

In Him Like Him

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately exhorts believers to demonstrate their union with Christ by living a life that faithfully imitates His holiness and example.

Scripture: 1 John 2:6, Romans 8:35, Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 2:9, John 13:14-15, Matthew 16:24, John 14:15

Topics: "Union With Christ", "Holiness"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the vital Christian truth of abiding in Christ and the resulting obligation to imitate His holy life. He emphasizes the believer's union with Christ as the foundation for living a life that honors God and glorifies Jesus. Spurgeon challenges listeners to examine their walk with Christ and to allow the Holy Spirit to produce genuine holiness and conformity to Christ's example. This sermon calls all who profess faith to live consistently with their profession and invites those not yet in Christ to find refuge and salvation in Him.

Transcript

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."—1 John 2:6.

He that saith he abideth in him: "—that is exactly what every Christian does say. He cannot be a Christian unless this be true of him, and he cannot fully enjoy his religion unless he assuredly knows that he is in Christ, and can boldly say as much. We must be in Christ, and abidingly in Christ, or else We are not saved in the Lord. It is our union with the Christ that makes us Christians: by union with him as our life we truly live,—live in the favour of God.—We are in Christ, dear brethren, as the manslayer was in the city of refuge: I hope that we can say we abide in him as our sanctuary and shelter. We have fled for refuge to him who is the hope set before us in the gospel; even as David and his men sheltered themselves in the eaves of En-gedi, so we hide ourselves in Christ. We each one sing, and our heart goes with the words—

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in thee."

We have entered into Christ as into the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, as guest; into a banquet-hall, as returning travellers into their home. And now we abide—in Christ in this sense, that we are joined to him : as the stone is, in the wall, as the wave is in the sea, as the branch is in the vine, so are we in Christ. As the branch receives all its sap from the stem, so all the sap of spiritual life flows from

Christ into us. If we were separated from him, we should be as branches cut off from the vine, only fit to be gathered up for the fire, and to be burned. So that we abide in Christ as our shelter, our home, and our life. Today we remain in Christ, and hope for ever to remain in him, as our Head. Ours is no transient union; while he lives as our Head we shall remain his members. We are nothing apart from him. As a finger is nothing without the head, as the whole body is nothing without the head, so should we be nothing without our Lord Jesus Christ. But we are in him vitally, and therefore we dare ask the question, "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?"

Beloved, since we, then, are the people who say that we abide in him, it is upon us that the obligation of the text falls: we ought ourselves also so to walk even as he walked. A Bible ought has great weight with a conscientious man. Ought it to be so? Then it shall be so, God helping me. If we say we must do. If we talk, we must walk, or it will, be mere talk. If we make the profession of abiding in Christ, we must prove it by our practice of walking with Christ. If we say that we are in Christ and abide in him, we must take care that our life and character are conformed to Christ, or else we shall be making an empty boast. This is true of every man who says he is in Christ, for the text is put in the most general and absolute manner: be the man old or young, rich or poor, learned or simple, pastor or hearer, it is incumbent upon him to live like Christ if he professes to live in Christ.

The first thing about a Christian is initiation, initiation into Christ: the next thing is imitation, the imitation of Christ. We cannot be Christians unless we are in Christ; and we are not truly in Christ unless in him we live and move and have our being, and the life of Christ is lived over again by us according to our measure. "Be ye imitators of God, as dear children." It is the nature of children to imitate their parents. Be ye imitators; of Christ as good soldiers, who cannot have a better model for their soldierly life than their Captain and Lord. Ought we not to be very grateful to Christ that he deigns to be our example? If he were not perfectly able to meet all our other wants, if he were an expiation and nothing else, we should glory in him as our atoning sacrifice, for we always put that to the front, and magnify the virtue of his precious blood beyond everything: but at the same time we need an example, and it is delightful to find it where we find our pardon and justification. They that are saved from the death of sin need to be guided in the life of holiness, and it is infinitely condescending on the part of Christ that he becomes an example to such poor creatures as we are. It is said to have been the distinguishing mark of Caesar as a soldier that he never said to his followers "Go!" but he always said "Come!" Of Alexander, also, it was noted that in weary marches he was sure to be on foot with his warriors, and in fierce attack's he always was in the van. The most persuasive sermon is the example which leads the way. This certainly is one trait in the Good Shepherd's character, "when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them." If Jesus bids us do anything, he first does it himself. He would have us wash one another's feet; and this is the argument—"Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Shall we not do as he does whom we profess to follow? He has left his footprints that we may set our feet in them. Will we not joyfully fix our feet upon this royal road?

