

The Knowledge of Good and Evil

Preached at Providence Chapel, Eden Street, London, on Tuesday Evening, August 26, 1845

"For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." Romans 7:19

Doubts will sometimes cross the mind as to the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures; but doubts will more often cross the mind as to the truth and reality of our own experience. Now there are certain considerations that are calculated to meet these doubts, whether they arise from infidelity, or whether they spring from unbelief. For instance: if we find that several children of God in distinct places, and under different circumstances, all testify to the same feelings, and if we find in our hearts the same feelings, we have so far an evidence that they are genuine. Again; if we find the experience of these people and our experience, as similar to theirs, recorded in the Word of God, it is a confirmation, not merely of the truth of the Scripture, but also of the truth of their and our experience.

I will illustrate this by what has occurred to me since I have been in London. A short time ago, I went to see a poor woman who has been bedridden more than four years, and during that space of time has scarcely ever been free from pain for a quarter of an hour. Now, she told me that all the bodily pains she had undergone were as nothing compared to the inward conflict produced by a body of sin and death struggling against the life of God in her soul. I can say the same. I have had my trials; trials of body, trials of circumstances, trials of mind, trials of different kinds; but I never found any trial equal to the internal conflict caused by a body of sin and death. A short time afterwards, I went to

see another bedridden female who had been confined to a bed of languishing about the same space of time. Talking of her bodily sufferings, without my mentioning what I had felt, she said, "All this pain and languishing is nothing compared to the pain I feel from the workings of sin in my carnal mind." There was the same distinct independent evidence, and the same response in my bosom.

When I go to the Word of God, I find the Apostle Paul expressing exactly the same feelings, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" When he was suffering under persecution, there was no such piteous cry. When the stones came thick and fast round his head, we read of no such mournful groan. Yea, he tells us, he took "pleasure in infirmities, in persecutions, in reproaches for Christ's sake." They wrung no cry from his bosom. In the jail at Philippi, with his back sore with stripes, and his feet fast in the stocks, he and his fellow-prisoner sang praises unto God. (Acts 16:25.) But the workings of sin in his carnal mind, the opposition of his depraved nature to the grace of God—it was that, and that only, which made him feel himself to be truly a "wretched man."

Now is not this a confirmation of the two points I have alluded to? Is it not, first, a striking testimony to the truth of the Scripture, when we find in it our own experience traced out? And is it not, secondly, a confirmation also of the truth and genuineness of our experience, when we find it consistent, not only with the Scripture, but also with the experience of those in whom we see distinctly the grace of God?

And this, I believe, is the great blessing which the church has derived from the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. God having inspired his holy Apostle there to write

down his own personal experience, and depict in vivid colours the inward work of the law and the pressure of the body of sin and death, it has met with such an echo and found such a response in the bosom of God's family, as to prove to them again and again a rich mine of comfort and strength.

In considering the words of the text this evening, I shall endeavour to speak upon them according to the two clauses, as they lie before us—*"The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do."*

I.—When man fell, he fell utterly. He did not fall half way, but he fell completely. And, in fact, a creature that falls at all from righteousness never can fall in any other way than completely. When the angels fell, they fell to the thorough extent of angelic nature; and when man fell, he fell to very depth of human nature. The fall of devils and the fall of man only differed in this—that the one fell to the full extent of angelic nature, and the other to the full extent of human nature. So that there is no medium, no compromise, no half way; but man in falling, fell to the very deepest point to which human nature could fall.

When the Lord is pleased, by a work of grace upon the heart, to bring his people to a knowledge of himself he bestows upon them that which is communicable of his own nature, as we read "partakers of the divine nature." Now when the Lord communicates to the soul this new nature, he gives it a new understanding; a new conscience, a new will, and new affections. The understanding of man's heart by nature is dark, depraved, benighted, and besotted; he therefore needs a new understanding, a new spiritual understanding, whereby to perceive spiritual things; for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." No natural understanding, however elevated or refined, can ever

receive, know, or appreciate spiritual things. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." This is called in Scripture, "the opening of the eyes."

