

"The Zeal of the Lord"

(No. 3432)

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1914.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." [Isaiah 9:7](#).

BEYOND all controversy, this is a most remarkable text. Zeal is an attribute which is attributable to man—we do not often think or speak of the zeal of the Lord of Hosts! At first sight, it might seem to be a misplaced word—God's zeal, the Divine arm, the fervency of the Infinite. Yet, if we think a little as we commune together tonight, I do not doubt but that much of comfort will cluster round the word, "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts." When I turn to Holy Writ, I do not find that, in connection with the Creation, the word, zeal, was ever used—and yet it was a glorious work, to make ten thousand, thousand worlds, to fill space with ponderous orbs, before whose dimensions human imagination, itself, is staggered! It was no small work to make this world, with all its varieties of skill and art, adaptation and beauty. The morning stars might well sing together at the sight of it, and burst forth into a new hymn, as the light first shone upon this, our planet. But the Lord seems to have done it much at His ease. In six days He finished it and rested from all His work. No element of hardness, no token of zeal! Indeed, what is there in the mere creative act to awaken those marvelous attributes which dwell in the bosom of the Infinite Jehovah? Wisdom? Why, it is but the play of wisdom! Power? It was but a mere freak of power. There is such boundless power in God, that all that He has created is but a drop in the bucket, and as a very little thing, compared with Him! Nor, if I remember rightly, does the idea ever come up in connection with the sustaining of worlds and the guiding of the events of Providence. It is true, He calls them all by their names, and by the greatness of His power, not one fails. Arcturus with his sons, Mazzaroth in his season, the Pleiades in their delightful influences—all these are swayed and governed by Him! But we find not that He was awakened up to zeal at all concerning them. And in the wonders of Providence which have been worked upon earth, it is remarkable how gently, how easily Jehovah seems to take them! Look at that splendid work at the Red Sea—a work which God, Himself, seems to have selected as a masterpiece of His skill and of His power, for even in Heaven they sing the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb—that song, "Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea." But how did He accomplish that stupendous work? "You did blow with Your wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in her mighty waters." No enthusiasm, no stirring up of strength—just the tender breath of His mouth and it is all done—and the chivalry of Egypt sinks into the middle of the sea! Nor when I hear of angels being formed of the Lord, whenever that event may have taken

place, do I hear of anything like the zeal of the Lord in connection therewith. Nor even the creation of Adam, when He took the man and placed him in the garden to till it. I pray I may use no expression which will dishonor the Most High, yet when we speak of Him, we are obliged to use language according to the analogies of human kind. It seems to me that when God created mere materialism, there was nothing to excite the Divine mind beyond a mere complacency when He looked upon it and said, "It was very good." And when He created pure spirits that were incapable of singing such as angels, He rejoiced to see their happiness, but inasmuch as they could not have communion with Him, being so good as not to know good or evil, His soul does not seem to have been stirred. But He desired, if I may use such language concerning Him, to have a race of beings surrounding Him who should know both good and evil, who should know evil by having practically fallen into it, having so smarted under it as to know it to be evil in a practical and experimental sense—a race of creatures who should, from henceforth, never choose evil, who should voluntarily choose that which is good forever and forever because they should be so bound to Him, the source of all goodness, by an overwhelming obligation of love, that while they know evil, they shall bewail it—while they understand what it is to sin, they shall never, throughout eternity, either in thought or imagination, defile themselves with sin, but shall remain immaculately perfect through the constraint of a love which He shall reveal toward them, which shall be sufficient to wash their robes and make them white, world without end! It seems to me that He desired to have a race of creatures that should not be like angels or a race of creatures apart from Himself—but a race that should be His sons, that should be mysterious and wonderful—and His plan was this, that Jesus, His only Son, should come into this world and take upon Himself the flesh and nature of fallen creatures, that in that flesh He should die and put away the guilt of all their sin, and that by His flesh, when risen, He should establish a link between them and God, so that there should be nothing between God and man. God blessed first forever, and then Jesus, the Man, positively and really a Man, clinging by His Manhood through His Godhead to those chosen creatures whom He should have purified and made clean, who should forever exist, the children of God, partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust. It is not for me—it is not for anyone to strike out the Divine idea and say this is what God meant and intended, but we have enough of Scripture to let us say that this was a part of His aim, at any rate, that in Jesus Christ there should be a race of creatures distinct from all others, because actually alive with the Deity—creatures who, to use the expression of the serpent, should "be as gods, knowing good and evil," and be as gods always and forever, preferring the good, though they have tasted the evil, and might have chosen it, but were constrained by Divine Grace to bewail it and, henceforth, to keep close to God, world without end!

