

CHRIST'S TRIPLE CHARACTER

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A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“Behold, I have given Him for a Witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people.”
Isaiah 55:4.

THERE is no Gospel apart from our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the essence of it. He is everything in it. There would be no Gospel without Him. In this chapter the Holy Spirit had been speaking, very largely, through the Prophet, of Gospel bounties and privileges. He had bid the thirsty to “come to the waters,” and the penniless to come and “buy wine and milk without money and without price.” When He had commanded men to listen diligently to Him, to eat that which was good and to let their soul delight itself in fatness, you might be quite sure that He would not so speak without very soon mentioning Christ. For if, in His Gospel, there are waters for the thirsty, those waters do not exist apart from Christ! Is not the Gospel that which proceeds out of His lips—no, more—is not Christ Himself—the Water of Life? He still says, “If any man thirsts, let him come unto Me, and drink.” It is true that wine and milk are provided, but out of what cluster comes that wine—and where shall the unadulterated milk of the Word be found but in Him? Christ not only supplies the necessities of His people, but He gives them abundant and superabundant joy in the luxuries of His Grace. You do not really preach the Gospel if you leave Christ out—if He is omitted, it is not the Gospel! You may invite men to listen to your message, but you are only inviting them to gaze upon an empty table unless Christ is the very center and substance of all that you set before them!

Hence, it is not at all amazing that, after the glorious Gospel invitations, expostulations and exhortations of the first three verses of this Chapter, we should come, in the 4th verse, to these words—“Behold, I have given HIM.’ I have talked to you about waters, and about wine and milk, and about bread, and about fatness; but, behold, I have given HIM,’ for He is all these—water, wine, milk, bread, fatness. I have spoken to you about ‘an Everlasting Covenant, even the sure mercies of David,’ but I mean HIM, for He is the great Surety of the Covenant and I have given Him for a Covenant of the people.” Beloved, we cannot do without a *personal* Christ. The preacher must preach Him and we must trust in Him, even in Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of God, the one and only Savior of sinners!

The first word in our text, “Behold,” reminds us that this is a theme for wonder. It is a matter that calls for attention and admiration. “Behold, I have given Him.” Is not this something that is worth admiring? Is not this the great marvel of time—yes, and the miracle of eternity—that God should so love the world as to give His only-begotten Son? I can understand His giving light to a dark world. I can comprehend His giving life, that men might live—but that He should give His beloved Son to be Light and Life to a dark and dead race—that He should give Him to become Incarnate and to take upon Himself the form of a Servant—that He should give Him to be despised and rejected of men and, at last, should give Him up to die—oh, behold! Behold! Behold! This is a sight to gaze upon forever and we do not wonder that the Apostle wrote, “Which things the angels desire to look into.”

A part of the wonder concerning Christ consists in the fact that His Father has given Him to the people—“I have given Him for a Witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people.” Not to you, O kings and princes—not to you, a few aristocrats picked here and there—but, “I have given Him for a Witness to the people.” “I have exalted One chosen out of the people.” He is the people’s Christ, the people’s Leader, the people’s Friend, the people’s King. And the wonder increases when you recollect that the word translated, “people,” might be just as accurately rendered, “nations.”

No doubt the Lord's intention, here, is to refer to the Gentiles—"Behold, I have given Him for a Witness to the Gentiles, a Leader and Commander to the Gentiles"—not to the chosen people, Israel, alone, but even to us, "sinners of the Gentiles," who were outside the favored family of the Jews!

The Gentiles seemed to have been passed by and left to perish. But now, behold this wonder—"more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife." Christ has been given as "a Light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of His people Israel" and now, to us, in these far-off isles of the sea, where our forefathers worshipped gods that were no gods, even to us is Jehovah-Jesus preached! And He has come from the courts of God to be to us a Witness, a Leader and a Commander. All glory be to His blessed name! Well does the text say, "Behold," concerning the Giver, the Gift and the persons who receive the Gift. Take care that you pass not by without thought and admiration that which the Holy Spirit commends to your notice by the use of the word, "Behold."

