

A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ

2 TIMOTHY 2:2-3 A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST

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“A good soldier of Jesus Christ.” — 2 Timothy 2:2-3

Many men, many minds. In reference to what a Christian is there have been very many and diverse opinions. According to the notions of some, a Christian is an exquisite of remarkably delicate tastes; he cannot worship except it be in a place whose architecture is correctly Gothic, otherwise his dainty soul will be shocked; he is unable to offer prayer aright unless his devotions are uplifted upon the wings of the choicest music; and, even then, scarcely will he be successful unless he be aided by sundry gentlemen, whose pedigree, like that of racehorses, can be clearly traced, and whose garments the tailor has fashioned according to the directions of the ecclesiastical fashion book for the various seasons of the year. If this be to be a Christian in these days, it must be confessed that Paul has said little concerning this delicate and artistic sort of creature, unless, indeed, he had reference to it in Galatians 4:9, 10, 11, which read at your leisure; neither would Paul's Master acknowledge it.

With some a Christian is a spiritual gourmand. He attends upon the ministry of the word for no purpose but to be fed; He strongly denounces every sermon that is aimed at the conversion of sinners, for he looks even upon the Bible itself as a book solely intended to yield him personal consolation. The more any doctrinal teaching promises him a monopoly of good things, and the more it excludes others, the better he enjoys it, it being to him a particular part of the sweetness of the feast to believe that but a very slender company may dare to partake of it. For him to live is to enjoy and not to serve. To gratify his selfishness he would blot out the free invitations of the gospel. He is not a hearer only, but certainly he is not also a doer, he is a hearer and a feeder, in a certain coarse sense, upon the word of God, and nothing more. That is not Paul's ideal of a Christian. He does not picture him with his napkin in his hand, sitting at a banquet, but rather with a sword girt upon his thigh, ready for the conflict.

To some the highest form of Christian is a great reader, a profound student of the best of books, for the purpose of composing spiritual riddles. He reads for no practical end. He is a picker out of words, a speller over of syllables, a magnifier of microscopic points, a proficient in biblical hair-splitting. The more a passage perplexes others the more sure he is of its meaning. He cares most for things which have the least practical bearing. He is a peeper through spiritual spyglasses, fancying that he can interpret what wiser men leave to God to expound. He is a hunter after spiritual conies, which, if caught, would never pay the huntsman for his toil, while the weightier matters he holds in small esteem. This does not seem to have been Paul's conception of a Christian; for the apostle was no lover of foolish and unlearned questions which gender strife.

And I am afraid I must add that with some the beau ideal of a Christian is that of a man who can sleep out his existence in blissful serenity; a man who, having believed, or professed to believe, in Christ, has settled his life-work for ever, and henceforth can say, “Soul, take thine ease, thou hast henceforth much goods laid up for many years in thine own security, eat, drink, be merry in the gospel; but as for feeding the hungry or clothing the naked, art thou thy brother's keeper? What is that to thee? See thou to thyself, and if thou thyself be right, let fate, or providence, or sovereignty, take care of the rest.” Paul does not appear to have pictured true believers as sluggards sound asleep upon the downiest beds; his description of a Christian in the text is that of a soldier, and that means something very far different either from a religious fop, whose best delight is music and millinery, or a theological critic who makes a man an offender for a word, or a spiritual glutton who cares for nothing but a lifelong enjoyment of the fat things full of marrow, or an ecclesiastical slumberer who longs only for peace for himself. He represents him as a soldier and that, I say, is quite another thing. For what is a soldier? A soldier is a practical man, a man who has work to do, and hard, stern work. He may sometimes when he is at his ease wear the fineries of war, but when he comes to real warfare he cares little enough for them; the dust and the smoke, and the garments rolled in blood, these are for those who go a soldiering; and swords all hacked, and dented armor, and bruised shields, these are the things that mark the good, the practical soldier. Truly to serve God, really to exhibit Christian graces, fully to achieve a life-work for Christ, actually to win souls, this is to bear fruit worthy of a Christian. A soldier is a man of deeds, and not of words. He has to contend and fight. In war times his life knows little of luxurious ease. In the dead of night perhaps the trumpet sounds to boot and saddle, just at the time when he is most weary, and he must away to the attack just when he would best prefer to take his rest in sleep. The Christian is a soldier in an enemy's country always needing to stand on his

watchtower, constantly to be contending, though not with flesh and blood, with far worse foes, namely, with spiritual wickednesses in high places.

The Christian is a self-sacrificing man as the **soldier** must be. To protect his country the **soldier** must expose his own bosom; to serve his king he must be ready to lay down his life. Surely he is no Christian who never felt the spirit of self-sacrifice. If I live unto myself I am living unto the flesh, and of the flesh I shall reap corruption. Only he who lives to his God, to Christ, to the truth, to the church, and to the good old cause, only he is the man who can reckon himself at all to be a **soldier** of Jesus Christ.

A **soldier** is a serving man. He does not follow his own pleasure; he is under law and rule; each hour of the day has its prescribed duty; and he must be obedient to the word of another and not to his own will and whim. Such is the Christian. We serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Though no longer the slaves of man so as to dread his frown, we are servants of Christ who has loosed our bonds.

The **soldier** is full often a suffering man. There are wounds, there are toils, there are frequent lyings in the hospitals, there may be ghastly cuts which let the soul out with the blood. Such the Christian **soldier** must be ready to suffer, enduring hardness, not looking for pleasure of a worldly kind in this life, but counting it his pleasure to renounce his pleasure for Christ's sake.

Once again, the true **soldier** is an ambitious being. He pants for honor, seeks for glory. On the field of strife he gathers his laurels, and amidst a thousand dangers he reaps renown. The Christian is fired by higher ambitions than earthly warrior ever knew. He sees a crown that can never fade; he loves a King who best of all is worthy to be served; he has a motive within him which moves him to the noblest deeds, a divine spirit impelling him to the most self-sacrificing actions. Thus you see the Christian is a **soldier**, and it is one of the main things in Christian life, to contend earnestly for the faith, and to fight valorously against sin.

Paul does not exhort Timothy to be a common, or ordinary **soldier**, but to be a "good **soldier** of Jesus Christ;" for all **soldiers**, and all true **soldiers**, may not be good **soldiers**. There are men who are but just **soldiers** and nothing more; they only need sufficient temptation and they readily become cowardly, idle, useless and worthless; but he is the good **soldier** who is bravest of the brave, courageous at all times, who is zealous, does his duty with heart and earnestness. He is the good **soldier** of Jesus Christ who, through grace, aims to make himself as able to serve his Lord as shall be possible, who tries to grow in grace and to be perfected in every good word and work, that he may be in his Master's battles fit for the roughest and sternest service, and ready to bear the very brunt of the fray. David had many **soldiers**, and good **soldiers** too, but you remember it was said of many, "These attained not unto the first three." Now Paul, if I read him rightly, would have Timothy try to be of the first three, to be a good **soldier**. And surely I would this morning say to my dear comrades in the little army of Christ meeting here, let each one of us try to attain unto the first three; let us ask to be numbered among the King's mighties, to do noble work for him and honorable service, that we may bring to our Master's cause fresh glory. Be it ours to covet earnestly the best gifts, and as we have had much forgiven, let us love much, and prove that love by signs following.

Before I proceed fully to open up this metaphor, let me say that though we shall use military terms this morning, and stirring speech, it should ever be recollected that we have no war against persons, and that the weapons which we use are not such as are forged for the deadly conflicts of mankind. **The wars of a Christian are against principles, against sins, against the miseries of mankind, against that evil one who has led man astray from his Maker, against the iniquity which keeps man an enemy to himself; and the weapons that we use are holy arguments and consecrated lives, devotion and prayer to God, and teaching and example among the sons of men.** Ours is battling for the peace, and fighting for rest. We disturb the world to make it quiet, and turn it upside down to set it right; we pull down strongholds that they may not pull down the Zion of God; we dash down the mighty that the humble and the meek may be established. We have no sympathy with any other war, but count it an evil of the direst sort, let it be disguised as it may. Now with that caution, whatever I shall seem to say will not sound as though I loved or excused ordinary warfare, for nothing can be more abhorrent to the Christian man than wholesale slaughter; nothing can be more desired by us than the promised era, when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Now let us come to the work of this morning.

First, we shall describe a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and when we have done so, we shall exhort you to be such.

I. First, then, this morning, we shall endeavor to describe a Good Soldier Of Jesus Christ .

(1) We must begin with this fundamental — he must be loyal to his King.

