

THE VICTORY OF FAITH

NO. 14

A SERMON
 DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 18, 1855
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 AT EXETER HALL, STRAND

*“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:
 and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”
 1 John 5:4*

THE epistles of John are perfumed with love. The word is continually occurring, while the Spirit enters into every sentence. Each letter is thoroughly soaked and impregnated with this heavenly honey. If he speaks of God, His name must be love. Are the brethren mentioned, he loves them. And even of the world itself, he writes, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” From the opening to the conclusion, love is the manner, love the matter, love the motive, and love the aim.

We stand, therefore, not a little astonished, to find such martial words in so peaceful a writing, for I hear a sound of war. It is not the voice of love, surely, that says, “He that is born of God overcometh the world.” Lo, here are strife and battle. The word “overcometh” seems to have in it something of the sword and warfare, of strife and contention, of agony and wrestling.

So unlike the love which is smooth and gentle, which has no harsh words within its lips, whose mouth is lined with velvet, whose words are softer than butter, whose utterances are more easily flowing than oil. Here we have war—war to the knife, for I read, “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.”

Strife until death, battle throughout life, fighting with a certainty of victory. How is it that the same Gospel which always speaks of peace, here proclaims a warfare? How can it be? Simply because there is something in the world which is antagonistic to love. There are principles abroad which cannot bear light, and therefore, before light can come, it must chase the darkness. Ere summer reigns, you know, it has to do battle with old winter and to send it howling away in the winds of March, and shedding its tears in April showers.

So also, before any great or good thing can have the mastery of this world, it must do battle for it. Satan has seated himself on his blood-stained throne and who shall take him down, except by main force, and fight, and war? Darkness broods o’er the nations. Nor can the sun establish his empire of light until he has pierced night with the arrowy sunbeams and made it flee away.

Hence we read in the Bible that Christ did not come to send peace on earth, but a sword. He came to set “the father against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

Not intentionally, mind you, but as a means to an end, because there must always be a struggle ere truth and righteousness can reign. Alas! for that earth is the battlefield where good must combat with evil. Angels look on and hold their breath, burning to mingle in the conflict, but the troops of the Captain of Salvation may be none but the soldiers of the cross. And that slender band must fight alone and yet shall triumph gloriously. Enough shall they be for conquest and the motto of their standard is ENOUGH. Enough by the arm of the helping Trinity.

As God shall help me, I shall speak to you of three things to be found in the text. First, the text speaks of a *great victory*, it says, “This is the victory.” Secondly, it mentions a *great birth*, “Whatsoever is born of God.” And thirdly, it extols a *great grace*, whereby we overcome the world, “even our faith.”

I. First, the text speaks of a GREAT VICTORY—the victory of victories—the greatest of all.

We know there have been great battles where nations have met in strife and one has overcome the other, but who has read of a victory that overcame the world? Some will say that Alexander was its conqueror, but I answer, nay. He was himself the vanquished man, even when all things were in his possession. He fought for the world and won it, and then mark how it mastered its master, conquered its conqueror, and lashed the monarch who had been its scourge.

See the royal youth weeping and stretching out his hands with idiotic cries, for another world which he might ravage. He seemed, in outward show, to have overcome old earth, but in reality, within his inmost soul, the earth had conquered him, had overwhelmed him, had wrapped him in the dream of ambition, girdled him with the chains of covetousness, so that when he had all, he was still dissatisfied. And like a poor slave, he was dragged on at the chariot wheels of the world, crying, moaning, lamenting, because he could not win another.

Who is the man that ever overcame the world? Let him stand forward. He is a Triton among the minnows. He shall outshine Caesar. He shall outmatch even our own lately-departed Wellington, if he can say he has overcome the world. It is so rare a thing, a victory so prodigious, a conquest so tremendous, that he who can claim to have won it may walk among his fellows, like Saul, with head and shoulders far above them. He shall command our respect. His very presence shall awe us into reverence. His speech shall persuade us to obedience, and yielding honor to whom honor is due, we'll say when we listen to his voice, "'Tis even as if an angel shook his wings."

