

LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED

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“Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me.”
John 14:1.

THE disciples had been like lambs carried in the warm bosom of a loving Shepherd. They were now about to be left by Him, and would hear the howling of the wolves, and endure the terrors of the snow-storm. They had been like tender plants conserved in a hothouse, a warm and genial atmosphere had always surrounded them; they were now to endure the wintry world with its nipping frosts, and so it was to be proven whether or not they had an inward vitality which could exist when outward protections were withdrawn. Their Master, their Head, was to be taken from them; well might they cry with Elisha, “My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!” We too, dear friends, though we have not enjoyed perhaps so entire an immunity as did the apostles, were at one time very graciously shielded from trouble; we had a summertime of joy and an autumn of peace, far different than this present winter of our discontent. It frequently happens that after conversion God, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, gives to the weaklings of the flock a period of repose during which they rejoice with David, “He makes me to lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside the still waters.” But for all of us there will come a time of trouble similar to that sorrowful occasion which led the Savior to utter these memorable heart-cheering words. If our conscious communion with Jesus should not be interrupted, yet some other form of tribulation awaits us, for the testimony of earth’s poet, that “man is made to mourn,” is well borne out by the inspired declaration, “man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.” We must not expect that we shall be exceptions to the general lot of our race; there is no discharge in this war, we must all be conscripts in the armies of grief. We too shall do battle with strong temptations, and feel the wounds of adversity. Albeit that yonder ship so lately launched upon a glassy sea has all her streamers flying, and rejoices in a favorable wind, let her captain remember that the sea is treacherous, that winds are variable, and that the stoutest vessel may find it more than difficult to outride a hurricane. I rejoice to see the courage of that young man who has but just joined the army of the church militant, and is buckling on the glittering armor of faith; as yet there are no dents and bruises on that fair helmet and burnished breastplate, but let the wearer reckon upon blows, and bruises, and bloodstains; no, let him rejoice if he endures hardness as a good soldier, for without the fight where would be the victory? Brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus, without due trial, where would be our experience, and without the experience, where would be the holy increase of our faith, and the joyful triumph of our love through the manifested power of Christ? We must expect, then, to walk with our Lord to the gates of Gethsemane, both His and ours; we must expect to cross the Brook Kidron in company with our Master, and it will be well if we hear Him say to us as He did to His disciples on that eventful night, “Let not your hearts be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me.”

My brothers and sisters, some of us live at this hour in the midst of trouble. We do not remember any period more dark with portents of evil than the present watch of earth’s long night. Few events have occurred of late to cheer the general gloom. Our hopeful spirit has been accustomed to say, all things considered, there are no times like the times present. Think about whether any times have been more vexatious and troublesome than those which just now are passing over our head. The political atmosphere is far from being clear, no, it is thick and heavy with feelings of mutual distrust, which bring no increase to England’s greatness, but greatly the reverse. There are those who think that our trade, especially in its more speculative department, has become thoroughly rotten; and one thing is quite certain, that many well-known infamous transactions have sapped the foundations of credit, and stained our national honor. Is all England bankrupt, and our wealth a sham? Let us hope not. But who can see without alarm the great portion of our trade which is going from us through the folly of the many who combine to regulate what ought to be left perfectly free? If our trade continues much longer to depart from us, we shall become a generation of beggars, who will deserve no pity because we brought our poverty upon ourselves.

There are, we fear, dark days coming upon this land; in fact, the dark days are here; for in no year of the last 20 has there been, brothers and sisters, such deep and wide-spread distress in London as at the present moment. I am far from endorsing all the fears of the timid, yet I do see much ground for pleading earnestly with God to send to our rulers political wisdom to end the bitter disputes of class with class, and to grant to our whole nation divine grace to repent of its many sins, that the chastening rod may be withdrawn.