That is our theme at this time. We do many of us say that we are in Christ: let us hear how obliged we are by this to walk even as he walked. Oh, Holy Spirit, let us feel the weight of the sacred obligation!

But I stop a minute. I know that there are some here who cannot say that they are in Christ. Then, if you are not in Christ, you are out of Christ; and out of Christ your position is dangerous, terrible, ruinous. If we saw a man hanging over a deep pit, if we saw a man exposed to a sea of fire, and likely to perish in it, all our tenderest emotions would begin to flow, and we should pray in an agony of spirit, "Oh, God, save this

man from danger!" My brethren, there are some among us tonight who are in the utmost danger; in a most emphatic sense they are lost already, for they are without God, and without Christ, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. Oh, my hearers, how shall I speak of you without tears? Poor souls, abiding under the wrath of God! Poor souls! The mercy is that you are not past hope. There is an arm that can reach you: there is a voice that calls you—calls you even now; hear it: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and besides me there is none else." Can you not even now give one look to him who died for you? Will you not turn the eye of faith that way, and trust him who was nailed to the tree on your behalf? God grant that you may, and then I may include you also in the blessed instruction of the text. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

I. I shall first of all ask you to CONSIDER HOW THIS OBLIGATION IS PROVED. Let us spend a few minutes over the question, Why ought we to walk as Jesus did?

When we read the word "ought," if we are honest men, we begin to look about us and to make enquiries as to the reason and the measure of this obligation. An "ought" is a compulsion to a true heart. There is a "needs be" to every godly man that he should do what he ought.

What, then, is the ground upon which this "ought" is fixed?

First, it is the design of God that those who are in Christ should walk as Christ walked. It is a part of the original covenant purpose; for "whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." That is the drift of the plan of grace, the aim of the covenant. Grace looks towards holiness, that there should be a people called forth to whom Christ should be the elder brother, the firstborn among many brethren. You certainly have not had the purpose of God fulfilled in you, dear friend, unless you have been conformed to the image of his dear Son. "He hath chosen us in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." This is the aim of election; this is the object of redemption; this is the fruit of calling; this is the concomitant of justification; this is the evidence of adoption; this is the earnest of glory; that we should be holy, even as Christ is holy, and in this respect should wear the lineaments of the Son of God. He hath given his own Son to die for us, that we may die to sin; he has given him to live that we may live like him. In every one of us the Father desires to see Christ, that so Christ may be glorified in every one of us. Do you not feel this to be an imperative necessity to be laid upon you? Would you have the Lord miss his purpose? You are chosen of God to this end, that you should be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, zealous of good works," and what is this but that you should walk even as he walked? Observe,

again, another point of this necessity: it is necessary to the mystical Christ that we should walk as he walked, for we are joined unto the Lord Jesus in one body. Now, Christ cannot be made a monster that would be a blasphemous notion. And yet if any man had eyes, ears, hands, or other members that were not conformable to the head, he would be a strange being. The mouth of a lion, the eye of an ox, the feathers of a bird—these things would have no consistency with the head of a man. We read of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, that it had a head of fine gold, but legs of iron, and feet part of iron and part of clay. Surely, Christ's spiritual body is not compounded of such discordant elements. No, no. He must be all of a piece. The mystical body must be the most beautiful and precious production of God; for the church is Christ's body, "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." And shall that mysterious fulness be something defiled, deformed, full of sin, subject to Satan? God forbid! "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy," and as your HEAD is holy, so be ye, as members of his body, holy too. Ought it not to be so? Does anybody raise a question? Does not every member of Christ, by the very fact that he is joined to

him by living union, feel at once that he must walk even as Christ walked?

And this, beloved, again, must all be the fruit of the one Spirit that is in Christ and in us. The Father anointed Christ of old with the same anointing, which rests on us in our measure. The Holy Spirit descended upon him, and rested upon him, and we have an unction from the same Holy One. The Spirit of God has anointed all the chosen of God who are regenerated, and he dwelleth with them and in them. Now, the Spirit of God in every case works to the same result. It cannot be supposed that the Spirit of God in any case produces unholiness: the thought were blasphemy. The fruit of the Spirit is everything that is delightful, right, and good towards God, and generous towards man. The Spirit of God, wherever He works, works according to the mind of God; and God is hymned as "Holy, holy, holy," by those pure spirits who know him best. He is altogether without spot or trace of sin, and so shall we be when the Spirit's work is done. If, then, the Spirit of God dwell in you (and if it do not, you are not in Christ), it must work in you conformity to Christ that you should walk even as he walked.

