

## **A Seasonable Exhortation**

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A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 11, 1886,

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." [1 Peter 1:13](#).

To read the whole chapter is most helpful to the understanding of our text. If we have studied it carefully, we must have said to ourselves, "How full of their Lord were the minds of these holy writers!" Peter can scarcely write a verse without an allusion to the Lord Jesus Christ. He was not only, "Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ," but you can see that his heart was steeped and saturated in memories of his Master—he could hardly get through a sentence without some allusion to the death, the Resurrection, or the Second Coming of his beloved Lord. Oh that my ministry might always be of the same sort, dripping with the holy unction of the Savior's name! Brethren, may your conversations and your lives be full of the Lord Jesus Christ, that men may take knowledge of you—that you have been with Jesus and have learned of

Him.

A second thought will have occurred to you—How ardently these men expected the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ! Peter was continually speaking of it and so was his beloved Brother, Paul. They hoped that Christ might come while they were yet alive—they evidently looked upon His Advent as very near. They were not mistaken in this last belief. It is very near. A long time has passed, you say? I answer, By no manner of means! Two thousand years is not a long time in the count of God, nor in reference to so grand a business! If a thousand years is with God as one day, if the Lord does not come for the next 20,000 years, we shall not be truthfully able to say that He delays His coming, for with a history of which the chief fact is the death of Christ, there may well be due pause and ample time for working out its infinite problems. We are dealing with eternal things and what are ages? Let us patiently wait. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness." Let us persevere in the same belief which filled the minds of the early Believers—that Jesus will come, that He may come at any time—and that He will surely come quickly! Brothers and Sisters, before the word which now proceeds from my lips shall have reached your ear the Lord may come in His Glory! Be you as men that look for His coming at any moment.

It is equally noticeable that while Apostolic men looked for the coming of Christ, they looked for it with no idea of dread, but, on the contrary, with the utmost joy! In this chapter Peter sets forth the glorious Advent of our Lord as an event to be hoped for with eagerness. He speaks of "the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." It

was to him, therefore, not a day of terror and of thunder and overwhelming confusion, but a day of the consummation of the work of Grace, a period in which Glory should crown the Grace received through the first manifestation of the Lord! It was all joy to the early Believers to think of the Lord's appearing. The falling stars, the darkened sun, the blood-red moon, the quivering earth, the skies rolled up like an outworn vesture—all these things had no horror for them since Jesus was, thus, coming. Though all creation should be on a blaze and the elements should melt with fervent heat, yet Jesus was coming and that was enough for them—the Bridegroom of their souls was on His way and this was rapture to their expectant spirits!

Observe also, once more, how constantly they were urging this as a motive! Peter never holds it out as a mere matter of speculation, nor exclusively as a ground of comfort, but he is constantly using the Lord's glorious appearing as the grand motive for action, for holiness, for watchfulness! Our text is a case in point—"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." My Brothers and Sisters, let us not set aside a Truth of God which is evidently meant for our stimulus, our strength and our

sanctification—but let us receive it into our hearts and pray that God may bless it to our practical profiting in all time to come.

I intend to handle the text with special view to the present time. It seems to me that there never was a text more appropriate for any day than this one for the time now passing. It begins, as you notice, with girding up the loins of your mind. These are days of great looseness—I see great laxity of doctrinal belief—and gross carelessness in religious practice everywhere! Christian people are doing, today, what their forefathers would have loathed! Multitudes of professors are but very little different from worldlings. Men's religion seems to hang loosely about them, as if it did not fit them—the wonder is that it does not drop off them! Men are so little braced up as to conscientious conviction and vigorous resolve that they easily go to pieces if assailed by error or temptation. The teaching necessary for today is this—"Gird up the loins of your mind," brace yourselves up! Pull yourselves together—be firm, compact, consistent, determined! Do not be like quicksilver which keeps on dissolving and running into fractions—do not fritter away life upon trifles, but live to purpose, with undivided heart and decided resolution.