A soldier of Jesus Christ owns the divine Redeemer as his King, and confesses his sole and undivided sovereignty in the spiritual kingdom. He abhors Antichrist in all its forms, and every principle that opposes itself to the reign of the beloved Prince of Peace. Jesus is to him both Lord and God. The day when he enlisted, he did as it were put his finger into the print of the nails, and say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." This was his enlistment declaration, and he remains true to it. "Christ is all," is his motto, and to win all men to obedience to Immanuel is his lifework. Till he sheathes his sword in the last victory, the Crucified is sole monarch of his

soul; for him he lives, for him he would even dare to die. He has entered into solemn league and covenant, to maintain against all comers that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Moreover, the Christian soldier not only acknowledges Jesus to be his King, but his heart is full of loving devotion to him as such. Nothing can make his heart leap like the mention of that august, that more than royal name. He remembers who Jesus is, the Son of God, "the Wonderful, the Counselor, the Mighty God." He remembers what Jesus did, how he loved him, and gave himself for him; he looks to the cross, and remembers the streams of blood whereby the elect were redeemed, even when they were enemies to God. He remembers Christ in heaven, enthroned at the right hand of the Father, he loves him there, and it ravishes his heart to think that God hath highly exalted the once-despised and rejected One, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. He pants for the time when the Crucified shall come in his glory, and rule the nations as their liege Lord. He loves Jesus so that he feels he belongs to him altogether, bought with his blood, redeemed by his power, and comforted by his presence; he delights to know that he is not his own, for he is bought with a price. And since he loves his King, and loves him with an ardor unquenchable, for many waters cannot drown his love, neither can the floods quench it, he loves all the King's brethren and servants for the King's sake; he hails his brethren in arms with hearty affection; he loves the grand old banner of the gospel; he prays for the wind of the Holy Spirit to expand its furls, that all eyes may behold its beauties; he is steadfast in the faith once delivered to the saints, and rejoices so much at every doctrine of the gospel that he would gladly lay down his life to preserve it to the world. Above all, he loves the crown of his King, and the cause of his Master. Oh, could he set the Captain of his salvation higher among men, he would be content to die in the ditch of neglect and scorn; could he but see the King come to his own, and the heir of all things loyally acknowledged by his revolted provinces, he would be satisfied whatever might become of himself. **His heart is more than loyal, it is full of personal affection for the chief among ten thousand. I ask you, brethren, whether it is so with you?**

Believing, yea, knowing that it is so with many, I would to God it were thus with all. Brethren, I know you love Jesus well, no music sounds to your ears so sweetly as his charming name; no song of choicest minstrel is half so sweet. The very thought of him with rapture fills your breasts. Assuredly you have one of the first marks of good soldiers; go on, I pray you, to that which lies beyond.

(2) The next characteristic of a good soldier is that he is obedient to his captain's commands.

He would be no soldier at all who would not take his marching orders from his leader, but must needs act after his own mind; he would soon be dismissed the service, if not shot, by order of a court martial, for crimes which military rule cannot tolerate. Now, without enlarging on that illustration, let me ask every Christian here, and myself first of all, are we doing all the Master's will? Do we wish to know the Master's will? I should not like that any part of the Scripture should be distasteful to me. I would tremble if there were portions of my Lord's testimony which I feared to read, or found it convenient to forget. It is terrible when men are obliged to pass over certain texts, or else to cut and square them to make them agree with their beliefs. We should not practice an ordinance merely because our church teaches it, or our parents believed in it; we must read the scriptures, and search the question for ourselves, or we are not respectful to our Lord. **The soldier who did not take the trouble to read the orders of his superior, might justly be suspected of mutinous intentions. Disobedience rankles in any heart where there is carelessness about knowing the Lord's will. Be courageous enough always to look Scripture in the face, it is after all nothing more than your bare duty.** Better for us that we changed our sentiments every day in order to be right, than that we held to them obstinately while we had some fear that perhaps we were wrong. To live a life of obedience is a greater matter than some suppose. Obedience is no second-rate virtue: "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "If ye love me" — what saith Jesus, "Go to the stake for me," or, "Preach before kings for me?" No, neither of these things is expressly selected, but "If ye love me, keep my commandments," as though this were the surest and most accepted test of love. May you thus, then, being loyal to the King be in the second place obedient to his commands.

(3) The third matter for a good soldier to mind is this, if he be indeed a first-class soldier, worthy of the service - to conquer will be his ruling passion.

The fight is on, and the soldier's blood is up, and now he feels "I must drive the enemy from his entrenchment, I must take yonder redoubt. I must plant our conquering standard on the castle of the foe, or I must die. Accursed be the sun if he go down this day and see me turn my back upon the enemy." He is resolved that he will win or lie cold and stark upon the battle field. The Christian man, in order that he may win for Christ the souls of others, may make known Christ's truth, may establish Christ's church on fresh ground, is quite as ready to suffer or die as is the boldest member of the most renowned regiment. To do this he disentangles himself as much as he can from all other ambitions and aims, "for be that warreth entangleth not himself with the affairs of this life." With a good soldier of Christ the master passion is to spread the gospel, to save souls from perishing, and he would sooner do this and be poor than be rich and neglect it; he would sooner be useful and live unknown than rank among the great ones of the earth and be useless to his Lord. A truly good soldier of Jesus Christ knows nothing about difficulties except as things to be surmounted. If his Master bids him perform exploits too hard for him, he draws upon the resources of omnipotence, and achieves impossibilities. Wellington sent word to his troops one night, "Ciudad Rodrigo must be taken to-night." And what do you think was the commentary

of the British soldiers appointed for the attack? "Then," said they all, "we will do it." So when our great Captain sends round, as he doth to us, the word of command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," if we were all good soldiers of the cross, we should say at once, "We will do it." However hard the task, since God himself is with us to be our Captain, and Jesus the Priest of the Most High is with us to sound the trumpet, we will do it in Jehovah's name. May such dauntless resolution fire your breasts, my brethren and sisters, and may you thus prove yourselves "good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

The passion for victory with the soldier often makes him forget everything else. Before the battle of Waterloo, Picton had had two of his ribs smashed in at Quatre Bras, but he concealed this serious injury, and, though suffering intensest agony, he rode at the head of his troop, and led one of the great charges which decided the fortunes of the day. He never left his post, but rode on till a ball crushed in his skull and penetrated to the brains. Then in the hot fight the hero fell. How few among us could thus endure hardness for Jesus. O that we felt we could suffer anything sooner than be turned aside from accomplishing our lifework for him we love. In that same battle one of our lieutenants, in the early part of the day, had his left fore-arm broken by a shot; he could not, therefore, hold the reins in his hand, but he seized them with his mouth, and fought on till another shot broke the upper part of the arm to splinters, and it had to be amputated; but within two days there he was, with his arm still bleeding, and the wound all raw, riding at the head of his division. **Brave things have been done amongst the soldiers of our country — O that such brave things were common among the armed men of the church militant!** Would to God, that in the teeth of suffering we could all persevere in living the holy life he bids us live, and in zealously spreading abroad that glorious gospel which has saved our souls and which will save the souls of others. Great Master, by thine own example inspire us with this valor. I desire to see in this our beloved church more of you who are resolved that Christ's gospel shall conquer this South of London, that it shall conquer the world, that Christ shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. I long to witness more of that dogged perseverance amongst Christians which would make them work on and on, even without success, and persevere under every discouragement, until at last their Master shall give them their reward on earth, or else take them away to their reward in heaven. **To be a good soldier of Jesus Christ, there must be a passion for victory, an insatiable greed for setting up the throne of Jesus in the souls of men.**

(4) Fourthly, a good soldier is very brave at a charge.

When the time comes and the orders are given for the good soldier to advance to the attack, he does not wish himself away; though a perfect hail of hurtling shot whistles all around, and the ranks of the army are thinned, he is glad to be there, for he feels the stern joy that flushes the face in the light of battle, and he only wants to be within arm's length of the foe and to come to close quarters with him. So is it with the genuine Christian when his heart is right with God. If he be bidden to advance, let the danger be what it may, he feels he is honored by having such a service allotted to him. But are we all such? I fear not. How many of us are silent about Jesus Christ in private conversation, how little do we show forth our light before men. If we were good soldiers, such as we ought to be, we should select every favorable opportunity in private as well as in public intercourse with our fellow men, and prudently but yet zealously press the claims of Jesus Christ and his gospel upon them. Oh, do you this, beloved, and good will come of it. We should each one be seeking to have his own special work for Jesus, and if no one else were attempting the task we should, like the brave men who rush in to the storming of a battery, carry the flag first and plant it, knowing that there are hundreds of others who will follow the first brave man, who might not be able perhaps to lead the way themselves. My beloved, may you and I be ready for anything, and bold to bear witness for Christ before a scoffing world. In the pulpits where we preach, in the workshops where we labor, in the markets where we trade, in every company amidst which we are called to move; wherever we may be, may we be brave enough to own our Lord and to uphold his cause. But this is not all that goes to make a good soldier.

(5) A good soldier is like a rock under attack.

So British soldiers have been; they have stood in solid squares against the enemies' cavalry until their foes have dashed upon them madly, gnashed their teeth, fired in their faces, thrown their guns at them, and yet might just as well have ridden against granite rocks; for our soldiers did not know how to yield, and would not retreat; as fast as one fell another filled up the gap, and there stood the square of iron defying the rush of the foe. We want this kind of fixed, resolved, persevering Godliness in our churches, and we shall have it if we are good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Alas! too many are exhausted by the zeal at first exhibited; for a time they can reach the highest point, but to continue on, and on, and on, this is too difficult a task for them. How many young people will join the church, and for awhile seem very zealous and then grow cold! Alas! it is not always the young, there be some among yourselves who were once most diligent in your various forms of service; what doth hinder you that you are not diligent in your Master's business now? Has Christ given you leave to retire into inglorious ease? Does he exempt you from service? Take heed lest you are also exempt from reward. No, we must through life still maintain our integrity, still resist temptation, still tread the separated path, and, withal, still seek the souls of men with undying ardor, with indefatigable earnestness, still wrestling with God for men and with men for God. Oh, for more of this stern determination to stand, and having done all to stand!