Perhaps further argument is not needed; but I would have true Christians remember that this is one article of the agreement which we make with Christ when we become his disciples. It is taken for granted that when we enter the service of Jesus we by that act and deed undertake by his help to follow his example. "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." You know, if any man love Christ, he must follow him:—"If ye love me, keep my commandments." When we took Christ's cross to be our salvation we took it also to be our heavenly burden. When we yielded ourselves up to Christ to be saved by him, we in spirit renounced every sin. We felt that we had come out from under the yoke of Satan, and that we made no reserve for the lusts of the flesh that we might obey them, but bowed our necks to the yoke of the Lord Jesus. We put ourselves into Christ's hands unreservedly, and we said, "Lord, sanctify me, and then use me. Take my body and all its members; take my mind and all its faculties; take my spirit and all the new powers which thou hast bestowed upon me with it; and let all these be thine. Reign in me; rule me absolutely, sovereignly, always and alone. I do not ask to be my own, for I am not my own, I am bought with a price." After we have learned the grand truth that, "if one died for all, then all died," we infer that "Christ died for all, that we that live might not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him that died for us, and rose again." Are we not, then, to be true to this blessed compact? "I do remember my faults this day," says one. Ay, but remember also the vows that still engage you. Do not desire to escape from the sacred bond. 'This day remember the Lord to whom you dedicated yourself in the days of your youth, perhaps long, years ago, and again entreat him to take full possession of the purchased possession, and hold it against all comers, for ever. So it ought to be. He that says, "I am in him" ought also so to walk even as he walked. Obey the sacrifice of Jesus, yield yourselves as living sacrifices; by your hope of being saved by him put your whole being into his hands to love and serve him all your days.

For, once more, inasmuch as we are in Christ, we are now bound to live to Christ's glory, and this is a great means of glorifying Christ. What can we do to glorify Christ if we do not walk even as he walked? If I came and preached to you, and if I had the tongues of men and of angels, yet if I did not seek to do as my Master did, what avails all that I can say? It is but "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." You know what men say to unholy preachers: they bid them be silent or be consistent. Unholy ministers are a derision, and a scoff, and a by-word. And so it is with unholy Christians, too. You may teach your children at home, or teach them in the Sunday-school class; but if they see your lives to be Christless, prayerless, godless, they will not learn any good from you. They will rather learn from what you do amiss, than from what you say that is right. Do you blame them that it is so? Are not actions far more forcible than words? Suppose

you church-members are unjust in your trade; suppose that in your common conversation you are loose; suppose that in your acts you are licentious or untrue; what does the world say of your Christianity? Why, it becomes to them a thing of contempt. They sniff at it. It is so much dung and sweepings of the street to them, and so it ought to be. In the early ages some of the worst opponents of Christianity used to wing their shafts with the inconsistencies of Christian professors, and they were wise in their generation. One of them said, "Where is that catholic holiness of which we have often heard so much?" and another said, "We heard of these people that they love their Christ, and love other men so that they would even die for love of their brethren; but many of them do not love as well as the heathen whom they despise." I dare say there was a good deal of slander and scandal in what they said; but I am also afraid that, if it were said today, there would be a vast deal of sorrowful truth in it. Christian love is by no means so plentiful as it might be, nor holy living, either. Is not this the thing that weakens the preaching, of the gospel—the want of living the gospel? If all the professed Christians who live in London really walked as Christ walked, would not the salt have more effect upon the corrupt mass than the stuff which is now called salt seems to have? We preach here in the pulpit; but what can we do, unless you preach yonder at home? It is you preaching in your shops, in your kitchens, in your nurseries, in your parlours, in the streets, which will tell on the masses. This is the preaching—the best preaching in the world, for it is seen as well as heard. I heard one say he liked to see men preach with their feet; and this is it, "they ought also so to walk even as Christ walked." No testimony excels that which is borne in ordinary life. Christ ought to be glorified by us, and therefore we ought to be like him, for if we are not, we cannot glorify him, but must dishonor him.

Now, that is my first point. Consider how this obligation is proved, and when you have weighed the argument pray the Holy Ghost to make you yield to its gentle pressure.

