You would have me do and give me Grace and strength to do it!

Let us change the review for a moment and look upon the sparing mercy of God in another light. "I was left." Some of you now present, whose history I well know, can say, "I was left," and say it with peculiar emphasis. You were born of ungodly parents. The earliest words you can remember were base and blasphemous—too bad to repeat. You can remember how the first breath your infant lungs received was tainted air—the air of vice, of sin and iniquity. You grew up, you and your brothers and your sisters, side by side. You filled the home with sin. You went on together in your youthful crimes and encouraged each other in evil habits. Thus you grew up to manhood and then you were banded together in ties of immorality as well as in ties of blood. You added to your number—you took in fresh associates. As your family circle increased, so did the flagrancy of your conduct. You all conspired to break the Sabbath. You devised the same schemes and perpetrated the same improprieties. You recollect how one and another of your old comrades died—you followed them to their graves and your merriment was checked a little while—but it soon broke out again. Then a sister died, steeped to the mouth in infidelity. After that, a brother was taken—he had no hope in his death—all was darkness and despair before him. And so, Sinner, you have outlived all your friends! If you are inclined to go to Hell, you must go there along a beaten track—a path which, as you look back upon the way you have trodden, is stained with blood, for you can remember how all who have been before you have gone to the long home in dismal gloom, without a glimpse or ray of joy.

And now you are left, Sinner, and, blessed be God, it may be you can say, "Yes, and I am not only left, but I am here in the House of Prayer! And if I know my own heart—there is nothing I should hate so much as to live my old life over again. Here I am and I never believed I would ever be here! I look back with mournfulness, indeed, upon those who have departed, but, though mourning them, I express my gratitude to God that I am not in torments—not in Hell—but still here! Yes, not only here, but having a hope that I shall one day see the face of Christ and stand amidst blazing worlds robed in His righteousness and preserved by His love."

You have been left, then—and what ought you to say? Ought you to boast? Oh, no! Be doubly humble! Should you take the glory to yourself? No! Put the crown upon the head of free, rich, undeserved Grace!

And what should you do above all other men? Why, you should be doubly pledged to serve Christ! As you served the devil through thick and thin until you came to serve him, alone, and your company had all departed, so, by Divine Grace, may you be pledged to Chr-ist—to follow Him, though all the world should despise Him—and to hold on to the end, until, if every professor should be an apostate, it might yet be said of you at the last, "He was left. He stood alone in sin while his comrades died and then he stood alone in Christ when his companions deserted him." Thus of you it shall always be said, "He was left."

This suggests also one more form of the same review. What a special Providence has watched over some of us and guarded our feeble frames! There are some of you, in particular, who have been left to such an age that, as you look back upon your youthful days, you recall far more of kinsfolk in the tomb than remain in the world, more under the earth than above it! In your dreams you are the associates of the dead. Still you are left! Preserved amidst a thousand dangers of infancy, then kept in youth, steered safely over the shoals and quicksands of an immature age and over the rocks and reefs of manhood, you have been brought past the ordinary period of mortal life—and yet you are still here. Seventy years exposed to perpetual death and yet preserved till you have come almost, perhaps, to your fourscore years! You have been left, my dear Brother or Sister—and why are you left? Why is it that brothers and sisters are all gone? Why is it that the ranks of your old schoolmates have gradually thinned? You cannot remember one, now alive, who was your companion in youth. How is it that now, you, who have lived in a certain quarter so long, see new names there on all the shop doors, new faces in the street and everything new to what you once saw in your young days? Why are you spared? Are you an unconverted man? Are you an unconverted woman? To what end are you spared? Is it that you may, at the 11th hour be saved? God grant it may be so! Or are you spared till you shall have sinned yourself into the lowest depths of Hell, that you may go there the most aggravated sinner because of the oft-repeated warnings so often neglected—are you spared for this, or is it that you may yet be saved?