These are equally days in which it is necessary to say, "be sober." We are always having some new fad or another brought out to infatuate the unstable. Very good but very weak-minded people are apt to make marvelous discoveries and to cry them up as if they had found the philosopher's stone! In my short time I have heard, "Lo here!" and I have listened. And, "Lo there!" and I have listened—the call has come from a third, fourth, fifth, sixth quarter in quick succession and, after all, there was nothing worth a thought! The whole world was going to be enlightened by some new light which Peter and Paul never

saw—something far superior to anything known by any of the saints or sages of the Church! But the grand illumination has not yet come. "Be sober," keep your feet; possess your souls; do not be carried away with every wind of doctrine! Do not be little babies, to believe everything that is told you, whether it is a ghost story or a fairy tale. Be sober—quit yourselves like men that have their wits about them. A very necessary word is this in times when everybody seems excited and some are so bewildered that they do not know their head from their heels! Crowds are prepared to follow any kind of foolery, whatever it may be, as long as it is advocated by clever men and is made to tickle their fancy. Do but shout loudly enough and many will answer! Do but set open the door and beckon and they will rush in, whatever the entertainment may be! Brothers and Sisters, "be sober," and judge for yourselves.

Nor is the third exhortation at all unnecessary—"Hope to the end." Certain of us have to confess that the outlook appears to us very dark and dismal. Our surroundings seem full of fear and we are apt to grow despondent, if not almost despairing. Wisely, then, does bold Peter say to us, "Hope to the end." You who love the Truth of God, do not despair of its success! You who hold to the good old ways, do not dream that everybody will desert them! Do not give way to distrust as to the issues of the conflict. Be so hopeful as to be "calm mid the bewildering cry, confident of victory."

Put these three exhortations into one—pull yourselves together, be steady, and be hopeful. There you have the practical run of the text. I desire earnestly that, by God's Spirit, we may carry it into practice from this day on and always.

In asking your attention to the text, I notice, first, an argument—"Therefore." Secondly, an exhortation—"Gird up the loins of your mind; be sober, and hope to the end." And thirdly, an expectation—"hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

I. First, then, here is AN ARGUMENT, indicated by "therefore." True religion is not unreasonable—it is common sense set to heavenly music. Albeit that true religion may be above reason, it is never contrary to reason, but if we had the reason of God, our reason would teach us what His Holy Spirit has revealed. Pure religion is pure truth—God help us to be sure of this! Holiness is also a direct logical inference from Revelation. I like to notice the Epistles with their, "there-fores" and, "wherefores." If you read the First Epistle of Peter, you have in this verse, "therefore," and in the 18th verse, "forasmuch," and in the 22nd verse, "seeing then." The second chapter begins with, "therefore." The sixth verse has its "wherefore;" the seventh its, "therefore," and the rest of the chapter is studded with the argumentative word, "for." Peter might seem to be too impetuous to be argumentative, but it is clear, to him, godliness was a matter of argument—he saw a distinct connection between the Doctrines of Grace and a holy life! Here in our text he says, "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind."

Will you kindly follow me while I run over his argument? I shall have to give you only an outline of it. Here it is. He begins by saying, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of

God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." See, Brothers and Sisters, you are elected to a very high

privilege! You are chosen of God from before the foundation of the world, out of His free favor, that you should be a sanctified, obedient and cleansed people! Therefore, since God has chosen you to this, do not give way to the world, but gird up your loins to contend with it! Be not carried away with every novelty, be sober. Do not be downcast and dispirited, but bravely hope. Shall the elect of God be timorous? Shall those who are chosen of the Most High give way to despair? God forbid! There is an argument, then, in the first and second verses, forcibly supporting the precepts of the text. If we had time to elaborate it, we should see that it well behooves the elect of God to choose his service resolutely, to abide in it steadfastly and hope for its reward with supreme confidence.

But next, Peter declares that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has "begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." O you begotten of God, see that you live as such! You are twice-born men! Live not the low life of the merely natural man. You are of the blood royal, you are descended from the King of Kings—degrade not your descent! You are born, not to death, as you were at your first birth, but unto life! Though you pass through the grave, you shall not remain there. The morgue is no home for your body—you shall come up out of the grave, for you are begotten again unto a hope most full of life by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Therefore, gird up your loins! If it is so that there is this new life in you, a life eternal as the life of God, then be not cast down! Pull your belt close about you! Keep yourself free from the oppressive cares and temptations of the world and stand with holy hope, expecting the coming of your Lord from Heaven! That is a good argument, is it not? Your election and your regeneration call you to holy living!