But besides this, man's *conscience* by nature is seared; it cannot distinguish between good and evil; it is unable to feel the spirituality of God's law, or to distinguish things that differ; it is unable to believe that what God has commanded must be obeyed, and what God has threatened must be accomplished.

But further; man's *will* by nature is as depraved as his understanding and his conscience. This carnal will chooses and delights in evil, revels in it, and has no desire except in the gratification of self and the indulgence of its lusts. Man therefore needs a new will, that his new will may choose what God approves of, and turn away from that which he forbids; that his new will may be enlisted upon the side of God and truth, to love the things that he loves and hate the things that he hates.

Man's *affections* also, by nature are earthly, carnal, and sensual, entirely bent on the gratification of self. He therefore needs the communication of new, holy, and spiritual affections, whereby his will not merely chooses what is good, but the affections also, the tender affections of the heart flow out toward it, desire it, and centre in it.

Now this new nature that the Lord thus creates in the soul, consisting of this new understanding, new conscience, new will, and new affections, is always enlisted upon the side of God and truth. It always must approve of that which God approves; and it always must abhor that which he hates. But so long as we are in this tabernacle, we shall have our old understanding, our old conscience, our old will, and our old

affections. And these being susceptible of no amelioration, these undergoing no process whereby they are refined, purified, and made better, will always be bent upon that evil into which they fell when our first progenitor fell from original purity. Our natural understanding will always be darkened, our natural conscience always be hard, our natural will always be towards evil, and our natural affections always cleave to the world and the flesh. Hence springs the conflict. My enlightened understanding and my darkened understanding; my new conscience and my old conscience; my renewed will and my unregenerated will; my heavenly affections and my earthly affections, will always lust one against the other: "for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

The Apostle felt the conflict which springs from the inward workings of these two distinct principles in his bosom, when he said, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." If you observe he speaks of the will as enlisted on the side of God; his heart, his new heart, was bent Godward—sincerely, earnestly, and spiritually desiring to know the will of God, and do it. There was his new heart, his enlightened understanding, his spiritual conscience, and his heavenly affections all enlisted on the side of God; and yet, through the depravity of his fallen nature, he was continually drawn aside from the path in which he would fain walk, and continually diverted into that crooked road into which he ever dreaded to fall.

But let us, with somewhat more clearness and distinctness, trace out some of the particulars in which "*the good we would, we do not.*"

1. We would *worship God in spirit and in truth.* That is a good

thing. It is one of the good gifts that come down from the Father of lights; it is what every regenerated man desires to feel and follow after; it is what every quickened soul loves to perform. But when we would worship God in spirit and in truth, when we would feel that his eye is upon us, when we would pour out our heart before him in simplicity and godly sincerity, when we would offer spiritual sacrifices, and render acceptable worship, "the good that we would, we do not." Something base, carnal, filthy, or self-righteous springs out of our depraved nature which renders us utterly unable to do the things that we would. We cannot worship God as we would in spirit and in truth. It is a mercy to be able to offer spiritual worship for one five minutes—aye, shall I further limit it?—one minute! Real spiritual worship, a sensible feeling of God's presence, a heartfelt prostration of spirit before him, the pouring out of our soul simply and spiritually into his bosom—one minute's spiritual worship of this nature is worth a whole day's prayer meeting without it. But we cannot do it; it is only so far as the Lord works in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure that we can offer these spiritual sacrifices.

2. We would *believe in the Lord of life and glory*. We would receive him into our heart as our Lord and our God. We would live upon his atoning blood as our only availing sacrifice. We would trust in his propitiation for sin, as our only pardon and peace. We would look to his glorious righteousness, as the only robe in which we can stand accepted before God. But we cannot do it. No sooner does the desire to do so spring up in the heart; no sooner is there the child-like simplicity of a believing soul, to look to, trust in, and lean solely upon the bosom of the Lord of life and glory, than some infidel, unbelieving, blasphemous, obscene, daring, presumptuous, or otherwise vile thought crosses our mind, and we are utterly unable to look to and hang upon the

Lord Jesus in the way that we spiritually would.

