

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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HANDS FULL OF HONEY.

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## A Sermon

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“And Samson turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.”—JUDGES xiv. 8, 9.

IT was a singular circumstance that a man unarmed should have slain a lion in the prime of its vigor; and yet more strange that a swarm of bees should have taken possession of the dried carcase, and have filled it with their honey. In that country, what with beasts, birds, and insects, and the dry heat, a dead body is soon cleansed from all corruption, and the bones are clean and white: still the killing of the lion, and the finding of the honey, make up a remarkable story. These singular circumstances became afterwards the subject of a riddle; but with that riddle we have no concern at this time. Samson himself is a riddle. He was not only a riddlemaker, but he was himself an enigma very difficult to explain: with his personal character I have at this time little or nothing to do. We are not today resting at the house of “Gaius, mine host,” where the pilgrims amused themselves with a dish of nuts after dinner; but we are on the march, and must attend to the more important matter of refreshing and inspiriting those who are in our company. Neither are we going to discuss difficulties; but as Samson took the honey without being stung, so would we gain instruction without debate. We have in these days so much to do, that we must make practical use of every incident that comes before us in the word of God. My one design is to cheer the desponding and stir up all God's people to greater diligence in his service. I conceive that the text may legitimately be employed for this purpose. By the help of the divine Spirit, even after this lapse of time, we may find honey in the lion.

The particular part of the incident which is recorded in these two verses appears to have been passed over by those who have written upon Samson's life. I suppose it appeared to be too inconsiderable. They are taken up with his festive riddle, but they omit the far more natural and commendable fact of his bringing forth the honey in his hands and presenting it to his father and mother. This is the little scene to which I direct your glances. It seems to me that the Israelitish hero with a slain lion in the background, standing out in the open road with his hands laden with masses of honeycomb and dripping with honey, which he holds out to his parents, makes a fine picture, worthy of the greatest artist. And what a type we have here of our Divine Lord and Master, Jesus, the conqueror of death and hell. He has destroyed the lion that roared upon us and upon him. He has shouted "victory" over all our foes. "It is finished" was his note of triumph; and now he stands in the midst of his church with his hands full of sweetness and consolation, presenting them to those of whom he says, "these are my brother, and sister, and mother." To each one of us who believe in him he gives the luscious food which he has prepared for us by the overthrow of our foes; he bids us come and eat that we may have our lives sweetened and our hearts filled with joy. To me the comparison seems wonderfully apt and suggestive. I see our triumphant Lord laden with sweetness, holding it forth to all his brethren, and inviting them to share in his joy.

But, beloved, it is written, "As he is, so are we also in this world." All that are true Christians are, in a measure, like the Christ whose name they bear, and it is to his image that we are finally to be conformed. When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; and meanwhile, in proportion as we see him now, "we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The Samson type may well serve as the symbol of every Christian in the world. The believer has been helped by divine grace in his spiritual conflicts, and he has known "the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." He has thus been made more than a conqueror through him that loved us, and now he stands in the midst of his fellow-men inviting them to Jesus. With the honey in his hands, which he continues still to feast upon, he displays the heavenly sweetness to all that are round about him, saying, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

I have before now met with that popular artist Gustave Doré, and suggested subjects to him. Had he survived among us, and had another opportunity occurred, I would have pressed him to execute a statue of Samson handing out the honey: strength distributing sweetness; and it might have served as a perpetual reminder of what a Christian should be—a Conqueror and a Comforter, slaying lions and distributing honey. The faithful servant of God wrestles with the powers of evil; but with far greater delight he speaks

to his friends and companions, saying, “Eat ye that which is good, and let your souls delight themselves in sweetness.” Set the statue before your mind’s eye, and now let me speak about it.

Three touches may suffice. First, *the believer's life has its conflicts*; secondly, *the believer's life has its sweets*; and, thirdly, *the believer's life leads him to communicate of those sweets to others*. Here is room for profitable meditation.

