

## **The "Beau Ideal" of Life**

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A SERMON ESPECIALLY TO YOUNG MIEN, PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 10, 1906.

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"O satisfy us earl/ with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." [Psalm 90:14](#).

MOSES saw, with deep regret, that the great host which came out of Egypt would have to die in the wilderness. Every day there were many funerals, for a vast multitude of men, women and children had to be buried in the wilderness. And tears of sorrow and sympathy must continually have stood in the eyes of the great leader of the children of Israel. After speaking about their days being passed away in God's wrath, Moses offered a prayer which, under the circumstances, was most natural and most wise. It was in substance this—"Lord, if we must die in this desert. If this whole generation (except Caleb and Joshua) must pass away in the wilderness, then, at any rate, give us the fullness of Your favor now, that we may spend all our remaining days—whether they are to be few or many—in gladness and rejoicing." Now, seeing that we, also, are all passing away and that whether young or old, we, too, must be carried to the grave unless the Lord should first return, this seems to me to be a very wise prayer for us to put up—"Lord, satisfy us with Your mercy now, that we may waste no more of our life in sinful dissatisfaction, but that from this hour to the last moment of our life, we may be filled with Your favor, and may rejoice and be glad all our days.

I. Just for a minute or two, I want, in the first place, to show you that Moses has here set before us THE "BEAU IDEAL" OF LIFE.

If one could have just such a life as he desired, could he desire anything better than to be satisfied early with God's favor? Would it not be a very delightful thing if the whole of his life could be spent exactly as it ought to be and could be spent in the enjoyment of the highest degree of happiness of which we are capable? "O satisfy us," is the prayer of the text—"O satisfy us early with Your mercy." If the young man—instead of seeking after something which he will still continue to seek after if he is spared to reach the prime of life—and will still seek after even when he grows gray, could get that which would content him at once. If he could get something which would immediately fill his soul and make it run over with thankfulness and joy—would it not be a great blessing to him, especially if he could get it, as Moses says, "early"—soon—in the very beginning of his life? Many men, even good men, have wasted the early morning of their days. And some have had the painful experience of looking back, in the afternoon of life, upon the best part of their day and even

the noontide, all gone—and there has been for them only the evening and, sometimes, only a very short evening to spend in complete satisfaction and real joy. It is a pity that so many Christian's lives should, for all practical purposes, be influential at the end of their stay on earth—that as far as their influence upon others is concerned, they should be merely like the candle-ends that we put upon the save-alls—but the whole candle has never been consumed in giving light in the sanctuary of God. It is a thing to be desired beyond measure that from the first to the last of life, God's blessing should rest upon us and that we should enjoy peace and happiness without any intermingling of the distress which is caused by sin. This, as I have said, seems to me to be the beau ideal of life—and I think that all Christians, at least, will agree with me.

It is a poor way of building a house to have a flaw in the foundation, for, however carefully we may build the superstructure, we can never make a satisfactory building because of the flaw down below. It is poor weaving on the part of the man at the loom, when he has a flaw at the beginning of his work—however carefully he may weave the latter portion of it, he will always know that he cannot get that old flaw out—that the piece of cloth will never be perfect. In

contrast to this kind of building and weaving, it would be a blessed thing to have such Grace and such wisdom given that the very first course of the foundation of the house of life should be well and truly laid, and that the whole building should be to the praise and glory of God! And it would be equally blessed that the very first throws of the shuttle of the web of life should be in accordance with the right rules for weaving, so that the whole piece of cloth might be pronounced perfect after its kind. I think this is the meaning of the prayer of the text, "O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

II. Secondly, as we judge this satisfaction to be the beau ideal of life, let us consider HOW SOME PEOPLE HAVE SOUGHT TO ATTAIN IT.