I want you, dear Friends, to look upon Christ's triple Character as it is described in our text. And, first, *we may see Him, here, in three Characters or relationships in which we shall next see three excellencies, demanding from us three duties, and ensuring three benefits.*

I. First, then, let us, with believing eyes, SEE OUR LORD IN THREE CHARACTERS OR RELATIONSHIPS. First, He is a Witness for the Father. Secondly, He is a Leader for His saved people. And, thirdly, He is a Commander for those who, as yet, are not saved, of whom the next verse says, "You shall call a nation that You know not, and nations that knew not You shall run unto You."

Well, then, first, our blessed Lord, to whom be all honor and reverence, is *a Witness for the Father*—a Witness concerning the Father. We would never have known what God was like if it had not been that "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." God was pleased to reveal Himself, to some extent, in types and emblems under the old Law of God, yet very little of Him was known in that way. The request of Thomas, "Lord, show us the Father," would still be the request of men if Christ had not made Him known to us. He came to show us the Father, for He that has seen Christ has seen the Father! If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus! Would you know what God thinks? Then, read what Jesus thinks! Would you know how God feels? Behold how Jesus feels! Would you know, in fact, as much of the Character of God as can possibly be revealed to men? You need not look upon the green fields and swelling floods in the hope of seeing God in His works—but study the Character of Christ, for there you have the fullness of the Godhead so manifested that it can be understood, as far as it is possible, by the finite mind. It is God in human flesh—Emmanuel, God With Us—whom you must study if you would know God!

And, oh, if, indeed, I do see God in Christ, then, what a blessed God He is to me! For who would not love Jesus? Even those who have denied His Deity have been fascinated by the beauty of His Character. Surely, everyone who has ever read the Gospels of the four Evangelists, must have been enraptured with their biographies of the Christ of God! What a matchless Character His was! Just and good, honest and tender, full of mental power and energy, yet all the while like a holy child—was there ever anything so unique as the life of Christ?

Nor is Christ merely the Witness concerning God's Character, but He is also a Witness concerning God's bearings toward us. How does God feel with regard to His rebellious creatures? Will He destroy them in His anger, or is He ready to restore them to His favor if they repent? Has He gracious feelings toward them? This is a question which might well subdue the whole world to a solemn hush until it was answered. But Christ has come to answer it—His very coming answers it. The angels thought so, for they came with Him and they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Their song clearly meant that, now, God delight in mercy! He has opened His stores of love to the unthankful and the undeserving. Since Jesus Christ has come to die that sinners might live, and to live again that sinners might not die, it becomes certain that God's bearing towards man is not that of wrath and indignation—of stern severity which refuses to accept the penitent—but that all is mercy, all is Grace and that Christ is the Witness that it is so! True, His death, as the Substitute for His people, revealed the Justice of God, but it also showed us how even Justice could no longer refuse that Mercy should have sway since all its demands had been satisfied by the great Sacrifice of Christ. So Christ is the Witness to us of how the Father feels towards the sons of men.

And He also came to be a Witness of another matter, namely, that God has set up a Kingdom among the sons of men. That was a faithful and true Witness of Christ when He said, "My Kingdom is not of this world"—witnessing a good confession before Pontius Pilate and, while claiming that He was a King, revealing the true Character of His reign. There

is a *spiritual* Kingdom set up in the world and it comprises those who are born-again to a spiritual life, enlisted under spiritual laws, to serve God, who is a Spirit, and who must be served in spirit and in truth. Christ came to tell us all this. Do we know anything about it? He has told us how to enter that Kingdom—have we entered it? “You must be born-again,” He said to Nicodemus, for, “except a man be born-again, He cannot see the Kingdom of God.” “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.” There is no way of entrance into the Kingdom of Divine Grace except by regeneration! And Jesus Christ is the Witness of that great Truth of God!

Having many things to say to you, I cannot fully describe the office of Christ as a Witness for the Father—that would be a sufficient theme for a whole discourse—and for many discourses. But I may briefly say that whatever Christ has taught concerning any Truth of God which has to do with our salvation, is His Witness upon that point. And if we want to know the truth about anything, we must go to Christ to learn it. If we want to know how we may be reconciled to God and effectually saved, we must sit at the feet of Jesus Christ and receive His testimony, for He is the Witness for the Father in all that affects our relationship to Him.