(5) The last mark of a really good soldier of Jesus Christ is that he derives his strength from on high.

This has been true even of some common soldiers, for religious men when they have sought strength from God have been all the

braver in the day of conflict. I like the story of Frederick the Great; when he overheard his favourite general engaged in prayer, and was about to utter a sneering remark, the fine old man, who never feared a foe, and did not even fear his majesty's jest, said, "Your Majesty, I have just been asking aid from your Majesty's great ally." He had been waiting upon God. This is how Christians get the victory; they seek it from the church's great ally, and then go to the conflict sure that they shall win the day. He is the best Christian who is the best intercessor, he shall do the most who shall pray the best. In the battle of Salamanca, when Wellington bade one of his officers advance with his troops, and occupy a gap, which the Duke perceived in the lines of the French, the general rode up to him, and said, "My lord, I will do the work, but first give me a grasp of that conquering right hand of yours." He received a hearty grip, and away he rode to the deadly encounter. Often has my soul said to her Captain, "My Lord, I will do that work if thou wilt give me a grip of thy conquering right hand." Oh, what power it puts into a man when he gets a grip of Christ, and Christ gets a grip of him! Fellowship with Christ is the fountain of the church's strength. Her power did never lie in her wealth, nor in the eloquence of her preachers, nor in aught that comes of man; the strength of the church is divine, and if she fails to draw strength from the everlasting hills, she becomes weak as water. Good soldiers of Jesus Christ, watch unto prayer, "praying in the Holy Ghost," for so shall you be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

II. Thus I have in a very poor way described a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Give me a few minutes whild Exhort You To Be Such ; and, mark you I shall speak especially to the members of this Christian church.

(1) I exhort you, dear brethren, who are soldiers of Christ, to be good soldiers, because many of you have been so.

Paul was wont to commend the churches when he could, and I feel I may honestly and from my heart commend many of you, for you have served your Lord and Master well. I know you have nothing whereof to glory, for when you have done all, you are unprofitable servants; but still I do rejoice, and will rejoice when I see the work of the Holy Spirit in you; and I will venture to say that I have seen here instances of apostolic ardor and self-sacrifice such as I have read of in ancient records, but hardly ever expected to see. There are those in this house this day who will shine as stars for ever and ever, for they have turned many to righteousness. Dishonor not your past, I beseech you, fall not from your high standing. "Forward" be your motto; never think of declining but rather advance in love to God, and in the ardor of your zeal. Be good soldiers still, and depart not from your first love. I am sure there is greater need of good soldiering now than ever. Ten years ago or sixteen years ago, when first I addressed you, the power of popery in this land was nothing to what it is now. In those days the Church of England was more generally Protestant, now it is so frequently popish that I may broadly say that now we are afflicted with two popish churches, that of Rome and that of Oxford, the second not one whit better than the first, only more crafty and insidious, inasmuch as it attracts to itself a number of godly and gracious men, who protect the villains who bear a Protestant name and who are doing the Pope's work. I grieve to know that the evangelical clergy of England, by their continued union with the Church of England are acting as a shield to the ritualistic or popish party, and giving them every opportunity to work out their schemes for leading the nation back to popery en masse. Around this very spot a battle will have to be fought between the sacramentarians and the lovers of the gospel. At your very doors the battle is come at last; it was not so till but lately, but here it is, and ye that are men must show your colors, and serve your Master against innumerable and constantly active foes. Ye have never failed me, ye have always been bold and steadfast, and laborious, and so let it be, for the time requires it. I can see on all hands that many of your young men are being attracted by the worldly amusements which surround us, for our dangers are not only those of popery, but those of the world, the flesh, and the devil. There must be greater earnestness and a deeper-toned piety among you, or the next generation will become unworthy of yourselves, your grief and not your joy. I pray you see to this.

(2) Be good soldiers, for much depends upon it.

Your country will be blest in proportion as you are earnest. Nonconformity in England will lose all its power if it loses its godliness. I do not care much for our political strength — I was about to say I am almost indifferent to our political rights — I care for them, but only so much as to occupy a very minor place in my consideration; but our spirituality is the main matter, it is this alone that can make us a blessing to our country. Sons of the Puritans, ye must walk with God, or your day is past, ye will be swept away as Esther would have been, who came to the kingdom for the salvation of her nation, if she had not fulfilled the office for which God had exalted her. You have grown in numbers, grown in strength, O that you may grow in grace, love the gospel better, and love Christ better, for your country needs it, your children need it, yourselves need it. The times are perilous, and yet they are hopeful; by their peril, and by their hopefulness, I beseech you be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Good soldiers we ought to be, for it is a grand old cause that is at stake. It is the kingdom of God, it is the church of Christ, it is the word, the truth, the doctrine of the gospel, the crown of Jesus, that are all at stake. I grant you that none shall ever shake the throne of Jesus, for though "the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing," yet shall his throne be established. But we now speak according to the manner of men. God has been pleased to leave this matter to his church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth. Oh then, stand up manfully, and fight earnestly when so much rests upon it! God grant that you may not be as the children of Ephraim, who being armed and carrying bows turned their backs in the day of battle.

(3) I implore you, my brethren, and mostly myself, to be good soldiers of Jesus, when you consider the fame that has preceded you.

A soldier when he receives his colors finds certain words embroidered on them, to remind him of the former victories of the regiment in which he serves. Look at the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and see the long list of the triumphs of the faithful. Remember how prophets and apostles served God; recollect how martyrs joyfully laid down their lives; look at the long line of the reformers and the confessors; remember your martyred sires and covenanting fathers, and by the grace of God I beseech you walk not unworthy of your noble lineage.

(4) Be good soldiers because of the victory which awaits you.

Oh, it will be a grand thing to share in the ultimate triumph of Christ, for triumph he will; when all his soldiers shall come back from the war, and the King himself at their head with the spoils of the victory, when they shall come back to the metropolitan city, to the ivory palaces of the great Captain, when the song is heard, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors," when the question shall be answered, "Who is the King of glory?" by the reply, "The Lord of Hosts, the Lord mighty in battle, he is the King of glory;" it will be a glorious thing to have shared the fight, for so surely you shall share the honors of that coronation day. A crown is prepared for that head though it be now made to ache with care for the cause, a palm branch for that hand which now toils in the fight, silver sandals for those feet which have now to march over weary miles for Christ's sake, honor and immortality not to be imagined till they are enjoyed, await every faithful soldier of the cross.

(5) Besides, and lastly if I want another argument to make you good soldiers, remember your Captain, the Captain whose wounded hands and pierced feet are tokens of his love to you.

Redeemed from going down to the pit, what can you do sufficiently to show your gratitude? Assured of eternal glory by-and-by, how can you sufficiently prove that you feel your indebtedness? Up, I pray you now. By him whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and yet were wet with tears, by him on whose head are many crowns, and who yet wore the crown of thorns, by him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and yet bowed his head to death for you, resolve that to life's latest breath you will spend and be spent for as praise. The Lord grant that there may be many such in this church—good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Two or three words and I will close.

At this present time I contemplate exhorting you to engage in fresh efforts for Christ. I do not know that you are relaxing, neither have I complaints to make of any, but I would wish that we would commence with renewed vigor this day, if God so wills it. As I myself commence a new year of Sabbaths as to my own age, I desire to see a new era of greater exertion in the cause of Jesus Christ; and, in order that it may be successful, let not a single man or woman on the church-roll be missing from his or her post in the spiritual conflict. It is a remarkable fact that on the eve of a great battle in the Peninsular war the officers read the muster-roll, and noted that "not a man was missing." They had all good stomach for the fight, and were all there. You that are in the Sabbath school, you that distribute your tracts, you that preach in the street, every man to his post; and if you have no post as yet, find one — let there not be one idler, not one single loiterer, for a single sluggard may mar the work.

Then if we are to be successful let nothing divide us. The motto of one of our most famous regiments embroidered on their banner is, "Quis separavit." Who shall separate us? We are but mortals, and, therefore, little jealousies may spring up, and among us there may be little causes of personal pique, but brave warriors in the olden times who had fallen out have been known to come together on the eve of battle and say, Come, let us be reconciled, we may die to-morrow; besides, we join in common hatred of the foe and love to the king." Let your peace be unbroken, your union indissoluble, and God will bless you.

To help us to succeed now, let us lay down this one rule, let no low standard of work, or virtue, or spiritual attainment, content any one of us; let us resolve to be as good Christians as can be beneath the stars, as fond of Christ as human hearts can be, doing and giving as much for Christ as we can do or give, consistently with other duties. Let us spare nothing, and keep back no part of the price; let there be no Ananias and Sapphira among us, but all be as John, who loved his Lord; and Paul, who counted all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus his Lord.

