## Every Man to Himself.

BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." *Prov. 14:10.*

You lift up your eyes and you behold the stars. Surely it is no idle imagination that these heavenly lights are distant worlds; but they are entirely separated from the inhabitants of this globe. You may peer at them through the telescope as long as you will, but you cannot enter into the feelings and pursuits of the dwellers in those worlds. There is a great gulf fixed, and we who would pass to them cannot, neither can they pass to us who would come from thence. In a great measure such is our relation to our fellow-men. Men are microcosms, or little worlds; each man has his distinct sphere, wherein he dwells apart. We are so many worlds, and no one world of man exactly overlaps another. You cannot completely know your fellow-man. There is a bitterness which each man feels alone, and a sweetness with which none can intermeddle.

It is not surprising that we must be in a measure unknown to others, since we do not even fully know ourselves. Mysteries exist within our own bosoms, and abysses which we have never yet explored. Their own personal humanity is to many an utterly unknown land, and none know themselves so fully as they think. "Man, know thyself," is a precept much more profound than it appears. If we do not know ourselves, how shall we know our fellows?

What is the practical use of these facts? We learn, I think, first, that we may not judge our brethren as though we understood them, and were competent to give a verdict upon them. Why do you sit down and write bitter things against your fellow man? Be not sure that you can accurately judge any of his actions. Seen upon its surface, and by itself, his act may appear blameworthy; but the motive behind, if known to you, would perhaps soften your censure, or even win your praise. Before the great Searcher of all hearts things are not what they seem. As our law condemneth no man before it hears him, so let us not hasten to give sentence, since we have not heard, and in all probability never shall hear, all the ins and outs of his behaviour. "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

Especially judge not the sons and daughters of sorrow. Allow no ungenerous surpicions of the afflicted, poor, and the despondent. Do not hastily say they ought to be more brave, and exhibit a greater faith. Ask not—Why are they so nervous and so absurdly fearful? It is not easy to be effectively sympathetic; some cannot manifest tenderness, even when they have a mind to do so. Many of the trials which are experienced by Christians are sent as an education in the art of sympathy. Be thankful for that which enables you to be a minister of consolation to your fellow men; but feel that in this matter you are a learner yet, and will frequently meet with sorrows and with joys into which you cannot enter.

One other lesson, and that is the great one we want, all of us, to learn.

We all need sympathy; and as it is impossible that we should ever perfectly obtain it from our fellow-men, there remains but One who can give it to us. There is One who can enter the closet where the skeleton is locked up; One who is in touch with our unmentionable grief. He weighs and measures that which is too heavy for us to bear. That blessed One. Oh, that we may each one have him for our friend!

Having already handled its general principle, we will now come close to our text in its two parts; the heart knows a bitterness peculiar to itself; and, secondly, the heart also knows a sweetness peculiar to itself.

I. The heart knoweth its own bitterness.

Concerning any man this is true. The shoe pinches on every foot, and that foot only knows where the pinch is felt by itself. Every shoulder bears its load, and that load is its own. Envy no man. He who seems most happy may be more fit for pity than for envy. His heart knows its own bitterness. Do not intrude into the hidden sorrows of any; it is enough for one heart to know its bitterness. May be, thou wilt increase misery if thou meddle with it. Leave that alone which thou canst not relieve. If thou canst help, lend thine attentive ear; but if thou canst not help, keep thy finger from the wound. You may cheer the heart of the burden-bearer, but his trouble is still the same—there is no dividing his grief.

Next, how true this is concerning an awakened man! When conscience at last starts up from its dream, when the Holy Spirit begins to convince the man of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; ah! then, beloved, "the heart knoweth its own bitterness." I could not have told you, if you had bribed me to disclose the secret, the inward grief I felt when day and night God's hand was heavy upon me on account of sin. Before I found a Saviour, the agony of my mind was at times indiscribable, for I felt the pressure of the wrath of God, justly incurred by my iniquity. Have any of you to whom I now speak at last come to your senses; and do you wish to escape from the wrath of God, but cannot? I am grieved for you, my brother; but yet I am thankful that by such self-despair men are brought at last to trust in Jesus, cut off from sin by a terrible discovery of its evil, cut off from self by utter despair, and driven to cast themselves on the merit of the Saviour. Fly to Jesus and you shall be saved; but till you do so, your heart will be filled with a bitterness beyond expression.