II. Now, secondly, CONSIDER WHEREIN THIS WALKING WITH CHRIST AS HE WALKED CONSISTS. Here is a wide subject. I have a sea before me with as much sailing, room as Noah in the ark. I can only just point out the direction in which you should sail if you would make a prosperous voyage.

First, brothers to put it all together in one word, the first thing that every Christian has to see to is holiness. I will not try at any great length to explain what that word means, but it always sounds to me as if it explained itself. You know what wholeness is—a thing, without a crack, or flaw, or break; complete, entire, uninjured, whole. Well, that is the main meaning of holy. The character of God is perfectly holy; in it nothing is lacking; nothing is redundant. When a thing, is complete it is whole, and this applied to moral and spiritual things gives you the inner meaning of "holy." When a man is healthy, perfectly healthy, in spirit, soul, and body, then he is perfectly holy; for sin is a moral disorder, and righteousness is the right state of every faculty. The man whose spiritual health is altogether right is right towards God, right towards himself, right towards men, right towards time, right towards eternity. He is right towards the first table of the law, and right towards the second table. He is an all-round man; he is a whole man, a holy man. Truth is within him; truth is spoken by him; truth is acted by him. Righteousness is in him; he thinks the right thing, and chooses that which is according to the law of uprightness. There is justice in him; he abhors that which is evil. There is goodness in him; he follows after that which will benefit his fellow-men. I cannot spare time to tell you all that the word "holy" means; but if you wish to see holiness, look at Christ. In him you see a perfect character, an all-round character. He is the perfect one; be ye like him in all holiness.

We must go a little into detail; so I say, next, one main point in which we ought to walk according to the walk of our great Exemplar is obedience. Our Lord Jesus Christ took upon himself the form of a servant; and what service it was that he rendered! "He was a son; yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered." And what obedience that dear Son of God rendered to the Father! He did not come to do his

own will, but the will of him that sent him. He yielded himself up to come under law to God, and to do the Fathers will. Now in this respect we ought also to walk even as he walked. We have not come into the world to do what we like, to possess what we choose, or to say, "That is my notion, and therefore so shall it be." Sin promised freedom, and brought us bondage; grace now binds us, and ensures us liberty. Obedience is the law of every spiritual nature. It is the Lord's will that in his house his word should be the supreme law, for so only can our fallen natures be restored to their original glory. Set the wandering stars in their spheres, and rule them by the majestic sway of the sun, and then they will keep their happy estate, but not else. Understanding, heart, life, lip, everything, is now to enter into the service of God, even the Father, and it is to be ours to say, "Lord, show me what thou wouldest have me to do." Surely, beyond any other quality, we see in the career of the Son of God the perfection of self-abnegation. No man was ever so truly free as Jesus, and yet no man was so fully subservient to the heavenly will. Never saw these seas a pilot so able to steer according to his own judgment, and never one so carefully to follow the channel as marked down in the chart. His was the unique originality of absolute obedience. Dear friends, you see how it ought to be with you also. It is ours to walk in cheerful subservience to the mind of the Father, even as Jesus did. Does this strike you as an easy thing? It is child's work, certainly; but assuredly it is not child's play.

Such a life would necessarily be one of great activity, for the life of Jesus was intensely energetic. The life of Christ was as full as it could hold. After he had been developed and disciplined by thirty years of seclusion, he showed himself among men as one moved to vehemence with love: "he was clad with zeal as with a cloak." From the day of his baptism till his death he went about doing good. It is wonderful what was packed into about three years: each action had a world of meaning within its own self, and there were thousands of such acts; each sermon was a complete revelation, and every day heard him pour forth such sermons. His biography is made up of the essence of life. Some one remarks that it is wonderful that he did not begin his active life when he was younger. We reply, that it is beautiful that he did not, because he was not called to it, and he was best obeying the Father by living in obscurity. Those thirty years at Nazareth were thirty wonderful years of obedience—obedience; tested by obscurity, patience, restraint, and perhaps dulness. Who among us would find such obedience easy? Would we not far rather rush into notice and make to ourselves a name? Some of us, perhaps, never learned the obedience of being quiet—but it is a wonderful one. Oh, for more of it! Do we know the obedience of being hidden when our light seems needed?—the obedience of going into the desert for forty years, like Moses, with nothing, to do but wait upon God till God shall put us in commission? There is a wonderful service in waiting till the order comes for us actively to be at it. Samuel said, "To obey is better than sacrifice;" it is in fact better than anything which we can possibly present to God. But when our Lord was at length loosed from his obscurity, with what force he sped along his life-way. How he spent himself! It was a candle burning not only at both ends, but altogether. He not only had zeal burning at his heart, but, like a sheet of flame, it covered him from head to foot. There is never an idle hour in the life of Christ. It is wonderful how he sustained the toil. Perhaps he measured out his zeal and his open industry by the fact that he was only to be for a short time here below. It might not be possible to others that they should do as much as he did in so short a space, because they are intended to live longer here, and must not destroy future usefulness by present indiscretion: but still, activity was the rule of our Master's existence. At it, always at it, altogether at it, spending and being spent for his Father; such was his mode of walking, among men. Oh, friends, if we, indeed, are in him, we ought also so to walk even. as he walked! Wake up, you lazy ones!