Now, Brothers and Sisters, it was such a plan as this that awoke the zeal of God! This was what could not have been done by mere power, but must bring forth all the attributes of God—the work that had to be achieved here was worthy of a great Creator—it was a work which would reveal the Deity as no other work had ever done and, therefore, if I may use the expression (I have often to excuse myself, not to you, but to Him), He seems to brace Himself up to a display of all the Divine Energy and Almighty Omnipotence, to accomplish His purpose, to carry out His plan and make Jesus the King of a chosen company! "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this."

I. GOD ENTERS INTO THE PLAN OF GLORIFYING CHRIST AND MAKING TO HIMSELF A PEOPLE

WITH GREAT ZEAL.

This can be proved in the following way—we judge of a man's zeal when the purpose has been long in His heart, and He has most industriously followed it through a long period. Now, the plan of Grace through Jesus Christ was in the eternal heart before the worlds were made. He had it all in His mind. Hence He speaks of Christ as "the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world," and never once has the Divine mind turned aside from this purpose. Think, then, what zeal God must have towards the achievement of this design, when through these long ages, as we call them, He has still resolved to push on the work which He determined to do. Think, again, that all the agents of Providence that have ever occurred on this globe have had an eye to that purpose—from the little up to the great. When He set the bounds of the people, He set them according to the children of Israel. He had an eye to the people of His love and to the Son of His choice, even when He was mapping out the territories which the different races should inhabit and not a king has fallen from His throne, not an army has devastated a province, no changes of government, no challenges of race have ever taken place apart from the Divine intent—that He would set His Son upon His holy hill of Zion, and make Him to be a King over all the nations of the earth. To that purpose God has steadily adhered all this while and, therefore, I honor "the zeal of the Lord of Hosts."

Just think a moment, and I will show you God must be zealous in this matter. Behold, His Son stoops to become a Man. You see Him lying as a Baby in Bethlehem's manger. You behold Him as a Youth obedient to His parents, as a full-grown Man, a Servant of servants in His toil. Now, when the Lord looks down upon His Son, how He must resolve to glorify Him! Oh, what must be the thought in that fraternal bosom! Does My Son thus stoop? Does He take such a Nature into union with Himself? Oh, I will crown His head with many crowns! For all His stoopings He shall have a glory. Does He sit there at a harlot's side at the well of Samaria? Does He sit there at the table with publicans and sinners? Does He go down to bear the sorrows of the sins of men? God seems to declare by Himself that He will give Him a name that is above every name—for all His stooping He shall have an exalta-

tion—the name at which every knee shall bow, even the name of Jesus, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord to the Glory of God the Father!

Or, look further through your tears, behold the wondrous Sacrifice of Calvary. Can you behold Jesus, smarting, suffering, bleeding, dying—and can you imagine God looking on, a regular spectator? Oh, no! If we may suppose Him to be capable of passions like ourselves, we shall have to say, as He looked upon His dying Son, He vowed that He would lift

His head above the sons of men, and make Him see a numerous seed to recompense His pain. If anything could make a man zealous in his cause, it would be to see it stained with the best blood on earth, to see it stained with his own son's blood! Surely a man would say, I consecrate myself over the blood of my child to live and die, to honor the name that was thus put to shame for my purpose, my design. And God says the same! The zeal of God burned at Calvary!