I. First, then, THE BELIEVER’S LIFE HAS ITS CONFLICTS. To become a Christian is to enlist for a soldier. To become a believer is to enter upon a pilgrimage, and the road is often rough: the hills are steep, the valleys are dark, giants block the way, and robbers lurk in corners. The man who reckons that he can glide into heaven without a struggle has made a great mistake. No cross no crown: no sweat no sweet: no conflict no conquest. These conflicts, if we take the case of Samson as our symbol, *begin early* in the life of the believer. While Samson was a child, the Spirit of the Lord moved him in the camps of Dan—see the last verse of the thirteenth chapter; and as soon as he was on the verge of manhood, he must match himself with a lion. God who intended that his servant should smite the Philistines, and should check their proud oppression of his people Israel, began early to train the hero for his life’s conflict. So, when Samson was going to seek a wife, he turned aside into the vineyards of Timnath, and a lion roared upon him. Yes, and the young believer, who as yet has not wrestled with the powers of darkness, will not be long before he hears the roar of the lion, and finds himself in the presence of the great Adversary. Very soon we learn the value of the prayer, “Deliver us from the evil one!” Most of the Lord’s servants have been men of war from their youth up. Without are fightings even when within there are no fears. This early combat with the savage beast was intended by God to let him know his strength when under the influence of the Spirit, and to train him for his future combats with Israel’s enemies. He that is to smite the Philistines hip and thigh with a great slaughter, until he has laid them heaps on heaps by his single prowess, must begin by rending a lion with his naked hands. He was to learn war in the same school as another and a greater hero, who afterwards said, “Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them.”

Soldiers are made by war. You cannot train veterans or create victors except by battles. As in the wars of armies so is it in spiritual contests: men must be trained for victory over evil by combat with it. Hence “it is good for a man that he bare the yoke in his youth”; for it will not gall his shoulders in after years. It is assuredly a dangerous thing to be altogether free from trouble: in silken ease the soldier loses his prowess. Look at Solomon, one of the greatest and wisest, and yet, I might say, one of the least and most foolish of men. It was his fatal privilege to sit upon a throne of gold and sun himself in

the brilliance of unclouded prosperity, and hence his heart soon went astray, and he fell from his high places. Solomon in his early days had no trouble, for no war was then raging, and no enemy worth notice was then living. His life ran smoothly on, and he was lulled into a dreamy sleep, the sleep of the voluptuous. He had been happier far had he been, like his father, called from his earliest days to trial and conflict; for this might have taught him to stand fast upon the pinnacle of glory whereon the providence of God had placed him. Learn, then, O young brother, that if, like Samson, you are to be a hero for Israel, you must early be inured to suffering and daring, in some form or other. When you step aside and seek for meditation in the quiet of the vineyard a young lion may roar upon you; even as in the earliest days of your Lord and Master's public service he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

These conflicts, dear friends, may often be *very terrible*. By a young lion is not meant a whelp, but a lion in the fulness of its early strength; not yet slackened in its pace, or curbed in its fury by growing years. Fresh and furious, a young lion is the worst kind of beast that a man can meet with. Let us expect as followers of Christ to meet with strong temptations, fierce persecutions, and severe trials, which will lead to stern conflicts. Do not reckon, thou that art yet putting on thy harness, that thou shalt soon put it off, or that when thou puttest it off it will be quite as bright as it is today. It will be dimmed with blood and dust, and battered by many a blow; perhaps thy foe may find a way to pierce it, or at least to wound thee between its joints. I would have every man begin to be a soldier of the cross, but I would at the same time have him count the cost; for it is no child's play, and if he thinks it will be such, he will be grievously disappointed. A young believer will, on a sudden, have a doubt suggested to him of which he never heard before; and it will roar upon him like a young lion; neither will he see all at once how to dispose of it. Or he may be placed in singular circumstances where his duty seems to run counter to the tenderest instincts of his nature; here, too, the young lion will roar upon him. Or, one for whom he has an intense respect may treat him ill because he is a follower of Christ, and the affection and respect which he feels for this person may make his opposition the more grievous: in this also it is with him as when a lion roareth. Or he may suffer a painful bereavement, or sustain a severe loss; or he may have a disease upon him, with consequent pains and depressions, and these may cast the shadow of death upon his spirit; so that again a young lion roars upon him. Brother, sister, let us reckon upon this, and not be dismayed by it, since in all this is the life of our spirit. By such lessons as these we are taught to do service for God, to sympathize with our fellow Christians, and to value the help of our gracious Saviour. By all these we are weaned from earth and made to hunger for that eternal glory which is yet to be revealed, of which

we may truly say, “No lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon.” These present evils are for our future good: their terror is for our teaching. Trials are sent us for much the same reason that the Canaanites were permitted to live in the Holy Land, that Israel might learn war, and be equipped for battles against foreign foes.

