

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

VOICES FROM THE EXCELLENT GLORY.

A Sermon

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 9TH, 1870, BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”—Matthew iii. 16, 17.

“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well phased; hear ye him.”—Matthew xvii. 5.

“Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”—John xii. 28.

THAT our Lord was the true Messiah of God was proved by his answering to all those *prophecies* which described the promised messenger of the covenant His *miracles* also proved that God was with him, and from their character they marked him out as the ordained deliverer. To open the blind eyes and unstop deaf ears, were works foretold as denoting the Messiah. His *teachings* were equally clear proofs of his mission, there is about them an authority found nowhere else. The words which he spake are spirit and life. They are self-evidencing in their elevation, purity, perfection. “Never man spake like this man.” His testimony is unique, and bears a majesty of deity about it which bespeaks itself. His *resurrection* also was a clear proof that he was sent of God. He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.” But in addition to all this and a great deal more, the divine Father was pleased also to speak out of heaven with an audible voice, to declare that Jesus of Nazareth was no other than the Son of God, and the promised Christ for whom the faithful were watching. Thrice did the majesty of heaven break its sublime silence and bear witness to the incarnate God. The three occasions, as mentioned in our texts, are most

instructive, and shall command our attention this morning. May the Holy Ghost instruct us.

Without any further preface, let us *consider the three testimonies given to our Lord by the voice of the Most High*; if time permit we will then *notice one or two instructive circumstances connected with them*, and close by *drawing a great practical lesson therefrom*.

I. In endeavouring to bring before your attentive minds THE THREE OCCASIONS ON WHICH THE FATHER BY A VOICE FROM HEAVEN BORE WITNESS TO HIS SON, I would invite you to observe, first, *when these voices were heard*.

Angels had proclaimed his birth, and wise men had seen his star, but the divine voice was not heard during the first thirty years of his sojourn; the three celestial utterances were reserved for the brief period of his public life. The first came at the commencement of his public ministry, at his baptism; the second some little time after the central point of his ministry; and the last, just before he closed his work, by being offered up. It is a fit thing to pray that all our works may be begun, continued, and ended under the divine blessing. Certainly our Lord Jesus Christ, as to his public work, both began it, continued it, and ended it with the publicly declared witness of the Most High. How cheering a thing it is at the beginning of a great enterprise to have from God clear testimony that he has sent you upon it! Such was the testimony given to the Master in the waters of Jordan, when he was first announced as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” How sweetly encouraging it is to the soul when the labour is heavy, the opposition vehement, and the spirit faint, to receive another affirming word from the excellent glory! such was that which came to Jesus on the holy mount, when retiring from the multitude he sought the refreshment of prayer and fellowship with God; then as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening, and a voice came out of the cloud, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him.” And best of all, when our work is almost done, and the shadows of evening are lengthening, and we are about to depart into the land of spirits, what a consolation it is to receive another refreshment from the divine mouth! Such our Saviour had a little while before he was lifted up from the earth. In answer to his fervent cry, “Father, glorify thy name,” there came a voice from heaven saying, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” In our departing hours we are most anxious about that which was our life’s

dearest object: the life-work of Christ was to glorify his Father's name, concerning that he prayed, and concerning that the voice gave full assurance. The result of the Lord's life-work was declared to be ensured, and therefore wrapping himself about with that heavenly testimony, the great Redeemer went bravely to his death. It is to be noted, then, that at the beginning, the middle, and end of our Master's work, the divine voice was heard.

The first celestial witness was uttered after he had lived for thirty years in comparative obscurity. It seemed meet that when he first appeared there should be some token that he was what he professed to be. That heavenly declaration, be it also remembered, came just before his memorable temptation. He was to be forty days in the wilderness tempted of the devil, and among the horrible suggestions hissed forth from the serpent's mouth would be the doubt, "If thou be the Son of God." What better forearming of our great champion than the witness, "This is my beloved Son"? How in the recollection of that paternal testimony would the Son be made strong to overcome all the temptations of the fiend, or to endure the hunger which followed the forty days of lonely fast! Thus ever, my brethren, it is not with the Master only but with the servants; before temptation there cometh Spiritual sustenance, which maketh the heart strong in endurance. Like Elias of old the believer falls asleep, being awakened, he eats bread of heaven's own providing, in the strength of which meat he journeys forty days through the wilderness without weariness. Expect that when the Lord trieth you he will also send you strength to sustain you under it.