Think again. Jesus Christ at this moment is everywhere dishonored. Millions use Christ's name in superstition, worshipping a crucifix, making a God out of the very images. Multitudes of people practice idolatry, enshrine and adore false deities, and what does God say? Do you think that He looks on like Jove, fabled among the heathen an impassive spectator? Oh, it is not so! He hears the blasphemies of men! He sees their sins and though He keeps His right hand in His bosom and we sometimes say, "Now, where is Your zeal and the soundings of Your heart," it is only because He is Divine and can put a Divine restraint upon His zeal that He does not rise at once and sweep away the idols and devastate the nations! His long-suffering makes Him wait. His pity bids Him tarry. But the day shall come—and it draws near—when with the hammer, He shall break in pieces, and with the iron rod He shall dash, like a potter's vessel, the usurpers who dare to stand in Christ's way and to take away the Kingdom from the rightful heir! Yet the very sins of men are stirring up the Lord and their iniquities, transgressions and blasphemies are almost exciting His holy soul, making a zeal to burn within Him which, one of these days, in the set time, will perform its work!

Only one more proof on this point, and it is this—Brothers and Sisters, we become zealous when we hear the cries and tears of the oppressed. I think I see a senator standing on the floor of the House of Commons, pleading, in years gone by, the cause of Africa's down-trodden sons. I do not wonder at the zeal of Wilberforce, or the marvelous eloquence of Fox. What a cause they had! They could hear the clanging of the fetters of the slaves, the sighs of prisoners, the shrieks of women—and this made them speak, for they burned with an indignation which carried them away! Pity pulled up the sluices of their speech and their souls ran out in mighty torrents of overwhelming eloquence! Now, think. The Lord this day hears the sighs of the oppressed all over the world. He hears the sighs of the sorrowful and, beyond that there comes up the daily cries of His elect, who day and night beseech His Throne. Oh, that we were more clamorous! Oh, that we were more intensely importunate!

Oh, that we gave Him no rest until He would establish and make Jerusalem a praise on the earth, for, remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, "And shall not God avenge His own elect? Though they cry night and day unto Him, I tell you He will avenge them speedily."

You see, then, proofs of God's zeal and the source of it, if we may use such a term. It is His purpose, a purpose to which He has kept so long. His zeal is, moreover, excited by Christ's humiliation, by the blasphemies and sins of men and by the tears of His people. God is not as we are—cold, insensible. He is full of zeal! And in the great good old cause, which shall, at last, win the day, there may be zealous partisans, but none is so zealous as the Lord of Hosts! A Master in the midst of Israel! We will now change the strain, and notice the second point. The text says His zeal will perform it. That is to say—

II. HIS ZEAL WILL PERFORM THE SETTING OF CHRIST UPON HIS KINGDOM AND THE ESTABLISHING OF IT FOREVER.

But it will perform everything that has to do with that Kingdom. God's zeal will not leave a single jot or tittle of the Covenant of His Grace unfulfilled. He has lifted His hand. He has sworn by Himself that Christ shall see of the travail of His soul—and the zeal of God will carry this out!

Notice, then, Brother and Sisters, tonight, first, that the Lord will secure the salvation of all His chosen. Nothing else could secure it but God's own zeal. The zeal of all the Church could not secure it. Men might perish, notwithstanding every act, but God knows them who are His, and He will find them! If there are some of them, tonight, plunged into the depths of sin, or others far gone in Atheism or unbelief, the zeal of God will find every blood-bought one, and Christ shall have every single soul that the Father gave Him—and that He redeemed with blood from among men. Oh, there is joy in this! But we cannot stay to think of it.