*Concerning the tried believer*, this is very true. The afflicted is one whose heart knows its own bitterness.

Possibly there may be present among us servants of God who are wading through rivers of trouble. We do not know, dear friends, in the holy day of our joy, how closely we may be sitting to "a woman of a sorrowful spirit," or, "a man that hath seen affliction." We little know the burdens which are bowing our neighbors' backs. Patience gives them smiling faces, but pain wrings their hearts. Great losses and great crosses fall to the lot of great saints. Sickness is often a means of grace; those who have much grace may be called to endure much disease. There is a bitterness which some of you can scarcely understand: it is the loss of beloved children, especially the loss of an only child. Bereavement of our loved ones is a heavy trial.

You see, then, that in the whole range of human society each heart knoweth its own bitterness: and I want to say this to you—the singularity of sorrow is a dream of the sufferer. Thou sittest alone and keepest silence, and thou sayest in thy heart, "I am the man that hath seen affliction," but a host of others have seen afflictions as well as thyself. Come down from thine elevation of special woe; indulge no longer the egotism of despair. Thou art but one pilgrim along the well-trodden Via Dolorosa. The stair-way of grief is never without its passengers, and at their head is "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Above all, remember that *the cure for bitterness of heart is to take it to your Lord at once.* Remember this word: "In all their affliction He was afflicted." No drop of gall was too bitter for His mouth: He tasted death itself. There is no corner in thy heart so dark but Christ hath seen in as dark a room as that. All the thorns that pierce thy feet once pierced His head. Go thou to Him with the full vessel of thy woe. "Ye people, pour out your hearts before Him: God is a refuge for us." Then shall you sing for joy of heart.

II. I wish I had an hour in which to speak to the full upon the second part of our subject. The heart knows a sweetness of its own. I will go into one or two of the forms of this sweetness. You have tasted, many of you, the joy of pardoned sin. Do you remember when you were, for the first time sure that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven you? Could you tell anybody the joy you then felt? In proportion as you were burdened before, you felt the bliss of rest. In proportion as the iron had entered into your soul before, the joy came leaping into your heart. Truly a stranger intermeddleth not with such joy. Only the pardoned know the joy of pardon. I dare say, when you were first saved, others said that you were off your head. In the family it was suspected that poor John was not himself at all; he was so different from what he used to be. Oh, yes, the joy of pardoned sin is one with which a stranger cannot intermeddle.

Some time after your pardon you knew the bliss of vanquished evil. To be forgiven was not enough; you longed to be free from the dominion of sin. I do not know what your peculiar sin may have been, but, after a struggle you overcame it, and you felt that the very desire for that sin was dead; you loathed it now as much as you loved it before. What a joy that was to you! Joy over a conquered evil is a joy worth worlds, and no stranger can deprive us of it.

Another great joy is that of answered prayer. When the Lord has heard our petitions, and given us the desire of our hearts, what joy fills our souls! It must have been a stern joy which filled Elijah when he stood at the altar, after the priests of Baal and their clatter had all failed; when he stood up and said, "Let it be known, O Lord, that I have done all these things at Thy word." When the live lightning leaped from heaven, and the sacrifice went up in sheets of flame, then I do not wonder that exhilaration lifted him out of himself, and he could do anything in the joy of his heart, because of his answered prayer. A stranger to prayer cannot know the joy of success. He who knows what it is to wrestle will understand what it is to prevail.

Further, dear brethren, there is a very extraordinary joy about usefulness. This is a joy which, thank God, I do know; but unless you know it, I cannot communicate its sweetness to you. It was but a poor child, or a servant girl, or a workingman in his fustian jacket; but as he took my hand and looked into my face, he said: "God Almighty bless you! You brought me to the Saviour." I get registered letters containing money for the Lord's work; but the letters which are most precious are those which tell of conversions from great sin to the Lord Jesus, through the printed sermons. These are my golden wages. If I say much about this, some one will charge me with blowing my own trumpet; but truly, this sacred bliss is one which the successful worker has all to himself, and a stranger intermeddles not therewith. You Sunday school teachers and workers know what I mean. Pray that you may have more of it!