But are you a Christian? Then it is not hard for you to answer the question, "Why are you spared?" I do not believe there is an old woman on earth, living in the most obscure cottage in England and sitting this very night in a dark attic, with her candle gone out, without means to buy another—I do not believe that old woman would be kept out of Heaven five minutes unless God had something for her to do on earth! And I do not think that yon gray-headed man would still be preserved unless there was something for him to do. Tell it out, tell it out, you aged man! Tell the story of that preserving Grace which has kept you up till now! Tell to your children and to your children's children what a God He is whom you have trusted! Stand up as a hoary patriarch and tell how He delivered you in six troubles and in seven suffered no evil to touch you! Bear to coming generations your faithful witness that His Word is true and that His promise cannot fail! Lean on your staff and say, before you die in the midst of your family, "Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised." Let your ripe days bring forth a mellow testimony to His love and, as you become more and more advanced in years, so be you more and more advanced in knowledge and in confirmed assurance of the Immutability of His counsel, the truthfulness of His oath, the preciousness of His blood and the sureness of the salvation of all those who put their trust in Him! Then shall we know that you are spared for a high and noble purpose, indeed! You shall say it with tears of gratitude and we will listen with smiles of joy—"I was left."

II. I must rather suggest these reviews than follow them up, though, did time permit, we might well enlarge abundantly and, therefore, I must hurry on to invite you to A PROSPECT.

You and I shall soon pass out of this world into another. This life is, as it were, but the ferry—we are being carried across and we shall soon come to the true shore, the real terra firma—for here there is nothing that

is substantial. When we shall come into that next world, we have to expect, by-and-by, a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. And in that solemn day we are to expect that all that dwell upon the face of the earth shall be gathered together in one place.

And He shall come, who came once to suffer—He shall come to judge the world in righteousness and the people in equity! He who came as an Infant shall come as the Infinite! He who lay wrapped in swaddling bands shall come girt about the waist with a golden girdle, with a rainbow wreath and robes of storm! There shall we all stand, a vast, innumerable company—earth shall be crowned from her valley's deepest base to the mountain's summit—and the sea's waves shall become the solid standing-place of men and women who have slept beneath its torrents. Then shall every eye be fixed on Him, every ear shall be open to Him and every heart shall watch with solemn awe and dread suspense for the transactions of that greatest of all days, that Day of Days, that sealing up of the ages, that completing of the dispensation!

Shall it be so or shall I be bound up in a bundle to burn and swept away forever by the breath of God's nostrils, like the chaff driven before the wind? It must be one or the other! Which shall it be? Can I answer that question? Can I tell? I can tell it—tell it now—for I have in this very Chapter of God's Word, that which teaches me how to judge myself! They who are preserved have the mark on their foreheads! And they have a character as well as a mark—and their character is that they sigh and cry for all the abominations of the wicked. Then, if I hate sin, and if I sigh because others love it—if I cry because I, myself, through infirmity fall into it—if the sin of myself and the sin of others is a constant source of grief and vexation of spirit to me—then I have that mark and evidence of those who shall neither sigh nor cry in the world to come, for sorrow and sighing shall flee away!

Have I the blood-mark on my brow today? Say, my Soul, have you put your trust in Jesus Christ, alone, and as the fruit of that faith, has your faith learned how to love, not only Him that saved you, but others, too, who as yet are unsaved? And do I sigh and cry within while I bear the blood-mark without! Come Brother, Sister, answer this for yourself, I charge you! I charge you do so by the tottering earth and by the ruined pillars of Heaven that shall surely shake! I pray you, by the cherubim and seraphim that shall be before the Throne of the Great Judge by the blazing lightning that shall then illumine the thick darkness and make the sun amazed, and turn the moon into blood—by Him whose tongue is like a flame, like a sword of fire! I charge you by Him who shall judge you, and try you, and read your heart, and declare your ways, and divide unto you your eternal portion! I charge you by the certainties of death, by the sureness of judgment, by the glories of Heaven, by the solemnities of Hell—I beseech, implore, command, entreat you—ask yourself, now, "Shall I be left? Do I believe in Christ? Have I been born-again? Have I a new heart and a right spirit? Or am I still what I always was—God's enemy, Christ's despiser, cursed by the Law of God, cast out from the Gospel, without God and without hope—a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel?"