Apart from these, we have each a share of home-trials. Is there one here who is happy enough to wholly escape from the troubles of the hearth? Some have the wolf at the door, shortness of bread just now is felt in the houses of many a Christian; some of you are compelled to eat your bread with carefulness, and go to your God in the morning and ask Him to provide for you your daily food, and repeat that prayer with more meaning than usual, for just now God is making us feel that He can break the staff of bread and send a famine in the land if He so wills it. Many who are not altogether poor are, nevertheless, in sorrow, for reverses in business have, during the last few months, brought the affairs of many of the Lord's people into a very perilous state, so that they cannot but be troubled in spirit. Vexations abound and many a path is strewn with thorns. If this is not the shape of our trouble, sickness may be raging where penury has not entered. Beyond all these there may be afflictions which it were not well to mention—griefs which must be carried by the mother alone, trials which the father alone must bear, or sorrows in which none but the daughter can share. We all have our omer full of trials, day by day this bitter manna falls around the camp.

Trials arising among the church of God are many, and we might add, that to the genuine Christian they are as heavy as any which he has to bear. I am sure, to those of us who have to look upon the church with the anxious eye of loving shepherds, to those of us who are set by God for the guidance and rule of His people, there are troubles enough, and more than enough, to bow us to the earth. In the best-ordered church, such as this is and long has been, it just is that offenses come. Sometimes it is a jealousy between brothers; at another time a strife between sisters; sometimes it is this one who has fallen into gross sin (God forgive these, who have pierced us through with many sorrows!) and another time it is a gradual backsliding which the pastor can detect, but which the subject of it cannot discern. Sometimes it is a heresy, which, springing up, troubles us; at another time it is a slander, which, like a deadly serpent, creeps through the grass. I have had little enough to complain of in these respects, but still such things are with us, even with us, and we must not count them strange, as though some strange thing had happened to us. While men are imperfect there will be sins among the best of them, which will cause sorrow both to themselves and to those of the Lord's people who are in fellowship with them.

Worst of all are soul troubles. God save you from these. Oh the grief of being conscious of having fallen from high places of enjoyment, conscious of having wasted opportunities for eminent usefulness, conscious of having been lax in prayer, of having been negligent in study, of having been—alas, that we should have to add it—unguarded in word and act! Ah, friends, when the soul feels all this, and cannot get to the blood of sprinkling as it should, cannot return to the Light of God's countenance as it would desire, it is trouble indeed! It is terrible to be compelled to sit and sing—

*“Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His Word?”*

But my tale is all too long. It is clear that this mortal life has troubles enough. Suppose that these should meet, and that the man as a patriot is oppressed with the ills of his country, as a father and a husband is depressed with the cares of home, as a Christian afflicted with the troubles in the church, and as a saint made to walk heavily before the Lord because of inward afflictions—“why then he is in a sorry plight,” you say. Indeed he is; but, blessed be God, he is in a plight in which the words of the text are still applicable to him. “Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me.”

Ceasing from this dolorous prelude, let us observe, that *the advice of the text is very timely and wise*; secondly, let us notice that *the advice of the text is practicable*; it is not given us to mock us, we must seek to carry it out; and lastly, and perhaps that last may yield us good cheer, *the advice of the text is very precious*.

I. FIRST, THEN, THE ADVICE OF THE TEXT IS VERY TIMELY AND WISE. There is no need to say, “Let not your heart be troubled,” when you are not in affliction. When all things go well with you, you will need another caution— “Let not your heart be exalted above measure: if riches increase,