There is a joy in the heart, with which no stranger intermeddles, of another kind, namely, peace in the time of trouble. Remember the martyr who had to be burned early in the morning, but needed to be shaken to awaken him. Fancy being shaken in the morning with "Get up and be burned!" How blessed to leave all with the Lord, and bear His will with gladsome readiness. To be calm in the presence of pain, bereavement, slander, ridicule! This is delightful. The worldling cannot understand this! The saint is neither careless nor callous; he has both sense and sensitiveness; and yet he lives apart from carking care, and throws aside the fret which else would eat into his heart.

One other joy I must not overlook; it is the highest of all, and that is the joy of communion with God. Do you know what this means? If you do not, I could not tell you, for I should seem as one that talketh in a dream. Yet, whether you know it or not, some of us find heaven begun below. If you have ever tested fellowship with God then there is a joy, as you know, with which no stranger intermeddles.

Beloved, if it be so, be much in the enjoyment of these delights! If you have never known these joys, I pray you seek them for yourself, each man, each woman of you. Remember, you must come to God alone, by the exercise of personal faith and personal repentance; for neither in your sorrow nor in your joy, can another man exactly fit with you. Therefore, come alone to the Lord Jesus, and come at once. Amen.

—If to one hundred men it were divinely revealed that 1889 is to be the last year of their earthly lives, how many of them would resolve to use its days just as they did those of 1888? Would you?

—It is said that "brains will tell." Sometimes they will, and sometimes they will not. Sometimes the more brains a man has, the less he tells. It doesn't always answer for brains to tell.

## Sanctuary Service.

Progress in the Christian life is, in an important sense, due to faithfulness in our attendance upon public service on the Lord's day. It is surprising, indeed, in view of such distinct Scriptural injunctions, that any one should discredit its necessity, or become indifferent in respect to the obligation. No less surprising is it, that, blest as we are with so great a *privilege*, any one should hold it in light esteem, or elevate any modern church arrangement to a superior place. There is a dignity, a permanence, as well as a peculiar charm in public worship, when spiritually enjoyed, that no other service can possibly afford. Oh, what is the testimony of devout hearts in all ages? It is that in "assembling ourselves together" on His holy day, God is pleased in a special manner to open His truth and seal it upon our hearts for edification.

The excuses for absenting ourselves from the public means of grace are usually found to be trivial. When this is the case, the loss to ourselves is irreparable. Providential circumstances, such as personal sickness or waiting upon the sick, may be a reasonable justification for our absence. Even in such cases the deprivation is conceded to be very great. Nothing less than the love and tenderness of God, who thus affects us, can, in any sense, compensate us in such a loss. To all devout hearts thus denied, He will surely come and in some way repair the breach made.

But not so will He deal with the willfully negligent. His pleasure cannot be upon them. His omniscient eye detects in their omission a defective consecration, a dullness as to spiritual things that must deeply grieve Him. When we suffer ourselves to become so occupied with earthly interests as to forget His house, we can look for nothing less than spiritual leanness to come into our souls.

If all this be true, it is manifestly our duty to seek release, as far as is possible, from worldly engagements on the holy Sabbath. The day is given, among other things, for hearing God's Word in the congregation of worshippers, in uniting in His praises and supplications in His temple. It is possible to so transfer the cares of the week to this day as to wholly unfit the soul for these sacred duties. And not only so; the reading, the social visiting, and the unnecessary work of the Sabbath may be of such a kind as will necessarily arrest spiritual thought and render religious exercises useless, even injurious.

Just here is the baleful influence of the Sunday secular newspaper. It would be quite impossible for Satan to invent a more destructive method of undermining public ministrations in the sanctuary than this. The secular is made to supersede the spiritual; the current of business carries the soul far out into tumultuous seas, away from God's sheltered harbor of needed rest. The whole scheme is fraught with perils to souls.

Said a professed Christian in our hearing recently: "I became so absorbed in my daily paper this morning that I failed to observe when the hour for public service came." The response of a friend at his side was a terrible rebuke: "You missed an excellent sermon, and a rich blessing in the sanctuary."

