

THE BIBLE TRIED AND PROVED

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A SERMON
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BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”
Psalm 12:6.

IN this psalm our text stands in contrast with the evil of the age. The Psalmist complains that the “godly man ceases. The faithful fail from among the children of men.” It was a great grief to him and he found no consolation except in the words of the Lord. What if men fail—the Word of the Lord abides! What a comfort it is to quit the arena of controversy for the green pastures of revelation! One feels like Noah, when shut within the ark—he saw no longer the death and desolation which reigned outside. Live in communion with the Word of God and even in the absence of Christian friends you will not lack for company. Furthermore, the verse stands in fuller contrast still with the words of the ungodly when they rebel against God and oppress His people. They said, “With our tongue will we prevail. Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?” They boasted, they domineered, and they threatened. The Psalmist turned away from the voice of the boaster to the words of the Lord. He saw the promise, the precept and the doctrine of pure truth and these consoled him while others spoke every man vanity with his neighbor. He had not so many of the words of the Lord as we have—but what he had made his own by meditation, he prized above the finest gold.

In the good company of those who had spoken under divine direction he was able to bear the threats of those who surrounded him. So, dear friends, if at any time your lot is cast where the truths you love so well are despised, get back to the prophets and apostles and hear through them what God the Lord will speak. The voices of earth are full of falsehood but the word from heaven is very pure. There is a good practical lesson in the position of the text—learn it well. Make the Word of God your daily companion and then whatever may grieve you in the false doctrine of the hour; you will not be too much cast down. For the words of the Lord will sustain your spirit.

Looking at the text, does it not strike you as a marvel of condescension that Jehovah, the Infinite, should use *words*? He has arranged for us, in His wisdom, this way of communicating with one another. But as for Himself, He is pure spirit and boundless—shall He contract His glorious thoughts into the narrow channel of sound and ear and nerve? Must the eternal mind use *human* words? The glorious Jehovah spoke *worlds*! The heavens and the earth were the utterances of His lips. To Him it seems more in accordance with His nature to speak tempests and thunders than to stoop to the humble vowels and consonants of a creature of the dust. Will He in very deed communicate with man in man's own way? Yes, He stoops to speak to us by *words*. We bless the Lord for verbal inspiration, of which we can say, “I have esteemed the words of Your mouth more than my necessary food.” I do not know of any other inspiration, neither am I able to conceive of any which can be of true service to us. We need a plain revelation upon which we can exercise faith. If the Lord had spoken to us by a method in which His meaning was infallible, but His words were questionable, we should have been rather puzzled than edified. For it is a task, indeed, to separate the true sense from the doubtful words. We would always be afraid that the prophet or apostle had not, after all, given us the divine sense. It is easy to hear and to repeat words. But it is not easy to convey the meaning of another into perfectly independent words of your own.

We believe that holy men of old, though using their own language, were led by the Spirit of God to use words which were also the words of God. The divine Spirit so operated upon the spirit of the inspired writer that he wrote the words of the Lord, and we, therefore, treasure up every one of them. To us “every Word of God is pure,” and full of soul nutriment. “Man does not live by bread, only, but by

every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.” We can heartily declare with the Psalmist, “You are my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep Your words.” Our condescending God is so well pleased to speak to us by words that He has even deigned to call His only-begotten Son, “The word.” “The word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” The Lord uses words not with reluctance but with pleasure. And He would have us think highly of them, too, as He said to Israel by Moses, “Therefore shall you lay up these My words, in your heart and in your soul.”

We believe that we have the words of God preserved for us in the Scriptures. We are exceedingly grateful that it is so. If we had not the words of the Lord thus recorded we should have felt that we lived in an evil time, since neither voice nor oracle is heard today. I say we should have fallen upon evil days if the words that God spoke of old had not been recorded under His direction. With this Book before us, what the Lord spoke two thousand years ago he virtually speaks now—for “He will not call back His words” (Isa 31:2). His word abides forever. It was spoken, not for one occasion, but for all ages. The word of the Lord is so instinct with everlasting life and eternal freshness that it is as vocal and forceful in the heart of the saint today as it was to the ear of Abraham when he heard it in Canaan; or to the mind of Moses in the desert; or to David when he sang it on his harp. I thank God that many of us know what it is to hear the divine word spoken again in our souls! By the Holy Spirit the words of Scripture come to us with a *present* inspiration—not only has the Book *been* inspired, it *is* inspired. This Book is more than paper and ink, it talks with us. Was not that the promise, “When you awake, it shall talk with you”?