I cannot speak to you as earnestly as I would to God that I could. I want to thrust this question into your very loins and stir up your heart's deepest thoughts with it. Sinner, what will become of you when God shall winnow the chaff from the wheat? What will be your portion? You that stand in the aisle, yonder, what will be your portion? You who are crowded over there—what will your portion be when He shall come and nothing shall escape His eyes? Say, shall you hear Him? Say, and shall your heart-strings crack while He utters the thundering sound, "Depart, you cursed"? Or shall it be your happy lot—your soul transported all the while with unutterable bliss—to hear Him say, "Come, you blessed

of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"? Our text reveals a prospect, I pray you to look at it, gaze across the narrow stream of death, and say. "Shall I be left?"—

"When you, my righteous Judge, shall come

To fetch Your ransomed people home,

Shall I among them stand?

Shall such a worthless worm as I,

Who sometimes am afraid to die

Be found at Your right hand?

I love to meet among them now,

Before Your gracious feet to bow,

Though vilest of them all!

But can I bear the piercing thought—

What if my name should be left out

When You for them shall call?

Prevent, prevent it by Your Grace!

Be You, dear Lord, my hiding place

In this the accepted day—

Your pardoning voice, oh let me hear

To still my unbelieving fear

Nor let me fall, I pray."

III. But now we come to A TERRIBLE CONTRAST which I think is suggested in the text, "I was left."

Then there will be some that will not be left in the sense we have been speaking of—and yet who will be left after another and more dreadful manner. They will be left by mercy, forsaken by hope, given up by friends and become a prey to the implacable fury, to the sudden, infinite and unmitigated severity and justice of an angry God! But they will not be left or exempted from judgment, for the sword shall find them out, the vials of Jehovah shall reach even to their heart! And that flame, the pile whereof is wood and much smoke, shall suddenly devour them and that without remedy. Sinner, you shall be left! I say, you will be left of all those fond joys that you now hug—left of that pride which now steels your heart—you will be low enough, then! You will be left of that iron constitution which now seems to repel the darts of death. You shall be left of those companions of yours that entice you on to sin and harden you in iniquity. You shall be left by those who promise to be your helpers at the last. They shall need helpers, themselves, and the strong man shall fail. You shall be left, then, of that pleasing fancy of yours and of that merry wit which

can make sport of Bible Truths and mock at Divine solemnities!

You shall be left, then, of all your buoyant hopes and of all your imaginary delights. You shall be left of that sweet angel, Hope, who never forsakes any but those who are condemned to Hell! You shall be left of God's Spirit, who sometimes now pleads with you. You shall be left of Jesus Christ, whose Gospel has been so often preached in your ear. You shall be left of God the Father—He shall shut His eyes of pity against you—His heart of compassion shall no more yearn over you, nor shall He regard your cries. You shall be left but, oh, again I tell you, you shall not be left as one who has escaped, for, when the earth shall open to swallow up the wicked, it shall open at your feet and swallow you up! When the fiery thunderbolt shall pursue the spirit that falls into the Pit that is bottomless, it shall pursue you, reach you and find you! When God tears the wicked in pieces and there shall be none to deliver, He shall tear you in pieces! He shall be unto you as a consuming fire, your conscience shall be full of gall, your heart shall be drunk with bitterness, your teeth shall be broken, even as with gravel, your hopes melted with His hot thunderbolts and all your joys withered and blasted by His breath!

O careless Sinner, mad Sinner, you who are now dashing yourself downward to destruction, why will you play the fool at this rate? There are cheaper ways of making sport for yourself than this! Dash your head against the wall. Go there and, like David, let your spittle fall upon your beard, but let not your sin fall upon your conscience—and let not your despite of Christ be like a millstone hung about your neck with which you shall be cast into the sea forever. Be wise, I pray you. O Lord, make the sinner wise! Hush his madness for a while. Let him be sober and hear the voice of reason! Let him be still and hear the voice of conscience! Let him be obedient and hear the voice of Scripture! "Thus says the

Lord, because I will do this, consider your ways." "Prepare to meet your God, O Israel." "Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved."