3. We would *have a single eye to the glory of God* in all that we do. We would consult his will. We would act simply as the Lord has commanded in his word. We would have pure, spiritual, tender motives. We would have such sincerity and honesty of soul Godward, that all we say, all we think, and all we do, should spring out of singleness of eye to God's glory. This is a good that our soul at times is earnestly bent upon. But "the good that we would, we do not." Some sensual motive, some vain-glorious thought, some proud desire, some secret lusting of self after its own exaltation, springs up. Our eye becomes darkened; the glory of God is put out of sight; and we cannot do the things, we cannot speak the words, we cannot live nor act to God's glory as we would.

4. We would (and it is a good thing to do so) *make the word of God our rule and guide in all things*. We would lay it down as a pattern to which our lives should be conformed; we would desire to obey its precepts, and implicitly follow its commands with childlike faith. It is a thing that we desire to do; an attainment that we breathe after in the movements of our soul Godward. But self-will often crosses the holy word of God; self-will fights against the pure motive that works in the spiritual mind, desiring that God's will should be our will. The attempt is defeated; the flower is crushed in the bloom before it expands; it does not last long enough to become solid fruit; but a chilling blast out of the mouth of self withers the bud before it opens into blossom.

5. We would *feel the Lord's presence in our soul*. We would have testimony upon testimony that we are the Lord's. We would have smiles, kisses, and embracements from the Lord of life and glory. We would have sign upon sign, token upon token, that we are interested in his precious love and blood. This is a good thing. It is good that the heart should thus be

established with grace. But we cannot do the things that we would; we cannot procure these love smiles, love kisses, love testimonies, and love embracements. Sometimes our heart is so hard, our mind so dark, and our affections so wandering from the Lord, that we have not even a desire to feel in our souls the presence of him whose love is heaven begun below.

6. We would desire (and it is a good thing to desire it, for it is a part of that which springs from the Author of every good thing in the heart) *to have the mind and likeness of Jesus stamped upon our soul*. We would desire to be led into a fellowship with his sufferings, and to be made conformable unto his death. We would put on his holy image. We would be clothed with humility after his pattern. We would walk in his footsteps who was meek and lowly in heart. But we cannot do the good that we would. We cannot, as we fain would, have stamped upon our mind the likeness and image of Jesus; and if we have it for a few moments stamped upon our hearts, it is like a child writing his name upon the sand by the sea-shore; the first wave that comes blots its out, and leaves not a trace behind. So, if for a few moments we feel gentle, humble, quiet, meek-hearted, and have communion with the Lord of life and glory in his sufferings; if a trickling tear sometimes distils from the surcharged eye; if there be some melting sensations towards the suffering, bleeding Lamb of God—no sooner has the Spirit traced out that writing in our heart, that a wave of corruption comes over the marks of his gracious fingers, so that we can scarcely read the impression that his touch has left. "The good that we would, we do not."

7. *To live in every respect agreeable to the gospel*; so that when reviled, not to revile again; when smitten on the one cheek, to turn the other; to live a life of communion with God, of separation from the world, of deadness to the things

of time and sense, of real looking unto and living upon the Lord of life and glory, so as to live a life of faith and prayer carried on by the power of the Spirit in the heart—this is a good thing; we would desire to do it; we would desire to feel it; we would desire it should be carried out in our life and conversation. But alas! of this we must say also, "The good that we would, we do not."

8. *That our words might be such as should not be inconsistent with our profession;* that our actions should not be such as the enemies of the gospel, and even the friends of the gospel, might justly point out as unbecoming—is a *good* at times we desire; especially when we have been pierced by the sting of guilt, or when we have had some views of the Lord of life and glory, and have had some pantings of heart that we might know him, and the power of his resurrection. "But the good that we would, we do not." Self, pride, vain glory, sin, corruption in various shapes and forms, intertwine with every thought, speak in every word, and run as in a stream through every action. I have compared sin sometimes to the thread that marks the cordage of the ships in Her Majesty's service. Every rope and every sail has a red thread running through it; you may cut the rope or hack the sail into a thousand parts, still there is the red thread to serve as a mark to detect it if depredated. So it is spiritually. Cut your heart to pieces, tear it to threads, mutilate it into a thousand fragments—the thread of sin remains intertwining, interlacing, and intermingling itself with every thought, every desire, and every imagination. There it is; you may cut the heart to pieces, but you cannot cut that thread out.

