

Wheat in the Barn

(No. 3393)

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1914.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"But gather the wheat into My bairn." [Matthew 13:30](#).

"GATHER the wheat into My barn." Then the purpose of the Son of Man will be accomplished. He sowed good seed and He shall have His barn filled with it at the last. Be not dispirited, Christ will not be disappointed. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." He went forth weeping, bearing precious seed, but He shall come again rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with Him.

"Gather the wheat into My barn." Then Satan's policy will be unsuccessful. The enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, hopeful that the false wheat would destroy or materially injure the true—but he failed in the end, for the wheat ripened and was ready to be gathered. Christ's garner shall be filled—the tares shall not choke the wheat. The Evil One will be put to shame!

In gathering in the wheat, good angels will be employed—"the angels are the reapers." This casts special scorn upon the great evil angel. He sows the tares and tries to destroy the harvest and, therefore, the good angels are brought in to celebrate his defeat and to rejoice together with their Lord in the success of the Divine Husbandry. Satan will make a poor profit out of his meddling—he shall be defeated in all his efforts and so the threat shall be fulfilled, "Upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat."

By giving the angels work to do, all intelligent creatures, of whose existence we have information, are made to take an interest in the work of Grace—whether for malice or for adoration, redemption excites them all. The wonderful works of God are made manifest to all, for these things were not done in a corner.

We too much forget the angels. Let us not overlook their tender sympathy with us—they behold the Lord rejoicing over our repentance—and they rejoice with Him! They are our watchers and the Lord's messengers of mercy. They bear us up in their hands lest we dash our foot against a stone. And when we come to die, they carry us to the bosom of our Lord. It is one of our joys that we have come to an innumerable company of angels—let us think of them with affection.

At this time I will keep to my text and preach from it almost word by word. It begins with, "but," and that is—

I. A WORD OF SEPARATION.

Here note that the tares and the wheat will grow together until the time of harvest shall come. It is a great sorrow of heart to some of the wheat to be growing side by side with tares.

The ungodly are as thorns and briars to those who fear the Lord. How frequently is the sigh forced forth from the godly heart, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" A man's foes are often found within his own household. Those who should have been his best helpers are often his worst hinderers. Their conversation vexes and torments him. It is of little use to try to escape from them, for the tares are permitted, in God's Providence, to grow with the wheat—and they will do so until the end. Good men have emigrated to distant lands to found communities in which there should be none but saints, but, alas, sinners have sprung up in their own families! The attempt to weed the ungodly and heretical out of the settlement has led to persecution and other evils—and the whole plan has proven a failure. Others have shut themselves away in hermitages to avoid the temptations of the world, and so have hoped to win the victory by running away—this is not the way of wisdom! The word for this present is, "Let both grow together." But there will come a time when a final separation will be made. Then, dear Christian woman, your husband will never persecute you again! Godly sister, your brother will heap no more ridicule upon you! Pious workman, there will be no more jesting and taunting from the ungodly! That, "but," will be an iron gate between the God-fearing and the godless! Then will the tares be cast into the fire, but the Lord of the harvest will say, "Gather the wheat into My barn."

This separation must be made, for the growing of the wheat and the tares together on earth has caused much pain and injury and, therefore, it will not be continued in a happier world. We can very well suppose that godly men and women might be willing that their unconverted children should dwell with them in Heaven, but it cannot be, for God will not have His cleansed ones defiled, nor His glorified ones tried by the presence of the unbelieving. The tares must be taken away in order to the perfectness and usefulness of the wheat. Would you have the tares and the wheat heaped up together in the granary in one mass? That would be bad husbandry with a vengeance! They can neither of them be put to appropriate use till thoroughly separated. Even so, mark you, the saved and the unsaved may live together here, but they will not live together in another world! The command is absolute—"Gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn." Sinner, can you hope to enter Heaven? You never loved your mother's God and is He to endure you in His heavenly courts? You never trusted your father's Savior and yet are you to behold His Glory forever? Are you to go swaggering down the streets of Heaven, letting fall an oath, or singing a loose song? Why, you know you get tired of the worship of God on the Lord's Day—do you think that the Lord will endure unwilling worshippers in the Temple above? The Sabbath is a wearisome day to you—how can you hope to enter into the Sabbath of God? You have no taste for heavenly pursuits and these things would be profaned if you were permitted to partake in them! Therefore that word, "but," must come in and you must part from the Lord's people, never to meet again! Can you bear to think of being divided from godly friends forever and ever?