We open the Book with this prayer, “Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.” And we often close it with this feeling, “Here I am, for You did call me.” As surely as if the promise had never been uttered before but had been spoken out of the excellent glory for the first time, the Lord has made Holy Scripture to be His direct word to our heart and conscience. I say not this of you all, but I can say it assuredly of many here present, may the Holy Spirit at this hour speak to you again!

In trying to handle my text there will be three points to dwell upon. First, the quality of the words of God—“The words of the Lord are pure words.” Secondly, the trials of the words of God—“As silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” And then, thirdly, the claims of these words derived from their purity and the trials which they have undergone. Eternal Spirit, help me to speak correctly concerning Your own Word, and help us to feel aright while we hear!

I. First, then, beloved friends, consider THE QUALITY OF THE WORDS OF GOD—“The words of the Lord are pure words.”

From this statement I gather, first, the uniformity of their character. No exception is made to any of the words of God but they are all described as “pure words.” They are not all of the same character. Some are for teaching; others are for comfort and others for rebuke. But they are so far of a uniform character that they are all “pure words.” I conceive it to be an evil habit to make preferences in Holy Scripture. We must preserve this volume as a whole. Those sin against Scripture who delight in doctrinal texts but omit the consideration of practical passages. If we preach doctrine, they cry, “How sweet!” They will hear of eternal love, free grace and the divine purpose. And I am glad they will. To such I say—eat the fat and drink the sweet, and rejoice that there are fat things full of marrow in this Book. But remember that men of God in old times took great delight in the commands of the Lord. They had respect unto Jehovah’s precepts and they loved His law. If any turn on their heel and refuse to hear of duties and ordinances I fear that they do not love God’s Word at all. He that does not love it *all* loves it *not at all*.

On the other hand, they are equally mistaken who delight in the preaching of duties but care not for the doctrines of grace. They say, “That sermon was worth hearing, for it has to do with daily life.” I am very glad that they are of this mind. But if at the same time they refuse other teaching of the Lord, they are greatly at fault. Jesus said, “He that is of God hears God’s words.” I fear you are not of God if you account a portion of the Lord’s words to be unworthy of your consideration. Beloved, we prize the whole range of the words of the Lord. We do not set aside the histories any more than the promises—

*“I’ll read the histories of Your love,
And keep Your laws in sight,
While through the promises I love
With ever fresh delight.”*

Above all, do not drop into the semi-blasphemy of some who think the New Testament vastly superior to the Old. I would not err by saying that in the Old Testament you have more of the bullion of truth than in the New—for therein I should be falling into the evil which I condemn. But this I will say—they are of *equal authority*—and that they cast such light upon each other that we could not spare either of them. “What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.” In the whole Book, from Genesis to Revelation, the words of Jehovah are found and they are always pure words.

Neither is it right for any to say, “Thus spoke Christ Himself. But such-and-such a teaching is Pauline.” No! It is not Pauline! If it is recorded here, it is of the Holy Spirit. Whether the Holy Spirit speaks by Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or John, or James, or Paul, the authority is still the same. Even concerning Jesus Christ our Lord this is true, for He says of Himself, “The word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s which sent Me.” In this matter He puts Himself upon the level of others who were as the mouth of God. He says again, “For I have not spoken of Myself. But the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak.” We accept the words of the apostles as the words of the Lord, remembering what John said—“We are of God: he that knows God hears us. He that is not of God hears us not. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6). A solemn judgment is thus pronounced upon those who would set the Spirit of Jesus against the Spirit which dwelt in the apostles. The words of the Lord are not affected in their value by the medium through which they came. The revealed truth is all of the same quality even when the portions of it are not of the same weight of metal.