The second occasion of the heavenly utterance was when our Lord was about (according to Luke) to send out other seventy disciples to preach the Word. The twelve had healed the sick, cast out devils, and done many mighty works; but now the labourers were to be increased and the harvest more rapidly ingathered; the seventy evangelists were to carry the divine crusade through all the Holy Land. Brethren, it is instructive that heaven gave to our Saviour, before extending his agencies of mercy, a fresh token for good; and we also, when the Lord calls us to wider service, may go up to the mountain apart to pray, and while we are there we too may expect to enjoy the comforting and strengthening witness of the Spirit within; the heavenly voice shall whisper, "Thou art mine," and we shall descend with radiant countenance to fight anew the battles of the Lord.

The third heavenly testimony came to our Lord just before his sufferings and death. I need not say to you how well-timed was that witness. With such a death before him, with such circumstances surrounding him, all tending to make his agony sharper and his death more terrible than any which had fallen to the lot of man before; with Gethsemane, with Gabbatha, with Golgotha, all before him; with such words as these yet to be uttered, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," and these, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" it was meet that the oppressed sufferer, who must tread the winepress alone, should receive at the outset a word from the throne of the highest, meeting exactly the point about which his soul was most concerned, namely, the glory of the Father's name.

While still enlarging upon the time when the divine voices were heard, we may also note that the first came to our Lord when he was in the attitude of *obedience*. Why needed he to be baptised? It is a sinner's ordinance, Jesus is no sinner and needs no washing, no death, no burial! But he takes the sinner's place, and therefore comes to be buried in Jordan, for "thus," saith he, "it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." It was to Christ an act of obedience. He took upon himself the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man he became obedient to every ordinance of God, and hence he yielded himself to baptism. Then came the voice, "This is my beloved Son." Brethren and sisters, learn that when you are in the path of filial obedience you may expect the Spirit to bear witness with your spirit that you are born of God. If you live in neglect of any known duty, if you are wilfully unobservant of any command of Christ, you may expect that there shall be withholden from you the sweet assuring tokens of divine love; but if you be scrupulously obedient, only desiring to know what is the Lord's will, and then promptly to do it, not asking the reason why, nor using your own tastes, or indulging your own whims, then in the path of obedience, especially if it cost you much, you may expect to have the witness in yourself that you are a child of God.

The second attestation came to our Master in his *devout retirement*. He had gone up to the mountain to pray; his desire was to be alone. He had taken with him his accustomed body-guard of three, Peter, and James, and John, that they might be with him while his soul communed with God. I doubt not that, as in the garden, they were bidden to remain a stone's cast distance off, for surely Jesus poured out his soul before God alone; and then it was that suddenly the glory of God shone upon

him; then, in his retirement, Moses and Elias appeared, coming forth from the spirit-world to commune with him; then did the Father utter a second time the testimony, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Brethren and sisters, you too, like your Master, may expect to receive divine testimonies when you are on the mount of communion alone, when your fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. The neglect of retirement will probably rob you of such assurances. If your prayer should be, "Show me a token for good," the answer will be, "Get thee to the top of Tabor, get thee away to thy retirement, there will I give thee the token which thy heart desires." But to live evermore spending our strength in public, wasting ourselves in the turmoil of this world, and to neglect the soul-refreshing ordinance of private devotion, is to deprive the inner man of the richest of spiritual delights.

The third testimony came to our Lord in his *ministry*. He was preaching in the temple when the Father responded to his prayer. Now while I have spoken a good word for obedience, and also have sought to magnify retirement, let it never be forgotten that public service is equally acceptable to God. Our Lord had been conversing with certain enquiring Greeks, and declaring the living power of his death to all who chose to hear him. In that selfsame hour the Father gave an audible answer to his prayer. If you, my brethren, are called to any form of service, I beseech you, under no pretext, neglect it. The neglect of anything for which you have the talent, and to which you have the call, may deprive you of the inward witness. Bear much fruit, so shall ye be his disciples, consciously so. Keep his commandments, so shall you abide in his love and know it. Forget not to be obedient, forget not to be prayerful in retirement, but forget not also that you are meant to shine as a light in this world, that you must work while it is called today, that you are not sent into this life merely to enjoy spiritual recreation or even celestial refreshment, but to do a work which no other can do, and for which you must give a personal account.