That separation involves an awful difference of destiny. "Gather the tares in bundles to burn them." I do not dare to draw the picture, but when the bundle is bound up, there is no place for it except the fire. God grant that you may never know all the anguish which burning must mean, but may you escape from it at once. It is no trifle which the Lord of Love compares to being consumed with fire. I am quite certain that no words of mine can ever set forth its terror. They say that we speak dreadful things about the wrath to come, but I am sure that we understate the case. What must the tender, loving, gracious Jesus have meant by the words, "Gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them"? See what a wide distinction there is between the lot of the Lord's people and Satan's people! Burn the wheat? Oh, no—"Gather the wheat into My barn." There let them be happily, safely housed forever! Oh, the infinite distance between Heaven and Hell!—the harps and the angels, and the wailing and gnashing of teeth! Who can ever measure the width of that gulf which divides the glorified saint, robed in white and crowned with immortality, from the soul which is driven forever away from the Presence of God and from the Glory of His power? It is a dreadful, "but"—that, "but" of separation! I pray you, remember that it will interpose between brother and brother—between mother and child—between husband and wife. "One shall be taken and the other left." And when that sword shall descend to divide, there shall never be any union later!

The separation is eternal. There is no hope or possibility of change in the world to come. "But," says one, "that dreadful 'but'! Why must there be such a difference? The answer is because there always was a difference! The wheat was sown by the Son of Man—the false wheat was sown by the enemy. There was always a difference in character—the wheat was good, the tares were evil. This difference did not appear at first, but it became more and more apparent as the wheat ripened and as the tares ripened, too. They were totally different plants—and so a regenerate person and an unregenerate person are altogether different beings. I have heard an unregenerate man say that he is quite as good as the godly man, but in so boasting he betrayed his pride. Surely there is as great a difference in God's sight between the unsaved and the Believer as between darkness and light, or between the dead and the living! There is in the one a life which there is not in the other—and the difference is vital and radical. Oh, that you may never trifle with this essential matter, but really be the wheat of the Lord! It is vain to have the name of wheat—we must have the nature of wheat! God will not be mocked—He will not be pleased by our calling ourselves Christians while we are not! Be not satisfied with Church membership, but seek after membership with Christ! Do not talk about faith, but exercise it! Do not boast of experience, but possess it. Be not like the wheat, but be the wheat! No shams and imitations will stand in the Last Great Day! That terrible, "but," will roll as a sea of fire between the true and the false! Oh, Holy Spirit, let each of us be found transformed by Your power! The next word of our text is, "gather,"—that is—

II. A WORD OF CONGREGATION.

What a blessed thing this gathering is! I feel it a great pleasure to gather multitudes together to hear the Gospel! And is it not a joy to see a house full of people on weekdays and Sundays who are willing to leave their homes and to come considerable distances to listen to the Gospel? It is a great thing to gather people together for that, but the gathering of the wheat into the barn is a far more wonderful business. Gathering is, in itself, better than scattering, and I pray that the Lord Jesus may always exercise His attracting power in this place, for He is no Divider, but, "unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Has He not said, "I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me"?

Observe that the congregation mentioned in our text is selected and assembled by skilled gatherers.' "The angels are the reapers." Ministers could not do it, for they do not know all the Lord's wheat and they are apt to make mistakes— some by too great leniency and others by excessive severity. Our poor judgments occasionally shut out saints and often shut in sinners. The angels will know their Master's property. They know each saint, for they were present at his birthday. Angels know when sinners repent and they never forget the persons of the penitents. They have witnessed the lives of those who have believed and have helped them in their spiritual battles, and so they know them. Yes, angels by a holy instinct discern the Father's children and are not to be deceived. They will not fail to gather all the wheat and to leave out every tare!

But they are gathered under a very stringent regulation, for, first of all, according to the parable, the tares—the false wheat—have been taken out and then the angelic reapers gather nothing but the wheat. The seed of the serpent, fathered by Satan, is thus separated from the seed of the Kingdom, owned by Jesus, the promised Deliverer. This is the one distinction and no other is taken into consideration. If the most amiable unconverted persons could stand in the ranks with the saints, the angels would not bear them to Heaven, for the mandate is, "Gather the wheat." Could the most honest man be found standing in the center of the Church, with all the members round about him and with all the ministers entreating that he might be spared, yet if he were not a Believer, he could not be carried into the Divine garner! There is no help for it. The angels have no choice in the matter—the peremptory command is, "Gather the wheat," and they must gather none else!