I do feel that I have a message for someone tonight. Though there may be some who think the sermon not appropriate to a congregation where there is so large a proportion of converted men and women, yet what a large proportion of ungodly ones there is here, too! I know that you come here, many of you, to hear some funny tale, or to catch at some strange, extravagant speech of one whom you repute to be an eccentric man. Ah, well, he is eccentric and hopes to be so till he dies! But it is simply eccentric in being in earnest and wanting to win souls! O poor Sinners, there is no odd tale I would not tell if I thought it would be blessed to you! There is no grotesque language which I would not use, however it might be thrown back at me, if I thought it might but be serviceable to you! I set not my account to be thought a fine speaker—they that use fine language may dwell in the king's palaces. I speak to you as one who knows he is accountable to no man, but only to his God—as one who shall have to render his account at the Last Great Day.

And I pray you will not go away to talk of this and that which you have marked in my language. Think of this one thing, "Shall I be left"? Shall I be saved? Shall I be caught up and dwell with Christ in Heaven, or shall I be cast down to Hell forever and ever?" Turn over these things! Think seriously of them. Hear that voice which says, "Him that comes to Me I will in nowise cast out." Give heed to the voice which expostulates, "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

How else shall your life be spared when the wicked are judged? How else shall you find shelter when the tempest of Divine wrath rages? How else shall you stand in the lot of the righteous at the end of the days?

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: EPHESIANS1.

Verses 1, 2. Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints, which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus, Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ The Apostle desires the same blessing for us who are "the faithful in Christ Jesus," as he did for the saints at Ephesus. He longs that we, also, may be filled with Grace and peace "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." And the wish of the Apostle is according to the will of God who would have us abound in Grace and in peace. Some of you Christian people are troubled in mind, yet your Lord said to His disciples and through them to you, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Jesus knew that in the world you would have tribulation, but He willed that in Him you would have peace. And the way to get that peace is by getting Divine Grace. "Grace be to you, and peace." The more gracious you are, the more easily will you bear the trying circumstances which surround you. Look not for peace apart from Grace—when you have Grace, you have a right to peace.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. I notice how, often, in the Epistles, benedictions are followed by doxologies. This is because the true heart loves to bless the Lord. What a rich treasure we have who are blessed "with all spiritual blessings!" There is nothing we can need but what is provided for us by our gracious God. Why are you poor, then, when God "has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"? Is it not because you often forget to go to the heavenly in Christ, and begin looking to the earthly in yourselves? There is nothing but starvation there—all true riches are found in the heavenly in Christ.

4. According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. The Apostle did not ignore the glorious and blessed doctrine of Divine Election. He delighted to meditate upon it and to speak of it. I wish that some Christians, nowadays, were not so much afraid of it. All spiritual blessings come to us in this way—this is the fountainhead of all favor and Grace—"According as He has chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world." The objective of our election—that to which God has chosen us in Christ is—"that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Unless you are holy, how can you talk of being chosen of God, for the elect are chosen unto holiness, chosen to be delivered from all blame through the love and Grace of God?

5, 6. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His Grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. It is well said, by an old writer, that there is no book which is written with such brevity as the Bible. It seems to give us the condensed essence of the Truth of God in the smallest possible space. What a mass of thought there is in those few lines which I have just read to you! We see here that we become the children of God by adoption, whatever the Universal Fatherhood people may say—"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself—and that this adoption is the result of predestination and is not because of our own merits, but, "according to the good pleasure of His will." Some systems of theology have much of logic, but little of God. But in Paul's teaching, it is God first, and last, and in the middle and all over. "To the praise of the glory of His Grace." What a wonderful expression this is—not only "the glory of His Grace," but the praise of that glory! God has done all things with a view to magnifying His Grace in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men—"Wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved." There seems to me to be a sacred poem in these words, "accepted in the Beloved." To my heart there is more heavenly music in those four words than in any oratorio I ever heard! "Accepted in the Beloved." Oh, what honey this is in the mouth, what cheer this is in the heart! Are

all of you, dear Friends, "accepted in the Beloved"?