Notwithstanding the numerous attractions of our time, so unfriendly to sanctuary service, what multitudes of hungry hearts are being satisfied with the "fatness of His house!" Never, we are confident, has the privilege of sitting where "strength and beauty are in His sanctuary" been more widely appreciated than at the present. Never have greater numbers in the aggregate sought His courts, or have exclaimed with joyful hearts: "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Unnumbered souls in Christian and heathen lands not only find delight in God's earthly temple; they anticipate with rapture the speedy entrance upon the heavenly. In the marvellous description given by the Revelator of that abode the temple vanishes away, and God becomes evermore all and in all: "I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

## A Golden Text.

BY MRS. NORA MARBLE.

Everybody in our whole village conceded that Jehial Dobson was a religious man, including Jehial himself. He went to church regularly, paid his dues without grumbling—so far as the outer world knew—owed no man a dollar and permitted no one to owe him one. He was well to do, the neighbors also conceded, had one of the finest farms in that region, and a snug sum in bank to boot.

His wife, Mary Ann Dobson, was a small, thin little creature, with a pair of faded blue eyes in which ever lurked a touching expression of weariness of both body and spirit. She had not always been pale and weary looking, as friends of her girlhood could vouch, but years of hard toil in kitchen and dairy—toil which had helped to swell that sum in the bank very materially, and to add acre after acre to the farm—had taken the roses from her cheeks and brought that look in the eyes which spoke of a weary body and a starved soul.

"I'm 'bout tuckered out," was her usual answer to occasional visitors, and the sigh with which she dropped into the chair and the nervous twitching of her toil-worn hands, left no doubt in the visitor's mind that Mary Dobson told the truth.

There were neighbors who whispered among themselves that Jehial Dobson was too "near," much too "near" for the comfort and well-being of his pale little wife, but the majority of the farmers' wifes thereabouts performed daily the same routine of duties, and went to bed nightly much more weary than the farm hands or horses themselves, so they had in consequence no sympathy to offer, and asked none in return.

One morning in May, in the year of our Lord, 1887, Jehial Dobson said to his wife:

"I've bought that field, Mary Ann, what I've been hankering for so long, so I reckon I'll have to get a new hand on to the farm. Jim and me can't do the work of four men much longer, I'm a thinkin'."

"Timothy Smith's field?" asked his wife, as she passed his second cup of muddy-looking coffee.

"Yes, he had to sell at last," chuckled her husband. "I knowed it would come last year when he broke his leg and was laid up for so long. He was in debt then, you know, and hed to get in deeper, of course, durin' them long months of sickness."

"Yes," said Mary Ann, sadly, "Timothy has been unfortunate, poor fellow."

"He did kick agin' selling the field," continued Mr. Dobson, "but I understand from Deacon Blake that debts are a pressin' of him, and he had to sell that or the house, you see."

"Ya'as," assented Mrs. Dobson, "and it was lucky for him you wanted that bit of field, warn't it Jehial?"

"Well, I reckon it was jist as lucky for me, Mary Ann, for seein' as how he was so anxious to sell, I hem'd and haw'd for quite a spell afore I let him see as how I wanted the field jest now, at all. 'You can hev it, Mr. Dobson,' sais Timothy, 'fer the price you offered last summer was a year;' but I warn't to be caught that way, Mary Ann, so I shook my head and sais:

"'Ya'as, Timothy, but times ain't what they was, and I hev given over all notion of buying it now, anyway."

Mrs. Dobson sighed, and looked at her husband with mild reproach; but made no reply.

"Timothy's countenance fell," continued Mr. Dobson, "and I calkerlated on gettin' the field for about half its worth on the instant. And I did, Mary Ann, so the field is mine at last."

"Poor unfortunate Timothy," repeated his wife. "I suppose it's all right, Jehial, for some reason or other sence the Scripture sais, 'For he that hath, to him shall be given;' and he that hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he hath,' and I reckon you were to take the little he had for some purpose or other what we can't see jest exactly now."

Mr. Dobson cleaned his throat, then coughed, and ate the remainder of his meal in silence, apparently absorbed in reflection.