I do not hesitate to say that the first part of the text is the cry of all men—

"O satisfy us, satisfy us, satisfy us!" But there is a kind of horse-leech in every man's soul that is not easily satisfied. It is like death, the grave and the sea. Whatever may be cast into the mouth of death, it is as hungry as it was before! And the sepulcher is never satisfied and, throw what you will into the sea, it is always ready to receive more. So is it with the hearts of men. "O satisfy us," is the world's cry as the heathens shout to their idol gods and as the priests of Baal cried to their lifeless image. "O satisfy us," is the world's cry today, for man's hunger is insatiable, though he disdains the only food which would satisfy his cravings. "O satisfy us," is the cry which is heard in every quarter of the globe—alas, not ascending to Heaven, as it should, but going out to the things of time and sense! Still do men seek satisfaction in that which Solomon calls "vanity of vanities."

Wise young men pray, in the words of the text, "O satisfy us early." They want to get that which is to be the source of their joy, not when they can no longer enjoy it, but now,

so they cry, "satisfy us early." They do not ask for God's mercy merely as a sort of pension for their old age, but they want to have it now. At any rate, I know that I did, for I wished to obtain whatever of gladness and joy could be had even in my youthful days. There is nothing wrong in desiring to be happy. There is nothing wrong in offering the prayer, "O satisfy us early," so long as that prayer is completed in the way in which my text completes it—"O satisfy us early with Your mercy."

Many have tried to satisfy themselves by gaining money. This is a pursuit in which a man may lawfully engage if it is not the chief objective of his life, as so many make it. They believed that they would be satisfied when they had acquired a certain amount, but they were not. I might confidently ask every man of wealth, now in this world, whether he was satisfied when he reached the amount which he had himself fixed as the limit of his desire? Did he not then feel that he must have more than that amount? Of course he did! So he set before him another sum and he said that when he had accumulated that amount, he would be content. But was he? Is not the desire for wealth a thing which grows with that it feeds upon, so that the more a man has, the more he wants? There never did live and there never could live, a man whose entire nature could be satisfied with his worldly possessions. You know that we call the man who delights in hoarding up riches—a miser. Why do we call him by that name unless it is because he is truly miserable? The very name for the man who is engrossed with avarice signifies unhappiness—and when you need to describe somebody who is both aged and wretched, you say, "He is like an old miser." Yes, so he is. Men may amass as much wealth as they will, but if, with the money, they have not acquired something better than the best metal that ever came from the mint or the mine, they will still go on crying, "O satisfy us! O satisfy us!" The Indians of South America believed that the Spaniards' god was made of gold and well they might when they saw the strangers' devotion to their idol! They once poured molten gold down a Spaniard's throat, saying, "You have thirsted for it, now you shall have enough of it." But if a man could eat gold, drink gold, sleep with gold, walk with gold and be robed in gold, yet, still, what is there in that metal which could satisfy the cravings of the highest part of man's nature—that mysterious spiritual thing which is called the soul? No, there is no solid satisfaction for the soul in all the wealth in the world!

Others have despised this gross pursuit and they have said that satisfaction is to be found in fame. We, all of us, like respect, esteem, honor. It is false for any man to say that he does not like praise, for he does. And if anyone is pleased at being told that he does not like flattery, he is there being more highly flattered than at any other time of his life—and he is enjoying the sensation! Some men, to gain honors and distinction in various ways, have made complete slaves of themselves. They have supposed that if they could but get the honors—perhaps the honor of a degree at the university, or the honor of a certain rank in the profession of the law, or even in the church, they would be satisfied. But no man was

ever yet satisfied with honors. They are but as a puff of wind which can never fill an immortal soul. If you read the histories of those statesman who have risen to the greatest heights of fame, you will, as a rule, find that the most famous man in the kingdom is generally the greatest slave. He has, from the very weight of his honors, the heavier burden of responsibility to bear. As "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," so, in its degree, uneasy lies the head that wears the laurel or the crown. There is no contentment to be found in fame, as those have proved who have won the most of it. There was a time when the flattery of two or three poor people in a village would have satisfied them, but now the plaudits of a whole nation seem as nothing to them—and when the whole world is ringing with their renown, they sit down in despondency, wring their hands in misery, and cry, with Solomon, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

Others have said, "But surely there is something solid and satisfying in learning." Well, there is more to be said for this than for either of the other two things that I have mentioned and, as far as I am concerned, I would sooner seek satisfaction in my library than in the marble halls of the wealthy or in the courts of kings! To study, to read, to make discoveries, to furnish the brain, to enrich the mind—there is something worth doing in all this, yet Solomon, who carried out this idea as far as it could be carried out in his day, recorded his very emphatic verdict concerning it, "Much study is a weariness of the flesh." "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," is very apt to also be your utterance with regard to study, for you always have the dreary thought that even if you could know more than all other men in the world, when your turn came to sleep in the grave, there would be no difference between you and the peasant of whom Wordsworth wrote—

"A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more."