Now it is this which makes the Lord's people such a burdened people; that makes them so oppressed in their souls as to cry out against themselves daily, and sometimes hourly, that they are what they are; that they would be spiritual, yet are

carnal; that they would be holy, yet are unholy; that they would believe in the Lord, yet are often unable to raise up any faith in his name; that they would have sweet communion with a risen Jesus, and yet have such sensual union with the things of time and sense; that they would be Christians throughout in every part, in word, thought, and deed, yet, in spite of all, feel their carnal mind, their wretched depravity intertwining, interlacing, gushing forth, contaminating with its polluted stream every thing without and within, so as to make them sigh, groan, and cry being burdened.

II.—But there is another part to this picture. We may turn it, and look at the other side of the canvass. *"The evil which I would not, that I do."* Can this be the experience of a Christian? Can this be a child of God? Can the Holy Ghost dwell in such a heart? Is this being conformed to Christ's image? Is this being a pilgrim travelling through the wilderness? Is this a sheep of Christ's flock? Is this a member of Christ's body? Is this the Spouse of the holy Lamb of God? Well may men say that the Apostle did not describe his own experience, if they felt nothing of the same kind in their own souls. If they never groaned, as Paul did, being burdened, I do not wonder that they say "this was his experience before he was converted." "Surely, such a description as this—'The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do,'—surely such words are not the words of a Christian, of an Apostle, of one who had been in the third heavens, who had known Jesus, and the power of his resurrection; surely, surely this must have been the bent of his mind before he was quickened by divine grace." So argues free-will and fleshly holiness in the heart of a pharisee. But what a mercy it is for you and me who know the plague of our heart, who sigh and groan daily being burdened by a body of sin and death, and at times feel

ourselves to be the filthiest of the filthy, the vilest of the vile, and the guiltiest of the guilty—what a mercy it is for such poor defiled worms, such crawling reptiles, such self-condemned sinners, to find that the Apostle Paul had this conflict in his bosom, and was commissioned by the Father of lights to write it down, that you and I, and such as we, may suck at this breast of consolation by having it opened up in our soul's experience.

"The evil which I would not, that I do." If you observe, the will is enlisted on the side of God; and this is the difference between one dead in sin, and one who has the life of God in his soul. "Thy people shall *be* willing in the day of thy power." A willing people! A will toward good, a will toward God, a will for things that God loves; and whatever may befall a child of God, however sin rages in him, this will remains unaltered. If he be drawn into sin, he is drawn against his will. If he do not what he desires to do, still his will is to do it; his will remains unaltered. He may fall into the deepest quagmire of sin; but still the will of his new nature is Godward, though he may be overtaken and plunged into the slough.

Let us, then, as we have attempted to describe "the good that we would, and do not," now reverse it, and look at the other side, "the evil which we would not, that we do."

1. To be continually *disbelieving and doubting* the truth of God's word, and the work of grace upon the soul; to be full of infidelity and unbelief—is not this an evil? is not this with some an almost continual evil? Is not this felt as a leprosy, a plague-spot in the hearts of many of God's quickened family? Now we would not do this. Here is the difference betwixt the believer and the unbeliever; the real infidel, and the child of God who carries infidelity in his bosom. The real unbeliever loves to disbelieve; he has no will to believe the truth. The