Next, we ought to walk as Christ did in the matter of self-denial. Of course, in this work of self-denial we are not called to imitate Christ in offering up ourselves as a propitiatory sacrifice. That would be a vain

intrusion into things which are his peculiar domain. The self-denials which we practise should be such as he prescribes us. There is a will-worship which is practised in the Church of Rome of self-denials which are absurd, and must, I think, be hateful in the sight of God rather than pleasing to him. Saint Bernard was a man whom I admire to the last degree, and I count him to be one of the Lord's choice ones; yet in the early part of his life there is no doubt that he lessened his powers of usefulness to a large extent by the emaciation which he endured, and the way in which he brought himself to death's door. At times he was incapable of activity by reason of the weakness which he had incurred through fasting, and colds and exposure. There is no need to inflict useless torture upon the body. When did the Saviour thus behave himself? Point me to a single mortification of a needless kind. Enough self-denials come naturally in every Christian man's way to make him try whether he can deny himself in very deed for the Lord's sake. You are thus tested when you are put in positions where you might get gain by an unrighteous act, or win fame by withholding a truth, or earn love and honour by pandering to the passions of those about you. May you have grace enough to say, "No; it cannot be. I love not myself, but my Lord. I seek not myself, but Christ. I desire to propagate nothing but his truth, and not my own ideas": then will you have exhibited the self-denial of Jesus. These self-denials will sometimes be hard to flesh and blood. And then in the Church of God to be able to give all your substance, to devote all your time, to lay out all your ability—this is to walk as Jesus walked. When weary and worn, still to be busy; to deny, yourself things which may be allowable, but which if allowable to you would be dangerous to others—this also is like the Lord. Such self-denial as may be helpful to the weak you ought to practise. Think what Christ would do in such a case, and do it; and, whenever you can glorify him by denying yourself, do it. So walk as he did who made himself of no reputation, but took upon himself the form of a servant. and who, though he was rich, brought himself down to poverty for our sakes, that we might be rich unto God. Think of that.

Another point in which we ought to imitate Christ most certainly is that of lowliness. I wish that all Christians did this. When I see some Christian women dressed out—well, like women of the world, though not with half a worldling's taste, and when I see men so big that they cannot speak to poor people, as if they were made of something better than ordinary flesh and blood; when I notice a haughty, high, hectoring disposition anywhere, it grates upon my feelings, and makes me wonder whether these blunderers hope to go to the heaven of the lowly. The Lord Jesus would never have been half as big as some of his followers are. What great folk some of his disciples are, as compared with him! He was lowly, meek, gentle, a man who so loved the souls of others that he forgot himself. You never detect in the Lord Jesus Christ any tendency towards pride or self-exaltation. Quite the reverse: he is ever compassionate and condescending to men of low estate.

And then note again another point, and that is his great tenderness, and gentleness, and readiness to forgive. His dying words ought to ring in the ear of all who find it hard to pass by affronts, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Did he not set us an example of bearing and forbearing? "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again." For every curse he gave a blessing,.. You cannot be Christians if this spirit of love is foreign to you. "Oh," say you, "we endorse the confession." I do not care. You must love your enemies, or you will die with the Creed in your throats. "Oh," say you, "we are regular in our pews, hearing the gospel." I do not care; you must forgive them that trespass against you, or you will go from your pews to perdition "Oh, but we have been baptized, and we come to the communion." I do not care even about that; for unless you are made meek and lowly in heart you will not find rest unto your souls. Pride goeth not before salvation, but before destruction; and a haughty spirit is no prophecy of elevation, but the herald of a fall. Take care, take care, you that say that you are in Christ; you ought also to walk in all the lowliness and in all the tenderness of Christ, or else at the end you will be discovered to

be none of his. Hard, cruel, unrelenting, iron-hearted professors will no more go to heaven than the hogs they fatten.