We must now dismiss the question of the time, and briefly consider *to whom* the attestations were given. The first at baptism, came to John and to our Lord, and most probably to them only. We do not think the voice from the opened heaven was necessarily heard by any one but John and our Lord. The token of the descending dove was given to John as the sign by which he should discern the Christ. "And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me.

Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him. the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.” John probably gathered from all that he had heard of Jesus that he was the great Bridegroom to whom he stood as friend, but he was not to follow his own judgment, he was to receive a token from God himself, and till that token came he could not act as one fully and indisputably convinced. When he had immersed our Lord he saw the heavens opened, saw the Spirit descending upon him, and heard the confirming voice, and then he knew beyond all doubt that Jesus was the Christ. To the Baptist, then, alone that voice was audible, but then through him it was published to all Judea.

The second testimony had a somewhat wider range, it came not to one but to three. Peter and James and John were present. What if I say to five, for there were with them Moses and Elias, representatives of the law and of the prophets, as the three apostles were the representatives of the Christian church, as if to show that law and gospel meet in Jesus, and the things in heaven and the things on earth are gathered together in one in him. The testimony enlarges, you see. At first one opened ear hears it, next five are assured thereby.

The third time the voice was heard of many, how many I cannot say, but the crowd in the temple heard it. Many heard it who did not understand it, for they said it thundered, perhaps perversely determining not to believe in the presence of God, but to ascribe that articulate voice rather to a rumbling thunder than to the divine mouth. Others who confessed that they heard words, averred that an angel spake—men will have anything but God; thunderpeals, or cherubim, or even devils they will welcome, but divine interpositions are irksome to them. Many, we say, heard the third voice, it was a testimony to the hundreds: may we not learn from this that God’s testimony to Christ is evermore a growing one? If at first he was revealed to one, then to more, then to a numerous band, expect, my brethren, the fulfilment of that promise, “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” If the glory of Jesus be today seen by thousands, it shall yet be unveiled to tens of thousands, and in the latter days the voice which spake once and again to our fathers, shall so speak as to shake not only earth but also heaven, and in that day if not before, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The heavenly testimony grows and spreads. Jesus is proclaimed as Lord in

many hearts. Look not on the present littleness of his visible kingdom, despise not the day of small things; the witness of Jesus is but a spark of fire, but the conflagration thereof shall yet belt the world with holy flame.

The three testimonies were given in this wise; the first, to the greatest of men: for “among those that are born of women there was not a greater prophet than John the Baptist;” yet the voice revealed a greater than he, whose shoe-latchet he was not worthy to unloose. The second was heard by the best of men—the great lawgiver, the chief of the prophets and the noblest of the apostles, yet the voice bare witness to a better than they. The third time the voice echoed in the holiest place in the temple, and there it testified to a holier than the holiest shrine. Jesus is everywhere magnified beyond all others as the only beloved Son of the Father. I need not however enlarge. There is far more of teaching than either time or ability allow me to open up to you.

We come in the next place to notice *to what* God bore testimony. God never sets his seal to a blank. What was it, then, which he attested? First, at the Jordan, witness was borne to Christ’s miraculous origin. “This is my beloved Son.” He comes not here as the Pharisees, and soldiers, and others have done, a mere son of man. Son of man he is, but he is also Son of the infinite, eternal God, and now on his introduction to his work he receives a spiritual anointing and a recognition from the Father. The seal was set that day to his Godhead and his relation to the Father was acknowledged.

By the second audible declaration it seems to me that the Father sealed the Son’s appointment as the great prophet, and the anointed servant of God; for in the second testimony these memorable words were added, “*hear him.*” Here God commands us to accept him as the great Teacher, to acknowledge him as the Head of the dispensation, to yield to him our loyal attention and obedience. When the Lord appears, it is necessary that men should know who he is; when he is actually engaged in his work it may be needful to confirm his authority; this was done on the holy mount, for so Peter understood it, as he writes in his second epistle. “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom

I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

The third testimony bore witness to the success of his work. “I have both glorified my name,” saith the Father, “and will glorify it again.” “What,” say you, “what if Jesus should not succeed? He has come into the world to vindicate the justice of God, and reveal his love, and so to glorify God—what if he should miss the mark; what, if after all his life of labour and his death of agony he should be unsuccessful?” The Father’s word declares that the results anticipated shall certainly be produced. “I have glorified it,” saith the Father; “all thy past life has glorified my name; thy coming down from heaven, thy life of thirty years’ obedience, all the works which thou hast done in thy three years of toil, all these have brought renown to the infinite Majesty; and “I will glorify it again,” in the supremest sense; amidst the glooms of the garden, amidst the terrors of Pilate’s hall, and amidst the sorrows of the cross, I will glorify my name yet again; yea, and in thy resurrection, in thine ascension, in thy majesty at my right hand, in thy judgment of the quick and dead I will glorify my name again” The three voices may be viewed as attesting the Son’s person, work, and success.