Abiding by the text, we observe next the purity of the words of the Lord—“The words of the Lord are pure words.” In commerce there is silver and silver, as you all know—silver with alloy and silver free from baser metal. The Word of God is the silver without the dross. It is as silver which has been purified seven times in a crucible of earth in the furnace till every worthless particle has been removed—it is absolutely pure. David said truly, “Your word is truth.” It is truth in the form of goodness, without mixture of evil. The commandments of the Lord are just and right. We have occasionally heard opponents carp at certain coarse expressions used in our translation of the Old Testament. But the coarseness of translators is not to be set to the account of the Holy Spirit, but to the fact that the force of the English language has changed and modes of expression which were current at one period become too gross for another. But I will assert this—I have never yet met with a single person to whom the words of God have of themselves suggested any evil thing. I have heard a great many horrible things said, but I have never met with a case in which any man has been led into sin by a passage of Scripture. Perversions are possible and probable—but the Book itself is absolutely pure. Details are given of very gross acts of criminality, but they leave no injurious impression upon the mind. The saddest story of Holy Scripture is a beacon and never a lure. This is the cleanest, clearest, purest Book extant among men. No, it is not to be mentioned in the same hour with the fabulous records which pass for holy books. It comes from God and every word is pure.

It is also a book pure in the sense of truth, being without mixture of error. I do not hesitate to say that I believe that there is no mistake whatever in the original Holy Scriptures from beginning to end. There may be, and there are mistakes of translation. For translators are not inspired—but even the *historical* facts are correct. Doubt has been cast upon them here and there and at times with great show of reason—doubt which it has been impossible to meet for a season. But only give space enough and search enough and the stones buried in the earth cry out to confirm each letter of Scripture! Old manuscripts, coins, and inscriptions are on the side of the Bible, and against it there are nothing but theories and the fact that many an event in history has no other record but that which the Bible affords us. The Book has been of late in the furnace of criticism, but much of that furnace has grown cold from the fact that the criticism is beneath contempt. “The words of the Lord are pure words”—there is not an error of any sort in the whole compass of them. These words come from Him who can make no mistake and who can have no wish to deceive His creatures. If I did not believe in the infallibility of the Bible, I would rather be without it. If I am to judge the Book, it is no judge of me. If I am to sift it, like the heap on the threshing floor, and lay this aside and only accept that, according to my own judgment, then I have no guidance whatever unless I have conceit enough to trust my own heart. The new theory denies infallibility to the

words of God but practically imputes it to the judgments of men. At least this is all the infallibility which they can get at. I protest that I will rather risk my soul with a guide inspired from heaven than with the differing leaders who arise from the earth at the call of “modern thought.”

Again, this Book is pure in the sense of reliability—it has in its promises no mixture of failure. Mark this—no prediction of Scripture has failed. No promise that God has given will turn out to be mere verbiage. “Has He said and shall He not do it?” Take the promise as the Lord gave it and you will find Him faithful to every jot and tittle of it. Some of us are not yet entitled to be called “old and gray-headed,” though the iron-gray is pretty conspicuous upon our heads. But up to now we have believed the promises of God and tested and tried them. And what is our verdict? I bear my solemn testimony that I have not found one word of the Lord fall to the ground. The fulfillment of a promise has been delayed sometimes beyond the period which my impatience would have desired, but to the right instant the promise has been kept—not to the ear only—but in deed and in truth. You may lean your whole weight upon any of the words of God, and they will bear you up. In your darkest hour you may have no candle but a single promise, and yet that lone light shall make high noon of your midnight. Glory be to His name! The words of the Lord are without evil, without error and without failure.