He was his old cheerful self, however, at dinner, when he imparted to his wife the news that the new hand had been engaged.

"What would you say if I'd tell you it was Timothy himself?" continued Jehial, with a laugh, "but it is, all the same. He came to me this mornin' with tears into his eyes and asked me for the place. He wasn't strong enough, I said, and that I was afeered his leg warn't just right yet, and several other objections I made, but he declared he was all right and able to do as much as the next man, and would work for $1.00 a day. Seein' as how I was calkerlatin' on payin' $1.50 a day, why, I jest clinched the bargain and he'll begin to-morrow."

So Timothy Smith worked week after week from sunrise to sunset, and Mr. Dobson congratulated himself time and again that he had secured a man who could accomplish so much for so little."

"One dollar a day ain't nothin' in comparison to what work he does," he was fond of saying to his wife. "Why, he works like a horse."

"A dollar a day ain't much, Jehial," answered Mary Ann, "fer sech a large family as he has. I don't believe they see a piece of fresh meat in the house more'n once the whole durin' week."

"That's often enough," replied her husband, helping himself plentifully to the steak; "poor folks oughtn't to ask fer no more."

"Poor unfortunit Timothy." repeated his wife, and Jehial Dobson shook his head and echoed the sentiment.

Now the harvest had been gathered, and so one Saturday night Timothy Smith received his last six dollars for his hard week's labor.

Mr. Dobson nervously fingered the crisp bills in his wallet upon that occasion and reflectively withdrew double the usual amount.

The light of hope gleamed in Timothy's eyes for a second, but died out almost immediately, for Mr. Dobson's hesitation was soon over. The wallet was replaced, and Timothy turned away with the usual pittance.

"It's according to the bargain," muttered Mr. Dobson; "it's all he asked, and it would be settin' a bad example to pay more than that, accordin' to my notions." Still he was not his usual cheerful self at supper that night, and something in his wife's eyes made him think she was internally repeating:

"To him that hath shall be given, etc."

The next Sabbath morning found him in his usual place at church.

Meeting had begun, however, before his wife entered and took her place beside him, for the chores had been heavy, and the vegetables had to be prepared for dinner, and it was with a weary sigh that she hurriedly made her toilet that morning, casting a longing eye, as she did so, upon the comfortable lounge on which she was half-inclined to seek the needed rest and repose, foregoing the church altogether.

"But Jehial wouldn't like it," she thought, and after all she might have a grain of comfort in the sermon, so in her old-fashioned bonnet and shawl, the little pale woman took her place beside her husband on that memorable September morning.

The minister arose, and Mr. Dobson fixed himself as comfortably as the uncushioned pew would allow, with an eye to a possible nap should the sermon prove dull and uninteresting.

"That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

Mr. Dobson settled the spectacles upon his nose and surveyed the speaker with much satisfaction.

"A good text," he resolved in his mind, "and very appropriate to the season," remembering with some pride his well-filled barn and other fruits of his reaping.

But as the sermon proceeded Mr. Dobson grew restless and his eyes furtively sought his wife's face.

There were no signs of rejoicing there, and as she turned her patient eyes upon him he noted their expression of weariness and sad resignation for the first time.

He fell into a study, from which he was awakened by the earnest voice of the speaker.

"The laborer is worthy of his hire," Then followed burning words in which he denounced the so-called followers of Christ, men base enough to take advantage of a brother's necessities, reaping where another had sown, accepting the best of brain or muscle, giving but a pittance, sometimes nothing in return.

Timothy's face, as it looked when he received his last week's wages, arose before Mr. Dobson and made him uneasy.

"He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much," quoted the speaker, and Mr. Dobson fancied his gaze was fixed upon him as he pictured the laborer's home, so often devoid of cheer, barren of comfort, but little for the present, no hope for the future.

"That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

Jehial Dobson sought the face of Timothy Smith's in the far corner.

No signs of rejoicing there; only dull despair, hopeless apathy. He raised his eyes at that moment and met Mr. Dobson's gaze. The latter's eyes fell and a flush arose to his brow.

Timothy smiled faintly.