set not your heart upon them.” The word, “Let not your heart be troubled,” is timely, and it is wise; a few minutes thought will lead you to see it. It is the easiest thing in the world, in times of difficulty, to let the heart be troubled; it is very natural for us to give up and drift with the stream, to feel that it is of no use “taking arms against” such “a sea of trouble,” but that it is better to lie passive and to say, “If one must be ruined, so let it be.” Despairing idleness is easy enough, especially to evil, rebellious spirits, who are willing enough to get into further mischief that they may have more with which to blame God, against whose providence they have quarreled. Our Lord will not have us be so rebellious. He bids us pluck up heart and be of good courage in the worst possible condition, and here is the wisdom of His advice, namely, that *a troubled heart will not help us in our difficulties or out of them*. It has never been perceived in time of drought that lamentations have brought showers of rain, or that in seasons of frost, doubts, fears, and discouragements, have produced a thaw. We have never heard of a man whose business was declining, who managed to multiply the number of his customers by unbelief in God. I do not remember reading of a person whose wife or child was sick, who discovered any miraculous healing power in rebellion against the Most High. It is a dark night, but the darkness of your heart will not light a candle for you. It is a terrible tempest, but to quench the fires of comfort and open the doors to admit the howling winds into the chambers of your spirit will not stay the storm. No good comes out of fretful, petulant, unbelieving heart-trouble. This lion yields no honey. If it would help you, you might reasonably sit down and weep till the tears had washed away your woe. If it were really to some practical benefit to be suspicious of God and distrustful of providence, why then you might have a shadow of excuse; but as this is a mine out of which no one ever dug any silver, as this is a fishery out of which the diver never brought up a pearl, we would say, “Renounce that which cannot be of service to you; for as it can do no good, it is certain that it does much mischief.”

A doubting, fretful spirit takes from us the joys we have. You have not all you could wish, but you still have more than you deserve. Your circumstances are not what they might be, but still they are not even now as bad as the circumstances of some others. Your unbelief makes you forget that health still remains for you if poverty oppresses you; and if both health and abundance have departed, you are a child of God, and your name is not blotted out from the roll of the elect. Why, brothers and sisters, there are flowers that bloom in winter, if we have but grace to see them. Never was there a night so dark for the soul but what some lone star of hope might be discerned, and never a spiritual tempest so terrible but what there was a haven into which the soul could dock if it had but enough confidence in God to make a run for it. Rest assured that though you have fallen very low, you might have fallen lower if it were not that underneath are the everlasting arms. A doubting, distrustful spirit will wither the few blossoms which remain upon your bough, and if half the wells are frozen by affliction, unbelief will freeze the other half by its despondency. Brothers and sisters, you will win no good, but you may get incalculable mischief by a troubled heart; it is a root which bears no fruit except wormwood.

A troubled heart makes that which is bad worse. It magnifies, aggravates, caricatures, misrepresents. If but an ordinary foe is in your way, a troubled heart makes him swell into a giant. “We were in their sight but as grasshoppers,” said the 10 evil spies, “yes, and we were but as grasshoppers in our own sight when we saw them.” But it was not so. No doubt the men were very tall, but they were not so big after all as to make an ordinary six-foot man look like a grasshopper. Their fears made them grasshoppers by first making them fools. If they had possessed but ordinary courage they would have been *men*, but being cowardly they subsided into grasshoppers. After all, what is an extra three, four, or five feet of flesh to a man? Is not the bravest soul the tallest? If he of shorter stature is but nimble and courageous, he will have the best of it; little David made short work of great Goliath. Yet so it is; unbelief makes out our difficulties to be most gigantic, and then it leads us to suppose that never a soul had such difficulties before, and so we egotistically lament, “I am the man that has seen affliction.” We claim to be peers in the realm of misery, if not the emperors of the kingdom of grief. Yet it is not so. Why? What ails you? The headache is excruciating! Well, it is bad enough, but what would you say if you had seven such aches at once, and cold and nakedness to back them! The twitches of rheumatism are horrible! Right well can I endorse that statement! But what then? Why there have been men who have lived with such tortures thrice told all their lives, like Baxter, who could count all his bones because each one had made itself heard by its own peculiar pain. I know that you and I often suffer under depression of spirit and physical pain, but what is our complaint compared with the diseases of Calvin, the man who preached at the break of every day to the students in the cathedral, and worked on till long past midnight, and was all the while a mass of disease, a complicated agony? You are poor! Ah yes! But you have your own room,

scanty as it is, and there are hundreds in the workhouse who find sorry comfort there. It is true you have to work hard. Yes, but think of the Huguenot galley slave in the olden times, who for the love of Christ was bound with chains to the oar, and scarcely knew rest day or night. Think of the sufferings of the martyrs of Smithfield, or of the saints who rotted in their prisons. Above all, let your eyes turn to the great Apostle and High Priest of your profession, and “consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest you be weary and faint in your mind.”—