Some have thought that the three voices attested our Lord in his threefold offices. John came proclaiming the kingdom: Jesus was in his baptism proclaimed as the chief of the new kingdom. On the second occasion, the voice which said, “Hear him,” ordained him as the prophet of his people. And on the third occasion Jesus was owned as a priest. Standing in the midst of priests, in the temple where sacrifice was offered, himself about to offer the true sacrifice, praying that his sacrifice might glorify God, he receives the witness that God has been glorified in him, and will be yet again.

My brethren, in this threefold witness receive into your hearts the testimony of God, who cannot lie. Behold your Saviour, well pleasing to his Father; let him be well pleasing to you. Hear him proclaimed as God’s beloved; O let him be the beloved of your hearts! Hear the testimony born to him that he has glorified God, and remember that his further glorifying God in some measure depends on you, for it is by your godly conversation, by your holy patience, by your zealous exertions for your Master’s praise, that God in Christ Jesus is to be glorified until he cometh. Let these three testimonies, as they make up a complete and conclusive code of evidence, have force upon your hearts and minds, and win you to a solemn confidence in your Lord and Master.

I shall now ask your attention to the question, *How* were the testimonies given? Observe that when our Lord was baptised, the heavens were opened and the Spirit descended. What if this proclaims to us that by his obedience our Lord procured the opening of heaven for us, that our prayers might ascend to God, and all blessings might descend to us, and especially that the Holy Ghost might come down and rest for ever upon the church of God? The Master's baptism was the type of his death. Buried beneath the waters of Jordan, he pictured there his being buried in the deeps of agony and in the darkness of the tomb; rising from the Jordan, he typified his resurrection; ascending its banks he represented his ascension into heaven. God sees in figure all righteousness fulfilled, and answers the type by the relative type of heaven opened and the dove descending.

Heaven was not beheld as opened when a second time the voice was heard. In Luke ix. we read that the voice came out of the cloud. The overshadowing cloud is a beautiful representation of the mediatorship of Christ. He, like a glorious cloud, veils the excessive brightness of the Godhead, and shields us, that when God speaks he may not speak as from the top of Sinai, with voice of trumpet and sound of thunder, but may speak through an interposing medium, with that still, small voice of love which we can hear with delight. Out of the cloud, my brethren, God speaks to his people; that is to say, he speaks to us in Christ Jesus. That was a strong utterance of Luther, but it was strictly true, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God," meaning I will have nothing to do with God out of Christ. If, indeed, we had to do with God out of Christ, what misery were it for us, my brethren? We should stand in the same terror as Israel did when bounds were set about the mount. Even Moses said, "I do exceeding fear and quake." It is a great mercy that the heavenly voice, as it reaches us, comes out of the cloud.

In reading the narrative of the third divine testimony, our mind rests neither upon the opening of heaven nor the cloud, but upon the voice alone, as if the glory of God in the work of Christ put every other thought aside. The opening of heaven, or the interposition of a mediator, are but means to the great end of glorifying God. O that this one great object may absorb all our souls! But, alas! the voice, plain as it was, was misunderstood, and the clearest revelation that God ever gave to mortals has been misunderstood by many. There will be those who think of thunder and the so-called grandeur of nature, and others who see only angels or second causes.