"He is judging me," thought Mr. Dobson, "as I am judging myself."

How that text followed him during the remainder of the day! It danced before his eyes when he tried to read, it burnt into his brain when he tried to sleep; do what he would it was ever before him in flaming letters.

"I noticed Timothy Smith's wife ain't been to church for a month or more," he said, breaking a long silence at tea that evening.

"No wonder," replied Mrs. Dobson, "seein' as how she hes no shoes fit to go out in."

"Who told you that," nervously inquired Jehial.

"Why, herself the other day when she came over to borrow mine. She was bare foot, and hed to go to town for medicine for the youngest child what is sick with the fever."

Mr. Dobson's tea must have been very hot, for when he replaced the cup from which he was drinking tears stood in his eyes.

Then he looked at his wife and asked tremulously:

"Mary Ann, do you reckin' I'm an honest man?"

"Why, Jehial!" she gasped, "what ever——"

"Would you call a robber honest?" he interrupted.

"Why, who ever——"

"He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much," quoted Mr. Dobson, rising, "And, Mary Ann, I hev been more than unjust fer I hev took that what did not belong to me."

"Jehial! Jehial! are you mad?" cried his wife aghast.

"No, Mary Ann," he answered, stopping to kiss her wrinkled brow, "I'm jest beginning' to be sane. I hev my eyes open at last to find I have been robbing my wife, as well as my neighbor. You have helped me to sow, wife, without any reason to rejoice over the reapin'."

"Oh, Jehial," she sobbed, "you've been thinkin' of that tex', ain't you? I'm rejoicin' now," she added, wiping her streaming eyes, "and feel as if I hed received a blessin'."

"So do I," replied Mr. Dobson solemnly, as he left the room.

Early the next morning found him at Timothy Smith's door.

"I've come to pay what I owe you," said he, bringing forth a well filled wallet.

"Why—I didn't know you owed me nothin', Mr. Dobson," stammered Timothy.

"No more did I," said that gentleman, with a queer smile, "till yesterday. The text showed me how much I owed you, Timothy. There," he added, placing in the astonished man's hand a roll of bills, "you'll find the real value of the field, and the extra fifty cents a day what I filched from you all summer," and overcome by the poor fellow's burst of happy tears, Mr. Dobson, to hide his own humid eyes, hurried from the spot.

"Why," exclaimed one of the neighbors to another, "whatever hes come over Mrs. Dobson, I wonder? I dropped in there yesterday, and ef she wern't a settin' onto the porch all dressed up in a fresh muslin, and she never said she was tuckered out wunst, not wunst, and there was a gal in the kitchen, and a new boy hired to help around, and goodness knows what else.

"You must have dropped into a fortin', Mrs. Dobson," said I, as soon as ever I could get my breath from astonishment.

"'Yes," says she, smilin' real sweet, 'we found it in the Bible last Sunday.'

"'Du tell," says I, 'a legacy?'

"'Yes," says she again, 'a rich legacy indeed.

"'I want to know,' says I, 'was it all done up in somethin' that you hadn't seed it afore?'

"'Yes,' says she, real earnest like, 'done up in a tex',' and that was all I could git out of her concernin' the fortin'.—*Illustrated Christian Weekly.*

## Strong in God.

"The other day," says Dr. Norman Macleod, "I was requested by a brother minister, who was unwell, to go and visit a dying child. He told me some remarkable things of this boy, eleven years of age, who, during three year's sickness, had manifested the most patient submission to the will of God with a singular enlightenment of the Spirit. I went to visit him. The child had suffered excruciating pain; for years he had not known one day's rest. I gazed with wonder at the boy. After drawing near to him and speaking some words of sympathy, he looked at me with his blue eyes—he could not move, it was the night before he died—and breathed into my ear these few words, 'I am strong in Him.'

"The words were few and uttered feebly; they were the words of a feeble child in a poor home, where the only ornament was that of a meek and quiet and affectionate mother; but these words seemed to lift the burden from the very heart; they seemed to make the world more beautiful than ever it was before; they brought home to my heart a great and blessed truth. May all of us be 'strong in Him.'"—*Life of Dr. Norman Macleod.*

## The Washington Treaty

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