These conflicts come early, and they are very terrible; and, moreover, they happen to us *when we are least prepared for them*. Samson was not hunting for wild beasts; he was engaged on a much more tender business. He was walking in the vineyards of Timnath, thinking of anything but lions, and “behold,” says the Scripture, “a young lion roared against him.” It was a remarkable and startling occurrence. He had left his father and mother and was quite alone; no one was within call to aid him in meeting his furious assailant. Human sympathy is exceedingly precious, but there are points in our spiritual conflict in which we cannot expect to receive it. To each man there are passages in life too narrow for walking two abreast. Upon certain crags we must stand alone. As our constitutions differ, so our trials, which are suited to our constitutions, must differ also. Each individual has a secret with which no friend can intermeddle; for every life has its mystery and its hid treasure. Do not be ashamed, young Christian, if you meet with temptations which appear to you to be quite singular: we have each one thought the same of his trials. You imagine that no one suffers as you do, whereas no temptation hath happened unto you but such as is common to man, and God will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it. Yet for the time being you may have to enter into fellowship with your Lord when he trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him. Is not this for your good? Is not this the way to strength? What kind of piety is that which is dependent upon the friendship of man? What sort of religion is that which cannot stand alone? Beloved, you will have to die alone, and you need therefore grace to cheer you in solitude. The dear wife can attend you weeping to the river’s brink, but into the chill stream she cannot go with you; and if you have not a religion which will sustain you in the solitudes of life, of what avail will it be to you in the grim lonesomeness of death? Thus I reckon it to be a happy circumstance that you are called to solitary conflict that you may test your faith, and see of what stuff your hope is made.

The contest was all the worse for Samson, that in addition to being quite alone, “there was nothing in his hand.” This is the most remarkable point in the narrative. He had no sword or hunter’s spear with which to wound the lordly savage: he had not even a stout staff with which to ward off his attack. Samson stood an unarmed, unarmoured man in the presence of a raging beast. So we in our early temptations are apt to think that we have no weapon for the war, and we do not know what to do. We are made to cry out, “I am unprepared! How can I meet this trial? I cannot grasp the enemy to wrestle

with him. What am I to do?" Herein will the splendor of faith and glory of God be made manifest, when you shall slay the lion, and yet it shall be said of you "that he had nothing in his hand"—nothing but that which the world sees not and values not.

Now, go one step further, for time forbids our lingering here. I invite you to remember that *it was by the Spirit of God that the victory was won*. We read, "And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid." Let the Holy Spirit help us in our trouble and we need neither company nor weapon; but without him what can we do? Good Bishop Hall says, "If that roaring lion, that goes about continually seeking whom he may devour, find us alone among the vineyards of the Philistines, where is our hope? Not in our heels, he is swifter than we: not in our weapons, we are naturally unarmed: not in our hands, which are weak and languishing; but in the Spirit of God, by whom we can do all things. If God fight in us, who can resist us? There is a stronger lion in us than that against us."

Here is our one necessity,—to be endowed with power from on high: the power of the Holy Ghost. Helped by the Spirit of God, the believer's victory will be complete: the lion shall not be driven away but rent in pieces. Girt with the Spirit's power, our victory shall be as easy as it will be perfect. Samson rent the lion as though it were a little lamb, or a kid of the goats. Well said Paul, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." Sin is soon overcome, temptations are readily refused, affliction is joyfully borne, persecution is gladly endured, when the Spirit of glory and of peace resteth upon us. "With God all things are possible;" and as the believer is with God, it cometh to pass that all things are possible to him that believeth.

If we were surrounded by all the devils in hell we need not fear them for an instant if the Lord be on our side. We are mightier than all hell's legions when the Spirit is mightily upon us. If we were to be beaten down by Satan until he had set his foot upon our breast, to press the very life out of us, yet if the Spirit of God helped us we would reach out our hand, and grasp the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and we would repeat the feat of Christian with Apollyon, when he gave the fiend such grievous wounds that he spread his dragon wings and flew away. Wherefore fear not, ye tried ones, but trust in the Spirit of God, and your conflict shall speedily end in victory. Sometimes our conflict is with past sin. We doubtfully enquire, "How can it be forgiven?" The temptation vanishes before a sight of the dying Redeemer. Then inbred lust roars against us, and we overcome it through the blood of the Lamb, for "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Sometimes a raging corruption, or a strong habit, wars upon us, and then we conquer by the might of the sanctifying Spirit of God, who is with us and shall be in us evermore. Or else it is the world which tempts,