The second office of Christ mentioned in the text *is that of a Leader to His own people*. The word, “Leader,” might be rendered, “the Foremost,” and truly, beloved Brothers and Sisters, Christ is the Foremost of all His people—the Standard-Bearer among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. Christ is in the forefront of the whole army of the faithful. He leads the van. There is none like He among the sons of men, and none to be compared with Him. We delight to accord to Him His rightful pre-eminence in all things. In the Church of God, Jesus Christ is the Leader because His life is the perfect example of practical holiness. First, He is God's Witness revealing to us the Truth of God. Then, next, He is our Example, working out the practical part of that revelation in His own life. He who would be saved, then, must follow the lead of Christ. He who is saved does, by the help of the Divine Spirit, follow that lead. Wherever you see His footprint, there put down your foot. Wherever He bids you go, there go. Though the way may be rough, and treading it may cost you much self-denial, you must go that way, for the God who gave you Christ to save you, gave Him to you, not merely to enlighten your intellect as a Witness, but to affect your life as a Leader and Example. Have we accepted Him in both capacities? I know some who seem willing to take Christ for their Leader, but not as a Witness to the Truth. That will not do. “What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” I know others who are willing to follow Christ doctrinally, but not practically. They would accept Him as a Witness, but not as a Leader. That, also, will not do. A half-Christ is no Christ at all! You must have Christ as a whole and take Him in all the Characters and relationships in which God gives Him to you, or you cannot have Him at all.

The third Character our Lord bears, according to our text, is that *of Commander*. There may be many meanings given to that title, but it seems to me that it must relate mainly to those of His people who are not yet saved. To them, He is a Commander. To them He issues laws as a Law-Giver, for such is also the sense of the term. What are the Laws which He has given? They are all in this blessed Book, but these are some of them. “Repent you, and believe the Gospel.” “Come unto Me.” “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.” “Go you,” He says to His servants, “into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” This message is to be delivered to men, not as a request to them to do it if they will, but as a *command* from Christ which, if they obey, He has said that they shall be saved. But if they disobey it, He has declared that they shall be damned. I am afraid that sometimes we pitch the Gospel note in much too low a key—I like to reach the higher key, for I believe it to be the right one. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we say to you, O sons and daughters of men—you are to believe in Him, to trust Him, to rely upon His atoning death and so to take Him to be your Savior! If you will not do so, you will justly be condemned! But if you will do as He commands you, you shall be saved. The moment you have believed in Him and yielded to His Divine authority, you are, in fact, saved! But this royal proclamation must not be despised or neglected, for, “how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”

But I think there is more in this title of Christ than the mere fact of His making the Law and bidding us publish it abroad in His name. He is also a Commander because He has power to enforce His proclamations. He calls a nation that knew Him not and then they learn to know Him. He invites them and then they run to Him. There is never a sinner who comes to Christ till Christ calls him and makes him come. We are bound to preach the Gospel to every creature, but sinners unanimously reject the command till Christ effectually calls them by His Grace! But when He calls them, then they come to Him. Oh, it is delightful to think that if the preacher's voice is powerless, His Master's voice is not! If He will but

speak, and say to the careless soul, "Turn from your wicked way, and begin to think," you shall see the careless one become thoughtful and repent of his sin and trust his Savior! If He shall find some Zacchaeus, and say to him, "Today I must abide at your house," He will abide at that house! If, tonight, Christ must go through Newington Butts—as it was written, "He must needs go through Samaria"—He will find some woman who little thought that she would ever meet with Him, and she shall afterwards say, as did that other woman, "Come see a Man, who told me all things that I ever did: is not this the Christ?" If there were no Divine Power over the will of man, no man would ever be saved. If, the Gospel being preached, it were left to men to accept it or reject it—and there were no exercise of Divine Power to lead them to receive it, we might preach our tongues out, we might weep our eyes out, we might pray till our knees refused any longer to bear us up—but never a soul would come to Christ! But He is set forth, first, as a Witness to the Truth of God. Next, as an Example, setting that Truth before us in His life and then, further, clothed with Divine Authority and girt about with Almighty Power, making the Truth to be effectual so that men come to Him, and live! Witness, Leader, Commander—you see the range and compass of our great Master's work. God grant us Grace to accept Him in all three relationships!