Furthermore, on this first head the text not only speaks of the uniform character of God’s Words and of their purity but of their *preciousness*. David compares them to refined silver and silver is a precious metal—in other places he has likened these words to pure gold. The words of the Lord might have seemed comparable to paper money, such as our own bank notes. But no, they are the metal itself. I remember the time when a friend of ours used to go into the western counties, from one farm to another, buying cheese and he was in the habit of taking quite a weight of coin with him. He had found that the farmers of that period did not care for bank notes and would not look at checks. They were more ready to sell when they saw that they would be paid in metal, down on the nail. In the words of God you have the solid money of truth—it is not fiction but the substance of truth. God’s Words are as bullion. When you have them in the grip of faith you have the substance of things hoped for. Faith finds in the promise of God the reality of what she looks for—the promise of God is as good as the performance itself. God’s Words—whether of doctrine, of practice, of comfort—are solid metal to the man of God who knows how to put them in the purse of personal faith. As we use silver in many articles within our houses, so do we use God’s Word in daily life; it has a thousand uses. As silver is the current coin of the merchant, so are the promises of God a currency both for heaven and earth—we deal with God by His promises, and so He deals with us.

As men and women deck themselves with silver by way of ornament, so are the words of the Lord our jewels and our glory. The promises are things of beauty which are a joy forever. When we love the Word of God and keep it, the beauty of holiness is upon us. This is the true ornament of character and life and we receive it as a love-gift from the Bridegroom of our souls. Beloved, I need not enlarge in your presence upon the preciousness of the Word of God. You have, many of you, prized it long and have proved its value. I have read of a German Christian woman who was accustomed to mark her Bible whenever she met with a passage which was especially precious to her. But towards the end of her life she ceased from the habit, for she said, “I find it unnecessary, for the whole of the Scripture has now become most precious to me.” To some of us the priceless volume is marked from beginning to end by our experience. It is all precious and altogether precious—

*“No treasures so enrich the mind,
Nor shall Your word be sold
For loads of silver well refined,
Nor heaps of choicest gold.”*

Furthermore, this text sets before us not only the purity and preciousness of the Lord’s words but the *permanence* of them. They are as silver which has passed through the hottest fires. Truly, the Word of God has for ages stood the fire—and fire applied in its fiercest heat—“tried in a furnace of earth”—that is to say in that furnace which refiners regard as their last resort. If the devil could have destroyed the Bible he would have brought up the hottest coals from the center of hell. He has not been able to destroy one single line! Fire, according to the text, was applied in a skillful way—silver is placed in a crucible of earth that the fire may get at it thoroughly. The refiner is quite sure to employ his heat in the best manner

known to him so as to melt away the dross—so have men with diabolical skill endeavored, by the cleverest criticism, to destroy the words of God. Their object is not purification—it is the *purity of Scripture* which annoys them—they aim at consuming the divine testimony. Their labor is in vain. For the sacred Book remains still what it always was—the pure word of the Lord.

But some of our misconceptions of its meaning have happily perished in the fires. The words of the Lord have been tried frequently, yes, they have been tried perfectly—“purified seven times.” What more remains, I cannot guess, but assuredly the processes have already been many and severe. It abides unchanged. The comfort of our fathers is our comfort. The words which cheered our youth are our support in age. “The grass withers, the flower fades: but the word of our God shall stand forever.” These words of God are a firm foundation and our eternal hopes are wisely built on them. We cannot permit anyone to deprive us of this basis of hope. In the olden time men were burned rather than cease to read their Bibles. We endure less brutal oppositions but they are far more subtle and difficult to resist. Still let us always abide by the everlasting words, for they will always abide by us. Unchanged, unchangeable are the words of the Ever Blessed. They are as silver without dross which will continue from age to age. This we do believe and in this we do rejoice. Nor is it a tax upon our faith to believe in the permanence of Holy Scripture—for these words were spoken by Him who is Omniscient and knows everything. Therefore there can be in them no mistake. They were spoken by Him who is Omnipotent and can do everything. And therefore His words will be carried out. Spoken by Him who is immutable, these words will never change. The words which God spoke thousands of years ago are true at this hour, for they come from Him who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

He that spoke these words is infallible and therefore *they* are infallible. When did He ever err? Could He err and yet be God? “Has He said and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken and shall He not make it good?” Rest you sure of this—“The words of the Lord are pure words.” But time hastens me on to the next point.

II. Secondly and carefully let us consider THE TRIALS OF THE WORDS OF GOD. They are said to be as silver, which has been tried in a furnace. The words of God have been tested by blasphemy, by ridicule, by persecution, by criticism, and by candid observation. I shall not attempt an oratorical flight while describing the historical tests of the precious metal of divine revelation—but I shall mention trials of a commonplace order which have come under my own notice and probably under yours also. This may be more homely but it will be more edifying. The Lord help us!