*“His way was much rougher and darker than mine,
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”*

Yet this is the habit of our unbelief to draw our picture in the blackest possible colors, to tell us that the road is unusually rough and utterly impassable, that the storm is such a tornado as never blew before, that our name will be down in the wreck register, and that it is impossible that we should ever reach the haven.

Moreover, *a troubled heart is most dishonorable to God*. It makes the Christian think very harshly of his tender heavenly Friend; it leads him to suspect eternal faithfulness, and to doubt unchangeable love. Is this a little thing? It breathes into the Christian a proud rebellious spirit. He judges his Judge, and misjudges. He has not learned Job’s philosophy; he cannot say, “Shall we receive good from the hand of the Lord, and shall we not also receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord.” Inward distress makes the humble, meek, teachable child of God to become a willful, wicked, rebellious offender in spirit. Is this a little thing? And meanwhile, it makes the family and the outsiders who know the Christian to doubt the reality of those truths of God of which the Christian used to boast in his brighter days. Satan suggests to them, “You see, these Christian people are no better sustained than others. See,” says the fiend, “they are as petulant, as unbelieving, and as rebellious as the rest of mankind; it is all a sham, a piece of enthusiasm which will not endure an ordinary trial.” Is this a small matter? Surely there are mouths enough to revile the throne of God, there are lips enough to utter blasphemy against Him without His own dear children turning against Him because He frowns upon them. Surely they should be bowed to the earth at the mere suspicion that they could do such a thing, and cry to God to save them from a troubled heart lest they should rebel against Him.

I feel with regard to the Christian church that the truth of God which I am endeavoring to bring forward is above all things essential. The mischief of the Christian church at large is a lack of holy confidence in God. The reason why we have had as a church, I believe, unprecedented prosperity has been that on the whole we have been a courageous, hopeful, and joyous body of Christian people who have believed in our own principles most intensely, and have endeavored to propagate them with the most vehement earnestness. Now I can suppose the devil coming in among us, and endeavoring to dishearten us by this or that supposed failure or difficulty. “Oh,” he says, “will you ever win the victory? Look! Sin still abounds, notwithstanding all the preaching and all the praying. Are not the jails full? Do you see any great moral change worked after all? Surely you will not make the advances you expected; you might as well give up.” Yes, and when once an army can be demoralized by a lack of spirit, when once the British soldier can be assured that he cannot win the day, that even at the push of the bayonet nothing can await him but defeat, then the rational conclusion he draws is that every man had better take care of himself, and look to his heels and flee to his home. But oh, if we can feel that the victory is not precarious nor even doubtful but absolutely certain, and if each one of us can rest assured that the Lord of hosts is with us, that the God of Jacob is our refuge, that the most discouraging circumstances which can possibly occur are only mere incidents in the great struggle, mere eddies in the mighty current that is bearing everything before it; if we can but feel that sooner should heaven and earth pass away than God’s promise be broken, I say, if we can keep our courage up at all times, if from the youngest of us who have lately joined, to the venerable veterans who have for years fought at our side, we can feel that we must win, that the purposes of God must be fulfilled, that the kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, then we shall see bright and glorious things.