Next, let me say, let the present moment be seized I should like to saturate this district with a mass of tracts simply teaching the gospel and protesting against the bastard popery around us. Heaven and earth are being raised around us just now; our poor are being bribed, the houses of our members are being systematically visited with the view of decoying them from our worship. We are told that a certain small building used by the Episcopal body is the parish church, and we ought to attend it. I might far more truthfully assert this to be the church of the parish by the choice of a far more numerous body, but I care not to make pretensions which prove nothing. The true question is — do we follow Christ, and uphold the teachings of Scripture, and if so, our standing is unassailable. Doubtless the word has gone forth that Dissent must be crushed, but if we live near to God, and maintain our zeal, Dissent will rise invincible from every attack. Foreseeing the gathering storm, it is our consolation that we know where he dwells who is Master of the

tempest, and can walk the waters for our help, and calm the sea around the weather-beaten bark. It becomes us now at this present moment to be indefatigable, to put forth all our strength for the truth, even the Lord's pure word in doctrine and in ordinance. Let no man's heart fail him. There is no fear of defeat. Lo, these many years the Lord of Hosts has been with us as a church, and he will be still our helper. We have seen the rise and fall of many who blazed for awhile, but are now quenched in darkness, while we have increased from a handful to this mass; and God who has been our trust, and is still our stay, will not forsake us now. He has not drawn you together, and held you in one body by cords of love, that after all you may prove to be a powerless unwieldy mass of associated Christians; he intends to direct and strengthen you for nobler ends and purposes God, even our own God, will bless us. Immanuel, God with us, leads the van. The truth, like the virgin daughter of Zion, shakes her head at boastful error, and laughs it to scorn. Let falsehood put on her tawdry garments, and think herself a queen, and say that she shall sit alone, and see no sorrow; let error come forth in her panoply and wave her flaunting banner before the sun. She draws near her end. Her armor — what is it? It is but pasteboard, and the lance of truth shall pierce it through and through. Her banner, what is it but a foul rag of the Roman harlot? It shall be laid in the dust. Nay, let error bring forth all her hosts, and let them stand in their serried ranks, and through them the faithful soldiers of Jesus will ride and bow the columns like reeds in the wind. In these days, the doctrines and traditions of men compass us about, yea, like bees they compass us about, but in the name of the Lord will we destroy them. Only let us have confidence in God, and the victory is sure. As for the thought of turning back, that can never be endured. A message came to Sir Colin Campbell at the Alma, that Her Majesty's Guards were falling thick and fast beneath the shot, had they not better retire for a little while into safe quarters? The answer was, "It were better, sir, that every one of Her Majesty's Guards should lie dead on this battle field than turn their backs on the enemy." And it is so. Let us die, yea, it were to be devoutly wished rather than that we lived a coward's life! Let the preacher first of all be carried to his grave, let him never live to see the shame of this Israel. Let these eyes be sealed in death rather than behold "Ichabod" written on these walls. No, brethren, it shall not be; you will serve Jesus, you will love him, and "Onward to victory" shall be your watchword from to-day. Be more in prayer, for this is the great matter. Seek out each one your own sphere of action; give yourselves wholly to it; and if any grow cold or careless, let him remember Jesus saith, "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with me." This blessed supping with Jesus will restore you; though you be like Laodicea, "neither cold nor hot." Fellowship with Jesus will renew the love of your espousals. Oh, then, my brethren, in Jesus' name I bid you be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

I have not preached to sinners, but you will do that if you catch the spirit of this sermon; there will be many thousands of words to sinners spoken as the result of this exhortation, if God, the Holy Spirit, make it answer my design. Only this word to those who are not soldiers of Jesus Christ; trust him now, come now and kiss his silver scepter of grace; he will forgive the rebel, and take him to be his servant. God bless you. Amen

2 Timothy 1:12

KNOWING AND BELIEVING

NO. 3331

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"I know whom I have believed." — 2 Timothy 1:12.

THE text is wholly taken up with three things; namely, with knowing, with believing, and with the person who is known and believed; and upon both the knowing and the believing Paul is very decided. He puts in no "if," no word of change; he does not say, "I hope so," or "I trust so," but "I know I have believed, and I know whom I have believed." It is all assurance, and not a shadow of doubt. Let us imitate the apostle, or ask for grace to be able to imitate him, that we may shake off the dubious phraseology which is so common among Christians nowadays, and may be able to speak with apostolic confidence upon, a matter upon which we ought to be confident if anywhere at all, namely, our own salvation.

As the text is thus taken up with knowing and believing, these two matters will be the subject of our meditation at this time.

My first remark drawn from the text shall be —

I. The Only Religious Knowing And Believing Which Are Of A Saving Character Concern The Person Of The Lord Jesus Christ. "I know," saith the apostle, — not "what" — but "whom I have believed." He does not say, "I know the catechism which I have

believed," nor "I know the Institutes of Calvin," nor "I know the body and system of theology"; but, "I know whom I have believed." Both the knowing and the believing centre round the wondrous person who for our sakes left his starry throne and became a man; knowing whom, is a saving knowledge, and trusting whom, is saving trust, but of which, all other knowing and believing falls short.

Observe, then, that all other knowledge may be useful enough in itself, but if it doth not concern Christ, it cannot be called saving knowledge. Some person know a great deal about doctrine. Perhaps they have taken up with the Calvinistic theology, or even with the hyper-Calvinistic, and they really understand the system thoroughly well; and they certainly hold it with quite enough tenacity, if not too much. We know some, who we believe, would very cheerfully go to the stake in defence of some points of doctrine so convinced are they of the orthodoxy of what they have received. Others take up another theory, and go upon, the Arminian principle, and they, too, know their set of doctrines, and know then well. But, dear friends, I may know all the doctrines in the Bible, but unless I know Christ, there, is not one of them that can save me. I may know election, but if I cannot see myself as chosen in Christ Jesus, election will do me no good. I may know the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, but if I am not in Christ, I should only persevere in my sins, and such a final perseverance will be dreadful indeed. It is one thing to know the doctrine of justification by faith, but it is quite another thing to be justified by faith, and to have peace with God. You may stand up for imputed righteousness, and fight for it, and yet the righteousness of Christ may never be imputed unto you. It is not knowing the creed, though that is well, that can save the soul; the knowledge that is wanted is to know him whom Paul believed.

And, again, a man may know something more than doctrine. He may know a great deal about experience. There is a class of persons who sneer at doctrine. They call the doctrinal preacher a mere "letterman;" as far themselves, they talk about deep experience. They have a consciousness of having a corrupt heart. They have discovered that they have evil tempers (by the way, other people, too, have discovered it!) They have discovered that they have defiled natures, and everybody can see that they are not sinlessly perfect. But, strange delusion, because they know the disease, they fancy they have been healed. Because they have perception enough to see they are spiritually bankrupt, they therefore imagine that their debts are paid. Because they feel themselves to be in the Slough of Despond, they dream they are on the rock.

But there is a vast difference between the two things. A man may think he has an experience of his own emptiness; nay, he may truly possess it, but if it does not drive him to Christ, if he does not come and rest on the Lord Jesus, all his experiences are of no saving value. The foundation of the soul's salvation is not experience of any or every kind, but the finished work, the meritorious blood and righteousness of our Lord and Saviour.

There are some, too, who not only know experience and doctrine, but, who also know how to talk of them. They have mingled with Christian people until they can get up their phraseology, and as some Christians have cant expressions, these people can "cant" in any quantity and to any extent. They can talk about their "poor souls," and about "the dear Lord," and use all these other precious phrases of hypocrisy which lard some religious publications, and which are to be found in the conversation of some people who ought to know better. They use these expressions, and then when they get in among the people of God they are received with open arms, and they fancy that because they can talk as Christians talk it is all well with them. But, oh, remember that if a parrot could call you "father" it would not, for all that, have become a child of yours; and that a foreigner may learn the language of an Englishman but never be an Englishman, but remain a foreigner still. So, too, you may take up the language of a Christian but may never have within you the Spirit of God, and therefore be none of his. You must know him. "Know thyself," said the heathen philosopher; that is well, but that knowledge may only lead a man to hell. "Know Christ"; says the Christian philosopher, "know him, and then you shall know yourself," and this shall certainly lead you to heaven, for the knowledge of Christ Jesus is saving knowledge — "whom to know is life eternal."

In addition to these valuable pieces of information, there are some who know a great deal ABOUT Christ, but here I must remind you that the text does not sag, "I know about Christ," but "I know him." Ah, dear hearer, you may have heard the gospel from your youth up, so that the whole history of Christ is at your fingers ends, but you may not know him, for there is a deal of difference between knowing about him, and knowing him. You may know about a medicine, but still die of the disease which the medicine might have cured. The prisoner may know about liberty, and yet lie and pine in his dungeon until, as John Bunyan put it, "the moss grows on his eyelids." The traveller may know about the home which he hopes to reach, and yet may be left out at nightfall in the midst of the forest. Many a man of business knows about wealth, or even concerning the millions of the Bank of England, and yet be a bankrupt, or on the verge of poverty. Many a sailor knows about the port, but his ship drifts upon the rock, and all hands go down. It is not enough to know about Christ, it is knowing Christ himself that alone saves the soul.