It will be a gathering from very great distances. Some of the wheat ripens in the South Sea Islands, in China, and in Japan. Some flourishes in France, broad acres grow in the United States—there is scarcely a land without a portion of the good grain! Where all God's wheat grows, I cannot tell. There is a remnant, according to the election of Grace, among every nation and people, but the angels will gather all the good grain to the same garner.

"Gather the wheat." The saints will be found in all ranks of society. The angels will bring in a few ears from palaces and great armfuls from cottages! Many will be collected from the lowly cottages of our villages and hamlets, and others will be raised up from the back slums

of our great cities to the metropolis of God! From the darkest places angels will bring those children of sweetness and light who seldom beheld the sun, and yet were pure in heart and saw their God! The hidden and obscure shall be brought into the Light of God, for the Lord knows them that are His—and His harvest-men will not miss them.

To me, it is a charming thought that they will come from all the ages. Let us hope that our first father, Adam, will be there. And mother Eve, following in the footsteps of their dear son, Abel, and trusting in the same Sacrifice. We shall meet Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, and Daniel, and all the saints made perfect! What a joy to see the Apostles, martyrs, and Reformers! I long to see Luther, and Calvin, and Bunyan, and Whitfield. I like the rhyme of good old father Ryland—

"They all shall be there, the great and the small! Poor I shall shake hands with the blessed St. Paul."

I do not know how that will be, but I have not much doubt that we shall have fellowship with all the saints of every age in the general assembly and Church of the First-Born, whose names are written in Heaven!

No matter when or where the wheat grew, it shall be gathered into the one barn—gathered never to be scattered—gathered out of all divisions of the visible Church, never to be divided again! They grew in different fields. Some flourished on the hillside where Episcopalians grow in all their glory! And others in the lowlier soil, where Baptists multiply, and Methodists flourish! But once the wheat is in the barn, none can tell in which field the ears grew. Then, indeed, shall the Master's prayer have a glorious answer—"That they all may be one." All our errors removed and our mistakes corrected and forgiven, the one Lord, the one faith and the one Baptism will be known of us all—and there will be no more displeasure and envying! What a blessed gathering it will be! What a meeting! The elect of God, the elite of all the centuries, of whom the world was not worthy! I should not like to be away. If there were no Hell, it would be Hell enough to me to be shut out of such heavenly society! If there were no weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, it would be dreadful enough to miss the Presence of the Lord, and the joy of praising Him forever, and the bliss of meeting with all the noblest beings that ever lived! Amid the necessary controversies of the age, I, who have been doomed to seem a man of strife, sigh for the blessed rest wherein all spiritual minds shall blend in eternal accord before the Throne of God and of the Lamb. Oh, that we were all right, that we might be all happily united in one spirit! In the text there is next—

III. A WORD OF DESIGNATION.

I have already trespassed upon that domain. "Gather the wheat" Nothing but "the wheat" will be placed in the Lord's homestead. Lend me your hearts while I urge you to a searching examination for a minute or two. The wheat was sown of the Lord. Are you sown of the Lord? Friend, if you have any religion, how did you get it? Was it self-sown? If so, it is good

for nothing! The true wheat was sown by the Son of Man. Are you sown of the Lord? Did the Spirit of God drop eternal life into your bosom? Did it come from that dear hand which was nailed to the Cross? Is Jesus your life? Does your life begin and end with Him? If so, it is well!

The wheat was sown of the Lord—it is also the object of the Lord's care. Wheat needs a deal of attention. The farmer would get nothing from it if he did not watch it carefully. Are you under the Lord's care? Does He keep you? Is that word true of your soul, "I the Lord do keep it. I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day"? Do you experience such keeping? Give an honest answer, as you love your soul.

Next, wheat is a useful thing, a gift from God for the life of men. The false wheat was of no good to anybody—it could only be eaten of swine—and then it made them stagger like drunken men! Are you one of those who are wholesome in society, who are like bread to the world, so that if men receive you, your example and your teaching, they will be blessed thereby? Judge yourselves whether you are good or evil in life and influence.

"Gather the wheat." You know that God must put the goodness, the Grace, the solidity and the usefulness into you, or else you will never be wheat fit for angelic gathering. One thing is true of the wheat—that it is the most dependent of all plants. I have never heard of a field of wheat which sprang up and grew and ripened without a farmer's care. Some ears may appear after a harvest when the corn has shaled out, but I have never heard of plains in America or elsewhere covered with unsown wheat. No, no. There is no wheat where there is no man, and there is no Grace where there is no Christ! We owe our very existence to the Father, who is the Farmer.