Further, the Apostle goes on to say that you are heirs of "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for you." For you, the harp of gold! For you, the starry crown, the endless victory, the sight of the King in His beauty! For you, the sitting upon the Throne of Jesus, even as He has overcome and has sat down with His Father upon His Throne! Courage, then, Brethren, if this is your destiny! Within a month you may be in Heaven! If within a brief period you shall be exalted to share the rest of your Redeemer, do not be cast down, nor overwhelmed with trouble, nor dismayed by the abounding of sin, nor even by your own personal temptations. "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end," for your end must be glorious! Good argument, is it not?

Then he goes on to say that you are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." God Himself surrounds you as with a wall of fire. Until Omnipotence can be vanquished, until Immutability can be changed, until the Immortal God can die, not one of His chosen people shall be destroyed! "Kept by the power of God,"

what power can destroy us? Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, be brave and confident. Shall such a man as I flee? Kept by the power of God, shall I tremble? If the power of God keeps me, shall I "reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man?" If the power of God keeps me, shall I be hopeless? Shall I speak like one that has no hereafter to rejoice in? It cannot be so! If God keeps us, we will keep our hope even to the end. Is not that a good argument?

Further, the Apostle goes on to say that we may be passing through necessary trial, but it is only for a little while. "Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if necessary, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." See, Beloved, the Apostle declares that you must be tried even as gold must be put into the furnace—you have faith and faith must be tested—it is according to its nature and Divine purpose! The faith of Abraham was sharply tried and so must the faith of all Believers. That your religion may be really solid metal and not an imitation of it, or a mere gilded bauble, you must be tried!

Your Master was tried—not without fighting did He win His crown! Not without labor did He enter into His reward. There is a necessity for our present affliction. God has a design in it—that He may have praise and Glory and honor at the appearing of His dear Son—a praise, Glory and honor in which we shall share! Come, then, Brethren, if this fire is to be passed through, let us gird up our loins to dash through it! Let us not fear, for the Lord has said, "When you pass through the fire I will be with you, you shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon you." My Brethren, if for a little time we must be tried, let us set our faces like flints to bear the trial. Let us not be intoxicated with sorrow or fear. Since God has a grand design in it, let us bow ourselves to His Divine will and only ask that His holy design may be fully answered. Let us hope to be sustained in the trial and sanctified as the result of it—and let no unbelieving fear cast a cloud over our sky. Is not this a good argument?

Nor is this all. He tells us that even while we are in trial we are still full of joy. Read the eighth verse concerning, "Jesus Christ, whom, having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Beloved, we who love the Lord have our joy even in our present adversity! We have two heavens—a Heaven here and a Heaven hereafter! Jesus is with us and this is Heaven—we are soon to be with Jesus and that is another Heaven! Though sometimes cast down, we are glad at heart—

"I would not change my blessed estate For all that earth calls good or great." Give me but the company of the sweet Lord Jesus and I ask no greater happiness! Yes, let me go back to my bed and my pain if I may have Jesus there! Better to lie in a dungeon and pine on bread and water with Christ's company than to sit in a parliament of kings and be their emperor and be without the Lord! Saints find everything in Christ when they have nothing else—and they equally find everything in Him when earthly comforts are multiplied! Beloved,

if it is so, then let us gird up the loins of our mind, be sober and hope to the end! He that is with us now and makes all our sorrows work for good will be with us even to the end! Come life, come death, our Lord's Presence provides us with an all-sufficiency. If His Presence shall go with us and He will give us peace, we need not stipulate as to the road. Therefore let us not be dismayed, nor even think of doubting. Is not this a good argument?