7, 8. In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His Grace; wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. Wisdom and prudence are two of the handmaids of Grace. Grace reigns through righteousness and the wisdom and prudence of God are set to work so to conduct the whole of the arrangements that "the glory of His Grace" may be all the more conspicuous!

9. Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself Even our knowledge of God's will is the result of "His good pleasure." If your eyes have been divinely opened, you see the will of God coming in everywhere—and ordering all things according to His gracious and unerring purpose!

10. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him. All the things that are in Christ shall be gathered together. None of them shall be left out. His great Covenant work shall be, in all respects, fully accomplished. There shall be no failure in any point. Whether in Heaven, or on earth, the things which are in Christ shall be gathered together in One, "even in Him."

11. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will How the Apostle delights to harp upon this theme! The Holy Spirit knew that a time would come when men would put a slur upon this glorious Truth of God, so He inspired His servant to set it forth as the very brightness of the sun in the spiritual firmament—"being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will."

12-14. That we should be to the praise of His glory, whom first trusted in Christ. In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. Twice more, in these three verses you have this expression, "to the praise of His glory," making a third time with that which he said before, "to the praise of the glory of His Grace." The true Gospel glorifies God! False gospels may have what is called "the enthusiasm of humanity" about them, but the true Gospel has an enthusiasm for the living God and it magnifies and glorifies Him. Note, O Believers, that you first trust in Christ and after that you have the seal of the Spirit. There are some who look for the sealing of the Spirit before believing in Jesus—but neither God nor man will set a seal to a blank paper—there must be the writing of faith upon the heart and then the Spirit of God comes in, with His blessed seal, and sets it at the bottom as His Divine and gracious token of acceptance. The Holy Spirit is "the earnest of our inheritance." Now, an earnest is a part of the possession, itself—it is not simply a pledge, it is more than that—so the Holy Spirit in our heart is Heaven begun below—it is the young dawn of the everlasting day! Blessed be God, we have His Spirit within us, and we rejoice in His indwelling!

15-17. Therefore I, also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. You know Him, for He has saved you—now go on to know a great deal more of Him. You can scarcely have a better gift than this, "the Spirit of wisdom and revela-

tion in the knowledge of Him." The knowledge of Christ Crucified is the most excellent of all the sciences! It is better to be well acquainted with Christ than to be a very Solomon concerning all other things, yet not to know Him.

18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened. You have eyes—God's Grace has given them to you—but they are capable of additional power and force and there is the telescope of faith, which you are allowed to use, which will enable you to see much more than you have ever seen as yet!

18. That you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. First, you are to know what your inheritance is. That is "the hope of His calling." And, next, you are to know what Christ's inheritance in you is, which is another thing. It is a most blessed subject for meditation that you are Christ's, altogether Christ's, and that all you are to be, will be Christ's, and that in you, poor creatures though you are, He will yet have a rich inheritance. Paul would have you know what are "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,"

19. And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. It takes a great deal of Divine Grace to make a Believer, and to keep a Believer—nothing but the almighty power of God can do it.

19, 20. According to the working of His mighty power, which He worked in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Not only raising Him from the dead, but lifting Him up to His own right hand and setting Him there, "in the heavenly places."

21. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. The power of God which works in a Believer is the same power with which He raised Christ from the dead and set Him in this preeminent place.

22. And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, This power is also to be seen working in you who believe in Jesus. What wonders of Grace we shall be when God has exerted that stupendous and amazing energy in each one of us, even as in His own Son! What an inheritance Christ will have in us then!

23. Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fill all in all Said I not truly to you that this blessed Book is full of Truth put into as few words as possible? Verily, there is none like it! Other books, at the best, are like gold hammered out very thin, but here you have ingots of solid spiritual wealth, priceless in value! God help us all to make them our own treasure, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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