I shall now attempt to expand the idea I have suggested, showing you in what varied senses the Christian overcomes the world. A tough battle, sirs, I warrant you, not one which carpet knights might win. No easy skirmish that he might win, who dashed to battle on some sunshiny day, looked at the host, then turned his courser's rein, and daintily dismounted at the door of his silken tent—not one which he shall gain, who, but a raw recruit today, puts on his regimentals and foolishly imagines that one week of service will ensure a crown of glory.

Nay, sirs, it is a life-long war—a fight needing the power of all these muscles and this strong heart—a contest which shall want all our strength, if we are to be triumphant. And if we do come off more than conquerors, it shall be said of us, as Hart said of Jesus Christ, "He had strength enough and none to spare."

A battle at which the stoutest heart might quail. A fight at which the brave might shake, if he did not remember that the Lord is on his side, and therefore, whom shall he fear? He is the strength of his life, of whom shall he be afraid? This fight with the world is not one of main force or physical might, if it were, we might soon win it. But it is all the more dangerous from the fact that it is a strife of mind, a contest of heart, a struggle of the spirit, a strife of the soul.

When we overcome the world in one fashion, we have not half done our work. For the world is a Proteus, changing its shape continually. Like the chameleon, it has all the colors of the rainbow, and when you have worsted the world in one shape, it will attack you in another. Until you die, you will always have fresh appearances of the world to wrestle with. Let me just mention some of the forms in which the Christian overcomes the world.

1. He overcomes the world when it sets up itself as a legislator, wishing to teach him customs. You know the world has its old massive law book of customs and he who does not choose to go according to the fashion of the world is under the ban of society. Most of you do just as everybody else does and that is enough for you. If you see so-and-so do a dishonest thing in business, it is sufficient for you that everybody does it. If you see that the majority of mankind have certain habits, you succumb, you yield.

You think, I suppose, that to march to hell in crowds, will help to diminish the fierce heat of the burning of the bottomless pit, instead of remembering that the more fire wood, the fiercer will be the flame. Men usually swim with the stream like a dead fish. It is only the living fish that goes against it. It is only the Christian who despises customs, who does not care for conventionalisms, who only asks himself the question, "Is it right or is it wrong? If it is right, I will be singular."

If there is not another man in this world who will do it, I will do it. Should a universal hiss go up to heaven, I will do it still. Should the very stones of earth fly up and stone me to death, I will do it still. Though they bind me to the stake, yet I must do it. I will be singularly right. If the multitude will not follow me, I will go without them. I will be glad if they will all go and do right as well, but if not, I will despise their customs. I care not what others do. I shall not be weighed by other men. To my own Master I stand or fall. Thus I conquer and overcome the customs of the world.”

Fair world! She dresses herself in ermine, she puts on the robes of a judge, and she solemnly tells you, “Man, you are wrong. Look at your fellows, see what they do. Behold my laws. For hundreds of years have not men done so? Who are you to set yourself up against me?” And she pulls out her worm-eaten law-book and turning over the musty pages, says, “See, here is an act passed in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and here is another law enacted in the days of Pharaoh. These must be right, because antiquity has enrolled them among her standard authorities. Do you mean to set yourself up and stand against the opinions of the multitude?”

Yes, we do. We take the law-book of the world and we burn it, as the Ephesians did their magic rolls. We take her deeds and make them into waste paper. We rend her proclamation from the walls. We care not what others do, custom to us is a cobweb. We count it no folly to be singular, but when to be singular is to be right, we count it the proudest wisdom.