Once more—the Apostle goes on to say that the Gospel which we believe and which we teach, and for which we are ready to suffer and even to die—is a Gospel that comes to us with the sanction of the Prophets. The Holy Spirit moved upon those choice spirits so that they spoke to us concerning the sufferings of Christ and the Glory which should follow. It seems to me, Brothers and Sisters, that with such men as Moses and David, Isaiah and Jeremiah to support our faith, we need not be ashamed of our company, nor tremble at the criticisms of the moderns! We ought, rather, to gird up the loins of our mind and give our whole soul to the proclamation of a Gospel which is rendered venerable by the testimony of inspired men of all ages! Be sober and steadfast in the belief of the old faith! Never be moved by anything that modern rationalism or ancient unbelief may have to say! For not only do the Prophets assure us that we follow no cunningly-devised fable, but the angels stand gazing into it with strong desire to know more of it! The daily study of cherubim and seraphim is the Revelation of God in Christ. I tell you, Sirs, that the Gospel which, today, is hacked in pieces by the wise men of this world who tell us that they have found out something more in harmony with growing enlightenment, is still the admiration of every holy one who walks yon golden streets, or waits before the burning Throne of God! Still do angels and principalities and powers admire the mystery of the Incarnate God and the substitutionary Atonement made for men by the crucified Lord! They never cease to wonder and adore concerning the glorious Gospel of the blessed God! Standing, then, side by side with Prophets, looking with intent gaze to the same Object which fixes the attention of angels, we are not abashed by ridicule, nor disquieted by opposition! We stand fast, as upon a rock, girding up the loins of our mind and hoping to the end! There again is a right good argument. Is it not so?

II. I beg you, dear Friends, to follow me to the next head of discourse, namely, THE EXHORTATION. The exhortation is a triplet—"Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end."

The first exhortation, "Gird up the loins of your mind," sounds very sweet in my ears. I do not know whether it raises echoes in your minds, as it does in mine. I fancy that Peter had a noticeable habit of pulling his garments together. I read of him that he, "girt his fisher's coat unto him, for he was stripped." Almost everybody has some personal peculiarity and mannerism. And it may have been the way of Peter to be often tightening his belt. Hence the Savior—and here is the music of the text to me—said to him by the sea, after He had said, "Simon, son of Jonas, do you love Me?"—"When you were young, you girded yourself

and walked where you would; but when you shall be old, you shall stretch forth your hands and another shall gird you and carry you where you would not. This spoke he, signifying by what death he should

glorify God."

That word, "gird," while it had something to do with Peter's old habit, is now sanctified by that blessed word which his Master had given him. Turning to the Lord's people, whom he desires to feed, he says to them, "Gird up the loins of your mind." "My Master talked of my girding my loins and of my being girt. I say now to you, Gird up the loins of your mind." Do you not think he borrowed the expression from the Lord Jesus? I think he did.

Moreover, he was writing to Hebrew strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. May he not have had ringing in his ears for these Hebrews, the words of Moses to their fathers when they were

strangers in Egypt? They were to eat the Passover with their loins girded and their staves in their hands. Thus would Peter have his brother "strangers" live in expectation of their complete deliverance and Home-going which was drawing near. I detect an echo of Egypt and the Paschal supper in this word.

Or did Peter wish them to be ready to rejoice in the great blessing which was soon to come to them? Were they to be ready to leap and run for joy? We read of Elijah, that when he heard the sound of an abundance of rain, he girded himself and ran before Ahab's chariot—and so when we hear of the Grace that is to be revealed at the coming of our Lord, we are ready to run without weariness and walk without fainting! Oh that every servant of God would gird up his loins to run and meet his Master's chariot, for the King is on His way! He comes! He comes! Go forth to meet Him. Meeting Him, it is but fit that you should be found as servants prepared to do His bidding and run on His errands.

The exact meaning of the metaphor, "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind," is to be found in the form of Oriental dress, which requires the use of a belt and the girding of it tightly, lest the garments should entangle the feet of the traveler, or otherwise hinder his action.

"Gird up the loins of your mind." My Brethren, that certainly teaches us, in the first place, earnestness. A man going to work tucks up his sleeves and tightens his robes. He has something to do which demands all his strength and, therefore, he cannot afford to have anything hanging loosely about him to hinder him. We brace ourselves for a supreme effort—and the Christian life is always such. We must always be in earnest if we would be disciples of our earnest Lord.