If the peasant rises no higher than that, however learned any of us may be, we have only risen a little above him for a time—and in the common dust we, too, shall sleep with him! If there were no eternal futures, what would all the joys of earthly knowledge be worth to us?

Others seek satisfaction in pleasure. I may be addressing some young man who says, "I do not care for wealth. I shall never trouble myself to hoard it. On the contrary, I love to spendit! I do not want to use a rake—give me a shovel and I will soon scatter all my father's substance!" There are some men who are very proficient in scattering what others have gathered with great diligence. These people say concerning study, "Let us get out of these crowded rooms into the pure, fresh air! We mean to go in for pleasure and to enjoy ourselves while we can." This looks, at first sight, as if it were a prudent thing to do and, certainly, there is a deal more sense in enjoying ourselves in a rational fashion than there can be in pinching and starving ourselves in order to hoard up money for heirs who will ridicule if they do not actually curse those who have provided so bountifully for them! Remember what Solomon says about others who seek what they call pleasure—"Who has woe? Who

has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has babbling? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? They who tarry long at the wine; they who go to seek mixed wine." There is no satisfaction there! The merriest man who ever lived—the man who drained the wine-cup of mirth even to its dregs—has dashed it to the ground in his fierce indignation and cursed the day in which he tried to find satisfaction there! Look at those who have gone to the house of the strange woman and see what comes of their sinful sojourning there—even if it is only for a little while. Does not dissipation bring disease and decay upon nature sooner than necessary? There is no satisfaction there, young man! So, if you want to really enjoy yourself, there is a nobler and a surer way of doing so. The way of so-called "pleasure" is a delusion and a snare, and the end thereof is sorrow, suffering and woe! Alas, that so many should continue to walk in a way which has such a sad end!

When a man plays the fool, let him do it for something that is worth having. Some time ago, when we were looking for a place for Messrs. Moody and Sankey to preach and sing, two of our Brothers went to see whether a certain building could be rented and, while they were waiting there, a man came up to them and presented his card—"Mr. So-and-So, clown." He thought our Brothers had gone to engage the place for some amusements! They told him that they had come to engage it for religious services and one of them said to him, "What a pity it is that you should play the fool for money!" I think the clown made a very sensible remark in reply, for he said, "You had better go and talk to those who play the fool and make nothing by it, for there is some sense in playing the fool for money." To play the fool and make nothing by it, is a very mild description of the folly of which I have been speaking! But how many play the fool and lose

money by it? What is it that clothes so many people in rags? What is it that makes so many have red eyes, trembling limbs and even delirium tremens? What is that but playing the fool and losing by it? And what will it be when such a man comes to die—a man who has lived without God, without Christ and who will be without hope in his death? That will be playing the fool with a vengeance! And the Truth of God will come home to him that the eternal ruin of his soul is the cost of his folly!

If you were to realize what this kind of "pleasure" means, you would have nothing to do with it! When Mount Vesuvius suddenly began pouring forth its lava upon Pompeii, most of the inhabitants were assembled in the amphitheatre. I have seen the ruins of the place where they were gathered. I do not know what spectacle was on at the time, but however interesting it may have been, there was not a man, or woman, or child who did not run as fast as they could to wherever they hoped they might find a place of refuge! A few persons remained in their habitations, or were unable to escape—and there they are to this day. Some of their bodies have been lately discovered in the very positions in which they were overtaken by the eruption. If men were wise, the merriest play that ever was acted upon the face of the earth, the richest golden gains that ever lay before a merchant, the choicest

pleasures that ever tempted the human heart would never induce them to tarry till they were forever lost—but they would be up and away and never rest till they had escaped from the wrath to come!