In dealing with the sinner’s obstinacy we have tested the words of the Lord. There are men who cannot be convinced or persuaded. They doubt everything and with closed teeth they resolve not to believe though a man declare it to them. They are encased in the armor of prejudice and they cannot be wounded with the sharpest arrows of argument though they profess great openness to conviction. What is to be done with the numerous people who are related to Mr. Obstinate? You might as well argue with an express-train as with Mr. Obstinate—he runs on and will not stop though a thousand should stand in his way. Will the words of God convince him? There are some in this place today of whom I should have said—if I had known them before their conversion—that it was a vain task to preach the gospel to them. They so much loved sin and so utterly despised the things of God. Strangely enough, they were among the first to receive the Word of God when they came under the sound of it. It came to them in its native majesty, in the power of the Holy Spirit. It spoke with a commanding tone to their inmost heart. It threw open the doors that had long been shut up and rusted on their hinges and Jesus entered to save and reign! These who had defiantly brandished their weapons, threw them down and surrendered unconditionally to almighty love, willing believers in the Lord Jesus. Brethren, we have only to have faith in God’s Word and speak it out straight and we shall see proud rebels yielding. No mind is so desperately set on mischief or so resolutely opposed to Christ that it cannot be made to bow before the power of the words of God. Oh, that we used more the naked sword of the Spirit! I am afraid we keep this two-edged sword in a scabbard and somewhat pride ourselves that the sheath is so elaborately adorned. What is the use of the sheath? The sword must be made bare and we must fight with it without attempting to garnish it.

Tell forth the words of God; omit neither the terrors of Sinai nor the love notes of Calvary. Proclaim the word with all fidelity as you know it and cry for the *power of the Highest* and the most obstinate sinner out of hell can be laid low by its means. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God—this is His one battering ram with which He casts down the strongholds of sin and self in those human hearts with which He effectually deals. The Word of God will bear the tests furnished by the hardness of the natural heart and it will, by its operations, prove its divine origin. But here begins another trial. When you have a man fairly broken down he has but come part of the way. A new difficulty arises. Will the words of the Lord overcome the penitent's *despair*? The man is full of terror on account of sin and hell has begun to burn within his bosom. You may talk to him lovingly but his soul refuses to be comforted. Until you bring the words of the Lord to bear upon him "his soul abhors all manner of meat." Tell him of a dying Savior. Dwell on free grace and full pardon. Speak of the reception of the prodigal son and of the Father's changeless love. Attended by the power of the Spirit, and only by the Holy Spirit, these truths will bring light to those who sit in darkness. The worst forms of depression are cured when Holy Scripture is *believed*. Often have I been baffled when laboring with a soul convicted of sin and unable to see Jesus. But I have never had a doubt that in the end the words of the Lord would become a cup of consolation to the fainting heart. We may be baffled for a season but with the words of the Lord as our weapons, Giant Despair will not defeat us. O you that are in bondage under fear of punishment, you shall come forth to liberty yet—your chains shall be broken if you will accept the words of God. My Master's word is a great opener of prison doors—He has broken the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron asunder.

That is a most wonderful word, which, like a battle-ax smashes in the helmet of presumption and at the same time, like the finger of love, touches the tender wound of the bleeding and heals it in an instant! The words of the Lord—for breaking down or lifting up—are equally effective. In certain instances, the words of God are tried by the seeker's singularity. How frequently have persons told us that they were sure there was *nobody* like themselves in the entire world! They were men up in a corner—strange fish, the like of which no sea could yield. Now, if these words are, indeed, of God, *they—and nothing else*—will be able to touch every case. The words of God have been put to that test and we are amazed at their universal adaptation. There is a text to meet every remarkable and out-of-the-way case. In certain instances we have heard of an odd text, concerning which we could not *before* see why it was written. Yet it has evidently a special fitness for a particular person to whom it has come with divine authority. The Bible may be compared to the locksmith's bunch of keys. You handle them one by one and say of one—"That is a strange key, surely it will fit no lock that ever was made!" But one of these days the smith is sent to open a very peculiar lock. None of his keys open it. At last he selects that singular specimen. Look! It enters, shoots back the bolt and gives access to the treasure!