This secures, in the next place, the spread of the Truth of God. Sometimes we sit down and say, "Truth, though mighty in itself, does not prevail among a godless generation set upon their idols." And oftentimes we mourn and lament because the battle has turned against the Lord. But, Brothers and Sisters, God's Truth is wide enough and safe enough— we need not weep over a few defeats! God has ordained that the laurels of the King are all safe! He has trodden the winepress alone, but the victory is sure to Him! We have but to keep on in the patience and tribulation of the saints till the set time shall come, and every Truth that God has declared shall be crowned and honored. Wisdom is justified of all her children, and the Infinite Wisdom of Jesus shall be justified in all His teaching. But the grand meaning is this—that the day is sure to come when all the nations shall be converted unto God! I am not going into any pre-millennial or post-millennial theories. I am neither a Prophet nor the son of a Prophet, but if there is anything plain in Scripture, it seems to be this—that there is a Kingdom of Christ, that there will be a reign of Christ over the people, that the Son of David shall rule the Kingdom, from the rivers even to the ends of the earth—they

that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him, the heathen shall come and lick the dust at His feet and He shall be King of kings and Lord of lords! "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this," says the text. I thank the Master for that word. All the missionary societies in the world will never know how to perform it! If they were strengthened to the uttermost, they would never be able to achieve this work. Not all the ministry will ever be able to perform this. Nor do I see any means adapted to achieve so sublime an end. Why, the population is increasing upon Christianity. We do not hold our own. Relatively, to the population, I suppose, there are not so many believers in Christ, today, as there were a hundred years ago. We are going backward instead of forward. See, you sons of men, your zeal and your earnestness—no, your lack of zeal and your lack of earnestness—see what it will come to! Poor, vain instruments, what can we perform? But in the rear there is One who will do it! As in the days of battle, when the front ranks are beaten, and one rank after another is driven back, up comes the old guards—and they never quail and know not how to say retreat—and so they win the day! Now, behold a greater than all the hosts of men, the Eternal Ages, the Ancient of Days, the Infinite, Himself, shall bring up His servants in the day of battle! And He shall thunder gloriously! The Gospel shall be proclaimed! The Kingdom shall be won! Christ shall reign and the "Hallelujah" shall come up unto the Lord Omnipotent, who not only gets the Kingdom, but gets it by His own power, wins by His own zeal! "The Lord of Hosts, the Lord of Hosts shall perform this." Now, our last word is practical—

III. THE PRACTICAL TEACHING WHICH ARISES OUT OF THIS TRUTH.

The expression of the text is only used four times in Scripture. One of these is a repetition of another. Virtually it is only used three times—in [Isaiah 63:15](#), "the zeal of the lord of Hosts" is used, as I have already used it, as an argument for prayer. God is thus addressed, "Where is Your zeal, and the sounding of your heart, and of Your mercies towards me? Are they restrained?" What a plea in prayer for us tomorrow night! O God convert the sons of men! Put an end to blasphemy and sin. If You do not, we have heard of Your zeal, but where is Your zeal? You can do it—why don't You do it? You can save. The hardest heart will yield to You. The rod of iron and steel shall be broken by the iron of the Cross. Oh God, where, where, where is Your zeal? Have You forgotten the great Fall and the Kingdom, and the Covenant, and Your oath? Have You forgotten Your Son—His griefs, His merits—Your promised recompense to Him? Where is Your zeal? Oh, but this is a battering ram with which to shake the very gates of Heaven! Men of prayer and faith, learn how to use this! The next time you are wrestling with the Angel, if you would overcome Him, here is the master plea, "Where is Your zeal, and the sounding of your heart?" Let us thus flee to God!

But the text may be used, in the second place, as a ground of hope. If you turn to [Isaiah 37:32](#), you will see that there it is used in relation to the salvation of a remnant—the remnant of Judah. When you and I feel ourselves to be like a remnant, cut off, and put away—when we feel ourselves to be unworthy of the Divine notice, let us recollect that God is zealous to

save His remnant and let us ask Him to save us—and appeal to the very zeal of God to give salvation to us who need it so much!