infidel doubts, and loves to doubt; he never wants to know truth; he never wants to get rid of his blasphemies, but rather seeks things to confirm them; any argument, any book, any person that will strengthen his infidelity, and confirm his unbelief, he will heartily grasp at; but he has no desire for anything to overcome, destroy, and remove it, nor for anything that is ever an antagonist to it. Now the child of God has a conflict from infidelity working in his mind. He feels unbelief and infidelity struggling in his heart; but does he seek for things to strengthen, or to overcome them? Does he seek for arguments to confirm his faith, or his suspicions and unbelief? This is the difference between a dead unbeliever and (shall I use the expression?) a living unbeliever. To have a principle in your flesh that cleaves to unbelief is an evil, and is felt to be an evil. The children of God do not glory in, and gloat over their corruptions; they do not nourish their unbelief, or dandle it as a babe in the arms of affection; they do not pride themselves upon it, and think the more unbelief they have the greater Christians they are. That is a libel charged upon them by their enemies. It is their grief, their sorrow, their distress; rid them of that, and you would confer upon them a blessing; take that away, and you would take away that which causes them so many groans, and so deeply exercises, tries, and plagues their souls.

2. *To be carnally-minded, and unable to lift our affections heavenward;* but, on the contrary, to go grovelling here below, buried under a whole dung-heap of carnality and filth, is an "evil." The children of God know by painful experience that to be carnally-minded is death; that it brings darkness into their minds, barrenness into their souls, hardness into their conscience, grief into their hearts. But they are carnally-minded in spite of all their desires to be heavenly minded. They feel carnal-mindedness to be an evil they are daily and hourly plagued with. Compare the moments that

we are spiritually-minded with the moments that we are carnally-minded; weigh them in an even balance; how many are the moments during the day that we are carnally-minded? How every tie of nature; how every thing about us; every sight we see; every sound we hear; every object we touch; the whole world with which we are surrounded; how all feed our carnal minds! I cannot go into the street, without feeding my carnal mind; I can scarcely hear a sound, without feeding my carnal mind; I can scarcely open my eyes, without feeding my carnal mind; I cannot go into a shop, or take up a book, I cannot speak, or hear others speak, without more or less feeding my carnal mind. And yet I am continually plagued, grieved, and troubled by it.—"The evil which would not, that I do."

3. That we should seek the exaltation of self in its various shapes and forms is an evil, a bitter evil, known to be so to God's people. In our right minds we would trample self under foot; we would have Christ exalted in our own hearts; we would not do things in religion to please self; I as a preacher, to exalt self; you as a hearer, to gratify self. Above all, that a minister in those very things that are professedly for the glory of God, should do those very things for the glory of self; that this insatiable whirlpool should suck into itself everything good; that this Maelstrom* should swallow into its capacious maw every thing gracious; that this vortex at the bottom of the heart should be drinking in self-exaltation, at the expense of every thing he loves—makes use of a holy God, a holy Christ, a holy Bible—every thing divine and sacred to feed cursed self—is not this an evil? Sometimes when I have preached to a large congregation, as I often do in London, so far from being lifted up in my feelings by seeing so many people met together, I have had to bury my head in the pulpit cushion with shame and self-loathing, because hideous self would so intrude its cursed head that I

could not be sincere and spiritually-minded, could not feel a desire after the glory of God, but filthy, defiled self would want to have its portion. This wretch must have his sop, and would often lay hold of the sacred truths of God that there might be a morsel to satisfy self, the devil, and pride. And when I have gone home after preaching, instead of being pleased with popularity, I have burst into a flood of tears because my heart was so vile, as to seek after its own cursed gratification at the expense of every thing that my spiritual mind held sacred and dear. This self-exaltation and gratification in religion is an evil that we would not do; and yet it is one which daily intrudes itself. Cut it to pieces by a spiritual ministry, self will intrude its hateful head into the very sanctuary of God. There is no place, nor time, nor posture free from its intrusion. But it is a mercy to hate it, though we cannot keep it out.

*A whirlpool on the coast of Norway, which is said to draw into its bosom and swallow up the largest ships.