and our feet have almost gone; but we overcome the world through the victory of faith: and if Satan raises against us the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, all at once, we are still delivered, for the Lord is a wall of fire round about us. The inward life bravely resists all sin, and God's help is given to believers to preserve them from all evil in the moment of urgent need; even as he helped his martyrs and confessors to speak the right word when called unprepared to confront their adversaries. Care not, therefore, oh thou truster in the Lord Jesus, how fierce thine enemy may be this day! As young David slew the lion and the bear, and smote the Philistine too, even so shalt thou go from victory to victory. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." Wherefore, with a lion-like spirit, meet lions which seek to devour you.

II. Now, then, we come to our second head, which is: THE BELIEVER'S LIFE HAS ITS SWEETS. We are not always killing lions, we are sometimes eating honey. Certain of us do both at a time; we kill lions and yet cease not to eat honey: and truly it has become so sweet a thing to enter into conflict for Christ's sake, that it is a joy to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. The same Lord who hath bidden us "quit yourselves like men; be strong," has also said, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice."

The believer's life has its sweets, and these are of the choicest: for what is sweeter than honey? What is more joyful than the joy of a saint? What is more happy than the happiness of a believer? I will not condescend to make a comparison between our joy and the mirth of fools; I will go no further than a contrast. Their mirth is as the crackling of thorns under a pot, which spit fire, and make a noise and a flash, but there is no heat, and they are soon gone out: nothing comes of it, the pot is long in boiling. But the Christian's delight is like a steady coal fire. You have seen the grate full of coals all burning red, and the whole mass of coal has seemed to be one great glowing ruby and everybody who has come into the room out of the cold has delighted to warm his hands, for it gives out a steady heat and warms the body even to its marrow. Such are our joys. I would sooner possess the joy of Christ five minutes than I would revel in the mirth of fools for half a century. There is more bliss in the tear of repentance than in the laughter of gaiety; our holy sorrows are sweeter than the worldling's joys. But, oh, when our joys grow full, divinely full, then are they unspeakably like those above, and heaven begins below. Did you never cry for joy? You say, perhaps, "Not since I was a child." Nor have I; but I have always remained a child as far as divine joy is concerned. I could often cry for joy when I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.

Ours is a joy which will bear thinking over. You can dare to pry into the bottom of it and test its foundation. It is a joy which does not grow stale; you

may keep it in your mouth by the year together, and yet it never cloy; you may return to it again, and again, and again, and find it still as fresh as ever. And the best of it is there is no repentance after it. You are never sorry that you were so glad. The world's gay folk are soon sick of their drink; but we are only sorry that we were not gladder still, for our gladness sanctifies. We are not denied any degree of joy to which we can possibly attain, for ours is a healthy, health-giving delight. Christ is the fulness of joy to his people, and we are bidden to enjoy him to the full. Christians have their sweets, and those are as honey and the honeycomb, the best of the best.

Of these joys *there is plenty*; for Samson found, as it were, a living spring of honey, since he discovered a swarm of bees. So abundant was the honey that he could take huge masses of the comb and carry it in his hands, and go away with it, bearing it to others. In the love of Christ, in pardoned sin, in acceptance in the Beloved, in resting in God, in perfectly acquiescing in his will, in the hope of heaven, there is such joy that none can measure it. We have such a living swarm of bees to make honey for us in the precious promises of God, that there is more delight in store than any of us can possibly realise. There is infinitely more of Christ beyond our comprehension than we have as yet been able to comprehend. How blessed to receive of his fulness, to be sweetened with his sweetness, and yet to know that infinite goodness still remains. Perhaps some of you have enjoyed so much of Christ that you could hardly bear any more; but your largest enjoyments are only as tiny shells filled by a single wave of the sea, while all the boundless ocean rolls far beyond your ken. We have exceeding great joy, yea, joy to spare. Our Master's wedding feast is not so scantily furnished that we have to bring in another seat for an extra guest, or murmur to ourselves that we had better not invite at random lest we should be incommoded by too great a crowd. Nay, rather the pillared halls of mercy in which the King doth make his feast are so vast that it will be our life-long business to furnish them with guests, compelling more and more to come in that his house may be filled, and that his royal festival may make glad ten thousand times ten thousand hearts.