Once more, consider *what* was it that was spoken on those three occasions. There was a difference in each case, though in the first two but slight. The first time the heavenly voice preached the gospel, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The old fathers were wont to say, “Go to Jordan if you would see the Trinity,” and we may add, go to Jordan if you would hear the gospel. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Observe the gospel in this sentence. The gospel is tidings concerning a blessed person sent of God; such tidings the Lord here utters. This man rising dripping from the water-floods, this man is pointed out as the hope of the world. The gospel is never preached except where the person of Jesus Christ is exhibited to men. “I, if I be lifted up”—not truths about me—but “I myself, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.” The attraction lies in the person of Christ, because the real power to save lies there. We have here the gospel revealing the acceptableness of the chosen person with God—“My *beloved* Son.” What men needed was a Saviour who could stand for them before God, one dear to the heart of God. It is good news to us that the anointed one is well beloved of the Father. Why, my hearers, though I have not yet opened up the fulness of that utterance, does not gospel light break in upon you already? Here is a person sent of God to save, a man of your own race, but yet right well-beloved of God, and so near to God as to be called his beloved Son. But note, yet more earnestly, the gospel of the next words, “In whom I am well pleased;” not “*With* whom,” as hasty readers suppose, but “*In* whom I am well pleased.” This is the very gospel, that God as he looks upon men is well pleased with all who are in Christ. God in Christ is not anger, but good pleasure. If I, a poor sinner, enter by faith into Christ, then I may be assured that God is well pleased with me; that, if I as his child come to him, and by a living faith link my destiny with the life and person of Christ, I need not fear the wrath of heaven. Sinner, God is not well pleased with you as you are; child of God, God is not well pleased with you as you are: there is enough about either saint or sinner to provoke the Lord to jealousy; but, sinner, if thou art in Christ by faith God is well pleased with thee; and, O heir of heaven, with all thine infirmities and imperfections, since thou art one with Christ by an eternal and now vital union, God is well pleased with thee. Said I not well that the gospel sounded from Jordan’s waves?

The second sound of the voice uttered not only the gospel itself, but the gospel command, “Hear him.” Matthew Henry has some very

delightful remarks upon this expression, "Hear him." He remarks in effect that salvation does not come by seeing, as the Romish church would have it, for the disciples were not directed to behold Christ in his glory, though the sight deserved all their attention, but they were bidden to hear rather than see. To hear the gospel is a most important duty, for faith cometh by hearing. But salvation comes not by hearing the doctrines of men but by hearing Jesus Christ. There stood Moses; and those three Jewish worthies, Peter and James and John, might have longed for Moses to open his mouth, and had he spoken to them they would have been very attentive to him, but the word was not, "Hear Moses," but "Hear *him*." There was Elias, too. O for a burning word from that master among the prophets, whose life was flame; but it was not said, "Hear ye Elias," but "Hear *him*." "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them," is the word sent to careless sinners, but to sincere seekers the direction is, "Hear *him*." Dear brethren and sisters, the great salvation of God comes to us through the testimony of Jesus Christ; not through the moral essays or philosophical treatises or doctrinal discussions of men. "Hear him." The gospel so commands you. Let not your ear be deaf when God communicates tidings of eternal life.

On the third occasion the testimony given was not the gospel nor the gospel precept, but the gospel's result: "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." I call your attention to this that you may be earnest in preaching the gospel. It is through the gospel that God is glorified. By the poorest gospel sermon that was ever preached, God through his Holy Spirit, gets to himself a glory which the most pompous ritual cannot yield him. You never speak well of Jesus but what you glorify God. No gospel word falls to the ground and is lost; it must accomplish that whereunto God hath sent it. He has glorified his name by the gospel, and he will again. Let this encourage those of you who are afraid that the times are very bad, and that we are all going to the pope. Do not be at all afraid. God will glorify his name by the gospel again as he did before. Martin Luther was not in himself a character so lovely that one might be overwhelmed with admiration of him: wherein then lay his power? His power lay in this, that he grasped the true gospel, and he was a man who, when he grasped a thing, gave it a grip so firm that the devil himself could not wrench it away from him. With the gospel in his hands he could say, "Heaps upon heaps with the weapon of the gospel I have slain my thousands; heaps upon heaps the foes of God

are overturned.” He was mighty because he declared the gospel of Jesus Christ, and with this he shook the world and brought about the Reformation. You need not therefore despair. If the ministers of Christ will only come back to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, plainly, simply, and with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, we shall drive the Ritualists, those cubs of the old Roman monster, back to their dens, as our lathers did their mother of old. Never lose your faith in the gospel. Always believe that our power is gone when we get away from the cross, but know also of a truth that when we come back to the truth as it is in Jesus, God glorifies his name.

II. LET US NOW OBSERVE ONE OR TWO INSTRUCTIVE CIRCUMSTANCES connected with these three divine voices. On each occasion *Jesus was in prayer*.