4. *The indulgence of sin in our carnal heart is an evil, a horrible evil—and yet who dare look God in the face, and say, it is an evil he never does? I am not alluding here to outward commission of evil. I am not speaking now of a man falling into drunkenness, adultery, or such sins as even eyes naturally enlightened see to be inconsistent with the will and word of God; but I speak of a man desiring and revelling in the inward imaginary sin. Who can say that he is pure here? who can say that he has cleansed his heart from these evils? It is an evil; we feel it to be an evil, to wallow in a wicked imagination, to feed upon the vilest garbage. But was there ever any sin that had not a counterpart in our carnal heart? We see the oak, the noble oak in the forest. Did not that oak come from an acorn? How many acorns of sin have we in our carnal heart, that would have become oaks, if permitted to*

come to perfection? The acorn is in the heart, and had it been permitted to grow, it would soon have sprung up, expanded its arms, and flourished aloft in all its gigantic forms.

5. *Want of love and affection to God's people*, picking at their faults, seeing their imperfections and magnifying them, and not observing our own—forgetting the beam in our own eye, and looking at the mote in another's—is not this an evil? What contention and strife spring out of it? What confusion in the church of God? Every man seeing so clearly the motes in other men's eyes, but so imperfectly the beam in his own.

6. How hard it is *at all times and in all places to speak the truth!* How hard to represent a thing exactly as it is! How hard not to give a shade of colouring; not to heighten, nor diminish, nor to pare off a corner here, nor to put on a jutting prominence there! How hard it is to speak with that simplicity, honesty, uprightness, and tenderness of conscience that become a child of God; and how often we have to lament, that with all our desires to speak the truth in the love of it, "the evil which we would not, that we do."

Now here is the difference betwixt a living soul under divine teaching, and one altogether dead in sin, that the living soul knows what good is as revealed in the word of God; his understanding is enlightened to perceive it; his conscience is touched to feel it; his will is bent to pursue it; and his affections flow to it. This is the state and condition of a man under divine teaching—he would, but he cannot do it. There is an obstacle, there is a hindrance; there is that which crosses every endeavour, which foils every attempt, which spreads snares in the way, entangles his feet, and throws him down, however eagerly he is bent upon running with patience the race that is set before him. He would not be

entangled in these snares for ten thousand worlds; he hates the evils of his heart, and mourns over the corruptions of his nature. They make the tear fall from his eye, and the sob to heave from his bosom; they make him a wretched man, and fill him day after day with sorrow, bitterness, and anguish; yet still he does, and can no more abstain from doing the evil that he would not, than he can do the good that he would. Now, mark me, I am not here speaking of a man living in sin; I am not speaking of a man falling into deep and open iniquity; such as brings disgrace upon the cause and grieves during his life-time his own soul; but I am speaking of the inward workings of inward evils. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Now these things are hid from the eye of others, though they are taking place daily in the chambers of our own hearts. Men may look at us; and they may see, or they may not see, there is a conflict. They may see little in our life to find fault with; yet all the time the inward grief and sorrow of our soul shall be, the good it would, it does not; and the evil which it would not, that it does.

Now, do you not find it so? Just look at these two points. Has your understanding been enlightened to see what good is, and do you believe that the will of God revealed in the word is the only rule of good? Have you seen a beauty and glory in that good? Have you seen that this good is the thing which every living soul desires to follow after, however cutting to the flesh, however contrary to self, however opposed to the natural bent of our mind? Does your will embrace it? Does your conscience fall beneath the power of it? Do your affections, at times, flow unto it, and settle upon it? If so, God has renewed you in the spirit of your mind. By nature, we cannot see what good is, we cannot feel what good is, we cannot choose what good is, we cannot love what good is. We may have a good of our own—we may have some