Dear friends, if you want to know what are the elements of our joy, I have already hinted at them, but I will for a moment enlarge thereon. *Our joys are often found in the former places of our conflicts*. We gather our honey out of the lions which have been slain for us or by us.

There is, first, our sin. A horrible lion that! But it is a dead lion, for grace has much more abounded over abounding sin. Oh, brothers I have never heard of any dainty in all the catalogue of human joys that could match a sense of pardoned sin. Full forgiveness! Free forgiveness! Eternal forgiveness. See, it sparkles like dew of heaven. To know that God has blotted out my sin is knowledge rich with unutterable bliss. My soul has begun to hear the songs of seraphim when it has heard that note, "I have blotted out

thy sins like a cloud, and as a thick cloud thine iniquities.” Here is choice honey for you!

The next dead lion is conquered desire. When a wish has arisen in the heart contrary to the mind of God, and you have said—“Down with you! I will pray you down. You used to master me; I fell into a habit and I was soon overcome by you; but I will not again yield to you. By God’s grace I will conquer you”;—I say, when at last you have obtained the victory such a sweet contentment perfumes your heart that you are filled with joy unspeakable; and you are devoutly grateful to have been helped of the Spirit of God to master your own spirit. Thus you have again eaten spiritual honey.

When you are able to feel in your own soul that you have overcome a strong temptation, the fiercer it was and the more terrible it was the louder has been your song and the more joyful your thanksgiving. To go back to Mr. Bunyan again; when Christian had passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death during the night, and when he had come entirely out of it and the sun rose, you remember he looked back. (A pause). He was long in taking that look, I warrant you. What thoughts he had while looking back. He could just discern that narrow track with the quagmire on one side and the deep ditch on the other; and he could see the shades out of which the hobgoblins hooted and the fiery eyes glanced forth. He looked back by sunlight and thought within himself, “Ah me! What goodness has been with me! I have gone through all that, and yet I am unharmed!” What a happy survey it was to him! Ah, the joy of having passed through temptation without having defiled one’s garments! How must Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have felt when they stepped out of the fiery furnace, and were not even singed, neither had the smell of fire passed upon them. Happy men were they to have lived in the centre of the seven-times-heated furnace where everything else was consumed. Here again is “a piece of an honeycomb.”

We find honey again from another slain lion; namely, our troubles after we have been enabled to endure them. This is the metal of which our joybells are cast. Out of the brass of our trials we make the trumpets of our triumph. He is not the happy man who has seen no trouble; but “blessed is he that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life that fadeth not away.”

Death, too. Oh, the honey that is found in dead death. Death is indeed dead. We triumph over him, and are no more afraid of him than little children are of a dead lion. We pluck him by the beard, and say to him, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” We even look forward to the time of our departure with delight, when we shall leave this heavy clay and on spirit wings ascend unto our Father and our God. You see there is rich store of honey for God’s people; and we do not hesitate to eat it. Let others

say as they will, we are a happy people, happy in Christ, happy in the Holy Spirit, happy in God our Father. So that believers have their sweets.

III. But the third is the point I want to dwell upon: THE BELIEVER'S LIFE LEADS HIM TO COMMUNICATE OF THESE SWEETS. As soon as we have tasted the honey of forgiven sin and perceived the bliss that God has laid up for his people in Christ Jesus, we feel it to be both our duty and our privilege to communicate the good news to others. Here let my ideal statue stand in our midst: the strong man, conqueror of the lion, holding forth his hands full of honey to his parents. We are to be modelled according to this fashion.

And, first, we do this *immediately*. The moment a man is converted, if he would let himself alone, his instincts would lead him to tell his fellows. I know that the moment I came out of that little chapel wherein I found the Saviour, I wanted to pour out my tale of joy. I could have cried with Cennick—

“Now will I tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour I have found;  
I'll point to thy redeeming blood,  
And say, ‘Behold the way to God!’”