Does it not also mean preparedness? When a man has girt his garments about him, he is ready for his work. A true Believer should be ready for suffering or service—ready, indeed, for anything. A servant standing with his loins girt signifies that whatever the message may be from his Master, he is ready to deliver it. Whatever the errand, he is ready to run upon

it. He only needs the word and he will not hesitate, but will obey at once. This is the position which Christian people should always occupy—you should be earnestly prepared for the will of the Lord, let it be what it may. The future is unknown to you, but you are in a fit condition to meet it, whatever form it may assume.

But the figure means more than this, does it not? It means determination and hearty resolution. The man who girds himself up for a work means that he is resolved to do it at once. He has made up his mind—no shilly-shallying remains with him, no hesitancy, no questioning, no holding back—he is set upon his course and is not to be moved from it. You will never get to Heaven, any of you, by playing at religion! There will be no climbing the hill of the Lord without effort; no going to Glory without the violence of faith. I believe that the ascent to Heaven is still as Bunyan described it—a staircase, every step of which will have to be fought for. He heard sweet singers on the roof of the palace singing—

"Come in! Come in! Eternal Glory you shall win."

Many had a mind to enter the palace and win that eternal Glory, but then, at the doorway stood a band of warlike men, with drawn swords, to wound and kill every man that ventured to enter! Therefore many who would have liked to have walked on the top of the palace did not care for so dangerous an enterprise—they desired the end but not the way to it! At last there came one with a determined countenance and he said to the writer with the inkhorn by his side, "Set down my name, Sir." And when his name was duly recorded, he drew his sword and rushed upon the armed men with all his might! It was a fierce conflict, but he meant to conquer or die, and he did conquer! He cut a lane through his enemies and, by-and-by, he, too, was heard singing with the rest—

"Come in! Come in!

Eternal Glory you shall win."

By conflict throughout a whole life we come to our rest—there is no other way. You cannot go round to a back door and enter into Heaven by stealth! You must fight if you would reign! Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind.

Once more, the figure teaches us that our life must be concentrated. "Gird up the loins of your mind." We have no strength to spare. We cannot afford to let part of our force leak away. We need to bring all our faculties to bear upon one point and exert them all to one end. Much can be done by concentration. The rays of the sun are warm, but if you collect them into a focus, by a magnifying glass, you produce a fire which otherwise you could not find in them. Concentrate your faculties upon faith in Jesus! Concentrate your emotions upon the love of Jesus! Concentrate your whole being upon the Glory of Jesus! You will accomplish marvels if you do this. A man who is all over the place is nowhere, but he whose life is one and indivisible, is strong—and his influence will be felt in the service of his Master.

I cannot stay long upon one point, though there is so much to be said. The second exhortation is—"Be sober." And does not that mean, first, moderation in all things? Do not



be so excited with joy as to become childish. Do not grow intoxicated and delirious with worldly gain or honor. On the other hand, do not be too much depressed with passing troubles. There are some who are so far from sobriety that if a little goes wrong with them, they are ready to cry, "Let me die." No, no!

"Be sober." Keep the middle way—hold to the golden mean. There are many persons to whom this exhortation is most necessary. Are there not men around us who blow hot today and cold tomorrow?—their heat is torrid, their cold, arctic! You would think they were angels from the way they talk one day, but you might think them angels of another sort from the manner in which they act at other times. They are so high up, or so low down, that in each case they are extreme. Today they are carried away with this and the next carried away with that. I knew a Christian man right well to whom I was accustomed to use one salutation whenever I saw him. He was a good man, but changeable. I said to him, "Good morning, Friend! What are you now?" He was once a valiant Arminian, setting young people right as to the errors of my Calvinistic teaching. A short time after, he became exceedingly Calvinistic, himself, and wanted to screw me up several degrees! But I declined to yield. Soon he became a Baptist and agreed with me on all points, so far as I know. This was not good enough and, therefore, he became a Plymouth Brother! And after that he went to the church from which he originally set out. When I next met him, I said, "Good morning, Brother, what are you now?" He replied, "That is too bad, Mr. Spurgeon, you asked me the same question last time." I replied, "Did I? But what are you now? Will the same answer do?" I knew it would not. I would earnestly say to all such Brethren, "Be sober. Be sober." It cannot be wise to stagger all over the road in this fashion! Make sure of your footing when you stand. Make doubly sure of it before you

shift!