There is one little big word which tells us more than all this about how Christ walked, and that is the word "love." Jesus was incarnate love. "God is love," but God is a spirit, therefore if you wish to see love embodied, look at Christ. He loves the little children, and suffers them to come to him. He loves the widow, and he is tender to her, and raises her dead son. He loves the sinners, and they draw near to him. He loves all sinful and tempted and tried ones, and therefore he comes to seek and to save. He loves the Father first, and then for the Father's sake he loves the myriads of men. Do you love nobody? Do you live within yourself? Are you immured within your own ribs? Is self all your world? Then you will go to hell. There is no help for it; for the place of unloving spirits is the bottomless pit. Only he that loves can live in heaven, for heaven is love: and you cannot go to glory unless you have learned to love, and to find it your very life to do good to those about you.

Let me add to all this, that he who says that Christ is in him ought also to live as Christ lived in secret. And how was this?

His life was spent in abounding devotion. Ah, me! I fear I shall condemn some here when I remind them of the hymn we just now sang—

"Cold mountains and the midnight air

Witnessed the fervour of his prayer."

If the perfect Christ could not live without prayer, how can such poor imperfect ones as we are live without it? He had no sin within him, and yet he had need to pray. He was pure and holy, and yet he must needs wait upon God all day long, and often speak with his Father; and then when the night came, and others went to their beds, he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed. If the Lord Jesus be in you, you must walk as he walked in that matter.

And, then, think of his delight in God. How wonderful was Christ's delight in his God! I can never think of his life as an unhappy one. He was, it is true, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"; but still there was a deep spring of wondrous happiness in the midst of his heart, which made him always blessed; for he said to his Father, "I delight to do thy will, my God! Yea, thy law is within heart." He delighted in God. Many a sweet night he spent in those prayer-times of his in fellowship with the Father. Why, it was that which prepared him for the agony of his bloody sweat, and for the "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Those love-visits, those near and dear communings which his holy heart had with the Father were his secret meat and drink. And you and I also must delight in God. This charming duty is far too much neglected. Strange that this honey should so seldom be in men's mouths! Listen to this text, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Many a man says, "I should like to have the desires of my heart" Brother, here is the royal road thereto, the King's ascent to his treasury—"Delight thyself also in the Lord." But, listen. it is very likely you would not obtain the desire that is now in your heart if you did that; for he that delights himself in God rises above the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and comes to desire that which God desires, and therefore it is that he wins the desire of his heart. But, oh, the pleasure, the joy, the bliss of delighting in God! How many times have I sung to myself that last dear stanza of the psalm, wherein the inspired poet sings—

"For yet I know I shall him praise,

Who graciously to me,

The health is of my countenance,

Yea, mine own God is he.”

Oh, what a pleasure! “Mine own God is he.” Rich men glory in wealth, famous men in valour, great men in honour, and I in “mine own God.” There is nothing about God but what is delightful to a saint. The infinite God is infinitely delightful to his people. Once get really to know God and to be like him, and even his sternest attributes—his power, his justice, his indignation against sin—will come to be delightful to you. Those men who are cavilling at what God does, questioning over what God has revealed, do not know him, for to know him is to adore him. Oh, brethren, let us find our pleasure, our treasure, our heaven, our all, in the Lord our God, even as our Lord Jesus did. In this thing let us walk even as he walked.

I have not quite done. Dear friends, we ought to walk in holy contentment. Jesus was perfectly content with his lot. When the foxes had holes and the birds of the air had nests, and he had not where to lay his head, yet he never murmured, but found rest in pursuing his life-work. The cravings of covetousness and pinings of ambition never touched our Lord. Friends, if you do, indeed, say that you abide in him, I pray you be of the same contented spirit. “I have learned,” said the apostle, as if it were a thing which had to be taught, “in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”

In a word, Christ lived above this world; let us walk as he walked. Christ lived for God, and for God alone; let us live after his fashion. And Christ persevered in such living; he never turned aside from it at all; but as he lived so he died, still serving his God, obedient to his Father’s will, even unto death. May our lives be a mosaic of perfect obedience, and our deaths the completion of the fair design. From our Bethlehem to our Gethsemane may our walk run parallel with the pathway of the Well-beloved! Oh, Holy Spirit, work us to this sacred pattern!