Some seem to have no real objective in life. I think I hear someone say, "Well, I have cared for none of those things that you have mentioned." Where then, my Friend, have you tried to find satisfaction? "Oh, I have not troubled my head about that! I just plod along from day to day, working hard to earn my daily bread. I do not know that I have any ambition in this world except to pay my way, have enough to eat and to drink, and clothes to put on, and bring up my children as well as I can." Rest assured, my Friend, that I do not despise you for having such desires. At the same time, I do think that it is a pity for an immortal soul not to have some aim and objective higher and brighter than that, for it is pretty nearly the objective of a mill-horse that goes round and round in its daily course and never aims at anything higher. Your objective is very much like that of a swallow, or a sparrow which builds its nest, and lays its eggs and hatches them, and sees its young flying off on their own account. Your ambition might be suitable for a dog, or a horse, or a cat, but it is not worthy of you—a being of a higher order! When I look at you and remember that you were made in the image of God, I think that, surely, there must be something worth living for—something nobler than this poor ambition of yours! I ask you honestly to say whether you have found satisfaction there—and I am fully persuaded that you have not.

There are some who argue that the Gospel cannot bless them. I frequently hear this kind of talk from poor working people. One says, "Well, Sir, if I were well-to-do, then I think I ought to be a Christian, but religion is not for the poor." That is in direct opposition to the declaration of Christ, Himself, that "the poor have the Gospel preached to them." And to the Inspired question, "Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?" Yet many people will have it that the Gospel is not for them because they are so poor!

I have also heard some say that they are so ignorant that they cannot be saved. One says, "I cannot read," and another says, "I can read, but I cannot understand what I read in the Bible. And when I go to hear a sermon, I cannot make out what is meant by it." They make out that they are almost idiots with regard to spiritual matters, yet, on any other subject, they would stick up for themselves and try to prove that they are almost philosophers! Yet their plea that ignorance prevents them from being saved is directly contrary to Scripture, for the Apostle Paul, Inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote to the Corinthians, "For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence."

Then, again, others say that they are too busy to be saved! At least that is the practical meaning of their excuse. One says, "Now, do not bother me about religion, for I really have not time to think about such things as that. See, I have to be up early in the morning and to work hard till late at night." Another says, "My business cares are so numerous that I cannot get away from the counting-house to go to a Prayer Meeting." Ah, dear Friends, but how many people who have not been able to find time to pray, have had to find time to die? And how very frequently do we see that the very people

who say that they have not had time to think about the things of God, have found plenty of time for indulgence in vice and sinful pleasures! That excuse, like the others I have mentioned, will not avail any of those who make it. There is time enough for the most hard-worked man to lift his eyes to Heaven and to cry, "O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake, accept me, for I come to You trusting in His atoning Sacrifice!" With many, the excuse is only an excuse, for they do not want Christ and they do not believe that there is anything for them in Christ and, therefore, they make these vain excuses.

I have known some even to say that they are too sinful to come to Christ—other people may be saved, but they could never be—they have gone too far into sin and they are too much involved in sin. They are so old and they have so many friends and connections on the side of evil. Perhaps they are in a business that is not honest and they are so interlaced with bad men that they cannot get out of it. So they say—and they will say anything so as to hide that which is really at the bottom of their hearts—which is that they do not want Jesus Christ to save them. They would rather that He should leave them alone to go quietly on their own way, even though that way will inevitably lead them to everlasting destruction!