Yet, dependent as it is, wheat stands in the front rank of honor and esteem—and so do the godly in the judgment of all who are of an understanding heart. We are nothing without Christ—but with Him we are full of honor. Oh, to be among those by whom the world is preserved, the excellent of the earth in whom the saints delight! God forbid we should be among the base and worthless tares! Our last head, upon which also I will speak briefly, is—

IV. A WORD OF DESTINATION.

"Gather the wheat into My barn." The process of gathering in the wheat will be completed at the Day of Judgment, but it is going on every day. From hour to hour saints are gathered—they are going heavenward even now. I am so glad to hear as a regular thing that the departed ones from my own dear Church have such joy in being harvested. Glory be to God, our people die well! The best thing is to live well, but we are greatly gladdened to hear that the brethren die well, for, full often, that is the most telling witness for vital godliness. Men of the world feel the power of triumphant deaths!

Every hour the saints are being gathered into the barn. That is where they want to be. We feel no pain at the news of ingathering, for we wish to be safely stored up by our Lord. If the wheat that is in the field could speak, every grain would say, "The ultimatum for which

we are living and growing is the barn, the granary." For this the frosty night! For this the sunny days! For this the dew and the rain—and for this everything! Every process with the wheat is tending towards the granary. So is it with us—everything is working towards Heaven—towards the gathering place—towards the congregation of the righteous—towards the vision of our Redeemer's face! Our death will cause no jar in our life-music! It will involve no pause, or even discord—it is part of a program—the crowning of our whole history!

To the wheat the barn is the place of security. It dreads no mildew there. It fears no frost, no heat, no drought, no wet when once in the barn. All its growth-perils are past. It has reached its perfection. It has rewarded the labor of the

Farmer and it is housed. Oh, long-expected day, begin! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, what a blessing it will be when you and I shall have come to our maturity and Christ shall see in us the travail of His soul!

I delight to think of Heaven as His barn! His barn, what must that be? It is but the poverty of language that such an expression has to be used at all concerning the home of our Father, the dwelling of Jesus! Heaven is the palace of the King, but so far to us a barn because it is the place of security, the place of rest forever! It is the homestead of Christ to which we shall be carried and for this we are ripening. It is to be thought of with ecstatic joy, for the gathering into the barn involves a harvest home and I have never heard of men sitting down to cry over an earthly harvest home, nor of their following the sheaves with tears! No, they clap their hands, they dance for joy and shout right lustily! Let us do something like that, concerning those who are already housed. With grave, sweet melodies let us sing around their tombs. Let us feel that, surely, the bitterness of death is passed. When we remember their glory, we may rejoice like the travailing woman when her child is born, who "remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." Another soul begins to sing in Heaven—why do you weep, O heirs of immortality? Is the eternal happiness of the righteous, the birth which comes of their death-pangs? Then happy are they who die! Is Glory the end and outcome of that which fills our home with mourning? If so, thank God for bereavements! Thank God for sad severing! He has promoted our dear ones to the skies! He has blessed them beyond all that we could ask or even think! He has taken them out of this weary world to lie in His bosom forever! Blessed be His name if it were for nothing else but this! Would you keep your old father here, full of pain and broken down with feebleness? Would you shut him out of Glory? Would you detain your dear wife here with all her suffering? Would you hold back your husband from the immortal crown? Could you wish your child to descend to earth again from the bliss which now surrounds her? No, no! We wish to be going Home ourselves, to the heavenly Father's house and its many mansions! But concerning the departed, we rejoice before the Lord as with the joy of harvest! "Therefore comfort one another with these words."

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: MATTHEW 13:1-23; 15:13-28; 1 CORINTHIANS 3:17-23.

Verses 1, 2. The same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the sea. And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a boat, and sat, and the whole multitude stood on the shore. He had thus a little breathing space between Him and the people—a better opportunity for His being both heard and seen. A noble instance of open-air preaching. And if our climate would permit, what a blessing it would be if we could turn out of these houses and sit in a boat or stand on the seashore!