To be sober means to have a calm, clear head, to judge things after the rule of right and not according to the rule of mob. Be not influenced by those who cry loudest in the street, or by those who beat the biggest drum. Judge for yourselves as men of understanding. Judge as in the sight of God with calm deliberation.

"Be sober," that is, be clear-headed. The man who drinks and thus destroys the sobriety of his body is befogged, muddled and has lost his way. Ceasing to be sober, he makes a fool of himself. Do not commit this sin spiritually. Be especially clear-headed and calm as to the things of God. Ask that the Grace of God may so rule in your heart that you may be peaceful and serene and not troubled with idle fear on one side or with foolish hope on the other.

"Be sober," says the Apostle. You know the word translated, "be sober," sometimes means, "be watchful." And, indeed, there is a great kinship between the two things. Live with your eyes open. Do not go about the world half asleep. Many Christians are asleep. Whole congregations are asleep! The minister snores theology and the people in the pews nod in chorus. Much sacred work is done in a sleepy style. You can have a Sunday school and

teachers and children can be asleep. You can have a tract-distributing society, with visitors going round to the doors all asleep! You can do everything in a dreamy way if so it pleases you. But says the Apostle—be watchful, be alive! Brothers and Sisters, look alive! Be so awakened by these grand arguments with which we have plied you already, that you shall brace yourselves up and throw your whole strength into the service of your Lord and Master!

Finally, let us "hope to the end." Never despair; never even doubt. Hope when things look hopeless. A sick and suffering Brother rebuked me the other day for being cast down. He said to me, "We ought never to show the white feather, but I think you do, sometimes." I asked him what he meant and he replied, "You sometimes seem to grow desponding and low. Now I am near to die, but I have no clouds and no fears." I rejoiced to see him so joyous and I answered, "That is right, my Brother, blame me as much as you please for my unbelief, I richly deserve it." "Why," he said, "you are the father of many of us! Did you not bring me and my friend over yonder to Christ? If you get low in spirit after so much blessing, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" I could say no other than, "I am ashamed of myself and I desire to be more confident in the future."

Brethren, we must hope and not fear. Be strong in holy confidence in God's Word and be sure that His cause will live and prosper. Hope, says the Apostle. Hope to the end. Go right through with it. If the worst comes to the worst, still hope. Hope as much as ever a man can hope, for when your hope is in God you cannot hope too much!

But let your hope be all in Grace. Do not hope in yourself or in your works, but "hope in the Grace," for so the text may be read. Hope, moreover, in the Grace which you have not yet received—in "the Grace that is to be brought unto

you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Bless God for the Grace that you have not yet obtained, for He has it in store for you! Yes, He has put it on the road and it is coming to you. When for the moment you seem to be slack in present Grace, say, "Glory to God for all the Grace I have not tasted yet." Hope for the Grace which is to come with your coming Lord.

III. This has brought me to my last head, in which there is much sweetness. I ask your patience while I dwell upon it. The third point is EXPECTATION—"Hope to the end for the Grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." What you have got to hope for, Brothers and Sisters, is more Grace! God will always give you Grace. He will never deal with you upon the ground of merit—that door is shut—He has begun with you in Grace and He will go on with you in Grace. Therefore, "hope to the end for the Grace."

Next, it is Grace that is on the way to you. The Greek should be rendered, "Hope to the end for the Grace that is being brought to you," or, "the Grace that is a bringing to you." Grace is coming to you with all speed. Jesus Christ is coming! He is on the way to earth—look for Him to appear soon! The Grace you are to look for is Grace linked with your Lord Jesus Christ—you never received any Grace apart from Him—and you never will.

The Grace you are to hope for is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. He has been revealed once, at His First Advent—therefore the Grace you have. He is to be revealed very soon in His Second Advent, therefore the Grace that is coming to you. Think of the Grace that is coming. "My ship is coming home," says the child. So, also, is mine—Jesus is coming—and that means all things to me. The golden chariot of my Lord is coming loaded down with unutterable love, infinite joy and eternal delight! Rejoice this morning for the Grace that is coming, Grace that is linked with Jesus Christ.