III. Now, in closing my discourse, I want to tell you WHERE REAL SATISFACTION CAN BE FOUND. It came in answer to the prayer of the text. "O satisfy us early with Your mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

Let me try and teach you, as plainly as I can, the way to find solid satisfaction. Friend, you are young and life is before you. You would gladly make it a whole life, altogether happy. Begin, then, by realizing that there is need for you to seek satisfaction from God. If you were an animal, you could be easily satisfied. Sheep and oxen are perfectly satisfied if you turn them into a field where there is plenty of grass. They never stand and cry, "O satisfy us," but they eat as much as they need and then they are perfectly content. But you, though placed in a world of wondrous beauty and though, as a man, you are made capable of great happiness, have not obtained it! So you may as well begin your search for it by the confession that you are a fallen creature. You have lost the peerless jewel of innocence. Your first father, Adam, lost it as your representative and you have also lost it on your own account. If you had not lost it, you would not need to pray to God, "O satisfy us early with Your mercy," for you would already be satisfied! Adam was satisfied as long as he kept from sinning against God—and you, also, would be satisfied if there were no sin in you. Let this confession be

made by each one of you, "Lord, I am unsatisfied because I am unholy. I have not attained to satisfaction because I have not attained to perfection."

Then, remember that if you are ever to get satisfaction, you will have to get it from God—and it must come from Him as the gift of His mercy. The text says, "O satisfy us early with Your mercy." God has so made us that we cannot get on without Him. It is both a blessing and a curse that it is so—it is a blessing that we cannot be satisfied without God, for that necessity helps to draw us to Him—but it is a curse if we continue to try to be satisfied without Him. As the planet needs the sun, so man needs his God. As the eye is nothing without light, so your spirit is nothing without God. You must have God! Yet, up till now, some of you have not even thought of Him. Getting what you needed here below has occupied all your attention! But as for God, perhaps you have not thought of Him, or if you have thought of Him, you have only done so to wish that there were no God. The thought of God has been a troublesome subject to you—you wish you could dismiss it altogether from your mind. But, my Friend, if you are ever to get satisfaction, this state of things must be altered! You must recognize that, as a creature, you must be at peace with your Creator. I do not ask you to take my word for this assertion, but I do urge you to search the Scriptures to see whether it is not so. There you will learn that until the quarrel between you and God is ended—until you submit to God and are at peace with Him—your soul cannot find rest any more than Noah's dove could find rest as she flew over the wild waste of waters and discovered no place for the sole of her feet to rest.

Do not forget that you cannot come back to God unless God shall display His mercy to you! If you appeal to Divine Justice, you will find that it must punish you, for, young as you are, you have broken God's holy Law. You have committed sins which have provoked the Lord to anger and jealousy—and before you can be reconciled to Him and have His love shed abroad in your heart, these sins of yours must be forgiven. They can be forgiven, for God delights in mercy! They can be forgiven now, for He waits to be gracious. They can be forgiven without money and without price, for He freely pardons all those who put their trust in Jesus Christ, His Son!

But suppose your past sins were all forgiven? You could not, even then, get satisfaction because there would still be in you a natural tendency to sin. You can, all of you, sin without being taught to do it. There is no need to found an institution for the purpose of teaching the practice of vice, or to employ agents to excite men to commit crime—he natural bias of the human heart is in that direction! Now, as long as you love sin and your heart has a bias towards evil, God and you cannot walk together. Thousands of years ago He asked the question, "Can two walk together except they are agreed?" It is necessary, therefore, that there should be a complete change in your nature, for it can never be content as it is. Whatever God might give it, even if He were to give it Heaven, itself—your nature would never be satisfied while it remained as it now is. Your nature is diseased and must be



healed—otherwise it will be with you as it would be with a sick man if you piled up his room with gold, or heaped up learned volumes all around him and bade him study them! They would not take away his pains—it is the disease, itself, that needs to be cured.

So is it with the malady of your spirit. You must be made right with God or, as Christ Himself put it, you must be born-again. Now, if you could be made a new creature with a will perfectly conformed to God's will, with a heart that loved what God loved and hated what God hated, with a spirit within you as pure as God, Himself, is, with a mind which sought only after purity and abhorred everything that was evil, and if, in addition to that, all your past sins could be forgiven, would not that be a grand and a blessed thing? There is many a man who has lived a life of crime and shame, who, when he sees a little curly-headed boy kneel down to say his prayers at his mother's knees, remembers when he did the same and wishes that he could be put into a mill and be ground young again. That is the kind of thing that would give you satisfaction—and that is just what Jesus Christ came to do for those who believe in Him, for He has come into the world to "save His people from their sins." That is, not merely to save them from being punished for sin, but to deliver them from the sin itself! He can give you, my Friends, a new heart and a right spirit. He says, "Behold, I make all things new," and those who believe in Him are made new creatures in Christ Jesus!