And, over and above, and in addition to all this, you may know the Scriptures from youth up. I suppose I have some — perhaps many — before me, who are well acquainted with almost every chapter in the Bible. You could not be questioned upon any part of it so as to be really nonplussed. You have read the book, and you continue to read it still, and I approve of your wise choice in so doing, and beg you ever to continue in so excellent a practice, but remember, if you have not the Word of God in your heart it is of small use to have it merely in your head. Oh, to know Christ is our supreme and tragic want! Not to know texts and Scripture merely, for "the letter killeth, it is only the Spirit that quickeneth," and unless you know Christ you do not know the vital Spirit of the Word of

God. The only saving knowledge, then, is knowing Christ.

Well, now, so is it with the exercise of faith. You may know a great deal about faith, but the only saving faith is belief concerning Christ. "I know whom I have, believed." To believe doctrine will not save a man. You may hold all the creed, and be orthodox, and then be no better than the devil; for I suppose that the devil is a very sound theologian. He surely knows that truth. He believes and trembles; but you may know it and not tremble, and so you may fall short of one virtue which even the devil possesses. A firm belief in what is preached to you is well enough in its way, but to believe a doctrine as such cannot save you. Some have a belief in their minister, and I suppose that is so flattering to us, that you will hardly expect us to speak against it; but of all vices it is one most surely to be dreaded because it is so very dangerous. We charge you in the sight of God, always weigh what we have to say to you, and if it be not according to Scripture, cast it away as you cast away refuse. Take nothing merely because we say it, let nothing that we preach be received upon our ipse dixit, but let it be tried and tested by the Word of God, for otherwise you may be led by the blind: and "if the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch." Ah, what multitudes of persons there are in England who are beginning to get their fellow man to perform their religion for them! They are too lazy to think: they are too idle to use whatever brains they have, and then they get some mere simpleton who thinks that God is pleased with his putting on a white gown or a blue dress, or a black gown or green dress, a scarlet gown or mauve dress, is pleased with burning candles in the daylight, and pleased with making a pungent odour in the church — they get such a creature as this to do their religion for them, and then they lie down at night to rest, feeling perfectly satisfied that God is satisfied and they are all right. Oh, I charge you believe not this delusion! It is not believing in a priest that will save you. Believing in the priest may be your ruin, but believing in Christ is the really vital point, the one thing that truly matters. He that believeth in Christ is saved, but he that believeth even the Pope of Rome shall find that he believeth to his own eternal ruin.

Then again, it is not believing in ourselves. Many persons believe thoroughly in themselves. The doctrine of self-reliance is preached in many quarters now-a-days. I suppose that what is meant by the term is a good mercantile possession, a business virtue, but it is a Christian vice as towards spiritual things, and emphatically towards the soul's salvation. Self-reliance in this matter always ruins those who practise it. Rely an self! Let night rely on her darkness to find a light; let emptiness rely on its insufficiency to find its fulness; let death rely on the worms to give it immortality; let hell rely upon its fire to make it into heaven — such trusts as these would be equally strong with those of the sinner who relies upon himself for salvation. Thy belief must not be that thou canst force thy way to heaven, but thou must believe him for aught else is an unsaving faith.

You see, then, that the knowledge which saves, and the belief which saves, both hang upon the cross; they both look to the wounds of that dear man, that blessed God, who was there the propitiation for our sins, and who suffered in our room and stead. My hearer, are you trusting Christ? Are you hanging upon him as the vessel hangs upon the nail? Do you know him as a man knoweth his friend? Do you seek to know more of him? Is he all your salvation and all your desire? If not, take home the warning solemnly; whatever else you know, you are ignorant still; and whatever else you believe, you are an unbeliever still, except you know and believe in him, who is the Saviour of men.

I pass on now to a second point, which is this —

II. That Knowledge Without Faith Is Vain.

This is to try to balance with but one scale: to run a chariot on one wheel. You have the double, matter here. "I know whom I have believed." It is good to know, but knowledge must be crowned with faith. It has been remarked that Paul does not say, "I know of whom I have heard." He does, not say, "I know of whom I have read;" he does not say, "I know of whom I have preached"; but, "I know whom I have believed." Here he hits the nail upon the head. Knowledge is useful in the bud; mere reading, preaching, too, are well as an exercise, but believing is the fruit which must grow upon the tree of knowledge or else the knowledge will be of little use to us.

Now, my dear friends, I know that I am addressing many of your class, many who know Christ in a certain sense; know much about him. You know of his nature, you believe him to be true Deity; you know him to be human like yourselves, and for man's sake made man. You know his life. You have often read it. You often like to dwell upon the incidents of it. It is a genuine and great pleasure to sing of Bethlehem and its manger, of Cana and its marriage. You have turned over the pages of that life of lives, and felt enraptured with this matchless masterpiece of biography. You are well acquainted, too, with his death; it has often drawn tears to your eyes when you have thought of the shame, and the spitting and the crown of thorns. You know something concerning his expiring cries. Your imagination has often pictured to you the wounded body of that dread Sufferer. You have thought that if you had been there, you would have wet his feet with your tears so did you sympathise with him. You know of his burial and of his resurrection, too, and you have sweetly joined with us when we have been singing —

"Angels, roll the rock away,

Jesus Christ is risen today;"

and you have not been behind-hand when, we have been singing of his ascension. You eyes have flushed with fire when you have heard the words —

**"They brought his chariot from on high,
To bear him to his throne,
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried,
'The glorious work is done.'"**

You know that he reigns in heaven. You know that he has prepared mansions for his people. You know that he intercedes for sinners. You expect that he will come. You are a believer in his Second Advent; and when the Te Deum has been sung in your hearing — "We believe that thou shalt come to be our Judge," you have said, "Ay! I do — I do — believe it." Now, if you know all this, you know that which it is very important to be known, but if you stop short there, where are you? Why, I have no doubt there have been hundreds who knew this, but who have given their bodies and souls to the devil, and have lived in open sin, day by day. If you could go to the condemned cell to-night, I should not wonder if the wretch confined there knows all this. If you were to go into the flaunting gin-palaces, which are scattered to our shame and curse all over London; where men and women are drinking liquid fire at this very moment, you would find that half of them know all this, but they do not drink any the less for it. If you were to go into the lairs of vice, you would find that the most abandoned know all this, but it does them no service. And I will add also this: that the lost spirits in hell went there knowing all this, and the devil himself knows it all, but he remains a devil still. Ah, my hearer, I charge thee before God, do not sit down and say, "I know, I know, I know." Dost thou believe? Dost thou believe?

The common answer given very frequently to the city missionary is just this: men say to them, "There is no need for you to come here and tell me anything; I know all about it." Ah, but dost thou believe in Jesus? What is the good of thy knowing except thou believest? I do not think that the most of you who go to places of worship want so much instruction in divine truth as you want an earnest appeal to your hearts not to stop short at instruction. You do know, and that, indeed, shall be, indeed, part of your damnation, that you had the light but you would not see, that Jesus came into your street, and came nigh unto you, but you would not have him. The medicine was there, but you died because you would not take it. The food was on the table, but you would sooner perish with hunger than, receive it as the free gift of heaven. Ah, my hearer, thy knowing should not benefit thee, but shall be a plague to thee. The poor savage in his kraal in Central Africa who never heard the name of Jesus, shall die with at least this mitigating circumstance, that he never rejected a Saviour's love. The million a month who die in China, for a million do every month die in China, the million who die every month in China die with this one solace, at any rate, that they never sinned against the light of Christianity, nor rejected the truth as it is in Jesus. This is more than you could say. This is a clout which will never be held to your armhole. This will never help to make, a dainty couch for you, when you make your bed in hell. The responsibility of having known shall add remorse to the whips of accusing conscience, and make perdition more terrible still. Oh, may God grant that we may not stop short with knowledge alone, but may know Christ as him whom we have believed! But still we have in the next place —

III. Faith Without Knowledge Is But A Bird With One Wing.

The old faith of the fuller is coming back in some places to-day. You remember what the fuller said, "Yes, he believed, he believed, what did he believe?" He believed, "What the Church believed." And what did the Church believe? "Well, the Church believed — well, what he believed." And pray what did he and the Church together believe? "Why, they both believed the same thing." Ah, how many there are of that sort to-day! They say, "We think he ought to be sincere, you know, and if he is sincere, it does not matter much whether it is absolutely true. He need not trouble greatly to enquire whether what he believes is Scriptural or not, or whether it is according to God's Revelation: that will take up too much of his time and thought, and look too much like being obedient to God's will. Just be sincere, you know, and then, hit or miss, whatever your mother or father happened to be in religious character, go at it with all your might and it will be all right." Now, unfortunately, that does not happen to be the truth; because we do not find people in this world getting on in proportion to their sincerity. I suppose our friends who bought Overend and Gurney's shares were sincere enough in their belief that they were buying a good thing, but I should fancy that their opinions have undergone a change of late. No doubt there have been persons who have taken prussic acid, sincerely believing that it would benefit them, but I suppose it has killed them, notwithstanding their sincerity. If a man should travel due south in order to get to the Orkney Islands, however sincere he might be, he would probably discover himself in the Bay of Biscay before long. The fact is, it is not sincerity alone; it is the studious endeavour to find out what the right is, and what the truth is, that is the only safe, way for us. We do not, therefore, ask you to believe without knowing what you are to believe. It is impossible. Do not think a man can hold in his hands four or five doctrines and say to you, "Do you believe them?" "Well, but what are they?" "Never mind; you are a true believer, and you must believe then without knowing them." A man who has no power of belief at all says, "Oh, yes, I believe; I will kiss your feet if necessary, or do anything you like to tell me." But the thoughtful man, the man who is: likely to be saved, says at once, "I find it impossible to believe

until I first know what I am to believe.”