II. Now, secondly, I am to speak briefly upon THE THREE EXCELLENCIES OF CHRIST IN CONNECTION WITH THESE THREE OFFICES.

First, is Christ a Witness? Then He is a true Witness. There are no falsehoods or mistakes in the Witness which Christ bears concerning His Father. He is intimately acquainted with the Father, for He came forth from the Father and, therefore, His testimony is wholly reliable. That which He had seen and heard of the Father, even that He made known to us. There is no possibility of the entrance of any error into the mind of Christ—all His utterances are Infallible Truths of God, for the Spirit of God was upon Him and in Him without measure. It is a trite saying, but a very comforting one, that whenever Christ speaks a good word to a sinner, He speaks according to the mind of His Father. Whenever He promises rest and peace, and pardon, to those that come unto Him, He promises all this in His Father's name and on His Father's behalf. So, if you have laid hold of Christ, you have not grasped a sham or a counterfeit. It is all true—in fact, He is the Truth of God as well as the Way and the Life! He will never deceive you, or mislead you—you can be sure of that!

We, His poor servants, make many a blunder in speaking of Him, but even the Jewish officers had to confess, "Never man spoke like this Man." He never makes a mistake in anything that He says, so if He lets fall any word that just suits your case and if you have caught hold of it, and lived upon it, let no one rob you of the consolation, for it is true! Jesus Christ is "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness." When He was upon the earth, He used to often say, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," because He knew that He was speaking the truth and you may be quite sure of it, too. We have had many who have called themselves God's witnesses, but we have had to question the truth of their testimony. Sometimes one of these witnesses has given the lie to another—and when the witnesses disagree, who is to decide between them? But Jesus Christ's witness is never self-contradictory. It is true throughout and he that will sit at His feet and drink in what Christ has spoken, has learned the Truth of God which he will never have to unlearn! He has laid hold of the substance—and not of a shadow.

Then, next, if our Lord is a Leader, He has, in that capacity, the quality of *holiness*. God has given Him to lead His people and you may safely follow wherever He leads you. Brothers and Sisters, be quite sure of this—Christ will never lead you into any sin and He will never conduct you into any folly, or error, or mistake. In His highest moods, Christ is never fanatical—and in His lowest He is never unbelieving. He meets with sinners of all sorts and even with publicans and harlots—yet there is no one more pure than He is at all times! He gets away alone, but it is not in order that He may act the part of the cynic and skeptic, but that, there, He may commune with His Father and pray for both saints and sinners. If you will follow Him in His silence or in His speech—if you will follow Him in His honor or in His dishonor—if you will follow Him in private or in public, in His thoughts or in His words, you will never go amiss! Perfect holiness is written across the whole biography of the Son of Man. So, what a mercy it is that if we have a Witness, it is all the Truth of God that He speaks! And if we have a Leader, His leadership conducts us to perfect holiness and, therefore, we may gladly follow Him!

Then, further, if He is a Commander, which is the third Character mentioned in our text, you see Divine Power in Him. It is no use having a commander-in-chief who issues proclamations, but who has neither wit nor wisdom in the day

of battle! It is no use having for a chieftain, one who knows nothing of war, and who, in the hour of conflict, is driven away like chaff before the wind. But, Beloved, if Christ is a Commander, there is no fear that we shall be defeated if we obey His orders. The strongest battalions are the battalions of God! The greatest force in all the world is the force of truth and righteousness! Men have not usually thought so, for fraud and plunder, cruelty and bloodshed have been the agents by which earthly monarchs have sought to win their victories. But the Lord has kept His great guns in the rear though He will bring them to the front, some day, and then it shall be seen that the might is with the right, for the Truth of God, love, Divine Grace and holiness shall be proven to have in them an Omnipotence before which all the powers of darkness and of sin shall fall defeated or fly confounded!

It is a grand thing, in time of battle, to have a commander who knows how to lead. When Oliver Cromwell came into the field, the Ironsides felt that his presence was worth more to them than that of ten thousand ordinary soldiers—and every man became a hero then! When Henry of Navarre rode down the French lines before the battle of Ivry, the courage of every warrior rose as he fastened on his white-plumed helmet and said to them, “Yonder is the enemy! Here is your king. God is on our side. Should you lose your standards in the battle, rally round my plume—you will always find it on the path of victory and honor.” Alas, his later history proved that this was an empty boast, for he became unfaithful to the faith, yet it availed to inspire his followers on that occasion. But our great King, when He comes to the front, as soon He will—when He comes to the front by His Spirit, as even now He does—gives courage to the coward and strength to the weak! And He makes each one among us, who treats Him as He should be treated—with implicit confidence—to feel that we shall conquer through His might!