We overcome the world. We trample on her customs. We walk as a distinct people, a separate race, a chosen generation, a peculiar people. The Christian behaves in his dealings not as the laughing infidel insinuates, when he sneeringly describes Mawworm, as saying, “Boy, have you sanded the sugar?” “Yes, sir.” “Have you put the sloe leaves in the tea?” “Yes, sir.” “Have you put red lead in the pepper?” “Yes, sir.” “*Then come to prayers.*”

Christians, do not do so. They say, “We know better, we cannot conform to the customs of the world. If we pray, we will also act or else we are hypocrites, confounded hypocrites. If we go to the house of God and profess to love Him, we love Him everywhere. We take our religion with us into the shop, behind the counter, into our offices—we must have it everywhere, or else God knows it is not religion at all.”

You must stand up, then, against the customs of mankind. Albeit, this may be a three-million peopled city, you are to come out and be separate, if you would overcome the world.

2. We rebel against the world’s customs. And if we do so, what is the conduct of our enemy? She changes her aspect. “That man is a heretic. That man is a fanatic. He is a cant, he is a hypocrite,” says the world directly. She grasps her sword, she puts frowns upon her brow, she scowls like a demon, she girds tempests round about her, and she says, “The man dares defy my government. He will not do as others do. Now I will persecute him. Slander! Come from the depths of hell and hiss at him. Envy! Sharpen up your tooth and bite him.”

She fetches up all false things and she persecutes the man. If she can, she does it with the hand, if not by the tongue. She afflicts him wherever he is. She tries to ruin him in business. Or if he stands forth as the champion of the truth, why then she laughs, and mocks, and scorns. She lets no stone be unturned whereby she may injure him.

What is then the behavior of the Lord’s warrior when he sees the world take up arms against him, and when he sees all earth, like an army, coming to chase him and utterly destroy him? Does he yield? Does he yield? Does he bend? Does he cringe? Oh, no! Like Luther, he writes “*Cedo nulli*” on his banner—‘I yield to none,’ and he goes to war against the world, if the world goes to war against him.

***“Let earth be all in arms abroad,
He dwells in perfect peace.”***

Ah! some of you, if you had a word spoken against you, would at once give up what religion you have. But the true-born child of God cares little for man’s opinion. “Ah!” he says, “let my bread fail me, let

me be doomed to wander penniless the wide world o'er. Yea, let me die—each drop of blood within these veins belongs to Christ and I am ready to shed it for His name's sake.”

He counts all things but loss, that he may win Christ—that he may be found in Him. And when the world's thunders roar, he smiles at the uproar, while he hums his pleasant tune—

*“Jerusalem my happy home,
Name ever dear to me;
When shall my labours have an end,
In joy and peace, and thee?”*

When the world's sword comes out, he looks at it. “Ah!” says he, “just as the lightning leaps from its thunder lair, splits the clouds, and affrights the stars, but is powerless against the rock-covered mountaineer, who smiles at its grandeur, so now the world cannot hurt me, for in the time of trouble my Father hides me in his pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle does He hide me, and set me up upon a rock.” Thus, again, we conquer the world by not caring for its frowns.

3. “Well,” says the world, “I will try another style,” and this, believe me, is the most dangerous of all. A smiling world is worse than a frowning one. She says, “I cannot smite the man low with my repeated blows, so I will take off my mailed glove and show him a fair white hand, I'll bid him kiss it. I will tell him I love him. I will flatter him, I will speak good words to him.”

John Bunyan well-describes this Madam Bubble. She has a winning way with her. She drops a smile at the end of each of her sentences. She talks much of fair things, and tries to win and woo. Oh, believe me, Christians are not so much in danger when they are persecuted as when they are admired. When we stand upon the pinnacle of popularity, we may well tremble and fear.

It is not when we are hissed at and hooted that we have any cause to be alarmed. It is when we are dandled on the lap of fortune and nursed upon the knees of the people. It is when all men speak well of us that woe is unto us. It is not in the cold wintry wind that I take off my coat of righteousness and throw it away. It is when the sun comes, when the weather is warm and the air balmy, that I unguardedly strip off my robes and become naked.

Good God! How many a man has been made naked by the love of this world! The world has flattered and applauded him. He has drunk the flattery. It was an intoxicating draught. He has staggered, he has reeled, he has sinned, he has lost his reputation. And as a comet that dashed across the sky, does wander far into space and is lost in darkness, so does he. Great as he was, he falls. Mighty as he was, he wanders and is lost.