I have sometimes thought when I have heard addresses from some revival brethren who had kept on saying time after time, “Believe, believe, believe,” that I should like to have known for myself what it was we were to believe in order to our salvation. There is, I fear, a great deal of vagueness and crudeness about this matter. I have heard it often asserted that, if you believe that Jesus Christ died for you you will be saved. My dear hearer, do not be deluded by such an idea. You may believe that Jesus Christ died for you, and may believe what is not true; you may believe that which will bring you no sort of good whatever. That is not saving faith. The man who, has saving faith afterwards attains to the conviction that Christ died for him, but it is not of the essence of saving faith. Do not get that into your head, or it will ruin you. Do not say, “I believe that Jesus Christ died for me,” and because of that feel that you are saved. I pray you to remember that the genuine faith that saves the soul has for its main element — trust — absolute rest of the whole soul — on the Lord Jesus Christ to save me, whether he died in particular or in special to save me or not, and relying, as I am, wholly and alone on him, I am saved. Afterwards I come to perceive that I have a special interest in the Saviour’s blood; but if I think I have perceived that before I have believed in Christ, then I have inverted the Scriptural order of things, and I have taken as a fruit of my faith that which is only to be obtained by rights, by the man who absolutely trusts in Christ, and Christ alone, to save.

The matter, then, which saves is this — a man trusts Christ, but he trusts Christ because he knows him. See! He knows Christ, and therefore he trusts him. How does he come to know him? Well, he has heard of him, he has read of him, he seeks him in prayer, and when he has learned his character, he trusts him. Occasionally young converts will say to us, “Sir, I cannot trust Christ.” I never try to argue with them about it, but say, “Then you do not know him, because to know Christ truly is sure to bring trust.” I believe there are some men in the world whom you have only to know to trust, because they are so transparently honest, so, clearly truthful, that you must trust them. The Saviour is such a character as that. Let me tell thee, sinner, God was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us: dost thou believe that? “Yes.” He lived a holy life: he died a painful death: the merit of his life and death is set to the account of every one who trusteth in him, and he declares that if thou trustest in him he will save thee. Now, thou canst trust him surely. You say, “No, I cannot.” Why not? Is he not able? He is divine, therefore you cannot raise the question. Is he not willing? He died: that argues willingness surely to do a less; thing, since he has done the greater. Thou canst not doubt that surely! The life of the Lord Jesus Christ is an answer to every form of doubt. Do you know, I feel with regard to Christ myself, that instead of its being any difficulty to trust him, I find it very difficult not to trust him, if I cannot find any reason why I should distrust him. I was turning over the other day same odds and ends of my own brain to see if I could find any reason why Christ should not receive my soul. Well, I could not find half a one, but I could think of twenty thousand reasons why I should believe in him to save me, even if I had a million souls. I feel as if his way of saving is so magnificent, and the working of it out so divinely generous, that his offerings were so great, his person is so glorious, that I could not only cast my one soul on him, but fifty thousand souls if I had them. Why, I cannot find any reasonable ground for doubting him. Soul, I would to God that thou wouldest think of him in the same light!

“He is able, he is willing: Doubt no more.”

Thou knowest something of him; oh, may God give the grace to add to thy knowledge trust, and then shalt thou have true saving faith.

Let it be remarked here that in proportion as our genuine knowledge of Christ increases, so we shall find that our trust in him will increase, too. The more we know Christ, the more we shall trust him, because every new piece of knowledge will give new arguments for immovable confidence in him. Oh, if you have not seen Christ, I can understand your doubting him, but if you have leaned your head upon his bosom, if he has ever kissed you with the kisses of his lips, if he has ever taken you into his banqueting-house, and waved his banner of love over you, I know you will feel, “Doubt thee, Jesu, doubt thee? Why, how can I? I know the power of thine arm: I know the love of thy heart: I know the efficacy of thy blood: I know the glory of thy person: I know the faithfulness of thy Word: I know the immutability of thine oath, and I can trust thee, and either sink or swim, my soul casteth herself upon thee, thou blessed Saviour. And now there may be some present who are saying, “I cannot say I know whom I have believed.”

IV. “How Can I Know That I May Believe In Him?”

The answer is, search the Word of God with a desire to find him. Seek out the most Christ-exalting ministry in your neighbourhood, in whatever denomination thou canst find it, and listen to it with all thine ears and with all thine heart. Get thee to thy chamber and there seek the Lord, to illuminate thee in the matter of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ask him to reveal his son in thee. I tell thee this: faith cometh by hearing and by hearing the Word of God, and when to these is added earnest seeking thou shalt not be long without finding him. They who seek Christ are already being sought of him. You who desire him shall have him, you who want him shall not be long without him. It is to have Christ to some degree, to hunger and to thirst after him; and when you feel that you cannot be content without him, he will not let you be, but will soon come to you. I believe there are some who will get peace with Christ to-night. Do you understand it, dear friend? You have nothing to do; you have nothing to be; you have not even anything to learn, except that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and that he is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto

God by him. You know that. Now, trust him, and if you do it is all done, and you are saved. If you have trusted in him whom God has revealed as your Saviour, it is not a matter of twenty minutes nor a matter much less of months, but, you are saved at once.

**“The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in him crucified God;
His pardon at once he receives,
Salvation in full through Christ’s blood.”**

When a man once gets into the life-boat, if it were certain that the lifeboat would never sink, he is saved as soon as he gets in. Now, the act of faith does, as it were, put us into the lifeboat of Christ Jesus, and we are saved directly. You may have many a tossing, but you will get safe to land at last. If you want faith you must get it, as I have told you, by knowing him, studying the Word of God, listening to it, and seeking his face; but make use of what you know, or else what you know will be like the stale manna, and will be of no use to you. Believe it as you know it; use it up as you get it; and if you already know Christ to be a sinner’s Saviour, and know that you are a sinner, then come to-night and put your trust in him, and be of good cheer, and he will never, never, never cast you away. And now, lastly, I should like to ask a question, and it is this —

V. How Many Are There Who Do Know Christ?

We all know something of which we are a little proud; but, “I know, I know, I know,” is a very poor thing to say when you do not know Christ. “I know,” say my young friend over there who has been to Oxford or Cambridge University, “I know so-and-so.” “I know,” says another, “such and such a special line of distinguished thinking.” But do you know Christ, my dear friend? “Ah, thank God,” says one upstairs, and another good soul below, “we can hardly read, sir, but we do know him.” I would change places with you, friends, much sooner than I would with the most learned of men who do not know Christ, because when they come to the gates of death, you know, he who keeps the gate will not say, “Do you know the classics? Have you read Horace? Have you studied Homer? Do you know mathematics? Do you understand logarithms or conic sections?” No, but he will say, “Do you know Christ?” and if you scarcely even know your own native tongue, yet if you know Christ the gates of heaven shall fly open to let you in.

Now, do you know Christ? Do let the question go round to each one, “Do I know Christ?” Well, then, do you believe Christ? Do you trust Christ? “Yes, thank God!” saith one, “with all my imperfections I can sing the hymn —

“On Christ the solid rock I stand

All other ground is sinking sand.”

Oh, then, brethren, let us be of good cheer, for, trusting him, he will never fail us: believing him, he will never leave us: but we shall see his face in glory. Oh, that the day were come! But when it does, to his name shall be all the praise! Amen.

2 Timothy 1:18

“THAT DAY” AND IT’S DISCLOSURES

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“The Lord grant unto him that He may find mercy of the Lord in that day.” — 2 Timothy 1:18.

Gratitude is never failing in Christians. When they have received a benefit, they are sure to acknowledge it. When Paul was at Rome, Onesiphorus found him out very diligently, and was not ashamed of his chains, but ministered to his necessities; and, therefore, Paul felt bound to him and to his family in perpetual thankfulness. Let none of us ever be accused of ingratitude? it is one of the worst of sins. Paul, no doubt, would have done all he could for Onesiphorus in other ways, but he added to all other ways of showing his gratitude that of praying for him — praying the prayer which we have here put on record in the Book of Inspiration. Learn hence that if we can do nothing else for our benefactors? we can bless them by our prayers. Let us be abundant in pouring out supplications before for all those who in any way have done us a service. We learn also from the text that the best of men have need to be prayed for. I cannot doubt but that Onesiphorus was saved. He seems to have been a most decided follower of Christ for when others did not know Paul because he was a prisoner, Onesiphorus knew him; he sought him out; he sought him out diligently;

event into the poorest quarters of that great city or Rome, and hunted him out, though probably the population at that time? was not less, but perhaps far more than four millions of people. He found out the Apostle, and he ministered unto his need. He was a good many and yet Paul prayed for him — prayed for him a prayer which would be appropriate for a bad man too, “The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day! “The best of us needs to be prayed for. Let us be thankful if we have anybody to pray for us. Let us count the prayers of the faithful to be our true riches. He is the happiest man who shall have the most of God’s people lift-up their hearts in prayer for him.