So, you see, we have three grand excellencies in our Lord Jesus Christ. As a Witness, we have the Truth of God. As a Leader, we have holiness. And as a Commander, we have power. Physical, mental, moral, *spiritual* power—all this is in Christ, for He could truly say, “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth.” And, therefore, He is a Commander whose orders we may delight to obey, for He will certainly lead us to victory!

III. Very solemnly, though very briefly, I want to refer to the third division of my subject, which is that THESE RELATIONSHIPS AND EXCELLENCIES DEMAND FROM US THREE DUTIES.

Is Christ a true Witness? Then, *believe Him*. Generally, in this house, I speak to persons who believe in the Bible—who believe, therefore, in the Deity of Christ and who believe also in the Truth of all that Christ spoke. But, my dear Hearers, some of you are very inconsistent, for, while you believe all this, you do not believe in Jesus Himself! I mean that you do not trust Him as your Savior, which is the practical way of believing in Him. You may believe every Word in the Bible and yet be lost—it is *trusting Christ alone* that will save you! Now, if all that is in this Bible is true—and you say that it is, from the time when you were at your mother’s knee, you believed it to be true—then, why do you believe it only with your brain? Believe it with your heart, “for with the heart man believes unto righteousness.” He who wishes to cross a river and who believes in the stability of the bridge that spans it, crosses by the bridge. Do you believe in Christ’s ability to carry you over the river of Death and to take you to Heaven? Then, trust Him to do it! He who believes in the genuineness of gold will take it if it is offered to him. You say that you believe in the Truthfulness of Christ—then trust Him as your Savior!

The only way to have Christ is to take Him as your own—to accept Him. Some people seem to fancy that faith in Jesus is something very wonderful and mysterious—and they try to go round thousands of miles to get at it—but the Scripture says, “The Word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.” What does a man do, if he is hungry, and there is bread set before him? Does he begin to analyze it and see how many grains of this and how many of that there are in it? He may do so if he pleases, but that will not feed him! The greatest chemical analyst in the world is not one single inch ahead of the poorest child in the matter of feeding. If he will live by bread, he must eat it, and the poor beggar boy can do the same. He puts it into his mouth, lets it go down into his inmost being and so forms part of himself! Now, this is all you have to do in order to be saved!

Dear Hearer, you are bothering yourself about feeling this and feeling that, and going about trying to experience this wonderful sensation and the other. All this is folly, or something worse! Will you trust Christ, or not? God sets Him forth to bear Witness to His Truth—will you believe Him who is the Truth? That is, will you take Christ to be your Savior? His Word says that the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all—the context shows that it is His own people

who are meant—and that He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Will you believe that it is so? Will you just take Christ as God gives Him? That is all you have to do! God says, “I have given Him.” What is the proper sequel to that? “Lord, I take Him! If you have given Him as Witness, Leader, Commander, Lord, I take Him as Witness, Leader, Commander, and I am only too glad to have Him in all those capacities. ‘Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief!’”

Next, the Lord Jesus is set forth as Leader. What is the duty arising out of that? If He is a Leader and holiness is the mark of His leadership, then, let us imitate Him! Christ will not blot out your sins in the past unless you are willing to be cured of the love of sin in the present and, of the pursuit of sin in the future! Are you willing, you who have been given to drunkenness, to be cured of the desire to drink as well as forgiven for your drunkenness? If your tongue has spoken that which is not true, do you wish to be made truthful, in the future, as well as to be forgiven the lies of the past? You who have been forgetful of God, and hard-hearted towards Him—are you as anxious to have new hearts and right spirits as you are to be saved from going down to Hell? You ought to be, for sin is the very essence of Hell—the eternal fire is a heart burning with iniquity! The worm that dies not is a conscience that shall forever torture the immortal spirit on account of its rebellion against God! We must be willing to be like Christ if we wish to be saved by Christ. He has not come to excuse or palliate human sin—He saves His people *from their sins*. He, who becomes to us our salvation from the punishment of sin, also becomes our salvation from the power of sin! Are you willing, then, to imitate Him—to live, as far as you can, as He lived—to be led by His Spirit? It should be so. If God gave Him to that end, let us take Him to that end.