But not to dwell longer on this part of the subject, I am sure you will perceive that our text, practically, is a good reason for confidence. You begin to be dispirited in God's work—it ought not to be so. If any of you are ready to give up your Sunday school work, or whatever it is you are engaged in, oh, say not so! God is so zealous that He will not let the good cause fail. There may be, as there will be in every great battle, a certain sort of temporary defeat which may be but a retiring of the troops, that they may the more sternly and successfully advance again to the front. So is it with the Cross of Christ. There are slight repulses, but everything is working to ultimate victory. Look at the sea as it comes up towards flood and then the waves retire. A child might sit down and weep, and say, "I thought the sea was coming up to here, but look, it has gone back again, and it has not washed my feet." In the long run the sea is still coming up, and it is thus a type of the good cause of Christ! Our lives are but like seconds in the tide of this great time of ours, which is itself but a second in the great duration of eternity! Because the good old cause does not seem to prosper for a single day and the Kingdom does not come to Christ in my short life, shall I sit down and weep? No, I am but one among millions who shall achieve the Divine Purpose—one little coral insect, helping to pile up the rock on which, by-and-by, shall grow the cedar and the palm tree and the lovely flowers! And the winds shall waft across it insects in every gale—I will do my work, though it is beneath the waves! I will do my work and die—and others shall do the same, but the rock is rising and God's Purpose is being accomplished! In the words of the Prayer of Moses, "Let Your work appear unto Your servants, and Your Glory unto their children." Lord, let us take the work and give our children the glory! Let us work on—they shall live to see the Glory! Some future generation shall see the triumph. And the best of it all is, we shall see it, too, for it will be but a sleep between now and then—a little leaning upon the Savior's bosom in our disembodied state—and then the trumpet shall ring so shrill and clear through Heaven and earth and we shall come to dwell again in these bodies of ours, restored and rendered fit for purified spirit to dwell in! And our eyes shall see in that day, the God that died for us, and oh, how we will adore Him and magnify Him! And we will say together, the cause for which we struggled, the Kingdom for which we fought, has come at last! It was a long day and a weary one, and we feared the Master would not come. Some of us fell asleep before His appearing, but we awaken at the knocks at the door—we awaken even with the blessed sleepers, and we come to see the triumph as we once of old saw the praise! Glory be to God, the victory is secure! Let us work on till then.

But last of all, if God is thus zealous for the crown rights, the Kingdom of Christ, let us be zealous, too. This is not the day of zeal—this is the day of cleverness and achievement. It is not the day of solid earnestness—it is the day of mere sensationalism and nothing more. Oh, what a sight it would have been to have seen old John Knox, when old and worn, go up

into his pulpit, and though before he began to preach, he seemed so weak that he could scarcely stand, yet he did not proceed far in preaching up the Master's name, before, as an old historian says, "He did seem to use such force that one would think he would dash the pulpit into fragments"—dash it into shivers, I suppose, before the Popish priests and hypocrites of the age! How his eyes flashed fire as he spoke out his Master's truth, as he denounced Popery and held up the Truths of God and the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus! We need more men of this sort! Oh, that God would but send us one, such, and then to back him, a race of Covenanters who would, with their very blood dedicate themselves to the Truth and the Kingdom of Christ against the insidious advances of Popery and the infidelity of Rome and Hell, which are twin brothers! Oh, that once again the Church were earnest to have no head or king of the Church but Christ, no creed but the Bible, no Baptism but the Baptism which He has taught, no sacrament but what He reveals, no Doctrine but what that book dictates—the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible! May we come back to this in purity, to this with earnestness, and then it will not be long before we shall hear Him coming in the chariot, paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem and we shall go forth to meet Him, even to meet King Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart! Oh, God of Zeal, drop Your zeal upon us, now, and make us zealous, too, even we, redeemed by blood, by Your Holy Spirit, inhabit and consecrate us afresh, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ISAIAH 40:1-17; 25-31; JOHN1:29-42.

Verses 1, 2. Comfort you, comfort you My people, says your God. Speak you comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she has received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. God would have His people happy. He knows that we are not in strong, vigorous state, neither do we honor His name while we are lacking in holy joy. Let the sinners be uncomfortable. Let them be "like the troubled sea that cannot rest." But as for God's people, it is His great joy that they should be happy. He bids His servants again and again to comfort them! Sometimes we are in a condition of warfare and we are under the chastising rod, but now the Lord appears graciously to His servants, and He says, "Your warfare is over: your chastisement is ended." Now the Lord returns in mercy and He grants a sense of forgiven sin.