But what can this Grace be that will be received at His coming? Justification? No, we already have that by His Resurrection. Sanctification? No, we already have that, by being made partakers of His life. What is the Grace that is to be revealed at His coming? Just look at the chapter and you will read in the fifth verse, "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Perfect salvation is one part of the Grace which is to be brought in the last time when Christ comes! When He comes there will be perfection for our souls and salvation for our bodies. Perhaps we may be alive when He comes. If so, we shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye into perfection, for, "this corruption must put on incorruption." Perhaps we may die before He comes. If so, it does not matter—though corruption, earth, and worms may have devoured this flesh, yet, at His coming, our body shall rise in the image of Christ's glorious body! We look for perfect salvation at the coming of Christ. This is the Grace that is coming to us and is on the road now.

And that is not all. The second Grace that Christ will bring with Him when He comes is the perfect vindication of our faith—"that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Today they sneer at our faith, but they will not do so when Jesus comes! Today we, ourselves, tremble for the Ark of the Lord, but we shall not do so when He comes! The coming of Christ in all the Glory of the Father will be a vindication of our faith! Then shall all men say that Believers were wise, prudent, philosophical. Those who believe in Jesus may be called fools, today, but men will think otherwise when they see them shine forth as the sun in the Father's Kingdom! Wait a wee bit—all will soon be cleared.

Copernicus declared the truth that the earth and the planets revolve around the sun. His opponents replied that this could not be true, for if the planet Venus revolved around the sun, she must present the same phases as the moon. This was very true. Copernicus looked up to Venus but he could not see those phases, nor could anyone else! Nevertheless he stuck to his statement and said, "I have no reply to give, but in due time God will be so good that an answer will be found." Copernicus died and his teaching had not yet been justified. But soon after, Galileo came forward with his telescope and, on looking at Venus, he saw that she did pass through exactly the same changes as the moon. Thus Wisdom is justified of her children. the Truth of God may not prevail today or tomorrow, but her ultimate victory

is sure! Today they say that the Doctrines of Grace are antiquated, obsolete and even injurious. We are at no trouble to answer the charge. We can wait and we do not doubt that public thought will alter its tone.

I hear the sneering words, "You orthodox are fools, for you hold to exploded notions." Truly, Sir, we do believe that which you please to say is exploded, but we shall be found to be right when your new systems have come and gone like vapors which appear for a little time and then vanish away. He is coming who will justify all who believe in Him and

award praise, glory and honor to their faith. If our Gospel is a lie, it will prove to be a lie at His coming! But it is so true that we are not troubled at the prospect of the Last Great Judgement! The mysteries which now perplex us will be solved when the mists are rolled away. Therefore, hope on for the Grace that is to be revealed.

Once more—when Christ comes there will be a revelation of perfect Glory. Read the 11th verse—"Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow." Now this is the Grace which is to come to us when Christ appears. "Grace," you say, "You mean Glory." I do. Yet what is Glory but Grace come to perfection? Grace is Glory in the bud and Glory is Grace in the full flower! You believe in Jesus Christ, but as yet you do not see the Glory that awaits you. Wait a little while. "It does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is."

I have brought you back to the Second Coming of Christ. I told you it was a practical doctrine. I want to leave that impression upon your minds that you may go back to your daily work and constant struggle with the world. "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end"—because there is wondrous Grace to be revealed to you, by-and-by. I should like you to act as the American—Colonel Davenport—did, upon a certain occasion. One day, many years back, a thick darkness came over the United States. Now and then in London we have dreadfully dark days for which we can scarcely account, but this was quite a new experience for the New Englanders and caused a terrible sensation. So exceedingly black was it that the barn-door fowls went to roost in the middle of the day!

The darkness grew worse and people trembled in their houses, declaring that the end of the world was coming. They were all excited and alarmed. One of the houses of legislature adjourned under the belief that the Day of Judgment was come. The other house was sitting and the blackness was so intense that everybody was awed. A motion was made that they should break up, as the end of the world had certainly arrived. Colonel Davenport objected, saying, "The Judgment is either approaching, or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjourning. And if it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish, therefore, that candles may be brought."

Brothers and Sisters, it is dark. But whatever is going to happen, or whatever is not going to happen, let us be found girded, sober and hopeful! In these dark political times, these dark religious times, I call for candles, for we mean to go on working! Amen.