But the true child of God is never so. He is as safe when the world smiles, as when it frowns. He cares as little for her praise as for her dispraise. If he is praised and it is true, he says, “My deeds deserve praise, but I refer all honor to my God.” Great souls know what they merit from their critic. To them it is nothing more than the giving of their daily income. Some men cannot live without a large amount of praise and if they have no more than they deserve, let them have it. If they are children of God, they will be kept steady, they will not be ruined or spoiled, but they will stand with feet like hinds' feet upon high places, “This is the victory that overcometh the world.”

4. Sometimes again, the world turns jailer to a Christian. God sends affliction and sorrow, until life is a prison-house, the world its jailer—and a wretched jailer too. Have you ever been in trials and troubles, my friends? And has the world ever come to you and said, “Poor prisoner, I have a key that will let you out.

“You are in pecuniary difficulties. I will tell you how you may get free. Put that Mr. Conscience away. He asks you whether it is a dishonest act. Never mind about him. Let him sleep. Think about the honesty after you have got the money and repent at your leisure.” So says the world, but you say, “I cannot do the thing.”

“Well,” says the world, “then groan and grumble—a good man like you locked up in this prison!” “No,” says the Christian, “my Father sent me into want and in His own time He will fetch me out. But if

I die here, I will not use wrong means to escape. My Father put me here for my good, I will not grumble. If my bones must lie here—if my coffin is to be under these stones—if my tombstone shall be in the wall of my dungeon—here will I die, rather than so much lift a finger to get out by unfair means.”

“Ah,” says the world, “then you are fool.” The scorner laughs and passes on, saying, “The man has no brain, he will not do a bold thing. He has no courage. He will not launch upon the sea. He wants to go in the old beaten track of morality.” Ay, so he does, for thus he overcomes the world.

Oh! I might tell you of some battles that have been fought. There has been many a poor maiden who has worked, worked, worked, until her fingers were worn to the bone just to earn a scanty living out of the things which we wear upon us, knowing not that oftentimes we wear the blood, and bones, and sinews of poor girls.

That poor girl has been tempted a thousand times, the evil one has tried to seduce her, but she has fought a valiant battle. Stern in her integrity in the midst of poverty, she still stands upright. “Clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners,” a heroine unconquered by the temptations and enticements of vice.

In other cases, many a man has had the chance of being rich in an hour, affluent in a moment, if he would but clutch something which he dare not look at, because God within him said, “No.” The world said, “Be rich, be rich,” but the Holy Spirit said, “No! Be honest. Serve your God.” Oh! the stern contest and the manly combat carried on within the heart! But he said, “No. Could I have the stars transmuted into worlds of gold, I would not for those globes of wealth belie my principles and damage my soul.” Thus he walks a conqueror. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

II. But my text speaks of a GREAT BIRTH.

A very kind friend has told me that while I was preaching in Exeter Hall, I ought to pay deference to the varied opinions of my hearers, that albeit I may be a Calvinist and a Baptist, I should recollect that there are a variety of creeds here. Now, if I were to preach nothing but what would please the whole lot of you, what on earth should I do? I preach what I believe to be true and if the omission of a single truth that I believe would make me King of England throughout eternity, I would not leave it out.

Those who do not like what I say have the option of leaving it. They come here, I suppose, to please themselves and if the truth does not please them, they can leave. I will never be afraid that an honest British audience will turn away from the man who does not stick, and stutter, and stammer in speaking the truth.

Well, now, about this great birth. I am going to say perhaps a harsh thing, but I heard it said by Mr. Jay first of all. Some say a new birth takes place in an infant baptism, but I remember that venerable patriarch saying, “Popery is a *lie*, Puseyism is a *lie*, baptismal regeneration is a *lie*.” So it is. It is a lie so palpable that I can scarcely imagine the preachers of it have any brains in their heads at all.