3-9. And He spoke many things unto them in parables saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow. And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them. Some fell upon stony places where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched: and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them; but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who has ears to hear, let him hear. Upon the very surface of it, this parable teaches those of us who have to sow that we must not expect to have our choice of the ground—and that we are not even to make a choice of the matter, but we are bound to go, as this sower did, and cast a handful there upon the hard trodden road and a handful there among the thorns and nettles, and a handful here again where there is no deepness of earth and God be thanked if a handful shall fall on good ground. Still, for us to suppose that we are to sort out the characters and to select the ground is a very great mistake! "Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." A distinction will soon come! The seed will be the grand detective of the soil. It will show what the soil is. Just as Christ on the Cross is the discernor of men's thoughts, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed, so is the preaching of Christ Crucified the test of human condition! You shall see now who it is that has the honest and good ground, and who has not. Not by a geological inspection, but simply by throwing a handful of seed on it. That will soon discern between the precious and the vile.

10-16. And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why do You speak unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven but to them it is not given. For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whoever has not, from him shall be taken away even what he has. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing, see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts and should be con-

verted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. A judicial blindness and deafness of heart had come over the nation of Israel, so that even when the sun shone in its strength in the Person and teaching of Christ, they could not see. And when God spoke more plainly than He ever spoke before, by His Son, yet they could not hear so as to understand. And I sometimes fear that some measure of this judicial blindness has happened unto many in our land. Those who take the metaphors of Scripture and interpret them literally and dare to take out of the old Law excuses for ritualistic observance—what can we say of them, but that this people's hearts have waxed gross? God has done very much for our country. He has seeded it with the blood of martyrs. The scars of martyrdom have hardly passed away and, after all this, if men will go back to the fooleries of popish ceremony—if they will put from them the blessed light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—depend upon it, God will give them up to some kind of hardness of heart, so that they will plunge from one superstition to another, and their last end shall be worse than the first! But blessed are they who, being taught of God, can perceive the spirit beneath the letter, and do not confound the emblems which the Savior used, but suck out the meaning from them as bees do the honey from the flowers!

17-19. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see and not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them. Hear you, therefore the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom and understands it not, then comes the Wicked One and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. Do you notice here the importance of the Word of God? But when it is heard, but not understood, you would suppose that the devil might as well let it stay where it was, for what hurt could it do to his kingdom for the man to hear it and not to understand it? But he is so frightened at the Word of God that he comes, like an evil bird, and takes it away for fear lest lying even in the dull heart without understanding, yet, somehow, it should breed an understanding in the heart! And so he takes it away from the thoughts and the memory, so fearful is he of it. "Nothing makes the devil tremble like the Gospel," said Martin Luther, and I do not doubt that all the churches in the world, with all their ceremonies, are less feared by the devil than one single Doctrine or text out of the Word of God! So he comes, like an evil bird, and catches away that which was sown in the heart. You must expect to lose a good deal of your teaching. As farmers drop several beans in the hole and say, "That one is for the worm; this one is for the crow—then there is another which they hope will spring up—so must we expect it to be with our teaching—much of which will be lost.

20, 21. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that hears the word, and with joy receives it. Yet has he not root in himself, but endures for a while: but when tribulation or persecution arises, because of the word, by-and-by he is offended. A straw fire blazes fiercely, but lasts not long. And so there are some who we hope are converts who

show an extraordinary zeal, and you would fancy that, surely, they would outrun all Christians! But they have not breath. They are not good stayers. They soon cease in the race. They are soon hot—soon cold. And we may expect to have many disappointments from persons of this character, and all the more so among children—readily impressed, but easily do they lose the impression.

22. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. Dear Friends who have to teach the young, you have, in their case, less danger in this respect. They have not yet come to the time when the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches will choke the Word. You have some advantage over us, though even the little things of a child's play may make nettles and thorns. Things which we could not consider to be cares—that seem too trivial—are cares to them. It may be that our heavenly Father thinks of our cares very much as we think of our children's cares—and as we should smile to see them distrustful, so it may be that He smiles and grieves whenever He finds us so. For, mark you, even among God's own people, God's Word cannot grow in our hearts at the rate it should, for we have the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches. We must cry to be lifted above these—delivered from the evil influences of the world in which we dwell—or else our good Lord and Master will waste many a handful of good seed upon us, though, I trust, that out of us He will get some harvest.

23. But he that received seed into good ground is he that hears the word, and understands which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. For all Christians are not alike fruitful. Would God they all reached to the hundredfold and went beyond it! Such seed, and such a sower, and such fruitful seasons as He has given to some of us, and such plowing and such tilling, and such feeding, and such watering, and such sunshine, and such dew—oh, we ought to bring forth a hundredfold! Let us chide ourselves and whenever we have to complain that we do not get a harvest from our sowing, or as much as we could desire, let us look within and say, "My heart, you are like the field I have to sow. My Master, I fear, gets as little out of you as I get when I go unsuccessfully to my work."