"Oh," says one, "I wish I were a new creature in Christ." Why should you not be? He that believes in Jesus has the witness of the Spirit within his heart and this is a sure sign that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus, for the first result of regeneration is true saving faith! So, if you trust in Jesus, that is a positive proof that you are born-again. Then see what will come of this great change. You will begin your new life with a new nature, a nature that loves God and hates evil—a nature that longs for conformity with the will of God! You will begin your new career "accepted in the Beloved," with a life within you that can never die and with a pardon granted to you that can never be reversed! You shall be so completely saved that you shall never return to the old follies and sins in which you formerly lived because you will not be saved because somebody has persuaded you to live in a different fashion, but because you have been made altogether a new creature!

"What?" asks someone, "Shall I be perfect when this change comes?" No, there is a nature in you which will still remain and with which you will have to fight and wrestle. But the new life, which Christ will give you, will enable you to overcome it. "Well," says one, "I do not see how that is to bring me satisfaction." But it will! This is a great mystery, but it is a great Truth of God. Possibly you are dissatisfied because you cannot bring the contents of your pocket up to the height of your wishes. But if you bring your wishes down to the level of the contents of your pocket, you will be satisfied with what you now have! You cannot get all that you want, but suppose that your wants are reduced to your actual needs? How will it be, then? You cannot, at present, expect to have all that your heart desires, but suppose your

heart is renewed by Grace so that you do not desire what God does not see fit to give you—will not that be the way for you to obtain satisfaction? If the mountain cannot come to Mahomet, Mahomet had better go to the mountain! And if we cannot change our outward circumstances, we had better be content with such things as we have.

We have been born into a world where there is much sin and much sorrow, where no man can have all that he wishes—and it is a grand thing when our wishes get changed, our desires get altered and we become altogether different from what we used to be! This is the path that leads to satisfaction! Some people seem to think that if they had what I have, they would be perfectly content. But I am quite certain that if they had it, they would be utterly dissatisfied with my portion! Yet I am perfectly satisfied with it—not perfectly satisfied with myself, for that I never shall be while I am down here—but I am perfectly satisfied with what God does for me and with me. That satisfaction is what every Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has a right to enjoy! And when he lives as a Believer should live, he does enjoy it, and he can sing with good Mr. Watts—

"I would not change my blest estate For all that earth calls good or great!

And while my faith can keep her hold, I envy not the sinner's gold."

The garden of such a man as I am just now describing is a very little one, but he walks in his rich neighbor's park and he thanks God that it does not belong to him, for he has not the trouble and expense of keeping it in order, yet he can probably enjoy it quite as much as its owner can! He goes to the top of a hill and he knows that all he can see is in a certain king's dominions, but he is glad that he is not the king, for he does not want the trouble of ruling a kingdom! He thanks God for the beauties of Nature which are all his—he knows that the mountains and the valleys, the sea and the sky are all his because they are his Father's, so he may enjoy them to the fullest. He thanks God that he does not need to put the sun into his pocket, nor to keep the moon in a cupboard all to himself—all things in the world are his as much as he needs them, but he rejoices to know that his fellow creatures may also enjoy them as much as he does.

He is brought, by the Grace of God, into such a state of mind that the joy of others is his joy, and that the sorrow of others is his sorrow. And he would not wish to forego this enlargement and expansion of his mind. The Grace of God has put him into such a condition of heart and soul that, on the land or on the sea, on a bed of sickness or walking about with the elasticity of health, he says, "It is all right, for my Father has ordained it all. He gives or He takes away. He kills or He makes alive and as He does it, all is well and I am perfectly satisfied with it—and as long as I live, I will bless His holy name." Now, that is the truly happy man and this is the only way to be really happy! Trust in Jesus, rest wholly upon Him and He will renew your spirit and change your heart—and with that change of heart He will give you capacities for happiness which you never can have in any other way!