I longed to tell how happy my soul was, and what a deliverance I had obtained from the crushing burden of sin. I longed to see all others come and trust my Lord and live! I did not preach a sermon, but I think I could have told out all the gospel at that first hour. Did not you, my friend, feel much the same? Did not your tongue long to be telling of what the Lord had done for you? Perhaps you are one of those proper and retiring people who are greatly gifted at holding their tongues; and therefore you left the feet of Jesus in silence,—silence which angels wondered at. Is that why you have held your tongue ever since? Perhaps if you had begun to speak then you would have continued your testimony to this day. I repeat my assertion that it is the instinct of every newborn soul to communicate the glad tidings which grace has proclaimed in his heart. Just as Samson had no sooner tasted of the honey than he carried a portion of it to his father and mother, so do we hasten to invite our neighbors to Christ. My dear young friend, as soon as ever you know the joy of the Lord, open your mouth in a quiet, humble way, and never allow yourself to be numbered with the deaf and dumb. Let no one stop you from unburdening your heart. Do not follow the bad example of those who have become dumb dogs because of their cowardice at the beginning.

The believer will do this *first to those who are nearest to him*. Samson took the honey to his father and mother who were not far away. With each of us the most natural action would be to tell a brother or a sister or a fellow-workman, or a bosom friend. It will be a great joy to see them eating the

honey which is so pleasant to our own palate. It is most natural in a parent at once to wish to tell his children of divine love—have you all done so? You pray for your children, but many of you would be the means of answering your own prayers if you would talk with them one by one. This may appear difficult, but once commenced it will soon grow easy: and, indeed, if it be difficult we should aspire to do it for that very reason. Should we not do many a difficult thing for him who overcame all difficulties for us? At the least, do not deny to your own children the personal testimony of their father or their mother to the surpassing power of grace and the unutterable sweetness of divine love. Tell it to those who are nearest to you.

*The believer will do this as best he can.* Samson, you see, brought the honey to his father and mother in a rough and ready style, going on eating it as he brought it. If I wished to give honey to my father and mother I should do it up rather daintily. I would at least put it in as respectable a dish as our kitchen could afford: but there were no plates and dishes out there in that Timnath vineyard, and so his own hands were the only salvers upon which Samson could present the delicacy,—“he took thereof in his hands, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat.” Perhaps you think, “If I am to speak to any person upon true religion, I should like to do it in poetry.” Better do it in prose, for perhaps they will take more notice of your verse than of your subject. Give them the honey *in your hands*, and if there is no dish they cannot take notice of the dish. “Ay, but I should like to do it very properly,” says one; “it is a very important matter, I should like to speak most correctly.” But my judgment is, that, as you will not be likely to attain to correct speech all in a hurry, and your friends may die while you are learning your grammar and your rhetoric, you had better tell them of Jesus according to your present ability. Tell them there is life in a look at Jesus. Tell them the story simply, as one child talks to another. Carry the honey in your hands, though it drip all round: no hurt will come of the spilling, there are always little ones waiting for such drops. If you were to make the gospel drip about everywhere, and sweeten all things, it would be no waste, but a blessed gain to all around. Therefore, I say to you, tell of Jesus Christ as best you can, and never cease to do so while life lasts.

But then Samson did another thing, and every true believer should do it too. He did not merely tell his parents about the honey, but *he took them some of it*. I do not read, “And he told his father and mother of the honey,” but I read, “and he took thereof in his hands.” Nothing is so powerful as an exhibition of grace itself to others. Do not talk about it, but carry it in your hands. “I cannot do that,” says one. Yes, you can, by your life, your temper, your spirit, your whole bearing. If your hands serve God, if your heart serves God, if your face beams with joy in the service of God, you will carry grace wherever you go, and those who see you will perceive it. You will hardly have

need to say, "Come and partake of grace;" for the grace of God in you will be its own invitation and attraction. Let our lives be full of Christ and we shall preach Christ. A holy life is the best of sermons. Soul-winning is wrought by a winning life more surely than by winning words.

Take note, also, that Samson *did this with great modesty*. We have plenty of people about nowadays who could not kill a mouse without publishing it in the Gospel Gazette; but Samson killed a lion and said nothing about it. He holds the honey in his hand for his father and mother—he shows them *that*; but we are specially informed that he told not his father or his mother that he had taken it out of the carcase of the lion. The Holy Spirit finds modesty so rare that he takes care to record it. In telling your own experience be wisely cautious. Say much of what the Lord has done for you, but say little of what you have done for the Lord. You need not make much effort to be brief on that point, for I am afraid that there is not much of it, if all were told. Do not utter a self-glorifying sentence. Let us put Christ to the front, and the joy and blessedness that comes of faith in him; and as for ourselves, we need not speak a word except to lament our sins and shortcomings.