Some of you grow discouraged because you have taught in the Sunday school, and you have seen no conversions in your class, and you want to sneak away among the baggage; others of you have tried to preach in the streets and you did not get on, and you feel half inclined not to do anything more. Is this right? Some of you have not felt as happy with other Christian people as you would like to be; you do not think others respect you quite up to the mark that you have marked for yourselves on your thermometer of dignity, and you are inclined to run away. Is this right? Now I will boldly say to those of you who are inclined to run, run, for our resolution is to stand fast. Those who are afraid, let them go to their

homes, for our eyes are on the battle and the crown. Those of you who cannot bear a little roughness and cannot fight for Christ, I had almost said, we shall be better without your cowardly spirits, but I would rather pray for you, that you may pluck up heart and cry with holy boldness, "Nothing shall discourage us." If all the devils in hell should appear visibly before us, and show their teeth with flame pouring from their mouths as from 10,000 ovens, yet as long as the Lord of hosts lives, by His grace we will not fear, but lift up our banners and laugh our enemies to scorn.—

*"We will in life and death
His steadfast truth declare,
And publish with our latest breath
His love and guardian care."*

There is a great deal more to say, but we cannot say it; perhaps you will think it over, and perhaps you will perceive that of all the mischiefs that might happen to a good man, it is certainly one of the greatest to let his heart be troubled; and that of all the good things that belong to a Christian soldier, a bold heart and confidence in God are not the least. As long as we do not lose heart we have not lost the day; but if confidence in God departs, then the floods have burst into the vessel, and what can save it? What indeed, but that eternal love which comes in to the rescue even at our extremity?

II. In the second place, THE ADVICE THAT IS GIVEN IS PRACTICABLE—it can be carried out. "Let not your heart be troubled." "Oh," says somebody, "that's very easy to say, but very hard to do." Here's a man who has fallen into a deep ditch, and you lean over the hurdle and say to him, "Don't be troubled about it." "Ah," he says, "that's very pretty for you that are standing up there, but how am I to be at ease while up to my neck in mud?" There is a noble ship stranded, and liable to be broken up by the breakers, and we speak from a trumpet and say to the mariners on board, "Don't be alarmed." "Oh," they say, "very likely not, when every timber is shivering, and the vessel is going to pieces." But when He who speaks is full of love, pity, and might, and has it in His own power to make His advice become prophetic of deliverance, we need not raise difficulties, but we may conclude that if Jesus says, "Let not your heart be troubled," our heart need not be troubled. There is a way of keeping the heart out of trouble, and the Savior prescribes the method. First, *He indicates that our resort must be to faith.* If in your worst times you would keep your head above water, the life belt must be *faith.* Now, Christian, do you not know this? In the olden times how were men kept from perishing but by faith? Read that mighty chapter in Hebrews, and see what faith did—how believers overcame armies, put to flight the army of aliens, quenched the violence of fire, and stopped the mouths of lions. There is nothing which faith has not done or cannot do. Faith is girdled about with the omnipotence of God for her belt; she is the great wonder-worker. Why, there were men in the olden times whose troubles were greater than yours, whose discouragements and difficulties in serving God were a great deal more severe than any you and I have known, yet they trusted God; they trusted God, and they were not confounded; they rested in Him, and they were not ashamed. Their puny arms worked miracles, and their uplifted voices in prayer brought blessings from on high. What God did of old He will do now—He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Christian, commit yourself to faith. Did not faith bring your first comfort to you? Remember when you were in despair under a sense of sin? What brought you joy? Was it good works? Was it your inward feelings? The first ray of light that came to your poor dark spirit, did it not come from the cross through believing? Oh, that blessed day when first I cast myself on Jesus and saw my sins numbered on the scapegoat's head of old, what a flood of light faith brought then! Open the same window, for the sun is in the same place, and you will get light from it. Go not, I pray you, to any other well but to this well of your spiritual Bethlehem which is within the gate, the water of which is still sweet and still free to you.