My dear young Friends, I want to speak these last few words especially to you. If my older friends here are not yet converted, I pray that they may soon be saved and I thank God that we have seen many such saved. No old man or old woman has any need or reason to despair! I have seen people of 70 and 80 years of age—and more than that—converted to Christ. He does not limit His Grace to any age. If you were 5,000 years old, I would be bound to preach the same Gospel to you as if you were a little child—whatever your age, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! But, at the same time, we cannot make you old people begin life again. We cannot take you back to the years of youth. Possibly you wish that we could! But as for you young people, we long for you to be satisfied early with God's mercy, that you may rejoice and be glad all your days! Are you fifteen, or 16 years of age? There was a time, I daresay, when you thought your brother was wonderfully old because he had got into his teens—but you do not feel very old, do you? But you think you will have reached a great age when you get to be forty! Perhaps, then, you will think that it is the people of sixty, or seventy, or eighty, or 90 years of age who are getting old, and not you! But let me assure you that now, now, NOW is your time!

I would not, God knows, deceive you about this matter for all the wealth there is in the world. I have known the Lord, blessed be His name, since I was 15 years of age, and there has never been a moment since then, in which I have regretted putting my trust in Him. A great many times I have mourned that I did not trust Him sooner and that I have not trusted Him better—but never once have I wished to go back to my former condition and leave my dear Lord and Master! You know that we sometimes hear servants speak well of their master before other people's faces—when they think their master will hear of it. But when they get together, a lot of them around the fire, no telling what they say about their master, then! But when you gather around the fire, or when you meet with any of my particular friends, ask them whether they ever heard me say a word, in public or in private, against my Master! On the contrary, I love to tell everybody how kind and good He has been to me—and to my most intimate friends I delight to relate all that I know about Him. I can tell you one thing, if a man serves a master who treats him badly, he will not be likely to bring his boy to that place of business—but it is my greatest delight to see my two boys serving my dear Lord and Master! If He had been a bad Master to me, I would have said to them, "Now, boys, do not, either of you, make the mistake that I have made in serving the Lord Jesus Christ as I have done." Oh, no, they have never heard me talk like that! They know how I rejoiced when I found them believing in Jesus Christ and afterwards beginning to do what they could in His service! Young people, your godly mothers and fathers would not be anxious to make you miserable. You have no idea that they want you to be wretched and sad, have you? No, but it is because they have found such supreme delight in the service of God that they want you to find your delight in it, too! I have gone up and down this country and traveled a good

deal in other countries, too, and I think I may say, without exaggeration, that I have talked with many thousands of Christians

and I have heard some strange things from some of them—but, up to this moment, I have never met with any Christians who have said to me, "We are all mistaken, after all. There is no solid satisfaction to be found in Jesus Christ."

I have seen some of these Christians at the time when men's hearts speak out, if ever they do! I have seen them die. I have visited the dear consumptive girl in her last hours and I have been with the gray-headed saint who has passed his fourscore years, when the time came for him to die! It has been my lot to stand by many death beds and I can honestly say that if I wanted to enjoy the most intense pleasure that is possible on earth, I would seek out some dying saint that I might witness his rapturous joy and hear his gladsome and cheering testimony to his Lord and Savior! A man usually speaks the truth when he comes face to face with death and eternity is opening before him. Most men put off their masquerading, then, and appear in their true colors. And it is then that Christians speak best concerning Christ! And often the loudest songs and the sweetest praise that they have ever given to Him, they lay at His feet, then, just before they go away from earth to go to be with Him forever!

Dear young Friends, the way of the highest happiness is the way of absolute trust in Jesus, giving yourself up to the renewing of the Holy Spirit that you may become new creatures in Christ Jesus! May God, in His Infinite mercy, grant that this great work of Grace may be worked in every unsaved soul in this assembly before you leave this building! And it will be if you simply rely upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will then take you by the hand and make all things new to you. God grant it, for His dear Son's sake! Amen.

—Adapted from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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