The sum of what I have to say is this,—if we have tasted any joy in Christ, if we have known any consolation of the Spirit, if faith has been to us a real power, and if it has wrought in us peace and rest, let us communicate this blessed discovery to others. If you do not do so, mark you, you will have missed the very object for which God has blessed you. I heard the other day of a Sunday-school address in America which pleased me much. The teacher, speaking to the boys, said, "Boys, here's a watch, what is it for?" The children answered, "To tell the time." "Well," he said, "suppose my watch does not tell the time, what is it good for?" "Good-for-nothing, sir." Then he took out a pencil. "What is this pencil for?" "It is to write with, sir." "Suppose this pencil won't make a mark, what is it good for?" "Good-for-nothing, sir." Then he took out his pocket-knife. "Boys, what is this for?" They were American boys, and so they shouted,—*"to whittle with,"* —that is to experiment on any substance that came in their way by cutting a notch in it. "But," said he, "suppose it will not cut, what is the knife good for?" "Good-for-nothing, sir." Then the teacher asked, "What is the chief end of man?" and they replied, "To glorify God." "But suppose a man does not glorify God, what is he good for?" "Good-for-nothing, sir." That brings out my point most clearly; there are many professors of whom *I* will not say that they are good-for-nothing, but methinks if they do not soon stir themselves up to glorify God by proclaiming the sweetness of God's love it will go hard with them. Remember how Jesus said of the savourless salt "henceforth it is good for nothing." What were you converted for? What were you forgiven for? What were you renewed for? What have you been preserved on earth for but to tell

to others the glad tidings of salvation and so to glorify God? Do, then, go out with your hands full of the honey of divine love and hold it out to others.

You must assuredly do good by this; you cannot possibly do harm, Samson did not invite his father and mother to see the lion when he was alive and roaring,—he might have done some hurt in that case, by frightening them, or exposing them to injury; but he settled the lion business himself, and when it came to honey he knew that even his mother could not be troubled about *that*; therefore he invited them both to share his gains. When you get into a soul-conflict, do not publish your distress to all your friends, but fight manfully in God's name; but when you possess the joy of Christ and the love of the Spirit, and grace is abundant in your soul, then tell the news to all around. You cannot do any hurt by such a proceeding: grace does good, and no harm, all its days. Even if you blunder over it you will do no mischief. The gospel spilled on the ground is not lost. Good, and only good, must come of making known salvation by Jesus Christ.

It will be much better for you to tell of the sweets of godliness than it will be to make riddles about the doctrine of it. Samson afterwards made a riddle about his lion and the honey; and that riddle ended in fighting and bloodshed. We have known certain Christians spend their lives in making riddles about the honey and the lion, by asking tough doctrinal questions which even angels cannot answer: "Riddle me this," they say, and then it has ended in a fight, and brotherly love has been murdered in the fray. It is much better to bring your hands full of honey to those who are needy, and present it to them that they may eat of it, than it is to cavil and discuss. No hurt can come of telling what the Lord has done for your soul, and it will keep you out of mischief. Therefore, I would stir up all Christian people to continue from day to day exhibiting to needy sinners the blessedness of Christ, that unbelievers may come and eat thereof.

By doing this you will be blessing men far more than Samson could bless his parents, for our honey is honey unto eternity, our sweets are sweets that last to heaven, and are best enjoyed there. Call upon others to taste and see that the Lord is good, and you shall have therein much joy. You shall increase your own pleasure by seeing the pleasure of the Lord prospering in your hand. What bliss awaits useful Christians when they enter into heaven, for they shall be met there by many who have gone before them whom they were the means of turning to Christ. I do often inwardly sing when I perceive that I can scarce go into any town or village but what somebody hunts me up to say to me, "Under God I owe my salvation to your sermons or to your books." What will be the felicities of heaven when we shall meet those who were turned to righteousness by our holding forth the word of life! Our heaven will be seven heavens as we see them there. If you have done nothing but exhibit in your lives the precious results of grace you will have done well. If

you have presented to your companions truths that were sweetness itself to you, and tried to say in broken accents “Oh that you knew this peace!” it shall give you joy unspeakable to meet those in glory who were attracted to Christ by such a simple means.

God make you all to be his witnesses in all the circles wherein you move.