Ah, dear friends, there is one reason why you should resort to faith, namely, that it is the only thing you have to resort to. What can you do if you do not trust your God? Under many troubles, when they are real troubles, the creature is evidently put to confusion; human ingenuity itself fails. We are like the seamen in a storm who reel to and fro, and stagger like drunken men and are at their wits end. Oh let us, now that every other anchor is drug, cast out the great sheet anchor, for that will hold. Now that every refuge has failed, let us fly to the Strong for strength, for God will be our helper. Surely it ought not to be difficult for a child to believe his father; it should not therefore be difficult for us to trust in our God today, and so to lift our spirits out of the tumult of their doubts. Somebody will say, "Well, I can understand that faith is a practical way of getting out of trouble, but I cannot understand how we are to have faith." Well, in this the Savior helps us. You remember what He said when the people were hungry—

“Give you them to eat.” “Ah,” they said, “there are so many; how can we feed them?” The Master began by saying, “How many loaves have you?” That is just what He says here. He says, “It is faith that will get you out of trouble; but how much faith have you?” He answers for them, “You believe in God.” I must do the same by you. Faith is that which will deliver you. You say, “Where am I to get it?” Well, you have some already, have you not? You have five barley loaves and a few small fishes. You are unbelieving creatures, but you have some measure of faith. You believe that there is a God. “Yes,” you say. You believe He is unchangeable, you believe that He is full of love, good and kind, and true and faithful. Now, really that is a great deal to begin with. You believe in God; the most of us believe in a great deal more than that; we not only believe in a God, and in the excellence of His character, but we believe that He has a chosen people, that He has made a covenant with them, ordered in all things and sure, that the promises of His covenant will be fulfilled, that He never puts away His people; we believe that all things work together for good to them who love God; we believe that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin; we believe that the Holy Spirit is given to dwell in His people. Now this is a great deal, a solid fulcrum upon which to place the lever. If you believe all that, you have only to properly employ this faith in order to lift your soul out of the horrible ditch of doubt and fear into which it has stumbled. You believe all this; surely, then, there is some room for hope and confidence.

The Savior goes on to say, “You believe in God,” very well, exercise that same faith with regard to the case in hand. The case in hand was this—could they trust a dying Savior? Could they rest upon one who was about to be crucified, dead and buried, who would be gone from them except that His poor mangled body would remain in their midst? “Now,” says Jesus, “you see you have had enough of faith to believe in God; now exercise that same faith upon Me; trust Me as you trust God.” From this I infer that the drift of the exhortation I am to give you this morning is this. “You have believed God about other things, exercise that same faith about this thing whatever it may be. You have believed God concerning the pardon of your soul; believe God about the child, about the wife, about the money, about the present difficulty. You have believed, concerning God, the great invisible One, and His great spiritual promises, now believe concerning this visible thing, this loss of yours, this cross of yours, this trial, this present affliction; exercise faith about that. Jesus Christ did in effect say to His people, “It is true I am going from you, but I want you to believe that I am not going far; I shall be in the same house as you are in, for my Father’s house has many rooms in it, and though you will be here in these earthly mansions and I shall be in the heavenly mansions, yet they are all in the Father’s house, for in My Father’s house are many dwelling places.” “I want you to believe,” says Jesus, “that when I am away from you I am about your interests, I am preparing a place for you, and moreover that I intend coming back to you. My heart will be with you, and My person shall soon return to you.” Now then, the drift of that applied to our case is this—believe that the present loss you sustain, or the present discouragement which threatens to overwhelm you—believe that God has a high design in it; that as Christ’s departure was to prepare eternal mansions for His people, so your present loss is to prepare you for a spiritual gain. I like that word of Christ when He says, “If it were not so I would have told you.”