MATTHEW 15:13-15; 21-28.

13. But He answered and said, Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. He had not any peculiar tenderness towards them, they were not plants of his Father's planting—they deserved to be rooted up and their teaching was so utterly false that if He had offended against it, He was glad to have done so.

14. Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. The bad teacher and he that is badly taught, for they are both responsible, shall both fall into the ditch. No man can lay the sin of his being misdirected entirely upon his priest or his teacher. He had no business to have submitted to him. At the

same time, it is a very serious responsibility for a man who knows not God to attempt to teach the things of God. I know a man who, in a certain place of worship was deeply convinced of sin—the arrows of God stuck in him and, being in great distress, he went to the minister and told him how he felt the burden of his guilt. The minister said to him, "My dear Friend, I really had no intention of making you uneasy—what was it I said?—I will get the sermon—I am very sorry, but really I do not know anything about it." The man said, "You told us we must be born-again." "Oh," said the minister, "that was done for you when a child—your parents did it." "You know, Sir, we must be converted." "Well, really I do not understand it. I am afraid I have disturbed you unnecessarily." Our friend, however, was not to be put off, so he sought and found the Savior. But how dreadful a thing it is when the blind lead the blind—they shall both fall into the ditch!

15. Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are you also yet without understanding? Do not you yet understand that whatever enters in at the mouth goes into the belly, and is eliminated? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defiles not a man. There is no defilement about that. Cleanliness is to be observed, but not the mere act of washing just for the sake of it, every time you eat bread, which defiles not a man! But oh, what defilement there is in evil thought! In anger, which breeds murder! In lust, which leads to adultery and fornication! In covetousness which begets theft! And in a false heart which leads to false witness, and in a profane mind which leads to blasphemy! Oh, that God would cleanse our secret thoughts, the very center of our hearts, for until the fountain is made clean, the stream that comes from it cannot be pure!

21, 22. Then Jesus went from there and departed to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, You Son of David! My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil "But He answered her not a word." How painful that silence must have been! In what suspense she was.

23. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away: for she cries after us. They were mistaken. She did not cry after them—she knew better than that! She cried after the Lord, after the great Son of David, not after them, but, however, she disturbed them.

24. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Christ's personal ministry was confined to the Jews. He came as a Savior to redeem all mankind, but as a Preacher, He was a minister to the Circumcision and He came to speak only to Israel.

25. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me! Her prayer got shorter and she grew more intense, more energetic, more determined to win the blessing. "Lord help me!"

26-28. But He answered and said, It is not right to take thee children's bread and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said to her, O woman, great is your faith: be it unto you even as you will. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. Oh, can you exercise a like faith in Christ? If so, you shall get a like blessing! Only believe in Him! Only make up your mind and however great the mercy, it cannot be too great for Him to give! And believe that He will give it, rest on Him to bestow it and you shall have it! God grant that many may receive it at this very hour!

1 CORINTHIANS 3:17-23.

17-18. If any man defiles the Temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the Temple of God is holy, which Temple you are. Let no man deceive himself If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. Do not let him seek to be reckoned wise by the philosophers of the period who are always against the Truth of God. Let him consent to be thought to be a fool—yes, let him know in his own heart that he is not wise—and then let him yield himself up to the wisdom of God. Consciousness of ignorance is the vestibule of knowledge! And he that knows right well that he is a fool is on the way to becoming a wise man! He that would pass into the Temple of Wisdom must first of all confess his ignorance.

19, 20. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. What a wonderfully small difference there is, after all, between the very cultured man, who thinks himself so, and the man who makes no pretense to it whatever! The knowledge which the wisest man has is about equal, in the Presence of God, to the knowledge which one child of three years old has over a child of two years old! To God we must all seem masses of ignorance! And if you could put the whole British Association, all the doctors of divinity, and all the LL.D.'s and all the men of high degrees together, the things they did not know would make a great many volumes—and the things they did know would not go very far. "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise that they are vain."

21. Therefore let no man glory in men. There really is not anything to glory in, in men! "The best of men are men at the best." Never need we exalt ourselves or extol others. "Lord, what is man that You are mindful of him?" "Let no man glory in men."

21 For all things are yours. Children of God, all men are yours, to serve your highest benefit! All ministers and leaders in Christ are yours to seek your souls' good! Treat them as bees do flowers, and gather honey from them all. "All things are yours."

22-23, Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come— all are yours. And you are Christ's; and Christ is God's.