My dear, dear young people, look out the proofs of that in your Bibles. John will find in one or other of the evangelists that it is distinctly stated on each occasion that our Lord was in prayer. Learn, then, that if any child of God would have God speak comfortably to him, he must speak to God in prayer. If you would have the witness of the Holy Ghost in your soul, you must be much in supplication. Neglect not the mercy-seat

Notice next, that each time *the sufferings of Christ were prominently before him*. John, at the waters of Jordan had said, “Behold the Lamb of God;” plainly speaking of sacrifice. Baptism itself, the fulfilling of all righteousness, we have seen to be the type of his death, and of his immersion in suffering. On Tabor, on the second occasion, Matthew tells us that, “Behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” The subject that the best of men talked about when they met was the death of Jesus. No better topic, then, for us when we meet. If we were the most talented and the wisest men that ever lived, if we met together and wanted the most select topic for an eclectic discourse, we ought to choose the cross; for Jesus, Moses, and Elias, three great representative men, talked of the atoning death of the great Substitute. The third time our Lord had just spoken about the hour being come in which he was to be glorified, as you well remember. Learn then, my brethren, that if you desire to see the glory of Christ, as attested of the Father, you must dwell much on his death. Do not talk to me about the life of Christ in all its parity, I know it and rejoice in it; but I tell you that the death of Christ, in all his

misery, is the grandest point of view. The example of Jesus should be exalted by all means, but his atonement is grander far; and you, sirs, who take the man Christ, and offer your pretty, complimentary phrases about him, but then turn round and deny his expiating sacrifice, I tell you your tawdry offerings are unacceptable to him; to be complimented by your lips is almost to be censured, for if you do not believe on him as an atoning sacrifice, you do not understand his life. Thus each attestation came in connection with the Lord's sufferings, as if the glory of Christ dwelt mainly there.

Once more, each time that Jesus received this word from the Father *he was honouring the Father*. In baptism he was honouring him by obedience; on the mountain he was honouring him in devotion; in the temple the very words he was using were, "Father, glorify thy name." Oh, if you would see God's glory, and hear God's voice in your own heart, honour him, spend and be spent for him, keep not back your sacrifices, withhold not your offerings, lay yourselves upon his altar, and when you say with Isaias, "Here am I, send me," for any service whatever it may be, then shall you also feel that the Lord is with you, owning both you and your work, and glorifying himself in it.

III. Lastly, THE PRACTICAL LESSON may be found in the words, "*Hear him.*"

Earnestly let me speak to every one here. God has three times with audible voice spoken out of heaven to bear witness to Jesus. These are historical facts. I beseech you then receive *with assured conviction* the truth to which God bears witness. The Man of Nazareth is the Son of the Highest; the Son of Mary is the Saviour appointed to bear human sin; he is the way of salvation, and the only way. Doubt not this truth; accept the Saviour, for God declares that he is well pleased in him; hear him then, *with profound reverence*, accept the teaching and invitations of Jesus as not the mere utterances of fallible men, but as the instructions and the loving expostulations of God. I pray you have respect to every word and command of Christ. Listen to him as spirits listen to the voice of the Most High when they bow before the throne; and if he saith to you, as he does this morning, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" hear ye him and lovingly obey the command. Hear him, I pray you, *with unconditional obedience*. God attests him as being sent from heaven; whatsoever he saith unto you, do it; and since he bids you believe him, be not unbelieving. He has told us to say in his name, "He that believeth, and is baptised,

shall be saved.” Despise not that double command. Attend, O sinner, attend, for it is the Son of God who speaks to thee. Trust and be baptised, and thou shalt be saved. There stands the gospel stamped with the authority of deity; obey it now. May the Holy Spirit lead thee so to do.

Hear him, lastly, *with joyful confidence*. If God has sent Jesus, trust him; if he bears the glory of God’s seal upon him, joyfully receive him. Ye who have trusted him, trust him better from this day forth. Leave your souls right confidently in the hand of him of whom Jehovah, thrice speaking out of heaven, declares that he is the only Saviour. Receive him, sinner, thou that wouldst be saved. May the Lord confirm the testimony which he spake out of heaven, by speaking in your hearts by his Holy Spirit, that you may rejoice in his beloved Son, and glorify God in him.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Mark i. 1–13;
Luke ix. 28–36; John xii. 20–33.

“THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.” Edited by C. H. SPURGEON.

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