When a man makes a general statement, if he knows an exception he ought to mention it, and if he does not mention it his statement is not strictly true. Jesus says, “If it were not so I would have told you.” There is a great word of His which says, “*All things work together for good to them who love God.*” A very awkward thing has happened to you; the trouble which you are now suffering is a very singular one; now, if ever there had been any exception to the rule which we have quoted, God in honor would have told it to you when He made the general statement, “*All things work together for good to them who love God.*” Such is His love and wisdom that if there had been one trial that could happen to one of His people which would not work for the good of that child of His, He would have said, “Dear child, there is an exception—one trouble will happen to you which will not work for your good.” I am positive that there is no exception to the statement that all things work together for good to them who love God, because if there had been an exception He would have put it in, He would have told us of it, that we might know how far to trust and when to leave off trusting, how far to rejoice and when to be cast down. Your case, then, is no exception to the rule; all that is happening is working for your everlasting benefit. Another place, however, another place will reveal this to you. Think of your Father’s house and its mansions, and it will mitigate your griefs. “Alas for us if you were all and nothing beyond, O earth.” There is another and a better land, and in your Father’s house, where the many mansions are, it may be you shall be privileged to understand how these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, have worked out for you a far more exceedingly and eternal weight of glory.

Before I close this point, let me say it ought to be a great deal easier for you and me to live above heart-trouble than it was for the apostles; I mean easier than it was to the apostles at the time when the Savior spoke to them and for 40 days afterwards. You say, "How was that?" Why because you have three things which they had not. You have *experience* of many past troubles out of which you have been delivered. They had only been converted at the outside of three years; they had not known much trouble, for Jesus in the flesh had dwelt among them to screen off troubles from them. Some of you have been converted thirty, 40—what if I say 60 years, and you have had abundance of trouble—you have not been screened from it. Now all this experience ought to make it easier for you to say, "My heart shall not be troubled." Again, you have received *the Holy Spirit*, and they had not. The Holy Spirit was not given, as you remember, until the day of Pentecost. His direct government in the church was not required while Christ was here. You have the Spirit, the Comforter to abide with you forever; surely you ought to be less distracted than they were. Thirdly, you have the whole of *Scripture*, they had but a part. They certainly had not the richest Scriptures of all, for they had not the Evangelists nor any of the New Testament, and having, as we have, all that store of promise and comfort, we ought surely to find it no hard work to obey the sweet precept, "Let not your heart be troubled."

III. THE EXHORTATION OF THE TEXT OUGHT TO BE VERY PRECIOUS TO ALL OF US THIS MORNING, and we should make a point of pleading for the Holy Spirit's aid to enable us to carry it out. Remember that the loving advice *came from Him*. Who said, "Let not your heart be troubled." Who could have said it but the Lord Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief? The mother says to the child, "Do not cry, child; be patient." That sounds very differently from what it would have done if the schoolmaster had said it, or if a stranger in the street had spoken. "Do not let your heart be troubled," might be a stinging remark from a stranger, but coming from the Savior, who "knows what strong temptations mean, for He has felt the same," it drops like virgin honey for sweetness, and like the balm of Gilead for healing power. *Jesus says*, "Let not your heart be troubled." His own face was towards the cross, He was hard by the olivepress of Gethsemane; He was about to be troubled as never man was troubled, and yet among His last words were these, "Let not your hearts be troubled." As if He wanted to monopolize all tears, and would not have them shed so much as one; as if He longed to take all the heart-trouble Himself and remove it far from them; as if He would have them exercise their hearts so much with believing that they would not have the smallest room left for grief; would have them so much taken up with the glorious result of His sufferings in procuring for them eternal mansions that they would not think about their own present losses, but let them be swallowed up in a mighty sea of joyful expectation. Oh the tenderness of Christ! "Let not your hearts be troubled." He is not here, this morning, in person, (would God He were!) but oh, if He will but look at us out of those eyes of His which wept, and make us feel that this cheering word wells up from that heart which was pierced with the spear, we shall find it to be a blessed word to our soul. Say it, sweet Jesus; say to every mourner, "Let not your heart be troubled." Brothers and sisters, the text should have to us the dignity of a command as well as the sweetness of counsel. Shall we be tormented with trouble after the Captain has said, "Let not your heart be troubled"? The Master of your spirit, who has bought you with His precious blood, demands that the harp strings of your heart should resound to the touch of His love, and of His love alone, and will you surrender those strings to be mournfully smitten by grief and unbelief? No, rather like George Herbert, say, "My harp shall find You, and every string shall have its attribute to sing." At Your word instead of mourning, I will bring forth joy; as You bid me I will put off my sackcloth and cast away my ashes, and I will rejoice in the Lord always, and yet again I will rejoice." Prize the counsel, because it comes from the Well-Beloved.