I call your attention, however, to-night to none of these surrounding particulars; I want to fix your minds upon one thing. I desire, anxiously desire, that we may all be led to look forward to that day of which the Apostle here speaks. And our first point shall be that day. Then our second point shall be the mercy of that day. First, then: —

I. “That Day.”

Paul speaks of the day of judgment here. He does not specify it, because it was so commonly believed in and expected among Christians, that it was quite sufficient for him to say “that day.” From the earliest times, wherever there has been divine light, that day has been expected: Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord, and his prophecy, though, very early, was so clear that the Jew, who almost closes the Book of Inspiration, quotes it — feeling, I suppose, that he could not use words more expressive than those which came from that ancient prophet. All along the pages of Scriptural history you read of men raised up to tell of that day. Asaph, in the Psalm we read just now, gave a most accurate description of that day when the Lord shall judge his people. And Daniel, when he saw the throne set and the Ancient of Days come, perceived that day for which we also are now looking. Nothing, perhaps, is more often spoken of in Scripture than that day. The New Testament teems with allusions to that Day of Judgment, when the Lord shall be revealed with flaming fire. I say it was so commonly understood, that Paul had no need to say anything except “that day.” Questions will be asked to-night by some, “When will that day come?” to which I would answer, it were better for us to be prepared for it come when it may, than to be anxious to fix its date. We can give you no information, because “of that day and of that hour knoweth no man — no, not the angels of heaven.” After trying to discover what I can of the future, I arrive at this conclusion from Scripture, that the Lord would have us be in a state of perpetual vigilance and expectancy, and hence he has studded the Scriptures with phrases to the effect that he comes quickly. Truly his “quickly” will not be the same as ours; but methinks the noontide of the world may have passed, and these are the latter days, and we might to be looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Son of Man. He may come to-morrow; he may come to-night. He may delay his coming, but he shall come such an hour as the mass of men think not, and at an hour when they are not aware. That day shall overtake them as a thief in the night, and come upon them as pain upon a woman in travail. Some may curiously ask whether the Day of Judgment will be a natural day or not. Will it be a day of twenty-four hours? To which we again reply, we have no information; but we know that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. It will be a definite period. Whatever its length or brevity, it will suffice for an accurate judgment, and a judgment of all mankind. Whether it shall occupy a thousand years or a single day, the work will be done — done thoroughly, done effectually, done for ever, for all the race of Adam. Let us rest assured of that. It is far more important for us to know these things about that day; first, that it will be ushered in as no other day has been. The day began in Eden with the rising sun; and when the sun’s first beams had lit up the sky, the birds began to sing right joyously amongst the trees; but that day shall be ushered in, not by the rising sun, but by the Sun of Righteousness himself. He shall arise with all the glory of his Father, and the holy angels shall come with him. There will be sights and sounds on that tremendous morning such as never were seen or heard by mortal men before. Even Sinai’s tremendous pomp, which made Moses fear and quake, shall be outdone in that dread day when the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel, and with the voice of God. It will be a day of days. Its dreadful surroundings are spoken of in Scripture, but, after all, words can but feebly describe them. It will be a day especially notable for the revelation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As yet he is hidden among the sons of men. He was as one concealed in incognito. He traveled through this world, and they counted him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He has gone into his glory but he is concealed at the right hand of God from the gaze of men below. They see him not; they know him not; but in that day he shall sit upon the: clouds of heaven, and every eye shall see him, and they also which crucified him. Then shall they say that he is Divine, and no longer shall they dare, to dispute it. Then shall the Jew see that he is the Messiah that was for to come, and then shall the Gentile perceive that he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The flashings of his glory shall convince all mankind, and the wicked shall stand speechless before his judgment-bar. Pilate then shall not ask him, “What is truth?” for he, alas! too hath, shall perceive it. They shall bring no accusation against him then, for to their confusion they shall see that he was no traitor, but a King. Judas shall not sell him then, for he, shall perceive then that he who sold him was the son of perdition, to perish for ever. Oh! what a day shall that be when, coming out of his chamber rejoicing like a strong man to run a race, the Bridegroom of the Church shall appear, and all his saints shall appear with him. It will be a day remarkable for its wonderful convictions. There will be a general assembly held on that day such as never has been held before. For, first, the Son of God shall be the center of all eyes, and around him shall be his Father’s angels. Heaven shall send her pomp to swell his train. Isle shall come, and his saints also shall come with him. The glorified shall come to sit with him, and then, as in a moment, the dead shall arise. I shall go into no

minute questions or particulars now, but certainly at that moment there shall stand upon the earth all the dead, both small and great, they that were on the earth buried in it, and they that were in the sea shall all arise, and as the trumpet rings out clear and loud the whole multitude of men that lived and died shall start up from their tombs to see their God upon his throne, and those that are alive at that time — all shall come and live again, and the raised bodies of men and the spirits of the just. There shall come up from the infernal pit lost spirits too, and the chief foe of God and man, long scarred by Jehovah's lightings — he shall come and lift his brazen front once more, and the saints shall judge the fallen angel who long had persecuted them. He shall receive his final sentence. and begin the utmost hell which God had reserved for the devil and his angels, so that there on this poor planet little compared with greater stars, and yet in God's sight most glorious of them all, there shall be a convocation of the three worlds. Heaven, earth and hell shall meet together, and Christ, in the midst of them all, shall judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity. Oh! what a day will that day be! And it will be a day, in addition to the general convocation, of universal excitement. Next week the day of thanksgiving will move London from end to end, but there will be tens of thousands to whom it will be or day of thanksgiving, but perhaps of bitter sorrow. There will be nothing that could make them thankful in the pageantry of that day. So of all the days that have ever happened to the sons of men, there have been some unmoved thereby. Let us speak as though our soul were in every word — some of our hearers will slumber, or their minds will wander. But on that day there will be no indifferent spectators of that tremendous pomp. The wicked shall wake up; their indifference shall have gone, and They shall be filled with dismay and despair. They shall long for annihilation, they shall ask the rocks to cover them, and the mountains to conceal them. The righteous shall not be listless either, for theirs shall be boldness in the day of judgment, and joy, and triumph, and acclamations of welcome, with which they shall hail the King of Kings sitting upon his throne. There will be a general excitement. Hell will howl its loudest howlings, and heaven will resound with its loftiest songs on that closing day of the drama of time, that day of which the Apostle speaks. And that will be a day of wondrous revelations. On that day we shall detect the hypocrite. See him yonder. The mask has fallen. See the leprosy on his brow. Then shall we see the men who were misrepresented, who were counted the offscouring of all things, though of them the world was not worthy. The filth with which men pelted them in the pillory of scorn shall fall off, and their garments shall be whiter than any fuller can make them in the glory of the righteousness which Christ shall put upon them. There will be a resurrection of reputations in that day. And at the same time there will be the judgment of mere profession. Perhaps in that hour we shall understand the providence of God infinitely better than we do now. Then we shall see the evil of men's hearts as we never saw it, for every idle word that man hath spoken shall be published there, and transgressions of midnight that were covered up with curtains of lies shall suddenly stand revealed as in the noon-day sun — and the men who scorned the righteous and were themselves guilty of abominable sin. Oh! what a revealing day! The housetops then shall ring with secrets that have been hidden in the closet, and men shall read the writing, as it were, upon the sky, the dark sayings and the hidden things which were of old. And then when the revealing shall have come, it will be a day of final judgment. From almost any court on earth there is an appeal. Even after the judge puts on the black cap and condemns the criminal, he yet appeals to public opinion and to the mercy of the nation, and perhaps an unworthy life may yet be spared. But from that judgment-seat there shall be no appeal. For ever and for ever fixed is the fate of men whom Christ hath judged. "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is unrighteous let him be unrighteous still." No change can take place, and no appeal can ever be made. 'Tis done, 'tis sealed, 'tis inevitable. 'Tis over for ever and for ever — for ever saved, or for ever lost. That day, then, ought to be a matter of personal interest to every one of my hearers, yea, and to every one beneath the sun. It will be the last day of time. Then there will be no more counting of rising and setting suns, no reckoning by waxing and waning moons. Then there will be no revolutions of the year to mark the period of time, nor will men count by centuries. It shall be eternity, one ocean of eternity without landmarks by which to say, "Thus far have we gone, and thus far have we yet to go." Oh! wondrous day! oh! marvellous day! last day of time, day for ever to be remembered; remembered by the wicked in hell, to whom it shall be said, "Son, remember," and remembered, methinks, by the righteous in heaven for ever, for they shall look back to that day when Christ appeared and they were declared to be the blessed of the Father to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from before the foundation of the world. Oh! how I blame my tongue and chide myself that I cannot speak upon this theme as I would, but nevertheless may the solemn facts make up for my want of speech, and may they tell upon your souls. Now I must turn to the second point, and speak upon:

II. The Mercy Of That Day.

The mercy which is prayed for in this verse, "The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." Will that prayer be heard? Will that prayer be heard for me, for you, each one of you in this area, in these galleries? Will God have mercy on you in that day? I will tell you.