The words of this Book are proved to be the words of God because they have an infinite adaptation to the varied minds which the Lord has made. What a gathering of locks we have here this morning! I could not describe you all—Bramah and Chubb and all the rest of them could not have devised such a variety—yet I am sure that in this inspired volume there is a key in every way suited to each lock. Personally, when I have been in trouble, I have read the Bible until a text has seemed to stand out of the Book and salute me, saying, "I was written especially for you." It has looked to me as if the story must have been in the mind of the writer when he penned that passage. And so it *was* in the mind of that divine Author who is at the back of all these inspired pages. Thus have the words of the Lord stood the test of adaptation to the singularities of individual men. We frequently meet with people of God who have tested the words of God in time of sore trouble. I make here an appeal to the experience of the people of God. You have lost a dear child. Was there not a word of the Lord to cheer you? You lost your property—was there a passage in the Scriptures to meet the disaster? You have been slandered—was there not a word to console you? You were very sick and depressed. Had not the Lord provided a comfort for you in that case? I will not multiply questions—the fact is that you never were high but the word of the Lord was up with you. And you never were low but what the Scripture was down with you. No child of God was ever in any ditch, pit, cave, or abyss—but the words of God found him out. How

often do the gracious promises lie in ambush to surprise us with their loving kindness! I adore the infinity of God's goodness, as I see it mirrored in the glass of Scripture.

Again—the Word of God is tried and proved as a guide in perplexity. Have we not been forced, at times, to come to a pause and say, "I do not know what to think about this. What is the proper course?" This book is an oracle to the simple-hearted man in mental, moral and spiritual perplexity. Oh, that we used it more! Rest assured that you never will be in a labyrinth so complicated that this Book, blessed of the Spirit, will not help you through. This is the compass for all mariners upon the sea of life—by its use you will know where the pole lies. Abide by the words of the Lord, and your way will be clear.

Beloved, the words of God endure another test. They are our preservatives in times of temptation. You can write a book that may help a man when he is tempted in a certain direction—will the same volume strengthen him when he is attracted in the opposite direction? Can you conceive a book which shall be a complete fence encircling a man in all directions? Keeping him from the abyss yonder and from the gulf on the other side? Yet such is the Bible. The devil himself cannot invent a temptation which is not met in these pages. And all the devils in hell together, if they were to hold parliament and to call in the aid of all evil men, could not invent a device which is not met by this matchless Library of truth. It reaches the believer in every condition and position and preserves him from all evil. "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word" (Psa 119:9).

Lastly on this point, here is a grand test of the Book—it helps men to *die*. Believe me, it is no child's play to die! You and I will find ourselves in that solemn article before we know it and then we shall need strong consolation. Nothing upon earth ever gives me so much encouragement in the faith as to visit members of this church when they are about to die. It is very sad to see them wasting away or racked with pain, but the chief effect produced upon the visitor is gladsome rather than gloomy. I have this week seen a sister well known to many of you, who has a cancer in her face and may, in all probability, soon be with her Lord. It is a dread affliction and one knows not what it may yet involve. But the gracious patient knows neither murmurs nor fears. No one in this place, though in the flush of health, could be calmer, more restful than our sister is! She spoke to me with full confidence that living or dying she is the Lord's, and she had bright anticipations of being forever with the Lord. The little she could say with her voice was supplemented by a great deal which she expressed with her eyes and with her whole demeanor. Here was no excitement, no fanaticism, no action of drugs upon the brain—just a sweetly reasonable, quiet, and assured hope of eternal joy!

Brethren, it is not hard to pass out of this world when we are resting on that old and sure gospel which I have preached to you these many years. Personally, I can both live and die on the eternal truths which I have proclaimed to you. And this assurance makes me bold in preaching. Not long ago I sat by a brother who was near his end. I said to him, "You have no fear of death?" He replied cheerfully, "I should be ashamed of myself if I had. After all that I have learned of the glorious gospel from your lips these many years, it is a joy to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

Now, if this inspired volume with its wonderful record of the words of God helps us in the trials of life—directs us in our daily paths, and enables us to weather the last great storm—surely it is precious beyond description, "as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times."