Prize it next because it *points to Him*. He says, "You believe in God; believe also in Me." You know, if it were not for the context which requires the particular construction here used, one would have looked to find these words, "You believe in Me, believe also in God." Jesus was speaking to Jews, disciples, who from their youth up had learned to believe in Emmanuel; believe in Me. There, there, there is the very cream of the whole matter. If you need comfort, Christian, you must hear Jesus say, Believe also *in Me*; you must approach afresh to the fountain, and believe in the power of the blood; you must take that fair linen of His righteousness and put it on, and believe that—

*"With His spotless vesture on,
You're holy as the Holy One."*

You must see Jesus dead in His grave, and believe that you died there in Him, and that your sin was buried there in Him. You must see Him rise, and you must believe also in Him, that His resurrection was

your resurrection, that you are risen in Him. You must mark Him as He climbs the starry way up to the appointed throne of His reward; this must be your belief also in Him, that He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Himself. You must see Him far above all principalities and powers, the ever-living and reigning Lord, and you must believe that because He lives you shall live, also. You must see Him with all things put under His feet, and you must believe that all things are under His feet *for you*; sin, death, hell, things present and things to come, all subject unto the Son that He may give to you, and to as many as the Father has given Him, eternal life. Oh, this is comfort! No place for a child's aching head like its mother's bosom. No shadow of a great rock in this weary land like our Savior's love consciously overshadowing us. His own side is the place where He protects His flock from the sun. This is the pasture where He makes them lie down; this is the river from which He gives them drink, namely, Himself. Communion with Jesus is glory. The saints feast, but it is upon His flesh; they drink, but it is of His blood; they triumph, but it is in His shame; they rejoice, but it is in His grief; they live, but it is with His life; and they reign, but it is through His power. It is precious advice, then, because it comes from Him and points to Him.

Once more, it is precious advice because *it speaks of Him*. It says, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you." Jesus is here seen in action; anything which makes us remember Christ should be prized. Jesus Christ comes to comfort us, but that comfort is all about Himself; we should greatly prize it. We want to know more of Jesus. One great deficiency is our ignorance of Him, and if the advice of this morning is calculated to make us know Him better and value Him more, let us prize it. Think of all He said and did, and what He is doing for us now. Now let your thoughts see Him beyond the glittering starry sky with the many crowns upon His head; see Him as your representative, claiming your rights, pleading before the throne for you, scattering blessings for you on earth, and preparing joys for you above.

That is the last thought, namely, that the advice is precious, because it hints that we are to be *with Him forever*. "An hour with my God," says the hymn, "will make up for it all." So it will; but what will an *eternity* with our God be, forever to behold Him smiling, forever to dwell in Him! "Abide in Me." That is heaven on earth. "Abide in Me" is all the heaven we shall need in heaven. He is preparing the place now, making it ready for us above, and here below making us ready for it. Courage, then, brothers and sisters, courage; let us not fret about the way; our heads are towards home. We are not outward-bound vessels, thank God; every wind that blows is bringing us nearer to our native land. Our tents are frail, we often pitch and strike them, but we nightly pitch them—

"A day's march nearer home."

Be of good cheer, soldier, the battle must soon end; and that bloodstained banner, when it shall wave so high, and that shout of triumph, when it shall thrill from so many thousand lips, and that grand assembly of heroes, all of them made more than conquerors, and the sight of the King in His beauty, riding in the chariot of His triumph, paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem, and the acclamations of spirits glorified, and the shouts and joyful music of cherubims and seraphims—all these shall make up for all the battles of today—

*"And they who, with their Master,
Have conquered in the fight,
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of light."*

Be that, by God's grace, ours. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 16.

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