standard of our own—our own morality—our own virtue, or our own religion. But that which is heavenly, spiritual, holy, and godlike—such as the renewed understanding sees, the renewed will embraces, the renewed conscience approves, the renewed affections embrace—none but living souls can ever see, feel, and delight in that. On the other hand, none but a quickened soul, under divine teaching, can see what is evil, and mourn and sigh under the depravity, the corruption, the unbelief, the carnality, the wickedness, and the deceitfulness of the evil heart laid bare. Unregenerate men may see the principle of evil working in the hearts of others. Men like Lord Chesterfield, and others who have studied mankind, can see the workings of selfishness and other evils in the heart, and yet never grieve, groan, and cry under them. Men of keen observation may see what is natural good, and what is natural evil; and may confess in the distance, what a good man *this* is, and what a bad man *that*—how honourable and upright *that* man is, and how very wicked and depraved *this*. But as to any intimate and inward conviction, feeling, and sensation of sin, any mourning over and groaning under it, any sense of an internal conflict and heavy burden, so as to bring him to say in the depth of his soul, "O wretched man that I am!"—to cry out thus in the bitterness of a wounded heart, can only be produced by divine teaching. A man may soar to the highest pinnacle of religious profession, and yet never know anything of the evil of his own heart. A man may revel in the vilest sins, and yet know nothing of the inward corruption of human nature. But in the child of God, there are these principles—light to see, and life to feel the good and evil, a will to choose the good and reject the evil, and affections that flow unto and embrace that which God loves and commands. Therefore, this inward conflict, this sore grief, this internal burden, that all the family of God are afflicted with, is a mark and evidence that the life and grace of God are in their bosoms.

This will end well. The afflicted, exercised, distressed, burdened, self-condemned child of God will come off more than conqueror, for strength is made perfect in his weakness. He is looking to the Lord of life and glory. He knows himself to be a ruined sinner. He therefore looks to and leans upon the Lord Jesus Christ. But a dead professor overlooks the warnings of a guilty conscience, the movements of an evil heart, the workings of inward depravity, and all the mystery of internal iniquity. But one day it will be brought out, to his confusion. He is something like a person who sweeps away all the dirt of the room into the corner, where it lies hidden and covered up; but by-and-bye, it will be dragged out of its hole to his shame. As long as the hypocrite can keep the outside clean, he is like the filthy slut, who sweeps all the dirt and rubbish of the room into a closet, instead of sweeping it into the street, and so keeping the house tidy.

But the Lord will come and search Jerusalem with candles, and discover the pride, and hypocrisy, and depravity that is hidden in the corners of the heart. He who has never seen and known this inward depravity—never grieved, groaned, mourned, and cried under this body of sin and death—who has neglected, slighted, and overlooked all this—who has never felt the necessity of an application of atoning blood—never felt the necessity of the inward teaching and witness of the Holy Spirit—never felt the reality of the inward presence of God, coming down into this den, and cleansing it out—but has washed merely the cup and platter by outside profession—is he not a mere whitewashed sepulchre, which within is full of dead men's bones and uncleanness? But a living soul, who knows what a wretch, what a monster of depravity he is, how full of everything that God hates, who desires not to indulge in hypocrisy, to have no whitewashed profession, no varnishing of duplicity, but to be honest and sincere, comes before a heart-searching God, and tells him

what he is, and says, "Lord, I am vile—I put my mouth in the dust—I am a sinner; but do thou cleanse me, and uphold me, and make me what thou wilt." None but a child of God can use sincerely such language as this; for none but he can feel the leprosy of sin, and the workings of iniquity in his very vitals, and yet experience the counter workings of the Spirit of God. Thus, whilst the one lives and dies a varnished hypocrite, with nothing but an outside profession, the other a poor desponding wretch, perhaps the greater part of his days, doubting, fearing, distressed, and exercised, but groaning, sighing, looking up to, pleading and wrestling with the Lord from the very depth of his heart, will be taken, like Lazarus, into the bosom of Jesus while he who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, despising the poor leprous beggar at his gate, will be driven ultimately into a deserved and never-ending perdition.

With these words I desire to leave you. I am rarely led to commence with introductory, and as rarely to end with farewell sermons. Therefore, as I began without introduction, so I leave without a farewell. But I know this, that the words I have spoken from this evening will be borne out pretty well every day that we live. We shall have, more or less, of this inward conflict as long as we are in the flesh. It will be our experience, more or less, day by day. And the more we are acquainted with our own depravity and corruption the more we shall desire in simplicity and godly sincerity, to know the Lord of life and glory. And thus, we shall go softly all the days of our life, in the bitterness of our soul; though we shall still be enabled to rejoice at times in the Lord Jesus Christ, as "of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."