Then, if He is a Commander, what does He require of us? Why, *obedience*, of course. There is an end to military power altogether if there is no discipline. Soldiers must obey their officers' orders. Then, if God gives Christ to be a Commander, the question is, are you willing to obey Him? Do you know of anything that has been said by Christ? Then, there must be no question about that—it must be obeyed by us. If we have trusted Christ to save us, it is not becoming for us to reason and argue, and question about it—the only enquiry we have to make is, “Is that the plain message of the Master?” Then, like the 600 who rode into the valley of death, it is—

*“Ours not to reason why,
Ours not to make reply,
Ours but to dare and die,”*

if so it must be—not turning to this book or that, but only to God's Book—“to the Law and to the Testimony”—not looking to this religious leader or that, but always to the King, Himself, the Captain of our salvation, the Christ of God. Thus it must be with us if we are His true followers.

Now, my dear Hearer, very earnestly do I put this question to you—Are you seeking in all things to obey Christ? There are great numbers of professing Christians who never think about whether a thing has Christ's sanction or not. If man has ordained it—if the denomination practices it—if it has the stamp of the bishop upon it and, especially, if it is fixed by the High Court of Parliament, which is a wonderful authority in matters of religion, then they yield to it. But true Christians care nothing for all the high courts under Heaven—they go by the Laws of the highest Court of all—the Word of the Lord Jesus—the will of the Most High God, for, in the Church of Christ there is but one Head, and that is Christ. To us, there is but one Master, and one Law-Giver—and that is the great Son of David—and His will we will do, and before His scepter we will bow. And unto no one else will we yield obedience in this matter—no, not for an hour!

What is that which brings men to Christ's Church sooner than anything else in the whole world? It is the Presence of Christ Himself. Today the only true and worthy attraction which the Church has for the world is Christ's Cross. We may gather people together, if we please, by fine sermons and gorgeous dresses. We may charm their ears with sweet music, but when we have done so, what have we accomplished more than might be done in the theater or the music hall? And even if we delight their nostrils with the smell of incense and their eyes with an abundance of flowers, what have we done more than could have been accomplished by the chemist or the florist? The real attraction of the Church is Christ Crucified, according to His own saying, “I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” And when the charms of everything else shall have faded and passed away, the charms of Christ will be as fresh as ever!

The spouse said of Him, in the Song of Solomon, “His locks are bushy and black as a raven.” But, in the Book of the Revelation, John speaks of Him as having His head and His hairs white like wool, as white as snow! The one symbolizes His antiquity—the other, His perennial youth—for He is always young, always strong, always beautiful, always attrac-

tive and, if the Church will but preach Christ, she will always have the best attraction for the ears and for the hearts of men that even God Himself could send down here below!

So, Beloved, I put it to you—Christ being true, do you believe Him? Christ being holy, do you imitate Him? Christ being clothed with Divine Authority and Power, do you obey Him? May those questions sink into your souls—and may you be able to answer each one of them in the affirmative!

IV. For, lastly, there are **THREE BENEFITS WHICH WILL BE SECURED BY THE PERFORMANCE OF THESE DUTIES.**

The first is this. If you believe Christ, “the faithful and true Witness,” then you have this benefit—*you have certainty as to what you believe*, and that is something that is worth having! The other day a gentleman uttered to another a skeptical expression which is very common just now. Many men seem to think it is a sign of great wisdom not to believe anything at all. When he had made his skeptical remark, the other pretty sharply rebuked him by saying, “Now, look here, I must believe something! And I would sooner believe in Jupiter and Juno than be as you are and believe nothing, at all.” So would I, but, blessed be God, we have no need to believe in fabled deities, for we have the God of Truth and the Truth of God in which we may always safely believe! Whenever you can say, concerning any matter, “Jesus says such-and-such,” do not you stir an inch from that! Stand there, for you are safe enough on such a rock as that!