III. Now thirdly, what are THE CLAIMS OF THESE WORDS OF THE LORD? The claims of these words are many. First, they deserve to be studied. Beloved, may I urge upon you the constant searching of inspired Scripture?

Here is the latest new novel! What shall I do with it? Cast it to the ground. Here is another piece of fiction which has been very popular! What shall I do with it? Throw it on one side, or thrust it between the bars of the grate. This sacred volume is the freshest of novels. It would be, to some of you, an entirely new book. We have a society for providing the Bible for readers but we greatly need *readers* of the Bible. I grieve that even to some who bear the Christian name, Holy Scripture is the least read book in their library. One said of a preacher, the other day, "How does he keep up the congregation? Does he always give the people something new?" "Yes," said the other, "he gives them the gospel. And in these days that is the newest thing out." It is truly so! The old, old gospel is always new. The modern doctrine is only new in *name*. It is, after all, nothing but a hash of stale heresies and moldy speculations. If God

has spoken, listen! If the Lord has recorded His words in a Book, *search* its pages with a believing heart. If you do not accept it as God's inspired word, I cannot invite you to pay any particular attention to it. But if you regard it as the Book of God, I charge you, as I shall meet you at the Judgment Seat of Christ—*study* the Bible *daily*. Treat not the Eternal God with disrespect but delight in His word.

Do you read it? Then believe it. Oh, for an intense belief of every word that God has spoken! Do not hold it as a dead creed but let it hold *you* as with an almighty hand. Have no controversy with any of the Lord's words. Believe without a doubt. The brother of the famous Unitarian, Dr. Priestly, was permitted to preach for his brother in his Chapel in Birmingham. But he was charged to take no controversial subject. He was obedient to the letter of his instructions but very rebellious against their spirit—seeing he took for his text—“Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.” Assuredly there is no controversy among *spiritual* men upon the glorious truth of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus!

So also, all the words of the Lord are out of the region of debate—they are to us *absolute certainties*. Until a doctrine becomes an absolute certainty to a man, he will never know its sweetness. The truth of God has little influence upon the soul till it is fully believed. Brothers and sisters, obey the Book! Do it freely, do it heartily, do it constantly. Err not from the commandment of God. May the Lord make you perfect in every good work, to do His will! “Whatever He says unto you, do it.” You that are unconverted, may you obey that gospel word—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Repentance and faith are at once the commands and the gifts of God—neglect them not.

Furthermore, these words of God are to be preserved. Give up no line of God's revelation. You may not know the particular importance of the text assailed, but it is not for you to assess the proportionate value of God's Words—if the Lord has spoken, be prepared to die for what He has said. I have often wondered whether, according to the notions of some people, there is any truth for which it would be worth while for a man to go to the stake. I should say not, for we are not sure of *anything* according to the modern notion. Would it be worthwhile dying for a doctrine which may not be true next week? Fresh discoveries may show that we have been the victims of an antiquated opinion—had we not better wait and see what will turn up? It will be a pity to be burned too soon, or to lie in prison for a dogma which will, in a few years, be superseded. Brethren, we cannot endure this shifty theology! May God send us a race of men who have backbones! Men who believe something and would die for what they believe. This Book deserves the sacrifice of our all for the maintenance of every line of it.

Believing and defending the Word of God, let us *proclaim* it. Go out this afternoon on this first Sunday of summer and speak in the street the words of this Book. Go to a cottage meeting, or to a workhouse, or to a lodging house and declare the divine words. “Truth is mighty and will prevail,” they say—it will *not* prevail if it is not made known! The Bible itself works no wonders until its truths are published abroad. Tell it among the heathen that the Lord reigns from the tree. Tell it among the multitude that the Son of God has come to save the lost, and that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life!

Make *all* men know that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” This thing was not done in a corner—keep it not a secret; go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And may God bless you! Amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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