It is so absurd upon the very face of it, that a man who believes it puts himself below the range of a commonsense man. Believe that every child by a drop of water is born again! Then that man that you see in the ring as a prize-fighter is born again, because those sanctified drops once fell upon his infant forehead! Another man swears—behold him drunk and reeling about the streets. He is born again!

A pretty born again that is! I think he wants to be born again another time. Such a regeneration as that only fits him for the devil, and by its deluding effect, may even make him sevenfold more the child of hell. But the men who curse, and swear, and rob, and steal, and those poor wretches who are hanged, have all been born again, according to the fiction of this beautiful Puseyite church. Out with it! Out with it! Ah, God sends something better than that into men’s hearts, when He sends them a new birth.

However, the text speaks of a great birth. “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.” This new birth is the mysterious point in all religion. If you preach anything else except the new birth, you will always get on well with your hearers. But if you insist that in order to enter heaven there must be a radical change, though this is the doctrine of the Scripture, it is so unpalatable to mankind in general that you will scarcely get them to listen.

Ah! now you turn away as I begin to tell you, that “except ye be born of water and of the Spirit, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” If I tell you that there must be a regenerating influence exerted upon your minds by the power of the Holy Ghost, then I know you will say, “It is enthusiasm.” Ah! but it is the enthusiasm of the Bible. There I stand. By this I will be judged. If the Bible does not say we must be born again, then I give it up. But if it does, then sirs, do not distrust that truth on which your salvation hangs.

What is it to be born again? Very briefly, to be born again is to undergo a change so *mysterious* that human words cannot speak of it. As we cannot describe our first birth, so it is impossible for us to describe the second. “The wind blows where it listeth, and you hear the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

But while it is so mysterious, it is a change which is *known and felt*. People are not born again when they are in bed and asleep, so that they do not know it. They feel it. They experience it. Galvanism, or the power of electricity, may be mysterious, but it produces a feeling—a sensation. So does the new birth.

At the time of the new birth, the soul is in great agony—often drowned in seas of tears. Sometimes it drinks bitters, now and then mingled with sweet drops of hope. Whilst we are passing from death unto life, there is an experience which none but the child of God can really understand. It is a mysterious change, but at the same time, it is a positive one. It is as much a change as if this heart were taken out of me, and the black drops of blood wrung from it, then washed and cleansed and put into my soul again. It is “a new heart and a right spirit,” a mysterious but yet an actual and real change!

Let me tell you, moreover, that this change is a *supernatural* one. It is not one that a man performs upon himself. It is not leaving off drinking and becoming sober. It is not turning from a Roman Catholic to a Protestant. It is not veering round from a Dissenter to a Churchman, or a Churchman to a Dissenter. It is a vast deal more than that.

It is a new principle infused which works in the heart, enters the very soul, and moves the entire man. Not a change of my name, but a renewal of my nature, so that I am not the man I used to be, but a new man in Christ Jesus. It is a supernatural change—something which man cannot do and which only God can effect, which the Bible itself cannot accomplish without the attendant Spirit of God—which no minister’s eloquence can bring about—something so mighty and wondrous that it must be confessed to be the work of God and God alone.

Here is the place to observe that this new birth is an *enduring change*. Arminians tell us that people are born again, then fall into sin, pick themselves up again, and become Christians again—fall into sin, lose the grace of God, then come back again—fall into sin a hundred times in their lives and so keep on losing grace and recovering it. Well, I suppose it is a new version of the Scripture where you read of that.