I do not wonder that Roman Catholics wanted infallibility, but I do wonder that they ever believed the Pope had it—especially the last one—who made more blunders than almost anybody else who ever lived! Poor soul, how could he ever imagine himself to be Infallible? If he had but been married, he would have known better, I am quite sure, but, perhaps living all alone, and quietly, in his big palace, he may have thought himself so, but it was a grave mistake. Still, we must have infallibility somewhere. The Romanist has his infallibility in the Pope—where have I mine? In Christ, for, whatever He said is Infallibly true! And I also have Infallibility in this Book. If anything is but in the Bible, I never for a single moment think of questioning it. Miracles? Strong historical statements? I believe them all! I can almost go as far as the old woman who said that she not only believed that the whale swallowed Jonah, but that if the Bible had said that Jonah swallowed the whale, she would have believed it! It says nothing of the kind, but I would go even to that length if it were a clear, positive statement of the Scriptures.

This is my Master's Book and I accept it all. I say, sometimes, that there are things in it that I do not understand, but then I do not need to understand everything. I do not see what good it does to have such a wonderful understanding. I would sooner not understand some things, because it gives me the more reason to show reverence to my God by believing what I cannot comprehend. If I could comprehend God, He would not be a God to me. If I could understand all that He tells me, I would feel sure that He had either left something out of His Revelation, or that there must be some mistake, somewhere, for the Infinite things of God cannot be grasped by finite beings!

There, then, is our Infallibility. Some have gone off to bold blatant infidelity in order to get something sure. And others have turned to Popery in the attempt to get something sure, but as for us, we cast our anchor down where the Cross stands above the surging billows—and there we rest! Christ says, “I am the Truth.” We believe that, and we take every Word He says as being Infallibly true, and so we secure absolute certainty. That is a great thing to have in these unsettled times—and a comfortable thing to have in these disturbed times. It is a very practical benefit, too, for when we have once thoroughly made up our mind upon any point, we can say, “That is so. Now we do not need to keep on bothering and questioning about that matter and we can go on with our work—and also seek to make advances in the Divine life.” So, the first benefit we secure is that of certainty.

Then, secondly, if Jesus Christ is our Example and we imitate Him, the next benefit that we obtain is *safety*. The way of holiness is always the path of safety. When a man is in the wrong, he is in danger. When he is doing wrong, his conscience generally tells him that he is in some kind of peril. If you and I were perfectly holy, we must, necessarily, be perfectly happy unless we voluntarily put aside that happiness for the good of others. And even the putting of it aside would not involve our altogether losing it, for I do not doubt that Christ was perfectly happy even when He was, Himself, “a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” and that He found an intense under-current of delight in laying aside His own joy for our sakes. Brothers and Sisters, if you are right all round, you are safe all round. There cannot be any power that can hurt the man who has become right in his relationships with God, with time, with eternity, with all things! Not even evil can injure the man who is perfectly holy, for it finds nothing in him on which it can operate. It strikes its sparks,

but there is no tinder to ignite. It hurls its darts and shoots its arrows, but the man is cased in triple steel and the points of the barbed shafts cannot pierce his armor. Happy, then, is the man who follows the leadership of Christ. Following the Lamb wherever He goes, he may go to his bed and rest, for he dwells under the wings of the Eternal. He may go forth into the midst of the world without fear, for neither the arrow that flies by day, nor the snare which is placed in secret, shall be able to hurt him, for the Lord covers him all the daylong!

The last blessing that comes to us is *victory*, for, if Christ is our Commander and He has all power and we obey Him, then victory is sure and every human heart loves to get the victory. The dying General Wolfe, when he heard those round him say, "They run," anxiously asked who they were that ran. And when they said, "The enemy," he could close his eyes in peace. I have no doubt that the dying Admiral, Lord Nelson, rejoiced when he knew that Trafalgar was won. Only let a man know that in the low and carnal sense, he is to be a victor, and his spirit is revived. But what will it be to hear the exultant shouts when we shall be passing into the next world? "Victory! Victory! Victory through the blood of the Lamb!" How awful would it be to hear that dreadful dirge, "The last fight has been fought and the campaign is lost forever." Will that happen to any of you? Not if Christ is the Captain of your salvation and you are one of the rank and file of His army! But dying and, by faith even now living, you may hear the triumphant shout, "The battle is fought and the victory is won forever! From now on enter into the joy of your Lord and rest in Him, world without end!" The Lord bring us all there, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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