III. I close now by saying, in the last place, consider, dear friends, WHAT IS NEEDFUL TO ALL THIS.

First, it is needful to have a nature like that of Christ. You cannot give out sweet waters so long as the fountains are impure. “Ye must be born again.” There is no walking with Jesus in newness of life unless we have a new heart and a right spirit. See to it, dear friends, that your nature is renewed—that the Holy Ghost has wrought in you a resurrection from among the dead; for, if not, your walk and conversation will savour of death and corruption. A new creature is essential to likeness to Christ: it is not possible that the carnal mind should wear the image of Jesus.

That being done, the next thing that is necessary is a constant anointing of the Holy Spirit. Can any Christian here do without the Holy Spirit? Then I am afraid that he is no Christian. But, as for us, we feel every day that we must cry for a fresh visitation of the Spirit, a renewed sense of indwelling, a fresh anointing from the Holy One of Israel, or else we cannot walk as Christ walked.

And then, again, there must be in us a strong resolve that we will walk as Christ walked; for our Lord himself did not lead in that holy life without stern resolution. He set his face like a flint that he would do the right; and he did the right. Do not, I pray you, be led astray by thoughtlessly following your fellow-men: it is a poor, sheepish business, that running in crowds. Dare to be singular dare to stand alone. Stand to it firmly that you will follow Christ. A Christian man in a discussion attempted to defend the truth, but his opponent grew angry, and cried out vehemently again and again, “Hear me! Hear me!” At last the good

man answered, "No, I shall not hear you, nor shall you hear me; but let us both sit down and hear the word of the Lord." And that is the thing to do, brethren, to be hearing Christ and following him; not I to learn of you, nor you of me, but both of Christ: so shall we end all controversy in a blessed agreement at his feet. God help us to get there.

And so, once again, I add that if we want to walk as Christ walked, we must have much communion with him. We cannot possibly get to be like Christ except by being with him. I wish that we could rise to be so much like the Saviour that we should resemble a certain ancient saint who died a martyr's death, to whom the world said, "What are you?" He said, "I am a Christian." They asked, "What trade do you follow?" And he said, "I am a Christian." They inquired, "What language do you speak?" And he said, "I am a Christian." "But what treasures have you?" said they; and he replied, "I am a Christian." They asked him what friends he had, and he said, "I am a Christian;" for all he was, and all he had, and all he wished to be, and all he hoped to be, were all wrapped up in Christ. If you live with Christ you will be absorbed by him, and he will embrace the whole of your existence: and, in consequence, your walk will be like his.

Take care that you do not in all things copy any but Christ; for if I set my watch by the watch of one of my friends, and he sets his watch by that of another friend, we may all be wrong together. If we shall, each one, take his time from the sun, we shall all be right. There is nothing like going to the fountain-head. Take your lessons in holiness, not from a poor erring disciple, but from the infallible Master. God help you to do so.

A person has written to me this morning to say that he has painted my portrait, but that he cannot finish it until he sees me. I should think not. Certainly you cannot paint a portrait of Christ in your own life unless you see him—see him clearly, see him continually. You may have it general notion of what Christ is like, and you may put a good deal of colour into your copy; but I am sure you will fail unless you see the grand original. You must get to commune with Jesus. You know what we did when we went to school. Our schoolmasters were not quite so wise then as schoolmasters are now. They wrote at the top of the page a certain line for us to follow, and a poor following it was. When I wrote my first line I copied the writing-master's model, but when I wrote the next line I copied my copy of the top line; so that when I reached the bottom of the page I produced a copy of my copy of my copy of my copy of the top line. Thus my handwriting fed upon itself, and was nothing bettered but rather grew worse. So one man copies Christ, perhaps; a friend who hears him preach copies him, and his wife at home copies the hearer, and somebody copies her; and so it goes on all down the line, till we all miss that glorious hand-writing which Jesus has come to teach us. Keep your eye on Christ, dear brother. Never mind me: never mind your friend: never mind the old doctor that you have been hearing so long. Look to Jesus, and to him alone. We have had our sects and our divisions all through that copying of the lines of the boys, instead of looking to the top-line that the Master wrote. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked" May the Spirit of God cause us to do it! Amen and Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 John 2.

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