But I read in my Bible that if true Christians could fall away, it would be impossible to renew them again unto repentance. I read, moreover, that wherever God has begun a good work, He will carry it on even to the end, and that whom He once loves, He loves to the end. If I have simply been reformed, I may be a drunkard yet, or you may see me acting on the stage. But if I am really born again, with that real supernatural change, I shall never fall away, I may fall into a sin, but I shall not fall finally. I shall stand while life shall last, constantly secure. And when I die it shall be said—

*“Servant of God, well done!
Rest from thy blest employ;
The battle’s fought, the victory’s won;
Enter thy rest of joy.”*

Do not deceive yourselves, my beloved. If you imagine that you have been regenerated, and having gone away from God, will be once more born again, you do not know anything about the matter. For

“He that is born of God sinneth not.” That is, he does not sin so much as to fall away from grace, “for he keepeth himself; that the evil one toucheth him not.” Happy is the man who is really and actually regenerate and passed from death unto life!

III. To conclude. There IS A GREAT GRACE.

Persons who are born again really do overcome the world. How is this brought about? The text says, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our *faith*.” Christians do not triumph over the world by reason. Not at all. Reason is a very good thing and nobody should find fault with it. Reason is a candle, but faith is a sun. Well, I prefer the sun, though I do not put out the candle. I use my reason as a Christian man. I exercise it constantly, but when I come to real warfare, reason is a wooden sword. It breaks, it snaps. While faith, that sword of true Jerusalem metal, cuts to the dividing of soul and body.

My text says, “This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith.” Who are the men that do anything in the world? Are they not always men of faith? Take it even as natural faith. Who wins the battle? Why, the man who knows he will win it and vows that he will be the victor. Who never gets on in the world? The man who is always afraid to do a thing, for fear he cannot accomplish it. Who climbs to the top of the Alps? The man who says, “I will do it, or I will die.”

Let such a man make up his mind that he can do a thing and he will do it, if it is within the range of possibility. Who have been the men who have lifted the standard, and grasping it with firm hand, have upheld it in the midst of stormy strife and battle? Why, men of faith. Who have done great things? Not men of fear and trembling, men who are afraid, but men of faith, who had bold fronts and foreheads made of brass—men who never shook and never trembled, but believing in God, lifted their eyes to the hills, whence comes their strength.

“Never was a marvel done upon the earth, but it had sprung of faith. Nothing noble, generous, or great, but faith was the root of the achievement. Nothing comely, nothing famous, but its praise is faith. Leonidas fought in human faith as Joshua in divine. Xenophon trusted to his skill and the sons of Matthias to their cause.”

Faith is mightiest of the mighty. It is the monarch of the realms of the mind. There is no being superior to its strength, no creature which will not bow to its divine prowess. The want of faith makes a man despicable, it shrivels him up so small that he might live in a nutshell. Give him faith and he is a leviathan that can dive into the depths of the sea. He is a war horse that cries, aha! aha! in the battle.

He is a giant who takes nations and crumbles them in his hand, who encounters hosts, and at a sword they vanish. He binds up sheaves of sceptres and gathers up all the crowns as his own. There is nothing like faith, sirs. Faith makes you almost as omnipotent as God, by the borrowed might of its divinity. Give us faith and we can do all things.

I want to tell you how it is that faith helps Christians to overcome the world. It always does it homeopathically. You say, “That is a singular idea.” So it may be. The principle is that, “like cures like.” So does faith overcome the world by curing like with like. How does faith trample upon the *fear* of the world? By the fear of God.

“Now,” says the world, “if you do not do this, I will take away your life. If you do not bow down before my false god, you shall be put in yon burning fiery furnace.” “But” says the man of faith, “I fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. True, I may dread you, but I have a greater fear than that. I fear lest I should displease God. I tremble lest I should offend my Sovereign.” So the one fear counterbalances the other.

How does faith overthrow the world’s *hopes*? “There,” says the world, “I will give you this, I will give you that, if you will be my disciple. There is a hope for you. You shall be rich, you shall be great.” But faith says, “I have a hope laid up in heaven. A hope which fades not away, eternal, incorrupt, eternally amaranthine hope, a golden hope, a crown of life.” And the hope of glory overcomes all the hopes of the world.

“Ah!” says the world, “Why not follow the *example* of your fellows?” “Because,” says faith, “I will follow the example of Christ.” If the world puts one example before us, faith puts another. “Oh! follow

the example of such a one. He is wise, and great, and good,” says the world. Says faith, “I will follow Christ. He is the wisest, the greatest, and the best.” It overcomes example by example.