3. The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, Prepare you the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. You know this was John the Baptist coming to proclaim the Savior. That was the best comfort God's people could have—the coming of the Lord. So it is now. The joy of the Church is the coming of the Lord! And to each one of us the greatest source of joy is the drawing near to us of our Lord. If He appears to us, our winter is over, our summer's sun has come! If Christ is with us, the time of the singing of birds has come and our heart is glad.

4, 5. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places, plain: And the Glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken it Wherever Christ comes, it is so. All things are right at His appearing and if the Lord but manifests Himself to us tonight, each one, we shall find the crooked things made straight. We shall see the mountains of difficulty, leveled, and the deep depressions will all be filled up and there will be a causeway along which the Lord triumphantly shall ride to display the greatness of His power! There is nothing that shall hinder the coming of the Lord to us, and when He comes, there is nothing that shall stand against Him!

6-8. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the fields. The grass withers, the flower fades because the breath of the LORD blows upon it: surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades: but the Word of our God shall stand forever Now that is a cry that we all need to hear—the death cry of all creature confidence—for man at his very best is only like grass and the flower. They will be mown down in due time, but if the scythe comes not near them, yet will they fade in their season, for they are transient things and every hope and confidence which is based upon that which is seen, must be temporal and must pass away. All the joy that you have tonight—all the hope and all the confidence you have which is based upon an earthly thing— must, by degrees, all disappear. Nothing is eternal but that which springs out of the Eternal. Unless our hope is in the Lord, alone, that hope will at some time or other fail us! This is a cry we need to hear because, until we are sick of the creature, we shall not turn to the Creator! Till we have done with false confidences, we shall not make God our trust!

9. O Zion, that brings good tidings, get you up into the high mountain! O Jerusalem, that brings good tidings, lift up your voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Look away from these fading things and behold your God. Look away from the brightest joy you have, though it is like the meadow, all alive with many colored flowers, and look to your God, and to your God, alone! "Behold your God"—your God in Christ! Your God who has come through the wilderness, making a highway for Himself, that He may come to you. Rejoice in Christ, your Savior, and you shall have a joy that never shall be taken from you!

10. 11. Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His rewards are with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. Do you belong to the flock tonight? Then let this comfort you. Never mind about the fading flowers. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd." He has brought you into the pasture tonight. Depend upon it, He has not led you by a wrong way. And now, though your soul is hungry and thirsty, you shall not lack, for, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd."

11. He shall gather the lambs with His arm. The feeblest, first. The most care for those that need most care. "He shall gather the lambs with His arm."

11. And carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Your sorrow is to come. It is known to yourself alone. None can sympathize with you. He will gently lead you. There is no overdriving with Christ. Sometimes His ministers, in order to get God's people right, one way, overdrive them another, and it is possible while rebuking the hypocrite, to cause grief to the sincere Believer, but our Lord is a better Shepherd than the under shepherds are at their very best. "He shall gather the lambs with His arm, carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Oh, what a blessed Helper we have! Let us rest in Him.

12-17. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being His counselor, has taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Behold, He takes up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity. Who would not trust such a God as this—this only God? How well may we be content to turn away from the fading creatures to this eternal Lord and put our trust in Him! Indeed, the wonder is that we trust the creature and do not trust the mighty Creator! Faith, which seems so difficult, after all, is nothing better than sanctified commonsense! It is the most commonsensethings in all the world to trust in Omnipotence—in infinite, unchanging love—in Infallible Truth. To trust anywhere else needs a great deal of justification, but to trust in God needs no apology. He well deserves it. O My soul, trust you in

Him!

25, 26. To whom, then, will you liken Me, or shall I be equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and behold who has created these things that bring out their host by number: He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might for that He is strong in power; not one is missing. There is no other power that hangs yon lamps of Heaven in their places and keeps them always burning, except the power of His Word! This whole round earth of ours hangs on nothing but the bidding of the Most High. I remember how Luther used to console himself in troublous times by saying, "Look at yonder arch of blue. There is not a pillar to hold it up, and yet, whoever saw the skies fall?" Nothing but the power of God keeps them up. My Soul, if all the worlds were made by His Word, cannot you hang on that Word? If all things exist but by the will and Word of your Father, can He not support you, and can you not trust Him? Oh, this confidence in the invisible and eternal ought to

be natural to us as God's children! But, alas, here is our great sin—that we frequently trust in an arm of flesh and forget our God!

27. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? He forgets no star among the myriads, no creature among the multitudes. He has marked in His book the track of every single atom of air and every particle of dust, and every drop of spray—how can you be forgotten?

28, 29. Have you not known? Have you not heard that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth faints not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He gives power to the faint. He loves to pour out into empty vessels. He does not give His power to the strong, but, "He gives power to the faint," and the more faint you are, the more room for His strength. Trust in Him! If you are so burdened that you cannot stand, lean on Him! The more you lean, the better will He love you. He delights to help His people. "He gives power to the faint."

29- 30. And to them that have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. We sometimes wish that we were as young as some, and that we had all their overflowing spirit—all the effervescence of their juvenile ardor. Ah, well, we need not wish for it, for mere mortal power shall droop and die—and earthly vigor cease—while such as trust the Lord shall find their strength increased. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall."

31. But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles—That is very much when they begin. They are all for flying and God gives them a glorious flight, and they are so happy and so delighted. But they will do better than that!

31. They shall run, and not be weary. Is that better than flying? Yes it is—a better pace to keep up, but God enables His servants at length to stay along the road of duty and to run in it. But there is even a better pace than that!

31. And they shall walk and not faint. It is a good steady pace. It is the pace that Enoch kept when he walked with God. Sometimes it is easier to take a running spurt than it is to keep on, day by day—walk, walk, walk in the sobriety of Christian conversation. Many under excitement can run a race, but it is the best of all to be able to steadily to walk on, walking with God the Lord. The Lord bring us to that pace! "They shall walk and not faint."

JOHN 129-42.

Verse 29. The next day John saw Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world. John lost no time. He had no sooner discovered the Savior than he bore witness of Him. "The next day." As soon as ever his eyes lighted upon Jesus, he had his testimony ready for Him. "Behold!" he said, "the Lamb of God."

30- 33. This is He of whom I said, After me comes a Man which is preferred before me: for He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He should manifest to Israel, therefore

am I come baptizing with water. And John bore record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not. At first.

33, 34. But He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God. Notice how very clear John is. There is no mistaking him. He repeated himself lest there should be any possibility of an error. And he gives the detail of the mode by which he recognized the Savior, in order that all might be persuaded to accept Jesus as in very truth the Messiah and the Son of God! And so we are to preach very plainly—not with enticing words of men's wisdom—but with demonstration of the Spirit and with power. What have we to conceal? No, we have everything to reveal and our business is that men should be convinced that Jesus is the Christ—and should come and put their trust in Him.

35, 36. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God! There is no objection to preaching the same sermon twice if it is on such a matter as this! "Behold the Lamb of God," he said one day. And the next day he did not vary the phraseology. He had no new metaphor—no new figure with which to set forth Christ, but, as striking a nail upon the head and the same nail will help to fasten it, and may do more service than bringing out a new nail, so he gets to the same word and the same subject—"Behold the Lamb of God."

37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. They went beyond their teacher. And oh, what a mercy it is if our hearers can go Christward far beyond us! John was well content to be left behind if they followed Jesus, and so may any minister of Christ rejoice if his people will follow Jesus, even if they go far beyond his attainments.

38. Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and said unto them, What do you seek? Christ wants intelligent followers, so He asks the question, "What do you seek?"

38, 39. They said unto Him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where do You dwell? He said unto them, Come and see. Which is often His answer to enquirers—"Come and see." "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good." Learn by experience. Do not merely hear what I say, but come and see.

39-42. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother, Simon, and said unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. This is how the Kingdom began to grow—by individual effort. "Andrew found Simon"—one convert must bring another—"and He brought Him to Jesus."

42. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, You are Simon, the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A Stone. There was a meaning in the change

of names, for there was about to be a change of character— the timid son of a dove soon to become a very rock for the Church!