First, he will have no mercy in that day upon those who had no mercy upon others. If you cannot forgive, neither shall you be forgiven. If you cannot kneel down and sincerely pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive them that are indebted to us," then the gates of heaven are fast barred against you. If you take your brother by the throat and say, "Pay me what thou lowest," the great Master of us all will commit you to the tormentors, because your great debt has not been paid. Relentless, malicious, revengeful men, take heed of that. Lay it on your pillow to-night, and let it pierce your heart — if ye forgive not every man his brother, your

heavenly Father will not forgive you.

Next, God will have no mercy in that day upon those who lived and died in wickedness. Here is the proof of it, "The wicked shall be turned into hell," and hell means not mercy, but misery. The men that have lied in the breaking of God's law from day to day, from childhood to manhood, perhaps from manhood to old age, and have died still sinning — for them there shall be no mercy whatsoever.

There shall be no mercy for those who neglect salvation. Again I give you God's words for it, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" These people had not done any particular mischief to anybody else; they had not persecuted Christ; they had not reviled his gospel; they had not been heretics; they simply neglected the matter. "How shall ye escape if ye neglect. so great salvation?" Ye shall not escape at all. If ye neglect his mercy here, mercy will neglect you for ever.

Then, again, they shall have no mercy who said they needed none. Are there not some here who fancy that they want no mercy from God? They do their best; they are excellent in character; they are well deserving, and they expect to enter into felicity through their good deeds. You seek no mercy, you shall have none. You proudly reject it. You trust to your own righteousness; you seek to have what you merit; you shall have what you merit, but that will be to be driven for ever from the presence of God. There cannot be mercy to those who will not confess that they need mercy. There shall be no mercy in that day for those who sought no mercy here. Prayerless souls? you are graceless souls, and mercy shall be denied you then. You will pray loudly enough then. Oh! how they pray in hell! What tears and groans send they up to heaven! They would fain have mercy there, but Mercy's day is over; Justice hath turned the key and hurled that key into the abyss where it never can be found. They are prisoners for ever beneath the wrath of God. They that will not ask it deserve not to have it. When mercy is to be had for the asking, if man turns upon his heel and does refuse to ask, what shall God do but say, "Because I called and ye refused — I stretched out my hand and no man regarded; I also will mock at your calamity. I will laugh when your fear cometh"? There shall be no mercy for those who ask no mercy.

Further, there shall in that day be no mercy for those that scoffed at Christ, denied his dignity, railed at his people, broke his Sabbath, and altogether abhorred his gospel. Oh! sirs, ye fight a desperate battle against him who made the heavens and the earth, and who is the darling Son of God! In fighting against Christ, ye, dash yourselves upon the bosses of Jehovah's buckler; ye cast yourselves upon the point of his spear. Be wise and stay your rebellion. "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little." How shall the wax contend with the fire, or the tow wage war with the flames? Yet you are doing this, O you that rebel against Christ! You shall either break or bow. Bow, I pray you, for if not he shall break you with a rod of iron; he shall break you in pieces like a potter's vessel. Beware, ye that despise him, lest in the day of his coming he despise your image, and ye utterly perish.

There shall in that day be no mercy for those who refuse the gospel; and I am sorry to say there are some here of that sort. Those cannot be said to refuse the gospel who do not know it, but most of you do know it. I was thinking this afternoon, as I prayed God to let this subject get into my own soul. About some of you who do not want for light and instruction, who do not need to know more about the way of salvation, or about the penalty of neglecting it. What you want is a new heart and a right spirit; you want the will subdued; you want decision of character; you want to be made thoughtful; you want to be made prayerful. I cannot do this for you, but I can warn you over and over and over again that they who go to hell from under the shadow of the pulpit wherein there is an earnest ministry go there with an emphasis. They that fall from the heights of privilege fall, indeed, into the lake of fire. God grant that not a solitary one of the many hearers who gather here may know what it is to have it said, "It shall be, more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. They would have repented had they heard the gospel, but you heard it, and repented not."

I must add to all this that there shall be no mercy in that day for those who have sold their Lord. "Where are they?" say you. "Does there live on this earth a miscreant who has sold his Lord?" God have mercy on the man — he not only lives on earth, but he is here. He was once a professor, but he found it more profitable to cease from religion, and he has done so. He once came to the communion table, but he fell into lustful habits, and he is no member of Christ. He has defiled the temple of God, and him shall God destroy. He could sometimes pray in public — at the prayer — meeting' but he dares not pray now; he has enough conscience left to let him cede from such hypocrisy. He sold his Lord for pleasure; he sold his Lord for pelf; he sold his Lord for the fear Of man. "Verily I say unto you, him that is ashamed of me and my Word, of him will I be ashamed when I shall come in the glory of my Father and all my holy angels with me." You know who spoke those words. They were spoken by him whose hands were pierced. He has said it, and oh! note, ye apostates, note it well, "He that denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven. Verily I say unto you, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." Oh! where is this unhappy man? May God have mercy on him to-night, for he will have no mercy upon him in that day if he dies as he now his.

And I shall close that list by saying in that day God will have no mercy for false professors. He will have no mercy upon preachers who could talk glibly, but whose lives were not consistent with their own teaching. What a condemnation shall await me, if I be not found in Christ after having preached so continuously to so many thousands! Oh! whatever a man shall be in hell, may God grant he

may never be an unfaithful minister of Christ, condemned out of his own mouth. But what shall I say of unfaithful deacons and elders, and church members? Their condemnation will be as just as it is terrific. Why needed they to add to their other sins the sin of a false profession? If they loved not Christ they need not have been traitors. There was no necessity for them to come forward and be baptized into the Triune name. There was no demand upon them to come to the table in remembrance of Christ's death if they were not his. They voluntarily thrust themselves into a profession which was a lie, and into the midst of a church with which they were not akin. Surely if he begins first at the house of God, his judgments will be most terrible upon false professors. For this chaff there shall be the fire unquenchable, for it was once upon the Lord's threshing floor; for this dross there shall be consuming flames, for it was once in alliance with the precious gold which the King calls his own. I feel inclined to stop preaching, and to pray for myself. The Lord have mercy upon me in that day! and then to take you all by name, if I could know you all one by one, and kneel here and say, "The Lord have mercy upon this man — this woman — this child — in that day." But I beg you pray it for yourselves; now, in the silence of your souls, let this prayer go up vehemently to heaven, "O God, have mercy upon me. Have mercy upon me in that day, and to that end have mercy upon me now."

I close, but I never like to close a sermon when it looks like Jeremiah's roll — written within and without with lamentations. Let us have a sweet word or two to finish with. We spoke of that day; for a moment let me speak of this day — of this day. You have not come to that day yet. To-day it is not judgment, but love that rules the hour. Now the great white throne is not yet set, neither is it a trumpet that rings in your ear, but it is an affectionate voice, which speaks to you and says, "Mercy is to be had yet, mercy is to be had by false professors, mercy is to be had by apostates, mercy is to be had by the very chief of sinners." This is a night, this very night, in which prayer will be answered. God has said, "Seek and ye shall find." This is a night in which Christ waits to be gracious. He is exalted on high on purpose to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins. This is a night in which sin may be forgiven. You are on praying ground; you are on pleading terms yet. The sentence is not passed. The wax is still melted, and it is not stamped and cold. There is hope for you better than that, there are kind invitations for you; there are loving exhortations. How long these may stand good I cannot tell. As far as any one of us may be concerned, the judgment day may come tomorrow. It may come to all mankind; but as far as the practical fact is concerned, it may come in death to any one of us to-night. I look round me, now, and I recollect a month ago certain seats in this place that were occupied by those that are now gone — gone to their account. If it were right, I think I could point my finger to some of you that are sitting in the places of dead men. They were their seats. They used to sit there, some of them, and they rejoiced in every word they heard. Is a sinner filling a saint's place? There are some, again, that are gone out of this company who gave us no evidence of grace. Alas! is there no sinner sitting in the place where one sat before him who forgot God? You are all passing away — I am passing with you. Shadows we are all. We fly like an arrow through the air. We are a wind that passeth, and it is not. Oh! make sure of eternal things, brethren and sisters. Whatever you lose, lose not Christ; whatever you miss, miss not salvation. May God impress you with this thought. May he impress you, moreover, with this thought — that "to-day is the accepted time; to-day is the day of salvation"; and may some of you be unable to sleep to-night until you have found the Savior;

**"For should swift death this night o'ertake you,
And your couch become your tomb,"**

then to-morrow, if unregenerate and unforgiven, you would be shut up where hope can never come to you. Oh! seek his face to-night! Dare not permit yourselves to feel the image of death upon you in sleep unless you have felt the scepter of Christ, touched by faith, communicate life and pardon to you. Seek ye him. Oh! seek ye him. Seek ye him while he, may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. The Lord bless you, every one of you, and may we meet in heaven without exception, for Christ's sake! Amen and Amen.