“Well,” says the world, “since you will not be conquered by all this, come, I will *love* you. You shall be my friend.” Faith says, “He that is the friend of this world, cannot be the friend of God. God loves me.” So he puts love against love, fear against fear, hope against hope, dread against dread, and so faith overcomes the world by like curing like.

In closing my discourse, men and brethren, I am but a child. I have spoken to you as I could this morning. Another time perhaps I might be able to launch more thunders and to proclaim better the Word of God. But this I am sure of—I tell you all I know and speak right on. I am no orator, but just tell you what springs up from my heart.

But before I have done, O that I may have a word with your souls. How many are there here who are born again? Some turn a deaf ear and say, “It is all nonsense. We go to our place of worship regularly, put our hymn books and Bibles under our arm! and we are a very religious sort of people.” Ah, soul! if I meet you at the bar of judgment, recollect I said—and said God’s Word—“Except ye be *born again*, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Others of you say, “We cannot believe that being born again is such a change as you speak of, I am a great deal better than I used to be. I do not swear now and I am very much reformed.” Sirs, I tell you it is no little change. It is not mending the pitcher, but it is breaking it up and having a new one. It is not patching the heart, it is having a new heart and a right spirit. There is nothing but death unto sin and life unto righteousness, that will save your souls.

I am preaching no new doctrine. Turn to the articles of the Church of England and read it there. Church people come to me sometimes to unite with our church. I show them our doctrines in their prayer book and they have said they never knew they were there. My dear hearers, why cannot you read your own articles of faith? Why, positively, you do not know what is in your own prayer book.

Men, nowadays, do not read their Bibles, and they have for the most part no religion. They have a religion, which is all outside show, but they do not think of searching to see what its meaning really is. Sirs, it is not the cloak of religion that will do for you, it is a vital godliness you need. It is not a religious Sunday, it is a religious Monday. It is not a pious church, it is a pious closet. It is not a sacred place to kneel in, it is a holy place to stand in all day long. There must be a change of heart real, radical, vital, entire.

And now, what say you? Has your faith overcome the world? Can you live above it? Or do you love the world and the things thereof? If so, sir, you must go on your way and perish, each one of you, unless you turn from that and give your hearts to Christ. Oh! what say you, is Jesus worthy of your love? Are the things of eternity and heaven worth the things of time? Is it so sweet to be a worldling that for that you can lie down in torment? Is it so good to be a sinner that for this you can risk your soul’s eternal welfare? O, my friends, is it worth your while to run the risk of an eternity of woe for an hour of pleasure? Is a dance worth dancing in hell with howling fiends forever? Is one dream, with a horrid waking, worth enjoying, when there are the glories of heaven for those who follow God?

Oh! if my lips would let me speak to you, my heart would run over at my eyes and I would weep myself away, until you had pity on your own poor souls. I know I am, in a measure, accountable for your souls. If the watchmen warn them not, they shall perish, but their blood shall be required at the watchman’s hands. “Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel?” thus saith the Lord. Besotted, filled with your evil wills, inclined to evil, still the Holy Ghost speaks by me this morning, “If you turn unto the LORD, with full purpose of heart, he will have mercy upon you, and to our God, he will abundantly pardon.”

I cannot bring you. I cannot fetch you. My words are powerless, my thoughts are weak! Old Adam is too strong for this young child to draw or drag, but may God speak to you, dear hearts. God send the truth home and then we shall rejoice together, both he that sows and he that reaps, because God has given us the increase.

God bless you! May you all be born again and have “that faith that overcometh the world!”

*“Have I that faith which looks to Christ,
O’ercomes the world and sin—
Receives Him Prophet, Priest, and King,
And makes the conscience clean?”*

*“If I this precious grace possess,
All praise is due to Thee;
If not, I seek it from Thy hands;
Now grant it, Lord, to me.”*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.